Creating Accessible Google Documents

Sonoma County
Office of Education
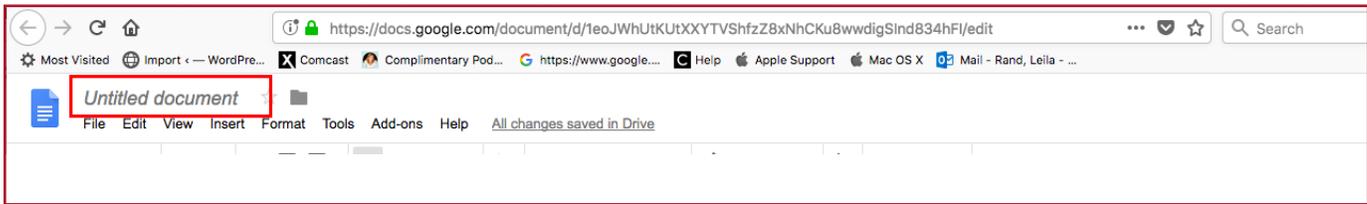
Leila Rand
**June, 2018**

Title the Document:

Add an official title to the document at the top of the page - just replace "Untitled Document"
The title should describe what the document is.

Images:

Screen reader users won't get any information about an image unless you use alternative text.
Insert yor picture, then right-click on it and choose "Alt Text". Type in your descriptive text in the Description box. If the picture has text in it, make sure to put that text in. Do not type anything into the Title field, as it will interfere with the Description being read.
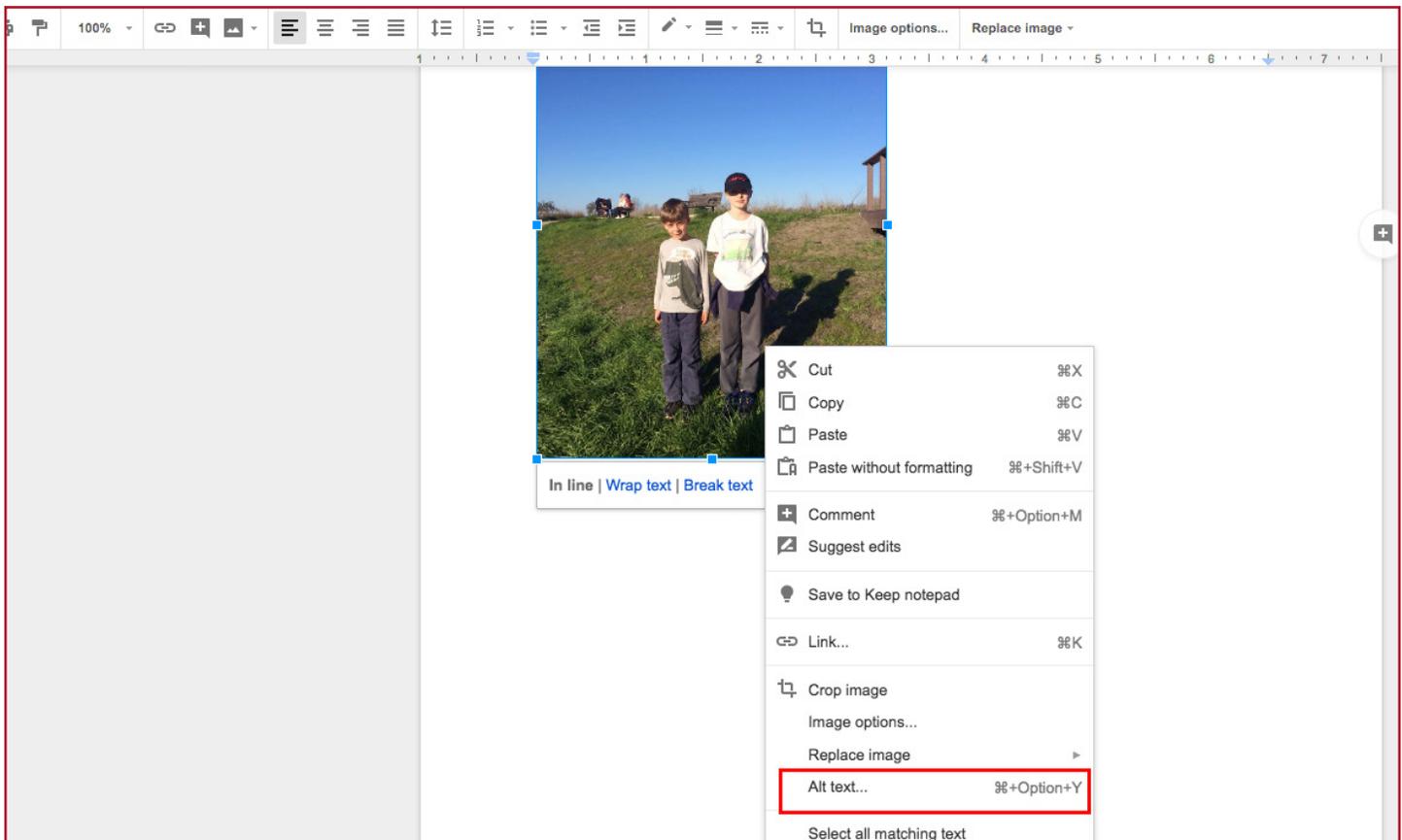
Headings:

