

Basic Keyboard Commands for Working with Documents



Karen McCall, M.Ed.

Copyright 2019

Table of Contents

The Basics	4
Character by Character	4
Word by Word	4
Line by Line	4
Paragraph by Paragraph.....	4
Home and End Keys.....	5
Select Text/Content.....	5
The Ribbons	6
Show or Hide the Ribbons	6
Groups	7
Galleries	7
Sub-Menus	7
Get Contextual Help.....	7
Adding Sandbox Text to a Document	7
Office Clipboard	8
Undo and Redo.....	8
Saving Documents	8
Protected View.....	8
Word Document Based Keyboard Commands	8
Document Title.....	9
Document Properties.....	9
Clear Formatting.....	9
Headings	9
Convert Case.....	9
Lists.....	9
Links	10
Tables.....	10
Copy and Paste Formatting	10
Insert a Picture	10
Add Alt text to Images	10
Font Size and Font Colour.....	10

Spell Check a Document.....	10
Accessibility Checker	11
Page Breaks	11
Paragraph Break.....	11
Table of Contents.....	11
JAWS Keyboard Commands.....	11
NVDA and JAWS Keyboard Commands.....	12

The Basics

Most of the commands you'll be using are Windows, Word or PowerPoint commands not specific to an adaptive technology. So, once you get those under your belt, adding the commands for reading specific information that each adaptive technology has will be easy.

I've used language such as "move to and/or read" because whether your adaptive technology reads the information or not will depend on the type of adaptive technology you use. For example, pressing the Right Arrow will move you in front of the next character but that character will only be read if you are using either a screen reader or Text-to-Speech tools.

Character by Character

In Word and most Windows based applications:

- Right Arrow moves to and/or reads a character to the right.
- Left Arrow moves to and/or reads a character to the left.

In both cases your cursor will be in front of the character.

Word by Word

- Ctrl + Right Arrow moves to and/or reads a word to the right.
- Ctrl + Left Arrow moves to and/or reads a word to the left.

In both cases your cursor will be in front of the words.

Line by Line

- Up Arrow moves to and/or reads the line above.
- Down Arrow moves to and/or reads the line below.

In both instances the cursor will be at the cursor point from which you moved not at the beginning of the line. This is important when teaching clients. This is also known as reading the previous and next lines on a page.

Paragraph by Paragraph

- In Word Ctrl + Up Arrow moves to and/or reads the previous paragraph.
- In Word Ctrl + Down Arrow moves to and/or reads the next paragraph.

In both instances this will put you at the beginning of the paragraph.

These keyboard commands work in PowerPoint/lists and correctly tagged PDF documents.

If you are using the JAWS screen reader, you can use the JAWS keyboard command to reread the current paragraph which is Ctrl + NumPad 5 with the NumLock turned off.

JAWS has keyboard commands for moving through sentences. Looking at the way you navigate paragraphs, see the similarity:

- Alt + Up Arrow moves to and reads the previous sentence.
- Alt + Down Arrow moves to and reads the next sentence.
- Alt + NumPad 5 rereads the current sentence.

The sentence reading keyboard commands are for JAWS only, however your adaptive technology may have similar keyboard commands. They should be found in the Help documentation of your adaptive technology.

Home and End Keys

The Home and End keys are important ones to know:

- Home moves you to the beginning of the line
- End moves you to the end of the line.
- Ctrl + Home moves you to the beginning of the document.
- Ctrl + End moves you to the end of the document.

Select Text/Content

When you add the Shift key you select content:

- Shift + Left or Right Arrow selects the character to the left or right of the cursor.
- Ctrl + Shift + Left or Right Arrow selects the word or part of the word to the left or right of the cursor.
 - For example, if your cursor is in the middle of a word, when you press Ctrl + Shift + Right Arrow you select from your cursor point (the middle of the word) to the end of the word.
 - When you use this keyboard command you also select the space after the word.
 - The exception is at the end of a sentence or if there is punctuation just after the word. If there is punctuation after the word, you only select the word, not the punctuation.
- Ctrl + Shift + Up Arrow selects the paragraph from the cursor point to the beginning of the paragraph
- Ctrl + Shift + Down Arrow selects the paragraph from the cursor point to the end of the paragraph.
- Ctrl + Shift + Home selects from the cursor point to the beginning of the document.
- Ctrl + Shift + End selects from the cursor point to the end of the document.

