# Accessibility in Word

* Add title
  + File > Info > Properties
* Check Accessibility
  + Accessibility: Investigate (Bottom of the page) **OR**
  + Review > Check Accessibility
* Add/Check Alternative Text (Alt Text)
  + Alt text – Description of image read by the screen reader
  + Don’t use automated alt text
  + Right Click Image > View Alt Text **OR**
  + Review > Check Accessibility > Alt Text
  + Mark any irrelevant images as decorative
    - Images that are only there for decoration and don’t add to the content may become audio clutter if read by a screen reader
* Alt Text Guide
  + Not the same as a caption — don’t add extra information such as photo credits, only what is visible in the image
    - This is reverse discrimination, as someone without assistive technology may not be able to access it
  + No need to add “picture of—” since it’s already assumed to be a picture, only clarify if it’s something such as an illustration
  + Keep it short and concise
  + Only describe what is necessary in the given context
  + Add a period at the end so the screen reader knows to pause before continuing to the text
  + Helpful resource: <https://asuo-ai-labs.streamlit.app/Image_Accessibility>
    - Use only as a guide — double check generated alt text and rewrite as needed
* Styles
  + Defines what the text *is* in the structure
    - Heading, Normal Body Text/Paragraph, Hyperlink, List, Caption, et cetera
  + Adds tags and lets people walk through the document — like a map
  + No matter what text looks like, it won’t be defined as a certain structure type unless a Style is added
  + Styles go by the block of text, not line-by-line or by character (so there’s no need to highlight everything)
    - Except Character Styles
* Headings
  + Use Heading Level 1 rather than Title
  + Screen readers recognize 6 headings (even though Word has the option to go up to 9)
  + Hierarchy that organizes the information so visually impaired users can navigate the document since they can’t rely on sight to find and jump to certain sections
  + Just because a section heading is bolded in large text, does not mean a screen reader will recognize it as a heading and categorize it as one!
  + Is an outline of the document
  + Also creates bookmarks to help sighted users navigate the document!
    - Navigation Pane (Ctrl+F **OR** View > Show > Navigation Pane)
  + Section levels can stay the same, go down by one, or jump back up one or more. They can’t skip numbers going down!
  + Skipping down means a person will be confused and think they missed something, skipping up means they know they’re starting a new section
* Open Styles Menu (Middle of Home Tab)
  + Update to Match Selection **OR**
  + Choose to format as an existing Style **OR**
  + Create a New Style
    - A+ button
* If you can’t find the Style you want:
  + Options > Show: All Styles > Sort: Alphabetical
* Editing Styles
  + Automatically updates all instances of the Style (or Styles based on it) in the Document
  + Keeps things within the document consistent and makes editing easier
* When adding Styles, don’t forget:
  + Character Styles
    - Italics – Emphasis
    - Bold – Strong
  + In general, only use these when needed, as they may be difficult for some people with disabilities to read and aren’t specified by a screen reader
  + To signify important information, consider adding a symbol such as an asterisk(\*)
* Stay away from formatting from the top — Font and Paragraph — especially for lists!
  + The options in the Styles menu are the same, only more accessible
  + Manual formatting may confuse screen readers (especially lists)
  + Character Style is unnecessary when the paragraph style is already defined as being bold, italics, et cetera.
* Show Paragraphs — ¶
  + Delete any extra blank space
    - Editing > Replace > Special > Paragraph Mark (replace two with one)
    - Paragraph mark also written as ^p
  + Empty paragraphs are read by screen readers as “blank”
* Edit Styles
  + Syles > Modify
  + Add Spaces
    - Format > Paragraph > Spacing
  + Can turn on Gridlines if you want to compare with the original document
    - View > Show > Gridlines
* Make sure objects are Inline (unless they are marked decorative)
  + Right Click Image > Wrap Text > In Line with Text
  + Drag to anchor the image before/after the appropriate line of text
  + This affects the reading order, which is otherwise irrelevant since Word is text-based and reads left to right and top to bottom
* Stay away from textboxes
  + They mess up the flow of text
  + If you have a document with a lot of design elements, utilize the IFAS Communications Graphic Design service, they will keep you on brand and ADA compliant ([https://branding.ifas.ufl.edu](https://branding.ifas.ufl.edu/))
  + It's not that it can get complicated, it will get complicated
* To give buffer room, add border
  + Picture Format > Picture border > More Lines
  + Increase the width as desired then change the color to blend into the background
* Add Footnote
  + References > Insert Footnote
  + To Edit:
    - Footnote and Endnote > Format
  + Will add the Footnote Text Style
* Add Link
  + Type text – either the URL (web address) or something descriptive, rather than “click here”
  + If it’s a web address, Word should automatically make it a hyperlink. If not:
  + Highlight > Right Click > Link
    - Add address and ScreenTip
  + ScreenTip = Alternative Text
* Tables
  + Insert > Table (Draw or Insert)
  + Make sure to have a Header Row and/or First Colum
    - Table Design > Table Style Options (check the relevant boxes)
  + Columns go down, Rows go across.
  + Don’t merge or split cells
  + Don’t leave the first cell blank
* Final notes:
  + Headers and Footers will be automatically artifacted, meaning they won’t be read by a screen reader so keep important information in the main document
  + Symbols
    - Only Unicode symbols will be read by a screen reader
    - Insert > Symbol
    - This includes special bullets in a list (best to keep it simple)
* Converting to PDF
  + File > Save As > PDF (\*.pdf) > More options… > Options… > PDF Options > PDF/A compliant
    - PDF/A compliance ensures long term file accessibility
* Questions? Contact:
  + Tracy Bryant, Director of Creative Services ([tracydz@ufl.edu](mailto:tracydz@ufl.edu))
  + Courtney McGillicuddy, Accessibility Document Specialist ([cmcgillicuddy@ufl.edu](mailto:cmcgillicuddy@ufl.edu))