Headings are very important for document accessibility - they allow screen readers to scan a page or jump to content. Do not simulate headings by just adding bold to text. Choose the header format in Google Docs, such as Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.

Create your heading text first, then you can set it as a heading in two ways:

- If you want to use custom styling, style the text the way you want, then right click on the heading level you want in Format>Heading (whichever level). Click "update heading to match"
- If the heading style is already set the way you like, select the text and click "Apply Heading".
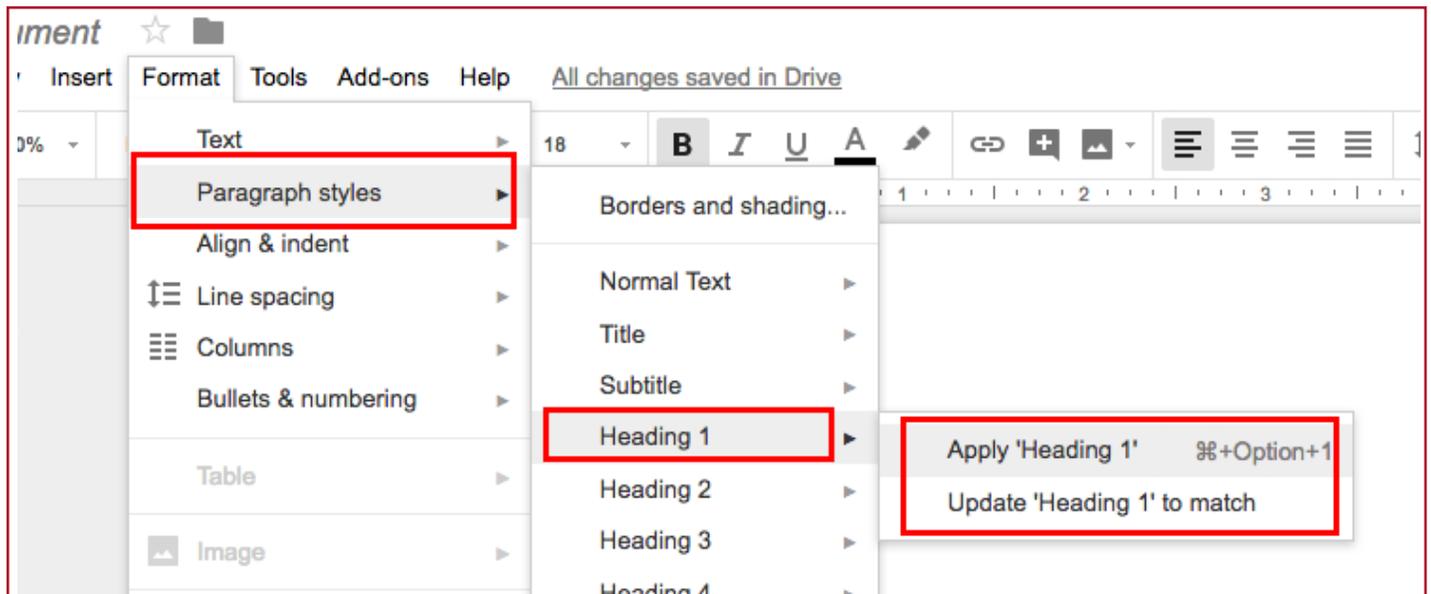
Lists:

