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Are your documents' headings accessible? [1]

May 13, 2024 by ES and UIS Communications [2]

For adaptive technology users, header tags are vital in giving a sense of the main topics of the page and enabling easier navigation through your content. Think of your headers as a table of contents for your page making a scannable outline of your content more accessible to everyone.

For screen reader users, headings are one of the primary methods they may use to navigate within a web page or document. A screen reader can announce all the headings in a document, which lets its users quickly skim the page or jump to a particular section of a document or page.

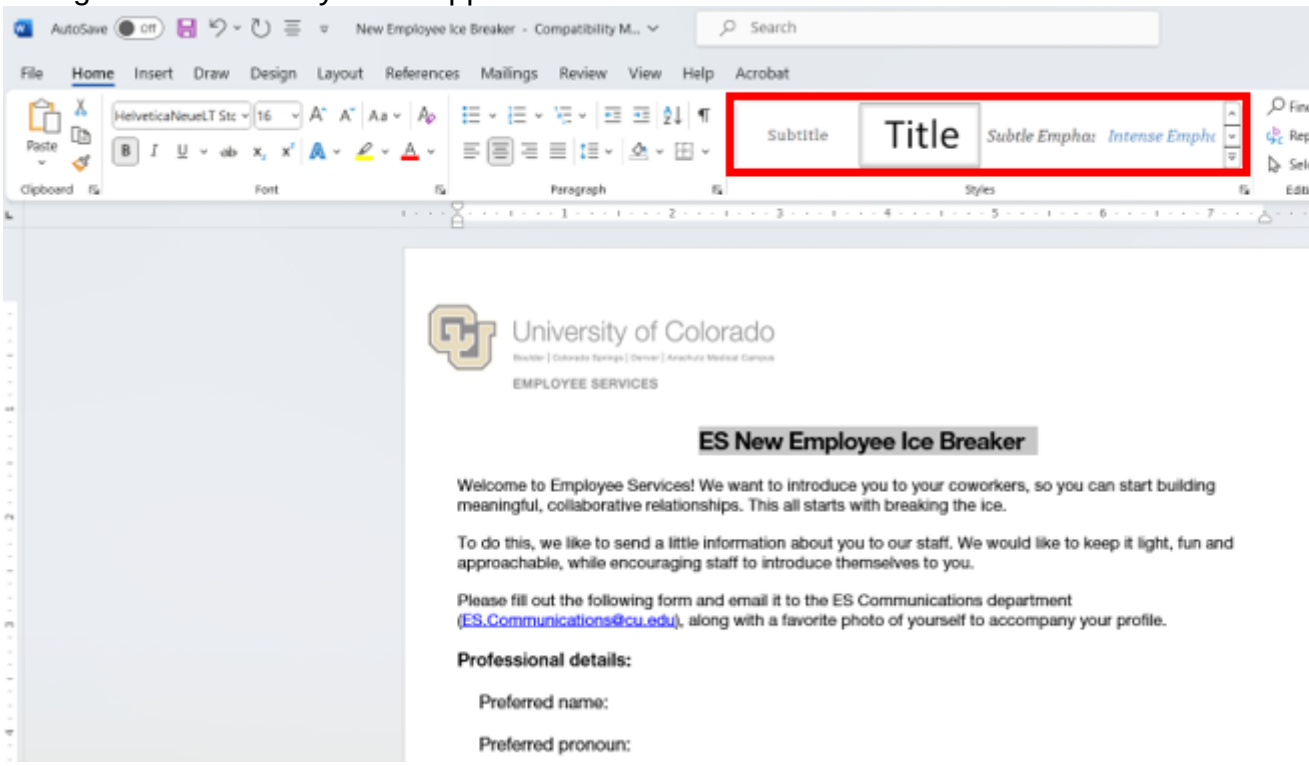
Headings are also useful for individuals with disabilities who have difficulty organizing content or keeping track of where they are within the subject matter. They can be used by individuals with executive functioning difficulties to regulate their progress through a document or keep them on track with a particular task.

Adding headings to documents

Word processing applications like Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat have built-in heading styles, making the process quick and easy. You may already use these preformatted styles, but it is important to be consistent with heading format throughout documents, to ensure that screen readers can navigate your document successfully.

