

Creating an Accessible InDesign Document



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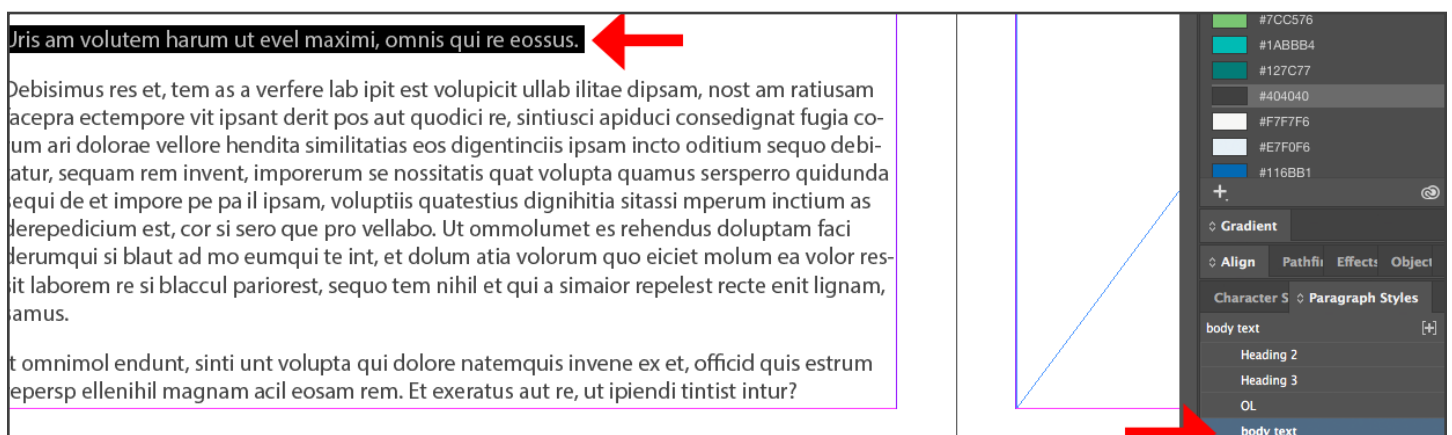
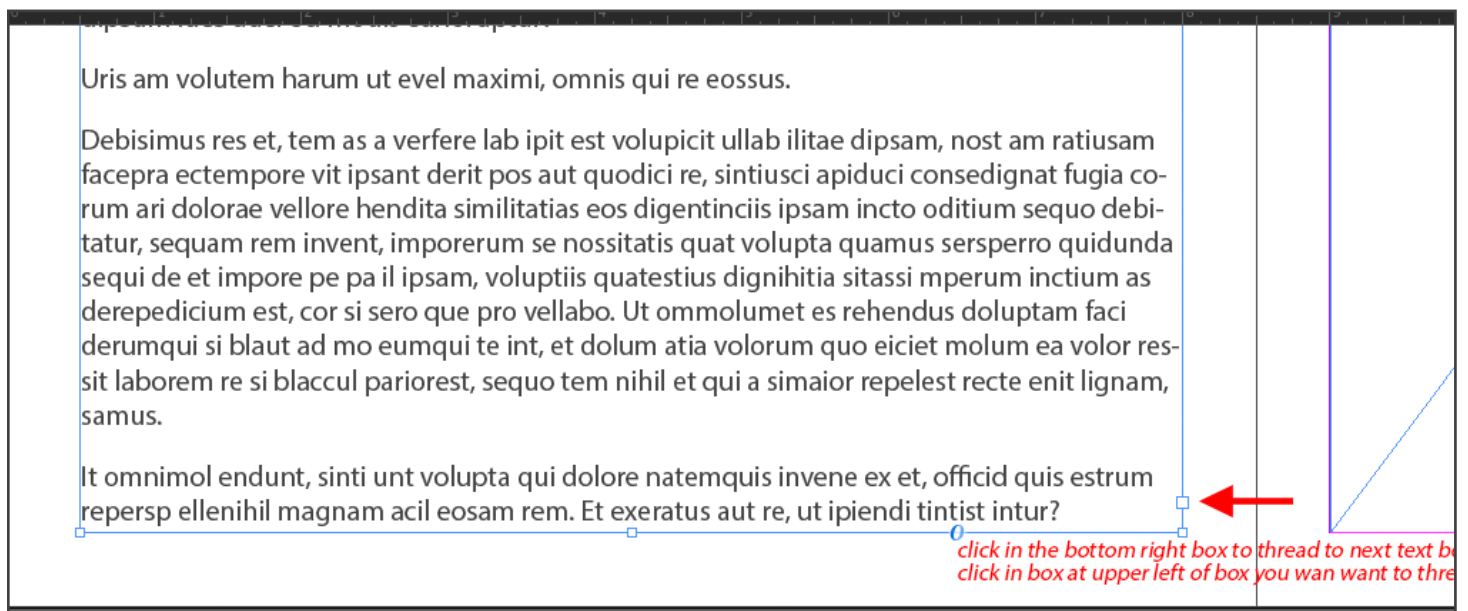
Getting Started

