

Maine CITE welcomes you to today's webinar!

Creating Accessible Documents

Lani Carlson, Maine CITE Director

May 19, 2026

The webinar will begin soon.



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
- Waypoint

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

- Active voice
- Simple words
- Shorter sentences



“We regret to inform you that your recent request for a refund has been declined due to non-compliance with the stipulated return policy.”

“We're sorry, but we can't give you a refund because it doesn't follow our return policy.”

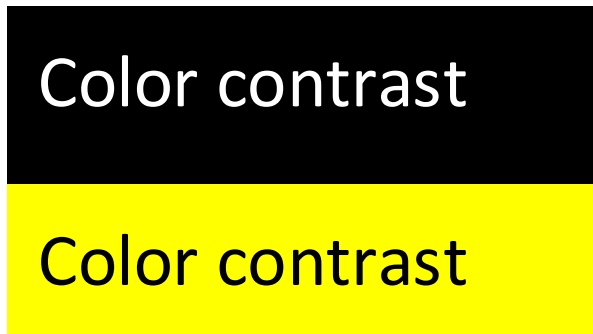
Font Style and Size

- Accessible fonts
- Font size
- Location

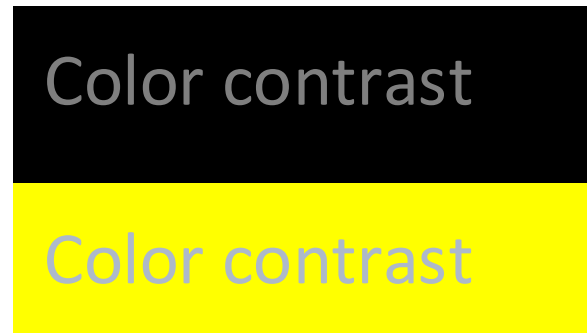


Color Contrast

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



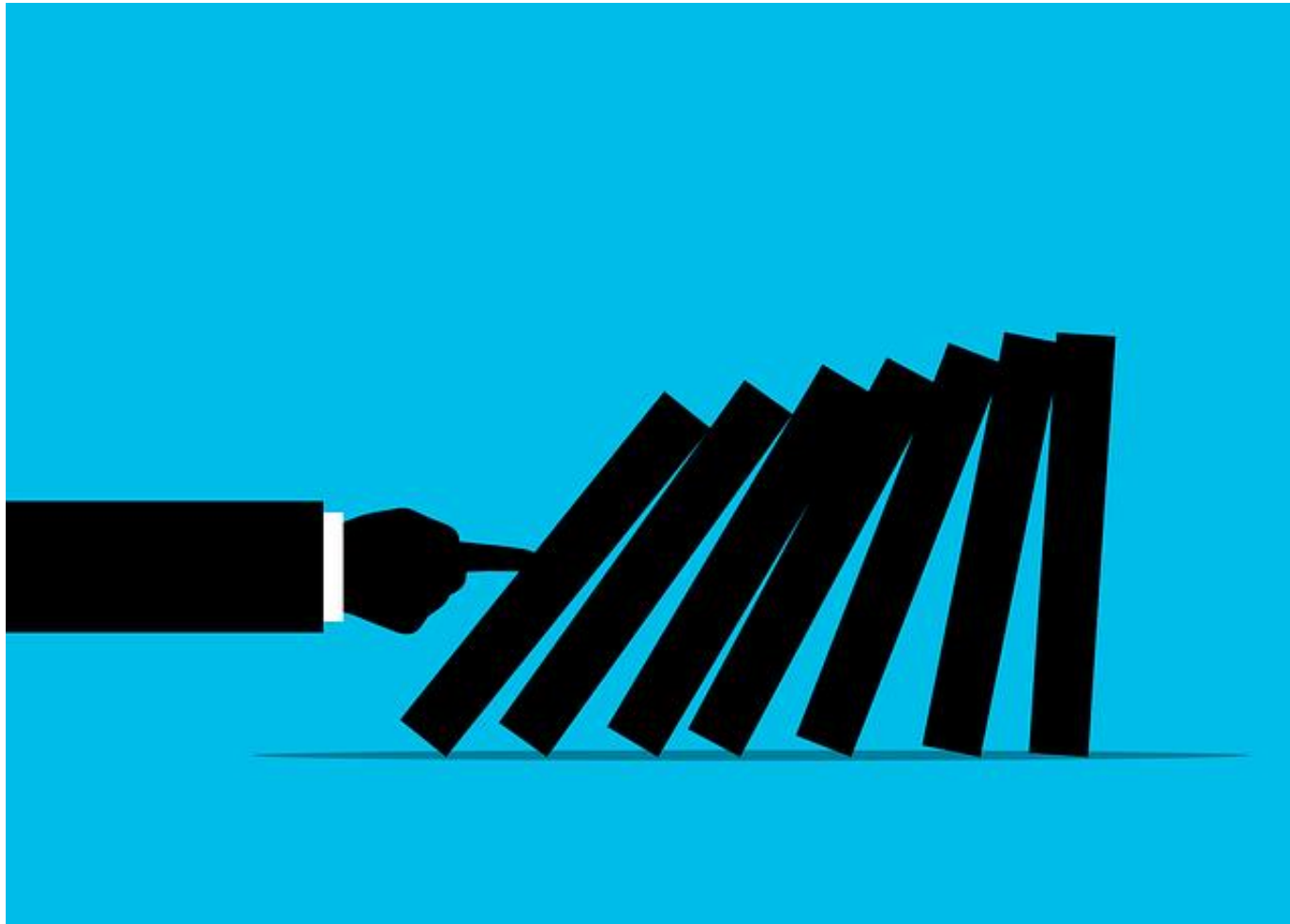
1:12 men are color blind.



