# Accessible Microsoft Word Documents (Windows)

## Heading Styles

**Create meaningful heading structure through use of the styles in Word**. This allows screen readers to navigate a document and increase accessibility for everyone.

1. Start a new line or select existing text to set as a heading.
2. Open the **Home tab** and choose the appropriate heading in the **Styles** panel.
   a. Use **only one Heading 1**.
3. Headings 1, 2, or 3 can also be assigned using **Ctrl + Alt + 1, 2, or 3**, respectively.



## Alternative Text

**Image descriptions can be added as alternative text in Word**. Alt text is read by screen reader in a Word file and should remain intact when exporting to HTML or PDF.

1. Right-click on image and select **View Alt Text…** An Alt Text pane will appear.
2. Enter appropriate alt text in the textbox.
3. Do not use generated descriptions:
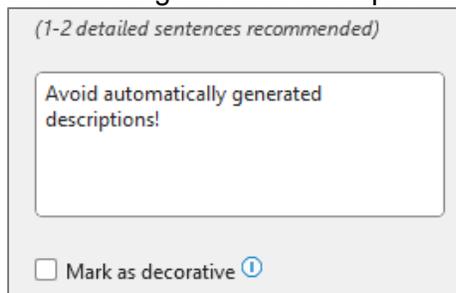


## Meaningful Links

**Create unique link text instead of pasting a full URL or using generic links (ex., "Learn more," "Link") in the document**. Appropriate link text makes the link more understandable, especially when read by screen reader.
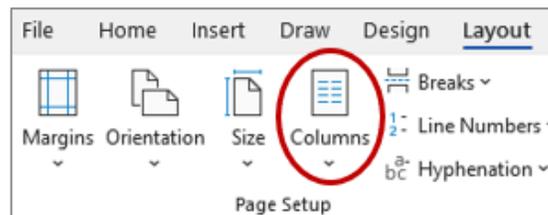
1. Right-click the existing URL link and select **Edit hyperlink** or tap **Ctrl + K**.
2. Change the text in the **Text to Display** field to a more meaningful description.
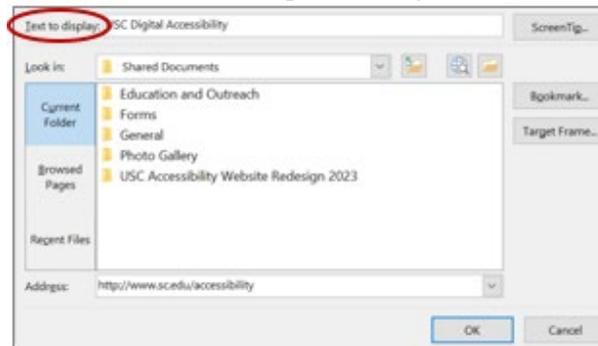


## Columns

**Always use true columns**. **Don't create columns using the Tab key**.
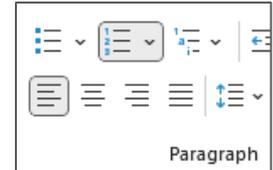
1. Select the **Layout** tab on the ribbon.
2. Select **Columns** in the Page Setup group.
3. Choose the number of columns.



## Lists

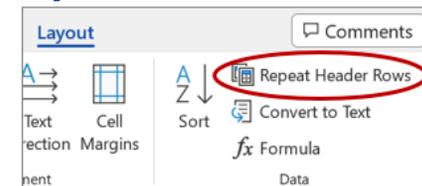**Use true numbered and bulleted lists**.

1. Choose the **Numbered List** or **Bulleted List** option from the Paragraph group from **Home** tab.



## Data Tables

**Accessible tables are used to display data**.

1. Choose **Insert tab > Table > Insert Table**.
2. Add table headers by **Header Row Table Design tab > Table Style Options**, then choose the **Repeat Header Rows** by **Layout tab > Data**.
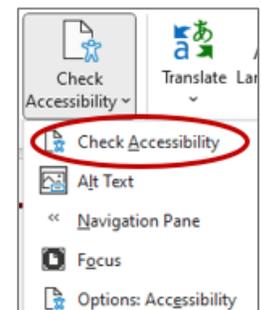


## Accessibility Checker

Don't forget to **check accessibility for issues**. The checker provides errors, warnings, & tips.

1. Select **Review tab > Check Accessibility > Check Accessibility** option.





*Learn more at USC's Digital Accessibility Website, sc.edu/accessibility*