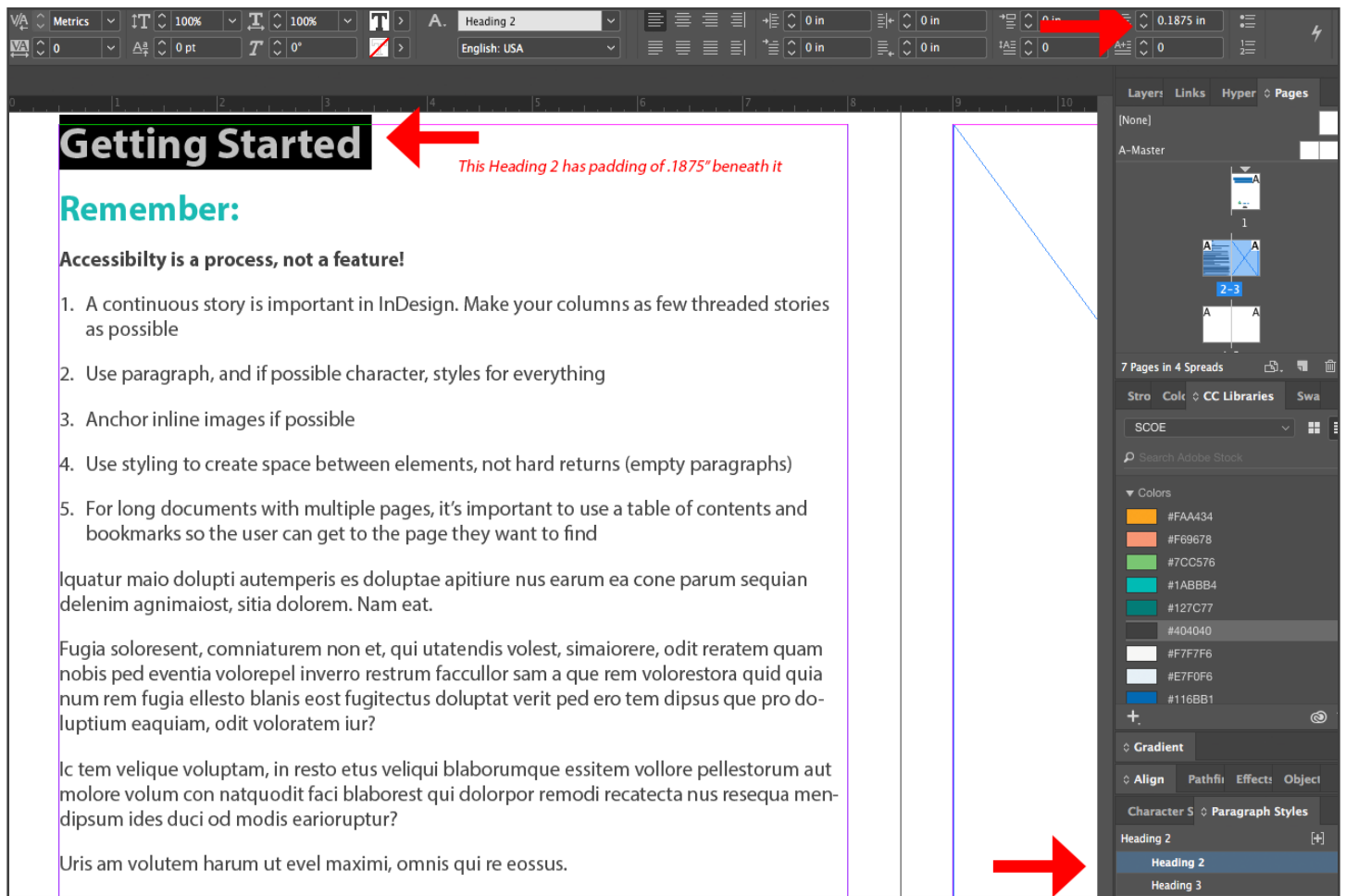
Remember:

Accessibility is a process, not a feature!