1:12 men are color blind.



Content Structure



Heading Structure

Heading 1: Title or main content

Heading 2: Major section

Heading 3: Sub-section of H2

Heading 4: Sub-section of H3

How a Screen Reader Works

Reading a Document



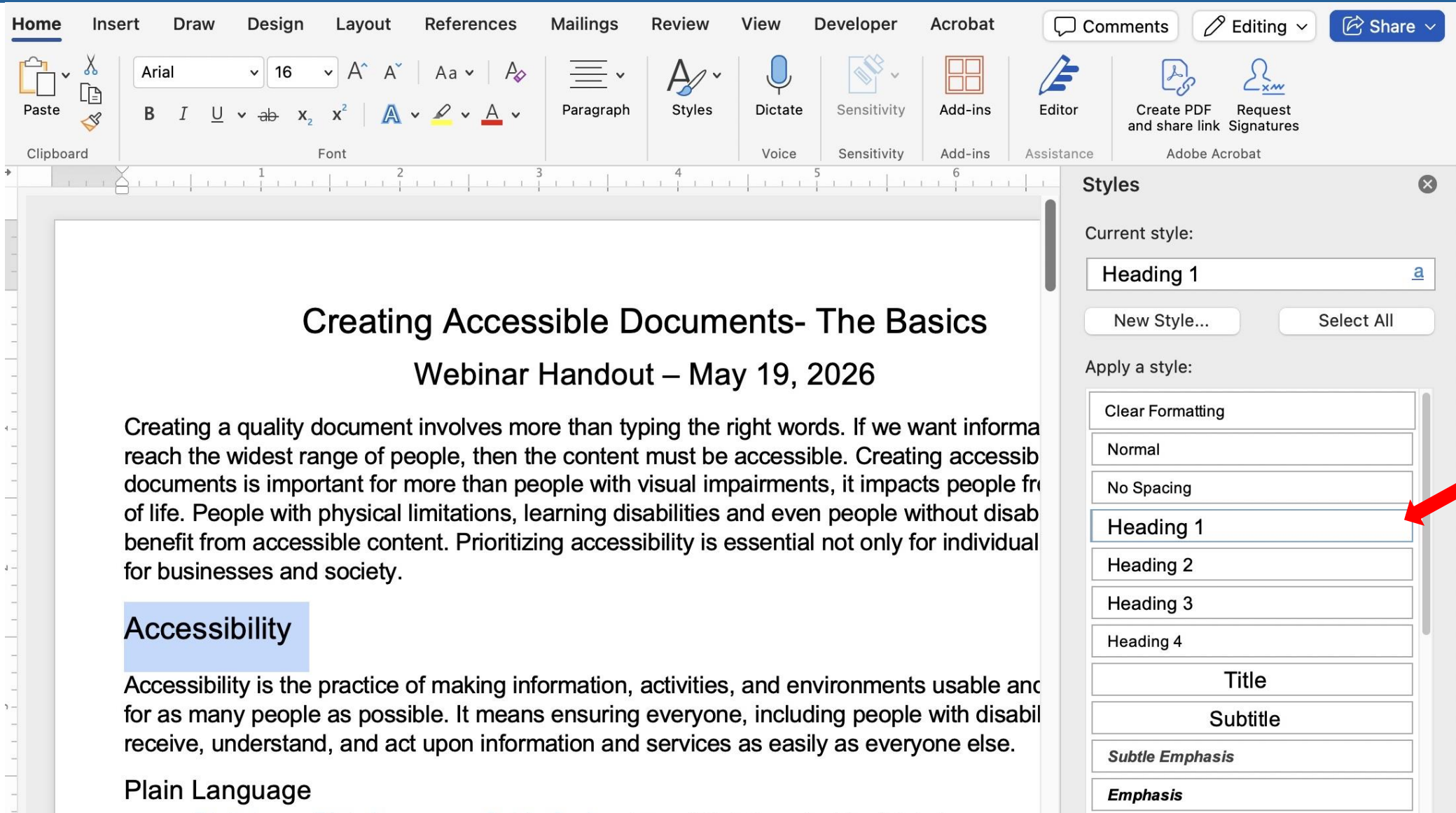
tinyurl.com/4s2tesmn

Headings in Word

The image shows the Microsoft Word ribbon and the Styles pane. The ribbon is set to the Home tab. The Styles section of the ribbon is highlighted with a red box, and a red arrow points to the Styles Pane icon. The Styles Pane is open, showing the current style as Normal. The Styles Pane also shows a list of styles, including Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, and Heading 4. A red arrow points to the Styles Pane icon in the ribbon, and another red arrow points to the Styles Pane icon in the Styles Pane.

- Main Menu, Select Home tab
- Look for the Styles section
- Select Styles Pane

Headings Example



The image shows a Microsoft Word document with the following content:

Creating Accessible Documents- The Basics
Webinar Handout – May 19, 2026

Creating a quality document involves more than typing the right words. If we want informa reach the widest range of people, then the content must be accessible. Creating accessib documents is important for more than people with visual impairments, it impacts people fr of life. People with physical limitations, learning disabilities and even people without disab benefit from accessible content. Prioritizing accessibility is essential not only for individual for businesses and society.

Accessibility

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and environments usable and for as many people as possible. It means ensuring everyone, including people with disabil receive, understand, and act upon information and services as easily as everyone else.

