

# Maine CITE welcomes you to today's webinar!

## Creating Accessible Documents

Lani Carlson, Maine CITE

The webinar will begin soon.

November 19, 2025



# Serving all ages and all abilities!

## Maine CITE provides:

- Information and assistance
- Assistive technology training
- Device demonstrations
- Device short-term loans
- Device reuse

## Partners:

- Gallant Therapy Services
- John F Murphy Homes
- Spurwink ALLTECH
- Pine Tree Society
- University of Maine at Farmington



# Plain Language

- Know your audience
- Words matter
- Design for understanding



# Plain Language Example



*“To operate the device, engage the power switch located on the rear panel of the unit. Subsequently, adjust the settings using the control dial situated on the front interface. Ensure that the device is calibrated according to the user manual to achieve optimal performance.”*



*“Turn on the device by flipping the switch on the back. Then, adjust the settings with the dial on the front. Follow the user manual to make sure the device is set up correctly for the best results.”*

# Make Your Content Readable

- Documents for the general public should be written on an 8th-grade reading level.
- Reading level check apps are available.
- “Shorter sentences, smaller words”.

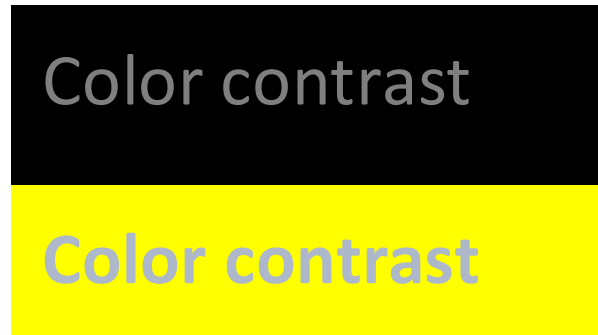
# Font Style & Size

- Can you read this?
- Can you read this?
- *Can you read this?*



# Color Contrast

Color contrast is the difference between two colors that makes it easy to see one thing from another.



Color contrast



Color contrast



# Color Conveying Meaning

**Apply Now!**  
(required fields are in blue)

Name:

Email:

Country:

**Apply Now!**

**\* = Required field**

**Name \***

**Email \***

Country:

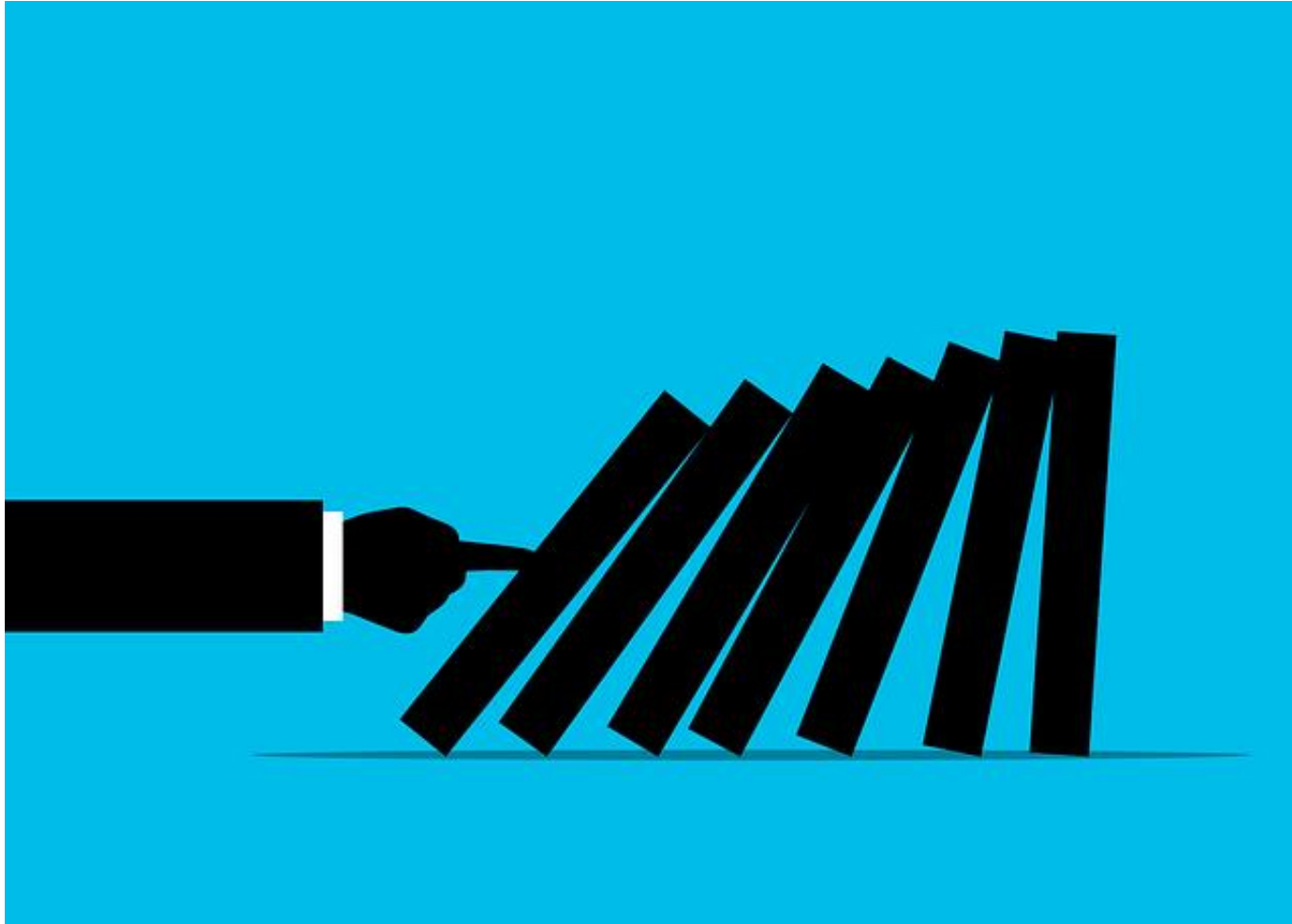
# Keep it Simple



1:12 men are color blind.