Basics:

1. A continuous story is important in InDesign. Make your columns as few threaded stories as possible
2. Use paragraph, and if possible character, styles for everything
3. Anchor inline images if possible
4. Use styling to create space between elements, not hard returns (empty paragraphs)
5. For long documents with multiple pages, it's important to use a table of contents and bookmarks so the user can get to the page they want to find





First Steps:

Title the document:

File>File Info: Put in a short title

Add tags to the tags panel:

Window>Utilities>Tags (keep this window open)

You will add new tags: H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and P

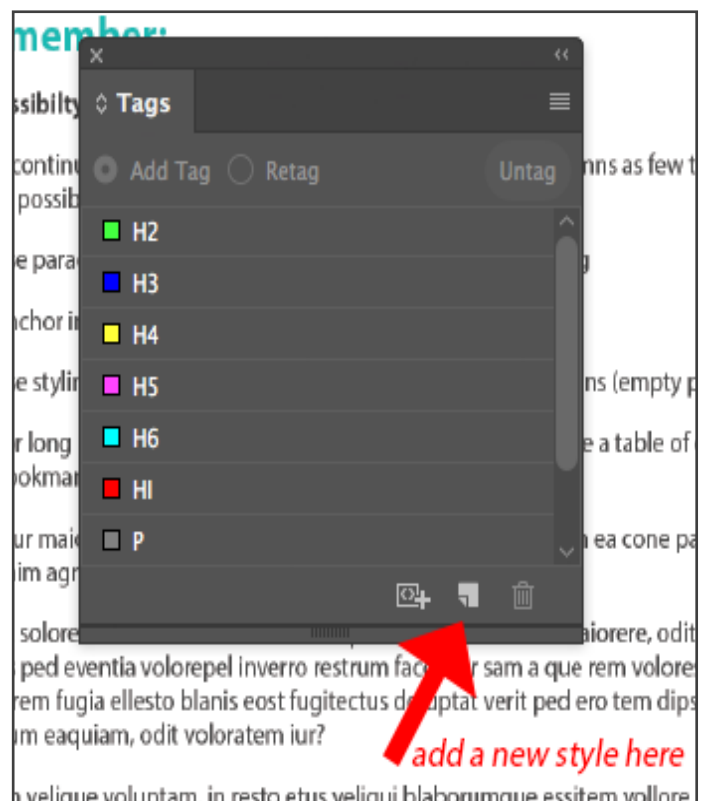
Open the Structure Panel

View> structure:

Click "show structure"

Click "show tag markers"

Click "show tagged frames"



Add in your content:

Add in your text, threading your stories and creating paragraph/character styles for every element that is styled differently.

Add in your images.

Add in any links and make sure your link language is clear and specific:

BAD: a URL by itself, or “read more”

