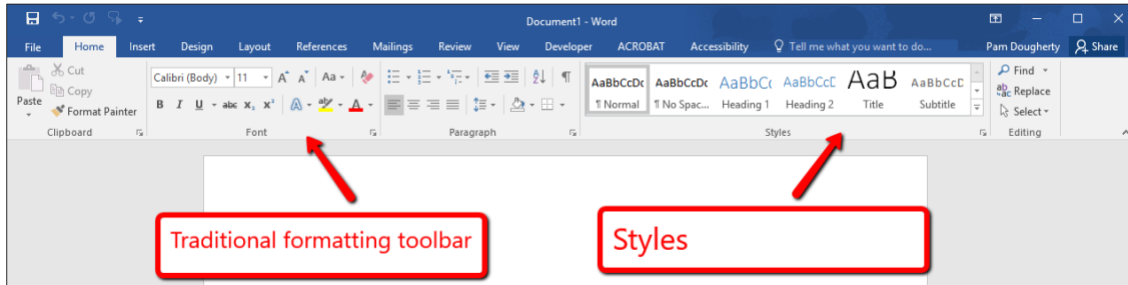


5 Habits for Creating Accessible Word Documents

Creating accessible documents is more a matter of changing habits than learning new technology. Word Styles are easy to use, can save you time, and will benefit your students. Follow the instructions below to develop 5 habits for creating Word documents using Styles (*Image 1*), that will solve 90% of common accessibility issues. Your students will thank you; and you will be part of creating a more inclusive campus community at Cal Poly!

Image 1: Styles



Habit #1: Use Headings from Styles

Students who are blind rely on screen readers to read electronic content aloud. Heading styles provide the structure for the document content. Rule of thumb is to use **Heading 1 for the Title** of the document, **Heading 2** for major sections that follow, and Heading 3 for further subsections. Always apply heading levels sequentially.

- **In Word 2016 for Windows**, click on the **Home** tab to access **Styles**. Click on **expand** icon in lower right corner. Choose styles from list. To see all styles, click on **Options** link at bottom and select **All styles** under “Select styles to show” and click **Ok**. To change a style, click on its arrow from the list and select **Modify**. (*Image 2*)
- **In Word 2016 for Mac**, click on the **Home** tab to access **Styles**. Click on **Styles Pane** icon. Choose from the styles in the list. To see all styles, click on the **List:** pull-down menu and select **All Styles**. To change a style, click on its icon in the list until it becomes an arrow and select **Modify Style**. (*Image 3*)

Image 2: Windows Styles Pane

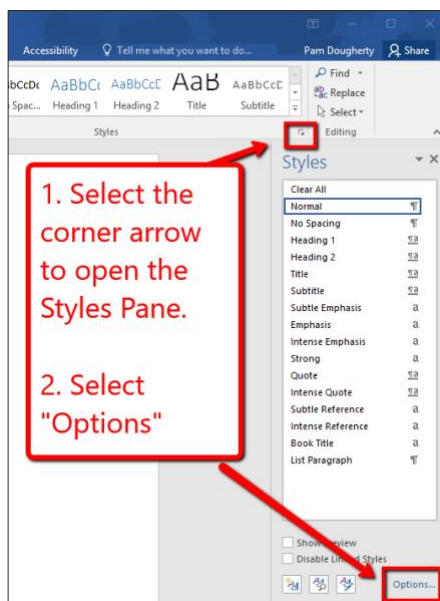
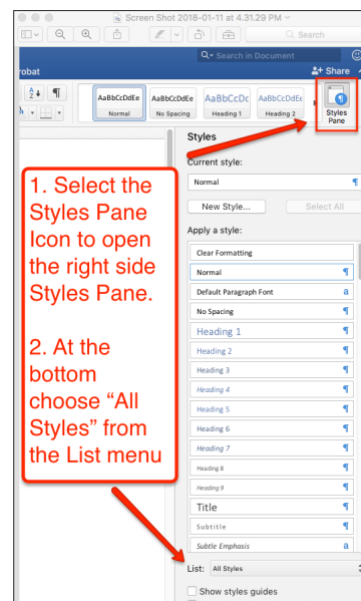


Image 3: Mac Styles Pane



Habit #2: Format your Word document using Styles

Use Styles instead of the formatting options that are available in Word's ribbon bar. Create all these format types with the **Styles menu**. For example, when using bullets (**List Bullet** style) or numbered lists (**List Number** style), create them within the **Styles menu** (be sure to select **All Styles**). For hyperlinks, select **Hyperlink** from the **Style** menu. Use the **Strong** style for bold and the **Emphasis** style for italics. (Image 4 and 5)