# Content Structure



# Heading Structure

## Headings (H)

- H1: Title or main content
- H2: Major section
- H3: Sub-section of H2
- H4: Sub-section of H3

H1: Creating Accessible Content

H2: Plain Language

H2: Visual Presentation

H3: Font

H3: Color Contrast

H2: Built-in Features

**\*\* Do not skip heading levels**

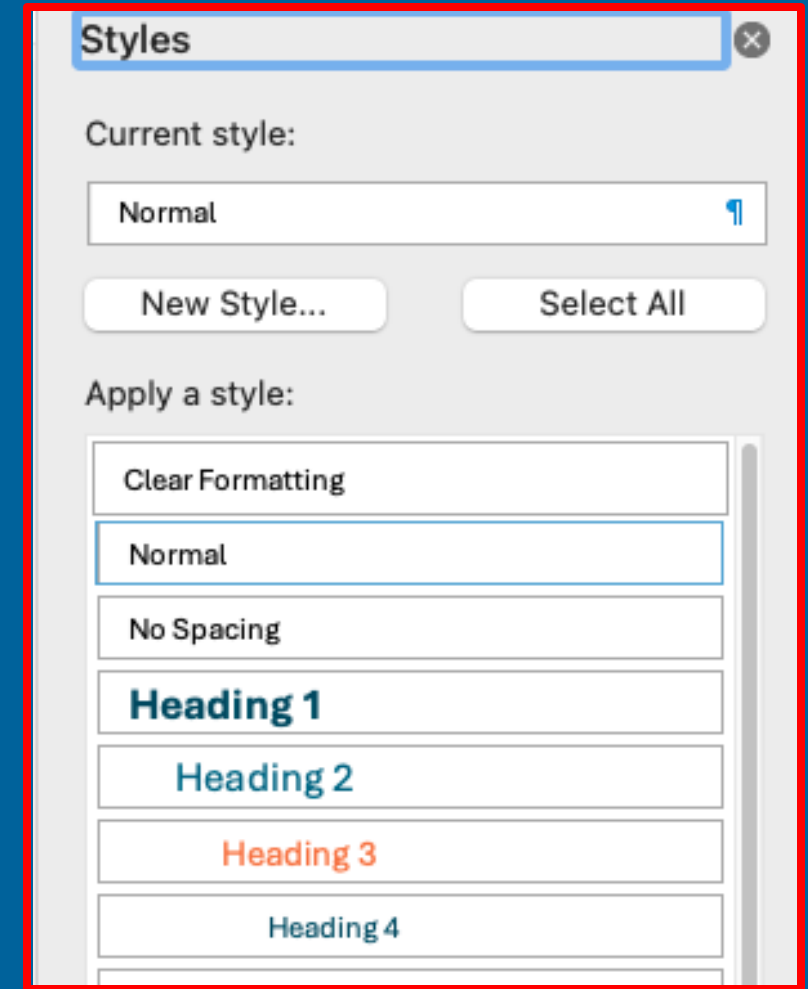
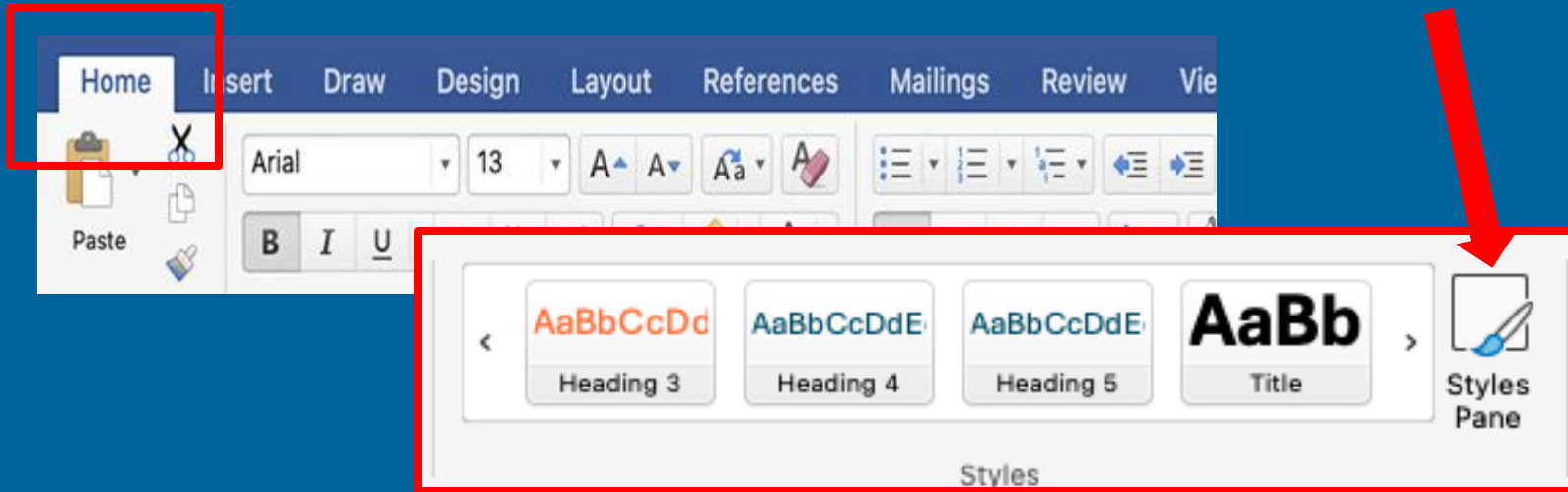
# How a Screen Reader Works

## Reading a Document

[tinyurl.com/4s2tesmn](https://tinyurl.com/4s2tesmn)

