

Microsoft Word Tricks and Tips

Making Word files accessible

Accessibility requires working with various technologies to add additional information and context to equitably convey meaning and information regardless of ability. Learning to utilize Microsoft Word will allow you to format documents so they visually look how you intended while remaining accessible.

Use the Paragraph border tool instead of single cell tables

When creating forms or when writing any text that needs a boarder, use a paragraph border instead of a single cell table. Tables are not best suited for textual organization, and, if used, you will need to apply a header row and alternate text.

You can identify if you've used a single cell table by clicking your cursor next to the text. If a small cross pops up to the upper left-hand corner of the border, you've used a table.

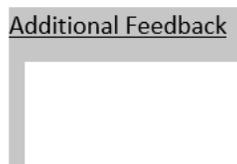


Follow the steps listed to apply a paragraph border to a section of text instead of using a single cell table.

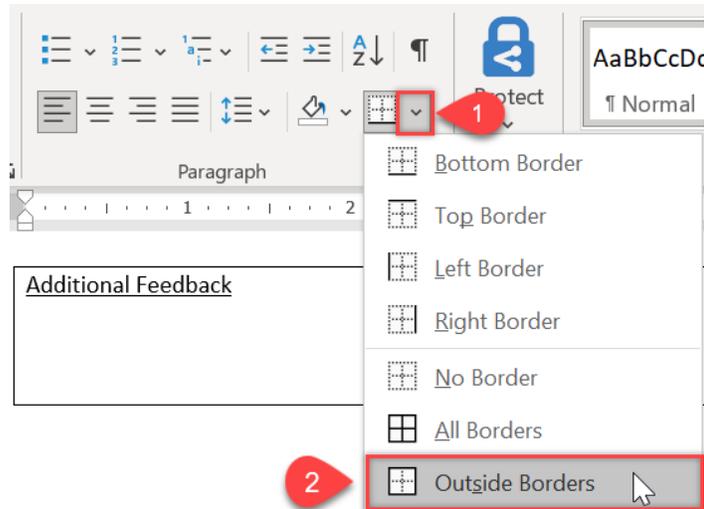
1. The Paragraph border tool is located on the "Home" tab of the ribbon at the top of your Word document. Once you've clicked on the "Home" tab, find the section labeled "Paragraph", and the "paragraph border" tool is a button that looks like a box divided into four quadrants by a dotted line.



2. Highlight the text that you want to surround with a boarder. If you want to ensure there is enough blank space to allow responses, highlight the next blank line as shown below.



3. Next, click on the down arrow of the "paragraph border" button and select "Outside Borders" from the drop down menu. As shown in the image, a border appears around the selected text.

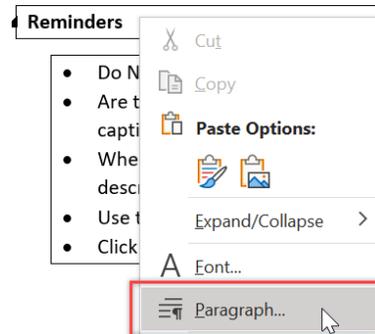


The Paragraph border tool creates a border around each paragraph. If you have two separate paragraphs, a separate box will appear around each. For instance, if you have a hanging bulleted list a separate border will appear around the title from the border around the bullet points. To make one border appear around both elements you will need to make the left indent for each paragraph align.