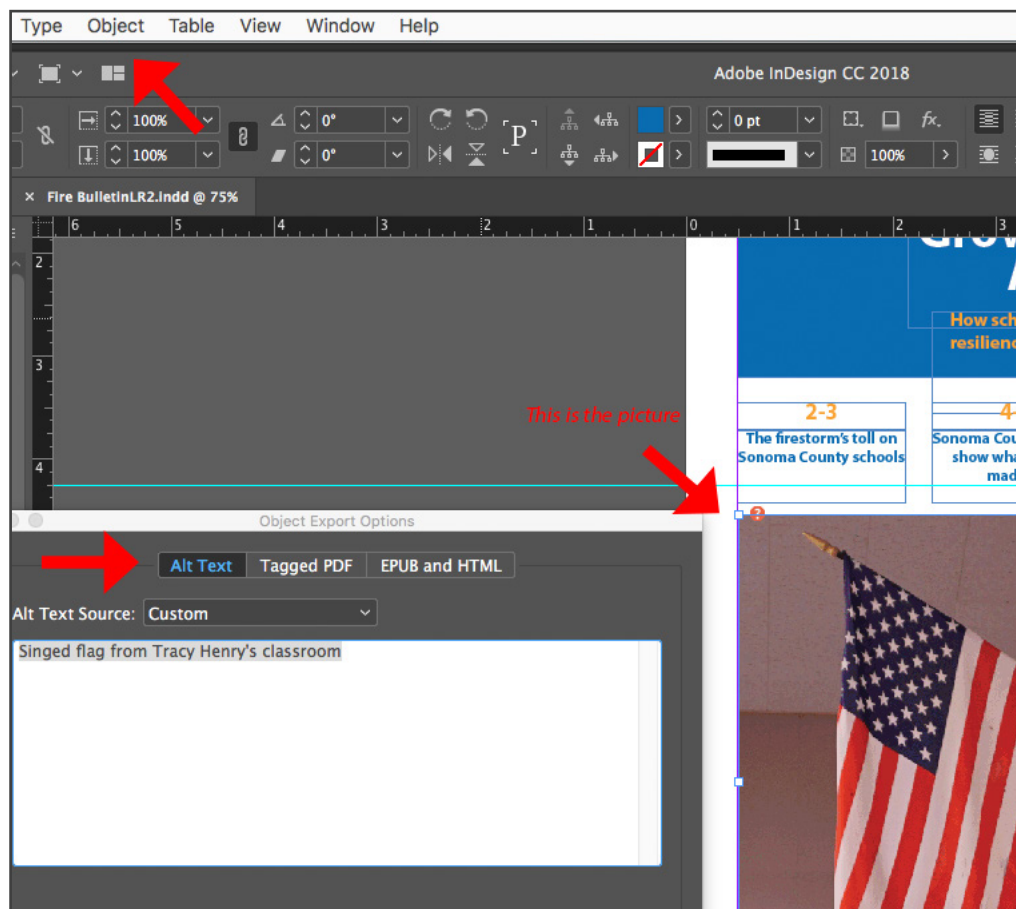
GOOD: “Read more about InDesign accessibility.”

Use a table of contents and bookmarks for long documents.

Make your document accessible

Add alternative text to your images:

1. Select image
2. Object>object export options
3. Alt Text
4. “Custom” from the drop down
5. Type in alt text

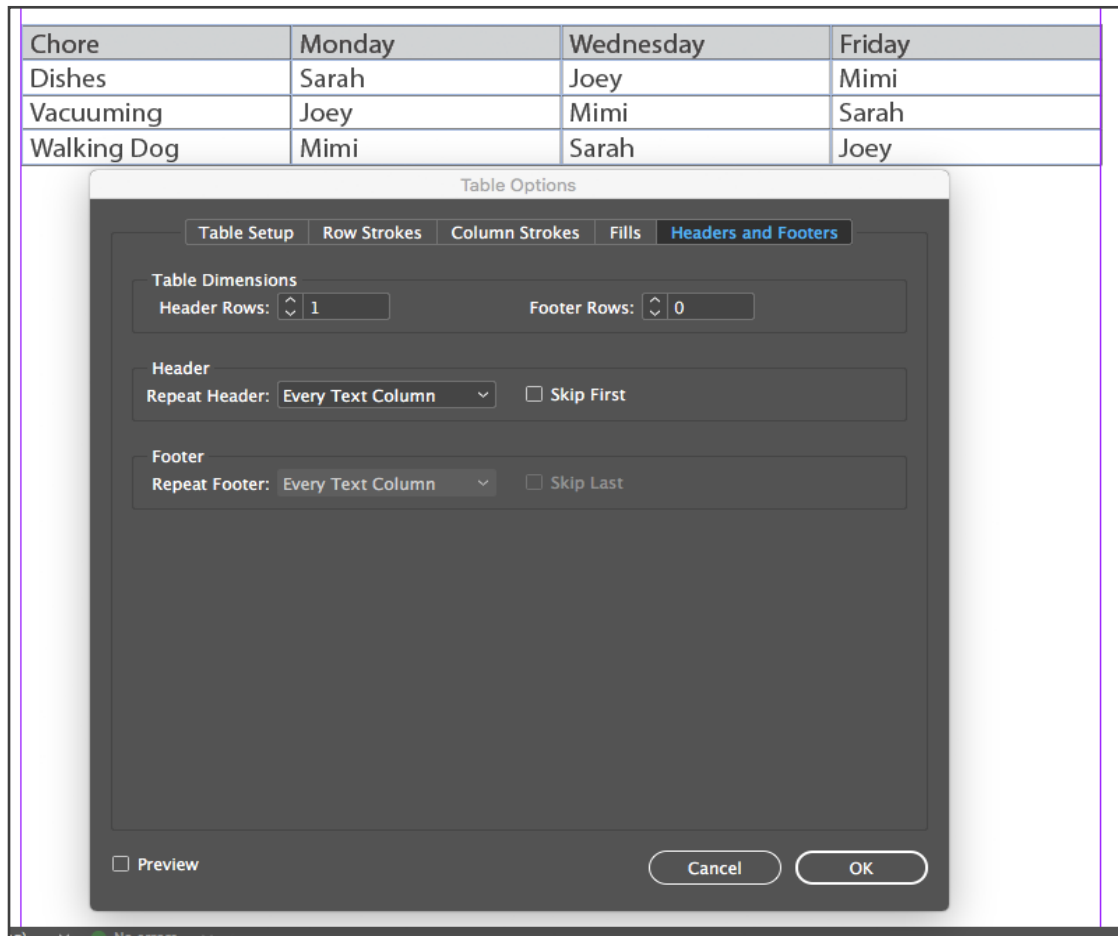


Make your tables accessible

Create Table: Table>Insert Table

Create a Header Row: Table options: Header and Footer - choose row 1 as header

Use the header to row to clearly label each column



Tag your document

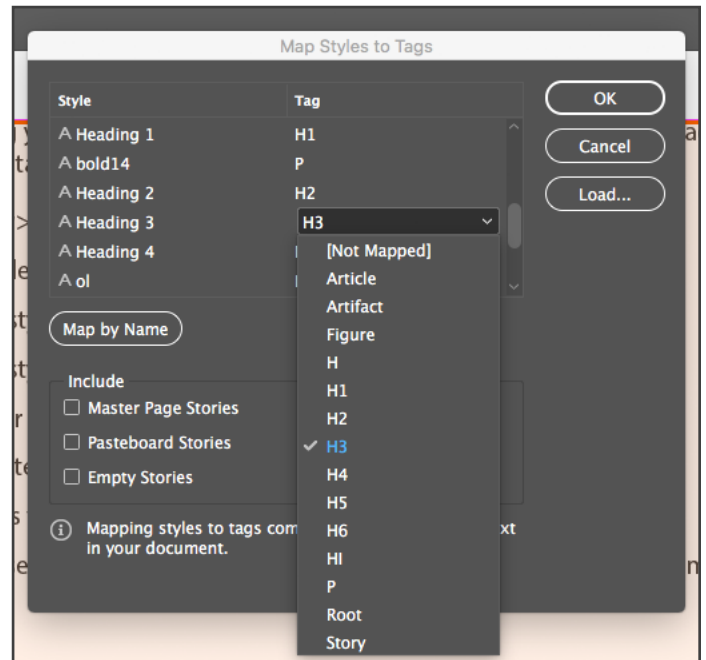
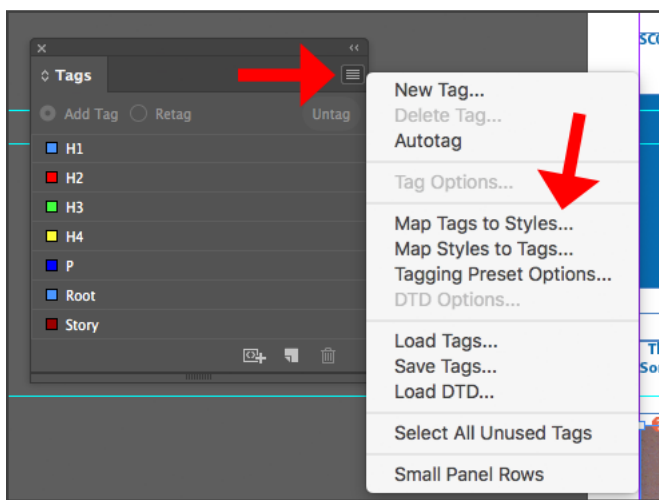
Screen readers can only recognize “tagged” items on a page – the tags tell the screen reader what type of structure the element is. So, every element (besides decorative images) needs to be tagged, including text.

In InDesign, the main tags are the ones you already entered in your tags panel:

- P= Paragraph, or regular text
- H1, H2, etc= Headers. These are the headers and subheaders that set off text sections. Headings are very important for document accessibility – they allow screen readers to scan a page or jump to content.

