

Document Layout

Before you begin creating your document, consider the accessibility of its layout and structure. Items like fonts, colours, tables and spacing can make a difference between a document that is accessible to all, and one that isn't.

Accessible Font Type, Size and Colour



An important consideration when creating accessible documents is the fact that accessibility is not restricted to non-sighted users. Adapting document text for users with low visibility is just as important. Selecting font size, colour, contrast and style can make a big difference:

- Sans serif fonts (e.g. Arial and Calibri) are the best choice for headings. Serif fonts (e.g. Cambria) are okay to use for body text (because it is similar to handwriting, the flow is easier to follow). Use only two or three fonts at most per document.
- Do not double space after periods.
- When adding emphasis to text, bold is a good choice, but underlined is not recommended as it can be confused for hyperlinks.

Note: The Emphasis style in Word may add emphasis or inflection when being read out by certain screen readers.

Use Accessible Text Colour

Here are some ideas to consider when using colour in your documents:

- Ensure that colour is not your only method of conveying important information. Add shapes if colour is used to indicate status. For example, add a checkmark symbol  if green is used to indicate "pass" and an uppercase X  if red indicates "fail".
- Black text on white backgrounds and white text on black backgrounds are considered neutrals and are good choices.
- When using small font sizes (18 points or less), the text colour needs to be four times darker than its background.
- Use the MS Word **Accessibility Checker**, to analyze the document and find insufficient colour contrast. The tool checks your document for text colour against page colour, table cell backgrounds, highlight, textbox fill colour, paragraph shading, shape and SmartArt fills, headers and footers, and links.
- Use the [Colour Contrast Analyzer](#), a free app that analyzes colours and contrast, and displays results almost immediately.

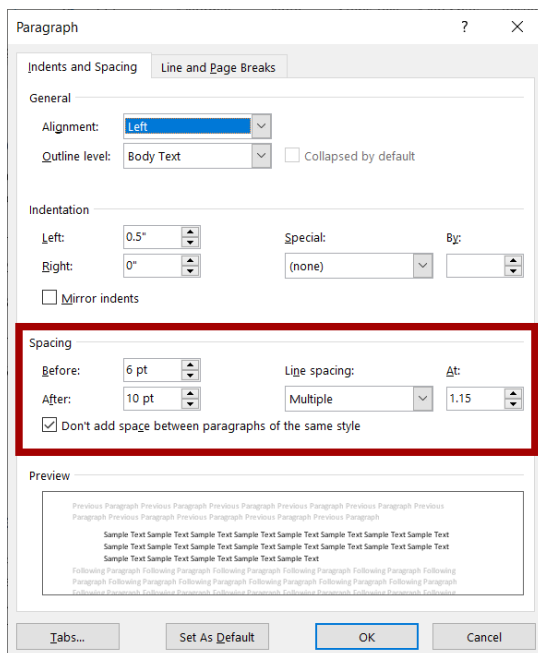
Use Accessible Text Spacing

Do not increase white space between sentences and paragraphs by using the Enter key on your keyboard as screen readers will read them out as Blank. Instead use the **Line and Paragraph spacing** tool:

1. Select your text.
2. Select the **Home** tab.
3. In the **Paragraph** group on the ribbon, select the **More** button. *The **Paragraph** dialog box opens.*



4. Click the **Indents and Spacing** tab.
5. Under the **Spacing** section, select the spacing options you would like to use.
 - The **Before** and **After** spacing option adds space between paragraphs.
 - The **Line spacing** option adds spacing between each line of your paragraph.



6. Click **OK** to save your changes.

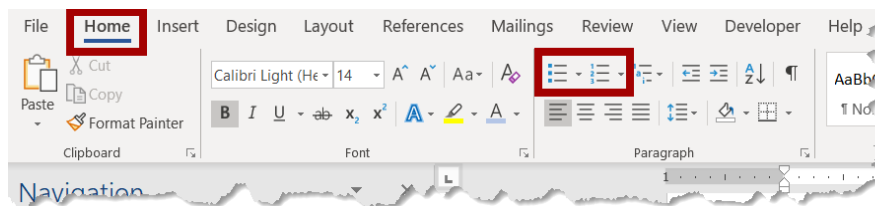
Accessible Lists

Lists should always be created using Word's built-in tools for numbered and bulleted lists. Without using these tools, any list you create will not be considered a list by the application or screen readers. Manually created lists will be tagged as regular paragraph text, which makes the content more difficult for the users of screen readers to fully understand.