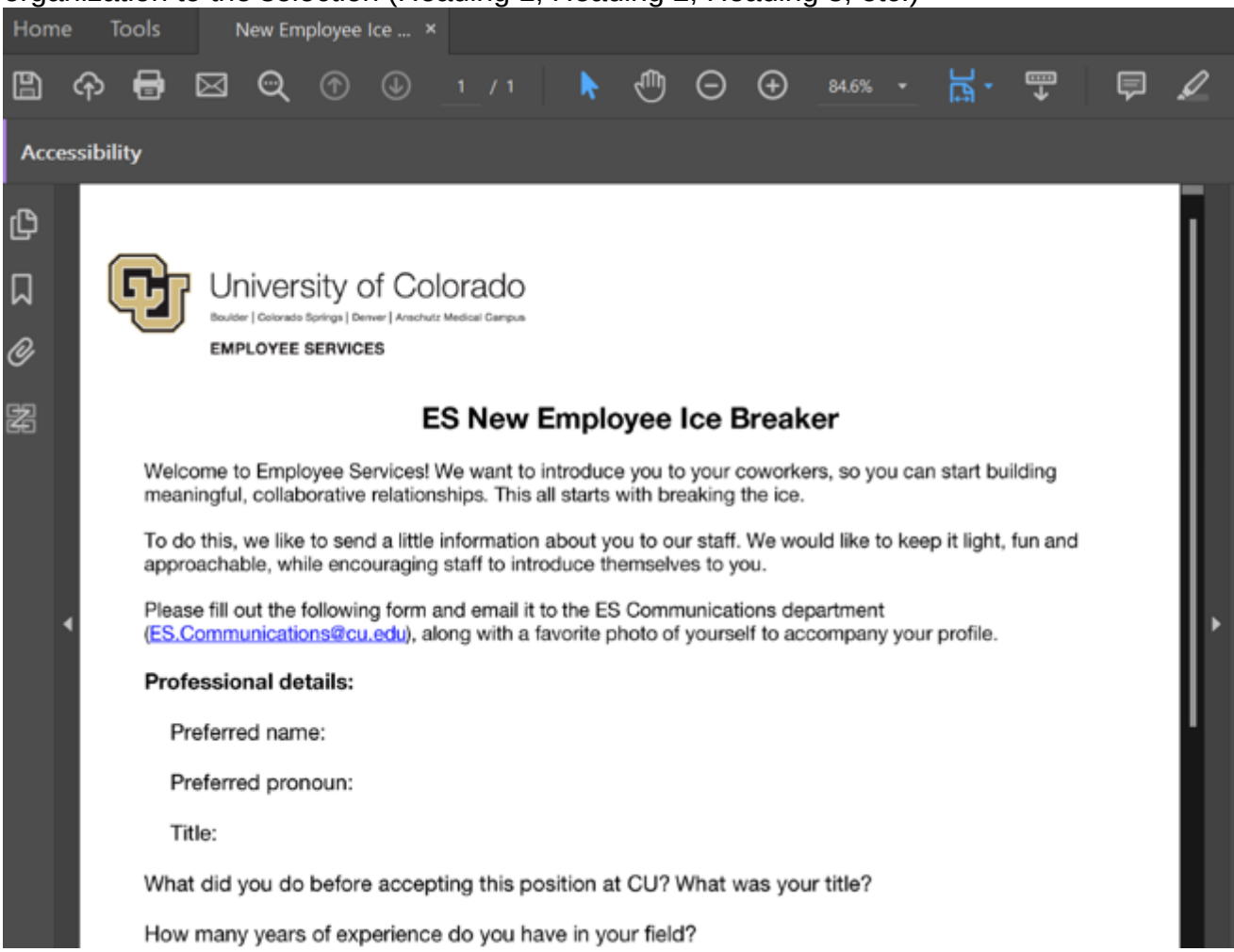
- In Microsoft Word, simply use the **Styles** functionality located in the **Ribbon** at the top of the window to add headings and subheadings. Right-click the heading to

