

Maine CITE welcomes you to today's webinar!

Creating Accessible Documents

Lani Carlson, Maine CITE

The webinar will begin soon.

February 18, 2026



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

Why Accessibility is Important

Broad Spectrum of Disabilities

- Permanent, Temporary, Situational

Type of Disability

- Motor
- Visual
- Auditory
- Cognitive

Creating Accessible Content

- Understandability
- Color contrast
- Content structure
- Built-in tools
- Hyperlinks
- Alternative text
- Accessibility checkers



Understandability

Plain Language

- Know your audience
- Word choices
- Design for understanding

Plain Language Example



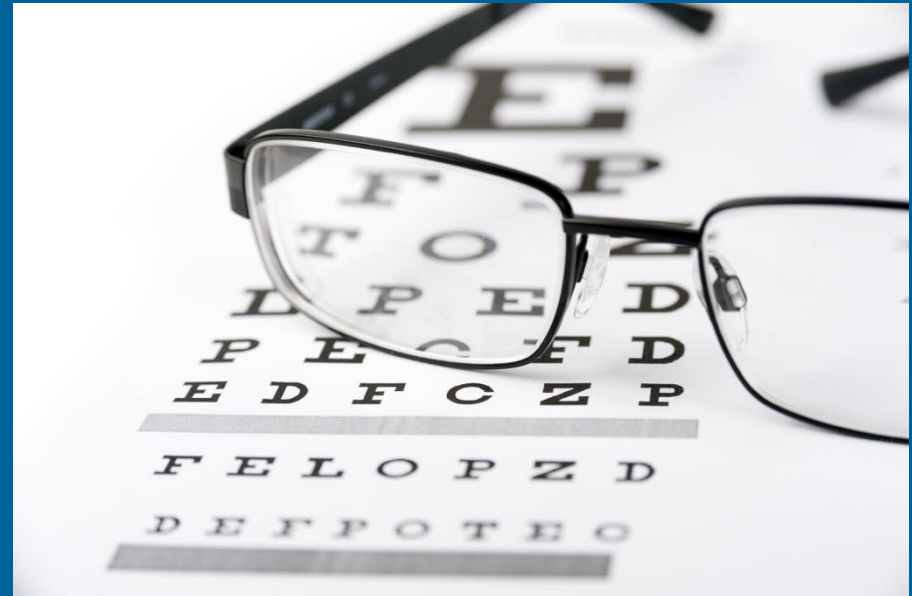
“To operate the device, engage the power switch located on the rear panel of the unit. Subsequently, adjust the settings using the control dial situated on the front interface. Ensure that the device is calibrated according to the user manual to achieve optimal performance.”



“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.”

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.



