# Introduction to Accessible MS Word Documents

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## Housekeeping:

* Ask questions any time. Interrupt or use zoom hand raise.
* Cameras can be on or off.
* State your name when communicating. Pace your speech.
* 10-minute break around 4pm.
* Options for engagement.

## Introduction

* The purpose of creating accessible source documents in Word is to prevent or eliminate technical or language-based barriers to information in electronic formats.
* We eliminate technical barriers by **labeling** the information correctly.
* Plain Language will limit language barriers.
* Creating accessible source documents is key. It is much easier to fix errors in MS Word than it is in PDF or EPUB format.
* [WebAIM: Accessible Documents: Word, PowerPoint, & Acrobat](https://webaim.org/training/docs/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwvb-zBhCmARIsAAfUI2siH_HU8IMcSBID6rhsVrqNGCiUVxTO0BJ_yA9BUY3L8niwL7YmqnoaAmyTEALw_wcB)
* [Accessibility Training Courses – Chax Accessibility Training](https://www.accessibilityunraveled.com/accessibility-training-courses/). “Designing with accessibility in mind adds about 20% to the workload. But... 'Accessibility at the end' can add up to 80%.  
  Work smarter not harder.”

### Standards in Accessibility for Electronic Information:

* [WCAG 101: Understanding the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines | WCAG](https://wcag.com/resource/what-is-wcag/)
* WCAG 2.2 Level AA is commonly referred to as an industry standard in electronic format accessibility.
* [World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)- Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/w3c-process/)
* [The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and WCAG: An Overview (boia.org)](https://www.boia.org/blog/the-nova-scotia-accessibility-act-and-wcag-an-overview)

## Setup and Formatting:

* Use the desktop application of MS Word.
* Enable the Developer tool on your MS Word Home Ribbon (Review-Check Accessibility-Options: Accessibility-Customize Ribbon-Main tabs (right side column)-select Developer checkbox).
* Open your Navigation Pane. (Review –Check Accessibility – Navigation Pane).
* Open your Accessibility Checker (Review – Check Accessibility – Check Accessibility).
* Customize your font to **sans serif** type (Calibri, Arial, Corbel, Verdana, Helvetica, TaHoma, Aptos). Serif fonts can make electronic information difficult to read (Times New Roman, Bodoni, Rockwell).
* Do not use *italics* or CAPS or underline to highlight important information- these are hard to read. **Use bold**!
* Create a document title (File – Info – Add a title). This will give assistive technology additional information on your document that you input.
* Page/ Paragraph layout:

1. Use default margins with left alignment.
2. Use page/section breaks instead of hitting “enter.” (Layout – Breaks – select either page or section break).
3. Locate your breaks: Home - Paragraph – Show/Hide (looks like a backward capital P).
4. Set your preferred spacing - Line and Paragraph Spacing – Line Spacing Options – Indents and Spacing-Spacing-Before/After).

## Headings:

* Headings give structure to your document sections, like chapters, and can help you navigate a document quickly. You can use a mouse or keys to skip through the titles. This way, headings can act like a table of contents and create an outline for the document.
* Create and customize Headings using the Styles tab in Word (Styles – Create a Style – Modify).
* Only **one Heading 1** per document.
* Use hierarchy of Headings.
* Check your headings manually in Navigation Pane.

### Headings Example Practice.

**Apply the appropriate headings to the following:**

2022-23 Annual Report (Heading 1)

Introduction (Heading 2)

Programs and Services (Heading 2)

Early Learning (Heading 3)

School-Aged Children (Heading 3)

Revenue and Expenditure (Heading 2)

Operating Revenue (Heading 3)

Operating Expenses by Province (Heading 3)

Nova Scotia (Heading 4)

New Brunswick (Heading 4)

## Check Colour Contrast

* Using different colour text or backgrounds in your document can affect the readability.
* WCAG 2.2 level AA requires a colour contrast ratio of at least **4.5:1** for normal size text and 3:1 for large text (14pt or larger).
* You do not need to check colour contrast on black and white.

Using the WEBAIM Colour contrast checker:

### [WebAIM: Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/):

1. Select the colour picker bar in the “foreground” column!
2. Click the eye dropper on the bottom left corner. Your curser will change to a grid circle.
3. Put the grid circle in the middle of the text colour to choose the color in the foreground text.
4. Complete steps 2-3 for the background colour.
5. The contrast checker will give you your ratio and you can compare it to the 4:5:1 WCAG accessibility standard.

### Colour Contrast Example 1:

Foreground colour (text) with the colour picker.

Background colour (blue) with the colour picker.

**Contrast Ratio:**

Does this meet 4.5:1or 3:1 ratio for WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility?

Hello

### Colour Contrast Example 2:

Foreground colour (text) with the colour picker.

Background colour with the colour picker.

**Contrast Ratio:**

Does this meet 4.5:1/3:1 ratio for WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility?