Image 4: Styles in Mac

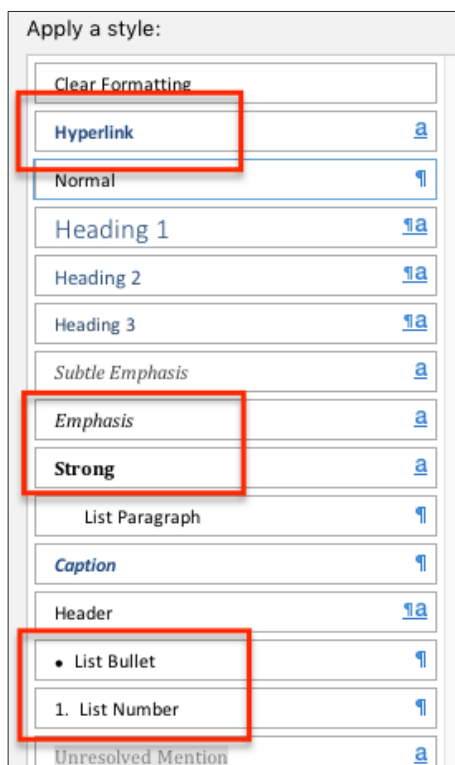


Image 5: Styles in Windows



Habit #3: Use hyperlink names that make sense

Do not label your hyperlink text using the actual URL. Also, avoid labeling hyperlinks as "Click here," which is confusing to the listener when a screen reader reads through the document links. Instead, use just a few descriptive words for your hyperlink text that will make it clear to the listener where the link will take them. For example, if you have a link in your syllabus to the Cal Poly Disability Resource Center, you would create the hyperlink with the text, [Cal Poly Disability Resource Center](https://drc.calpoly.edu/), not <https://drc.calpoly.edu/>.

Habit #4: Assign alt text to images

Image descriptions are read aloud by the screen reader to the listener to provide meaning and context. Image descriptions are known as "alternative text" or "alt text." To add an image description, **right click** on the image and select **Format Picture**. Within the Format Picture Pane, you will see a tab or icon labeled **Layout & Properties**. Click on the **Alt Text** choice and type a description in the **Description** field itself and leave the Title field blank (Image 6). Image descriptions should be brief, a simple phrase or sentence. For example, in Image 7 below, "DNA Replication" is sufficient. If the details of the image are essential for understanding the page content, it's best to place the information directly within the document itself, rather than creating a long description. If your image is merely decorative, you can place "null" text, two double quote marks (" ") in the description field, which the screen reader will not read aloud to the listener.

Image 6: Format picture pane

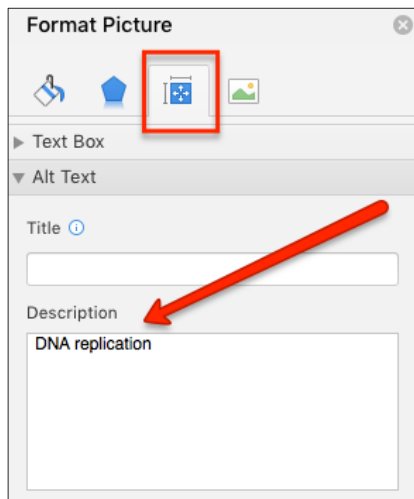
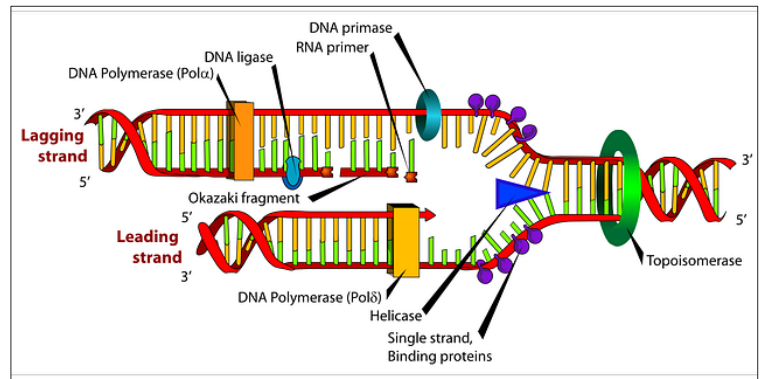


Image 7: DNA Replication



Habit #5: Add header row and alt text for tables

Tables generally make sense to people as a visual presentation since someone reading a document can refer back to the column and row headings to make sense of the data. However, imagine having the data of a table read to you. In such an instance, the header row needs to be identified so that the contents of the table can be read properly. A header row is also necessary when a table spans multiple pages. Tables also require alt text so listeners using screen readers can scan the document to quickly identify table content.

To add a header row, right-click on the Table itself and select **Table Properties**. Next, select the **Row** tab and select the checkbox next to **Repeat as header row at the top of the page**. Make sure the box next to **Allow row to break across pages** is *not* selected (see Image 8 below). While you are still in **Table Properties**, select the **Alt Text** tab to add your table description, such as “Weekly Assignments.” Then select **OK**. (See Table 1 example below).

