# Quick Reference: How to Maintain Accessibility in the Syllabus Template

Use these instructions to ensure your Word syllabus is accessible when saved as a PDF.

It is recommended that you build your syllabus in the **CALS Accessible Syllabus Template**.

Use Headings for Structure

1. In Word, select "View' and click the "Navigation Pane Show" to view your document's heading structure.
   a. You will be able to view the heading structure as a panel on the left. (For Mac users, select the "Navigation Pane" then select the second tab from the left.)
   b. Be sure the document only has a single heading 1, this should be the title of your document.
   c. Be sure not to place headings out of order, for example you can't skip a heading and place a heading #4 under a heading #2, you will need to use the headings in sequence.
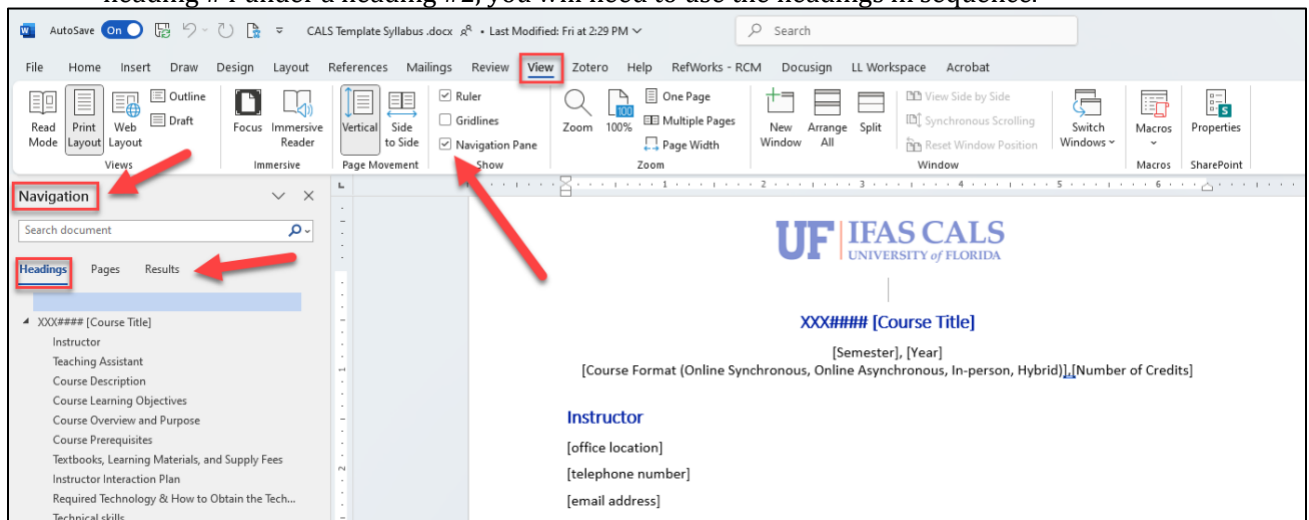
2.

Use the Styles Menu to Adjust Your Headings

1. The Styles menu in Word is a collection of formatting presets, allowing users to quickly apply consistent text styling (such as headings, titles, and normal text). Using styles helps maintain document consistency and ensures accessibility.
2. To find the **Styles menu**
   a. Go to the Home tab in the ribbon at the top.
   b. Look toward the right side of the Home tab; you'll see the Styles gallery, (on Macs the button is called Styles Pane).
   c. It contains visual thumbnails labeled (e.g., Normal, Heading 1, Heading 2, Title).