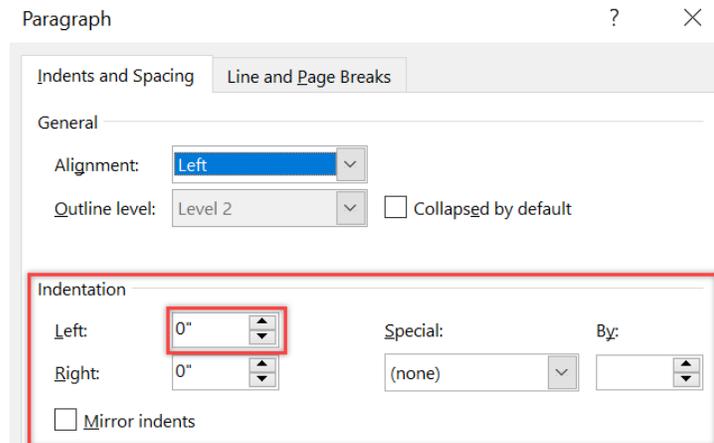
Reminders

- Do NOT insert pictures of worksheets or entire forms
- Are there more than two full sentences in the image? Write out the text under the figure as a caption
- When using flow charts or models, describe the full process in the text or type out a full description under the image
- Use the Paragraph border tool instead of single cell tables
- Click on every image to ensure meaningful alternate text

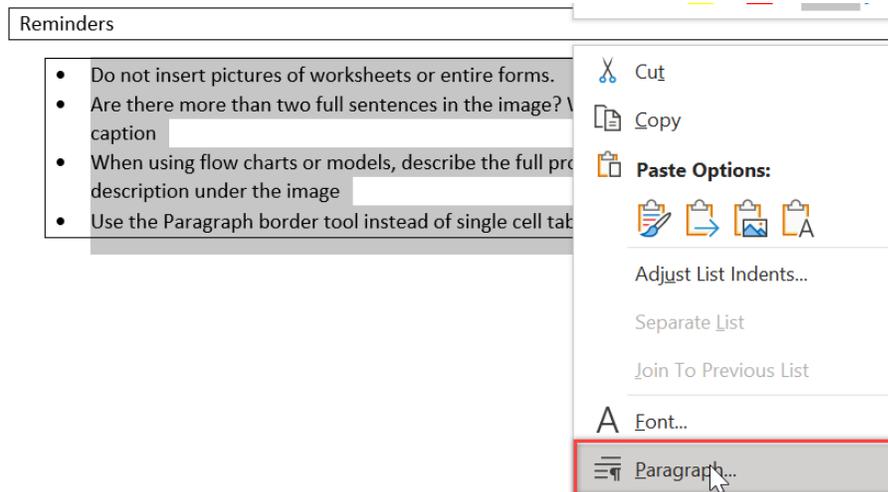
1. Once the paragraph indents are aligned the two paragraph borders will snap together into one border around both paragraphs. Check the indentation of the first paragraph. Right click to open the drop down menu, and select "Paragraph" from the options.



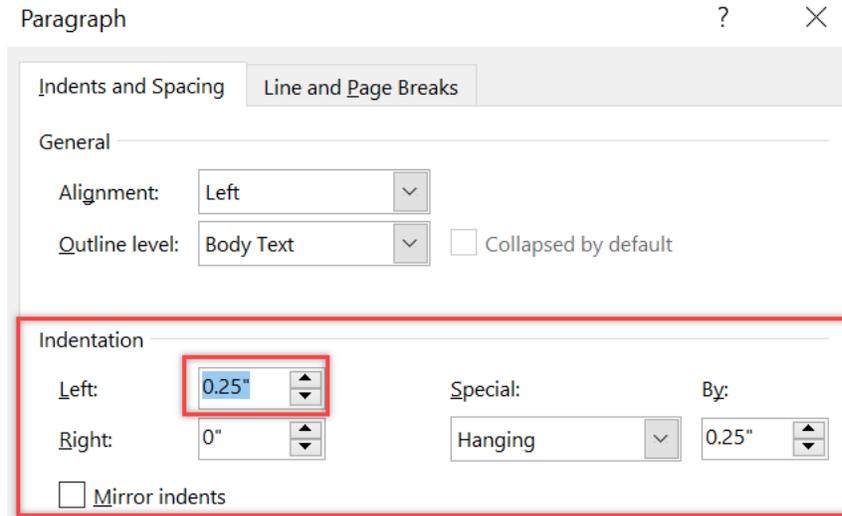
2. The Paragraph pop up menu will open. There are multiple options on this screen, but you want to ensure you are on the tab of "Indents and Spacing", and look at the section for Indentation. Note the number for the indentation for both left and right. In this case it is 0" for both.



3. Highlight the section of text you want to change, in this case the bullet points. Right click and select "Paragraph" from the drop down menu.



