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Understanding and Using Headings

Headings are the most important part to an accessible book. Screen readers us headings to navigate through a book or document, so they must be well formed. This means we must use Styles to create headings, and we must follow the `Rule of Hierarchy` (meaning every heading follows a structured hierarchical order.)

When you create a heading in a document, such as a title or a chapter heading, it is not enough to bold the text or increase the font size. A screenreader cannot "see" the bold letters. Always use the Headings Styles from the Style Pane.

General rules

The following are some general rules on how to create Headings in your workflow.

- As you apply headings to the document, ensure they appear in the navigation pane in the correct order and at the correct level (Heading 2 will be indented relative to Heading 1).

- Nest headings without skipping. For example, if you have a book with two levels of headings, use Heading 1 and Heading 2, not Heading 1 and Heading 3, no matter how small or insignificant the second level of heading might appear. It's very important to not skip heading levels as the document will not validate as an accessible ebook.

- **A heading should not have any line break in between**. This will result in two headings of the same level without any text in between. This is what is known as a `split heading`. This mark-up is invalid. For example, if the document has the following:

Chapter 1
Basics of Programming

If the same heading style is applied to both the lines above, there will be two headings of the same level since the section name is broken up into two paragraphs. Manually bring the heading name into one line and then apply the heading style. The correct format will be as follows:

Chapter 1 Basics of Programming

> If a heading doesn't appear in the correct hierarchy in the Navigation Pane, try clearing all formatting from the heading and reapplying the heading style.

Choosing headings

Refer to the table of contents of the book and familiarize yourself with the general layout of the book and the hierarchy of chapters, sections, sub-sections, etc. Determine how you would like to set up the different elements of the book using Heading levels 1-6.

DAISY and EPUB books support heading levels only up to level 6. Most books will have headings only 3 to 4 levels deep. Many books, especially standard fiction works, will only use Heading 1 and no lower levels. This is typical of books that have chapters without sections or subsections.

1. Heading 1: Top level sections include sections of front and rear matter, and usually chapters (unless they are arranged in sections or parts).
2. Heading 2: Next level breakdown. If a book has 3 Parts each with Chapters, each Part receives a Heading 1 and each Chapter receives a Heading 2.
3. Heading 3: Can be used for subsections.
4. Heading 4-6: Rarely used.

> To learn more on how to apply or fix the Heading Style in Word go to Understanding and Using Styles.

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