# **MAKING DOCUMENTS ACCESSIBLE IN WORD 2016--Tables**

**Tables** are tricky creatures when it comes to accessibility. In order to make a table accessible for individuals who are blind, have a visual impairment, or a learning disability, **provide row and column headers**. The text-to-speech software by default will read the information in a table horizontally, cell by cell, row by row.

* Do not use tabs or spaces to create tables. It may look like a table; however, it does not have the structure, and it will not be recognized as a table and therefore not be accessible or readable by assistive technologies.
* Tables should be used to present columns and rows of data. Simple tables created in Word using the technique described below are accessible without modifications, and current screen reading software reads these simple tables quite well.
* **Do not** use the Draw Table tool in Word to create tables. Screen reading software continues to have difficulty reading complex tables created in Word using the Draw Table tool because these types of tables usually have cells of different heights or a varying number of columns per row. The screen reading software cannot give the individual context for the table data because it is not possible to associate cells with the row and column headers.
* Do not use merged or split cells in tables created in Word or in Blackboard.
* Do not use Heading Styles (such as Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.) in a Table.
* Remove blank rows and columns.
* Add Row and Column Headers to tables to distinguish the heading text from the data area of the table. Screen readers read simple tables efficiently when the column or row headers are clearly defined. Letter Grade and Range are the column headers in the table shown below. Notice that the title of the table (Grading Scale) is keyed outside of the table. Screen readers do not read merged cells very well, so it is best to keep the table titles keyed outside of the table. Example:

## Grading Scale

| **Letter Grade** | **Range** |
| --- | --- |
| A | 90-100 |
| B | 80-89 |
| C | 70-79 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | 0-59 |

* **Repeat Row Headers** if the table spans more than one page. Tables that are contained on multiple pages should have the header row repeated on each page. To repeat row headers, follow these steps:

1. Select the heading row or rows that you want to repeat on each page. The selection must include the first row of the table.
2. Under **Table Tools**, on the **Layout** tab, in the **Data** group, click **Repeat Header Rows**. OR….
3. In the table, right-click the row that you want to repeat, and then click **Table Properties**.
4. In the **Table Properties** dialog box, on the **Row** tab, select the **Repeat as header row at the top of each page** check box.

* **Do Not Allow Rows to Break Across the Page.**

1. Select the entire table.
2. Right Click and choose Table Properties.
3. Make sure the Row tab is active.
4. Remove the check mark beside Allow Rows to Break Across the Page.
5. Click OK.

* **Add Alt Text** to the table. To add Alt Text to a table, follow these steps:

1. Right click on the Table.
2. Click Table Properties.
3. Click the Alt Text Tab in the Table Properties dialog box if it isn’t already the active tab.
4. Key a title **AND** a description for the table.