

# Accessibility Manual

Microsoft Word

(Note: The topics discussed in this guide include the use of the Microsoft Office 365 suite of applications.)

When creating a document in Microsoft Word, it is important to pay attention to the following areas before running the Accessibility Checker and, ultimately, before converting to PDF or any other formats:

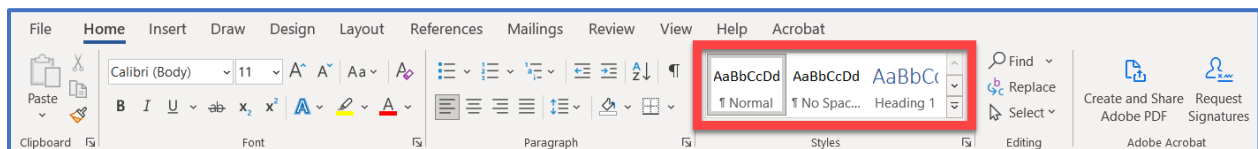
1. Appropriate use of headers and styling
2. Correct formatting of lists
3. Correct spacing throughout the document
4. Appropriate formatting of hyperlinks
5. Alternate text in images and tables
6. Creating simple tables that are tagged correctly

## Appropriate Use of Headers and Styling

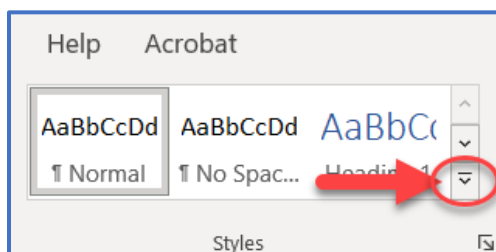
One of the most important things to consider when creating Word documents is to utilize the built-in Styles by designating certain text throughout your document as Title, Subtitle, Heading 1, Heading 2, etc. This will format each section of the document to not only make it easier to navigate for someone who uses a screen reader but it will also make it easier for you, in general, to format and edit the document.

Keep in mind that headings are hierarchical, or nesting. This means that, for example, Heading 2 is contained underneath Heading 1. Think of it this way: If you are writing a book, using Heading 1 for each chapter will allow someone who uses a screen reader to quickly navigate to the chapter of their choosing.

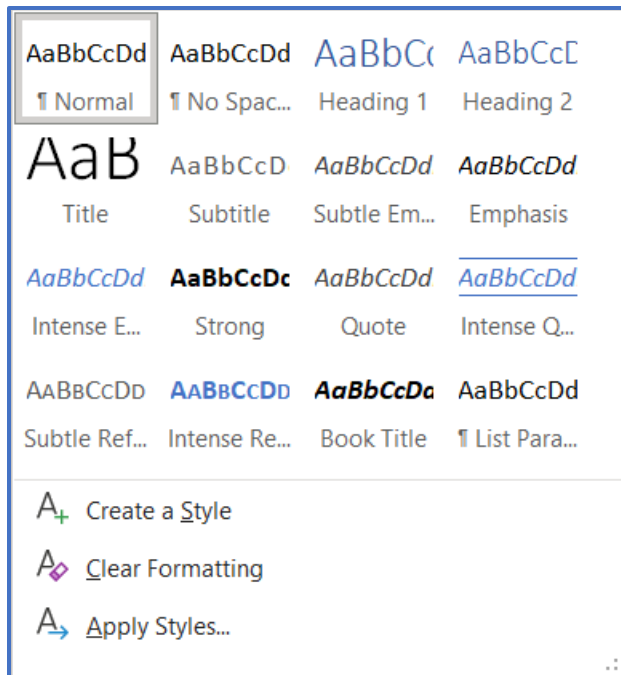
The Styles Tab can be found in the Home Ribbon at the top of the screen:



You can expand the Styles by clicking the down arrow with the horizontal line above it:



This is what it looks like when expanded:



Note: The Style types will change order in this view depending on which styles you use more often

To apply a style, select the text you wish to change and click on the desired style. Styles can always be changed later.

## Correct Formatting of Lists

It is important that lists are formatted correctly so that screen readers can differentiate between these and other elements of your document.

To add a list:

1. Under the Home Tab, and within the Paragraph section, click one of the options highlighted in the image below. These include a bulleted list, a numbered list, or a multilevel list.
2. To add another item to the list, press enter. An additional list item will be created.
3. To exit the list, press enter twice.