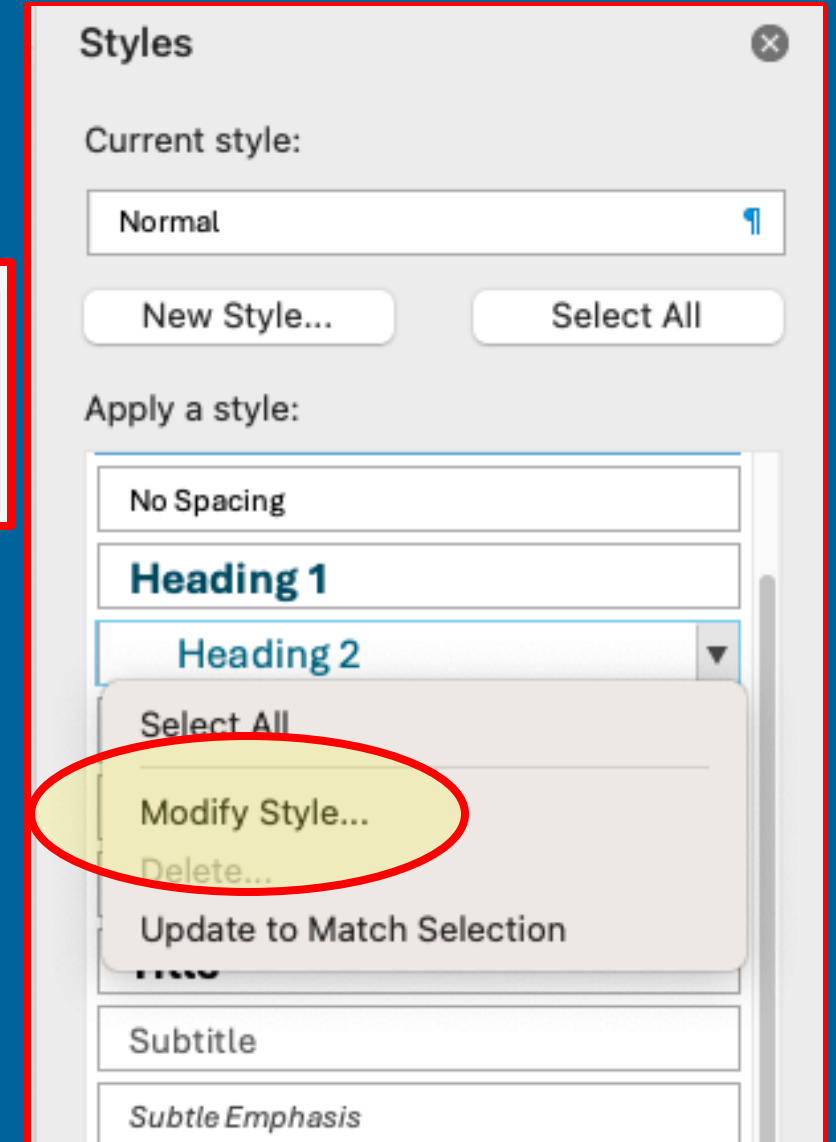
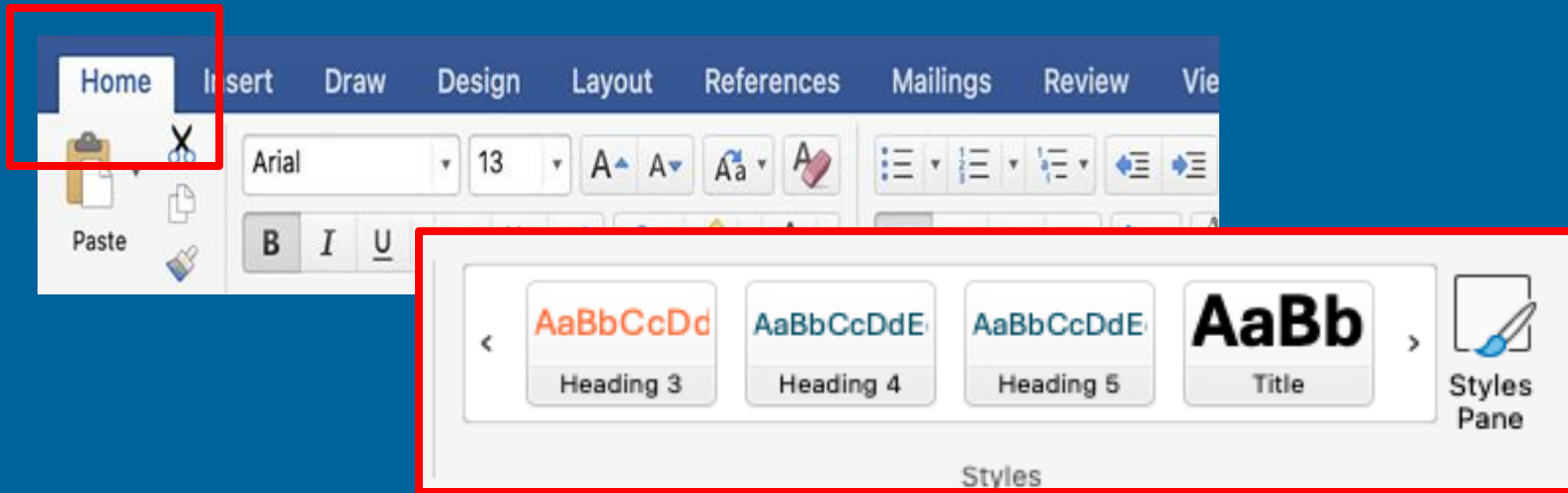
**Tufts** | Technology Services  
UNIVERSITY

# Headings in Word



- Main Menu, Select Home tab
- Look for the Styles section
- Select Styles Pane
- Highlight text & assign a style

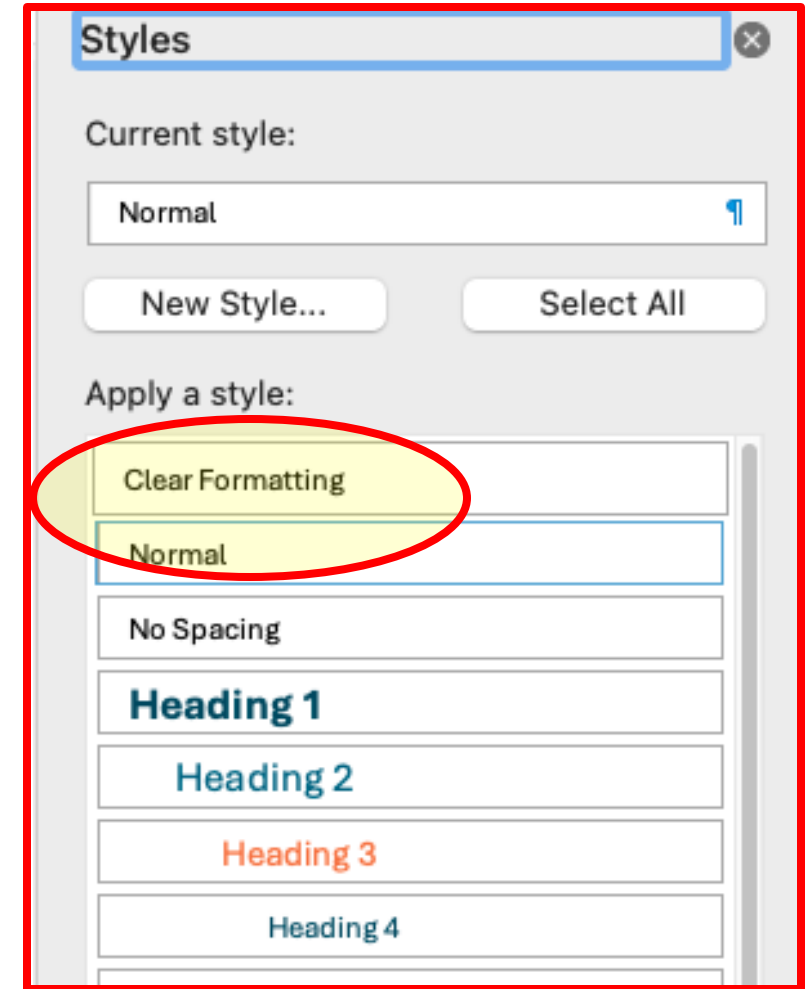
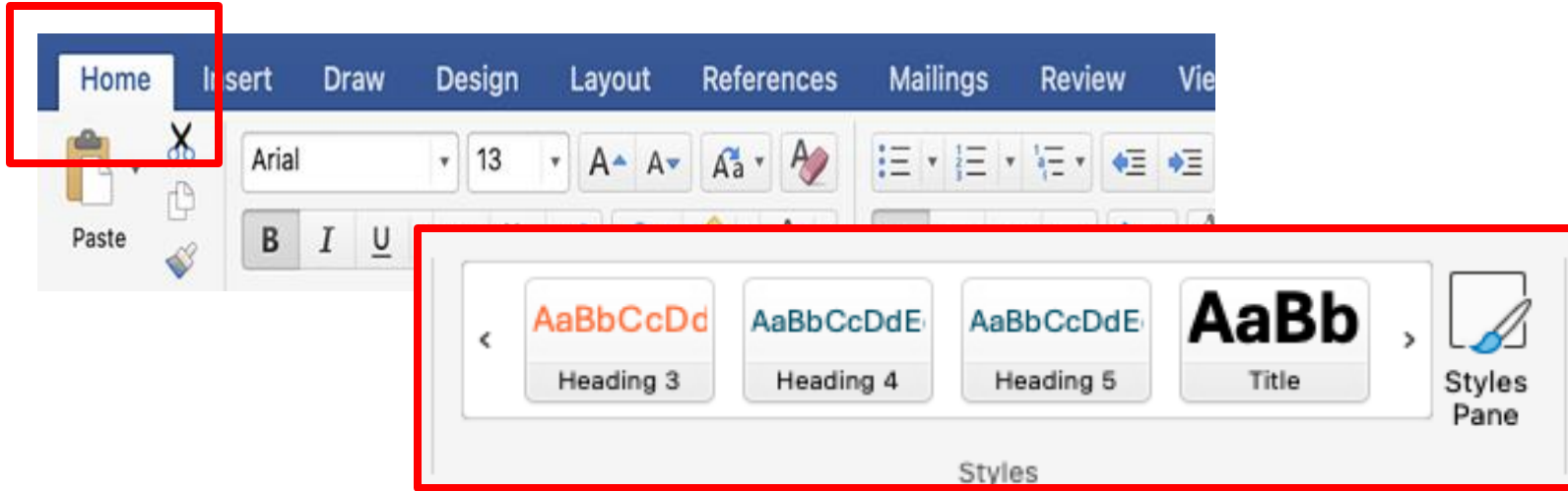
# Modify Headings in Word