4. Look at the section for Indentation and note that the “Left” indentation is set to 0.25”. Change the value to 0” and the border will surround both sections.



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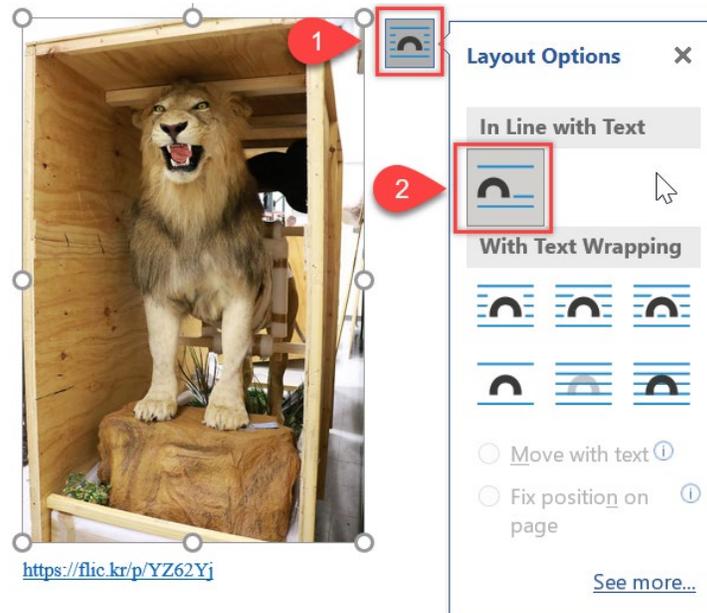
Ensure Objects and Images are in Line

Assistive technology accesses information by starting at the top of a page and progressing left to right and top to bottom. Each element is identified in proper order to give meaning. When elements, especially images, are not properly positioned on a page they end up out of order and could be completely ignored by assistive technology or identified at the beginning, end, or randomly in the middle of the page scrambling the meaning and use of the image.

When an element is properly positioned it is called “in-line” this means it is fixed to a certain space on the page and can be properly identified by assistive technology. It is important that all elements are “in-line” so they are identified in the proper order.

You might be tempted to *not* have an image in-line for ease of formatting. An image is not in-line when you can simply click and drag it around the page, and this can seem like an easier formatting option. However, it is not accessible and not ADA compliant.

- Left click on a figure and a little box will appear outside the upper right hand corner of the image. The box has an arc on it intersected with several blue lines; this is the “Layout Options” button. Ensure that the button for “In Line with Text” is selected as shown below.

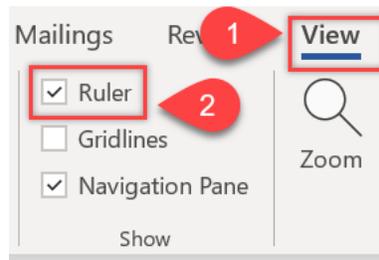


- Making an image in-line can shift its location on a page. Use the “Ruler” or other formatting techniques to position the image correctly.
- Below is an example of an image not in-line. When you click on the “Layout Options” button the option for “Square” under “With Text Wrapping” is selected. This type of formatting is not accessible. To achieve the look of an image on one side of the page and text on the other you would need to utilize Word’s column feature.



How to User Word's Ruler

1. Under the "View" tab of the ribbon within the "Show" quadrant is a checkbox for a "Ruler"



Make sure the checkbox is selected to have the "Ruler" tool show on the page. The Ruler will appear at the top of the page. It has grey shading on either end to mark the page's margins, which are identified in the below image with a red square. There are also three arrows in the below image surrounded by a red circle. The arrows control the indentation, the arrow on the right hand side controls the right hand indentation. The top hand arrow on the left hand side controls the left hanging indentation, while the bottom arrow on the left hand side controls the paragraph left side indentation.



The Ruler tool is very helpful when trying to specifically place objects on a page. If there is an image that needs to be mostly on the right hand side of the page, but not all the way right aligned, you can place the image on the page and use the left hanging arrow to slide across the ruler until the image reaches the appropriate location.