Make sure to use the list functions in the toolbar - ordered or bulleted. Don't use spaces, tabs or shapes to create lists. Be sure to use the Increase or Decrease Indents icons to change the level of a list item.
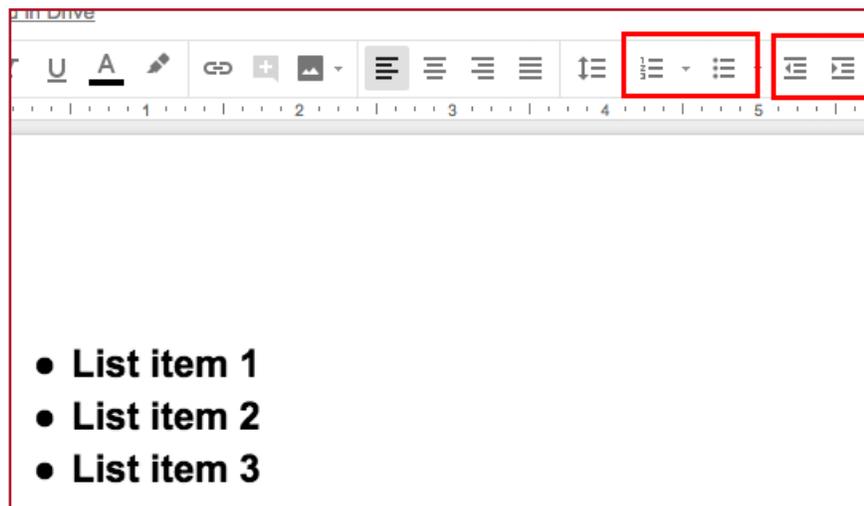
Tables:

Use tables for data, not for layout. Avoid using tabs or spaces to create columns; if the content is data, a table is better. Simple tables are best. Don't nest tables. Avoid using text boxes directly above or below your table, as their content will get read as part of the table.
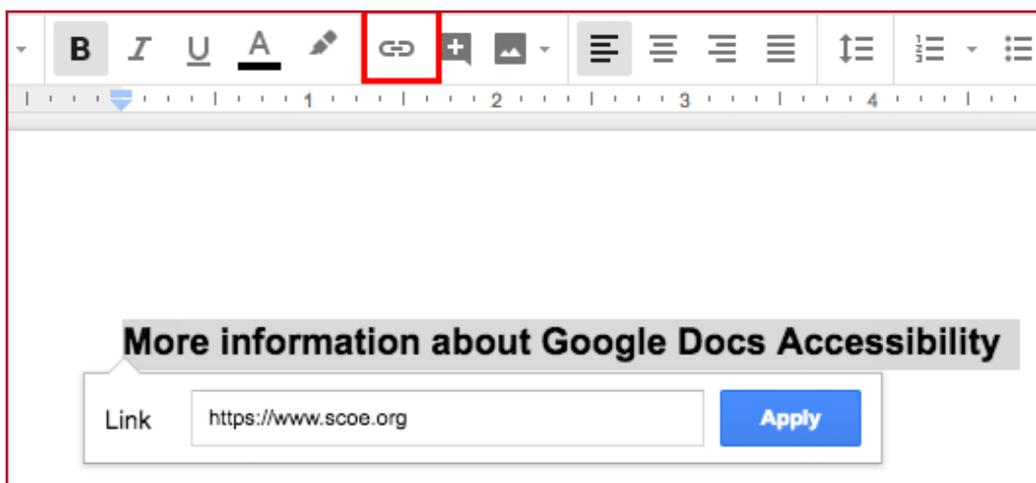
To make a simple table:

