# Microsoft Word Accessibility Checklist

## [Use An Agency Template](https://scdoe.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/OETA_Group-MC-WebAccessibilityBasics/EV2zIROIXdVMjNxK_4a2kRkBcbYqMiiGvXaBRrIuC-6zjg?e=Tg6agh&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1XZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTaGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0%3D" \o "SCDE video: How to Use Agency Templates)

[**Go to the agency intranet**](https://scdoe.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/OETA_Group-MC-WebAccessibilityBasics/EUuz48VLUP5JkGvppxEGgHgBHWmspzboSpGf7A-Gq0vPwA?e=MMtJMX&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1XZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTaGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0%3D) and use the appropriate SCDE template. [**(intranet.ed.sc.gov)**](https://intranet.ed.sc.gov/branding/templates/)

## [Use Formatting Tools in the Ribbon](https://scdoe.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/OETA_Group-MC-WebAccessibilityBasics/EYzE4Ld3U5BGtBHtVws_OVcBxtky2qafBNi_5GU338F6TQ?e=aC8R37&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1XZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTaGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0%3D" \o "SCDE video: Using the Ribbon in Word for Accessibility)

[**“Show” formatting marks**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/show-or-hide-formatting-4967e4aa-a42b-4353-a8bc-de65c417784d) to see the page layout and spacing.

Click in the Header/Footer (check both) to ensure that built-in tools have been used.

Use the [**STYLES section of the Microsoft Word ribbon;**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-improve-accessibility-with-heading-styles-68f1eeff-6113-410f-8313-b5d382cc3be1)  HEADING 1 for section titles, HEADING 2 for subsections, and HEADING 3 for smaller divisions.

Use the ribbon and context menus for lists, [**columns**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-newsletter-columns-3a00e688-253d-456e-9481-661fdd5b724b), spacing, alignment, and [**tables**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-accessible-tables-in-word-cb464015-59dc-46a0-ac01-6217c62210e5).

## Assign All Images Alternative Text

Add short [**alternative text**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-improve-accessibility-with-alt-text-9c57ee44-bb48-40e3-aad4-7647fc1dba51) (2 sentence max) to every image.

Mark purely decorative images using the [**checkbox in the alternative text menu**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/everything-you-need-to-know-to-write-effective-alt-text-df98f884-ca3d-456c-807b-1a1fa82f5dc2#:~:text=When%20not%20to%20use%20alt%20text%3F).

## Use Descriptive Text for Hyperlinks

Do NOT use [**the URL or "click here."**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-accessible-links-in-word-28305cc8-3be2-417c-a313-dc22082d1ee0) If printing the document the URL may be provided *in addition.*

Ensure links are a unique color and underlined. (A **[default link style](https://webaim.org/techniques/hypertext/link_text" \l "appearance" \o "Webpage: Link Appearance (WebAIM.org))**is best practice.)

## Use High Color and Contrast

Text should have [**high contrast**](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) with the background. Do not use gradients or images behind text.

Do NOT use [**color alone to convey information**](https://tips.uark.edu/accessibility-color-issues/#gsc.tab=0). Use visual cues AND text like: \*Important: \_\_

## [Keep Tables Simple](https://scdoe.sharepoint.com/:v:/s/OETA_Group-MC-WebAccessibilityBasics/EdM7tojl7xVFlYDDHVqaMmQBMzWRF001NiVpFd9IN3rmWQ?e=PMDJZ6&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1XZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTaGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0%3D" \o "SCDE video: Accessible Tables in Word)

Use tables to show data and organize information, NOT for layout. Break complex tables into multiple simpler ones.

Avoid [**merged, nested, or blank cells**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-accessible-tables-in-word-cb464015-59dc-46a0-ac01-6217c62210e5).

Always [**designate a header row**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-accessible-tables-in-word-cb464015-59dc-46a0-ac01-6217c62210e5#:~:text=To%20add%20a%20header%20row%20to%20a%20table,Options%20group%2C%20and%20then%20choose%20Header%20row.%20).

## Use the Accessibility Checker

Set the [**Document Properties**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/view-or-change-the-properties-for-an-office-file-21d604c2-481e-4379-8e54-1dd4622c6b75#:~:text=View%20and%20change%20the%20standard%20properties%20for%20the%20current%20file): TITLE must be descriptive. Author = South Carolina Department of Education.

Run the [**built-in accessibility checker**](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-check-the-accessibility-of-your-document-9d660cba-1fcd-45ad-a9d1-c4f4b5eb5b7d) and fix any errors.