



Checklist for Accessible Word Documents

Please remember:

- You are creating content for students and your colleagues in the District, as well as anyone coming into contact with College of the Desert programs and services.
- These guidelines apply to any electronic information distributed online using District websites, the Portal, Canvas, or email.
- These guidelines are also highly recommended for content intended for use in face-to-face settings – it helps that the content is already accessible if an alternate format is requested.

How to Use These Checklists

1. The General Checklist applies to any type of document or content. Use it in Word, PowerPoint, even email messages in Outlook.
2. If you are creating tables in any type of document or content, also use the General Checklist for Tables.
3. Links to step-by-step resources are included if you have questions.
4. For additional assistance, contact [Nicolás Crisosto](#), extension 4823.



Word Checklist

In addition to using the [General Checklist for All Documents](#), Microsoft Word has specific tools that can help find and fix several issues.

Columns are a great way to organize information. Plus, columns are usually easier to format and keep accessible. This is why a best practice is to avoid using tables for layout.

If your document uses tables for data, you will also want to review the [General Checklist for Tables in All Documents](#).

For All Word Documents	Yes
Did you use the Columns tool instead of typing spaces or Tab to layout side-by-side information? Creating Columns in Word	
Did you use paragraph indenting to create blank space in front of or after text instead of typing spaces? Paragraph Formatting	
Did you use paragraph spacing instead of creating blank lines with Enter? Line and Paragraph Spacing in Word	
Did you check the outline view or print preview to make sure that all items in the document are in logical order? Switch to the Outline View in Word	
Did you use the built-in Table of Contents tool instead of making one individually? Use the Table of Contents Tool in Word	
Windows and macOS: Did you run the Accessibility Checker? Run the Accessibility Checker	



General Checklist for All Documents

For All Documents	Yes
<p>Did you use a legible font like Verdana 12 point for the text? Fonts for the Web and Electronic Documents</p>	
<p>Did you use the built-in styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) instead of changing font sizes and styles (bold, color, etc.) individually? Add Heading Styles in Microsoft Office</p>	
<p>Did you use the built-in bulleted and numbered list tools instead of making them individually? Make Lists in Microsoft Office Working with Lists in Microsoft Word</p>	
<p>Do all images that communicate information have meaningful alternative text descriptions? Add Alternative Text Descriptions in Microsoft Office Create Meaningful Descriptions of Graphs and Charts</p>	
<p>Did you avoid using color as the only way to communicate information? Tips to Not Rely on Color Alone</p>	
<p>Does all text have high contrast with the background? Download an App to Check the Colors You Use for Good Contrast</p>	
<p>Did you change the display text for all links to ordinary language, describing the destination or purpose of the links? Ten Tips for Writing Meaningful Link Text Create Accessible Links</p>	
<p>Did you use underlining only for links? Underlining of Links</p>	



General Checklist for Tables in All Documents

For All Tables	Yes
Did you consider using columns to display side-by-side information instead of tables? Creating Columns in Word	
Did you consider using headings and lists to organize information instead of tables? Add Heading Styles in Microsoft Office Make Lists in Microsoft Office	
Did you avoid merging or splitting cells? Create Accessible Tables in Word	
Did you avoid creating empty cells in data tables?	
Do all table cells contain only text and not images or lists?	
Do all tables have a title row, caption, or alternative text description?	
Is the first row in all tables with data marked as the header row? Mark a Table Row as the Header Row in Microsoft Office	
Is the header row repeated if the table spans multiple pages? Repeat Table Header Rows in Microsoft Office	