

# LAUSD Job Aid for Microsoft Word

Accessibility in Microsoft Word is crucial for the Los Angeles Unified School District (the District) because it ensures that all students, parents, and community members, including those with disabilities, can access and understand important information. This promotes inclusivity, equal opportunities, and compliance with legal requirements like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Additionally, accessible documents improve overall usability, making information clearer and easier to navigate for everyone.

**Resource:** [Effective Communication](#)

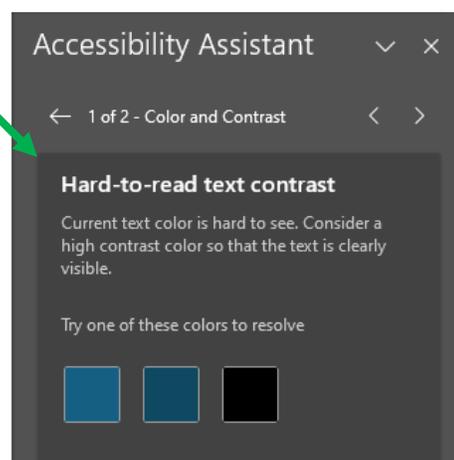
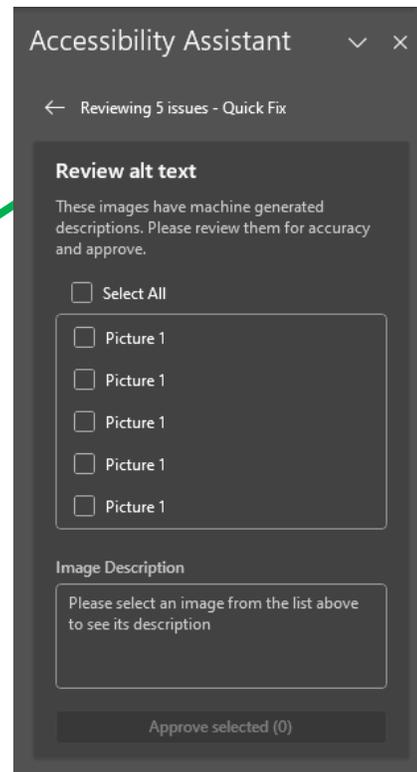
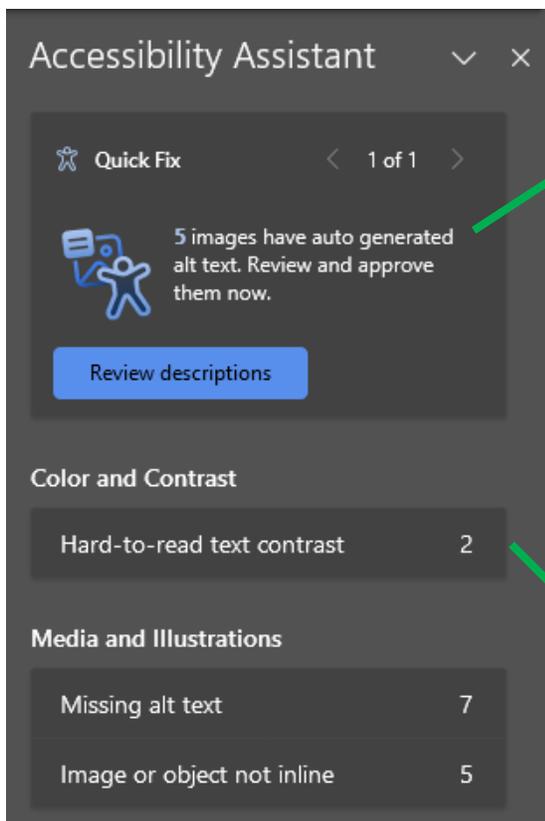
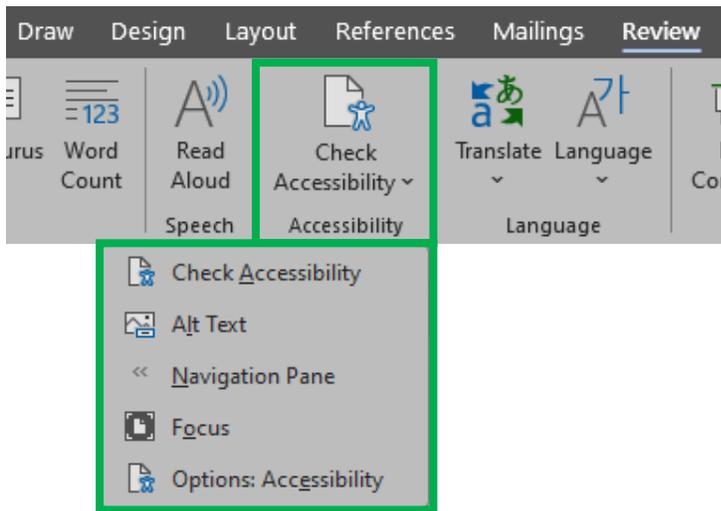
## Document Accessibility Checker

