



# Creating Universally Designed Word 2010 Documents - Quick Start Guide

## Overview

Creating accessible documents – ones that work well with all sorts of technology – can be a daunting task. The purpose of this guide is to pinpoint the most important steps to add to your workflow when creating Word 2010 documents. Implementing the following steps as you go – instead of after the document is already finished – makes this a less overwhelming process:

1. Provide Structure with Styles and Headings.
2. Add Alternate Text to Images.
3. Add Descriptive Text to Hyperlinks.
4. Designate a Header Row for Tables.
5. Use the Accessibility Checker.

## Provide Structure With Styles

### Use Headings

Headings are important for creating a hierarchy in your document that helps students to navigate the document more easily – both visually and using technology. It is important to use the built-in styles for formatting, rather than manually formatting the text using bold, italics or font sizes.

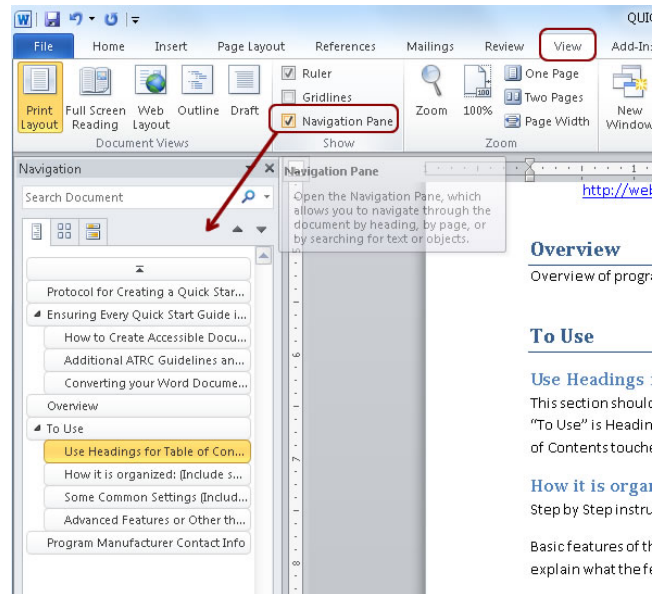


- Use headings to indicate the **level of importance** of a section, not just for visual effect.
- Using headings automatically generates a **Table of Contents** for your document.

- Don't skip heading levels. Stay within a hierarchy, where **Heading 1** is the highest level of heading.

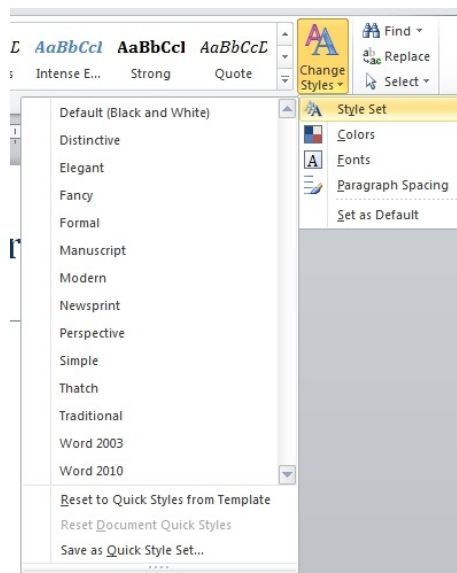
## Check Your Outline

To see the outline that is generated by your headings, click on **View**, and check the **Navigation Pane** checkbox on the ribbon.



## Choose a Style

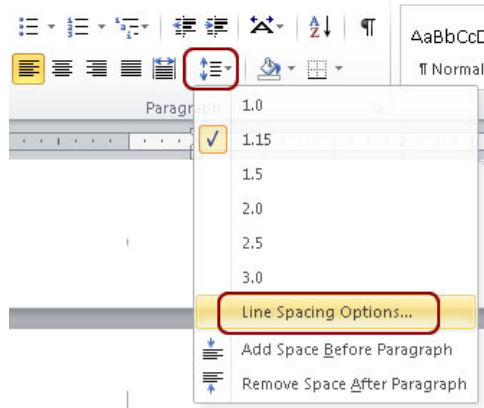
Microsoft has several styles to choose from if you don't like the default. Click on **Change Styles > Style Set** to see the other options.



