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HOW TO MAKE ACCESSIBLE WORD DOCUMENTS

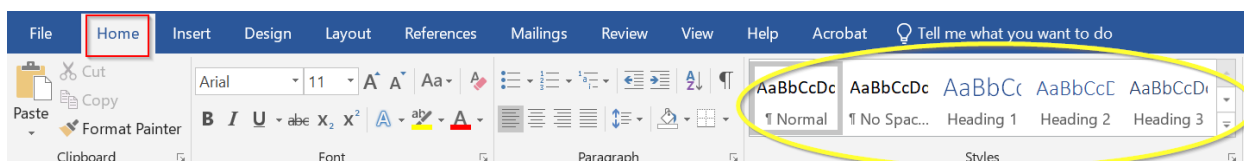
Microsoft Word tends to be the easiest platform for screen reader technology to navigate through. By using the below steps, you can make any of your Word documents accessible for students who use screen reading technology.

PROVIDING HEADINGS FOR YOUR DOCUMENT IS KEY

Headers are the structural markup to provide hierarchy of information within a document and allows screen reader users to skim a document efficiently. Think of headers like a table of contents for your document.

HOW TO ADD HEADERS TO YOUR DOCUMENT

Headers can be found under the **Home Tab**→**Styles**. Headings are added by either clicking on the heading you want before you start typing that line, or by highlighting the section heading and then clicking on the respective header style.



AaB

Title

Important note: Screen readers CANNOT read the Title Heading listing in the styles list.



So, instead use Heading 1 for the title of your document.

AaBbCc

Heading 1

Then use Heading 2 for the start of the document sections.

AaBbCcC

Heading 2

If there is an additional subsections use Heading 3

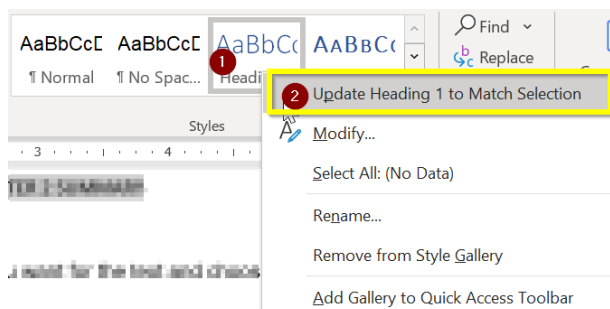
AaBbCcD

Heading 3

HOW TO HAVE THE HEADERS MATCH YOUR CURRENT DOCUMENT THEME

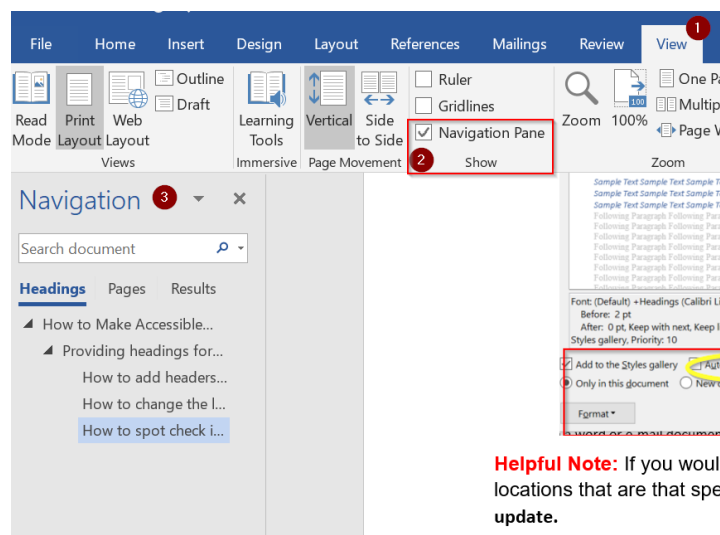
:

1. In the document, select the section of text that you want the header to match- Such as this example title- **CLARKSON CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY**.
2. Right click on the header level you want for the text and choose Update Header To Match section



HOW TO SPOT CHECK IF YOUR HEADING LEVELS ARE SET UP IN A LOGICAL ORDER

Once you have added headers to your document, you can verify that they are laid out the way you would like them by clicking on the **View Tab** and clicking on **Navigation Pane**. This will show you how your document is currently laid out based off the header levels you gave to different parts of your document.



Helpful Note: If you would like to update the locations that are that specific, you can click on the 'Update' button.

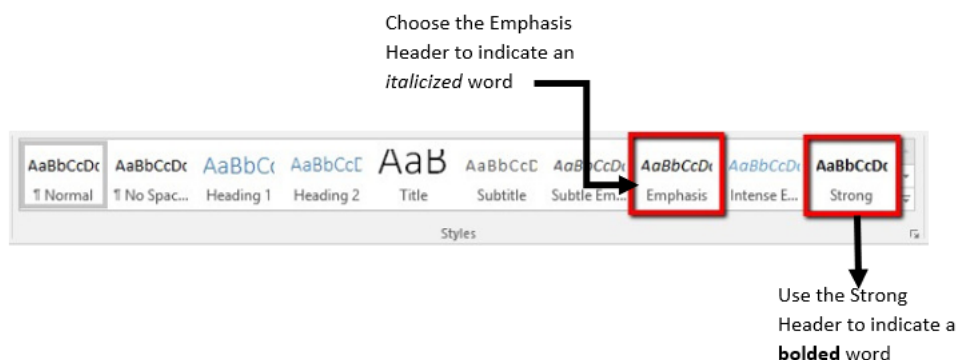
HOW TO BOLD AND ITALICIZE IN A DOCUMENT SO IT IS SCREEN READER FRIENDLY



Screen reader technology cannot identify if a word is bolded or italicized.