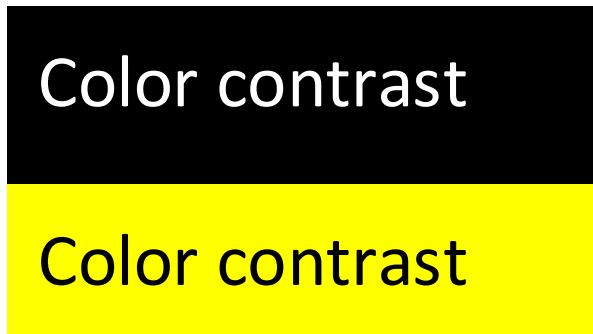
Color contrast

Color contrast

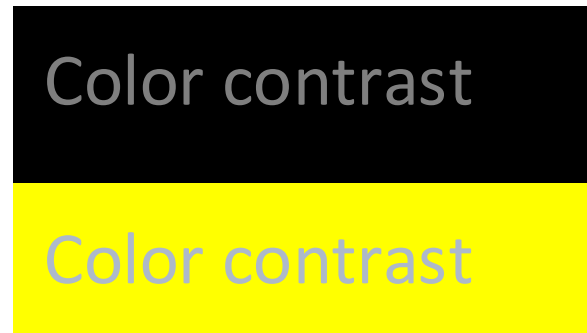
Color contrast

Color Contrast

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



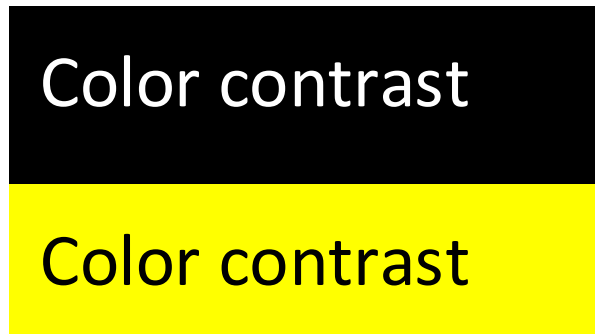
Color contrast



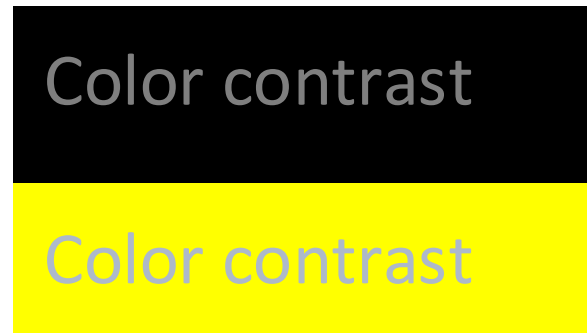
Color contrast

Color 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



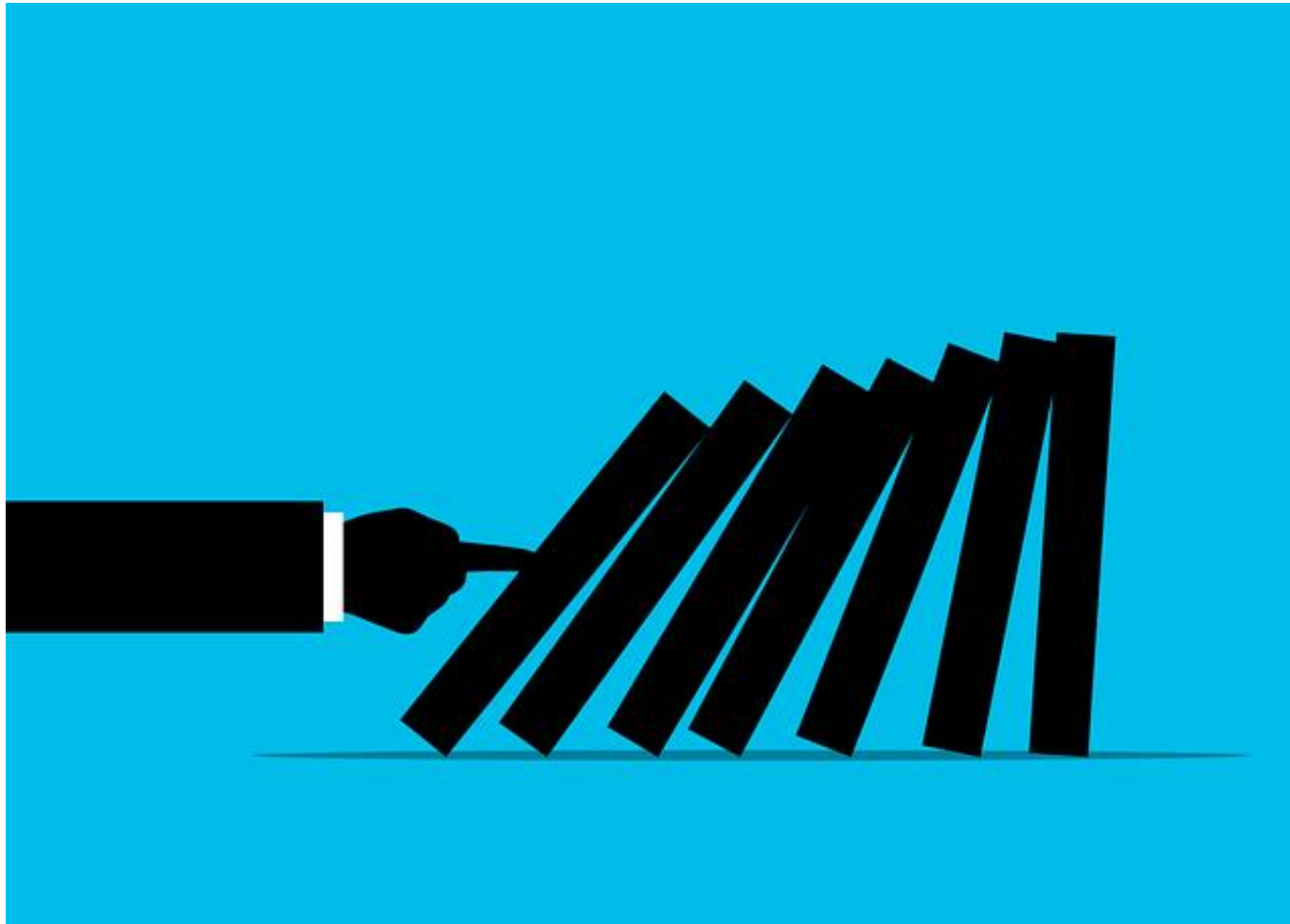
1:12 men are color blind.