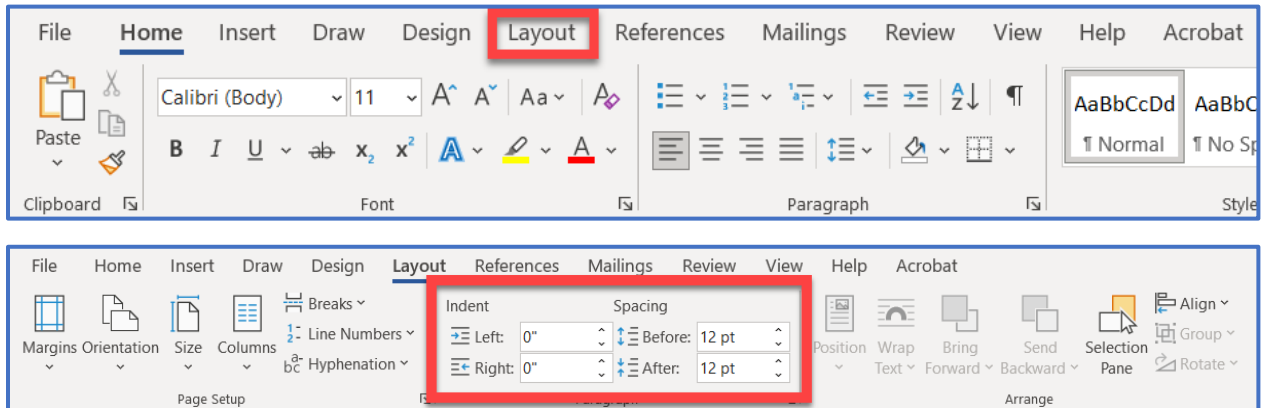
## Correct Spacing Throughout the Document

It is important to consider how you create space within your document. Simply pressing the space bar several times to give something space will return an error in an accessibility report.

To correct issues with extra spacing, delete any extra spaces. If you need to add extra white space, add spacing before and after your text to get the desired results.

- The best way to add space **between words** on the same line is by using the tab key.
- The best way to add space **between lines** is to use built-in Paragraph settings.

Paragraph spacing settings can be accessed by clicking on the Layout tab at the top of the screen and then adjusting Spacing under the Paragraph section:



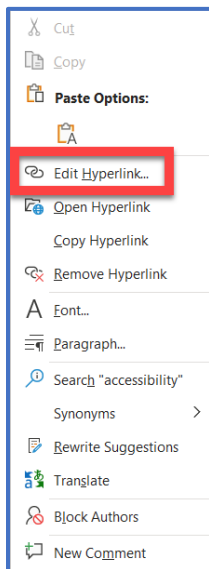
## Appropriate Formatting of Hyperlinks

If you simply copy the entire web address of a URL, anyone using a screen reader will have to listen to this URL, letter by letter. The following paragraph from Webaim.org summarizes the importance of formatting hyperlinks correctly:

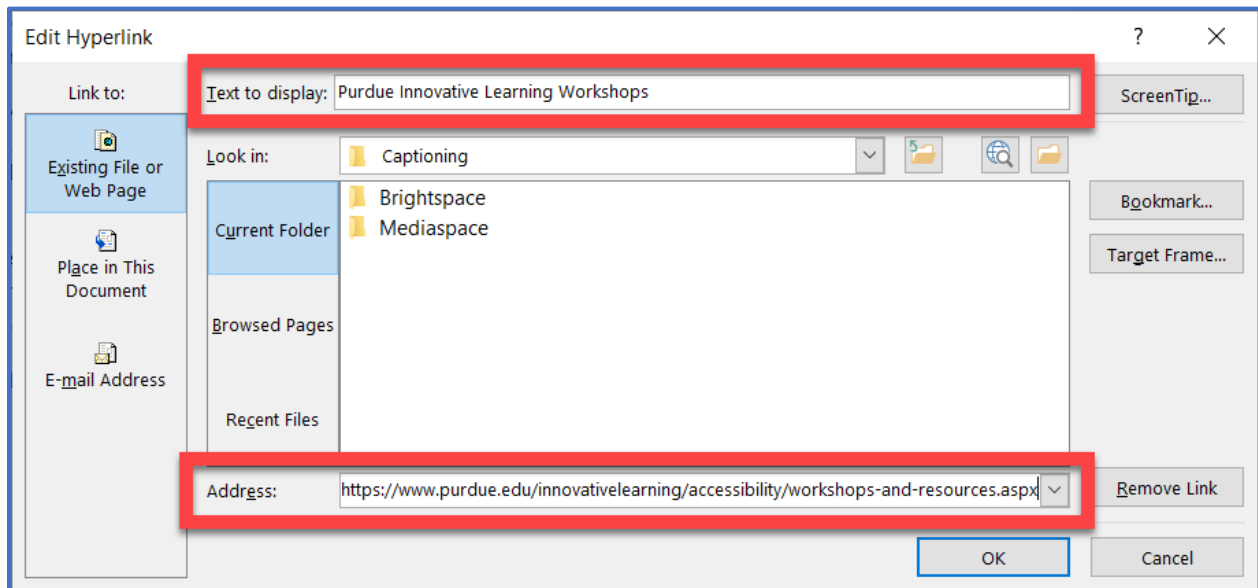
“URLs are not always human-readable or screen-reader friendly. Many URLs contain combinations of numbers, letters, ampersands, dashes, underscores, and other characters that make sense to scripts and databases but which make little or no sense to the average person. In most cases, it is better to use human-readable text instead of the URL.”