The accessibility checker helps identify and fix accessibility issues, such as missing alternative text (the brief text description of images that are read out loud), poor color contrast, and improper use of headings and tables. By addressing these issues, you ensure that your content is readable and navigable for users with visual impairments or those relying on assistive technologies.

Use the built-in MS Word Accessibility Checker to identify and address accessibility issues. When using the Accessibility Checker the documents are then inspected, and errors are categorized with suggested solutions once the error is selected. Real-time feedback is available to show as issues are resolved. Test your document with assistive technologies such as screen readers to ensure compatibility. Remember to Save your work to preserve the accessibility structure!

The Check Accessibility tab (see below), which opens the “Accessibility Assistant” window with errors sectioned off by category type. You may also select specific support such as Alt Text, Navigation Pane, Focus and Options: Accessibility only. “Accessibility Assistant” windowpane will generate possible

solutions for review and approval that address each error category and provide alternatives or “quick fix” recommendations.



## Screen Readers

Screen readers are a type of assistive technology designed for people who are blind or visually impaired. They convert text and image content on a computer screen into speech or braille output. Screen readers work by interpreting the information on the screen and providing commands through keyboard shortcuts. Here are a few recommended screen reader applications and guides that will help you maneuver through documents.



- [JAWS Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [NVDA Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [VoiceOver User Guide](#)

## Color Contrast

Ensure sufficient color contrast between text and background to improve readability. Use accessible color combinations that comply with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) Standards. Accessibility check for color is necessary where the document has a variety of different colors.

Make sure your contents color contrast passes by using the [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#). Test your color contrast by identifying the two-color fields, “Foreground Color” (text) and the “Background Color”. A color contrast ratio of 4.5:1 is recommended for regular text. Manually enter Hex values or use the color picker by clicking the Color Picker box next to each field and use the dropper.

## Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

The screenshot shows the Contrast Checker interface. The 'Foreground' section has a hex value of #002177 and a lightness slider. The 'Background' section has a hex value of #E2DCD6 and a lightness slider. A 'Contrast Ratio' box displays '10.4:1'. Below the sliders are 'Color Picker' and 'Alpha' (set to 1) controls.

Contrast Ratio  
**10.4:1**

[permalink](#)

The screenshot shows the test results for the 10.4:1 contrast ratio. Three categories are listed: 'Normal Text' (WCAG AA: Pass, WCAG AAA: Pass), 'Large Text' (WCAG AA: Pass, WCAG AAA: Pass), and 'Graphical Objects and User Interface Components' (WCAG AA: Pass). Each category is accompanied by a sample of the text and a green 'Pass' badge.

## Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

The screenshot shows the Contrast Checker interface. The 'Foreground' section has a hex value of #A2C3EB and a lightness slider. The 'Background' section has a hex value of #E2DCD6 and a lightness slider. A 'Contrast Ratio' box displays '1.33:1'. Below the sliders are 'Color Picker' and 'Alpha' (set to 1) controls.

Contrast Ratio  
**1.33:1**

[permalink](#)

The screenshot shows the test results for the 1.33:1 contrast ratio. Three categories are listed: 'Normal Text' (WCAG AA: Fail, WCAG AAA: Fail), 'Large Text' (WCAG AA: Fail, WCAG AAA: Fail), and 'Graphical Objects and User Interface Components' (WCAG AA: Fail). Each category is accompanied by a sample of the text and a red 'Fail' badge.

Test results will show if the contrast passed or failed in the following three categories:

- Normal Text (12pt)
- Large Text (16pt or larger)
- Graphical Objects

## Font

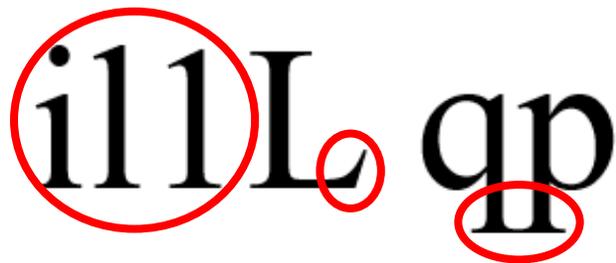
Fonts play a crucial role in accessibility because they impact readability and comprehension. Clear, legible fonts ensure that text is easily readable for people with visual impairments or dyslexia. Choose simple fonts like the [District's branding fonts](#): Larsseit, Poppins, and Lato. Do not use decorative fonts with scripts or decorative styles as these are harder to read. Make sure font characters are appropriately spaced out and do not have any connections or overlap. Ensure your font size is 12 points or larger and avoid the use of all capital letters, excessive italics or underline.

## Typography

Both legibility and readability are crucial for effective communication in design and typography. Ensuring high legibility and readability helps make text accessible to a wider audience.

- Legibility focuses on the clarity of individual characters.
- Readability focuses on the ease of reading and understanding the text.

Test height, similarities decorative elements with lower case “i”, lower case “l”, the number “1” upper case “L”. Another test is comparing lower case “q” and lower case “p” to determine how close the characters align.

The image shows the characters 'i', 'l', '1', 'L', 'q', and 'p' in the Times New Roman font. Red circles are drawn around the 'i', 'l', '1', and 'L' to highlight their similar shapes. Another red circle is drawn around the 'q' and 'p' to highlight their similar shapes and decorative elements.

Font: Times New Roman

Times New Roman is not accessible because font characters are similar, have decorative ends, and decorative elements connect.

The image shows the characters 'i', 'l', '1', 'L', 'q', and 'p' in the Poppins font. The characters are clearly distinct from each other, with no decorative elements connecting them.

