# Accessible Word Documents

Designing a document that utilizes accessible design principles will help ensure that your content is available to all students. It is easier to apply accessibility principles while creating a document; however, these guidelines are applicable to existing presentations.

1. **Structure** the document. Use a Heading 1 Style for the document's title and Heading 2, 3, etc., for the sub-headings.
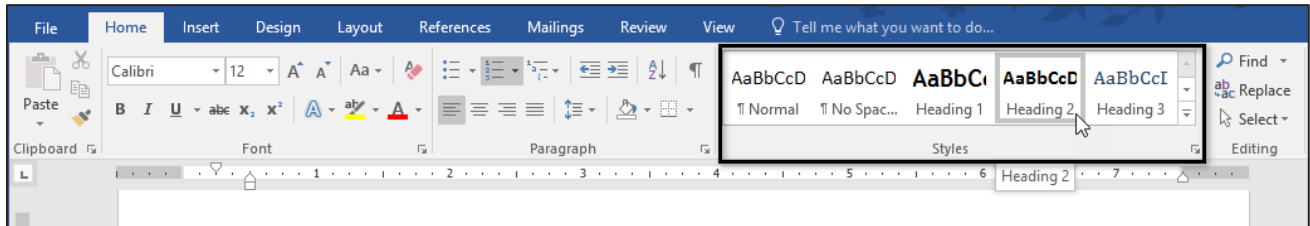
2. View the document's structure in the **Navigation Pane** (click View tab > Navigation Pane).
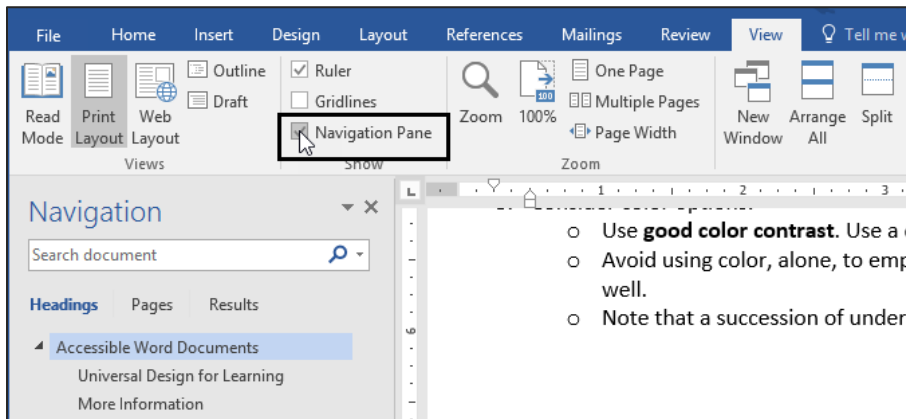
3. Utilize **built-in bulleted and numbered lists**. Instead of typing paragraphs on slides, break information into bite-sized chunks, and let the slide be a supplement to your lecture.
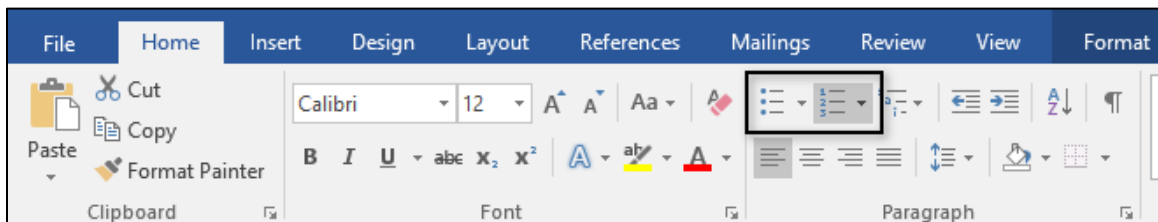
4. Consider font style and color:
   o Use a readable font (suggested: Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS, Verdana)
   o Avoid using color, alone, to emphasize text. Use font variations, such as bold and/or italics, as well.
   o Note that a string of underlined words is often misinterpreted as a hyperlink.

