Making Content Accessible

FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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Topics

1. Overview of Text to Speech Technology

2. Word Documents

3. Power Points

4. PDFs

Text to Speech Technology

- Text to Speech technology is anything that turns visual information into sound

- Many big software manufacturers have built-in text to speech options inside their software
  - Microsoft Word has an immersive Reader built in

- There are also browser extensions that allow for text to speech of internet material
  - Such as Read Aloud for Chrome and Firefox

- NVDA Screen Reader Download
  - A free screen reader that can be downloaded by anyone

Why make content accessible to Text to Speech Technology?

➤ Many people use text to speech technology for a variety of reasons. Some include:

  ➤ Sight impairment

  ➤ Print disability (like dyslexia)

  ➤ A preference for hearing material instead of reading it

➤ It's relatively easy to do

➤ High accessibility return for your effort

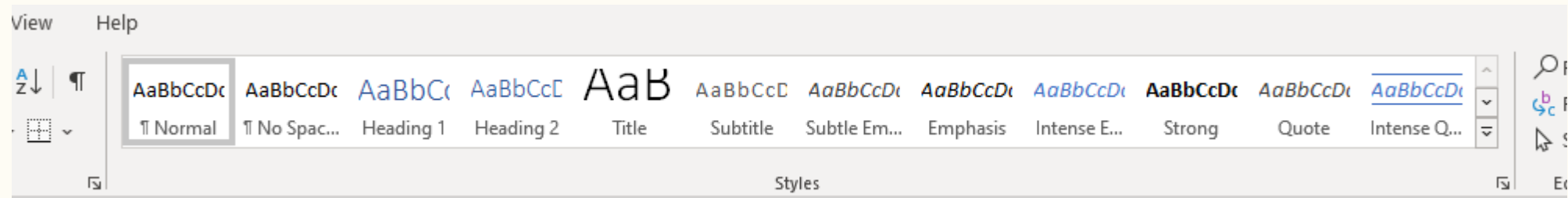# Microsoft Word Built-in Accessibility Tools

Microsoft Words offers a lot of ways to help make your documents accessible:

➢Heading Styles

➢Formatting

➢Accessibility Checker

Word: Heading Styles

➢Instead of just increasing or bolding font to make a new heading, mark your headings using the style area in the Home tab of the MS Word ribbon

➢Use Title or Heading 1 for document titles (both are OK). All documents should have titles

➢Other headings should nest under that as Heading 2, Heading 3

Writing Good Link Text

➢ If you make hyperlinks in Word or anywhere else, be sure the link language is descriptive.

➢ "Click here" links are disorienting for screenreader users

➢ Best practice is to provide a short description where the link goes

UNM's policies concerning academic honesty can be found [here](). ❌

UNM's policies concerning academic ✔

honesty can be in Section 4.8 of the [Regents' Policy Manual: Academic Dishonesty]()
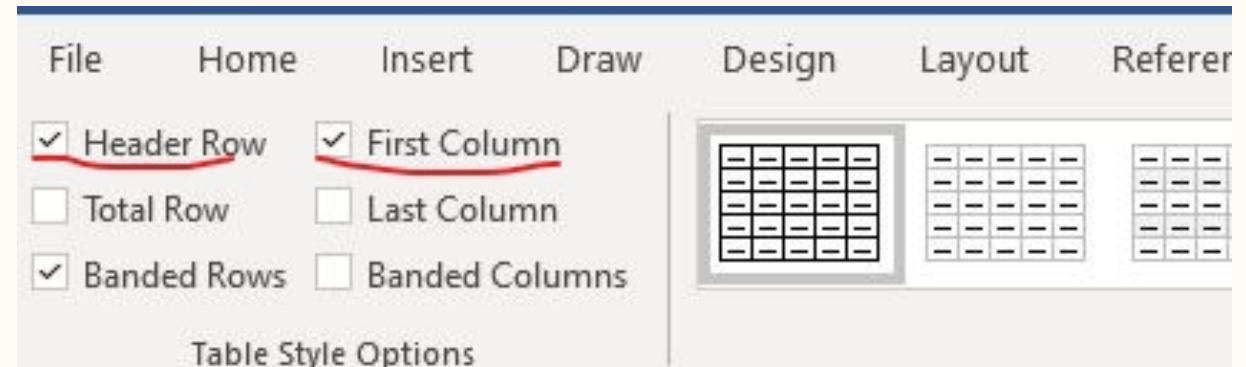
What to avoid in Word