Font: Poppins

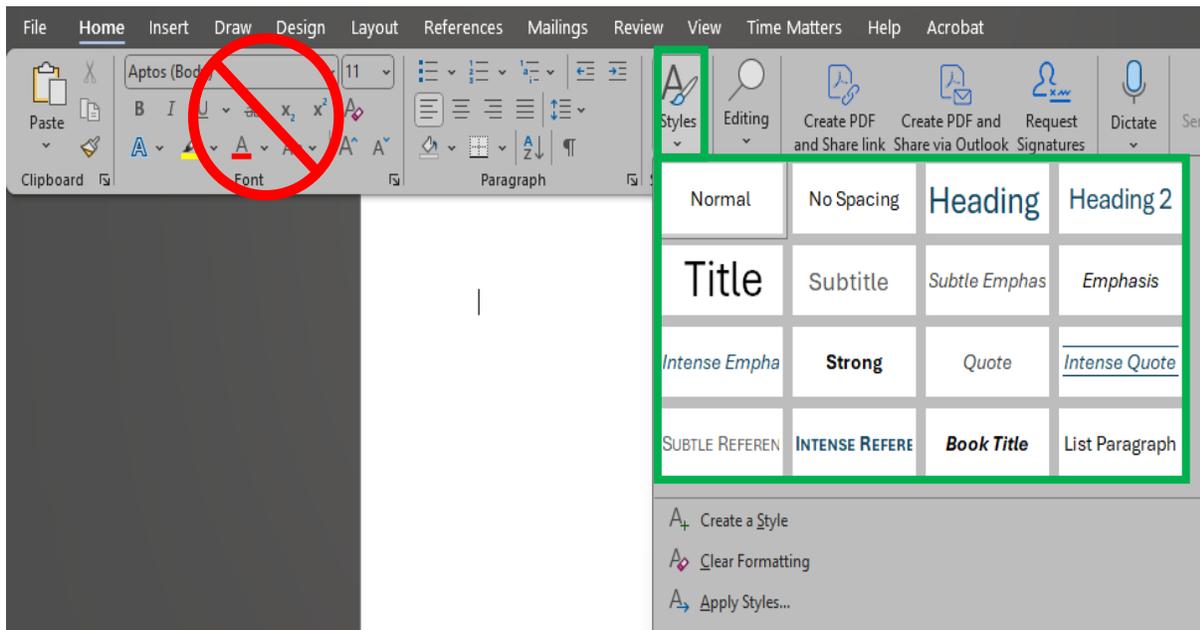
Poppins font ensures characters are all different, there are no decorative elements and has sufficient spacing between characters.

## Headings

Headings allow screen reader users to navigate through the document efficiently. They can jump from one heading to another, making it easier to find specific sections. Headings provide a logical structure that helps organize content, and when done properly, the heading structure can be exported to "Save As" an Adobe PDF.

Note: Avoid using the "Title" style. Enlarging, Underlining or bolding the text does not make the title of the document accessible. The title of your document should be labeled as "Heading 1".

- Set meaningful titles for your document.
- Utilize heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) for hierarchical organization.
- The Styles Pane is in the "Home" tab of the ribbon.
- Ensure headings accurately describe the content they precede.



## Table & List Structure

Proper use of tables and lists promotes inclusivity and enhances usability by maintaining clear structure and hierarchy. Use the built-in "Table" feature under the Insert tab instead of creating tables with tabs or spaces. Provide

clear headers and rows, avoid merging cells, and use simple table structures. For long tables, apply “Repeat Header Rows” under the Table Layout tab. Use built-in bullets or number list styles to ensure proper reading order for screen readers and keep list formatting consistent. Avoid mixing different list styles in the same document.

<b>Course Subject</b>	<b>Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Math	25	-Math
English	20	-English
Science	18	-Science
History	22	-History

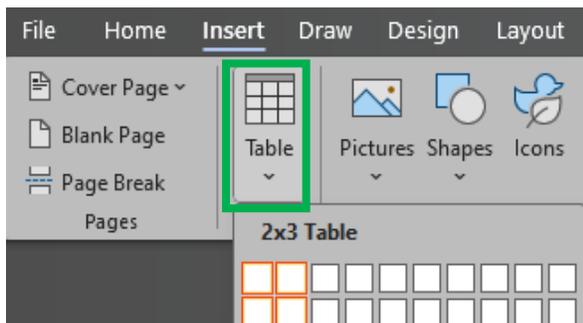
The above tables have been manually created; therefore, the screen reader will not associate the course subjects with the correct student enrollment number.