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: Accessible Content

H2: Plain Language

H2: Visual Presentation

H3: Font

H3: Color Contrast

H2: Built-in Features

** Do not skip heading levels

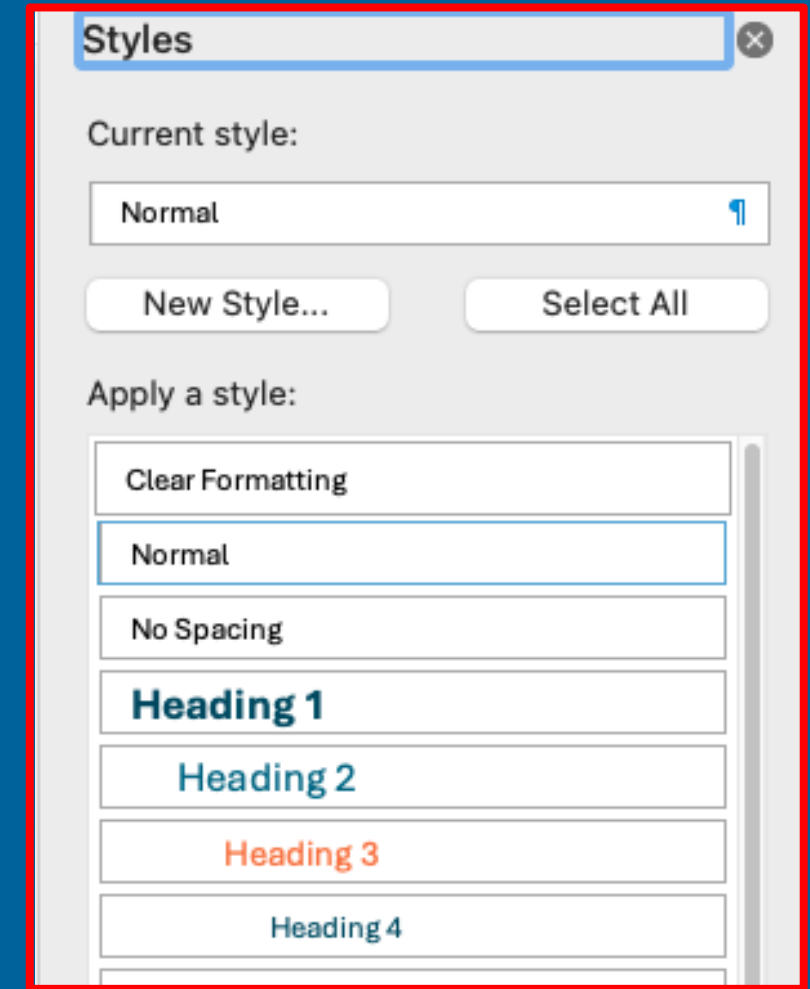
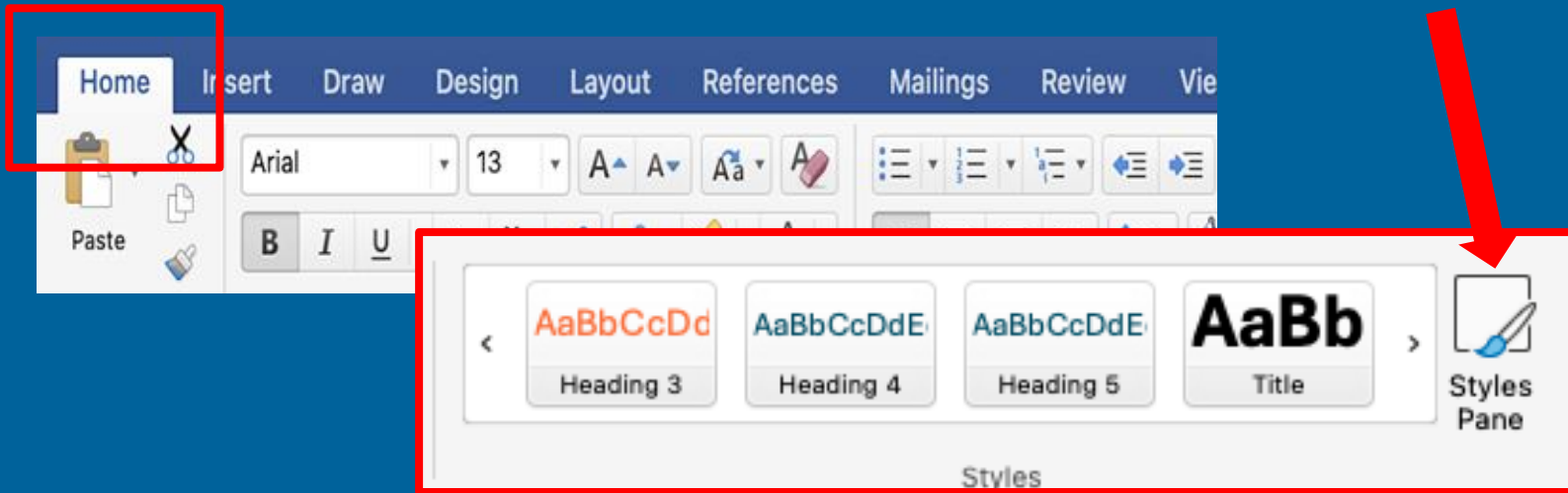
How a Screen Reader Works