Human-readable text is text that masks the original URL. For example, the original URL linking to a product on an online retailer may be over 100 characters in length. You can format this URL to something simple and more descriptive, while masking the original URL.

To better format <https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/accessibility/workshops-and-resources.aspx>, right click on the hyperlink and click Edit Hyperlink.



Edit the Display Text to be something simple, yet descriptive. Make sure the address points to the correct URL.

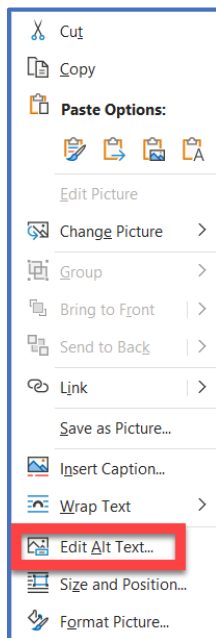


## Alternate Text in Images and Tables

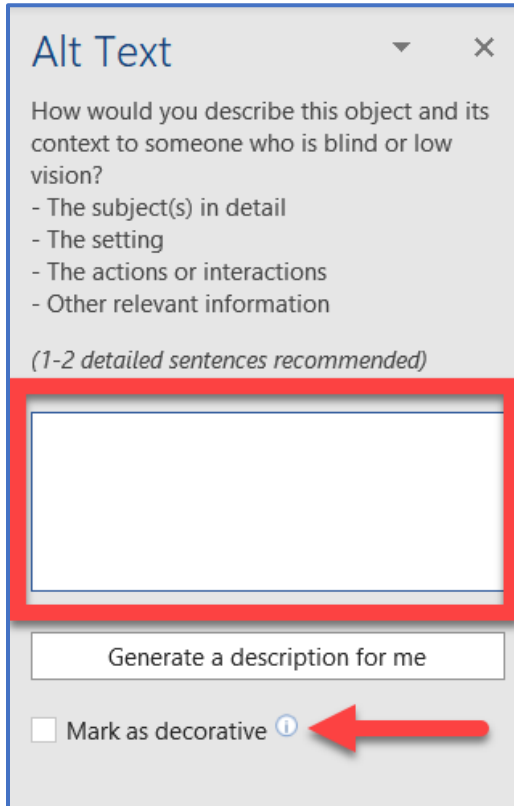
Every non-decorative image and visual element in your document needs to have either Alternate Text or Captions. Keep in mind that screen readers will not be able to navigate within the Alternate Text of an image so if this is too long, navigation could be cumbersome, and it is recommended to describe the image either before or after it to give the proper context that a screen reader can navigate.

To add Alternate Text to an image:

Right click on the image and click Edit Alt Text



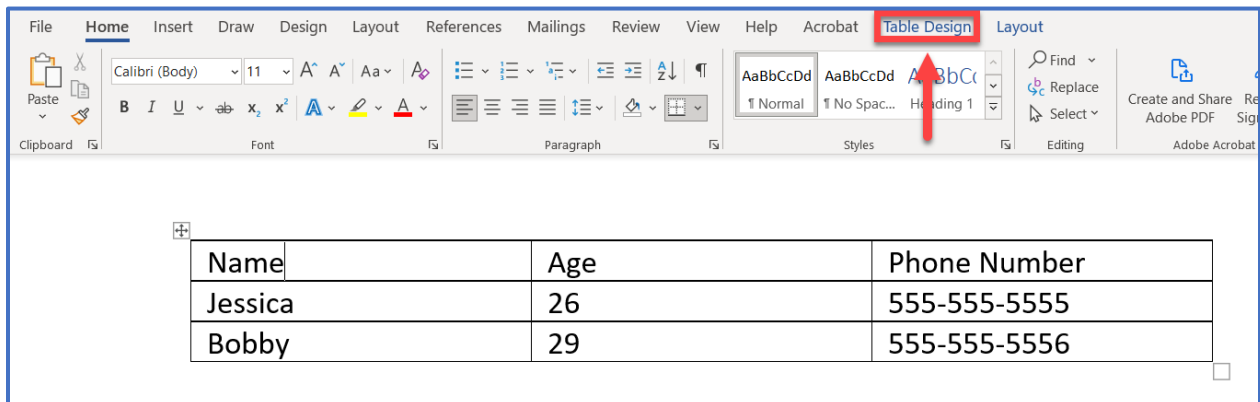
The Alt Text dialog will open on the right side of the screen. Type the image description in the box or, if the image does not have anything to do with the subject matter, select the checkbox next to Mark as Decorative.



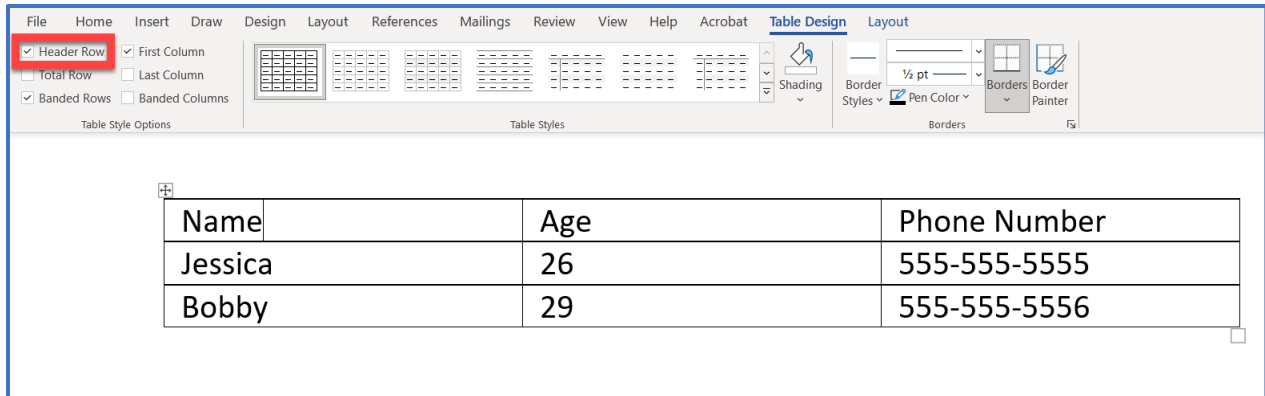
## Creating Simple Tables that are Tagged Correctly

Tables that get too complex are sometimes impossible for screen readers to navigate. If possible, try to keep tables simple by avoiding cell splitting or merging.

Designate Column Headers to identify the header row. To do this, click anywhere in the table and click Table Design in the ribbon at the top of the screen:



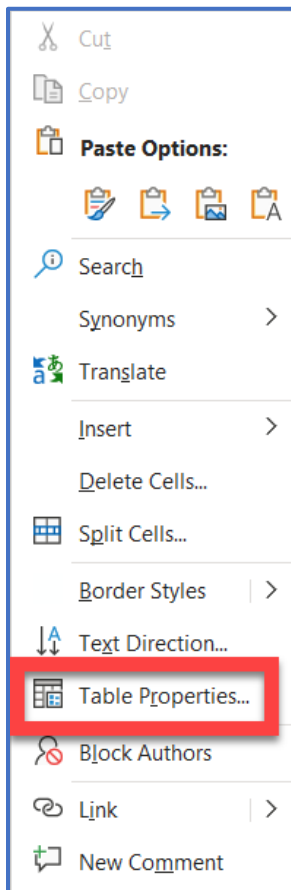
Make sure to check the checkbox next to Header Row is checked



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word ribbon with the 'Table Design' tab selected. In the 'Table Style Options' group, the 'Header Row' checkbox is checked and highlighted with a red box. Other options include 'First Column', 'Last Column', 'Banded Rows', and 'Banded Columns'. Below the ribbon is a table with three columns: 'Name', 'Age', and 'Phone Number'. The data rows are 'Jessica' (Age 26, Phone Number 555-555-5555) and 'Bobby' (Age 29, Phone Number 555-555-5556).