The way to tag your content in InDesign is to “map” the paragraph and character styles you created to the tags you added in the tag panel:

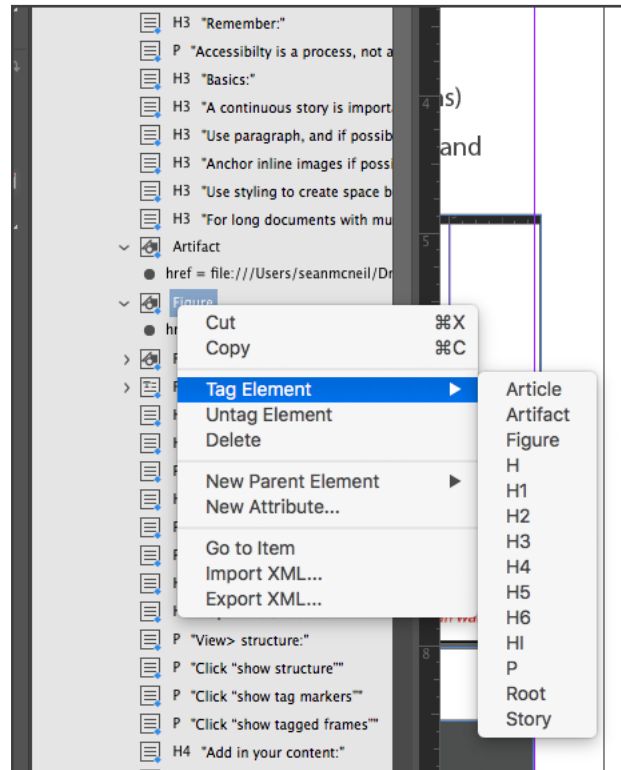
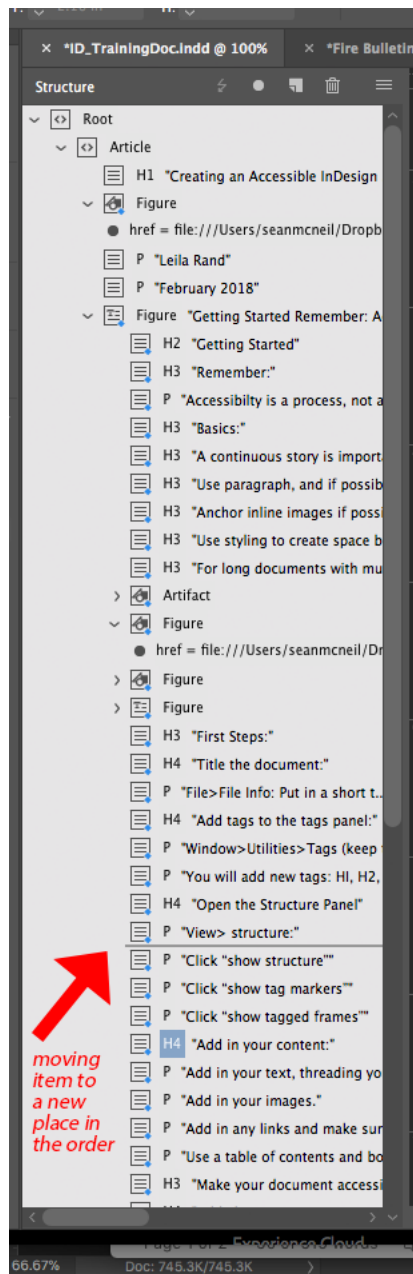
6. Window>utilities>tags
7. Map styles to tags
8. For the style you use for the top-level header on a page, map it to H1
9. For the style you use for the top-level subheader, map it to H2
10. So on for H3, etc.
11. Regular text – map to P
12. You can leave lists and tables untagged
13. If you use block quotes, you can create a tag called block quotes and map to that



Once you have mapped the styles to the tags, you will notice that the structure panel, which until now only had a “Root” folder in it, suddenly shows all of your content, as structure types.

At this point, you will want to look carefully at the items in the structure panel to make sure they are in the same order you intend them to be read in. Threaded panels should stay in the proper order, but elements that are outside of a thread might end up in a strange place in the structure panel.

You can move the structure items into the proper position by clicking and dragging the icon to the left of the tag up or down to the right place. Notice that you can make move items right to nest them within other elements.



If you have an image that is purely “decorative”, meaning it is not integral to the content of the page, you can tag it as an “artifact”, and it won’t be read by the screen reader. If Artifact doesn’t get automatically added when you map your styles to tags, you can manually add it as a tag. You can also add alt text to an image from the structure panel by right-clicking on it, choosing “Add Attribute”, naming it “alt” and putting the text in the Value section.