➢These components of Word are not accessible:
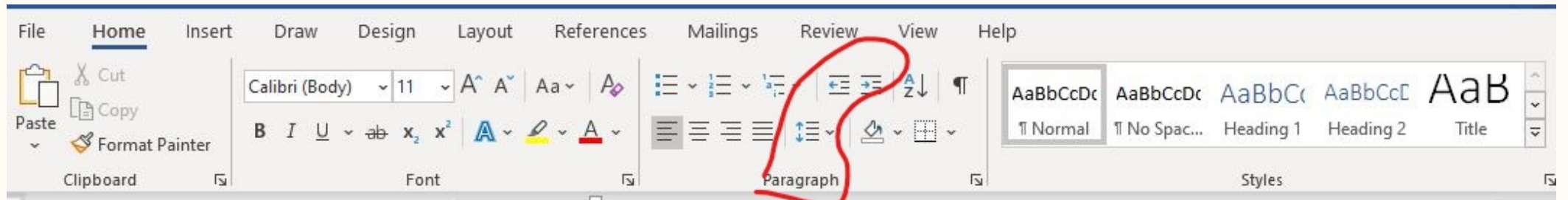
➢Text Box

➢Quick Parts

➢WordArt

➢Drop Caps

Other things to think about with Word: Tables

➢ Tables are difficult for screen reader users

  ➢ Make sure the Header Row and First Column row are checked

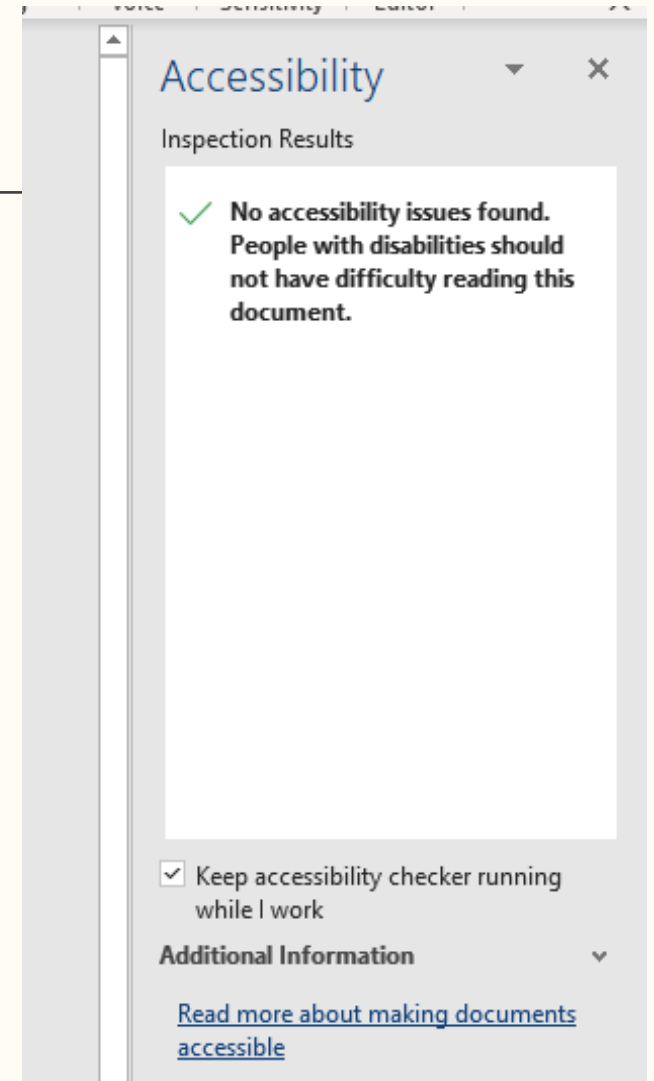# Other things to think about with Word: Formatting