Like tools have similar keyboard commands and the only “adaptive technology” commands I’ve listed here are to reread the paragraph or the sentence commands using the JAWS screen reader.

Try to keep your hands on each side of the keyboard and use the left and right Ctrl, Alt, and Shift keys. I always tell clients that there is barbed wire down the middle of the keyboard and hands must stay separate. It helps with learning keyboarding and tends to discourage hunt and peck as well as games of keyboard twister.

The Ribbons

Pressing Alt will show you the keyboard commands for each Ribbon. Each Ribbon has other keyboard commands for the tools on the Ribbon. For example, pressing Alt + H, U will open the Bullets Gallery on the Home Ribbon. Other main Ribbons are:

- Alt + H for the Home Ribbon.
- Alt + N for the Insert Ribbon.
- Alt + G for the Design Ribbon.
- Alt + P for the Page Layout Ribbon.
- Alt + S for the References Ribbon.
- Alt + M for the Mailings Ribbon.
- Alt + R for the Review Ribbon.
- Alt + W for the View Ribbon.
- Alt + X for the Add-ins Ribbon if you have Add-ons installed.
- Alt + Y, 2 for the Help Ribbon. A caveat to this is that on my computer, the Acrobat Ribbon is Y, number 1, number 1. The Help Ribbon might be a different keyboard command on your computer.

Show or Hide the Ribbons

To show or hide the Ribbons, press Ctrl + F1.

Use Ctrl + Shift + F1 to cycle through the Title bar, Quick Access and Ribbons on or off. This is not the same as Full Screen view. If you choose not to show any of the tools at the top of the document, they will temporarily appear when you use keyboard commands to access File/Backstage area, Ribbon, Sub-Ribbon or Quick Access Toolbar tools.

Groups

Each Ribbon is divided into Groups. For example, the Home Ribbon has the Clipboard, Fonts, Paragraph, Styles, Editing and Voice Groups. If you have Adobe Acrobat Pro DC installed you will also see an Adobe Acrobat Group on the Home Ribbon.

Galleries

Some tools on the Ribbons have Galleries. For example, the Styles Gallery on the Home Ribbon (Alt + H, L). Two more examples are the Table of Contents Gallery on the References Ribbon (Alt + S, T) and the Page Header Gallery (Alt + N, H) or Footer Gallery (Alt + N, letter O) both on the Insert Ribbon.

Sub-Menus

Some tools on the Ribbons have sub-menus. For example, the convert Case tool on the Home Ribbon (Alt + H, 7). Two more examples of sub-menus for Ribbon tools are the Breaks tools on the Page Layout Ribbon (Alt + P, B) and the Find tools on the Home Ribbon (Alt + H, F, D, A for an Advanced Find).

Get Contextual Help

You can press Alt + Q and type in a command/what you want to do and get results that are specific to locations on the Ribbons for the task you want to do.

Adding Sandbox Text to a Document

There are two keyboard commands you can use to insert placeholder text into templates while working on them.

The first keyboard command will insert random text from the Office Help documentation. The number you choose is the number of paragraphs inserted, each containing three sentences.

```
"=rand(7)"
```

Type this without the quotes. Once you press the Enter key seven paragraphs will be added to the document each having three sentences. You can use any number you want or need.

```
"=rand(5,7)"
```

When the Enter key is pressed five paragraphs of seven sentences each will be added to the document. The content is from the Office Help documentation.

If you want the traditional Latin text, type =lorem(5) or =lorem (5, 7) to add Latin placeholder text into your document. It works the same way, use one number to add X paragraphs of three sentences each and X, Y to add X number of paragraphs with Y number of sentences.

As with the previous keyboard commands, you can use any number combination you want or need. Remember to delete this before you save your new template.

Office Clipboard

The Office Clipboard (Alt + H, P, letter O) opens to the left of a document. The Office Clipboard, unlike the Windows Clipboard, can hold up to 24 items on it. Close the Office Clipboard by putting focus in it and pressing Ctrl + Spacebar, followed by C.

