



# Accessibility Core Skill # 1: Document Structure/Headings

## Benefit to User

- Quick and easy navigation: visually, by keyboard, or by screen reader.
- Screen readers can view a list of all headings on a page and skim documents by heading level.

## Step by Step

1. Select text for heading (text is styled as 'normal' by default).
2. Select a style from the style ribbon on the home tab (Figure 1).
  - To access additional styles, use the drop down button (Figure 2).
  - Make sure to 'nest' headings without skipping levels. Heading 1 is always the top level heading. Heading 2 is always a subsection of Heading 1. Heading 3 is always a subsection of Heading 2 (Figure 3).

## Take-Aways

### Do (Accessible):

- Do provide navigational structure by applying heading styles.
- Do nest heading levels hierarchically.

### Don't (Not Accessible):

- Don't create headings by changing the font styling, providing only visual structure
- Don't skip heading levels.

Figure 1

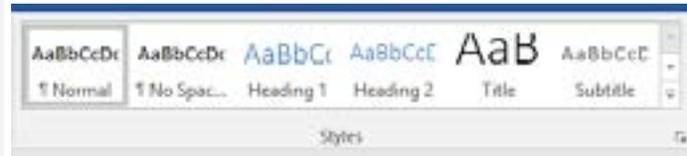


Figure 2

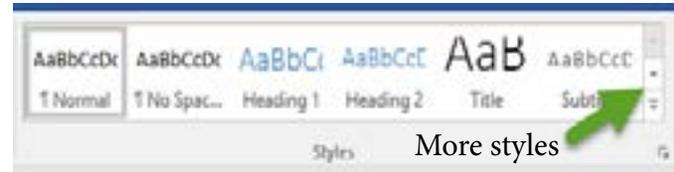


Figure 3

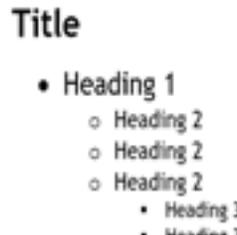
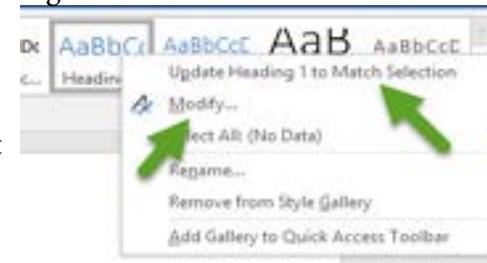


Figure 4



Right click heading for menu

## Benefit to Author

- Consistent look throughout document
- Auto-generate table of contents.
- Quickly change the look and feel using built-in themes.

## High Level Overview

Hidden layers of code behind MS Word documents give information about the document to computers. The code tells software how to structure and display the content.

Properly structuring pages can be the most important accessibility consideration in creating a Word document. Hierarchical structure allows keyboard users and screen readers to quickly and efficiently navigate the document.

## Bonus Tips

Don't like the look of a heading level? Don't skip headings to get the right look. Instead, modify (Figure 4) the heading style by right clicking on the style in the ribbon.

If you have already created a visual structure by styling fonts and need to retroactively add heading styles, right click the appropriate heading level and select "Update Heading to Match Selection" (Figure 4).