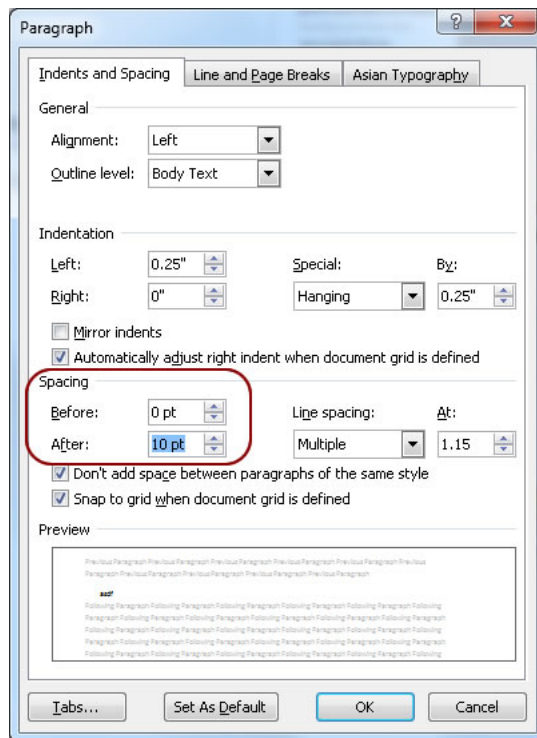
# Pitfalls to Avoid

## Manual Spacing

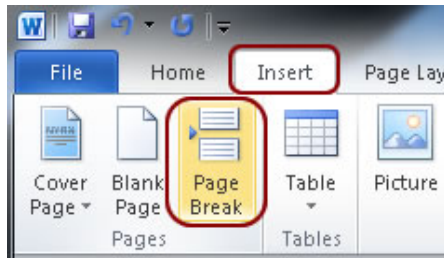
1. Avoid using the ENTER key to add extra space between paragraphs or to force a new page. Manage your white space on the page using the **Line Spacing Options** in the **Paragraph** section of the **Home Ribbon**.



2. Look for the **Spacing Options** in the window that opens. This is where you can adjust the amount of space between lines until it looks how you want it.

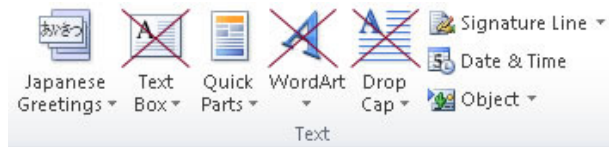


3. To force content onto a new page, avoid using the ENTER key multiple times. Instead, use the **Page Break** feature on the **Insert Ribbon**.



## Styles to Avoid

Unfortunately, not all styles are equal. Features such as Word Art, Drop Caps, and Text Boxes are not accessible to screen readers and will not be heard by a listener. It is best to avoid using these features when creating a universally designed document.



## Add Alternate Text to Images

Images are often an essential aspect of universally designed documents, as they provide another way to approach the content besides text and have the added bonus of breaking up the text on a page and making it more interesting or appealing. They are especially helpful for visual learners, but there's another side of the coin – the problems they create for people with visual impairments.

You don't have to stop using images in your documents. You just need to add a step to your workflow to keep them universally designed both for the visual learners and those who are visually impaired. Provide a text alternative that their software can read to them so they won't miss out on any of the visual information that you're presenting.

## Where to Use Alternate Text

Alternate text should be added to all non-text elements, including:

- Pictures
- Graphs
- Charts
- WordArt

## Writing Good Alternate Text

Here are some considerations to help you make alternate text meaningful to a listener:

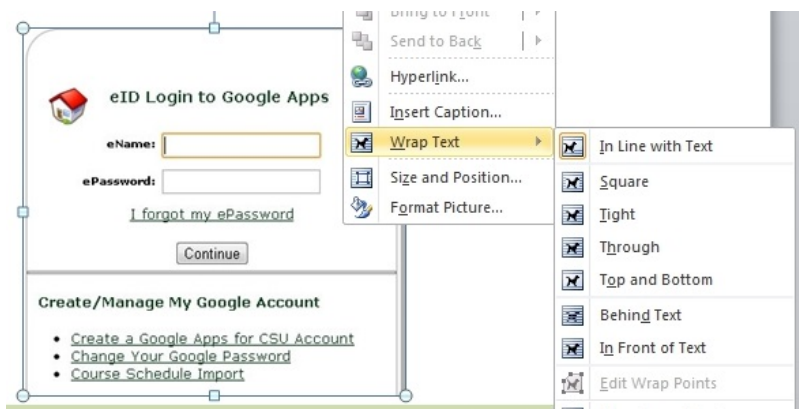
1. What is the context of the image?
2. What meaning does it add to the page?
3. What do you expect your readers to get out of the image visually?
4. Is there text in the image? (If so, reproduce the text.)
5. If it is a specific type of chart or graph, include the type in the description (e.g. Venn diagram).
6. Avoid redundant statements like “Image of” or “This is a picture of.” Simply state what it is.
7. If the image is already described in the surrounding text, the alt text can be very short.
8. Be concise.

