# Word Accessibility Checklist

This checklist is organized so that the easiest things to fix (those caught by the accessibility checker) are listed first, then things that require manual checking to fix are farther down. This may be a useful order in which to approach document accessibility, but you’re welcome to work in whatever order makes the most sense to you.

## Getting Started: Open the Accessibility Checker:

When making Word files accessible, you’ll want to start by opening the file in the desktop Word application since some aspects of the accessibility checker do not work in the web version. The accessibility checker can be opened by clicking the Accessibility icon from the bottom of the screen or clicking ‘Review’ from the menu bar, then selecting ‘Check Accessibility’.

## Things the accessibility checker usually catches:

* Are the font type and size adjustable (ie, is the file editable and not ‘read-only’)?
* Do all tables have titles, headers, and captions (alt text) enabled? Are all the column headings unique?
* Do tables avoid using merged cells?

## Things the accessibility checker helps with, but requires additional work from you:

* Was a heading structure added to the document using the “Styles” feature with headings in order and no heading levels skipped?
  + The accessibility checker will only tell you if Styles are used and if heading levels are skipped but will not tell you if the appropriate heading levels were used
* Do all images either have alternative text giving an accurate and concise description **or** have a ‘decorative image’ designation if the image is non-informative?
  + If the image has alt text of something non-descriptive like the file name, the accessibility checker will not flag the image. This means you need to examine the alt text for all images, not just those flagged by the checker.
* Are equivalent alternatives to complex images like graphs and infographics provided?
  + The accessibility checker will only tell you if alt text is missing entirely, it will not tell you whether the alt text is a sufficient description. Complex images should have a short description in alt text **and** a longer description, which can be a description on the slide, a caption, a link, or in the notes area.
* Is there sufficient color contrast?
  + The accessibility checker does not necessarily catch all color contrast issues. Online color contrast checkers, such as [WebAIM's contrast checker,](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) can help you determine whether there is sufficient contrast.

## Things the accessibility checker does not look for:

* When sharing the file, was it left as a Word file rather than being converted to a PDF?
  + PDFs are very challenging to make fully accessible and cannot be edited by the user if they need a different font, etc.
* Are all lists created using the numbered or bulleted list feature?
* Are all URLs given as hyperlinks embedded in meaningful text that clearly indicates the link’s purpose or destination?
  + The full URL should not be given. Avoid links that include verbs or verb phrases like “click here” or “go here for more information”. Email addresses can be written out (i.e., [iteach2@unl.edu](mailto:iteach2@unl.edu)).
* Is underlining used only for hyperlinks and not for other textual emphasis?
* Is the use of all capital letters used only for acronyms and not other textual emphasis?
* Does the document avoid relying solely on visual formatting (colors, fonts, shapes, etc.) to convey information or navigation? If text needs to be emphasized, is it bolded and/or italicized rather than relying solely on visual formatting?
* Is text presented as text rather than an image including text? The only exception to this is when the text is part of a logo or other branding.
  + To fix this issue, the image should be replaced by text rather than adding alt text to the image.
* Are sans serif fonts such as Courier, Arial, Verdana, and Calibri used?
* Are indent and alignment buttons used to create alignment rather than the Tab key or repeated use of the Spacebar or Enter key?
* Are tables only used to organize data with a logical relationship rather than being used for layout structure or organization?
* Do tables avoid having any empty data cells?