- Highlight text
- Dropdown arrow next to current style
- Modify style

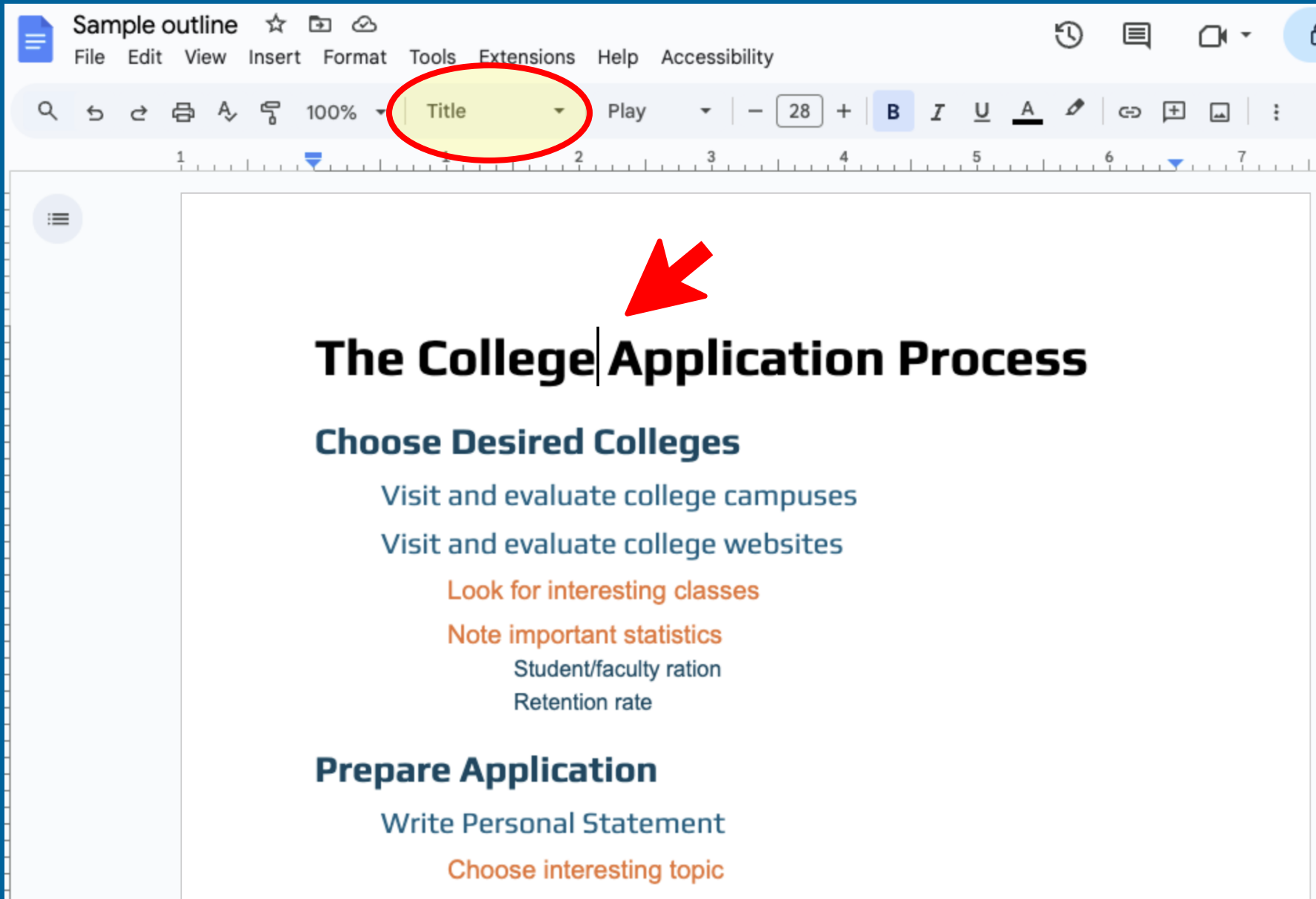


# Fresh Start in Word



- Select all text (Command A)
- Styles pane: Clear formatting

# Headings in Google Docs



Sample outline ☆ 📁 ☁

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Extensions Help Accessibility

100% Title Play 28 B I U A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

# The College Application Process

## Choose Desired Colleges

- Visit and evaluate college campuses
- Visit and evaluate college websites
- Look for interesting classes
- Note important statistics
  - Student/faculty ration
  - Retention rate