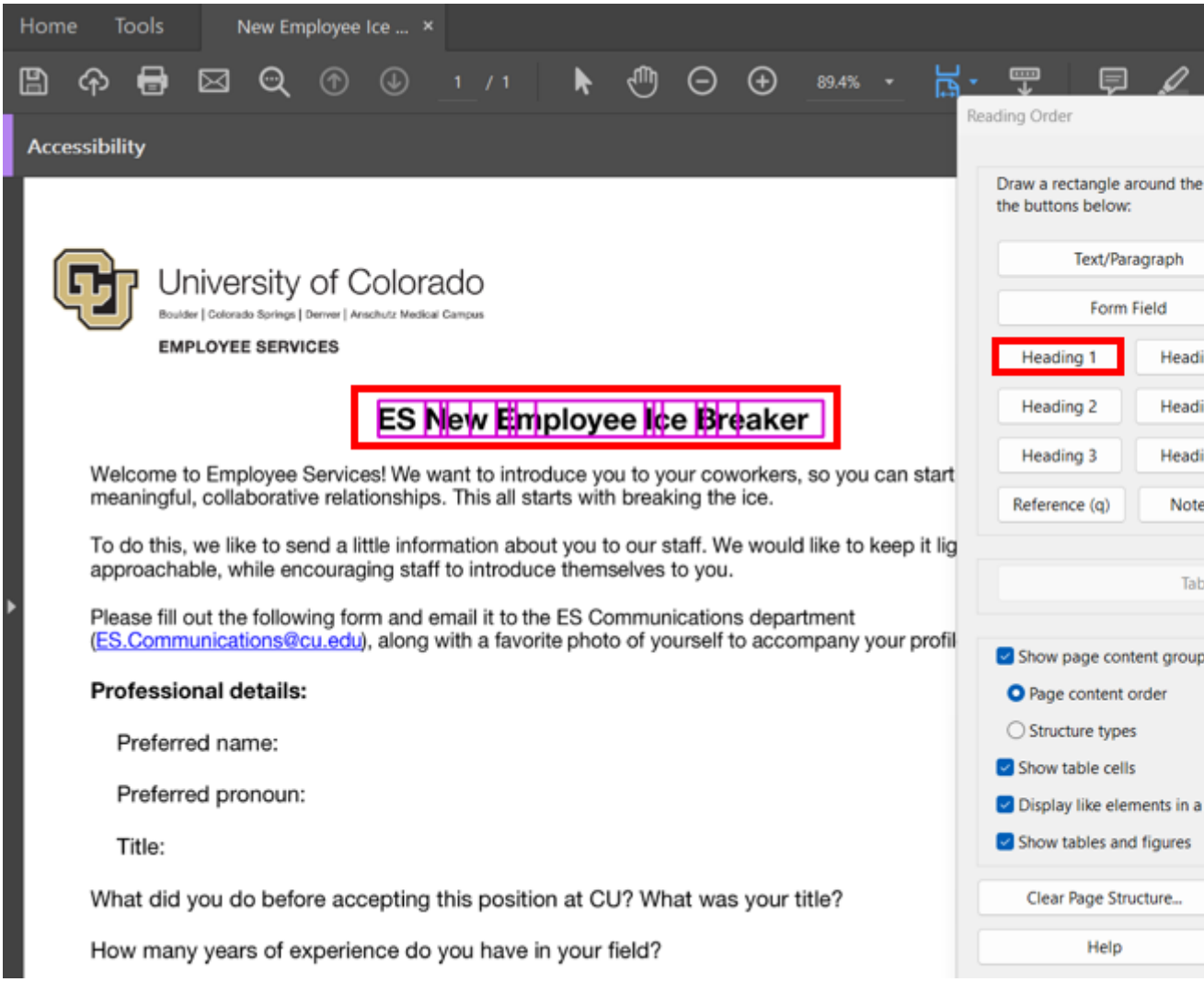
change the format's style and appearance.



- In Adobe Acrobat, select the **Reading Order** tool from the **Accessibility** toolbar. Then, draw rectangles around your headings and designate the proper level of

organization to the selection (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.)





For more information on creating accessible headings, consult the following tutorials for different content platforms:

- Headings in Microsoft Word (video) [3]
- Headings in Google Docs [4]
- Headings in WebExpress [5]
- Headings in HTML [6]

accessibility [7]
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