Reading a Document

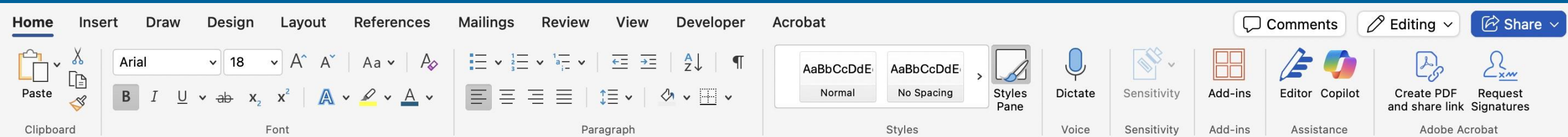
tinyurl.com/4s2tesmn

Tufts | Technology Services
UNIVERSITY

Headings in Word



1. Main Menu, Select Home tab
2. Look for the Styles section
3. Select Styles Pane



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 ratio

Retention rate



Styles

Current style: **Heading 1**

New Style... Select All

Apply a style:

- Normal
- No Spacing
- Heading 1**
- Heading 2
- Heading 3
- Heading 4
- Heading 5
- Title
- Subtitle

4. Highlight text & assign a style

Modify Headings in Word

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface with the following elements:

- Ribbon:** Home, Insert, Draw, Design, Layout, References, Mailings, Review, View, Developer, Acrobat.
- Font Group:** Arial, 18, Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Text Color (A), Background Color (A).
- Paragraph Group:** Bulleted list, Numbered list, Indentation, Paragraph alignment, Paragraph spacing.
- Styles Group:** Normal, No Spacing, Styles Pane.
- Other Tools:** Dictate, Sensitivity, Add-ins, Editor Copilot, Create PDF and share link, Request Signatures.

Document Content:

- The College Application Process** (Main Title)
- Choose Desired Colleges** (Sub-heading, highlighted in blue)
- Visit and evaluate college campuses
- Visit and evaluate college websites
- Look for interesting classes
- Note important statistics
 - Student/faculty ratio
 - Retention rate

Styles Pane:

- Current style: **Heading 1**
- Buttons: New Style..., Select All
- Apply a style: Normal, No Spacing, **Heading 1**, Select All, **Modify Style...** (highlighted with a red circle), Delete..., Update to Match Selection
- Other styles: Title, Subtitle, Subtle Emphasis

Modify Styles

Modify Styles

- Font
- Alignment
- Page formatting
- Preview
- Save & update

- Font...
- Paragraph...
- Tabs...
- Border...
- Language...
- Frame...
- Numbering...
- Shortcut key...



Modify Style

Properties

Name:

Style type:

Style based on:

Style for following paragraph:

Formatting

Arial 18 **B** *I* U

Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph Previous Paragraph

Choose Desired Colleges

Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph Following Paragraph

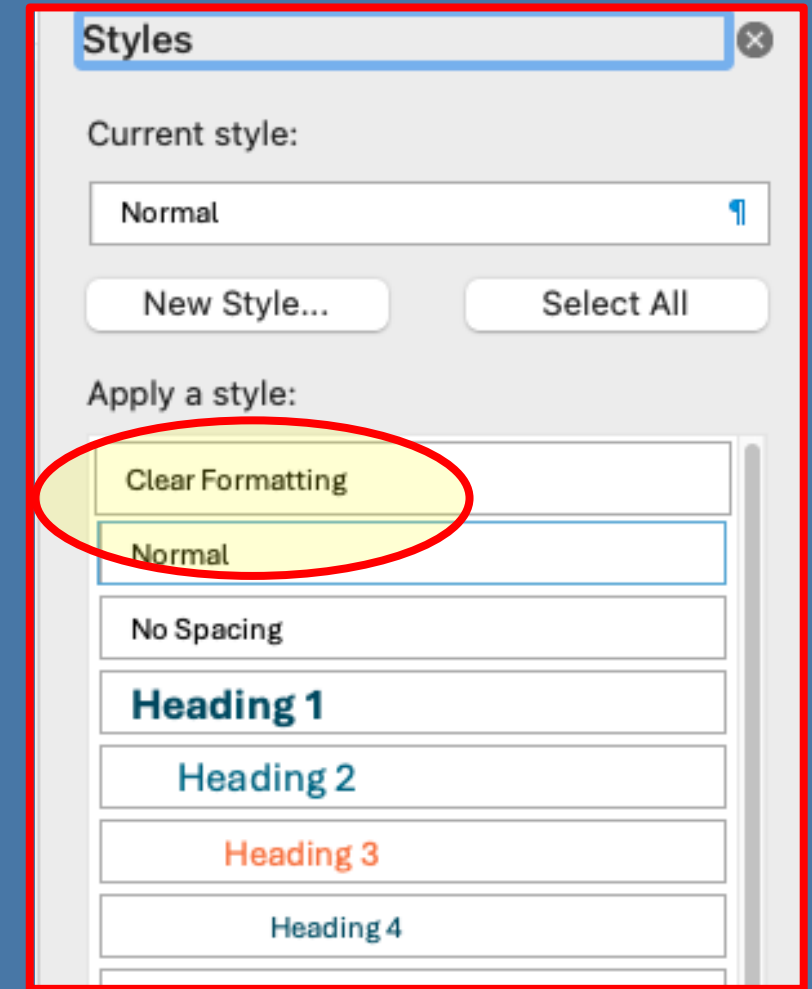
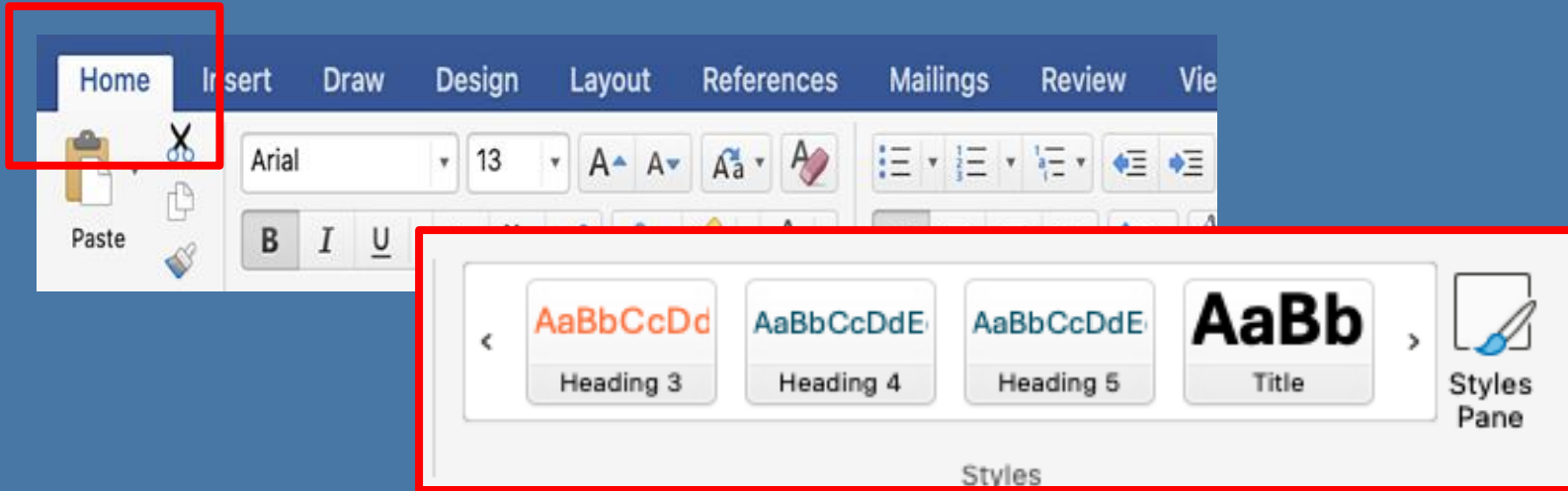
Font: (Default) Arial, 18 pt, Bold, Font color: Accent 1, Space Before: 18 pt After: 4 pt, Keep with next, Keep lines together, Level 1, Style: Linked, Show in the Styles gallery, Priority: 10

