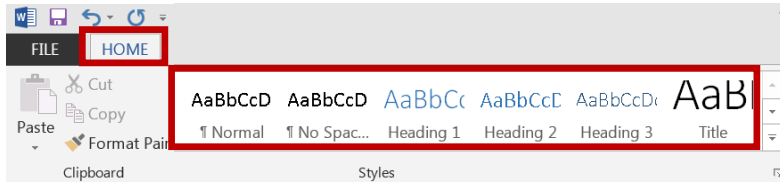


# Authoring Accessible Word Documents (Office 2013 Windows)

## Style & Formatting

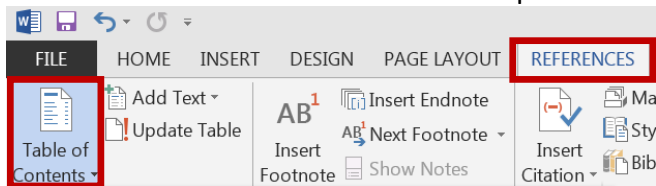
**ALWAYS USE LOGICAL HEADING STRUCTURE** to create a hierarchy in your document. Instead of “Title”, use “Heading 1” for the title, use “Heading 2” as the main heading, “Heading 3” next, etc. Avoid fake headings created using bold, underline, or italics for visual effect.

1. Select text or place cursor on line.
2. Click the appropriate heading level on the HOME tab>Styles.



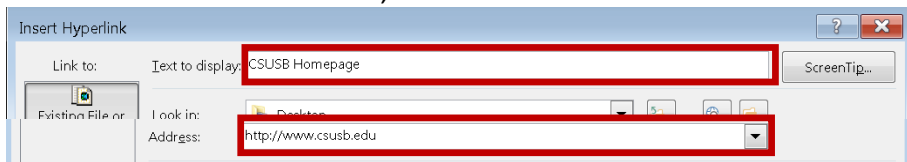
**TABLE OF CONTENTS** should be created using the tool, not manually.

1. Click in the document where the TOC should be inserted.
2. Click REFERENCES tab > Table of Contents, and then choose an “Automatic Table” from the drop down list.



**HYPERLINKS** should display a meaningful description and have the full URL masked. To cite the entire URL for print/archive purposes, enclose in [brackets] so it is not formatted as a clickable hyperlink.

1. Select the text you want to make into a link.
2. Right click and choose “Hyperlink”.
3. In the “Text to display” field, use a simple description.
4. In the “Address” field, enter the full Web address.

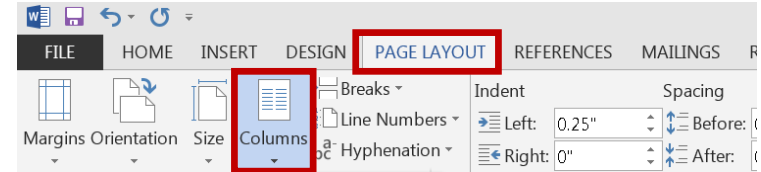


**WHITE SPACE** Use SHIFT + ENTER for white space of more than two lines.

## Layout & Structure

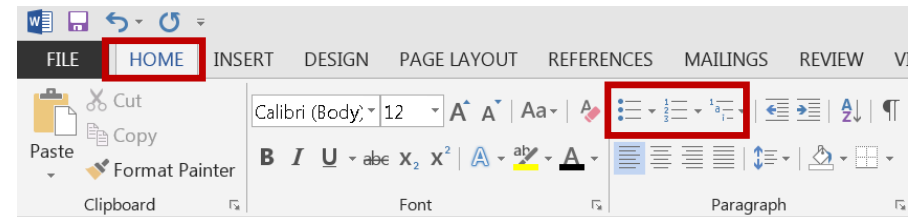
**COLUMNS** are created using the tool; avoid the tab key and spacebar.