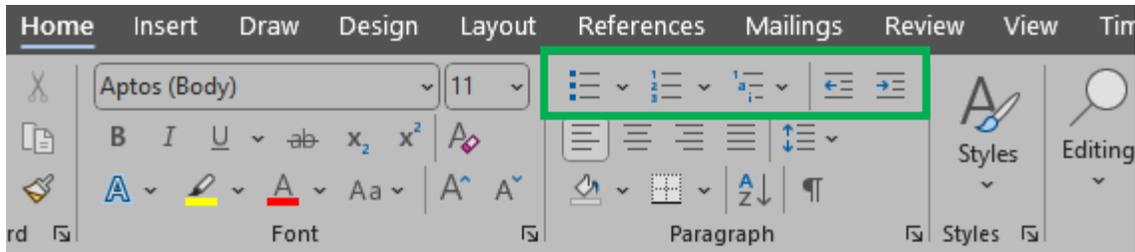
<b>Course Subject</b>	<b>Student Enrollment</b>
Math	25
English	20
Science	18
History	22

**Subject**

- Math
- English
- Science
- History

These tables use the appropriate table structure. The table headers will be read by the screen reader and relate it to the corresponding columns and rows.

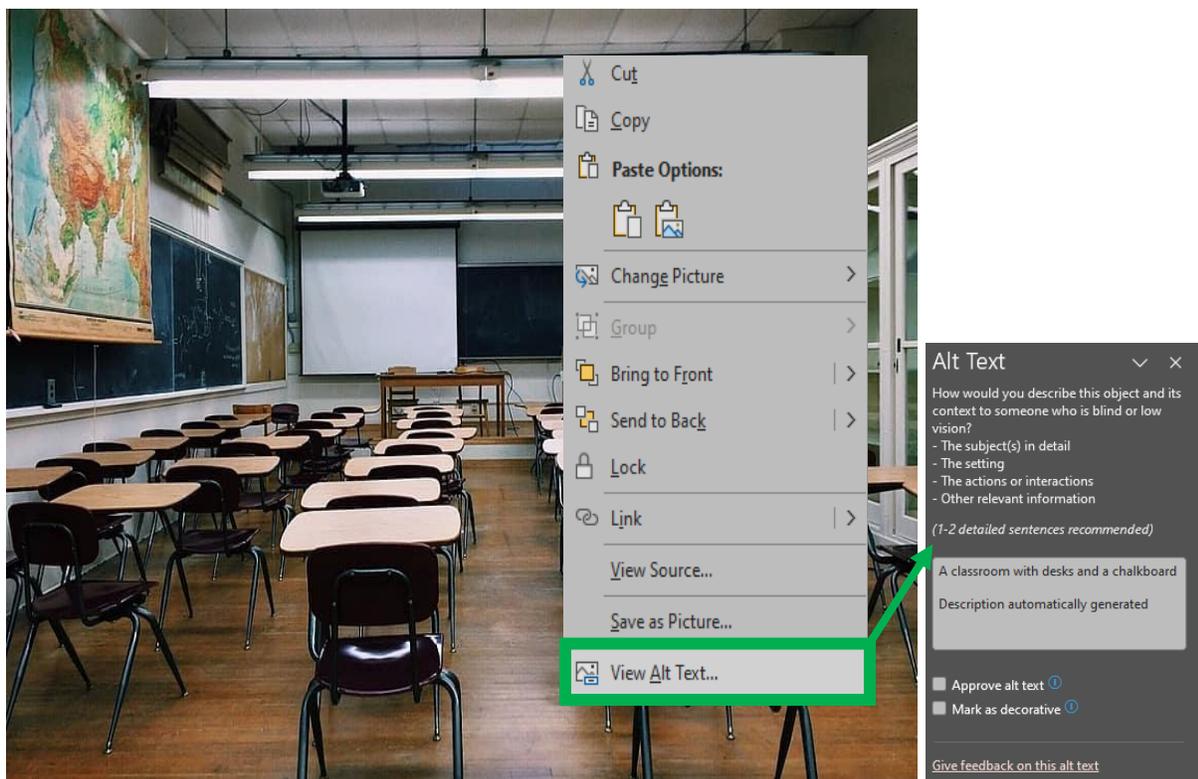




## Alternative Text (Alt Text)

Alt text provides descriptions for images, helping people with visual impairments who use screen readers. It also displays if the image fails to load, ensuring effective communication. To add alt text, right-click on an image and select the “Alt Text” tab. Provide concise, descriptive text that conveys the image’s meaning and relates to the surrounding content. The “Generate alt text for me” button uses AI to create descriptions, but not all images are recognized accurately. For decorative images, mark them as “Decorative” to avoid unnecessary screen reader descriptions or errors.

