



Complying with Digital Accessibility Standards

NC State Historic Preservation Office | Andrew Edmonds

Digital accessibility

- 01 What, Why, Who, When?
- 02 Break for questions
- 03 Live demonstration using Microsoft Word: How?
- 04 Expectations and take away materials
- 05 Finish with more questions

What is digital accessibility?

Digital accessibility means making websites, apps, and downloadable documents **usable by everyone**, including people with disabilities.

It helps ensure that people who use **assistive technology** can access information.

Access by disability type:

- **Visual** – screen readers, invert colors, magnification
- **Auditory** – captions, transcripts, tactile output
- **Mobility** – alternative keyboard and input devices
- **Cognitive** – simple, intuitive, text read software
- **Other / Hidden** – make accessibility an opt out

Why does this matter?

- Digital accessibility is the **right thing** to do.
- Digital accessibility creates a **better experience** for all users.
- Digital accessibility is also **the law**.
 - Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act – **State and Local Governments**
 - Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – requires **federal agencies** to create, purchase, and use information and communications technology that is accessible to people with disabilities.

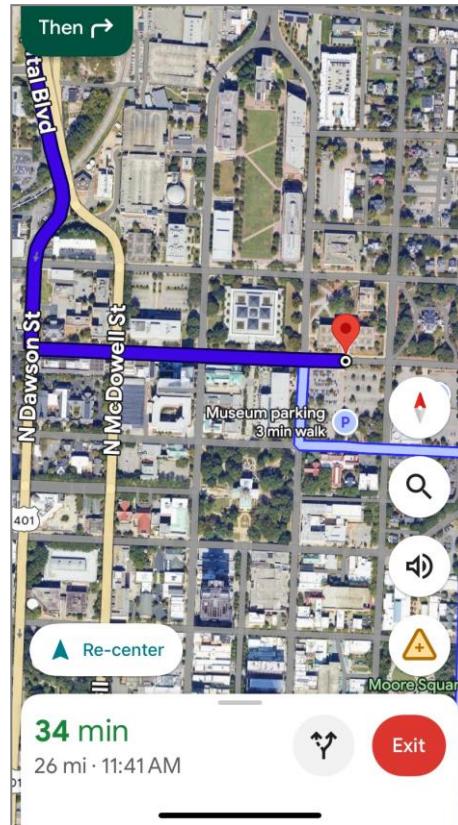
Accessibility design benefits everyone



Accessibility design benefits everyone (2)



Accessibility design benefits everyone (3)



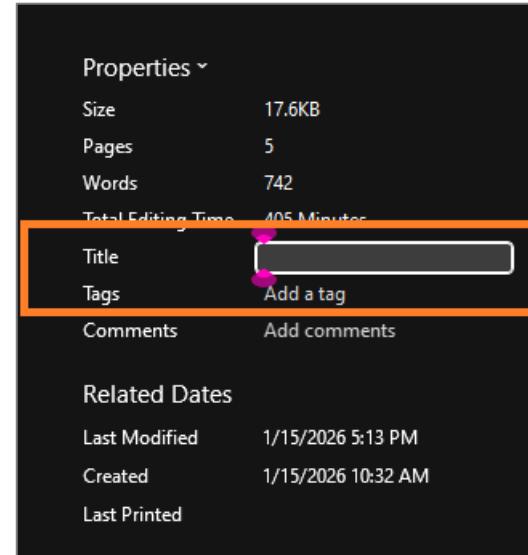
Common accessibility issues

1. Structuring content
2. Images
3. Font choice
4. Color choice
5. Tables and Lists
6. Links



Making accessible reports: Structuring content

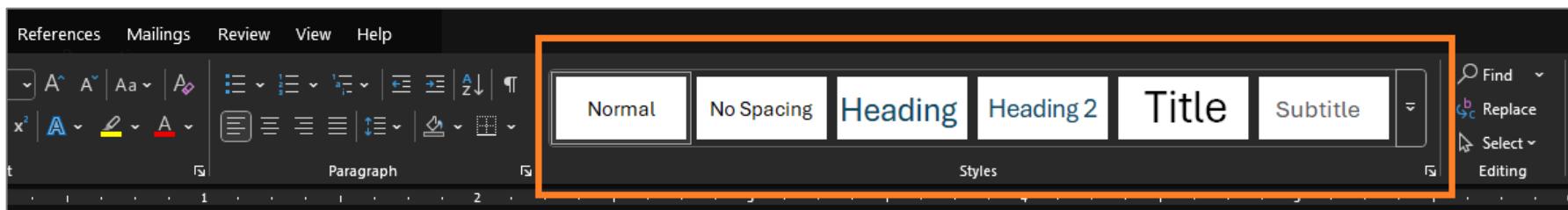
- Setting up the Word document
 - **Title** (File > Info > Title)
 - (a) unique, (b) meaningful, (c) dated, (d) draft, confidential, final, etc
 - Watermarks, headers & footers
- **Create a template**
- Consider a **Table of Contents**