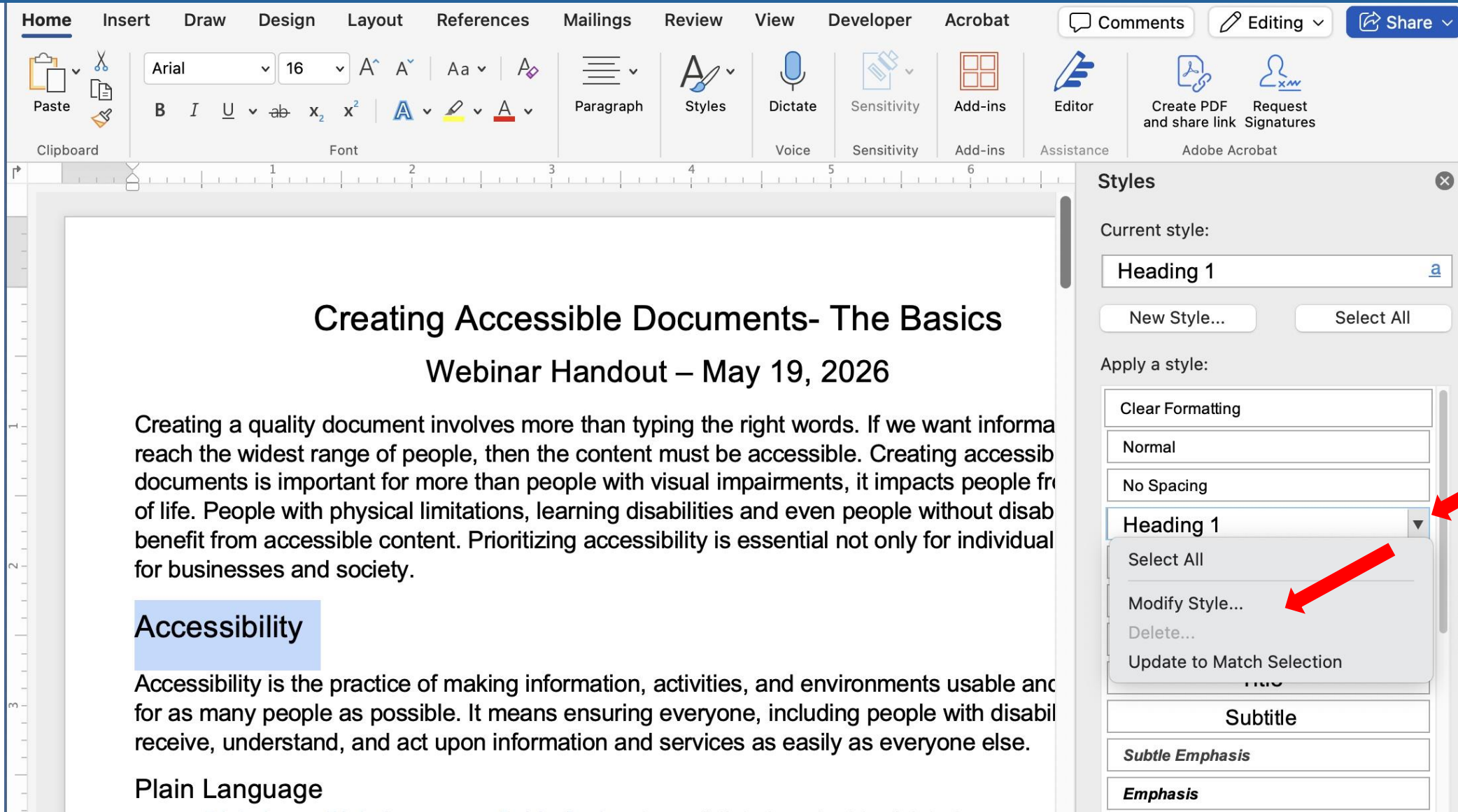
Plain Language

The Styles pane on the right shows the following styles:

- Current style: Heading 1
- Apply a style: Clear Formatting, Normal, No Spacing, **Heading 1**, Heading 2, Heading 3, Heading 4, Title, Subtitle, Subtle Emphasis, Emphasis

A red arrow points to the 'Heading 1' style in the 'Apply a style' list.

Modify Styles



The image shows a Microsoft Word document with the following content:

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Plain Language

The Styles pane on the right shows the following styles:

- Current style: Heading 1
- Apply a style:
 - Clear Formatting
 - Normal
 - No Spacing
 - Heading 1 (selected)
 - Select All
 - Modify Style...
 - Delete...
 - Update to Match Selection
 - Subtitle
 - Subtle Emphasis
 - Emphasis

Two red arrows point to the 'Heading 1' style in the list and the 'Modify Style...' option in the context menu.