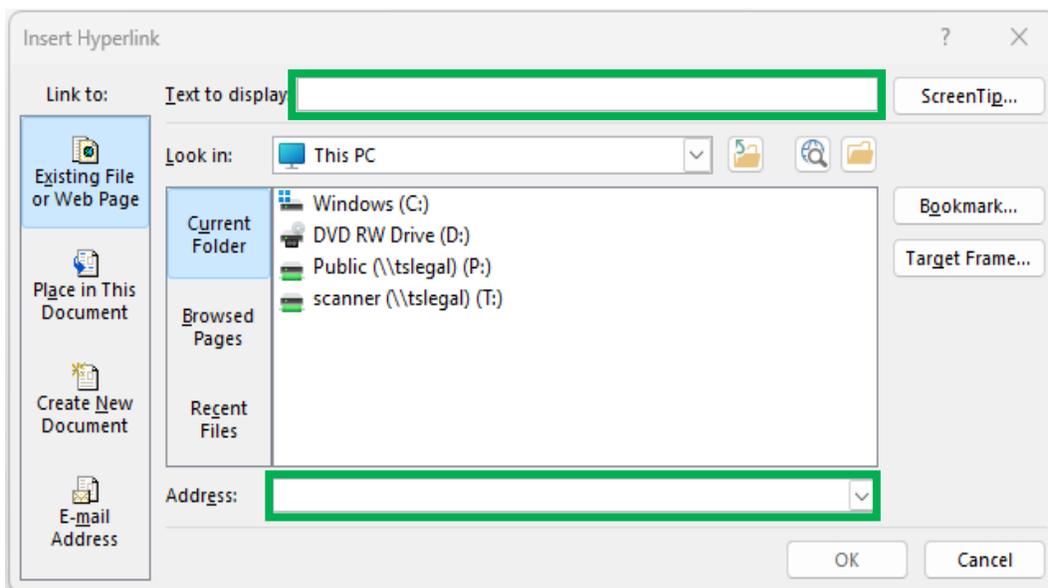
Note: Alt Text is only accessible when using a screen reader. The image description is not available to those who are not using screen readers.



Screen readers or other assistive technology will announce “image of a classroom with desks and a chalkboard.” No need to add the pre-fix Image, photo, graphic, etc.

## Descriptive Text for Multimedia

Descriptive Text provides additional context and clarity for surrounding content. Using descriptive text for links, titles, and captioned images will ensure that all individuals have equitable access to the information being shared. Use descriptive text for hyperlink anchors that clearly and accurately describe the link's destination or title of the website. Avoid generic phrases like "click here" or "read more," as they provide little context to users who navigate by screen readers. Providing alternative formats such as external transcripts, captions and creating inclusion for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing individuals. Link to external transcripts or provide them directly within the document.



Using hyperlinks in MS Word instead of full web addresses enhances document readability and professionalism by keeping the text clean and uncluttered. Type concise text description in the “Text to display” field and enter the web link in the “Address” field.