3.
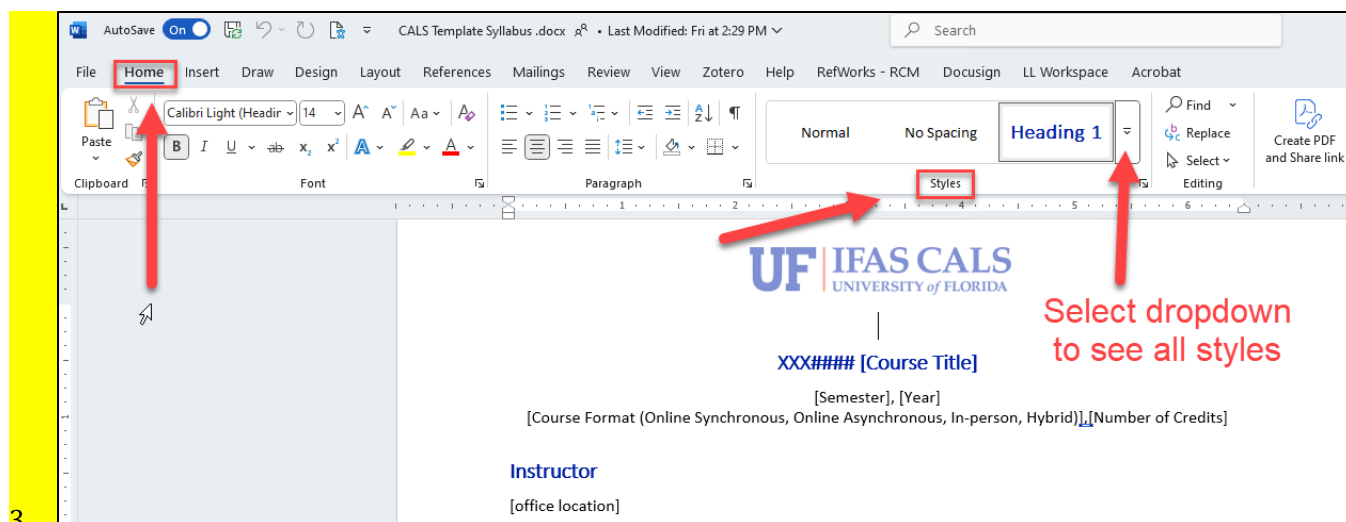
How to Copy and Paste into Syllabus Template and Maintain Styles

1. Copy the content from your source.
2. Go to your Word document and place your cursor where you want to paste.
   a. Right-click, then under Paste Options, select:
   b. **Merge Formatting** (clipboard with a paintbrush icon): matches your pasted content to your document's existing styles.
   c. **or Keep Text Only** (clipboard with the letter "A"): removes all original formatting and matches your default style, (Mac users press Shift+Command+V).


3.
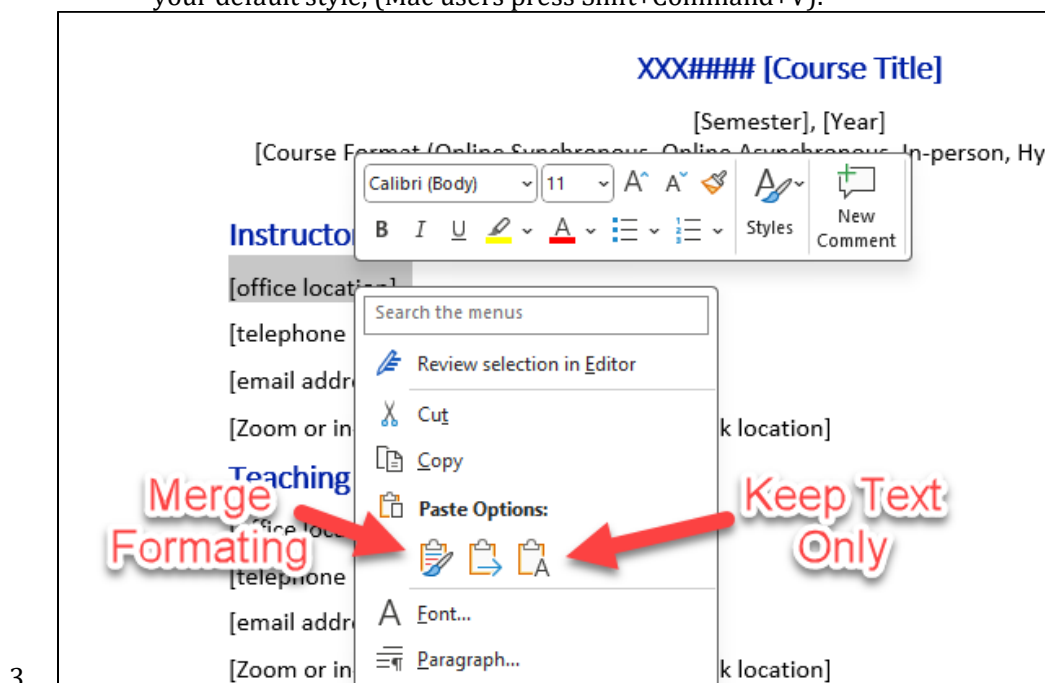
How to Maintain Accessibility in Tables