Modify Heading Style

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 16 **B** *I* U

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

Accessibility

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

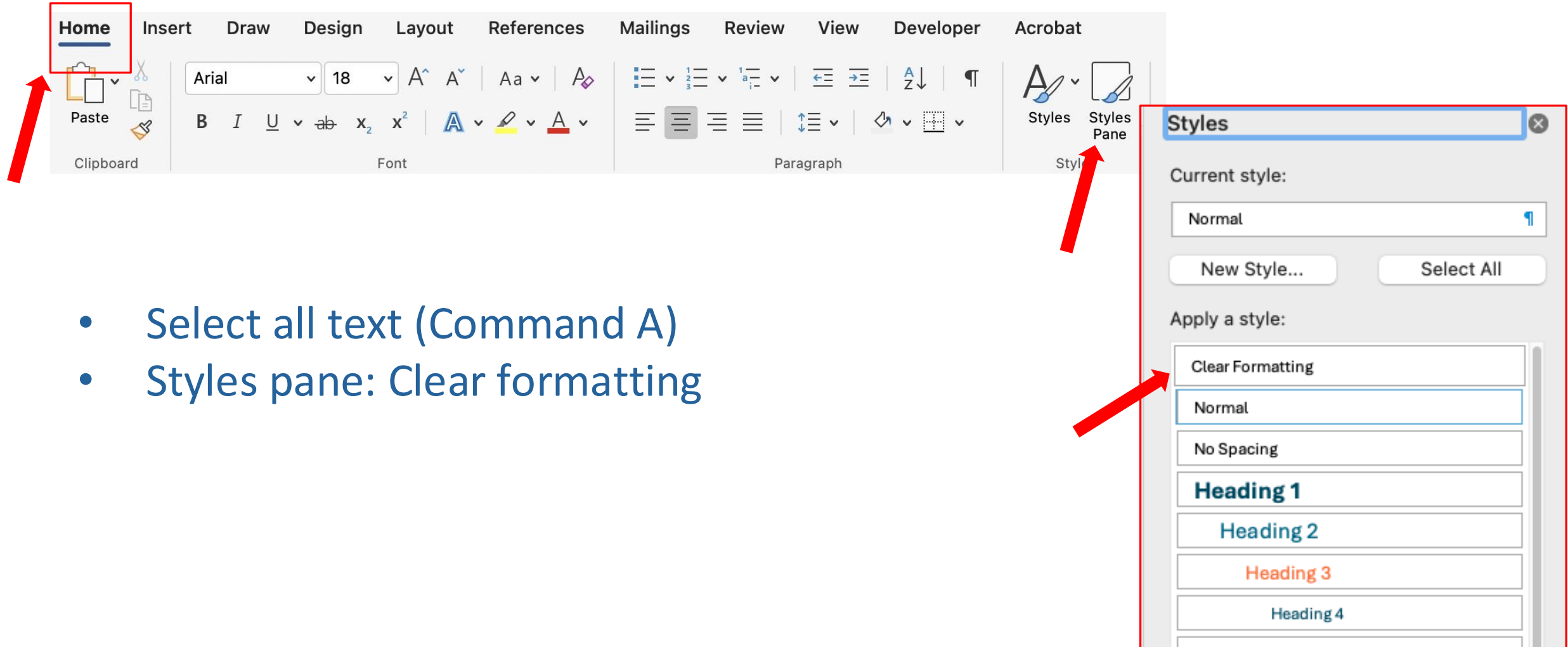
Font: 16 pt, Font color: Text 1, Space
Before: 12 pt
After: 12 pt, Keep with next, Keep lines together, Level 1, Style: Linked, Show in the Styles gallery, Priority: 10

Add to template
 Add to Quick Style list
 Automatically update

Format

Cancel **OK**

Fresh Start in Word



The image shows the Microsoft Word ribbon and the Styles pane. The ribbon is set to the Home tab. The Styles pane is open, showing the current style as 'Normal'. The 'Clear Formatting' option is highlighted in the 'Apply a style' section. Red arrows point to the Home tab, the Styles pane, and the Clear Formatting option.

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

Modify Headings in Google Docs

The screenshot displays the Google Docs interface for a document titled "Level 1_CAD May_2026_Handout .DOCX". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Tools", "Gemini", "Help", and "Accessibility". The toolbar shows various editing tools, with the font and heading options highlighted by a red circle. The font is set to "Arial" and the size is "16". The heading dropdown menu is open, showing options: "Normal text", "Title", "Subtitle", "Heading 1" (selected with a checkmark), "Heading 2", "Heading 3", and "Options". The document content includes a main heading "Making Accessible Documents- The Basics" and a subtitle "Webinar Handout – May 19, 2026". A red arrow points to the hamburger menu icon on the left side of the document.

Level 1_CAD May_2026_Handout .DOCX

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Gemini Help Accessibility

Heading 1 Arial 16 B I U A

Normal text

Title

Subtitle

✓ Heading 1

Apply 'Heading 1' ⌘+Option+1

Update 'Heading 1' to match

Heading 2

Heading 3

Options

Making Accessible Documents- The Basics

Webinar Handout – May 19, 2026

nt involves more than typing the right words. If we want information to

ossible. Creating accessible

ments, it impacts people from all walks

even people without disabilities

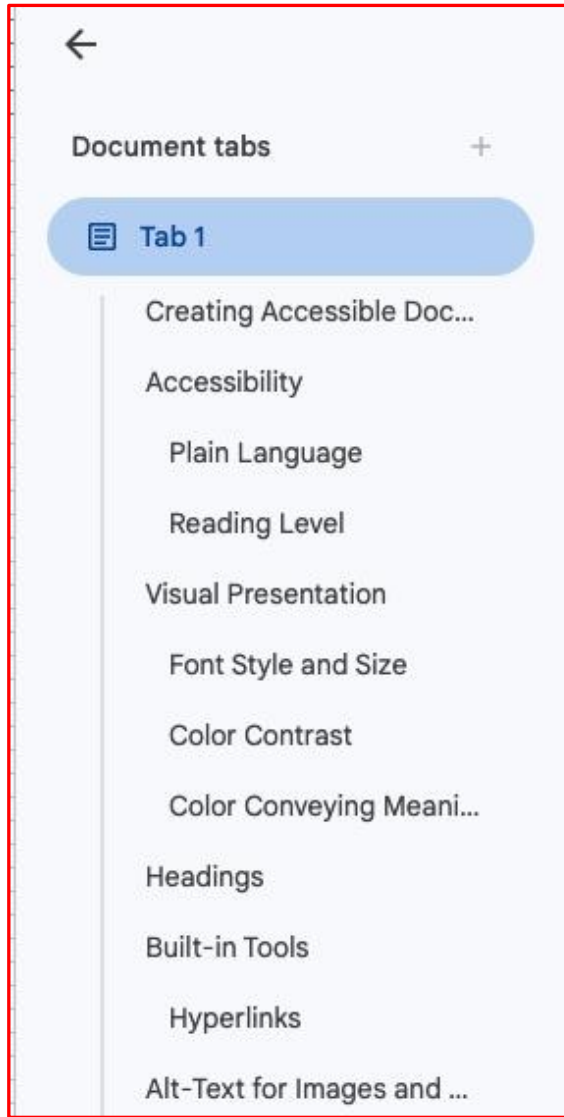
ential not only for individuals, but also

e of making information, activities, and environments usable and meaningful

sible. It means ensuring everyone, including people with disabilities, can

act upon information and services as easily as everyone else.