Name	Age	Phone Number
Jessica	26	555-555-5555
Bobby	29	555-555-5556

It is also important that the table has Alternate Text. In most cases, a title should suffice. To do this, right click anywhere in the table and click Table Properties. A dialog box will open.



The screenshot shows a context menu for a table in Microsoft Word. The menu items are: Cut, Copy, Paste Options (with icons for Paste, Paste and Match Style, Paste and Merge Formatting, and Paste and Match Style and Merge Formatting), Search (with Synonyms), Translate, Insert, Delete Cells..., Split Cells..., Border Styles, Text Direction..., Table Properties... (highlighted with a red box), Block Authors, Link, and New Comment.

Click Alt Text and add a title to the table

The image shows a 'Table Properties' dialog box with the 'Alt Text' tab selected. The 'Alt Text' tab is highlighted with a red box. A red arrow points to the 'Title' input field. The 'Description' field is empty. Below the input fields, there is a section titled 'Alternative Text' with explanatory text.

**Table Properties** ? X

Table Row Column Cell **Alt Text**

Title

Description

**Alternative Text**  
Titles and descriptions provide alternative, text-based representations of the information contained in tables, diagrams, images, and other objects. This information is useful for people with vision or cognitive impairments who may not be able to see or understand the object.

A title can be read to a person with a disability and is used to determine whether they wish to hear the description of the content.

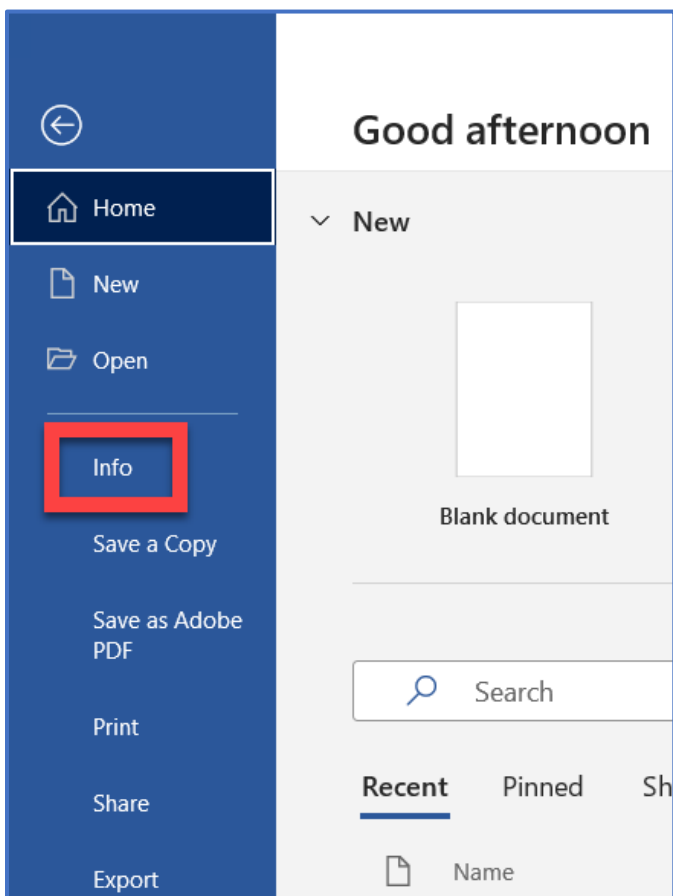
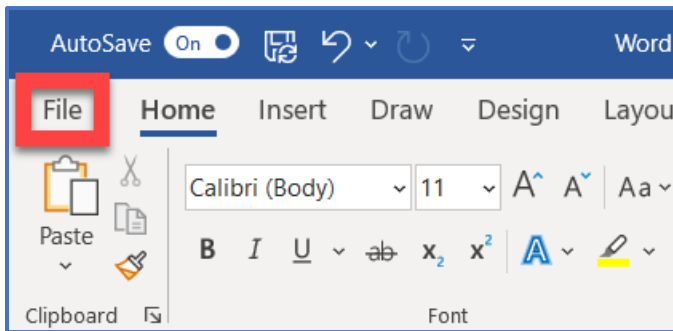
OK Cancel

## Using the Accessibility Checker in Microsoft Word

After creating your document, it is recommended that you use the Accessibility Checker in Microsoft Word to make sure you have done all you can to make it accessible.