1. Use and fill in tables within the template. These are already accessible.
2. If you need another table, copy an accessible table that already exists within the template, and adjust it accordingly.

3. If you do copy over tables from a different document, make sure they:
    a. Avoid merged or split cells; these disrupt screen readers.
    b. Designate the header row by selecting it, right-clicking, and choosing "Table Properties > Row > Repeat as header row at the top of each page." This ensures screen readers announce column headers consistently.
    c. Text and background colors within cells must meet accessibility contrast guidelines (minimum 4.5:1 ratio).
    d. Use legible, standard fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri).
    e. Use tables strictly for tabular data, not for page layout or alignment.
4. [Detailed instructions from the University of Arkansas on making Tables in Microsoft Word Accessible](#).

Add ALT Text to Make Images Accessible

1. Provide concise yet descriptive alt text for the image.
    a. Right-click the table, select "View Alt Text," and enter meaningful titles and descriptions.
    b. If image is decorative, select "Mark as decorative"
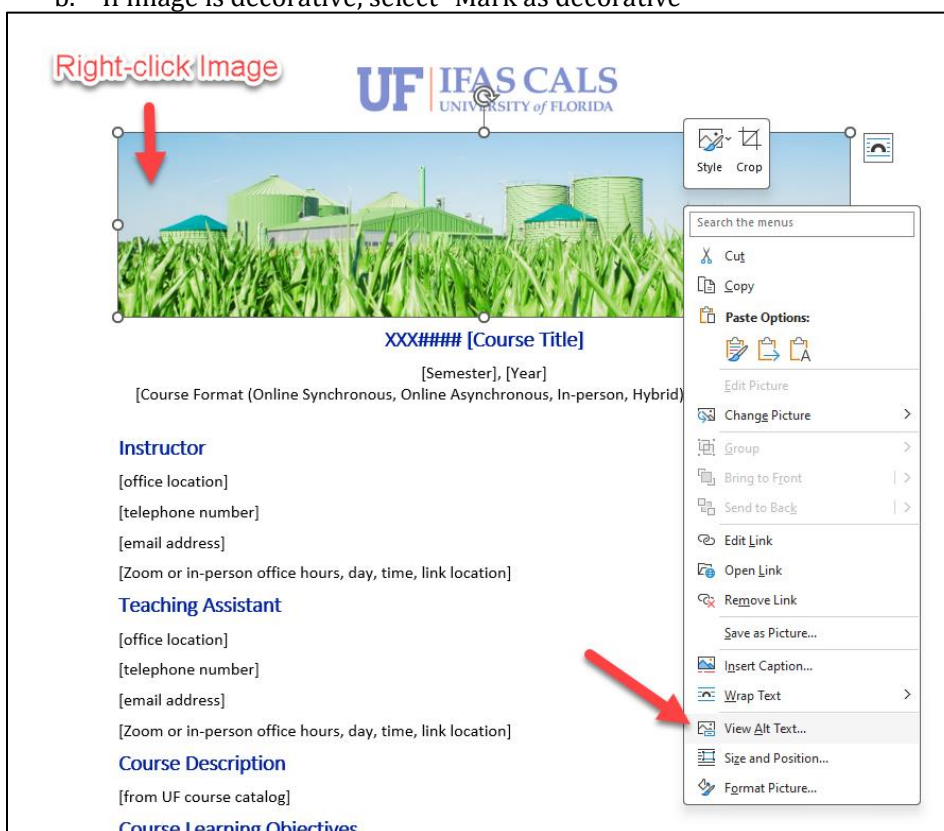
2.