> Formatting issues

> Every time you press "enter" or "tab" a screenreader will read "blank"

> It also says "blank" at the end of the document

> If you rely on Enter or Tab to create formatting, it might sound like your document is over when it's not

> Use your Line and Paragraph Spacing button and Indent buttons instead

Word Accessibility Checker

➤ Word can run an automated accessibility check and help catch some easy fixes

➤ Type "Accessibility Checker" in Word's search bar

➤ Or go to File → Check for issues → Check accessibility

Accessibility ▾ ✕

Inspection Results

✓ No accessibility issues found. People with disabilities should not have difficulty reading this document.

☑ Keep accessibility checker running while I work

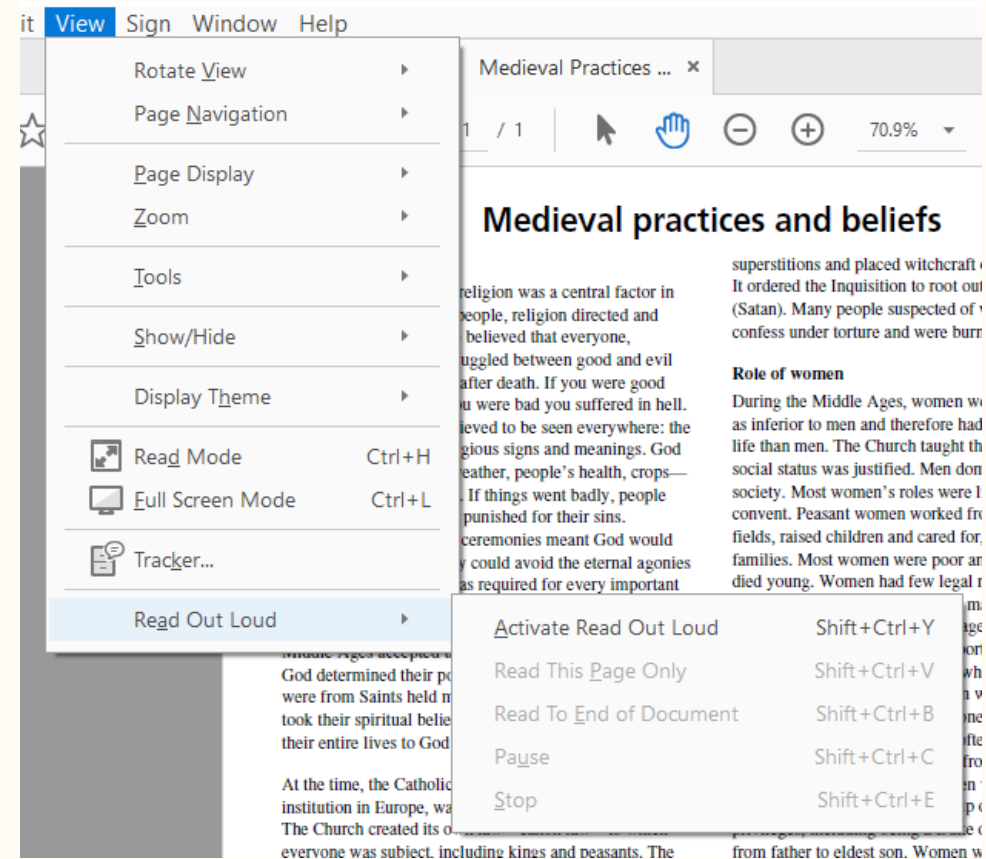Additional Information ⌄

Read more about making documents accessible

PDFs and Accessibility

➢ PDFs are more complicated than Word, but there are some simple things to maximize PDF accessibility

➢ If you're making your own PDF from another file type, make sure that the source file is accessibility