However, there is a simple trick that you can use to bold or italicize a word, while still making it accessible to a screen reader. Highlight the word you want to bold or italicize. Then in the **Styles** toolbar, choose the corresponding heading setting:



AVOID UNDERLINING

Underlined text indicates a hyperlink to assistive technologies like a screen reader. Reserve underlining only for navigation hyperlinks.

FONT TYPE MATTERS FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE LIMITED VISION

Not all font types are treated equally. In fact, sans serif font styles are recommended because they are **easier for individuals with low or limited vision to read**.



Font types that are recommended include **Arial, Calibri, Verdana, and Tahoma**.

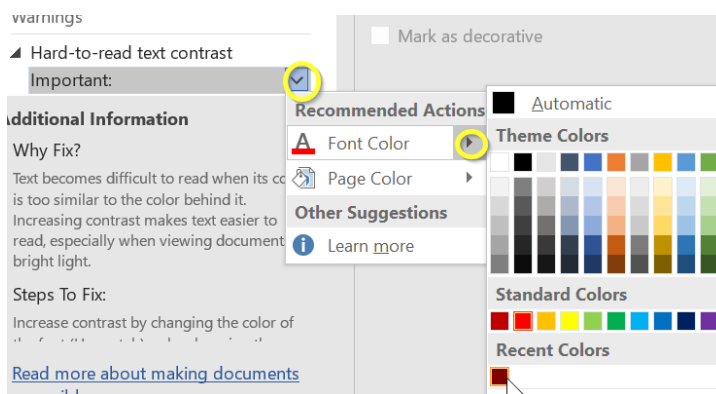


Font types that are not recommended include Times New Roman, Georgia, and Bookman Old Style.

COLOR CONTRAST IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE LIMITED VISION

Sufficient contrast should be kept in mind during document creation to help make sure the information is viewable for individuals who have limited vision. A [Color Contrast Analyzer](#) can be used to help determine accessibility. With that said, fixing it using the accessibility checker would likely be an easier option (see Helpful tip on next page).

- Make sure that the contrast between foreground and background colors is at least 4.5:1. (Black text on a white background has a very strong ratio at 21:1)
- **Helpful tip:** If you are not sure if a text/background has challenging color contrast, run the accessibility checker on your document. If color contrast is an issue you will see a warning that says “hard to read contrast” and can easily fix it within the checker. (The word or phrase that has challenging contrast will show in the checker for this example it is the word “important.”)
- If the new color you choose meets contrast requirements the error will disappear.



- Color contrast **cannot** really be fixed once it is converted to a PDF Format. So make sure to make changes before converting it to PDF.



ADDING HYPERLINKS IN A WORD DOCUMENT

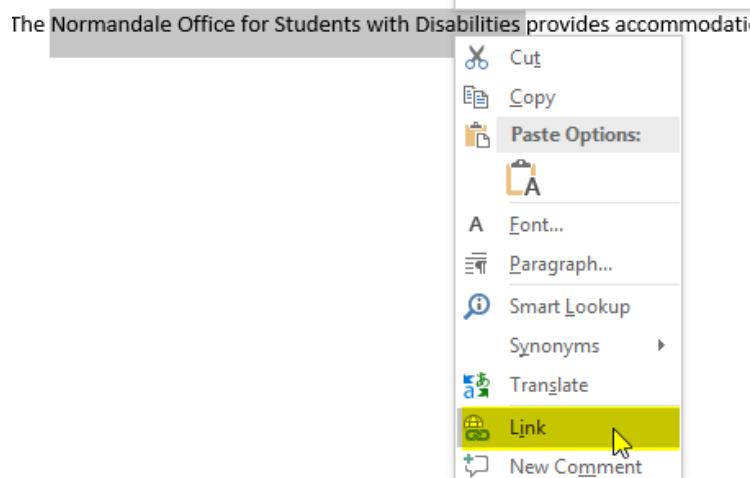
In order to make a web address accessible to a screen reader, do not simply copy and paste a web address into a document. (Doing so will result in the technology to read each letter of the hyperlink individually.)

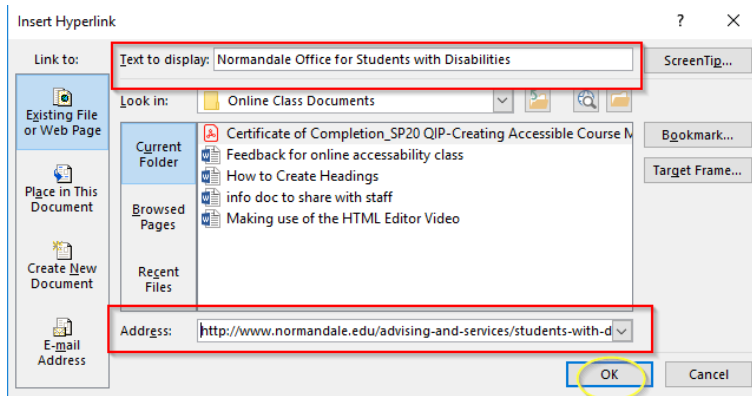


Instead, rename the hyperlink, to help indicate where the hyperlink will redirect the person to when once they click on it. **Pro Tip: Do not simply say “Click Here.”** Remember to make sure the name of the hyperlink will help the student know where the hyperlink will direct them to.

