

Accessibility Guidelines: Creating MS Word Documents

Updated 3/13/19

Set Language

Identify Document Language

- In Office 2011 (Mac), select Tools > Language from the application menu to define the default language.
- To define a different language for part of the document, select each foreign language individually, then select Tools > Language to define the language for each.

IMPORTANT: Currently language settings only effect accessibility of the Word document itself. They do not survive when exported to PDF. If PDF is the final format in which you intend to distribute your document, you will need to define language in the PDF directly using Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Color

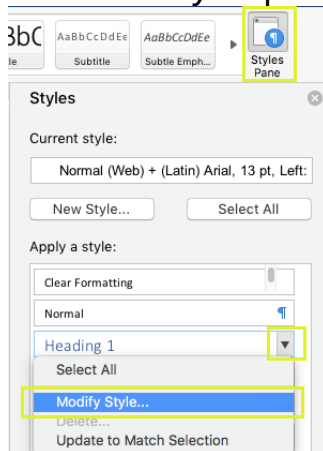
Contrast

Test the style colors to make sure there is proper contrast.

IMPORTANT: To analyze colors, the HEX code is needed. MS Word gives RGB values, and they must be converted.

- Find the RGB value

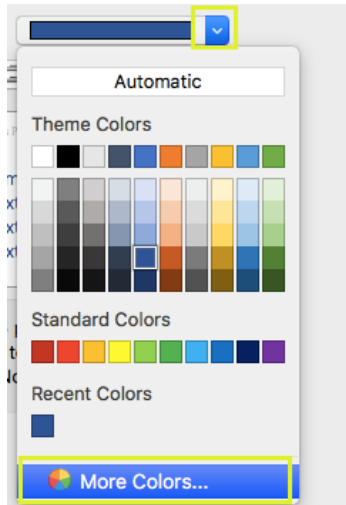
Go to the *Styles* pane to get information for the style



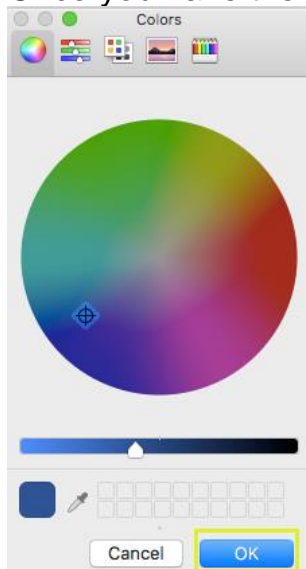
Click the arrow next to the color and *More Colors* button

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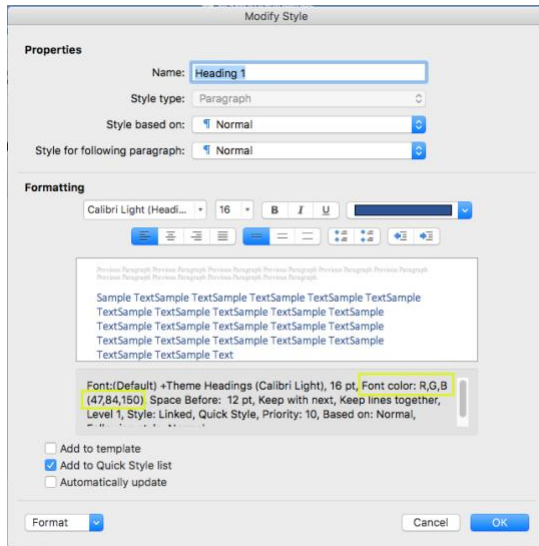
Once you have the color wheel, click *OK*



You can now see the RGB values.

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- Convert the RGB values to HEX

Copy these values and enter them into a RGB to HEX converter, i.e. <https://www.rgbtohex.net/>

Once you get the HEX number, go to <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker> and enter the HEX value.