Outline View Google Docs



Creating Accessible Documents- The Basics

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Plain Language

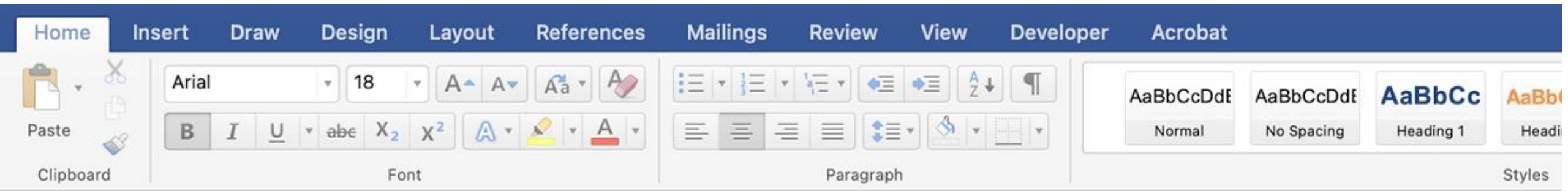
- [Digital.gov: Plain Language Guide Series](https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language), <https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language>

Reading Level

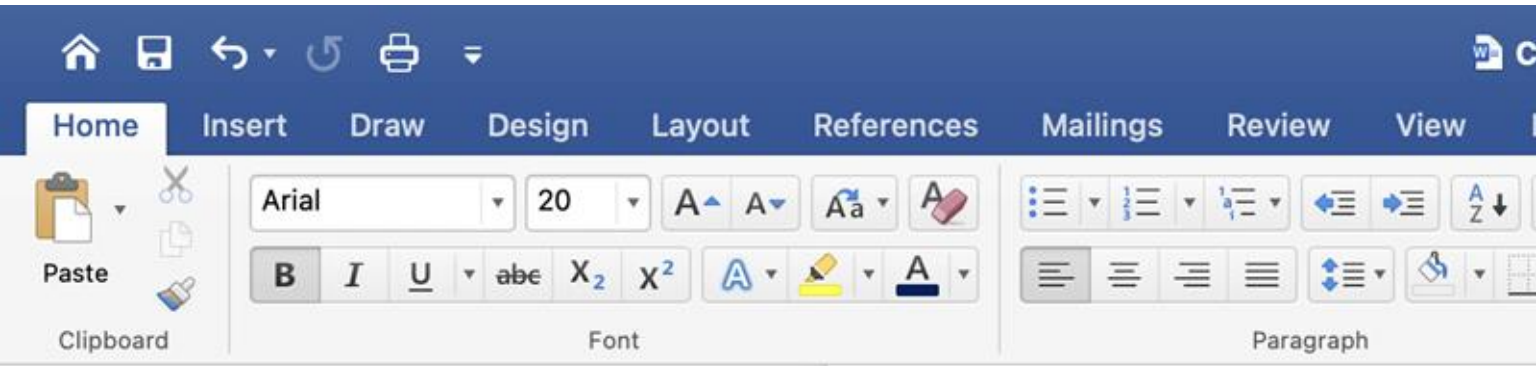
There are reading level check apps available through Google search. Microsoft Word has a built-in Readability statistics tool which must be enabled to use.

- Review > Editor > Insights > Flesch reading ease
- Review > Editor > Insights > Flesch-Kincaid grade level