HOW TO ADD A HYPERLINK IN A WORD DOCUMENT (OR E-MAIL)

Highlight the part of the sentence that you want to turn into a hyperlink, **right-click**, and choose the **Link** option:





Once the hyperlink is in place, when you hover over it with your mouse you will see this message:

http://www.normandale.edu/
advising-and-services/
students-with-disabilities
Ctrl+Click to follow link

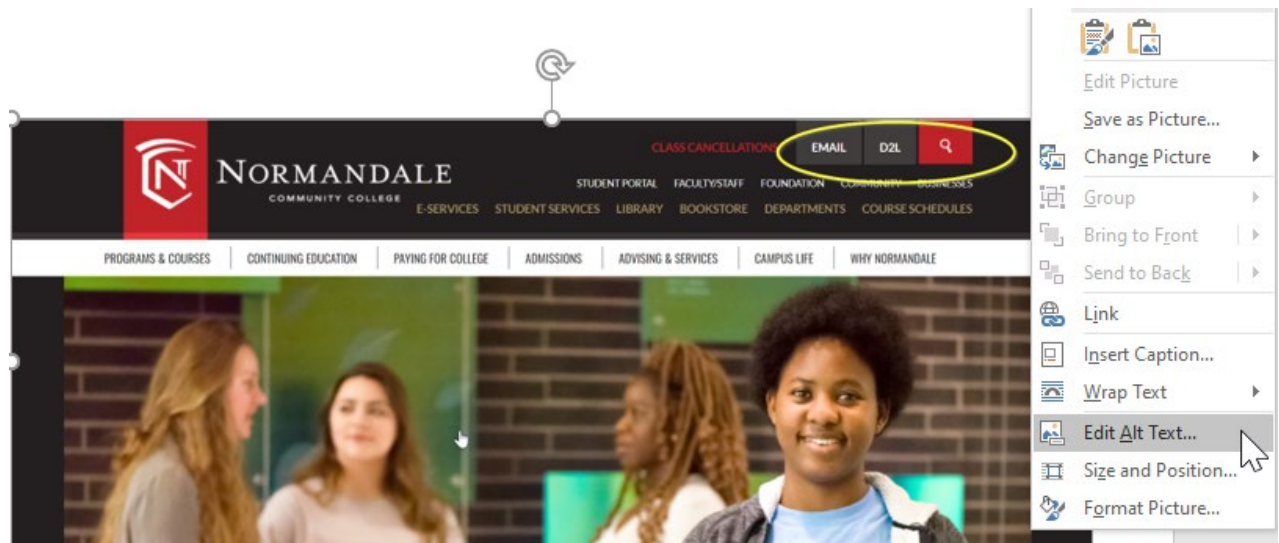
The [Normandale Office for Students with Disabilities](http://www.normandale.edu/advising-and-services/students-with-disabilities) provides accommoda-

ADDING ALTERNATIVE TEXT TO PICTURES

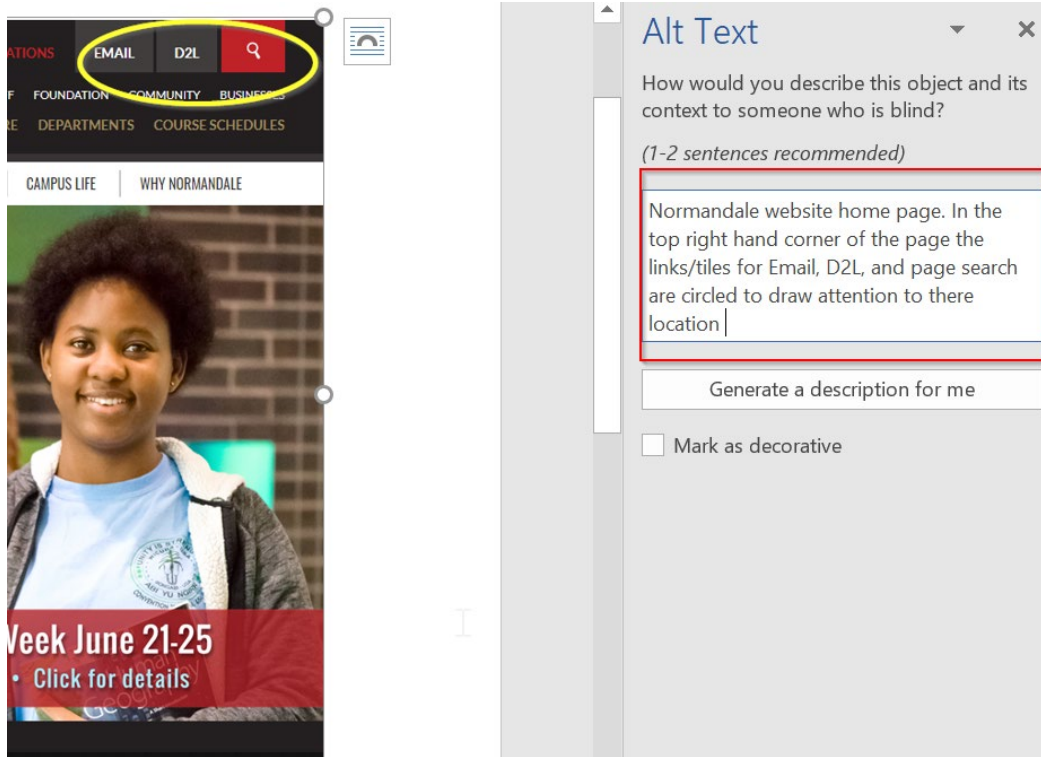
Alternative text (commonly referred to as “alt text”) can be read by screen readers, and helps people who are blind or who have low vision understand what images and other objects are in a document. Without alt text an image on a page will simply read as “image.”

