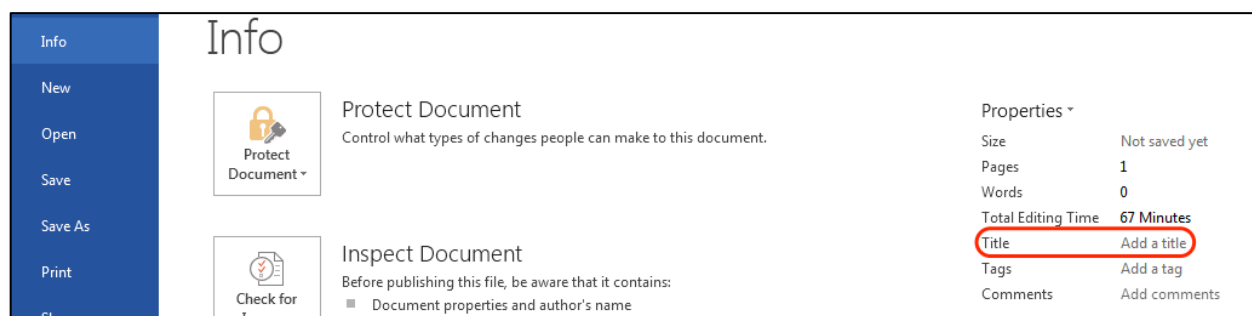


# Creating accessible word documents

## Add title for your document

Adding a title is required to make your Word document accessible. Title should describe the document in a few words. Usually the top-level heading of your document can be used as a title.

Go to File > Info and under Properties type the Title for your document.



## Add alt text for images and other objects

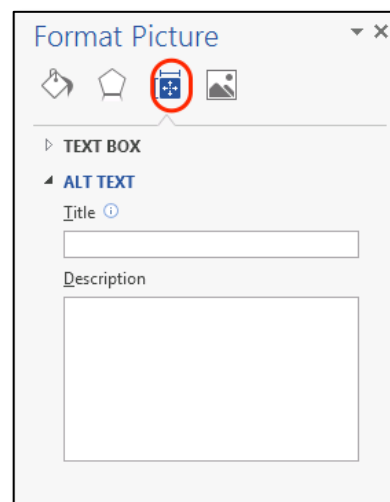
Screen readers cannot infer meaning from images and other objects. Images and other objects include pictures, images of text, images of tables, shapes, icons with hyperlinks, etc. Therefore, you must add descriptive text to images and other objects by alt text to images and other objects

When adding alt-text to images and other objects, you must add:

1. text that describes the purpose and/or function for **meaningful** objects. If the object is an image of text, the Alt-Text must match the text verbatim.
2. "" in description for **decorative** objects.
3. Must place images/objects in line so that screen reader can read them in the proper reading order.

To enter Alt-Text, right click on the image and select Format Picture > Layout & Properties Icon. In "Description:" enter information that states the purpose and/or function of the object (in about 250 characters or less) for a meaningful image or object **OR** enter "" for a decorative object.

If you want, enter a brief summary in the Title box. This box should only be filled in if you are entering a detailed or long explanation in the Description box. By using the Title box, people won't need to read the full description unless they want to. You can close the Format Picture dialog afterwards.



To place images and objects in line you:

1. Click on the image or object.
2. Select Page Layout > Position > In Line with Text.

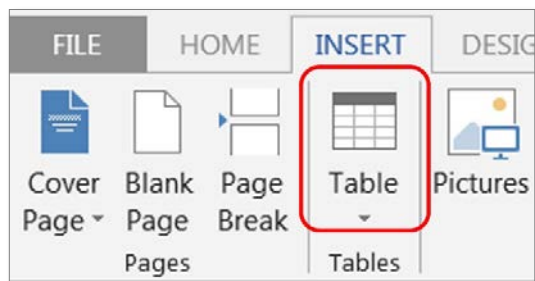
## Use built-in features to create data tables

Data tables are those tables where the information in a cell requires information from a row and/or column header to adequately describe the cell's content. When you create a data table you must:

1. Insert tables. You cannot make images of tables accessible.
2. Keep data tables simple (use one row of column headers and no merged or split cells).
3. Identify the header row.
4. Place data tables in-line so that screen readers can access the content.

If you need to create complex data tables (data tables with more than one header row, one or more header column, and/or merged or split cells), then you must convert the document to an accessible format. Complex data tables cannot be made accessible in MS Word.

Go to Insert > Tables



To create a data table, you:

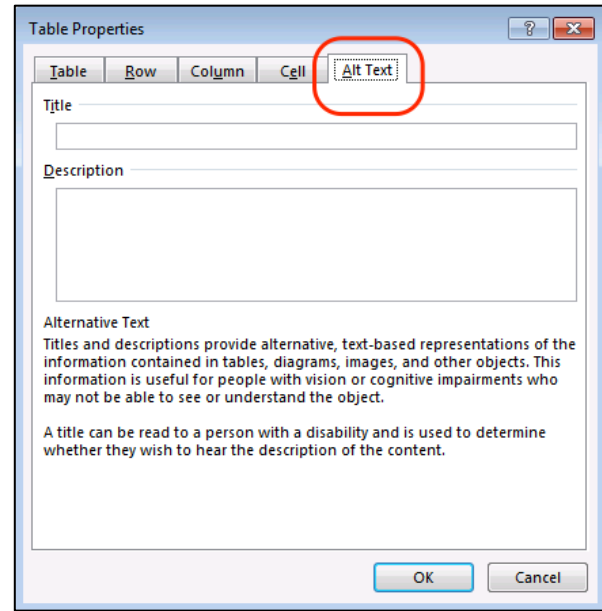
1. Insert the number of columns and rows you need for your data table.
2. Do not merge or split cells.
3. Only type headers into the first row and identify the header row. Select the first row > Table Tools Layout tab on the Ribbon > "Repeat as header row" button.