Hello

## Alt Text

* Alternative Text describes the appearance or function of an image and is read aloud by screen readers. You input what you want the screen reader to read.
* One of the most common accessibility issues and is easy to fix.
* Complete Alt Text for images like photographs, memes, icons, buttons, maps, graphs, chart, emojis, shapes, graphics, sometimes signatures.

1. Keep to 1-2 sentences.
2. Write only what you see.
3. Write any text from the image in the alt text box.

* Image is presented “in line” with text. Use “wrap text” function (right click image- Wrap Text-In Line with Text).
* If the image does not have a function beyond decoration. Mark the item as “decorative.”
* [An alt Decision Tree | Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) | W3C](https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decision-tree/)

### Alt Text Example 1:

Right click the image and select View Alt text:



### Alt Text Example 2:

Create Alt text for the image below!

**A group of people sitting on a hill overlooking a lake

Description automatically generated**

## Tables

* Tables should only be used to present data.
* Do not use tables for layout or design.
* Cells that are merged or split can be confusing for people using screen readers.

### **Example:** Label Header Rows in a Table:

1. Table – Insert (pick your rows/ columns).
2. Click anywhere in your table. This makes the **Table Design** tab appear in the upper ribbon, click the tab.
3. Check the **Header Row** box and the **First Column** box.
4. Click on the **Layout** tab.
5. Click **Repeat Header Rows**

* This ensures the table header row will show up if the table extends into the next page.

## Links:

* Links should be informative and describe where they will take users.
* Do not use vague language like “[click here](https://apsea.ca/contact)”, the user does not know where this link will bring them.
* For example, “For more information [contact us](https://apsea.ca/contact)”. The user knows by clicking this link it will allow them to contact the organization.
* If the document is meant for print (not digital), then the link should be a simple URL.
* For example, [apsea.ca/contact](https://apsea.ca/contact)
* If the document is digital and printed, include a descriptive link and a simple URL.
* For example, [Contact us](https://apsea.ca/contact) (apsea.ca/contact).
* Underlining should be reserved for linking websites to the text Ex: visit the APSEA website [here](https://www.apsea.ca/about-us).

**Example: Insert link into text**

1. Copy the website: [www.apsea.ca](http://www.apsea.ca)
2. Highlight the bold text below.
3. Right click and select Link.
4. Add the link to the address bar.

For more information on our programs and services contact the **APSEA website.**

## Plain Language

### What is plain language?

“A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.” ​- International Plain Language Federation

### Why is plain language important?

* Information is easy to understand by a wide audience.
* Helps ensure everyone is included – creates equity!

### Where to Start?

* Use clear, simple, frequently used words.
  + For example, **use** instead of **utilize.**
  + If you need to use complex terms, define them.
* Write in short sentences and small paragraphs.
* Know your audience and write for them, specifically.
* Aim for a grade 6-8 reading level- this is plain language best practice as stated by the Centre for Plain Language’s [website](https://centerforplainlanguage.org/what-is-readability/).
* Write the way you speak (in a conversational tone).
* Write with an active voice in the present tense.

**Active:** The dog bit the man.  
**Passive:** The man was bitten by the dog.

### Plain Language Tools:

* Check the Readability of your Word documents with the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level in Word’s Editor Tab:

1. Select your text- Home- Editor- Insights/Document Stats.

* Use AI to help with Chat GBT: [ChatGPT](https://chatgpt.com/?oai-dm=1)

1. Always review AI generated plain language manually.
2. When using AI you should provide clear instructions:

Ex: Please put the following text into plain language at a grade 6 reading level.

**Important:** When using an AI tool, please **do not** input any identifying information for staff, clients, or the organization into the tool.

### Example Writing Plain Language:

**Check the reading level and use AI to put the text in plain language.**

By eschewing unnecessarily complex jargon and convoluted sentence structures, plain language prioritizes clarity and precision, enabling individuals from varying educational, linguistic, and cognitive backgrounds to engage meaningfully with information.

Paste Plain Language Paragraph Here:

## Evaluating Your Document’s Accessibility:

* Run MS Word Accessibility Checker (Review- Check Accessibility- Check Accessibility).
* **Please note** performing an accessibility check with this tool does **not** necessarily mean your document is accessible. This tool can only flag certain accessibility issues (missing alt-text, image not in line with text, etc.).
* Check your document using a screen reader (JAWS/NVDA) and listen to make sure your information is labeled correctly.

### Four types of errors:

1. **Errors:** Content that makes the document difficult or impossible to read and understand for people with disabilities.
2. **Warnings:** Content that in most (but not all) cases makes the document difficult to understand for people with disabilities.
3. **Tips:** Content that people with disabilities can understand but that could be presented in a different way to improve the user’s experience.
4. **Intelligent Services:** Content that is automatically made accessible by AI, and that you should review for accuracy and context.

* Click on a single issue in the Accessibility tab to go to that issue in your document.
* The Accessibility Checker will provide you with recommended actions.
* [Word and PowerPoint 365 Accessibility Evaluation Guide (webaim.org)](https://webaim.org/resources/evaloffice/evaloffice.pdf)