HOW TO ADD ALT TEXT TO A PICTURE

1. **Right-click on the image** that you would like to add alt text for and click on **Edit Alt Text**

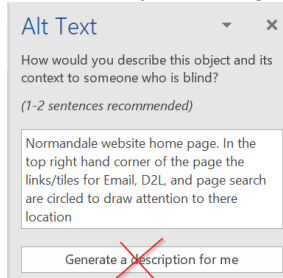


2. Type in an image description. You want to keep your description as short and concise as possible. The image description should have the essential information that you want a student to be aware of, such as the example below:

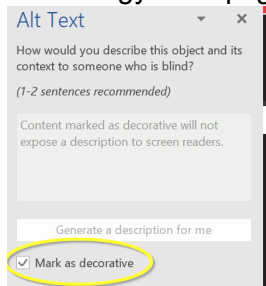


A FEW PRO TIPS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN MAKING ALT TEXT

1. **NEVER** use the generate a description box to come up with an alt text for you. The descriptions that Word comes up with automatically are in no way going to accurately represent your image.



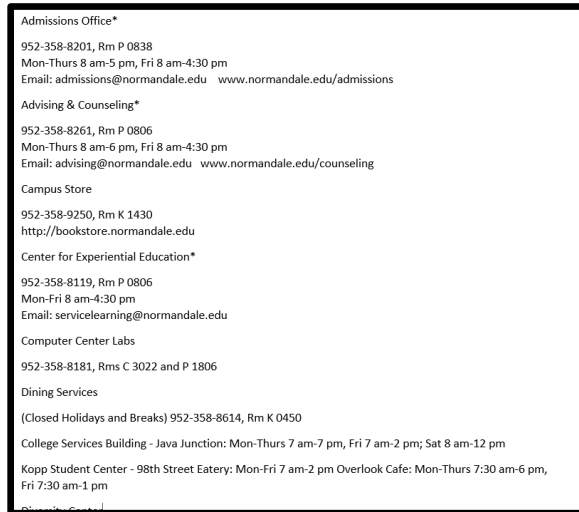
2. If you have an **image that is simply decorative and does not have any essential information within it, then mark it as decorative**. This will cause the screen reader technology to skip/ignore the image when navigating though the document.



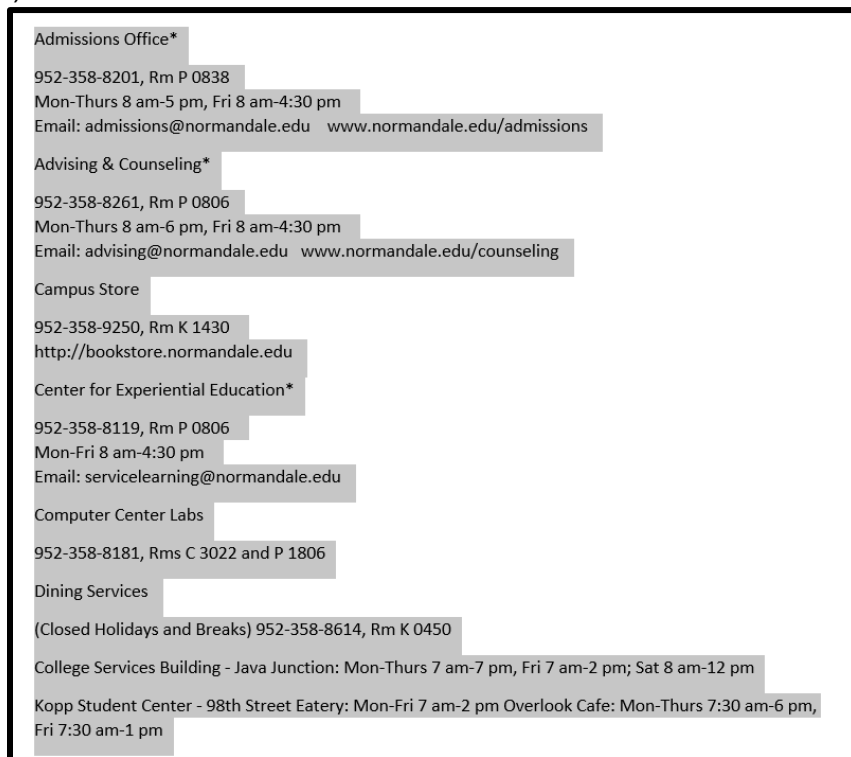
USING COLUMNS WHEN LAYING OUT YOUR PAGE

There may be times that you want to show text side-by-side. If that is the case, use the columns option under the layout tab to insure proper reading order. (**Do not** use tabs or spaces to attempt to format your information into columns because it will not read correctly with the screen reading technology.)

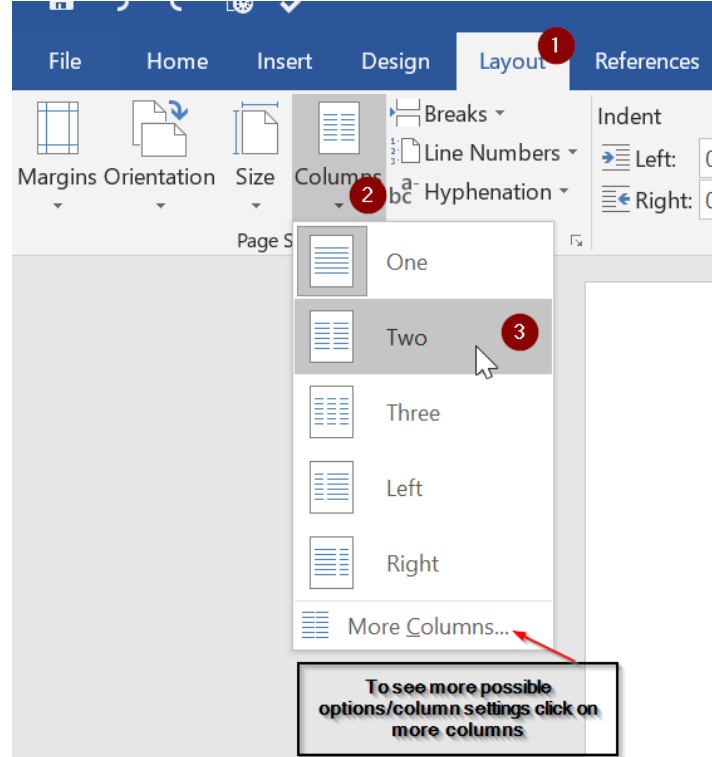
Example: Let's pretend you want to put the following information into two columns.



