# Authoring Accessible Word Files

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| **Headings** | Use Styles to create headings. |
| | Structure content hierarchically: Heading 1 (title), Heading 2 (sections), Heading 3 (subsections), and so on. |
| **Images** | Add concise, meaningful alt text to images and graphics. |
| | Mark non-essential visuals as decorative. |
| | Review and edit any AI-generated alt text. |
| | Provide underlying data for charts and graphs. |
| | Include long descriptions for complex images when needed. |
| **Links** | Write clear, descriptive link text. |
| **Lists** | Use built-in list tools (Home ribbon or Styles) to create structured lists. |
| **Color contrast** | Use high-contrast colors for text (verify contrast of text over images or graphics). |
| **Color reliance** | Use text, labels, or patterns—not color alone—to convey meaning. |
| **Tables** | Use tables only for data. |
| | Keep tables simple; convert complex tables to multiple simple tables. |
| | Define column or row headers. |
| **Reading Order** | Set images and graphics to Inline with Text. |
| | If an image is wrapped, place the anchor icon in the margin next to the related paragraph to manage the image's location in the reading order. |
| | Use columns instead of text boxes to maintain reading order. |
| **Document Title** | Add a concise, descriptive document title. |
| **Headers/Footers** | Place essential content in the main body of the document so assistive technology can access it. |
| **TOC** | Use Word's built-in Table of Contents tool (References tab). |
| **Check Accessibility** | Run *Check Accessibility* (Review tab) and fix all issues. |
| **Create PDF** | *Save As* or *Save a copy* using *Best for electronic distribution and accessibility*. |

Complete guide on Digital Accessibility for Word.