Making accessible reports: Structuring content (2)

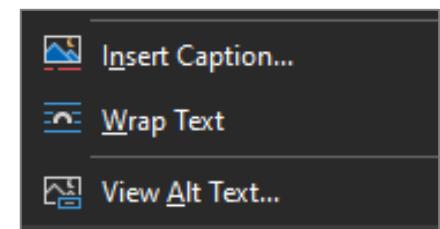
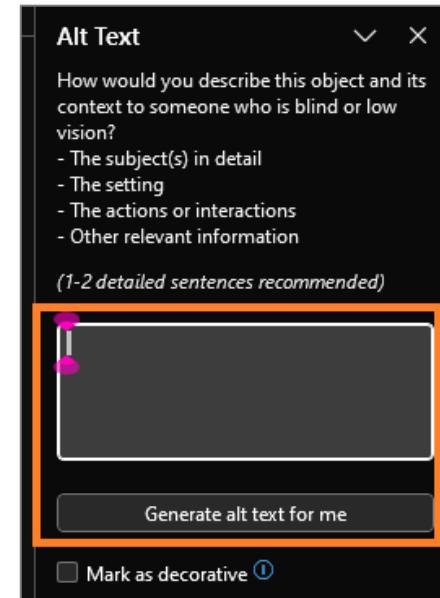
- **Establish an outline** – logical heading order
- **Use the Styles menu** – modify Headings, Normal text, and hyperlinks
- **Avoid**
 - Manual formatting
 - Full justification of text
 - Text boxes

- Heading 1
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 3
 - Normal text
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 2
 - Normal text



Making accessible reports: Images

- **Every image** needs “alternative text”
 - Pictures, illustrations, images of text, shapes, charts, & maps
 - Alt text = the purpose and context
 - **Be succinct** – maximum of 15 words
- *However* –
 - Should not be redundant
 - “Jane Q. Public House as described in report”
- Place images “**in line with text**” for proper reading order
- Mark as “**decorative**” in rare instances



Making accessible reports: Font choice

Sample sans serif fonts

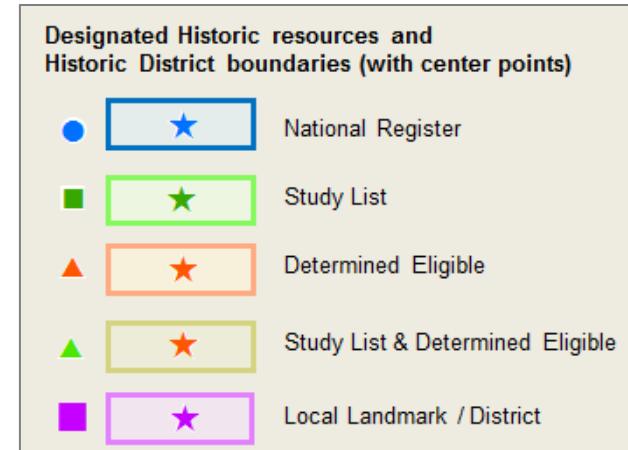
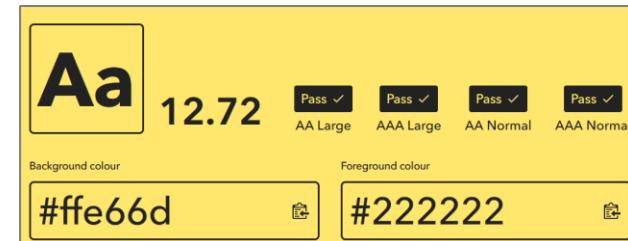
Arial
Calibri
Century Gothic
Tahoma
Verdana