1. Select the information you want to switch into columns from the above example (**Tip:** if you want to do it for the whole document, no need to select specific information--move on to step 2):



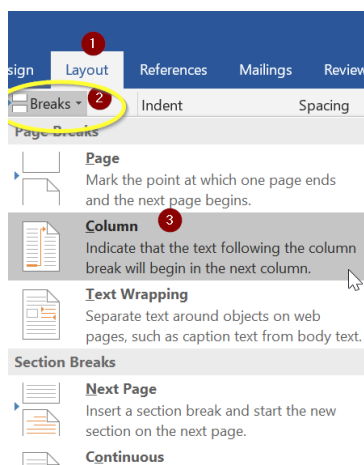
2. Go to the **Layout** Tab and choose **Columns** and choose the number of columns that you want (for more options click on More Columns)



3. This will automatically change the format to a two-column format:

Admissions Office*	952-358-8119, Rm P 0806
952-358-8201, Rm P 0838	Mon-Fri 8 am-4:30 pm
Mon-Thurs 8 am-5 pm, Fri 8 am-4:30 pm	Email: servicelearning@normandale.edu
Email: admissions@normandale.edu	Computer Center Labs
www.normandale.edu/admissions	952-358-8181, Rms C 3022 and P 1806
Advising & Counseling*	Dining Services
952-358-8261, Rm P 0806	(Closed Holidays and Breaks) 952-358-8614, Rm K 0450
Mon-Thurs 8 am-6 pm, Fri 8 am-4:30 pm	College Services Building - Java Junction: Mon-Thurs 7 am-7 pm, Fri 7 am-2 pm; Sat 8 am-12 pm
Email: advising@normandale.edu	Kopp Student Center - 98th Street Eatery: Mon-Fri 7 am-2 pm Overlook Cafe: Mon-Thurs 7:30 am-6 pm, Fri 7:30 am-1 pm
www.normandale.edu/counseling	
Campus Store	
952-358-9250, Rm K 1430	
http://bookstore.normandale.edu	
Center for Experiential Education*	

Pro Tip: As you will notice in this example, “Center for Experiential Education” is at the bottom of the first column, but we want it at the top of the second column. To make this change, put your cursor in *front* of the word “Center.” Then in the Layout Tab click Breaks and then click on Columns.



This action will move our desired text to the next column

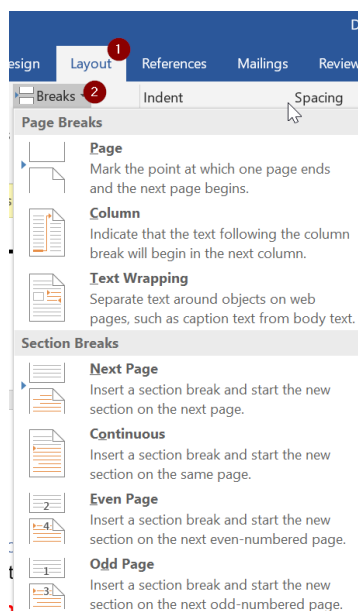
Admissions Office*	Center for Experiential Education*
952-358-8201, Rm P 0838	952-358-8119, Rm P 0806
Mon-Thurs 8 am-5 pm, Fri 8 am-4:30 pm	Mon-Fri 8 am-4:30 pm
Email: admissions@normandale.edu	Email: servicelearning@normandale.edu
www.normandale.edu/admissions	Computer Center Labs
Advising & Counseling*	952-358-8181, Rms C 3022 and P 1806
952-358-8261, Rm P 0806	Dining Services
Mon-Thurs 8 am-6 pm, Fri 8 am-4:30 pm	(Closed Holidays and Breaks) 952-358-8614, Rm K 0450
Email: advising@normandale.edu	College Services Building - Java Junction: Mon-Thurs 7 am-7 pm, Fri 7 am-2 pm; Sat 8 am-12 pm
www.normandale.edu/counseling	Kopp Student Center - 98th Street Eatery: Mon-Fri 7 am-2 pm Overlook Cafe: Mon-Thurs 7:30 am-6 pm, Fri 7:30 am-1 pm
Campus Store	
952-358-9250, Rm K 1430	
http://bookstore.normandale.edu	

HOW YOU PROVIDE SPACING IN A DOCUMENT IS IMPORTANT

When it comes to screen reading technology, not all spacing is treated equally.

AVOID HITTING ENTER TO ADD BLANK SPACES TO YOUR DOCUMENT

Important: You want to avoid hitting the enter key a bunch of times to give spaces between sections, because for every empty line space the screen reading technology is going to read it as “blank.” Instead use page breaks to start on a new page or start a new section. This is found under the **Layout** Tab and then **Breaks** (see picture that follows).