## Prepare Application

- Write Personal Statement
- Choose interesting topic

1  
1  
2  
3  
4

☰

**The** **ication Process**

**Choos** **s**

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Vis websites  
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- Normal text ▶
- ✓ **Title** ▶
- Subtitle ▶
- Heading 1** ▶
- Heading 2 ▶
- Heading 3 ▶
- Heading 4 ▶
- Heading 5 ▶
- Options ▶

Sample outline ☆ 📁 ☁

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Extensions Help Accessibility

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1 4 5 6 7

1 1 2 3 4

☰

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campuses

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Normal text ▶

✓ **Title** ▶

Subtitle ▶

**Heading 1** ▶

Heading 2 ▶

Heading 3 ▶

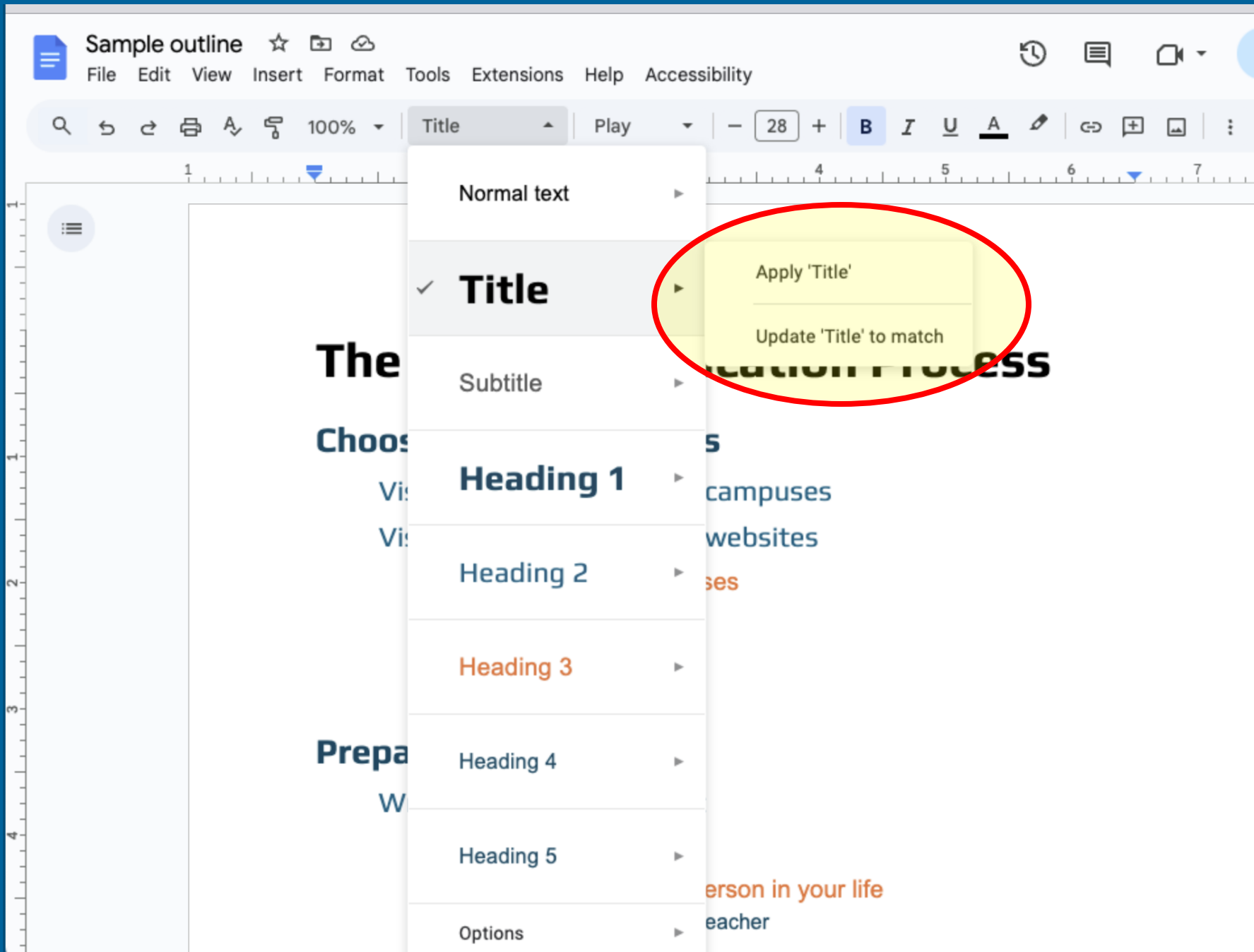
Heading 4 ▶

Heading 5 ▶

Options ▶

Apply 'Title'

Update 'Title' to match





Document tabs



Tab 1



The College Application ...

Choose Desired Colleges

Visit and evaluate colle...

Visit and evaluate colle...

Look for interesting c...

Note important statis...

Student/faculty rati...

Retention rate

Prepare Application

Write Personal Stateme...

Choose interesting to...

Describe an influenti...