To create a list, click the bullets or numbering option in the **Paragraph** group on the ribbon's **Home** tab.

Use bulleted lists

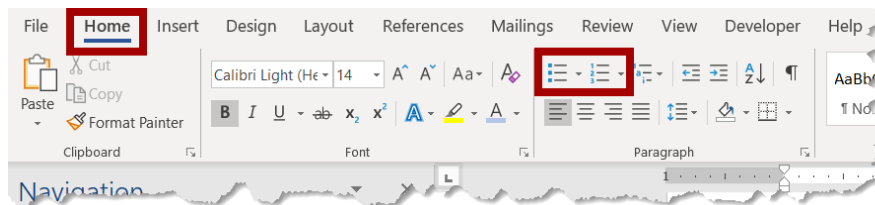
1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.
2. Select the **Home** tab.
3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Bullets** button.



4. Type the first bullet item in your list.
5. Press the **Enter** key to create a new bullet and add the next item.

Use ordered lists

1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.
2. Select the **Home** tab.



3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Numbering** button.
4. Type the first numbered step in your list.
5. Press the **Enter** key to create a new number and add the next step.

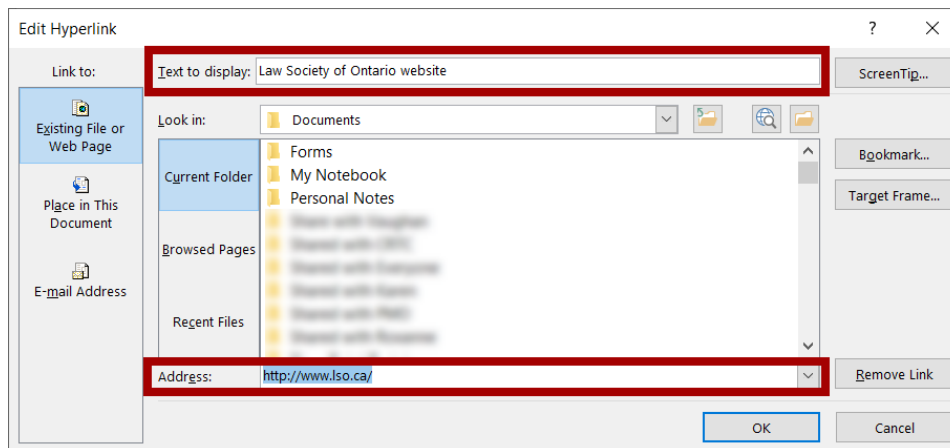
Accessible Hyperlinks

When formatting a hyperlink, be as meaningful as possible. For instance, don't use the word "here" as the hyperlink (e.g. "Click [here](#)"). Instead, use a hyperlink that describes the item or the link destination's title, such as "Details are available on the [Law Society of Ontario website](#)". This allows all users to understand what the hyperlink is referring to before deciding whether to click on it.

In addition, if a document is to be printed, it's a good idea to also include the URL in brackets so that the link is still available, e.g. [Law Society of Ontario website \(www.iso.ca\)](http://www.iso.ca)

Add hyperlink text

1. Select the text where you would like to add the hyperlink.
2. Right-click your text selection and select **Link** from the options provided. *The Insert Hyperlink dialogue box appears.*
3. The hyperlinked text you selected appears in the **Text to display** field.
4. In the **Address box**, enter the destination address for the hyperlink.




Accessible Tables

Use tables if your data is best presented in a table but remember to keep the table simple. If the table is complex with multiple merged cells, consider whether you could divide it into multiple smaller tables with a heading above each.


Things to avoid when using tables:

- **Don't** use tables exclusively for managing layout. Tables should only be used for communicating relationships of information within the rows and columns.
- **Don't** merge cells.
- **Don't** include a merged heading at the top of the table. Instead, use a built-in style such as Heading 1, Heading 2, etc. before the table. This way, the table will be included within the document navigation.