1. Click PAGE LAYOUT tab>Columns> choose from dropdown list.



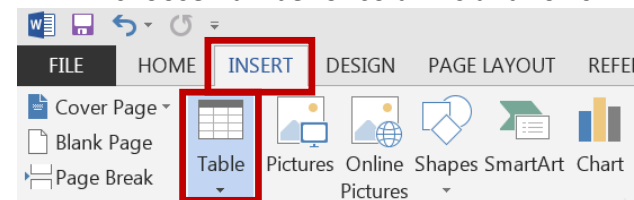
**LISTS**, either numbered or bulleted, are created with the tool. Avoid fake lists by manually typing numbers in sequence or using dashes.

1. On the HOME tab choose numbered list or bulleted list.

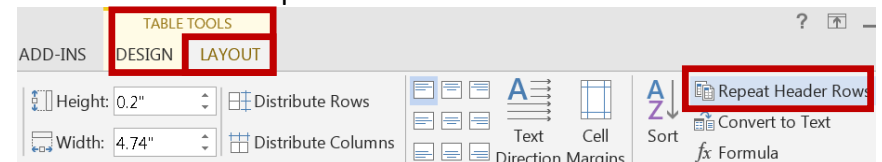


**DATA TABLES** must have repeating header rows. With this, screen readers repeat the header title with each value or cell read to provide context to the non-sighted user.

1. Click the INSERT tab, select “Table”> “Insert Table” and then choose number of columns and rows.



2. To repeat header rows, first click on your table within the document to reveal the TABLE TOOLS tab, then click LAYOUT>“Repeat Header Rows”



## Authoring Accessible Word Documents (Office 2013 Windows)

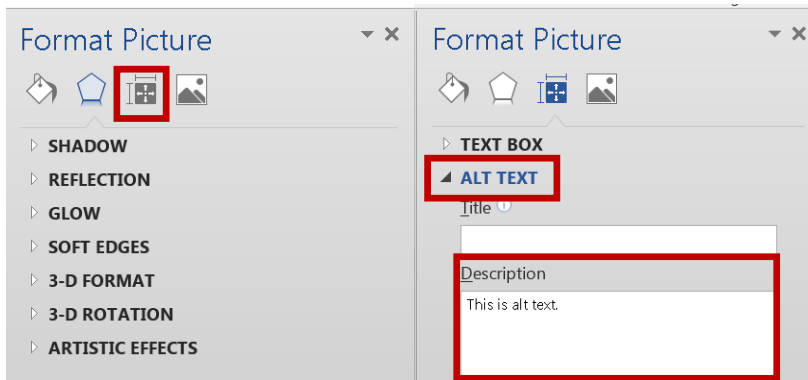
### Images

Images can be classified into three categories:

- **Decorative images** do not convey information. Avoid overuse.
- **Informational images** are the most commonly used and enhance text with additional meaning or illustration. These need alternative text (see below).
- **Complex images** contain informational data, too much to explain in alt text. Complex images must be summarized in the body of the document.

**ALTERNATIVE TEXT** must be assigned to informational images. Screen readers read alt text to describe an image.

1. Right click on the image and select FORMAT PICTURE to reveal the pane on the right side of the document.
2. Select LAYOUT PROPERTIES to reveal the ALT TEXT pane.
3. For informational images, enter a succinct explanation in the “Description” field (screen readers ignore alt text of more than 125 characters). Ignore the “Title” field.



For purely decorative images that convey no meaning, leave the “Description” field and the “Title” field completely empty (not even a space). This signals the screen reader to completely ignore the image.

### Color Use

Avoid using color alone to convey meaning— use redundancy (something differentiating items other than just color) so that individuals who may be colorblind or use a screen reader can differentiate meaning.

Color alone:

XX

With redundancy:

FP

Use high contrast color combinations and avoid light colored fonts.

Low contrast  
High contrast

### Best Practices

#### FONT TYPE

Serif fonts are designed for print distribution, whereas Sans Serif fonts are designed for electronic viewing.

E                      E  
Serif                      Sans Serif  
(Times New Roman)      (Arial)

The National Federation for the Blind recommends a minimum font size of 14 pt. for readability.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY

- Avoid use of fully justified text.
- Word’s built-in accessibility checker is unreliable.
- Avoid unnecessarily complex language.