AN EASY WAY TO ADD SPACING

One of the easiest ways to add spacing or new lines to a document is to **hold down the SHIFT key while you hit the Enter key**. This is known as a soft return. It will allow you to add new lines to a document, while also avoiding adding in “blank spaces” that would cause an accessibility error.

HOW TO MAKE ACCESSIBLE LISTS IN WORD

Lists can help provide structure to a document and makes the reading more efficient.



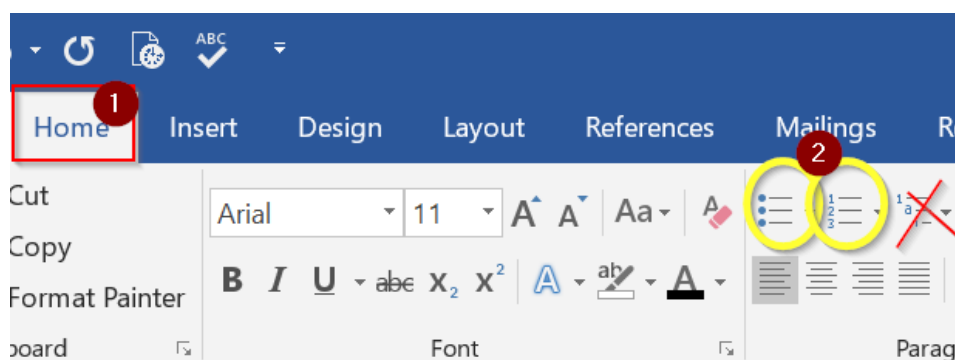
Don't:

Use dashes, asterisks, etcetera, to make lists. Do not use the multilevel list option built into Word because there are accessibility issues currently with that feature.

Do:

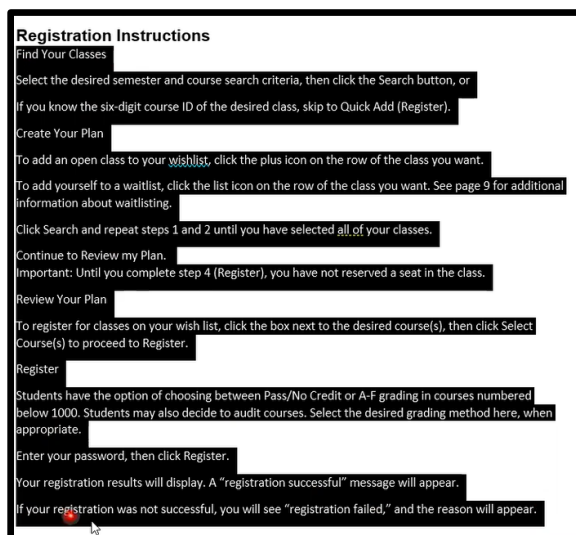


Use the bullets feature or numbering feature under the **Home** tab and **Paragraph** setting to create lists:

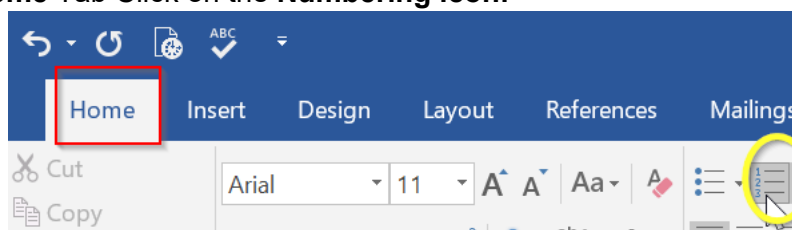


HOW TO MAKE AN ACCESSIBLE MULTILEVEL LIST

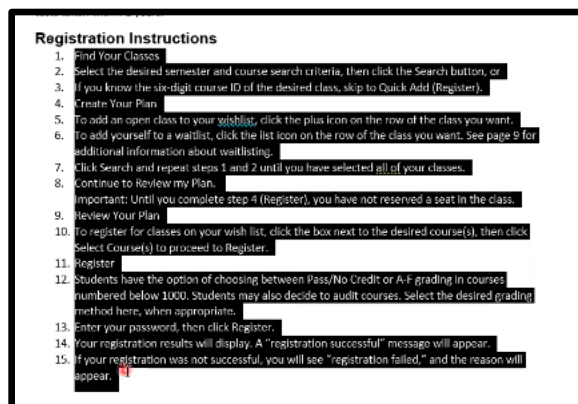
1. Highlight the complete part that you want to make a multilevel list:



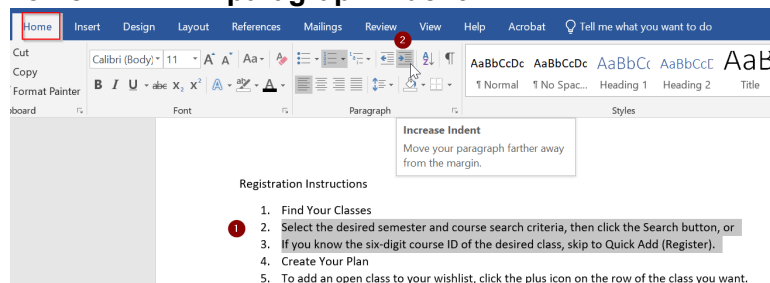
2. Under the **Home** Tab Click on the **Numbering** icon:



3. This will temporarily number each line:



4. Next, select the part that you would like to indent (in this example, lines number 2 and 3) and under the **Home** tab select **paragraph indent**:



5. This will cause the selected lines to get indented while also upholding the integrity of the list for screen reader technology. **Pro Tip:** Hitting the **Tab Key** is a shortcut way to also properly indent the selected info.

