Making Accessible Word Documents

For additional information on creating accessible Word Documents, visit the [Walker Center for Teaching and Learning's Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

Styles

- Use the font Styles feature (i.e. Normal, Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) in order to format documents.
- Make sure each Style element has a different look from the others (i.e. Heading 1 looks bigger than Heading 2 etc.).
- Make sure Headings levels are correctly ordered.

Fonts

- Use 12 point or larger font size.
- Be consistent with the fonts used in the document.
- Use a simple, plain font – such as Calibri, Helvetica, Verdana, or Arial.
- Avoid using italics or upper-case letters for emphasis.

Lists

- Use the Bulleted or Numbered List feature.

Colors

- Use high color contrast between the text and background (e.g. black text on a white background).
- Make sure that all information conveyed with color can also be conveyed without color.

Spacing

- To start a new page use Page Breaks, don't press enter repeatedly.
- Adjust indents and spacing using the Paragraph formatting menu.
- Space between the lines should be at least 25% of the point size (e.g. a document with 12 point font has at least 3 point space between the lines).

Images

- Add alternative text to graphics and images.
- Avoid using text boxes, Word Art, and watermarks because they cannot be read by screen readers.
- Avoid using watermarks and background images because they can make documents illegible.

Columns

- To insert a column use the Page Layout tab then click Columns.
- Avoid using spaces and tabs, it will not be recognized as a column by screen readers.

Tables

- To insert a table, use the Insert tab then click Table.
- Use Table Headings and check the Header Row check box in the Table Design tab.
- If a table is longer than a page; Heading Rows must be repeated at the top of the table on each of the following pages.

Hyperlinks

- Ensure that the Hyperlink has context and describes where it leads.
- Avoid using terms such as "Click here" or "More info" as a link title.

Graphs and Charts

- Add a short caption before the chart or graph that describes the content.
- Provide an alternative presentation of any findings (e.g. for many charts, the best alternative format in which to present data is a table with the original figures).

Headers and Footers

- Include page numbers on all documents that have multiple pages.
- Use the Insert tab then Page Number. Do not manually type the page numbers.

Saving the Document

- Before saving, use the Accessibility Checker (Word 2010 and higher) located under the Info section on the File tab.
- Save document as a Word 97-2003 Document (*.doc) instead of a Word Document (*.docx) file.