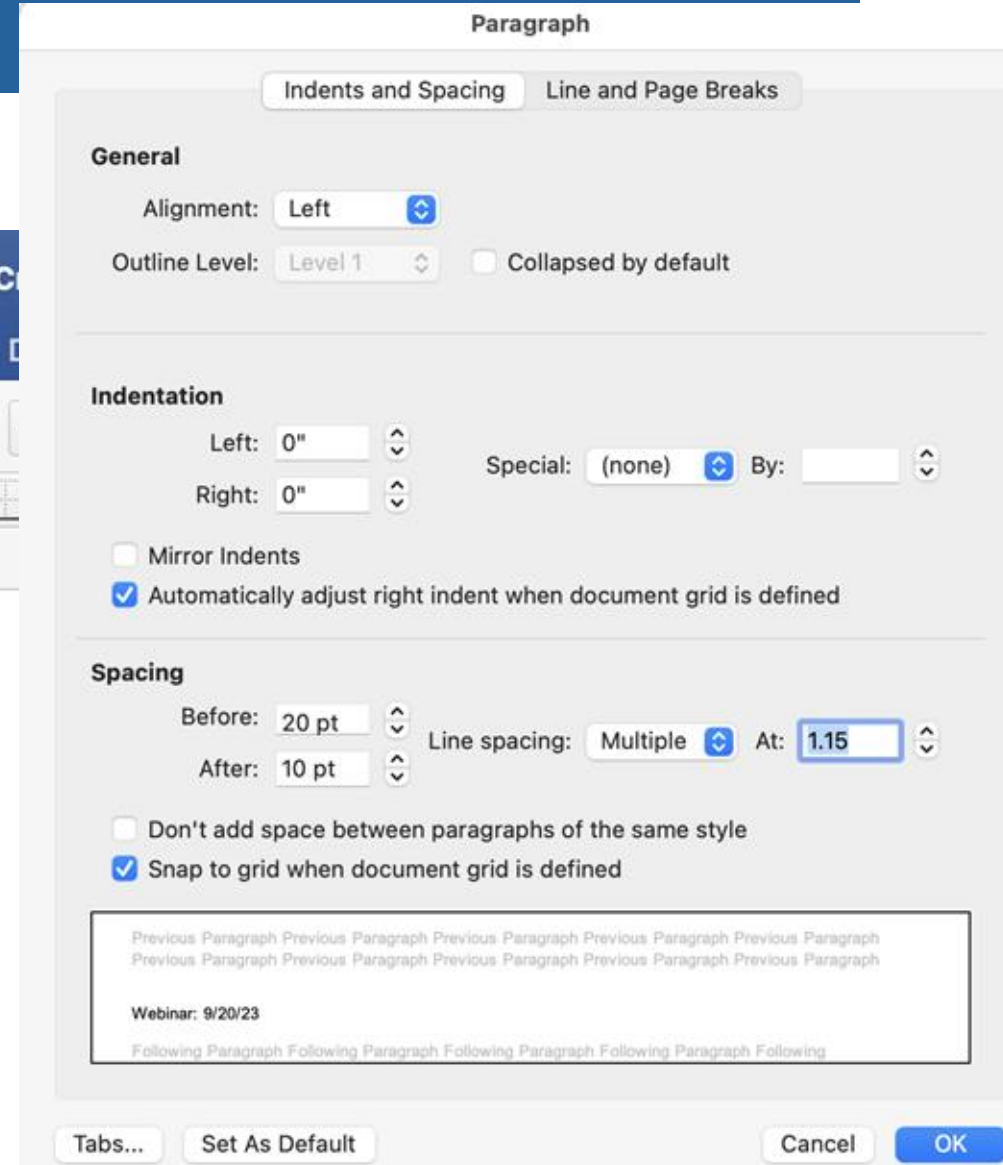
Built-in Tools



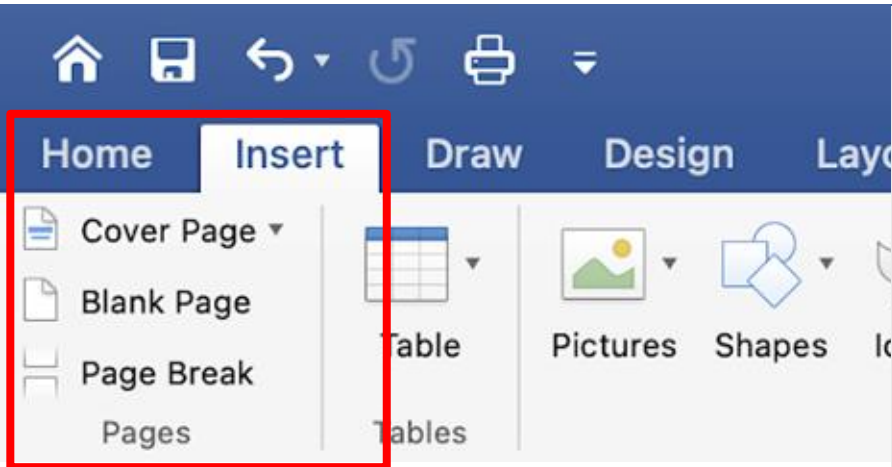
White Space



- 1.0
 - ✓ 1.15
 - 1.5
 - 2.0
 - 2.5
 - 3.0
- Line Spacing Options...
- Remove Space Before Paragraph
 - Remove Space After Paragraph



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.maine cite.org

info@maine cite.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](#).

YES!

- 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/>

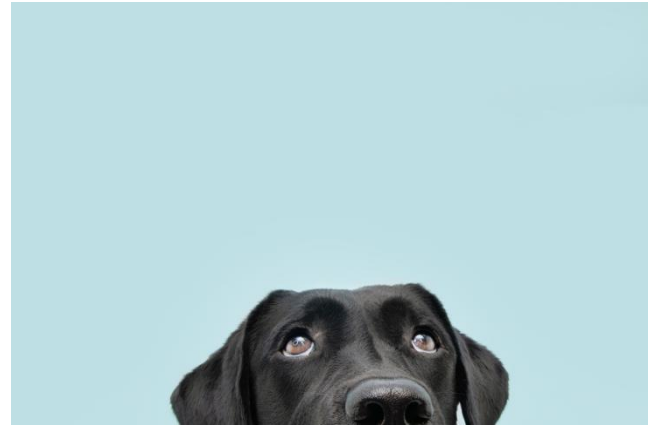
Shorten hyperlinks with Tiny URL (free), Bit.ly (free limited use), or Ow.ly (free trial)

