

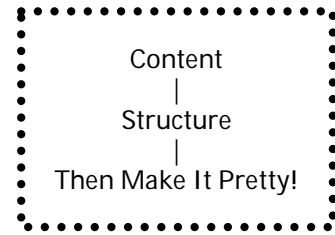
## Accessible Word Tips

Do	Don't	Why
Create Structured Documents by using Styles in the Formatting Palette.	Don't play with font size and color to imply semantic meaning.	Only true headings and subheadings (Heading 1, 2, 3 etc.), not just bolded, enlarged or centered text will convey semantic meaning to an assistive technology user.
Use Word Bullets and Numbering styles to define bullets or numbered lists	Don't add a number or a dot to a paragraph to imitate a list.	Proper Lists will convey semantic meaning to an assistive technology user.
Use the Column feature to add column text	Don't use tabs.	Columns will convey semantic meaning to an assistive technology user.
Give ALT text to all inserted images and charts.	Don't forget to add ALT text!	Without ALT text, image content is invisible to assistive technology users.
Verify the read order of a text box is correct and logical.	Don't insert text boxes or other elements into an area that's not already defined.	Assistive technology can't always detect inserted text boxes. Read order of content in text boxes is dependent on when the text box was inserted and may not make sense.
Simplify all charts and tables.	Don't insert complex charts or tables, or use unnecessary graphics for charts.	Disabled users may not be able to interpret the data without importing it to another application. It's also difficult to make complex charts and tables accessible.
If the table has a header, set that row as a header.	Don't just use a big font, bold, a different color, or a larger font to imply header.	Headers will enable disabled users navigate through the table without getting lost.
Color and highlighting is used for enhancement.	Don't make color the only method of conveying information.	Low vision and colorblind users will not be able to differentiate the information.
Ensure sufficient color contrast in text, charts and images.	Don't select colors with poor contrast between text and background or in images that convey necessary meaning.	Low vision and colorblind users will not be able to read to document.
Choose a font that is easy to read, such as Arial or Helvetica.	Don't use shadowed or outlined text.	Low vision users may find it difficult to read.
Limit use of animation.	Don't included unnecessary animated GIFs.	Animations can be distracting to some users.
Reduce file size by inserting images that have been resized correctly.	Don't insert huge images and use the Format Image or image handles to "shrink."	Big file sizes make download and use more difficult for all users. Reduce file size by importing correctly sized images instead of resizing them in Word.
Use good link text.	<b>No "click here!"</b>	Hyperlinked phrases such as "click here" can be confusing for people who use screen readers. Make each hyperlink descriptive of content to which it links.
Save accessible Word in multiple formats to give users access to the format that works best for them. Provide links to appropriate plug-ins.	Don't assume that "one size fits all."	Some people don't have Word. Provide links to appropriate plug-ins like the free Word Viewer or better yet, if online, provide a more accessible HTML version

# Accessible Word Tips

## Use Structured Formatting

Structural formatting is an essential element of accessible digital content. It describes the purpose of the text, allow readers to scan through and identify content, and to better understand the author’s message. Without structural formatting, a multi-page document becomes a big block of text.



Documents that use structural formatting are more accessible to all readers, including those with disabilities. Structured Word documents are also more likely to be accessible to other types of technology (like search engines) and are more likely to be accessible when converted to other file types, like HTML or PDF.

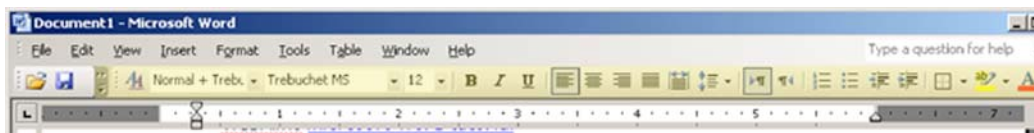
## Styles Options in Formatting Palette

In MS Word, the structural formatting options are available in the Styles area of the Formatting Palette.

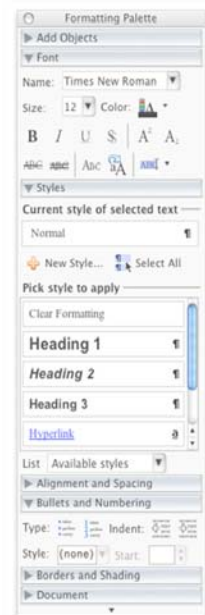
View > Toolbars > Formatting

If “Formatting” is checked the Formatting Palette should be visible.

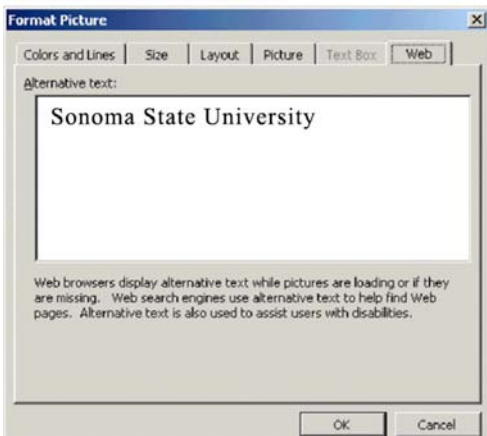
**Remember:** Avoid using the font styling options to make text look like Headings. Instead, use the “Styles” options to apply the appropriate structural formatting. Then, use Format > Styles to change the appearance of structural elements to your liking. The formatting tool can be on the on the top with the standard menu toolbar or on the side as a floating palette. On Word for a Mac, the formatting tool is often a floating palette.



Word on Windows the formatting toolbar is often under the standard menu toolbar.



## Add Alternative Text to Images



A text equivalent means adding words to represent the purpose of a non-text element. The alternative text should be consistent, clear and, most important, useful.

When an image is used to represent page content, the image must have an *equivalent* text description in the alt attribute that explains the meaning of the image. This can include complex graphics, charts etc.

Unfortunately Word for the Mac (2004) will not add alternative text. The new version of Word for the Mac (2008) *might* resolve this issue for Macs. Until then, only the Windows version of Word will add alternative text. Right click on the image and select Format Picture (or select Format > Picture from the menu bar). The Format Picture window appears, click on Web tab and add the alternative text.