

Create Accessible Media (Word)

Overview

This tutorial will explain how to create **Accessible Media** using Microsoft Word. Creating Accessible Media is gaining importance in education broadly, but it is imperative to use accessibility best practices when teaching in online learning environments where students with impairments and disabilities are regular attendees. Further, ensuring that your content is accessible will improve the user experience for all users, e.g. navigability, simplicity.

Font and Color Considerations

Before working with individual skills, here are some general considerations for creating Accessible Media:

- ✓ Ensure that font size is sufficient, usually around 10 – 12 points or more.
- ✓ Provide sufficient contrast between text and background color. Use a [Color Contrast Checker](#) when in doubt.
- ✓ Do not use color alone to convey information.

Alternate Text for Images

Images can be given Alternate (Alt) Text in Microsoft Word. Alt Text is used to describe an image for students using screen readers and screen reading software.

Step 1

Right-click the image that requires Alt Text.

Step 2

Select “Format Picture” from the Contextual menu.

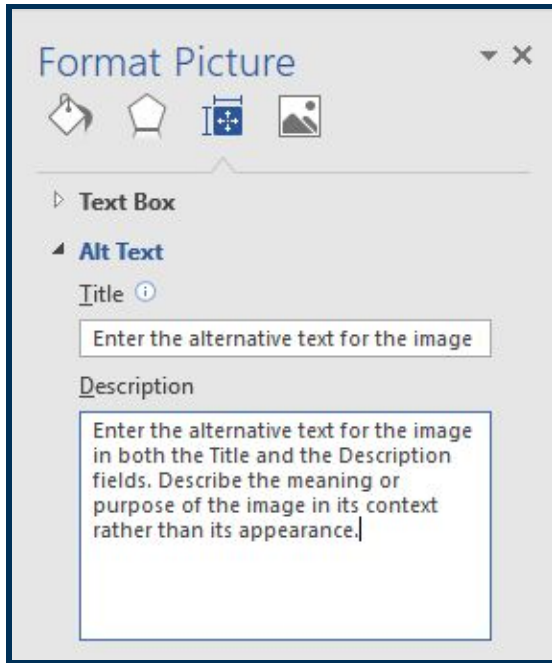
Step 3

Click the *Layout and Properties* tab.

Step 4

Click the *Alt Text* option.

Enter the Alt Text for the image in both the Title and the Description fields. Describe the meaning or purpose of the image in its context rather than its appearance.



Things to consider

- ✓ You do not need to include “image of” or “picture of” in the description. For example, write “Winthrop University Clock tower” instead of “Picture of Winthrop University of Clock tower”.
- ✓ Any text within the image must be included in the Alt Tag.
- ✓ Clickable images must describe the function, not the image. For example, a picture of a house that takes the user to the Home Page when clicked should be tagged “Return to Home Page” and not “House.”
- ✓ Keep Alt Tags short (less than a paragraph). If you require a longer description, include it near the image as standard text.
- ✓ In Word, all images must be Alt tagged, even if they are purely decorative.

Self-Describing Links

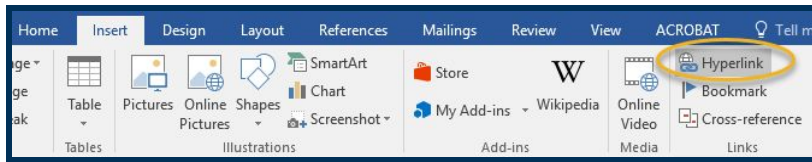
Online instruction benefits from using hyperlinks to direct student attention. Creating accessible and engaging hyperlinks is a skill that helps learners easily navigate your content.

Step 1

Highlight the text you would like to make a link.

