



Table Guidelines for Word

Tables are for Data, Not Layout

A question to consider when designing a table is, "Are you using a table to position elements in a document?" If the answer is yes, then you are trying to use a table for layout. The information presented in a layout table is not announced logically for people who use screen readers. **Layout tables do not represent or imply any relationship among content.** Data tables show a relationship between the header cells and data cells. Avoid using layout tables.

Fruits (Bad example of a list displayed in a Layout Table.)

Raspberry	Blackberry	Strawberry
Pineapple	Grapes	Kiwi
Pomegranate	Orange	Apple
Banana	Cherries	Cantaloupe

To make the information in the above example layout table accessible we will use headings and lists below.

Fruits

- Raspberry
- Blackberry
- Strawberry
- Pineapple
- Grapes
- Kiwi
- Pomegranate
- Orange
- Apple
- Banana

- Cherries
- Cantaloupe

Keep Tables Simple

MS Word only supports simple tables. Simple tables do not have:

- More than one row or column header.
- Merged:
 - Rows
 - Columns
 - cells
- Split cells

Examples of simple tables are:

Table with a row of column headers

Header	Header	Header
Data	Data	Data
Data	Data	Data

Table with a column of row headers

Header	Data	Data
Header	Data	Data
Header	Data	Data

Table with row and column headers

Header	Header	Header
Header	Data	Data
Header	Data	Data

Live Training Note: Demonstrate how to set up these tables by inserting them and checking the appropriate Table Style Options.

Review [Part 1: Things to consider – Table Design](#) [PDF document] for detailed information on simple table designs.

Simple Table Example

Item	HEB	Randall's	Costco	Whole Foods
Pears	1.29/lb.	1.49/lb.	1.19/lb.	2.79/lb.
Peaches	1.89/lb.	1.93/lb.	1.87/lb.	2.43/lb.

Item	HEB	Randall's	Costco	Whole Foods
Bananas	1.45/lb.	1.62/lb.	1.43/lb.	2.05/lb.
Apples	1.15/lb.	1.30/lb.	1.10/lb.	1.89/lb.

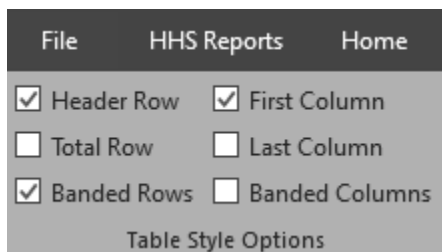
Live Training Note: Demonstrate what changing the table style options does to the table.

Pro tip: Add alternating row colors to a table to make it easier to read for everyone.

Setting Column or Row Headers

You can adjust the custom table styles to accommodate your simple table design.

1. Insert your cursor in the table.
2. Click the **Table Design** tab.
3. In the **Table Style Options** group, check the **Header Row** or **First Column** check box or both if needed.



Set Table Properties

Live Training Note: No demonstration. Everyone should be using agency created templates that have this property set. This is less work for everyone.

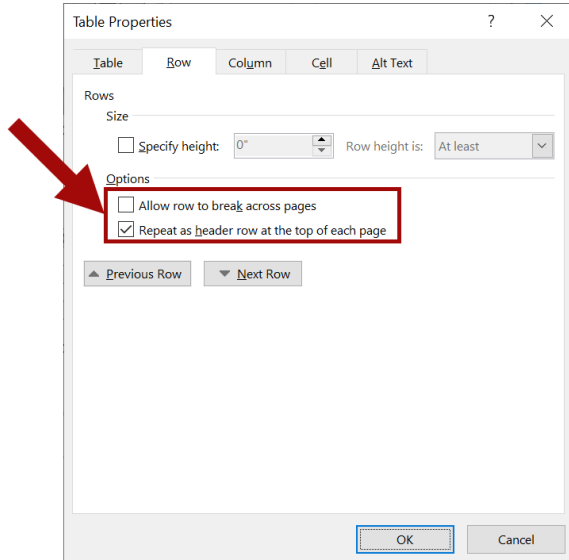
When creating simple tables in MS Word, make sure Table Properties are set.

Note: Table properties are set in HHS word templates' custom table styles.

1. Highlight the table header row.
2. Right-click on the table. A menu pops up. Select **Table Properties** button.
3. Click on the **Row** tab.

4. Make sure to:

- A. Uncheck the “**Allow rows to break across pages**” checkbox.
- B. Check the “**Repeat as header row at the top of the page**” check box.



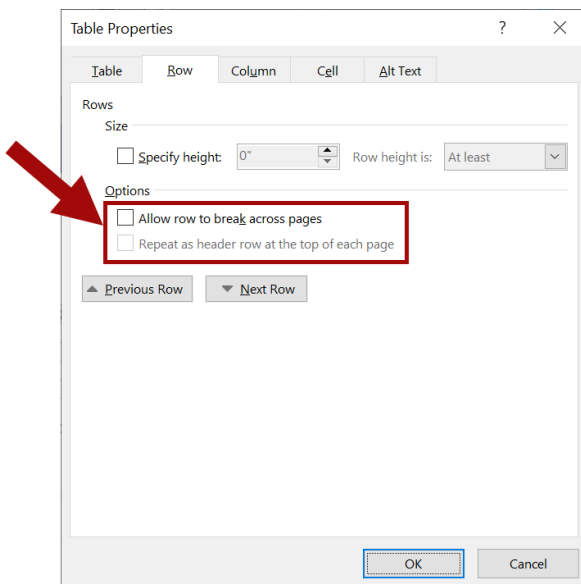
5. Click the **OK** button.

6. Highlight the remaining rows in the table.

7. Right-click the table and select the **Table Properties** button.

8. Click on the **Row** tab.

9. Make sure to uncheck the “**Allow rows to break across pages**” and “**Repeat as header row at the top of the page**” checkboxes.



10. Click **OK**.

Avoid Complex Tables

Complex tables are difficult for anyone to read and understand.

Live Training Note: We will demonstrate how to make this a simple table and apply a custom table style. There are three different text styles that can be applied to tables. They are Clear All, Body Text, and Table Content.

Example of a complex table

Region	Fiscal Year 2020		Fiscal Year 2021	
	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter
01	6542	8543	8236	9186
02	5011	8361	4654	6854
03	5165	8745	6958	8641

Example of a simple accessible table with all the same information as the previous table.

Region	FY 2020 1 st Quarter	FY 2020 2 nd Quarter	FY 2021 1 st Quarter	FY 2021 2 nd Quarter
01	6542	8543	8236	9186
02	5011	8361	4654	6854
03	5165	8745	6958	8641

If you have to use a complex table:

- Use other methods than a table to convey complex information. An example is in page 12 of [Troubleshooting Common Problems in Word](#) [PDF document]
- Use simple tables to convey complex information. For more information see [Part 3: How to Remediate a Complex Table](#) [PDF document].
- Build the complex table in Word and plan to share the document as a PDF. Remediate the complex table in Adobe Acrobat Pro. For more information review:
 - ▶ [Part 3: How to Remediate a Complex Table](#) [PDF document].
 - ▶ [Complex Tables with Spanning Headers tutorial](#) [PDF document].

Tables in HHS Templates

Live Training Note: We will demonstrate the following information in this live training.

In the [How to Use HHS Word Templates \[PDF Document\]](#) you can find information on the following:

- Table Styles on page 13.
- How to Format an Existing Table on page 14.
- How to Add Quick Tables on page 15.
- How to Insert a Table on page 17.

In the [Troubleshooting Common Problems in Word \[PDF document\]](#) you will find the following information:

- Table Problems starting on page 12.