Add to template

Add to Quick Style list

Automatically update

Fresh Start in Word



1. Select all text (Command A)
2. Styles pane: Clear formatting

Headings in Google Docs

Sample outline .DOCX

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Help Accessibility

100% Title Arial 20 B I U A



The College Application Process

Choose Desired Colleges

Visit and evaluate college campuses

Visit and evaluate college websites

Look for interesting classes



Normal text ▶

Title ▶

Subtitle ▶

Heading 1 ▶

Heading 2 ▶

Heading 3 ▶

Heading 4 ▶

Heading 5 ▶

Options ▶

Apply 'Title'

Update 'Title' to match

ed Colleges

the college campuses

the college websites

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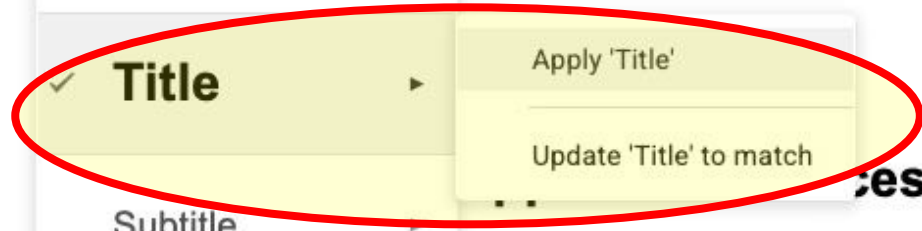
esting topic