# The College Application Process

## Choose Desired Colleges

Visit and evaluate college campuses

Visit and evaluate college websites

Look for interesting classes

Note important statistics

Student/faculty ration

Retention rate

## Prepare Application

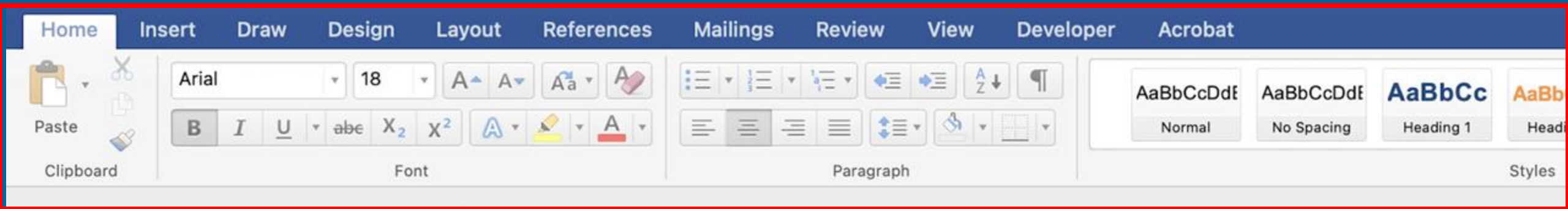
Write Personal Statement

Choose interesting topic

Describe an influential person in your life

Favorite high school teacher

# Use Your Tools

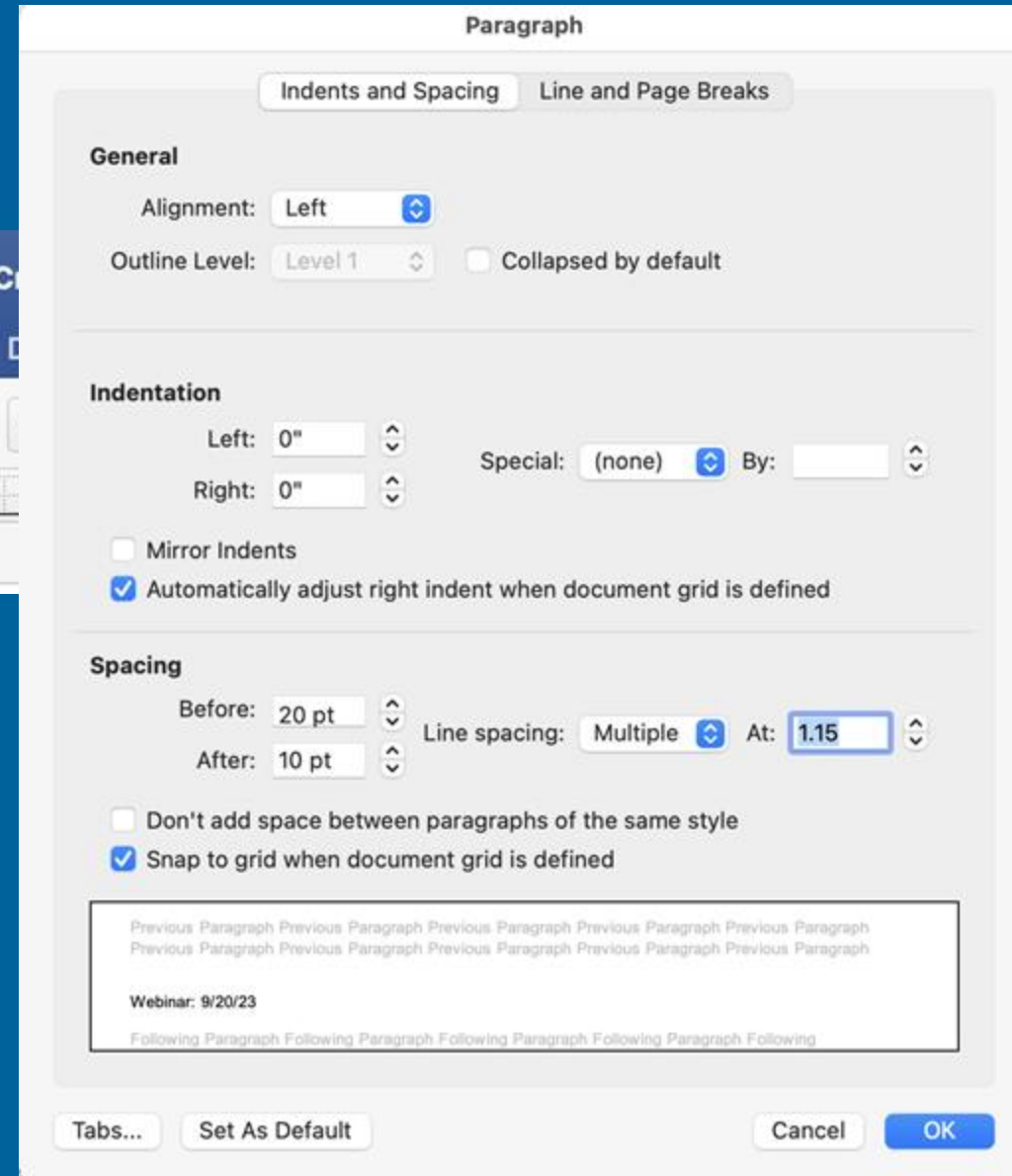
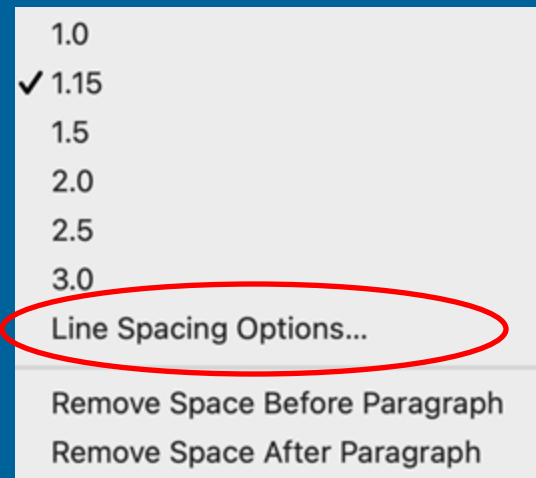
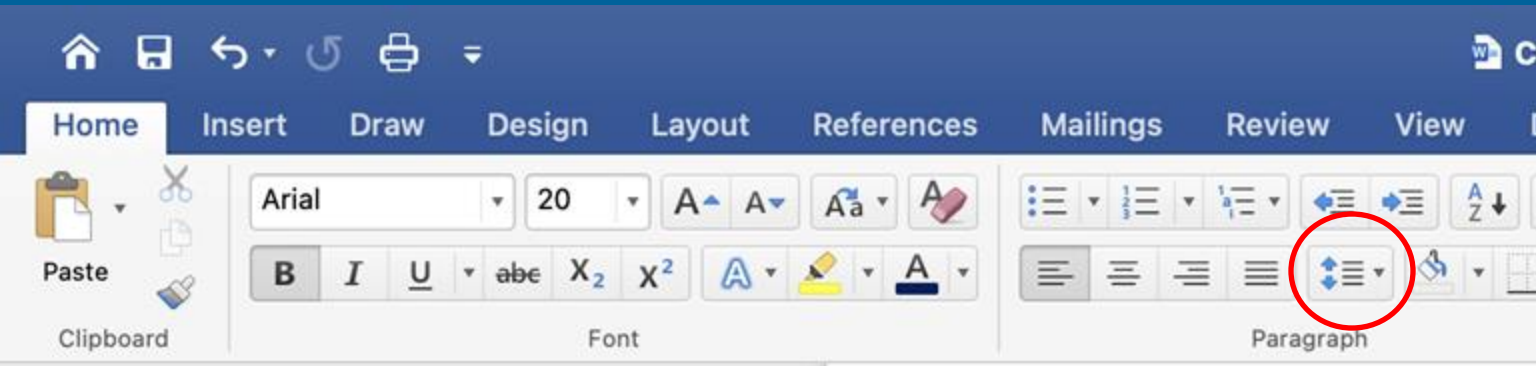