This comes in handy when you are remediating content, consolidating content or copying multiple items from one Office application to another.

If you are copying something to a non-Office application, you will be using the Windows Clipboard and it will only contain the last item you copied.

Undo and Redo

If you've done something and want to Undo it, press Ctrl + Z.

To Redo something you've accidentally deleted, press Ctrl + Y.

If you go to the Quick Access Toolbar just above the Home Ribbon and activate the Undo button, you can Undo up to 50 items. You can't pick and choose which ones, each action depends on another one, so undoing item 5 will also undo items 4, 3, 2 and 1.

Press Alt followed by 3 to view the list of actions you've done in the document.

Saving Documents

The fastest way to save a document in Microsoft Office is to press F12. This opens the Save As dialog where you can give the file a name, change the file type and the location of the file.

Protected View

If you open a document you've received in an e-mail or downloaded from the Internet, you will see/hear it is in Protected View. To make the document editable, if you trust the source of the document, press Alt + F, letter I, E.

Word Document Based Keyboard Commands

The following keyboard commands are the most frequently used ones when working with Word documents.

Note: Do NOT use the Bold, Italic or Underline from the Home Ribbon and do not use the Ctrl + B, letter I or U to make text bold, Italic or Underline. This is direct formatting! Direct formatting creates accessibility barriers.

Document Title

The document title should always use the Title Style. Press Ctrl + Shift + S to open the Apply Styles dialog, type Title in the edit area and press Enter.

Close the Apply Styles dialog by pressing Ctrl + Spacebar, followed by C. This is not “Ctrl + Spacebar, C.”

You can also use the Styles Pane: Alt + H, F, Y and click on the Title Style.

Document Properties

All documents should have document properties. First, in a PDF document it should be the title of the document that appears in the Title Bar, not the filename. To add the document properties in Office applications:

Press Alt + F, letter I, Q, S and then Enter on Advanced properties.

I keep a NotePad document with keywords/tags that I can copy and paste into document properties. I

Clear Formatting

Alt + H, E for Home Ribbon, Erase (Formatting) once you select text.

Headings

To apply a Heading Style to selected text:

- Ctrl + Alt + number 1 applies a Heading 1.
- Ctrl + Alt + 2 applies a Heading 2.
- Ctrl + Alt + 3 applies a Heading 3.

You can also use:

- Alt + H, F, Y to open the Styles Pane and select a Style.
- Ctrl + Shift + S to open the Apply Styles Pane and choose a Style.

Convert Case

Select the text you want the text case converted for and press Alt + H, 7 then choose the case conversion you want from the sub-menu.

Lists

Always use the icons/buttons on the Home Ribbon to create a list. You can, however, start a list by typing a number followed by a period and a space and then press Enter at the end of the sentence/paragraph.

- Alt + H, U for a Bulleted List

- Alt + H, N for a Numbered List.
- Alt + H, M for a Multilevel List.

Links

Select the text you want to be a link and press Ctrl + K.

Tables

Never draw a table! To create an accessible table:

Press Alt + N, T and use either the Table Gallery or press the letter I to open the Insert Table dialog.

Copy and Paste Formatting

If you want to copy formatting and use it on other pieces of text:

- Select the text and press Ctrl + Shift + C.
- Press Ctrl + Shift + V on selected text to paste the formatting.

If you've pasted a Heading Style, the Heading Style will be applied to the selected text.

Insert a Picture

This applies to both Word and PowerPoint.

- Alt + N, P to Insert a Picture from your computer.
- Alt + N, F to Insert a Picture from a File.

Add Alt text to Images

Select the image or object and press the right mouse button or the AppKey and then A for Edit Alt text. The Alt Text Pane opens to the right of the document.

Font Size and Font Colour

Do Not select text and change the font size or colour! Either modify an existing Style (you may need to create a new template) or create a new Style (you may need to create a new template).

Spell Check a Document

Press Alt + F7 to move to the next spelling mistake in the document and open the list of suggestions.

Press F7 to open the Spall Check Pane to the right of the document. You can then use Tab and Enter to examine spelling and/or grammatical errors and fix them.