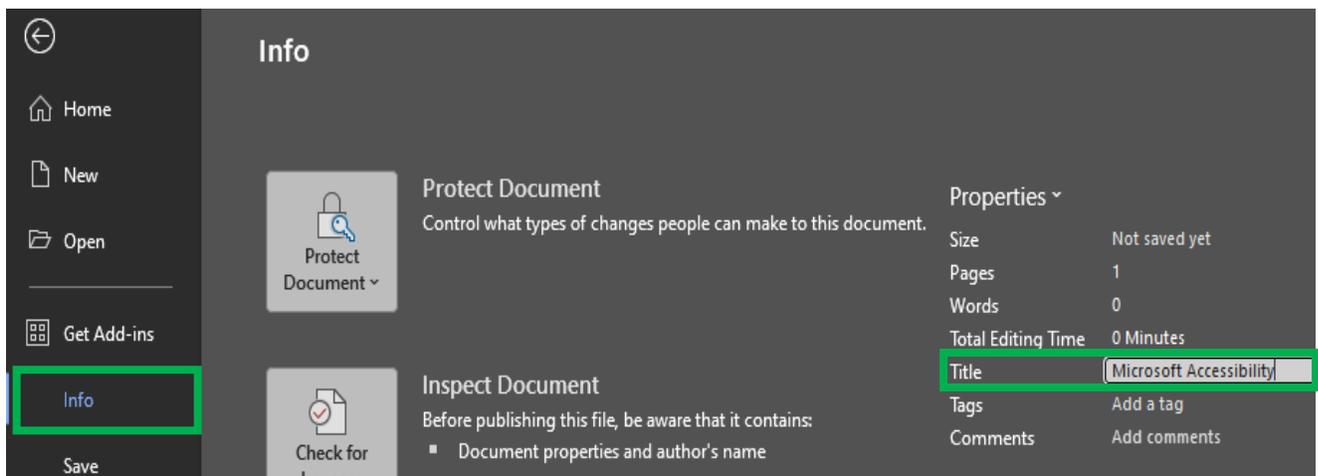
## Document Title

Adding a document title is crucial for accessibility, as it creates an introduction for someone who is using assistive technology. Follow these quick easy steps to ensure your document is accessible from the start.

**Step 1:** Go the **“File”** menu and select **“Info”**.

**Step 2:** From the Properties section select **“Add a Title”** and add your title.

- **“File Name”**: Used for organization and location of the document.
- **“Title”**: Used for understanding content upon opening, and curial for screen readers.



## Converting Word to PDF

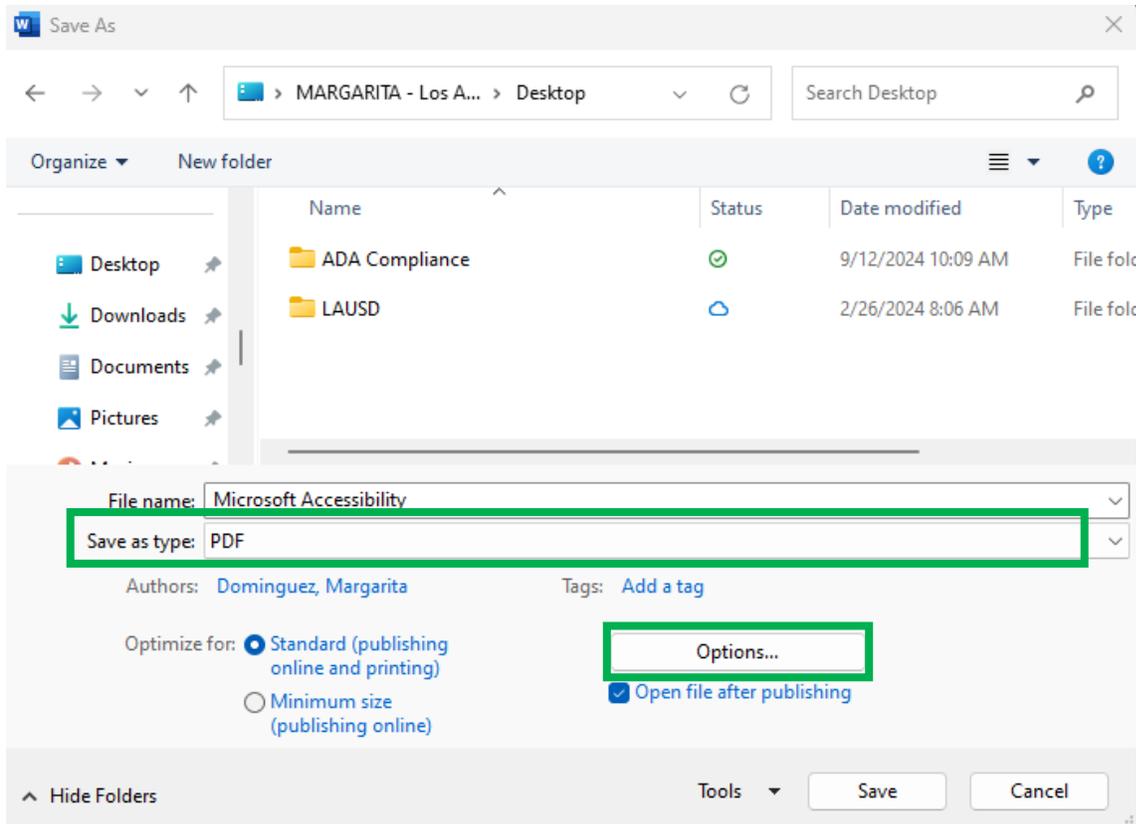
Need to save your file as a PDF? Properly saving a file as a PDF is crucial for accessibility because it preserves the document’s structure, which is essential for screen readers and other assistive technologies. Follow these steps to ensure the changes made in Word transfer into an accessible PDF.