**Note:** Sometimes images that are downloaded from the web have “junk” alternate text (usually a long file name). Make sure to check every image and replace the junk with something helpful.

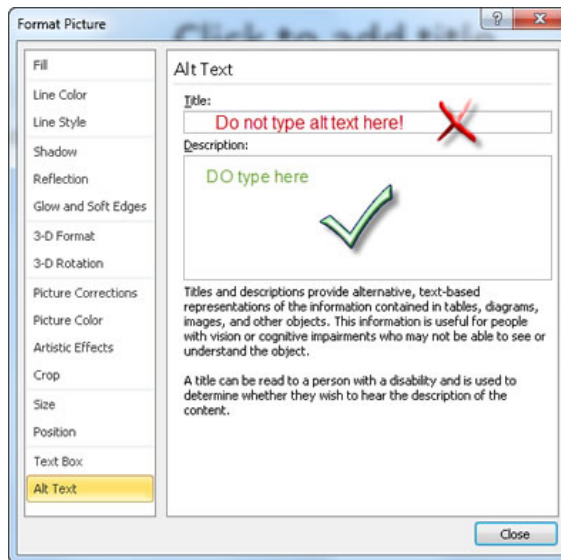
## How To Add Alt Text to an Image

There are two main things to remember with images.

1. First of all, images must be in-line with text or they will be ignored by a screen reader even with alternate text provided. **Right-click** on the image, select **Wrap Text** and then **In Line with Text**.



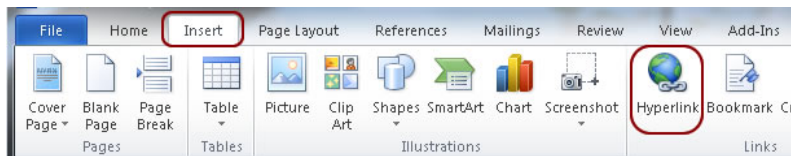
2. To add the alt text, **right-click** on the image and select **Format Picture**. Select the **Alt Text** menu at the bottom of the window. Add the text in the **Description** box. Text in the “Title” box will not be read by a screen reader.



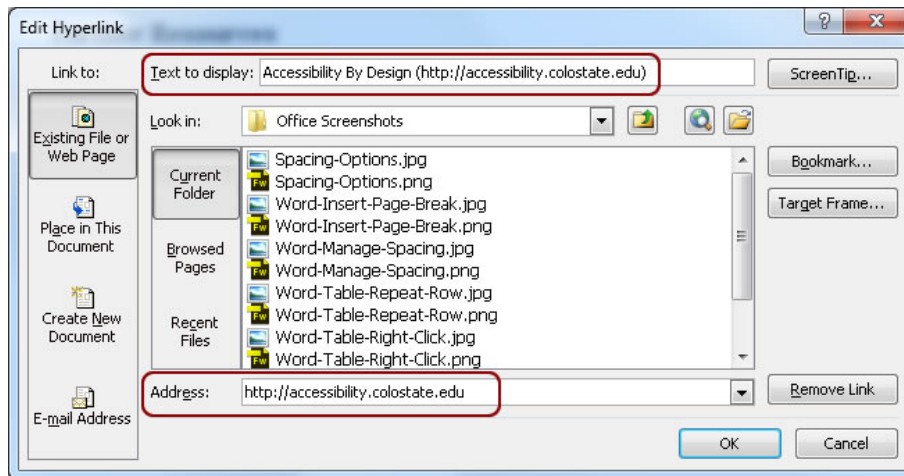
## Descriptive Hyperlinks

Links can sound confusing to a listener, especially if there are a lot of random characters in the address. You can make links more meaningful to listeners by providing a short description along with the address. This way the address will still be visible for participants who have a printed handout.

1. **Highlight** the link text.
2. On the **Insert** Ribbon, Select **Hyperlink**.



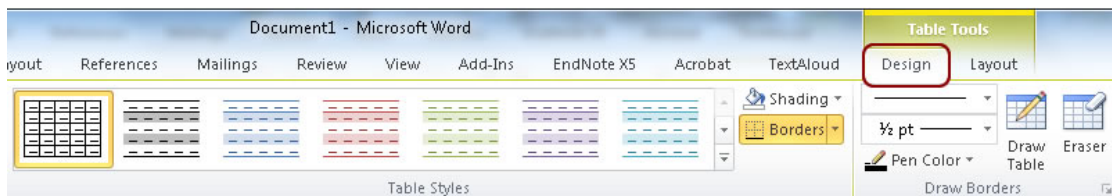
3. Type the text that should appear in your document in the **Text to Display** field at the top.
4. Layout the display text like this: *Description of Link (Actual web address)*
5. Type the actual web address in the **Address** field at the bottom. This is the one that will be followed when clicked on.



