

Accessibility Guidelines for Word Documents

We can all contribute to making text documents more accessible. The following guidelines provide practical recommendations for accessible document design.

1) Fonts and Paragraphs

Use a consistent **sans-serif font** throughout your document. We recommend font families such as **Arial** or **Helvetica** in a **minimum size of 12 pt**.

Avoid unnecessary spaces at the end of paragraphs.

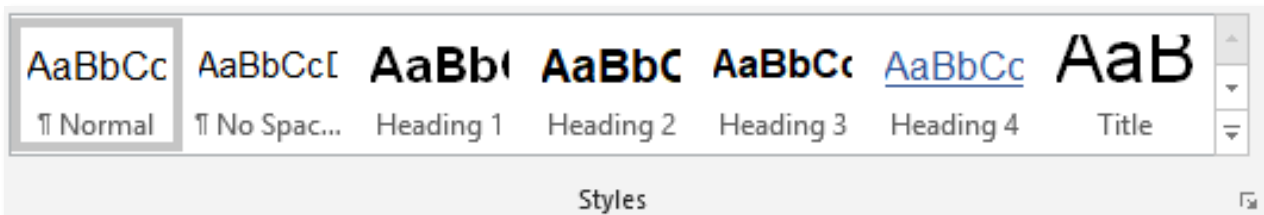


Display **paragraph marks** and use paragraph breaks only for actual paragraph endings.

2) Styles

A clear document structure is essential for accessibility. Therefore, **format your headings consistently throughout the document**. First-level headings should always use the same formatting and should be visually distinct from second- and third-level headings.

You can use Word's built-in heading styles for this purpose.



Please check the formatting of all parts of the document:

- Title / Subtitle
- Abstract
- Main text: Heading 1 / Heading 2 / Heading 3
- References / Bibliography

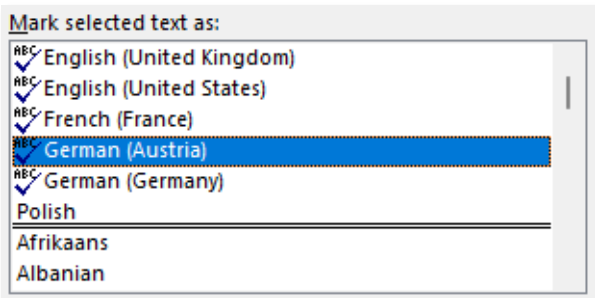
3) Quotations and Block Quotes

Please check that all **direct quotations** in the text are enclosed in **quotation marks**. Quotations extending over more than three lines should be formatted using the **“Quote”** style template.

4) Words in Other Languages

To begin with, select the entire text and **set the primary language**, such as “English”. To ensure that screen readers can read your text aloud correctly, words and terms in other languages must be recognised and tagged accordingly.

For example, if the text refers to a “Wiener Würstelstand”, the term should be marked as German. In this case, select “German (Austria)”. Foreign words that are widely used in English do not usually need to be marked separately (e.g. kindergarten, zeitgeist, wanderlust, pizza, pasta, café, déjà vu, avant-garde, sushi, karaoke, tsunami, emoji, etc.).



If you are unsure whether a word should be marked as a different language, consult a current English dictionary such as the Oxford English Dictionary or the Cambridge Dictionary. If the word is listed there as part of standard English usage, it can remain marked as English.

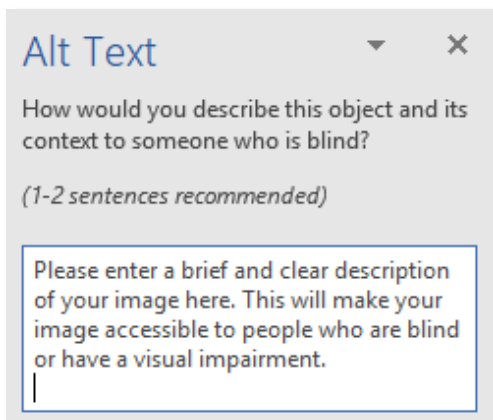
The language setting should also be adjusted for **authors' names** where necessary. Do not forget the **titles of publications** in other languages or the **names of authors in the bibliography**

5) Images

Alternative text descriptions can help ensure that images and graphics are accessible to people who are blind or have a visual impairment.

As the author, you are best placed to understand the purpose and relevant content of the image. Please therefore provide a brief image description in one or two sentences.

To do this, right-click on the image and select “**Edit Alt Text**” from the drop-down menu (note: in older versions of Microsoft Word, this option can be found under “Format Picture”).



If, for example, data presented in charts is already described in detail in the text, it is sufficient to indicate that the information is explained in the main text.

6) Tables

Please ensure that **tables are designed as simply and logically as possible** and **avoid using tables purely for layout purposes**.

7) Table and Image Captions

Use Word's built-in **caption function** for tables and images to ensure that captions are clearly identifiable and properly structured.

8) Lists and Bullet Points

Use Word's built-in **list tools** for bullet points and numbered lists.



9) Footnotes

Use Word's built-in "**Insert Footnote**" function to create footnotes. To do this, select the "References" tab and choose "Insert Footnote".



10) Links

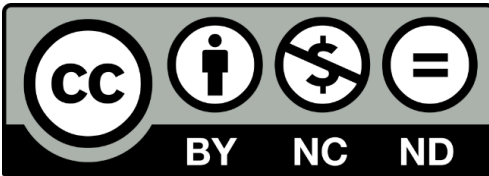
Please ensure that **all links are working correctly**. Test and correct them if necessary.

Tip: You can check your Word document for accessibility using Word's built-in **accessibility checker**. To do this, select the "Accessibility" or "Review" tab and start the accessibility check.



You can also save the document as a PDF to improve compatibility with screen readers. In the PDF save options, select the checkboxes "**Document structure tags for accessibility**" and "**PDF/A compliant**".

Thank you for helping make documents more accessible!



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