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

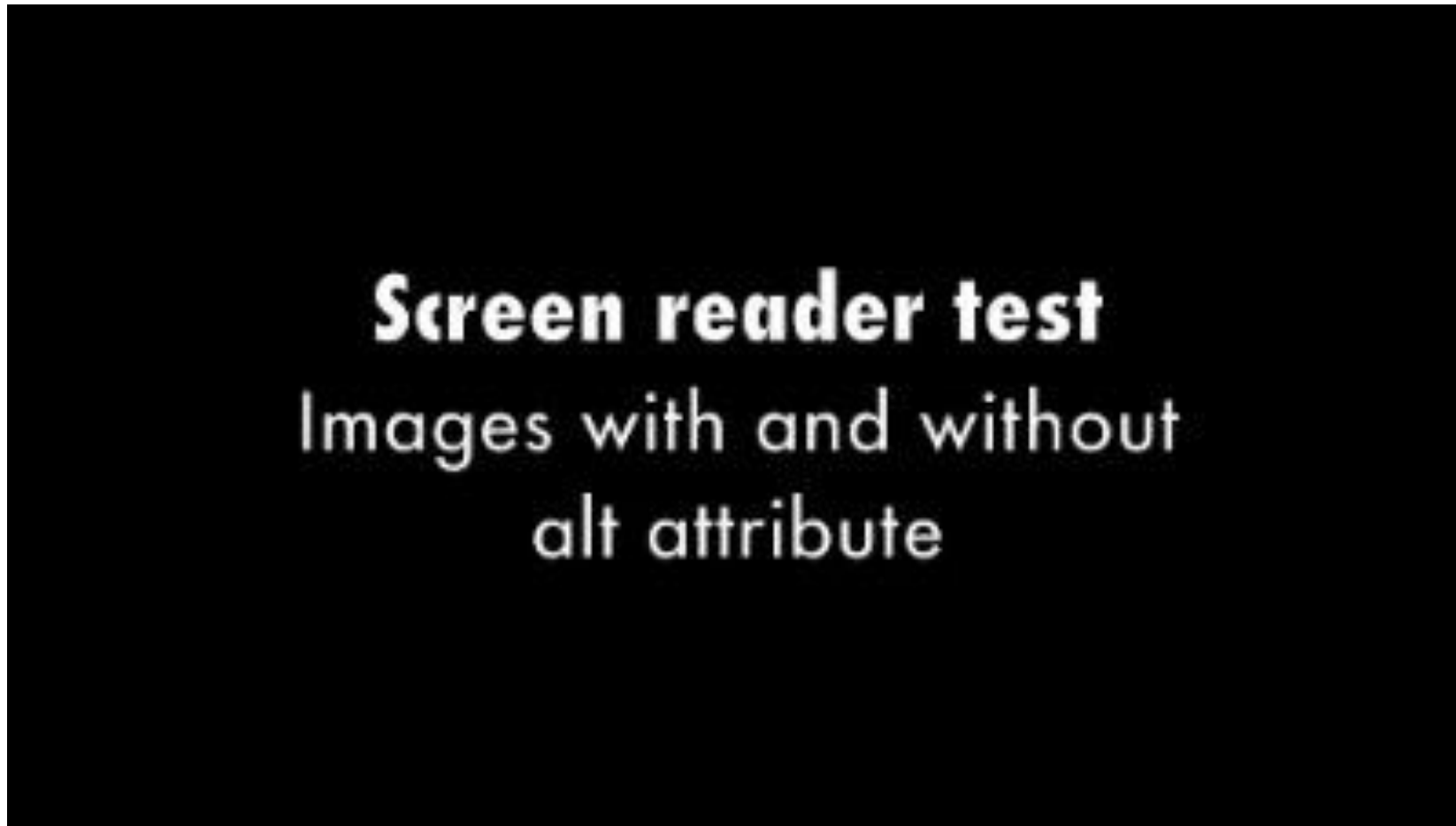
Alternative Text (Alt text)

- 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: The top of a dog's face looking upwards.



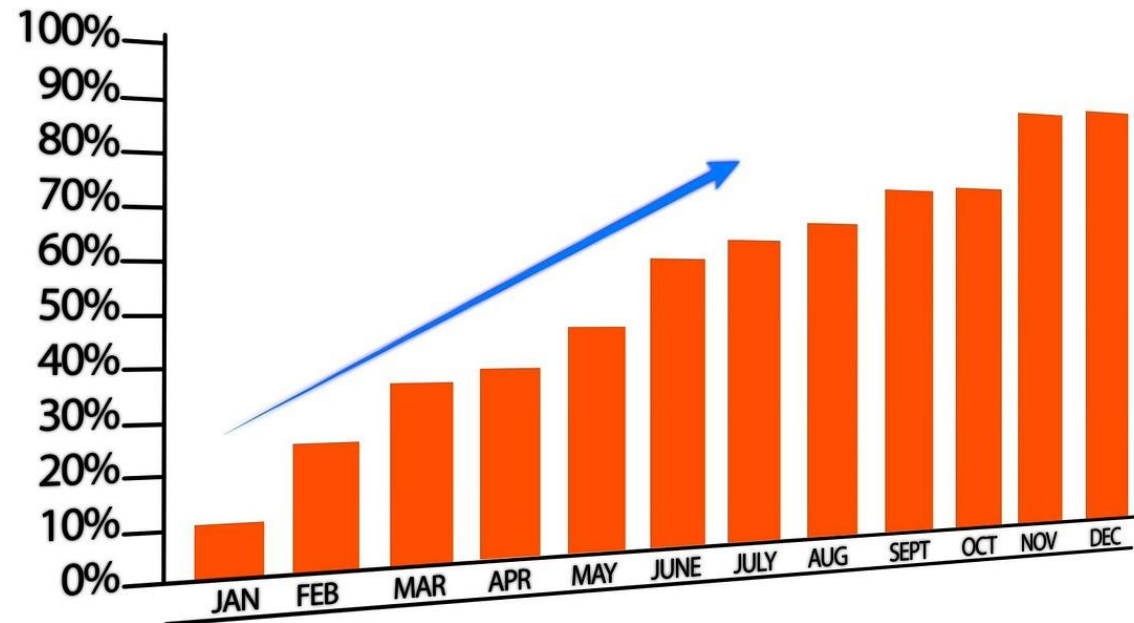
Screen Reader Reading Alt Text



<https://tinyurl.com/evj68ft2>

Alt Text Best Practices

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



Alt text: A bar chart showing increased percentages over 12-months.