5. Compose **alternative text for all images** with the purpose of replacing the image. Remember to consider the context of the image. Right-click the **image** and select **Format Picture**.
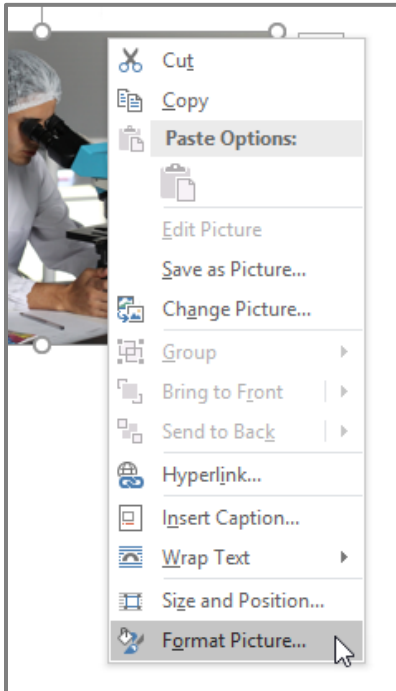

   o   If the image needs a **longer description**, provide the description under or near the image.

6. Create tables natively with Word's **Insert Table** command.
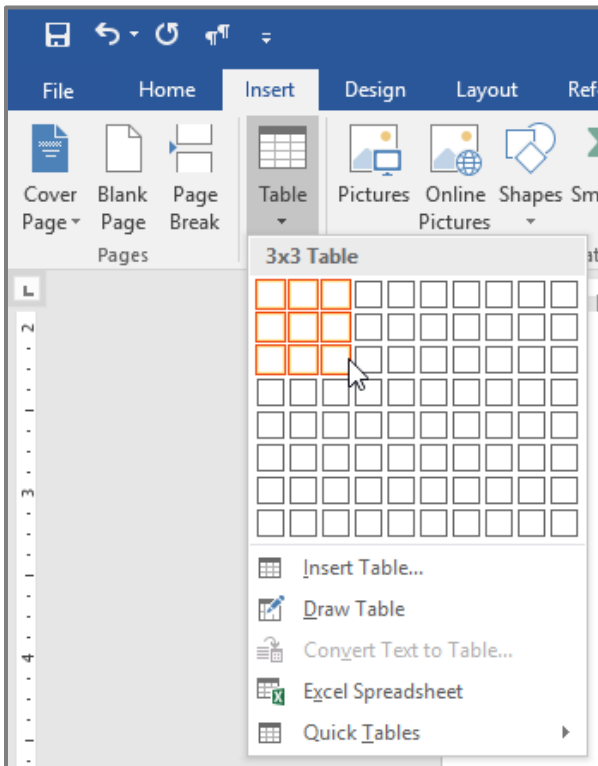
   o   Set the Header row and add a title (Caption)
   o   Make sure there are no blank cells
   o   Alternative text should reiterate the title and clarify abbreviations and/or acronyms.

7. When creating a hyperlink, determine whether it is to a web page or for a downloadable file:
   o The text of a **webpage hyperlink** should answer two questions:
      ▪ To which website does the link go? (name of website)
      ▪ What will be viewed? (specific content)
   o If the hyperlink is for a **downloadable file**, indicate the file type. If the document is a:
      ▪ Word document, then use (doc)
      ▪ Adobe PDF file, then use (pdf)
      ▪ PowerPoint presentation, then use (ppt)
      ▪ Text file, then use (txt)

8. Evaluate your document with the **Accessibility Checker**.
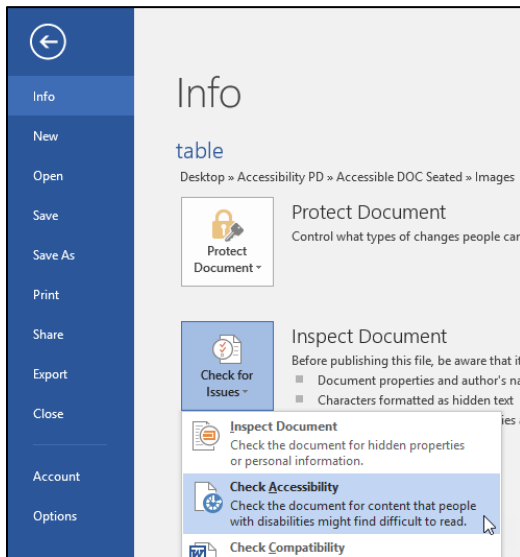
More Information
- [WebAIM's Microsoft Word Accessibility](http://webaim.org/techniques/word/)
  Direct link: http://webaim.org/techniques/word/
- [NCDAE's Accessible Documents Cheatsheet](http://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/#msword)
  Direct link: http://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/#msword
- [Accessible Digital Office Document Project](http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/)
  Direct link: http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/