## Provide Alt-text for tables

You can provide Alt-text for tables as well. The alt text should describe the contents of the table.

To provide alt text for a table, you:

1. Right click on the table and click Table Properties.
2. Click the Alt Text tab.
3. In the Description box, enter an explanation of the table. This box should always be filled in.
4. If you want, enter a brief summary in the Title box. This box should only be filled in if you are entering a detailed or long explanation in the Description box. By using the Title box, people won't need to read the full description unless they want to.



## Use styles to create headings

Headings are used to break-up content and make finding information easier. Screen readers cannot infer meaning from just formatting (such as bold or underlined text). Styles create a structure that screen readers can quickly access.

Go to **Home > Styles** and use styles when creating Headings in your document.



To use Styles, you can either:

1. Click on the style you want and then type your heading, OR
2. Type your heading and then click on the style you want to use.

If you have different heading levels (such as Major, Section, Subheading, etc.) that look different, you must use a different Style for each type of heading. You can modify Styles so that you can create the look and feel you want in your document.

## Use built-in features to create lists

Lists are used to break-up and simplify content. Screen readers cannot infer meaning from just formatting (if you Tab and use a dash as a bullet). Using built-in list features creates a structure that screen readers can identify.

Go to **Home > Paragraph** and use Bullets, Numbering or Multilevel List features when putting lists in your document.



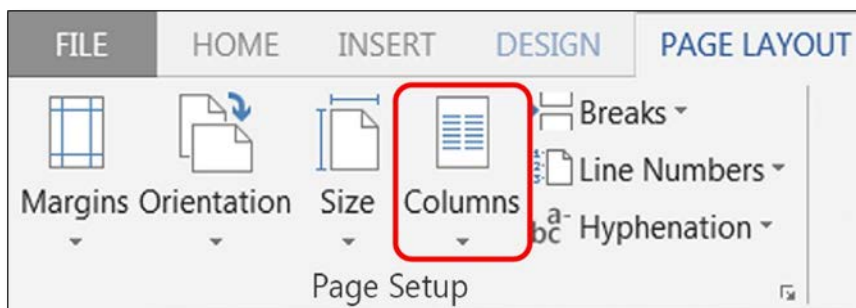
To use the built-in list features, you can either:

1. Click on the list feature you want and then type your list item, **OR**
2. Type your list item and then click on the list you want to use.

## Use Built-In Columns to organize content

Columns are used to break-up and organize content. This item doesn't mean that you are required to use columns, but when you are using a column layout, you must use the built-in column feature rather than creating the appearance of columns by using tabs or spaces. Screen readers cannot read information in the correct reading order if just tabs or spaces are used. Columns create a structure that screen readers can use to read information in the correct order (top to bottom and then left to right).

Go to Page **Layout > Columns** when creating columns in your document.



To use Column formatting you:

1. Select content you want to make into columns.
2. Click on Columns.
3. Click on the icon representing the number of columns you want.

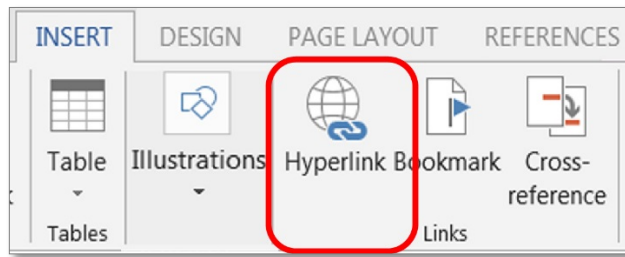
## Create unambiguous names for links

It is important to provide unambiguous names or context for links that describe the destination, function or purpose so that AT can correctly identify information. For example, if you have several links and you name them all "click here," then screen reader will not be able to convey to individuals with disabilities information that distinguishes distinct links.

Ensure that the destination, purpose or function is described in surrounding text

**OR**

Go to Insert>Hyperlink



To set a hyperlink name, you:

1. Type an unambiguous name in your document that describes the destination, function, and/or purpose.
2. Select the text in your document that you want to be a hyperlink (this text will show in “Text to Display”).
3. Go to Insert > Hyperlink > Link To
  - a. If “Existing File or Web Page,” type the accurate URL in Address.
  - b. If “Place in this Document,” click on the appropriate line in “Select a Place in this Document.”
  - c. If “Create a New Document,” type in the document name in “Name of New Document.”
  - d. If “Email Address,” type a valid email address in “E-mail address.”

## Use color (and other sensory characteristics) plus text to convey meaning

In order to use color and other sensory characteristics (such as size, shape, and location) accessibly, ensure that you do not use color alone to convey meaning. If you do, then individuals with disabilities who are blind, have low vision or are color blind will not have access to comparable information.

To use color accessibly:

1. Use color and other sensory characteristics (such as size, shape, and location) to convey meaning.
2. Create text that duplicates the meaning of the color or other sensory characteristic).

**Table 1: Example of a Status Layout Table Using Color and Text**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Project A	ON TIME
Project B	AT RISK
Project C	LATE