3. ALT Text Best Practices:
    a. Keep ALT text concise (typically 1–2 sentences or less).
    b. Clearly describe the content and function of the image.
    c. Do not begin ALT text with phrases like "image of" or "picture of" unless essential for context.
    d. If the image is decorative, select "Mark as decorative".
        i. A decorative image is an image used for visual styling that does not contribute to the understanding of the content, thus does not require ALT text.

4.
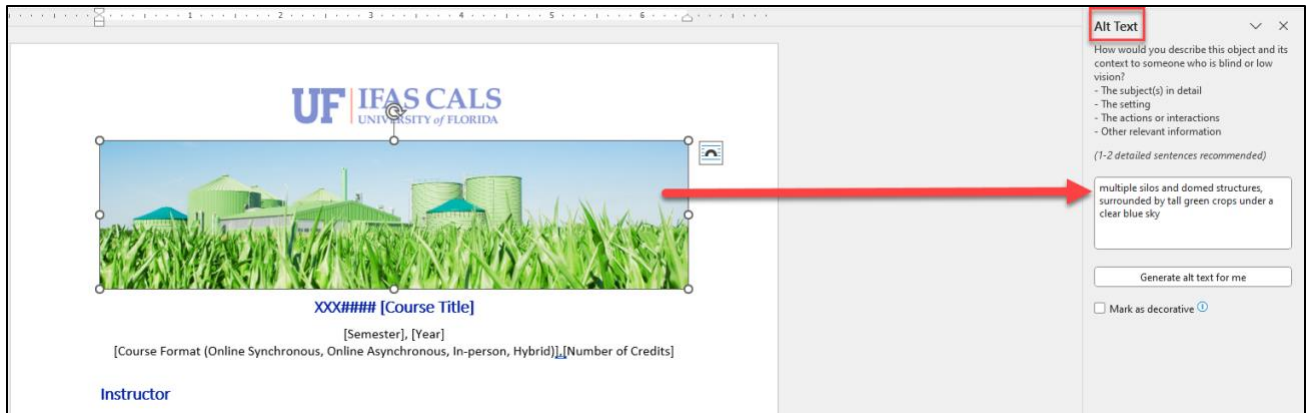
Use the Accessibility Checker before Sharing the Document