➢ Convert by using the Save As → Save as type → PDF rather than print to PDF

➢ Avoid scanning to make PDFs. These are essentially just pictures and do not respond to text to speech software
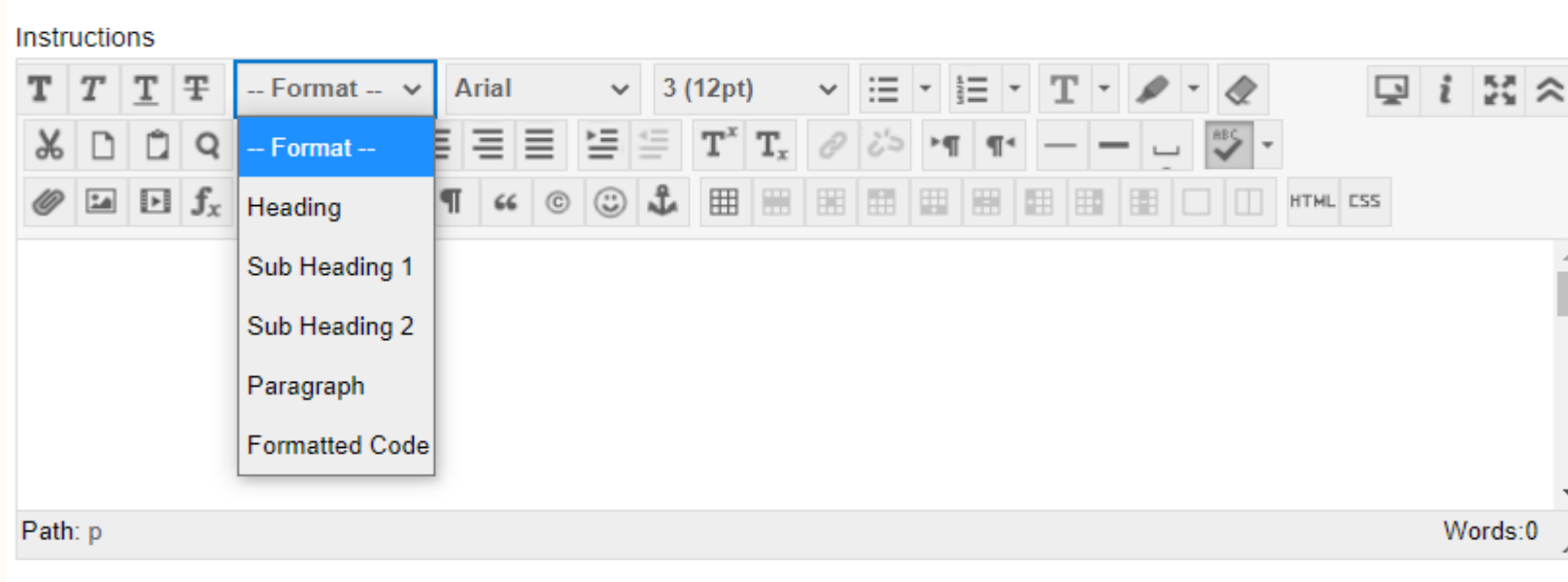
Checking accessibility for existing PDFs

➤Check for accessibility at the most basic level – see if it can be read aloud by an automated voice

➤Open your PDF in Adobe

➤Go to View → Read Out Loud → Activate read out loud

➤Then go back to View → Read Out Loud → Read This Page Only

Accessibility in Learn

Although I'm told that Learn is minimally accessible to screen readers, it is still possible to make assignments more accessible by using similar formatting techniques as in World

Some Helpful Links

➢ [NV Access](#) : Free downloadable screen reader

➢ [Read Aloud](#): A text to Speech Voice Reader

➢ A [sample table being read aloud by a screen reader](#)

➢ [UNM Main Campus Accessibility Resource Center](#)

➢ [UNM Valencia Accessibility Resource Center](#)

Acknowledgements

Most of what I've learned this semester about working with visually impaired students has been from Jex Wyche, Adaptive Technology Specialist at CNM, because my visually impaired students attends CNM. Much of the information in this presentation also came from sessions with Jex as she guided me through how to help my student. I say this in part because I don't want to present this as being all my original material but also because I'm sure the Accessibilities Resource Center at UNM be equally helpful. The most important lesson I've learned from all this is don't try to do it on your own. Go to the people who know what they are doing for guidance. The online environment is very challenging for a visually impaired student but there are ways to make it better.