1. Find Your Classes
 - a. Select the desired semester and course search criteria, then click the Search button, or
 - b. If you know the six-digit course ID of the desired class, skip to Quick Add (Register).
2. Create Your Plan
3. To add an open class to your wishlist, click the plus icon on the row of the class you want.
4. To add yourself to a waitlist, click the list icon on the row of the class you want. See page 9 for

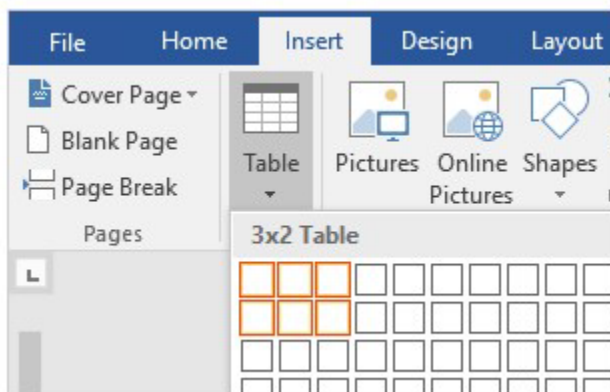
Pro Tip: What if there is an area that I want on a new line, but I do not want it listed as a new number of sub indent? First, *place your curser in front of the word you want to put on a new line*. Then *hold down the shift key as you hit enter*. This should result in a new line while holding the integrity of the list.

USING TABLES IN WORD

You only want to use tables for tabular data. **Do not use tables to set up the overall layout of the page.** Why? You may have materials in an order in your table that is obvious to a sighted reader, but is not a screen reader. Instead, if you are trying to accomplish page layout, use the column format option that was discussed earlier in this handout.

ADDING A TABLE IN WORD

1. Click the **Insert** Tab.
2. Click the Insert **Table** icon.
3. Select the number of rows & columns desired by moving your cursor down & right.



Helpful Note: You do not need to add alt text to a table. Just make sure all your rows and column have either a title or data in it. You also **do not** want to leave any data cells blank.



EXAMPLE OF ACCESSIBLE TABLE VS A NOT ACCESSIBLE TABLE

Accessible

Table 1. Grading rubric for writing assignments. Lists categories, evaluation criteria, and point values for each criterion.

Possible grade	Length	Topic	Argument	Mechanics	Citations
A	The paper meets the page length requirement and is formatted correctly. 10 points	Topic fits the scope of the project, makes a clear argument. 20 points	Project includes in-depth discussion and elaboration in all sections. 20 points	No spelling and/or grammar mistakes. 5 points	Cites all information from out of class discussion sources. APA citation style is used in both text and bibliography. 10 points
B	The paper meets the length requirement but has inconsistent citation formatting. 8.5 points	The paper is focused but does not make a clear argument. 17 points	Project includes in-depth discussion and elaboration in most sections. 17 points	Minimal spelling and/or grammar mistakes. 4.25 points	Cites most information obtained from other sources. 8.5 points
C	The paper is up to 1 page too short or too long or is incorrectly formatted. 7.5 points	Topic is either too broad or too narrow. 15 points	Project has omissions of content or content runs-on excessively. Paper relies heavily on quotations for content. 15 points	Several spelling and grammar mistakes. 3.75 points	Cites some information from other sources. Citation style is either inconsistent or incorrect. 7.5 points
D	The paper is more than 1 page longer or shorter than assigned. 6.5 points	Paper does not stay on topic. 13 points	Project has cursory discussion in all the sections of the paper or brief discussions in only a few sections. 13 points	Many spelling and grammar mistakes that make the paper hard to understand. 3.25 points	Does not cite sources. 6.5 points



Not accessible

The below table contains the exact same core content as the previous example of a well-made table, but the following changes make it inaccessible:

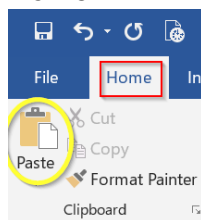
- This table does not include a caption that informs readers about the what this content is.
- This table is also missing the row and column headings that helped readers identify what each cell in the table means.
- The last column is a single merged cell that identifies the criteria that needs to be met to receive a certain letter grade. While this column certainly contains helpful information, it would be very confusing to a screen reader user because all of the information is contained in one large cell.

(Tables should not contain merged cells as they are difficult to navigate with screen readers.)

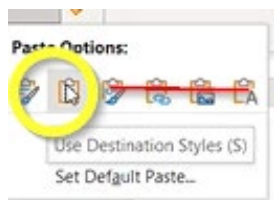
10 points The paper meets the page length requirement and is formatted correctly.	20 points Topic fits the scope of the project, makes a clear argument.	20 points Project includes in-depth discussion and elaboration in all sections.	5 points No spelling and/or grammar mistakes.	10 points Cites all information from out of class discussion sources. APA citation style is used in both text and bibliography.	= A paper
8.5 points The paper meets the length requirement but has inconsistent citation formatting.	17 points The paper is focused but does not make a clear argument.	17 points Project includes in-depth discussion and elaboration in most sections.	4.25 points Minimal spelling and/or grammar mistakes.	8.5 points Cites most information obtained from other sources.	
7.5 points The paper is up to 1 page too short or too long or is incorrectly formatted.	15 points Topic is either too broad or too narrow.	15 points Project has omissions of content or content runs-on excessively. Paper relies heavily on quotations for content.	3.75 points Several spelling and grammar mistakes.	7.5 points Cites some information from other sources. Citation style is either inconsistent or incorrect.	
6.5 points The paper is more than 1 page longer or shorter than assigned.	13 points Paper does not stay on topic.	13 points Project has cursory discussion in all the sections of the paper or brief discussions in only a few sections.	3.25 points Many spelling and grammar mistakes that make the paper hard to understand.	6.5 points Does not cite sources.	