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

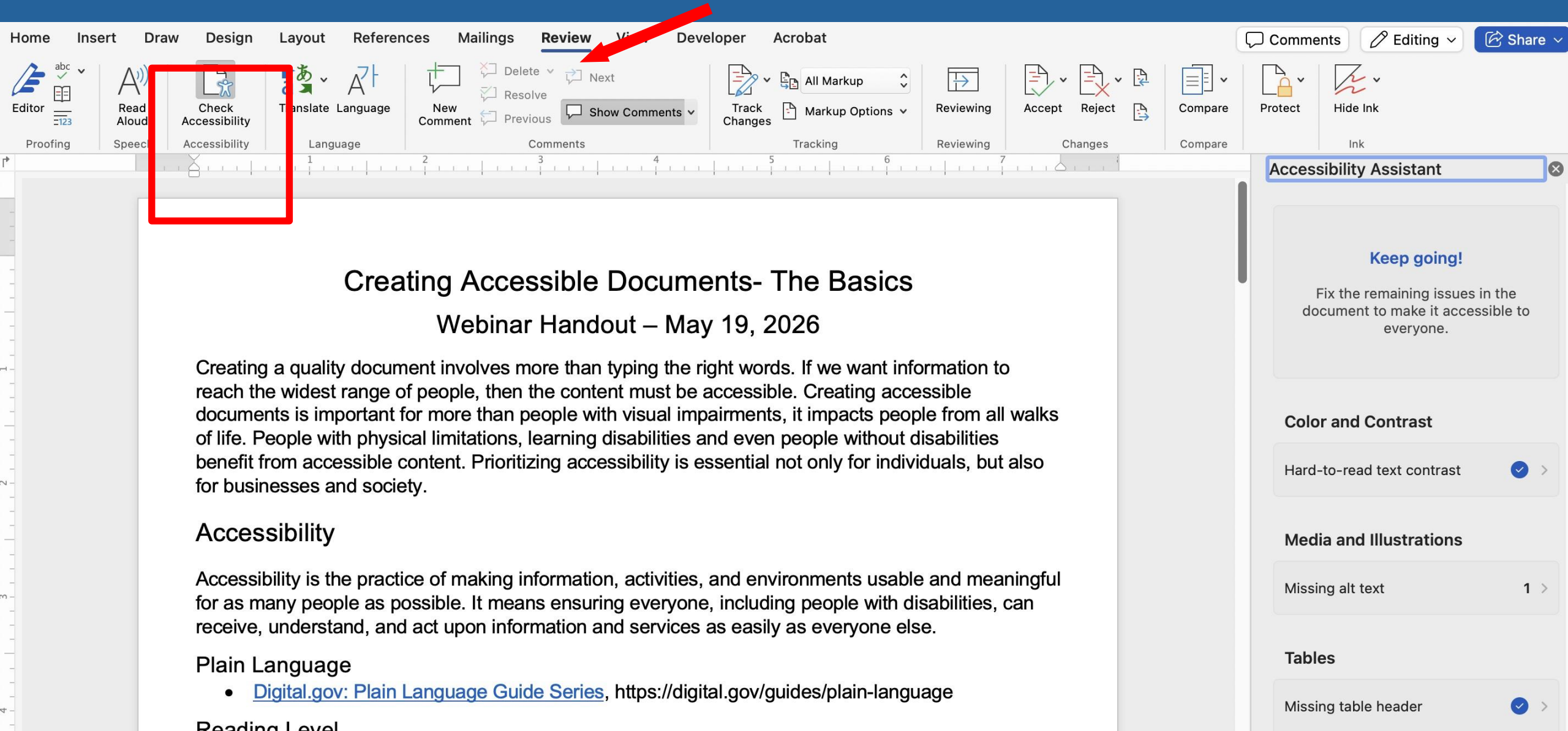
(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Black dog's face looking upwards.

Mark as decorative

Generate alt text for me

Accessibility Checker - Word



Home Insert Draw Design Layout References Mailings **Review** View Developer Acrobat

Editor Proofing Read Aloud Speed Check Accessibility Translate Language Language New Comment Delete Resolve Previous Next Show Comments Track Changes All Markup Markup Options Reviewing Accept Reject Compare Protect Hide Ink

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Plain Language

- [Digital.gov: Plain Language Guide Series](https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language), <https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language>

Reading Level

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 >

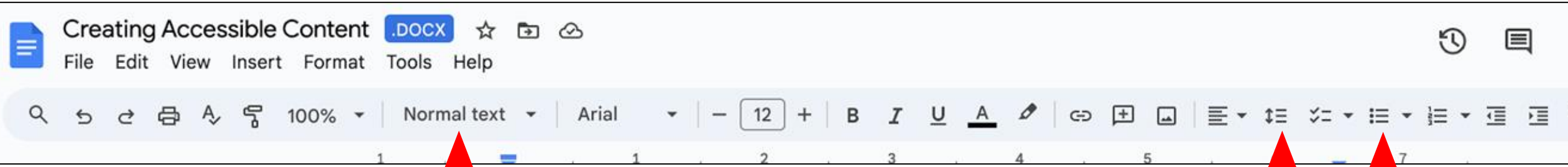
Media and Illustrations

Missing alt text 1 >

Tables

Missing table header >

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?



Reach out! We are here to help!



www.mainecite.org

info@mainecite.org

207-621-3195