## Creating Accessible Content

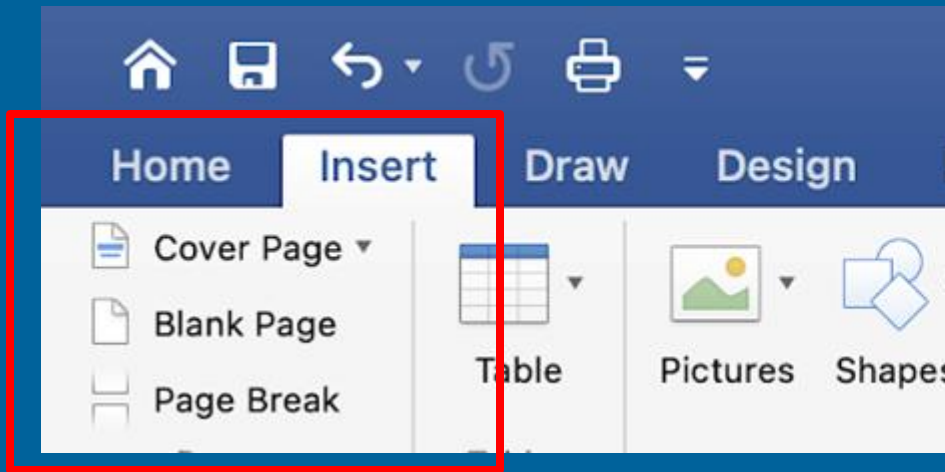
Maine CITE

Webinar Handout

# White Space



# Page Breaks



and make the necessary adjustments. You can select that the modifications be applied to the entire document. This will change the text using that style throughout the document.

In Google Docs, you can add a Heading from the main toolbar, select the text and look for the [styles](#) dropdown menu.



[www.mainecite.org](http://www.mainecite.org)

[info@mainecite.org](mailto:info@mainecite.org)

207-621-3195

Page 3

## Built-in Tools

Use the built-in tools to format your document. Repeated use of tab or return creates dead air for screen readers and there is no indication the document continues.

- Increase the space between paragraphs by expanding the 'Paragraph' tools under the 'Home' menu and adding space before or after the paragraph.
- To start a new page, use the 'Page Break' option under the 'Insert' menu.

# Hyperlinks

- Keep text to a minimum.
- Be descriptive without relying on the surrounding text.
- Use different text style for hyperlink.
- More information can be found on [Maine CITE's website](#).
- More information can be found on [Maine CITE's website](http://www.mainecite.org),  
www.mainecite.org.

# Hyperlinks (continued)

Avoid ambiguous hyperlink text.

- More information can be found [here](#).

Long URL address that may be easily confused or forgotten.

- Watch this webinar: <https://mainecite.org/trainings/creating-accessible-content-level-1-november-20-2024/>

Shorten hyperlinks:

- Tiny URL (free), Bit.ly (free limited use), or Ow.ly (free trial).

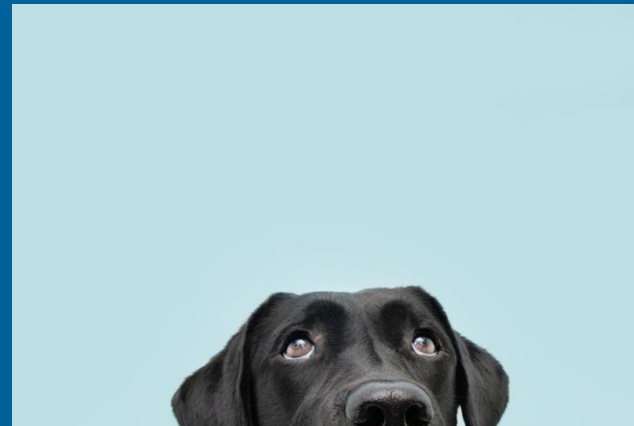
 Watch the [Level 1 CAC training](https://tinyurl.com/yck6my83), (<https://tinyurl.com/yck6my83>)

# Alternative Text (Alt text)

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- Provides a description of any non-text elements.
- Describes the **content** or **function** of the image.
- Images, icons, charts, maps, and text images.

Alt text: Black dog looking up.