Training Schedule 

Date	Topic	Number of Attendees
March 3	Introduction to Word	10
March 10	Advanced Features in Word	8
April 14	Creating Excel Formulas	10
May 30	PowerPoint Best Practices	12

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Training Schedule 

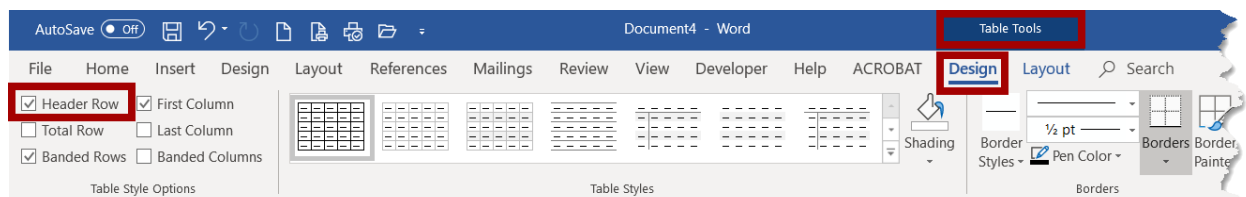
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Things to do when using tables to help make them more “readable” by a screen reader:

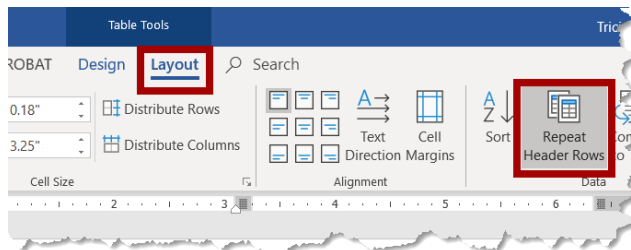
- Clearly identify the contents of columns and rows by using headers.
- Repeat header rows at top of each page.

Use table headers

1. Position the cursor anywhere in a table. The Table Tools tab appears in the ribbon.
2. On the Table Tools **Design** tab, in the **Table Style Options** group, select the **Header Row** check box.



3. Type the column headings into the table.
4. Select the Header row and click the Table Tools **Layout** tab on the ribbon.



5. Click the **Repeat Header Rows** option found in the Data group. This organizes the table so that it can be correctly tagged when the document is converted to PDF.

Accessible Headers and Footers

Headers and Footers are considered decorative text and are not read by screen readers. Do not put information in a header or footer that is important and not available elsewhere.

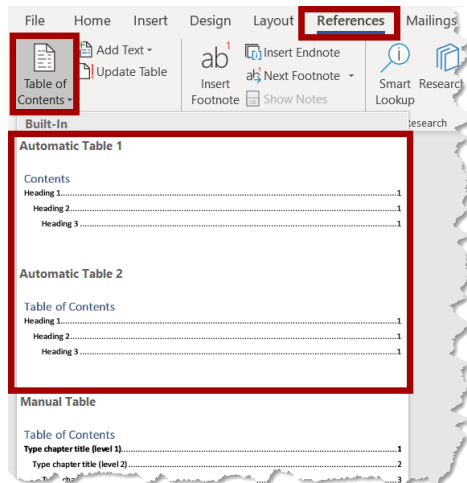
Accessible Table of Contents

The table of contents serves two purposes in the accessibility of a document; it gives users an overview of the document's contents and organization and it allows all readers to go directly to a specific section of the document.

If you have created your document using the recommended styles tool, you can easily create an accessible Table of Contents by using the automated tool within Word.

Create a Table of Contents

1. Click the **Table of Contents** button on the **References** tab in the ribbon.

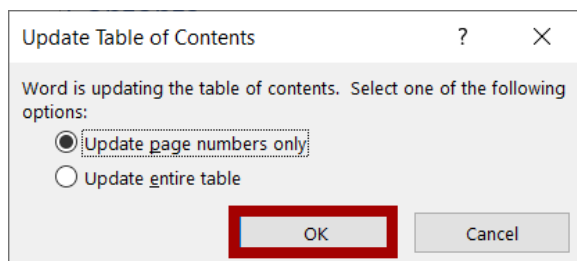


2. Choose one of the built-in Table of Content options provided in the dropdown menu.

Update a Table of Contents

If any changes are made to the document after the table of contents is created, be sure to update it so that any changes in headings and page numbers are reflected in the table of contents.

1. Click the **Update Table** button on the **References** tab in the ribbon.



2. Select one of the following radio buttons provided:
 - **Update page numbers only:** This only updates the page numbers for each heading and ignores any changes to the heading text.
 - **Update entire table:** This option updates the heading text and any page number changes.
3. Click the **OK** button.