Accessibility Checker

There are two ways to launch the Accessibility Checker:

- Alt + F, letter I, letter I and then choose Check Accessibility from the dropdown menu.
- Alt + R, A, number 1 from the Review Ribbon, Check Accessibility.

Page Breaks

Select the text you want on the top of the next page and press Alt + H, P, G to open the Paragraph dialog. Press Ctrl + Page Down to move to the Widows and Orphans tab and then press Alt + B for "Top of next page." This method, rather than Ctrl + Enter, makes it easy to remove the page break if needed.

Paragraph Break

At the end of a line, press Shift + Enter for a Paragraph Break. Usually this is done for addresses.

Table of Contents

Place your cursor where you want the Table of Contents to start and press Alt + S, T for References Ribbon, Table of Contents. Press C again for custom/Create Table of Contents and accept the defaults.

If you find that the document title or Title Style is in the Table of Contents, place your cursor in the Table of Contents, press the right mouse button or the AppKey and then E for Edit Field. The Edit Field dialog opens, choose TOC from the list (Table of Contents) and then Edit. In the Table of Contents dialog, press Alt + letter O for Options, scroll down to the Title Style and remove the number next to it. Activate OK all the way back to redoing/replacing the existing Table of Contents.

Update a Table of Contents by placing your cursor in the Table of Contents, press the right mouse button or the AppKey and choose Update Field. Always choose to update everything, not just the page numbers.

JAWS Keyboard Commands

Note the logic of the commands.

- NumPad 5 reads the current character. Use this if you want to hear the current character again.
 - Left or Right Arrow will move to and read the current character, NumPad 5 lets you hear the character again.
- NumPad 5, 5 Puts you into phonetic mode so you can use the left and right arrows to hear Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta. Use this for words or characters you can't understand. Press the Escape key to get out of this mode.

- JawsKey + 5, 5 spells the current word but not phonetically.
- JawsKey + NumPad 5 reads the current word.
- JawsKey + NumPad 8 reads current line.
- JawsKey + NumPad 2 Starts reading from the cursor point and won't stop until you press the Ctrl key.
- Ctrl stops JAWS from speaking.

JAWS has a keyboard command for reading selected text so you can double check that what you've selected is what you wanted to select. Press JawsKey + Shift + NumPad 2 to have selected text read to you.

NVDA and JAWS Keyboard Commands

You can find all of the [JAWS keyboard commands](#)¹ on the Vispero website. The keyboard commands are also available through the Help documentation in JAWS.

Microsoft has a help document called [Appendix B: Narrator keyboard commands and touch gestures](#)².

You can find a complete list of [NVDA keyboard commands](#)³ on the WebAIM site.

- The JawsKey is the Insert key on the Numpad when the NumLock is off.
- The NVDA key is the Insert key on the Numpad when the NumLock is off.
- The Narrator key is the Insert key on the Numpad when the NumLock is off. To turn Narrator on, press Windows key + Ctrl + Enter.

Table 1 Summary of screen reader keyboard commands.

Description	JAWS	NVDA	Narrator
Say current character	NumPad 5	Numpad 2	Narrator + Comma
Previous character	Left Arrow	Left Arrow	Narrator + M
Next character	Right Arrow	Right Arrow	Narrator + Period
Phonetic spell mode	NumPad 5, 5	N/A	NA

¹ JAWS Keyboard Commands in tagged PDF document, Vispero:
<https://www.freedomscientific.com/Content/Documents/Manuals/JAWS/Keystrokes.pdf>

² Appendix B – Narrator keyboard commands and touch gestures, Microsoft:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/22806/windows-10-narrator-keyboard-commands-touch-gestures>

³ NVDA Keyboard Commands on the WebAIM website:
<https://webaim.org/resources/shortcuts/nvda#reading>

Description	JAWS	NVDA	Narrator
Spell word	JawsKey + 5, 5	NumPad 5, 5	Narrator + Ctrl + 5, 5
Say current word	JawsKey + NumPad 5	NumPad 5	Narrator + K
Say current line	JawsKey + NumPad 8	Numpad 7	Narrator + letter I
Read until stopped	JawsKey + NumPad 2	NVDA + Down Arrow	Narrator + C
Stop speaking	Ctrl	Ctrl	Ctrl