- Analyze results to see if the color has proper contrast <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Conveying information

Never use color alone to convey information

BAD

Project	Due Date	Completed
Web comparisons report	September 15	X
Webinar materials	September 20	X
Survey questionnaire	September 23	X

GOOD

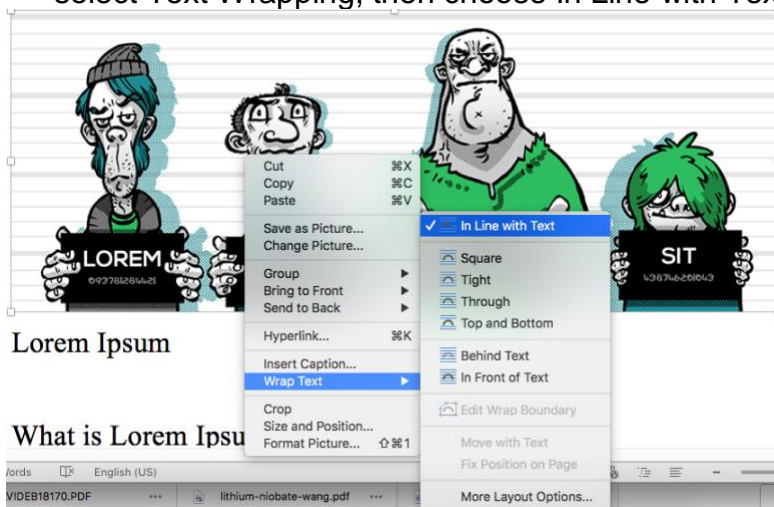
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Project	Due Date	Completed
Web comparisons report	September 15	Y
Webinar materials	September 20	N
Survey questionnaire	September 23	N

Images & Wrapping Text

- Set the wrapping style to “In Line with Text”.
Text that wraps around an image or graphic often times will confuse a screen reader, making it difficult for the user to understand. Right click the image and select Text Wrapping, then choose In Line with Text.

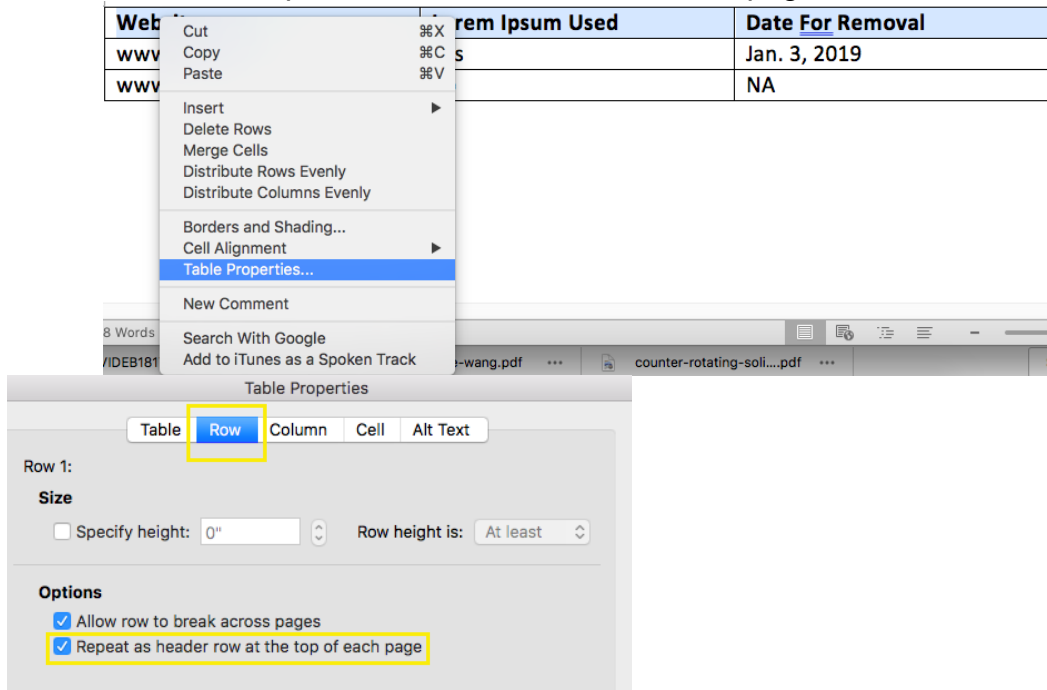


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Table Headers

- After a table has been created and populated with data, a Header Row needs to be identified:
 - Select the first row of the table, Right click. Select Table Properties > Row tab.
 - Ensure the option “Allow row to break across pages” is checked.