1. Insert>table
2. Right click on the table to make changes or access table properties
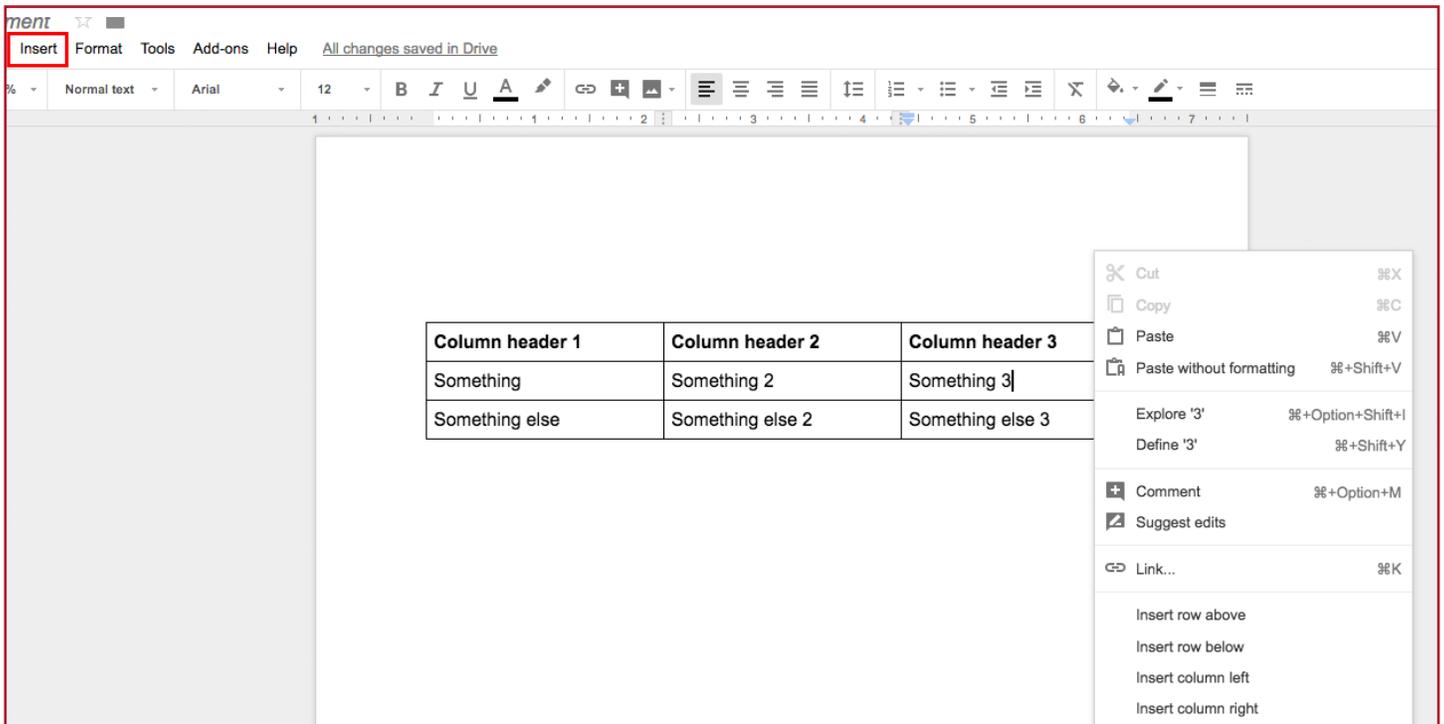
Links:

Use clear, unique text for links. Avoid generic language like "click here" which is confusing to screen readers. Avoid URLs.

Don't Make Empty Paragraphs:

Don't hit return twice to create space between paragraphs or elements on the page. Screen readers will read these empty spaces out loud. Right click on a paragraph or element, choose "paragraph" and add space before or after the element.
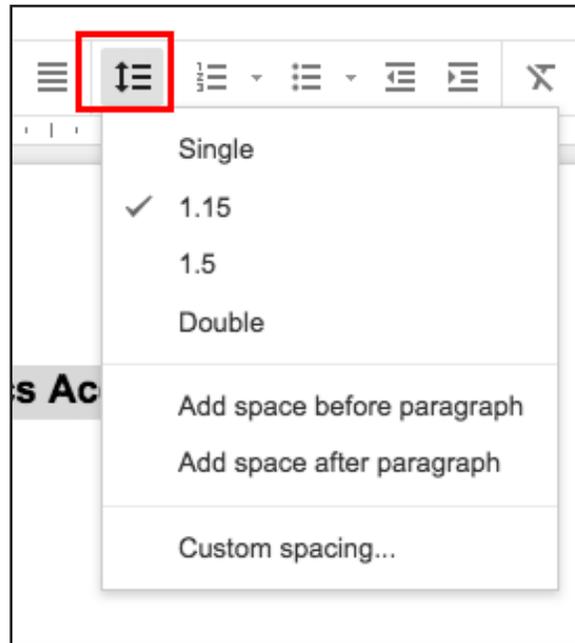
Save as PDF or Word Doc:

For placing uploading to a website, you can either save the doc as a PDF or as a Word document. If you save it to a Word doc you can use the accessibility checker in Word to check it. You can use Adobe Acrobat to check the accessiblity of the PDF.