

# COURSE ACCESSIBILITY

## 5 EASY FIXES

This message to all faculty and staff has been approved by Dr. Sally McRorie, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### Course Accessibility: Easy Fix #4

The proper use of heading styles is an easy way to improve the accessibility of course content. Headings help readers quickly scan sections of text and comprehend how content is organized. Students using assistive technology, like screen readers, depend on headings to navigate content. A common accessibility mistake is to style headings by adjusting the font size or applying boldface type, but screen readers don't detect these variations as headings. For students with visual impairments, headings should *always* be applied using a program's built-in heading styles. We explain how in the steps below.

#### How to Add Headings in Documents

First, identify documents in your course site that have been flagged by [Ally](#) as missing headings: [Open your Ally Course Report](#), scan the list of accessibility issues, and locate content labeled "The document does not have any headings."



Click on the content affected, and Ally will provide a list of individual files that need attention.

Name	Issues	Score
Accessibility PowerPoint Example.pptx Presentation	4	24%
SampleReport_DigitalEd.pdf PDF document	4	31%
Accessibility Activity.docx Word document	1	52%

**The document does not have any headings**  
3 out of 82

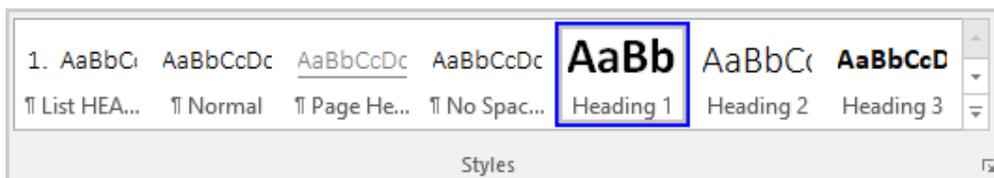
Identify the Microsoft Word documents that do not have headings. Though you'll ultimately want to address other types of files like PowerPoint slides, Word documents are the easiest place to start. When you're ready to take on others, Ally will help you through those too.

To add headings to a Word document, follow the step-by-step instructions in the Ally instructor feedback panel:

1. Select How to add headings.
2. Open your original document.
3. Click on Word for Microsoft Office. Ally will provide instructions for adding heading styles in your file.

The screenshot shows the Ally instructor feedback panel for the document 'Accessibility Activity.docx'. The panel displays an accessibility score of 52% with a progress indicator. Below the score, it states 'This document does not have headings' and provides two buttons: 'What this means' and 'How to add headings'. A section titled 'Upload a version with headings' includes a dashed box for file upload, an upward arrow icon, the text 'Drop file to upload or', and a 'Browse' button. A separate white box titled 'How to add headings' contains the following text: 'Step 1: Open the original document', 'Locate or [download](#) the original document. Open it using your preferred software:', and two links: '[Word for Microsoft Office 2016](#)' and '[Writer for LibreOffice 5.2](#)'. A 'Help' button is also present at the bottom of this box.

1. Within your Word document, select the text you want to be your heading.
2. Go to the Home tab, and select the desired heading level from the Styles group.



## Heading Best Practices

When adding headings, be mindful of the following best practices:

### **Follow a logical hierarchy.**

When headings aren't in order by level (eg, 1, then 2, then 3), it creates unnecessary confusion for students trying to navigate content with a screen reader. Always begin with a level-1 heading and proceed in rank order from there.

### **Don't overuse headings.**

Unless it's a very long document, three levels of headings are usually sufficient. Avoid using more than six.

### **Never apply text styles in place of a heading style.**

Always style headings by using the built-in styles (or editing the built-in styles to suit your taste).

## New to Ally?

The Office of Distance Learning enabled the course accessibility tool Ally in all Canvas courses and organizational sites in December 2020. Ally simplifies the process of converting course materials into formats *all* students can access. Visit the [Ally Resource Guide](#) for access to Ally support resources, including webinars and one-on-one consultations. Review previous tips from our *Course Accessibility: Five Easy Fixes* series:

[Easy Fix #1: How to Add Image Descriptions](#)

[Easy Fix #2: How to Fix Contrast Issues](#)

[Easy Fix #3: How to Add a Missing Title](#)

Please don't hesitate to contact the Office of Distance Learning if you have questions. Thank you for all you do to foster inclusive learning at FSU!

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Questions? Visit us on the web at [odl.fsu.edu](http://odl.fsu.edu), [sign up for our newsletter](#), call [850-644-8004](tel:850-644-8004) Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, or [submit a ticket](#) to ODL Technical Support.