1. Open Accessibility Checker
   a. Go to the Review tab in the ribbon.
   b. Click on Check Accessibility.
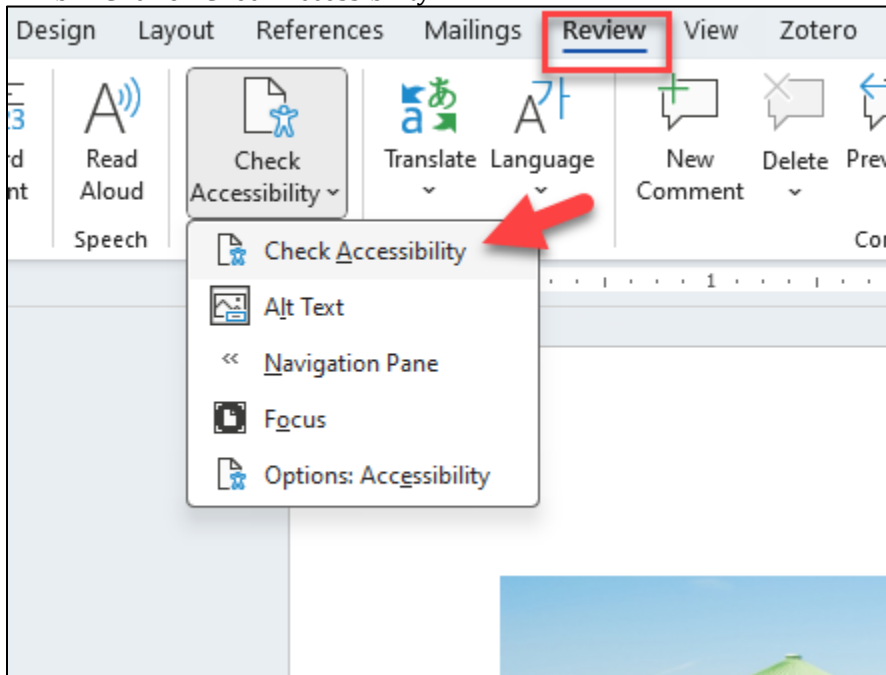
2.
3. Review Accessibility Results
   a. The Accessibility Checker pane opens on the right side. Issues are divided into categories:
      i. Errors (serious accessibility issues)
      ii. Warnings (potential issues)
      iii. Tips (recommendations for best practices)
4. Fix Accessibility Issues
   a. Click each issue in the pane to highlight the problem.
      i. Read the suggestions below the selected issue for recommended solutions.
      ii. Apply suggested fixes directly in your document.
      iii. Verify Accessibility Improvements
   b. As you resolve each issue, it disappears from the checker pane.
      i. Continue until no errors remain.
5. Common Accessibility Issues to Look For:

      a. Missing alt text on images or tables.
      b. Tables without header rows.
      c. Low color contrast.
      d. Improper heading structure.
      e. Unclear hyperlinks ("click here," instead of name of what link leads to).
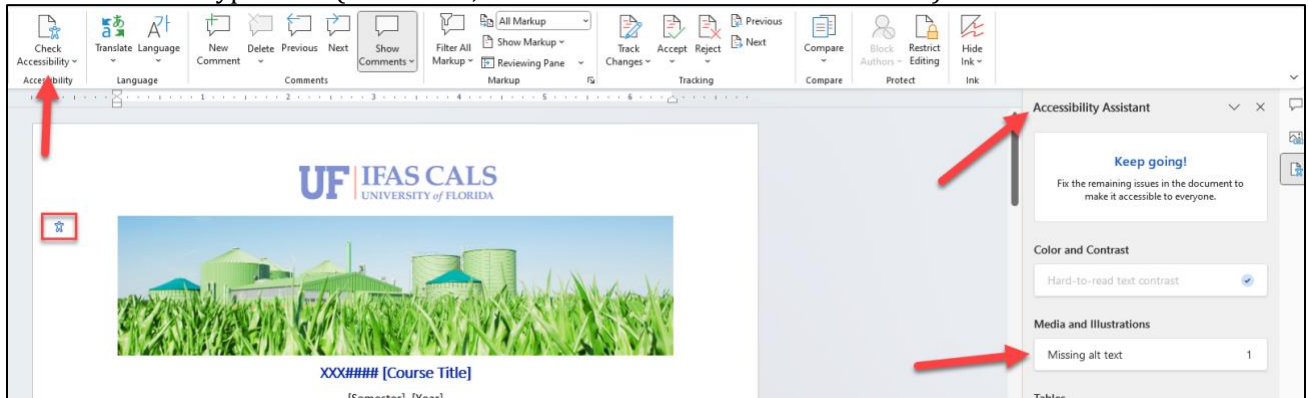
6.

Save as an Accessible PDF

1. Prepare Your Document
       a. Ensure you've run the Accessibility Checker and resolved any issues.
2. Save as PDF
       a. Click on File.
       b. Select Save As.
3. Choose the folder or location to save the file.
       a. Set File Type
           i.In the Save as type dropdown menu, select PDF (.pdf).
4. Adjust PDF Accessibility Options (For Mac users, select "Best for electronic distribution and accessibility (uses Microsoft online service)".)

Resources

Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities Microsoft Website

UF CITT Accessibility Basics Online Self-Paced Course