Sample serif fonts

Book Antiqua
Bookman Old Style
Georgia
Palatino
Times New Roman

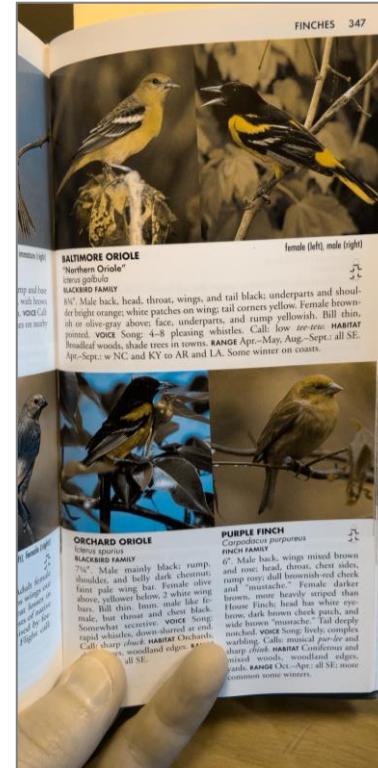
Making accessible reports: Color choice

- **Color contrast ratio**
 - 4.5:1 color contrast ratio for body text
 - 3:1 for larger text (18 pt regular; 14 pt bold)
 - [Color contrast checker](#)
- **Color blindness** concerns
 - Color alone should not convey meaning
 - Vary icons, size, and patterns
 - [Color Brewer for maps](#)



Low Vision? [Enable high contrast mode](#)

Making accessible reports: Color choice (2)

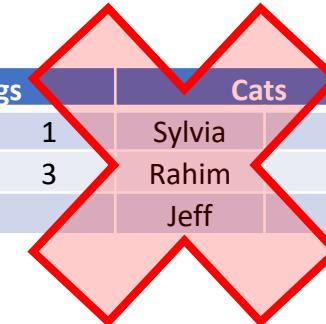


Making accessible reports: Tables

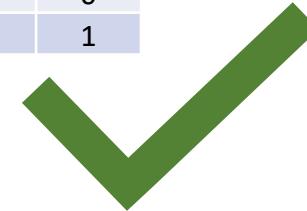
- **Avoid** or use Word's **built-in options**
- **Simplify** – no blank cells, no merged cells
- **Use headers** – left column and/or top row
- Provide a **caption**
- Do not paste an image of a table!

Table 4.1: Ward Mill Site Information Table.

Resource Name	B.O. Ward House and Mill
HPO Survey Site Number	WT0358
Location	443 Old Watauga River Road, Sugar Grove, Watauga County
PIN	1961486427000
Date of Construction	1939-1970
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible under A and C



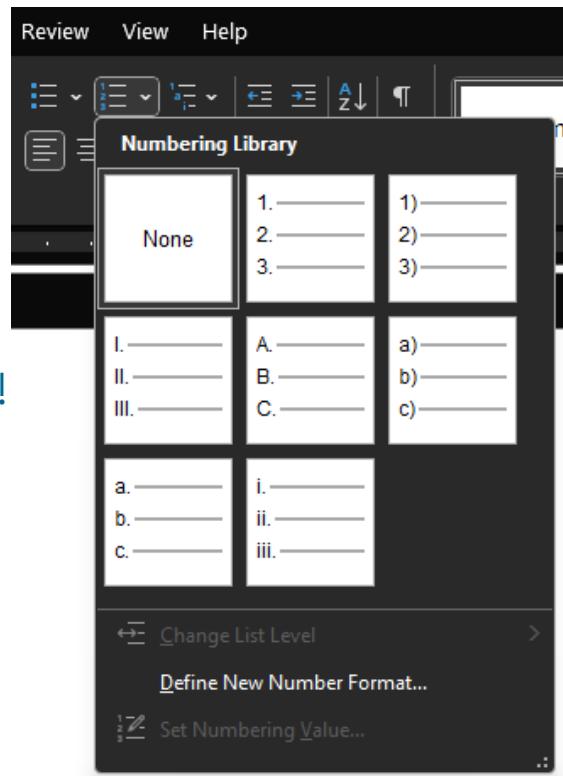
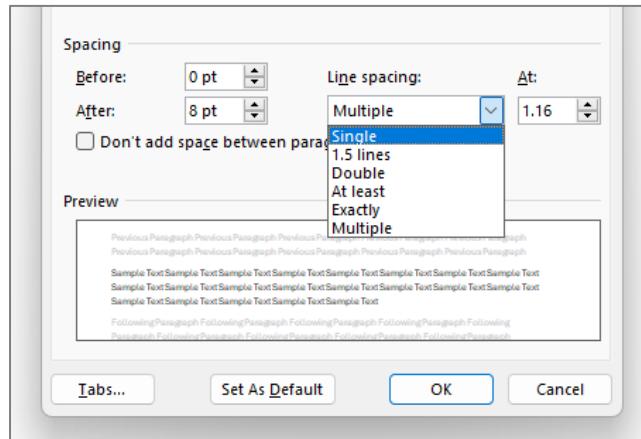
Dogs	Cats
Sylvia	1
Rahim	3
Jeff	1



Person	Dogs	Cats
Sylvia	1	2
Rahim	3	0
Jeff	0	1

Making accessible reports: Lists

- **Use built-in formatting**
 - Ordered – 1, 2, 3 or A, B, C
 - Unordered – Bulleted
- Home > Paragraph > Line spacing – *not* the Enter key!