nfluent person in your life

high school teacher

rent

Include important personal details





100%

Title

Play

28

B

I

U

A



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

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Note important statistics

Student/faculty ration

Retention rate

Prepare Application

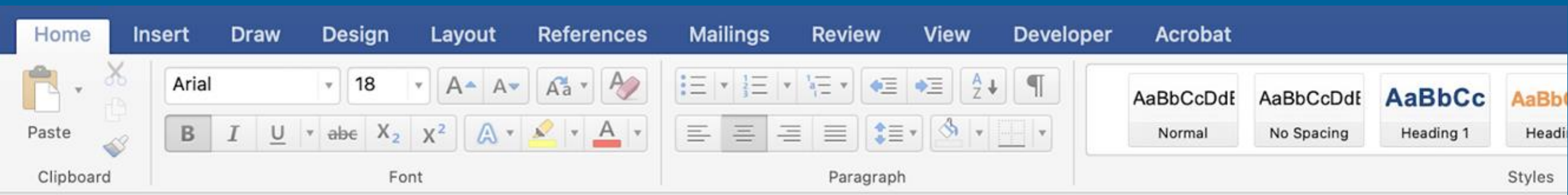
Write Personal Statement

Choose interesting topic

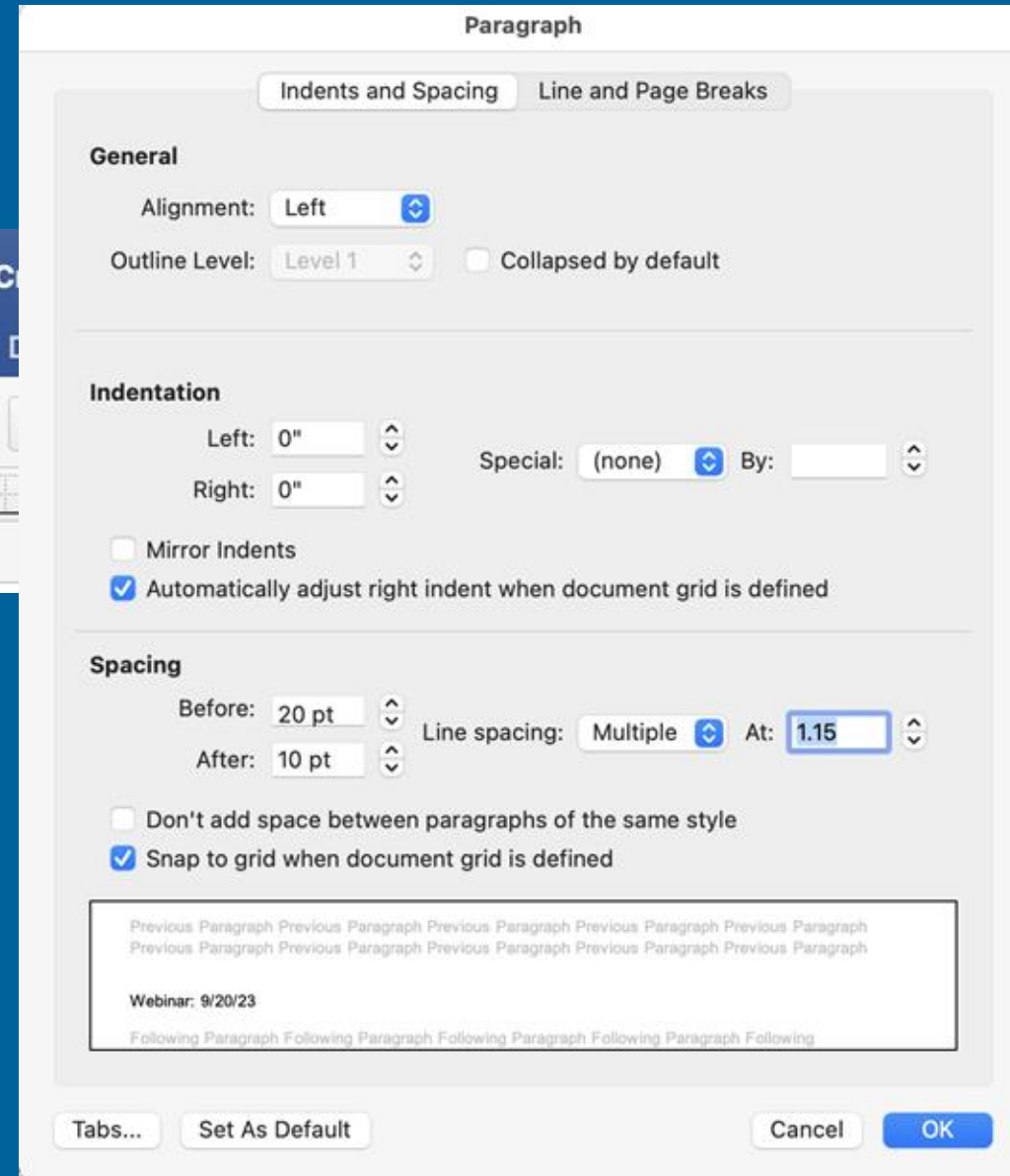
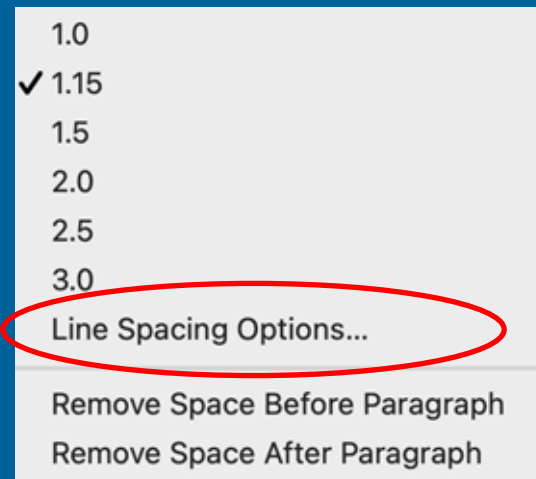
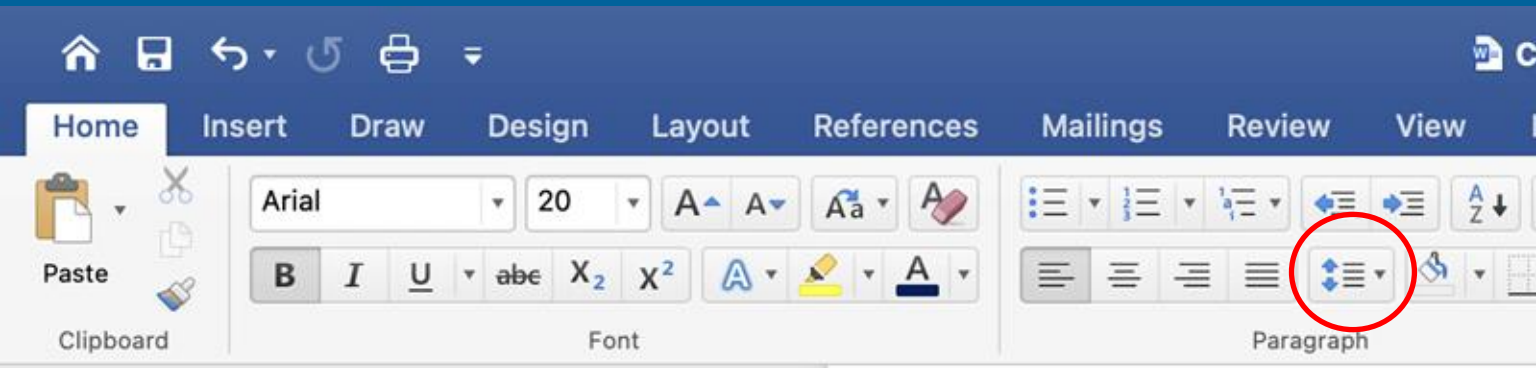
Describe an influential person in your life