Styles and lists

- Use styles, not freely formatted text!
 - Example: instead of bolding a title to indicate a new section, use headers



- Use the list feature to create lists, not your own style

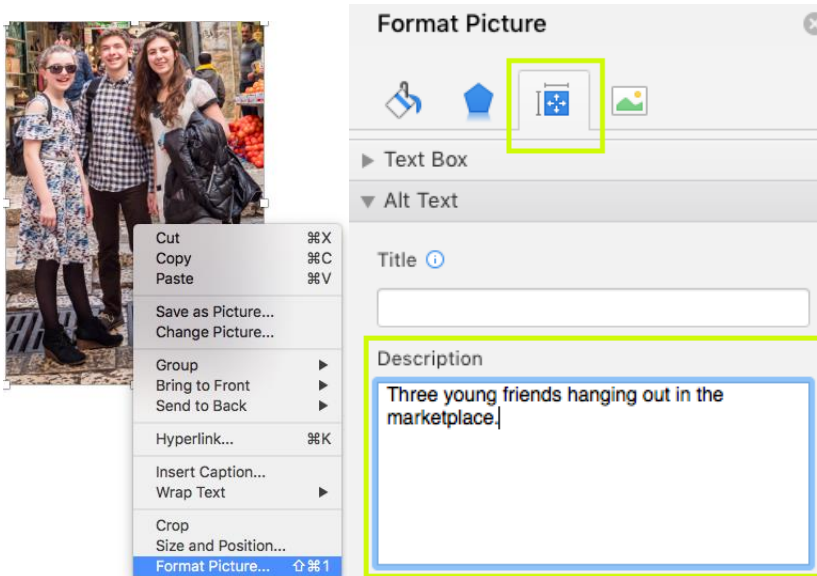


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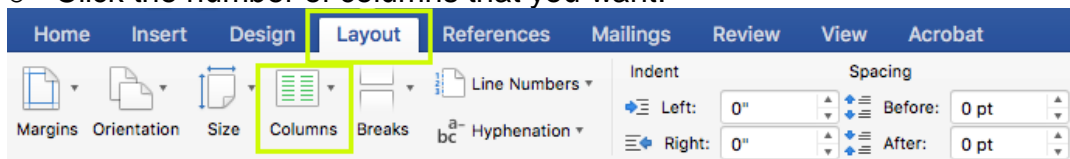
ALT Text

- Create Alt text for images:
 - Right click on image
 - Select Format Picture
 - Select the Layout & Properties tab
 - Enter Alt text into the Description field



Column Layout

- For 2 columns of data: use 2 column feature, NOT spacebar or tab:
 - Select the text you want formatted in columns, or place your cursor where you want columns to begin
 - On the Layout tab, click Columns
 - Click More Columns
 - Click the number of columns that you want.



Add a Table of Contents

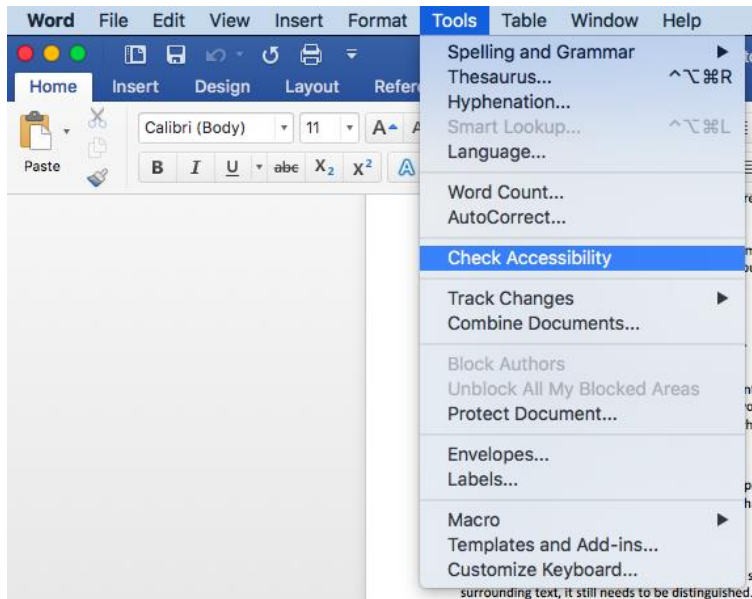
- Table of contents help users navigate to sections of the document and also become bookmarks for PDFs
- Word uses the headings in your document to build an automatic table of contents
 - Click *References* > *Table of Contents* and then choose an Automatic Table of Contents style from the list.

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Accessibility Checker

- Check overall accessibility of document:
 - Under Tools, go to Accessibility and remediate



Converting Word to PDF

- Save As: select PDF for file format
- Select the radio button for accessibility
- IMPORTANT: The file must be exported correctly. If a file is created by printing to PDF, it will not be correctly tagged.