**Step 1:** Select **“File”** tab.

**Step 2:** Select **“Save As”**.

**Step 3:** Choose **“PDF”** in the Save as type dropdown.

**Step 4:** Once PDF is selected, click on **“Options”**.

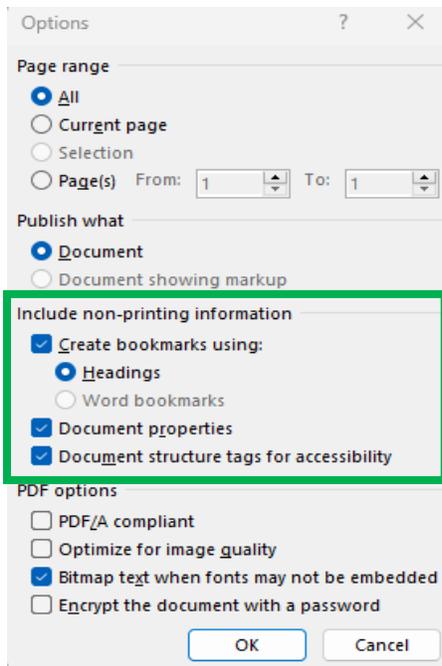


**Step 5:** Select the following items from the “Include non-printing information” section and click “OK”.

- Create bookmarks using: Headings
- Document properties
- Document structure tags for accessibility

**Step 6:** Select “Save” to convert your Word file into a PDF.

**Do NOT select the “Print to PDF”**, accessible document structure is lost with this option.



## Resources

Below is a list of Microsoft support sites and videos for additional information.

- [Microsoft Support-Accessibility Checker](#)
- [MS-Rules for the Accessibility Checker](#)
- [Screen Reader Support for Word](#)
- [Microsoft Support-Color Contrast](#)
- [Microsoft Support-Headings](#)
- [Microsoft Support-Tables](#)
- [Microsoft Support-Alt Text](#)
- [Microsoft Support-Hyperlink](#)

Remember, creating accessible content benefits everyone! Make sure you apply these best practices to your MS Word documents. If you have additional questions or need ADA Technical Support, please contact the Office of ADA Compliance by email at [ADA-info@lausd.net](mailto:ADA-info@lausd.net).