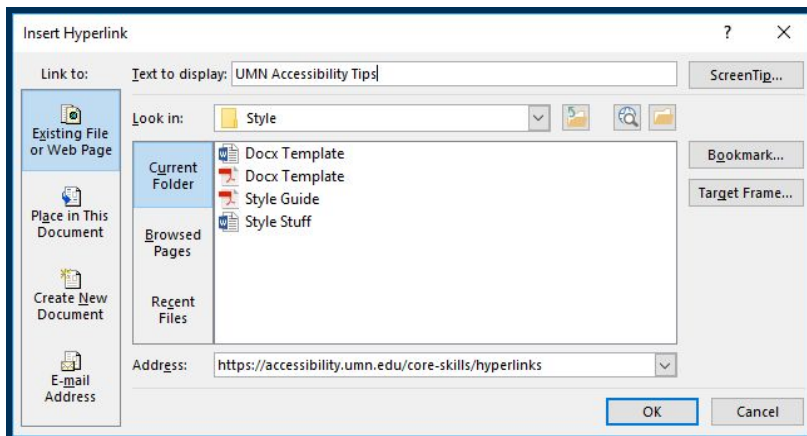
Step 2

Right-click the text, or go to the *Insert* tab on the Windows Ribbon and click on “Hyperlink”.



Step 3

Type or paste a URL in the Address field. Also, use the *Text to display* field to describe the link.



Step 4

Press OK.

Things to consider

- ✓ The link text should describe where the user will be taken. For example, [Winthrop University Homepage](#)
- ✓ If you wish to include the URL for users who may print the document, place the URL in parenthesis next to the self-describing link. If it automatically creates a link, right-click the URL, and select "Remove Hyperlink." You can also hold the CTRL (CMD if Macintosh) Key and press "Z" to undo the automatic correction. For example, [Winthrop University Homepage](#) (<http://www.winthrop.edu>)

Heading Structure

Headings improve your content's navigability, illustrating a hierarchy of ideas both visually and logically. Screen readers can use Headings to preview content, and proper Headings allow students to jump around the document more easily than using bold text (screen readers cannot detect bold text) or similar text effects.

Step 1

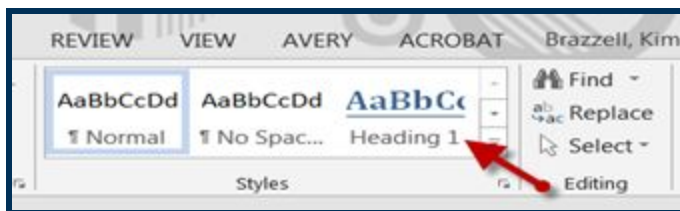
Highlight the text that you would like to make a Heading.

Step 2

Click the *Home* tab.

Step 3

In the “Styles” pane, click the Heading level you would like to apply to the text. Consider how many levels of hierarchy the information will require, and begin your headings appropriately.



Step 4

You can format the text if you do not like the default style for the Heading. Once you make changes, right-click the Heading level in the “Styles” pane and select “Update Heading X to Match Selection.” The next time you use this Heading, the new formatting will be applied.



Things to consider

- ✓ The Heading structure should outline the document. For example, the document title would be Heading 1, individual sections would be Heading 2, subsections would be Heading 3, etc.
- ✓ You may change the appearance of the headings in advance by right-clicking a particular heading style (example: Heading 1) and selecting “Modify...”

Accessible Lists

Lists are valuable tools for organizing content, especially when you are breaking down complex ideas into their component parts. To make lists accessible, use Word’s built-in list features to label the content as a list. This label helps screen reading software identify the content as separate from the rest of the body text, and it will adjust reading speed and fluency accordingly.

Step 1

Select the items you would like to make into a list.

Step 2

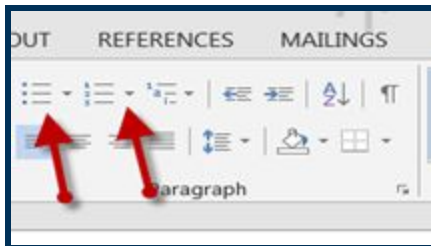
Click the *Home* tab.

Step 3

Click either the *Ordered List* (123/ABC) or *Unordered List* (bullets/dashes) button from the “Paragraph” pane.

Step 4

Select the desired list type by using the drop-down arrows following each button.



Things to consider

- ✓ Word usually can predict when you are building a list. If Word automatically places the next item indicator (numbers, bullets, dashes), then the list will be accessible.
- ✓ Use lists in lieu of tables whenever possible.