Favorite high school teacher

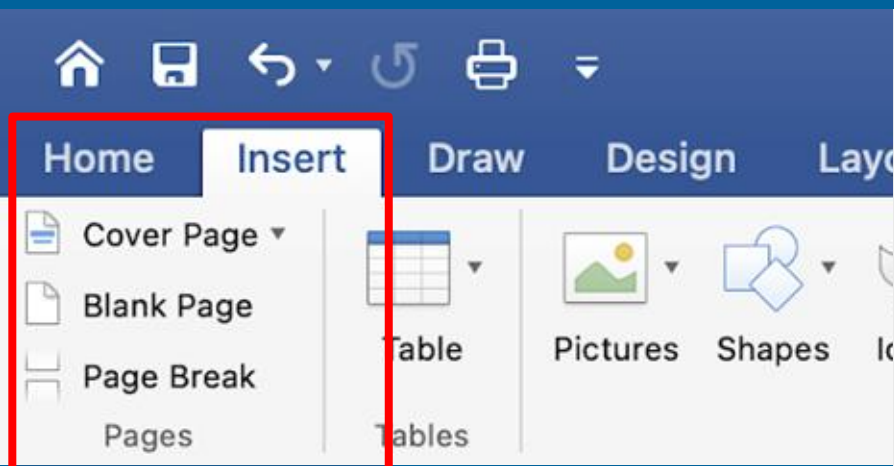
Built-in Tools



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

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

Be descriptive and concise; where will the link take you?

- Avoid: More information can be found [here](#).
- More information can be found on [Maine CITE's website](#).
- More information can be found on [Maine CITE's website](#), www.mainecite.org.

Hyperlink Tools

Long URL addresses may be easily confused or forgotten.

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

Shorten hyperlinks:

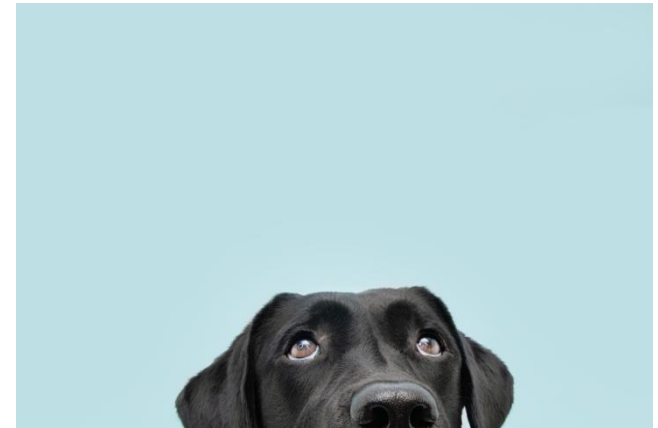
Tiny URL (free), Bit.ly (free limited use), or Ow.ly (free trial)

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

Alternative Text (Alt text)

- 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's face looking upwards.