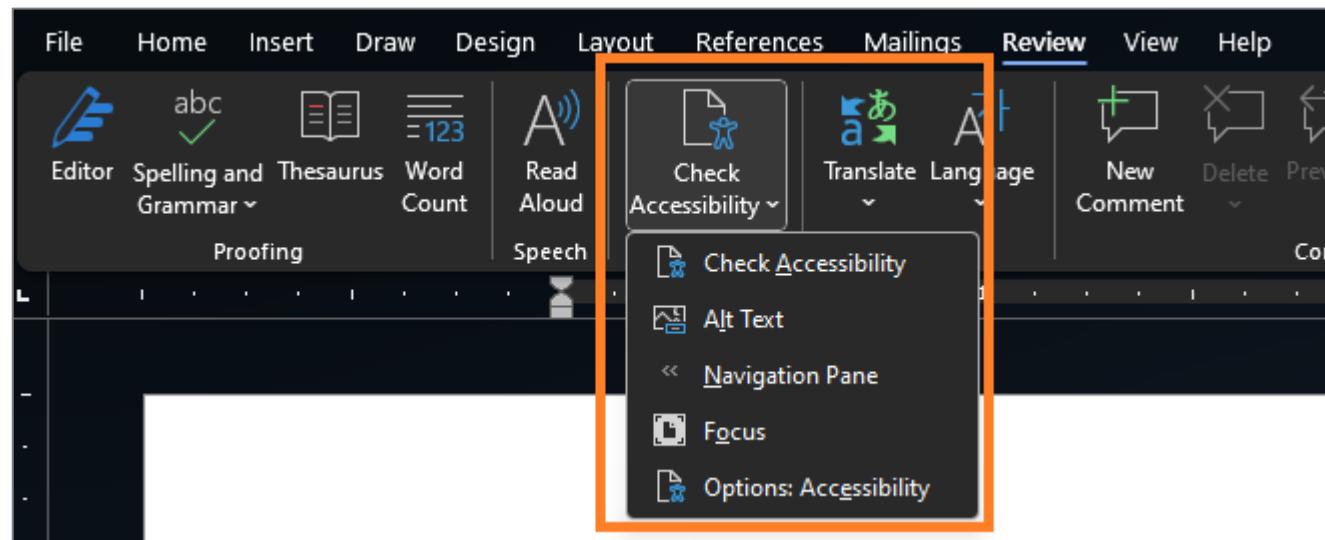


Making accessible reports: Links

- Use **descriptive** hyperlinks
- Use **underlines**
- Do not use “Click here” or the generic “Read more”
 - ❖ Find out more on the City's Sanborn Maps collection
 - ❖ Several biographical studies were used in research
 - ❖ Map generated from the HPOWEB mapping application

Making accessible reports: Accessibility checker

Use Word's accessibility checker tool! **Review menu > Check Accessibility**



When does this go into effect?

- ❖ State and local governments must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level A & AA by April 24, 2026.
- ❖ The NCHPO will require delivery
 - ❖ Of National Register nominations and Survey Reports in Microsoft Word format
 - ❖ In accessibility compliant format
 - ❖ **After March 31, 2026**



Resources

- ❑ Screen readers
 - ❑ Job Access With Speech ([JAWS](#))
 - ❑ NonVisual Desktop Access ([NVDA](#))
- ❑ Services
 - ❑ Adobe Acrobat Pro DC needed to remediate existing PDFs
 - ❑ Durham-based Ablr is a full-service disability inclusion organization
 - ❑ [A11y](#)
- ❑ Tips
 - ❑ Ablr ([Creating Accessible Documents, part one](#)) ([part two](#))
 - ❑ [Alt text decision tree](#)
 - ❑ [California accessibility videos](#)
 - ❑ [Duke Top 8 Tips](#)
 - ❑ [UNC Top 10 Tips](#)
 - ❑ [Microsoft Word](#)
 - ❑ [Monroe College tips](#) (good info on columns)
 - ❑ [NCDIT \(Digital Accessibility\)](#) ([Web Content Accessibility](#))

Questions?

- ✓ Structuring content
- ✓ Images
- ✓ Font choice
- ✓ Color choice
- ✓ Tables and Lists
- ✓ Links