## Tables

Here are some general guidelines to follow if you use tables:

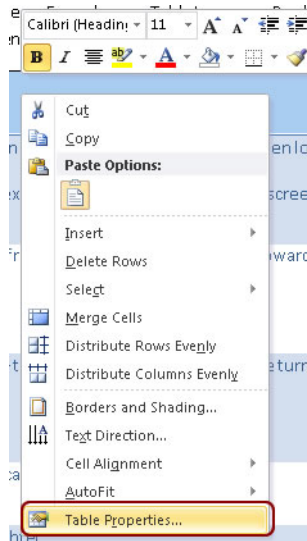
- Use Table Styles to make your tables easier to read and to appeal to visual learners. You can change styles on the Ribbon under **Table Tools > Design**.



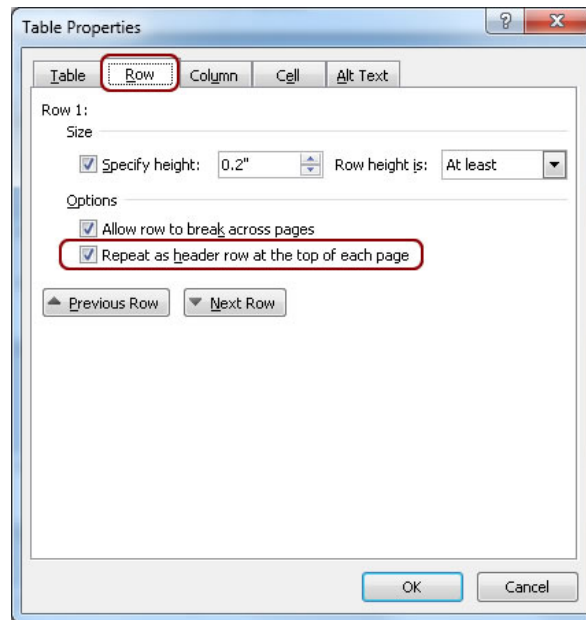
- Avoid using tables with too many columns. Try to keep them to 6 columns or less.
- Avoid using empty cells to create padding or visual effects.
- Designate a header row.
  - The header row will repeat at the top of each page, making it easier to follow visually and allowing a listener to hear which column they are in.

### How to Set the Header Row

1. **Highlight** the top row of the table. **Important** – the menu is different when the entire table is selected. Make sure you only select the header row.
2. While the top row is highlighted, **Right-Click** on it and Select **Table Properties** from the bottom of the menu.



3. Switch to **Row**, the second tab in the Properties window. Check the box to **“Repeat as header row at the top of each page.”**



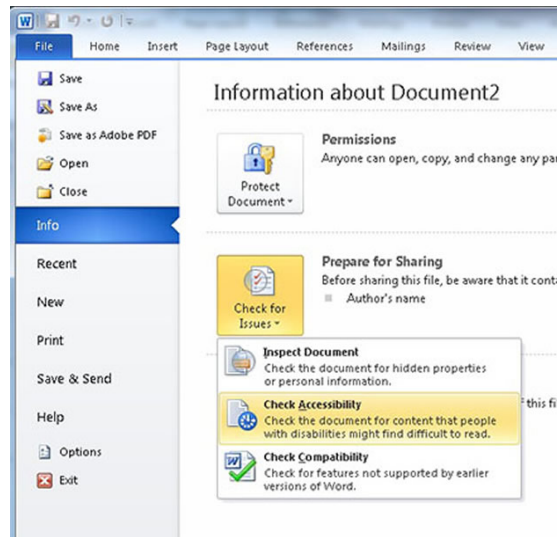
## Run the Accessibility Checker

Since it's easy to miss details sometimes, Microsoft has a built-in tool that will check your document for you. It generates a report with instructions on how to fix any problems.

**Note:** The checker will not recognize “junk” alternate text, so it is still important to check images manually.



The Accessibility Checker is located under **File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility**.



## Summary

---

To recap the most important steps to add to your workflow for universally designed Word documents:

- Use Headings, Styles and Layouts to format your text.
- Add descriptive alternate text to images.
- Add descriptive text to hyperlinks.
- Designate a Header row in tables.
- Use the Accessibility Checker to look for issues you may have missed.

## Further Resources

---

[Accessibility By Design \(http://accessibility.colostate.edu\)](http://accessibility.colostate.edu)

[Access Project Tutorials \(http://accessproject.colostate.edu/\)](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/)

[WebAIM Word 2010 Article \(http://webaim.org/\)](http://webaim.org/)