

Creating Accessible Headings in Canvas and Word

The basic rule

Use built-in heading styles in a logical hierarchy. Do not create “fake headings” by only making text larger, bold, underlined, or a different color.

In Canvas

Start with Heading 2. Canvas automatically uses the page, assignment, discussion, announcement, or quiz title as Heading 1 (H1).

How to create a heading

1. Select the text that should be a heading.
2. In the Rich Content Editor, open the Paragraph drop-down menu.
3. Choose Heading 2, Heading 3, or Heading 4 based on the section level.

Example:

Module Overview (page title, H1)

Learning Objectives — (main section, H2)

Readings — (main section, H2)

Learning Materials — (main section, H2)

Video Lecture — (related to the main section, H3)

Lecture Slides — (related to the main section, H3)

Assignment — (a new main section, back to H2)

Instructions — (related to that main section, H3)

Submission Requirements — (also related to “Assignment”, so H3)

4. Run the Canvas Accessibility Checker before publishing.
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In Microsoft Word

Use Title for the document name; use Heading 1 for the first level of sections. Then use Heading 2 and Heading 3 for subsections.

How to create a heading

1. Select the heading text.
 2. Go to Home → Styles.
 3. Choose Heading 1, Heading 2, or Heading 3 based on the section level.
 4. Use the Navigation Pane or Word’s Accessibility Checker to review the structure.
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4 Rules to Remember

1. Use real heading styles—not bold or large text—to create headings.
2. In Canvas pages, start major content sections with Heading 2.
3. Use heading levels to communicate **relationships** between concepts. Think of it as an outline.

H2 = major section

H3 = section inside an H2

H4 = section inside an H3

4. Think of headings as the outline of your page.