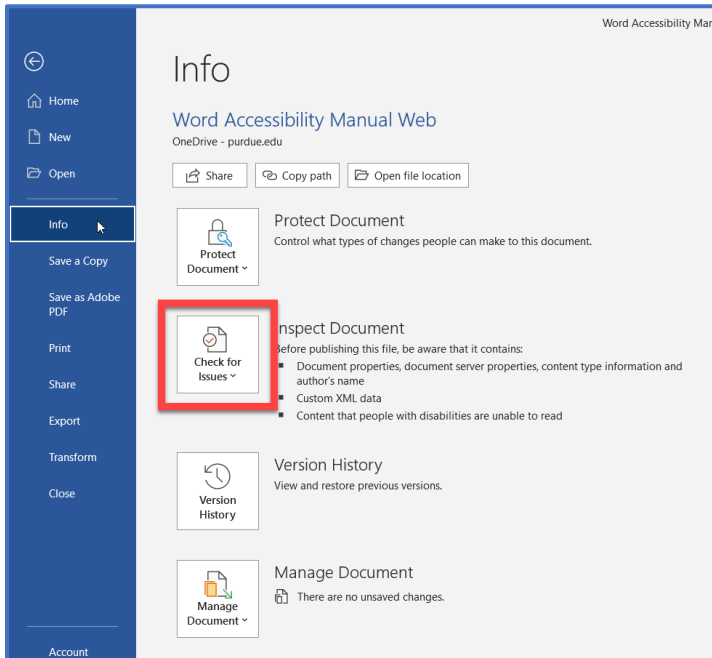
To run the Accessibility Checker:

1. Click File in the top left of the screen and click Info

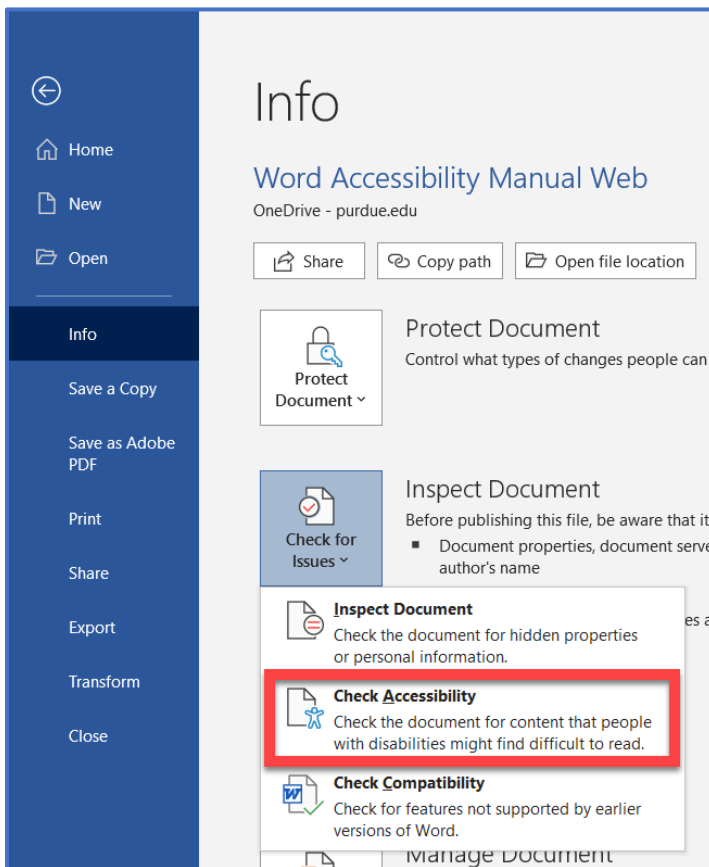




2. Click the Check for Issues button under the Inspect Document section



3. Click Check Accessibility



## Interpreting the Results of the Accessibility Checker

If you have followed the steps in this guide, there should be very few, if any, accessibility issues in your document.

If the Accessibility Checker finds no known issues, it will display the message “No Accessibility Issues found. People with disabilities should not have difficulty reading this document.”

### Errors

Errors include things that are very difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to understand

### Warnings

Warnings include things that could potentially be difficult for people with disabilities to understand

### Tips

Word will provide some helpful tips to better organize your content to make it easier for people with disabilities to understand

To fix an issue within the document, click on the issue in the Inspection Results to see where the issue is. Below that you will see an explanation of why you should fix the issue, as well as how you can fix the issue.