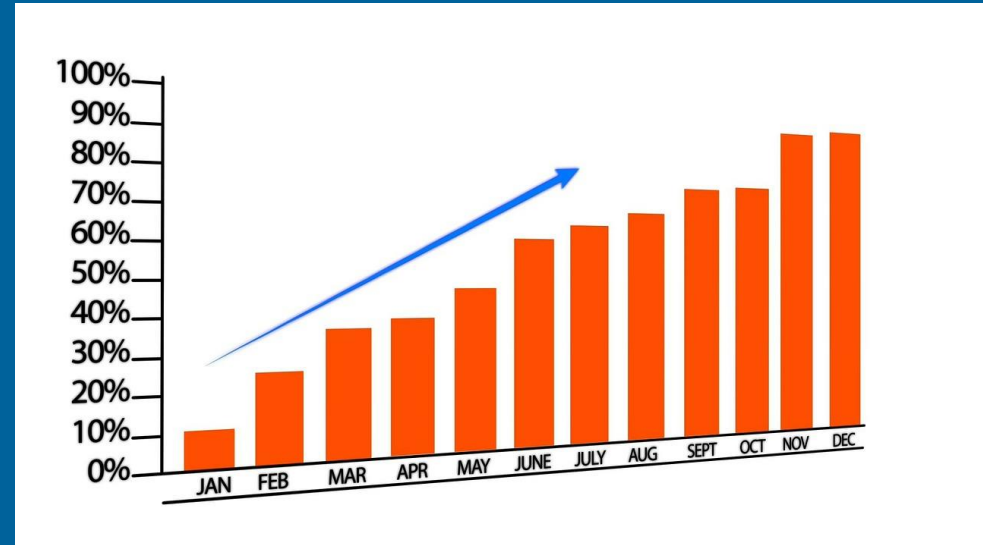
# Screen Reader Reading Alt Text

**Screen reader test**  
Images with and without  
alt attribute

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvqasTVoW98>

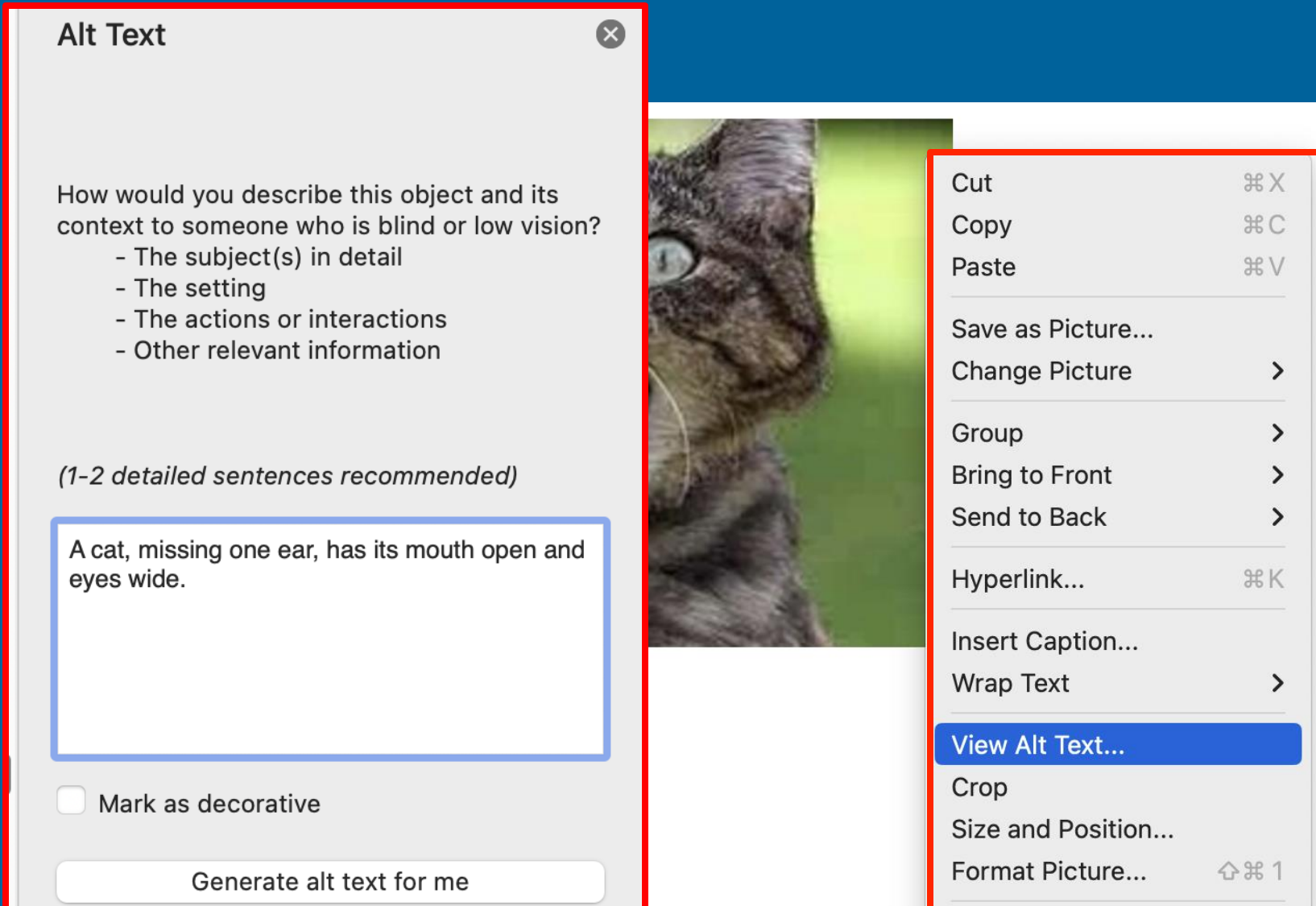
# Alt Text Best Practices

- Keep it short
- Accurate and equivalent
- But NOT redundant



Alt text: A bar chart showing increased percentages over a 12-month time period.

# How to Add Alt-Text



The image shows a software interface with two main components highlighted by red boxes. On the left is an 'Alt Text' dialog box, and on the right is a context menu for an image of a cat.

**Alt Text Dialog Box:**

- Title:** Alt Text
- Question:** How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?
- Guidelines:**
  - The subject(s) in detail
  - The setting
  - The actions or interactions
  - Other relevant information
- Recommendation:** (1-2 detailed sentences recommended)
- Text Input:** A cat, missing one ear, has its mouth open and eyes wide.
- Checkbox:**  Mark as decorative
- Button:** Generate alt text for me

**Context Menu:**

- Cut ⌘ X
- Copy ⌘ C
- Paste ⌘ V
- Save as Picture...
- Change Picture >
- Group >
- Bring to Front >
- Send to Back >
- Hyperlink... ⌘ K
- Insert Caption...
- Wrap Text >
- View Alt Text...** (highlighted)
- Crop
- Size and Position...
- Format Picture... ⌘ 1

## Alt Text



How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?

- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

*(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)*

A cat, missing one ear, has its mouth open and eyes wide.

Mark as decorative

Generate alt text for me

## Alt text



Cut ⌘ X

Copy ⌘ C

Paste ⌘ V

Save as Picture...

Change Picture >

Group >

Bring to Front >

Send to Back >

Hyperlink... ⌘ K

Insert Caption...

Wrap Text >

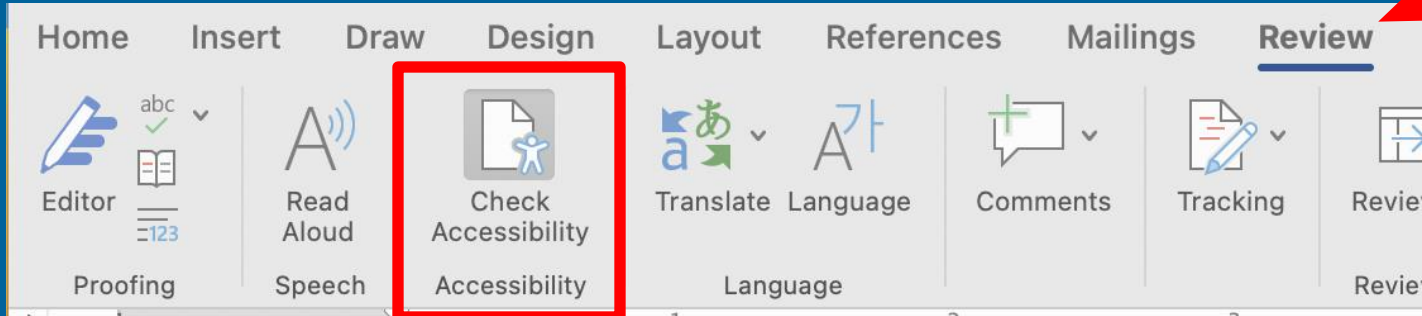
View Alt Text...

Crop

Size and Position...

Format Picture... ⌘ 1

# Accessibility Checker- Word



Accessibility Assistant ✕

**Keep going!**

Fix the remaining issues in the document to make it accessible to everyone.

**Color and Contrast**

Hard-to-read text contrast 1 >

**Media and Illustrations**

Missing alt text 1 >

**Tables**

Missing table header ✓ >

Use of merged or split cells ✓ >

**Document Structure**

No headings in document ✓ >

# Hey GOOGLE!



Accessibility features are built into Google applications too!

- Alt-Text
- Headings
- Lists
- Line spacing

# Accessibility Checker Warning

Some items may require manual checking:

- Color contrast
- Information provided in color
- Bullet and numbered lists
- Font readability
- Abbreviations and terms
- Grammar and spelling
- Accuracy of alt text



# It's Accessible, now what?

How is it being shared?



# Reach out! We are here to help!

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207-621-3195