Image 8: Table Properties Pane

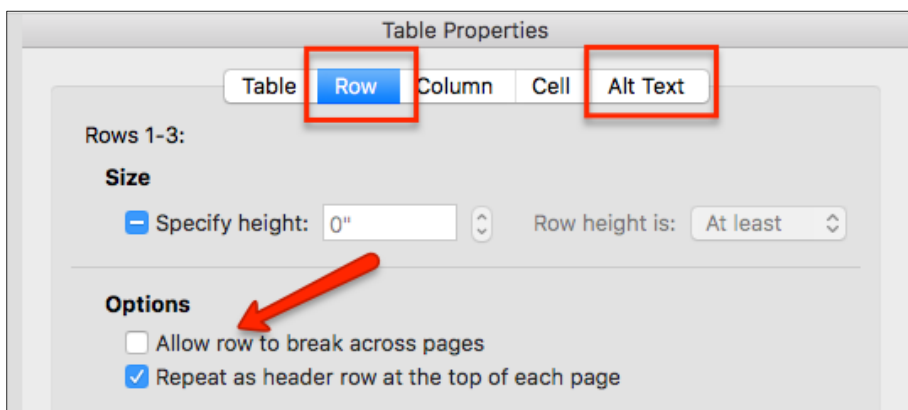


Table 1: Weekly Assignments

Week	Assignment Description	Due Date
Week 1	Syllabus Quiz	Friday, 9/28/18
Week 2	Homework # 1	Friday, 10/5/18
Week 3	Essay paper	Friday, 10/12/18

Final Steps: Check Accessibility and Add Metadata

Before posting your document, **run an accessibility check** to identify and fix common errors:

- **Windows:** Select **File**, then **Info** from the menu, then **Check for Issues** then **Check Accessibility** (Image 9).
- **Mac:** Select the **Review** tab, then **Check Accessibility** (Image 10). A pane will open on the right side displaying any errors, warning, and tips. If there are errors listed, click on these and Word will provide suggestions of how you might fix the errors in your document.

Image 9: Check Accessibility on Windows

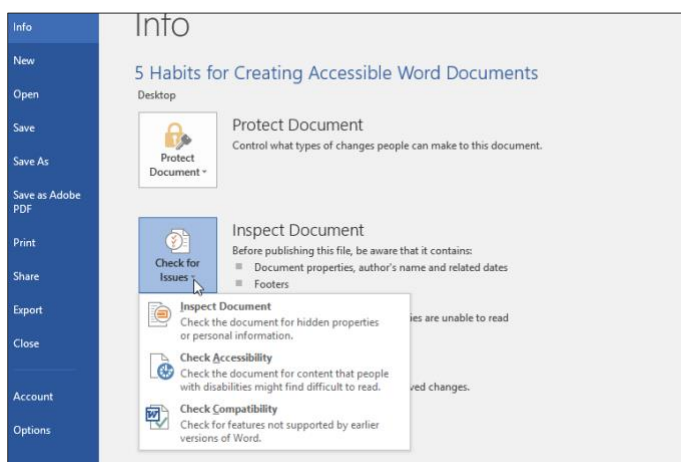
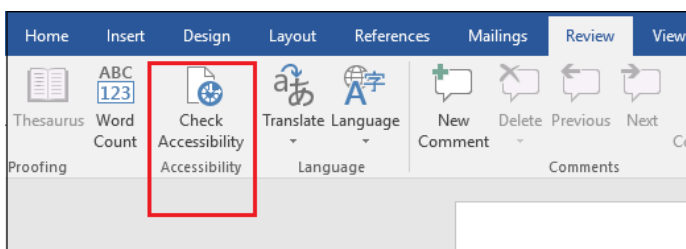


Image 10: Mac Check Accessibility



Finally, **add document properties** then **save as** Word Document (PC) or docx (Mac). Document properties provide searchable metadata such as title, author, and key words. After saving, make sure you **convert to Adobe PDF** before posting or sharing: Word is best for creating accessible documents; PDF is best for consistent display and viewing across all devices and browsers.

- **Mac:** To add document properties, select **File**, then **Properties**, then **Summary** to add metadata
- **PC:** Select **File**, then **Info** tab, then **Properties** on the right side to add metadata

That's all there is to it! Incorporate these five habits into your Word document creation process and you can be confident that your documents are reasonably accessible. Please find additional resources below.

Resources

1. [CTLT Accessibility Resources](#)
2. [Cal Poly Disability Resource Center](#)
3. [SensusAccess](#) (document converter)
4. [WebAIM: Microsoft Word](#) (screenshot tutorials)
5. [Accessible Electronic Documents](#) (video tutorials)
6. [Microsoft Office Accessible Templates](#)
7. Microsoft Accessibility Tools