HOW TO INSERT A DATA TABLE FROM EXCEL INTO WORD

1. In Excel, find the information you want and copy the cells that you want to paste over into Word.
2. On the **Home** Tab choose **Paste**.



3. Choose either **Use Destination Styles** or **Use Destination Theme** only (all other options will cause accessibility challenges)



RUNNING THE ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER

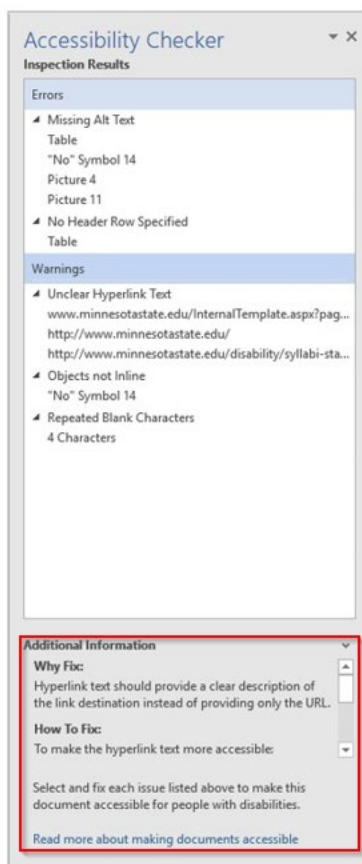
In some versions of Word, you find the checker by clicking on the **File** tab in the upper left corner, then **Check for Issues**, then **Check Accessibility**. Many versions of Word have the **Check Accessibility** icon under the **Review** tab. The location of the accessibility checker can vary on your version of Word.

Pro tip: While there is an accessibility checker feature in the online version of Office 365, that version will not allow you to fix as many issues as the desktop version. So, try to run the accessibility checker via your desktop whenever possible.



Important Note: Sometimes when you run the accessibility checker you will get an error stating that the checker cannot be run. **If that happens**, resave a second copy of the document. Example, if the title of the document was xx click **save as** and resave as xx2. Open up that second document (xx2) and click the accessibility checker icon. The accessibility checker should now work.

Once you have found, and run the Accessibility Checker, a pane will open on the right side of your screen with the **Inspection Results**. You have to learn how to read the results and repair any errors identified therein - you will see what Microsoft has identified as an Error, Warning, or Tip.



- **Error:** Content that makes the document difficult or impossible to read and understand for people with disabilities.
- **Warning:** Content that in most (but not all) cases makes the document difficult to understand for people with disabilities.
- **Tip:** Content that people with disabilities can understand but that could be presented in a different way to improve the user's experience.

Repairing the identified issues becomes easier with patience and practice. If you get stuck, the Accessibility Checker provides tips directly within the results for each identified issue on **Why Fix** it and **How to Fix** it.

Helpful Note: If you get a warning that says “**Object not in line with text**” you can *disregard that warning*. That warning does not need to be fixed.

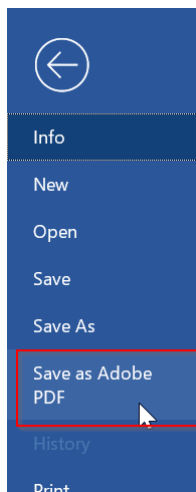
SAVING TO PDF: NOT ALL SAVING METHODS ARE CREATED EQUALLY

Note: Whenever possible, **it is best to give a student who uses screen reader technology a Word version of a document** because that tends to be most accessible for them to navigate through.

When/if you would like to save your Word document to a PDF there is one specific way that you want to do it to help insure that as many of the accessibility features convert over as possible. (Note: Converting a document to PDF will cause a couple of accessibility errors that would need to be addressed.)



- Under the **File** Tab, choose **Save as Adobe PDF**

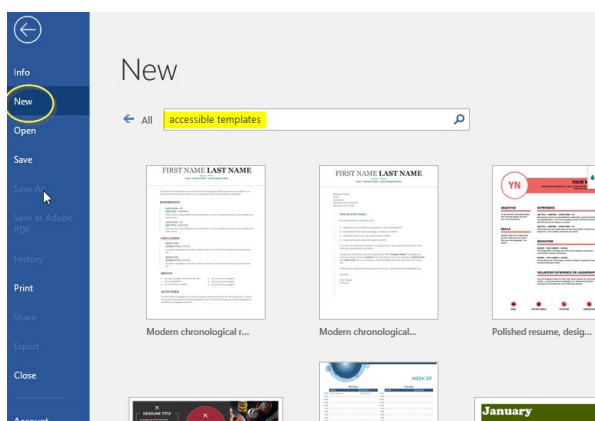


- **Do NOT** do a Print to PDF

BONUS TIPS

CAN USE TEMPLATES IF DO NOT WISH TO BUILD AN ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENT FROM SCRATCH

Accessible templates can be found under the **File** tab by clicking **New** and typing in *accessible templates*



Pro Tip: A full list of all of the [accessible office templates](#) offered by Microsoft 365 can be found online.

CONVERTING A WORD DOCUMENT TO PDF

Whenever possible, **it is best to give a student who uses screen reader technology a Word version of a document** because that tends to be most accessible for them to navigate through. With that said, keep in mind if you convert a Word document to PDF, even a fully accessible version of Word will have a couple errors when it is converted to PDF; including the need to assign a title once it is in PDF and verifying the reading order. See the handout “How to Make Accessible PDF’s” for more information.