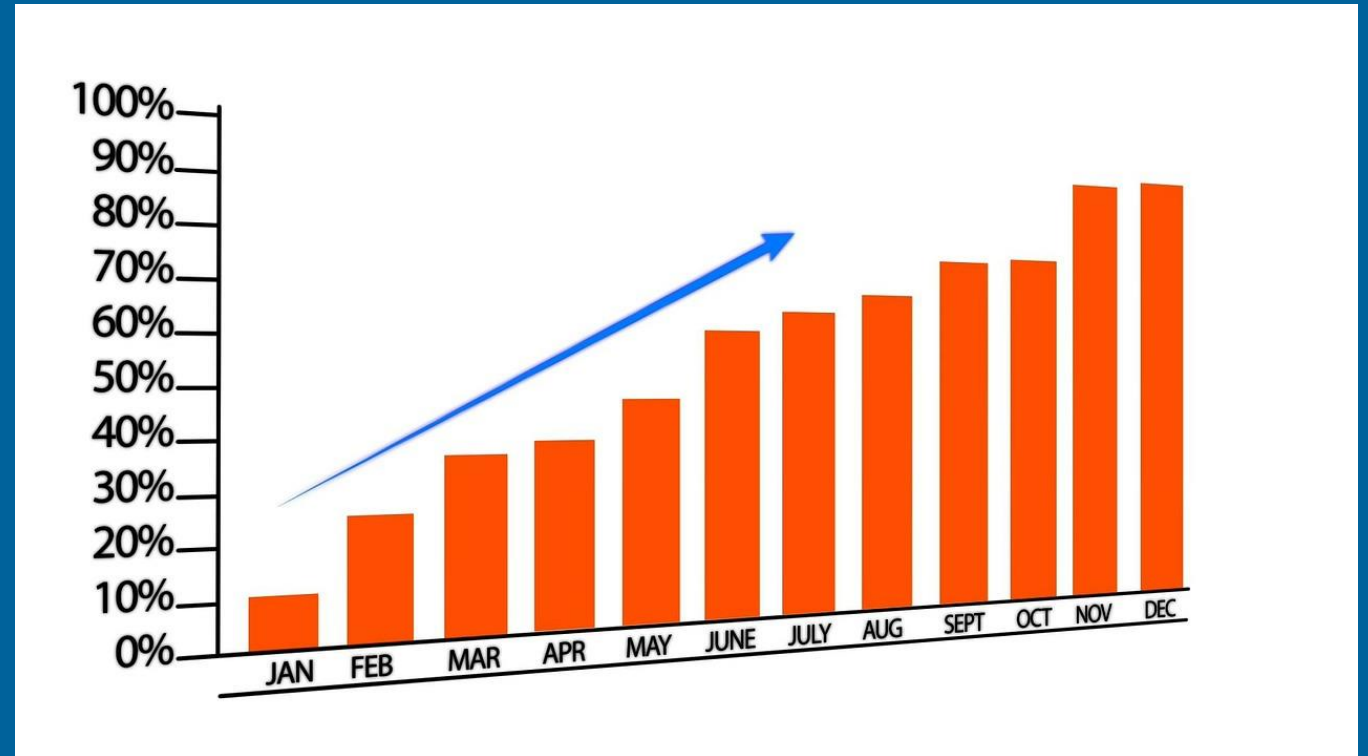
Screen Reader Reading Alt Text

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.

Adding Alt Text



Save as Picture...

Change Picture >

Group >

Bring to Front >

Send to Back >

Hyperlink... ⌘K

Insert Caption...

Wrap Text >

View Alt Text...

Crop

Auto 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

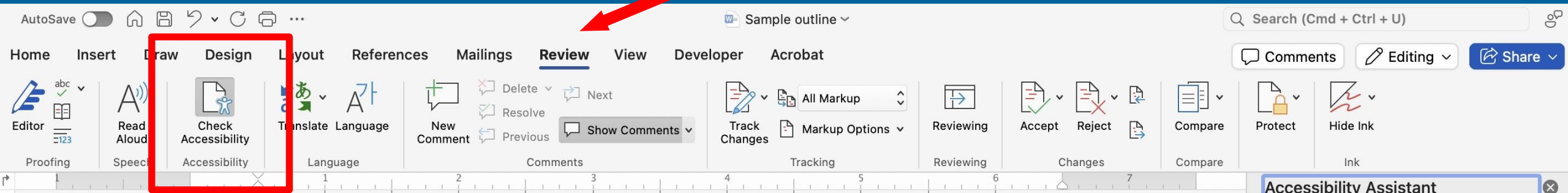
(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Black dog's face looking upwards.

Mark as decorative

Generate alt text for me

Accessibility Checker on Word



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Accessibility Assistant

Quick Fix 1 of 1

3 text ranges with orange color have poor contrast. Review now to enhance readability.

[Review issues](#)

Color and Contrast

Hard-to-read text contrast 3 >

Media and Illustrations

Missing alt text >

Tables

Google Docs Accessibility



Accessibility features are built into Google applications too!

- Alt-Text
- Headings
- Lists
- Line spacing

Accessibility Checkers

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!



Maine CITE

Assistive Technology for all ages and all abilities

www.mainecite.org

info@mainecite.org

207-621-3195

