Color Contrast in Microsoft Word

Overview
Contrast ratio refers to how bright or dark colors appear on screens. Text is much easier to read when there is sufficient contrast between the text and the background. This is good design for everyone and especially important for low vision users. WCAG 2.1 Level AA requires a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 (3:1 for large text).

Checking contrast within Microsoft Word can be a bit of a challenge because Word uses RGB values for color and most online color contrast checkers use Hex values. (Stick to colors like black or navy blue on a white background and there’s no need to check the contrast.)

Checking and Correcting Contrast
1. To check the contrast in a word document, begin by highlighting the text (or object) you wish to check.
2. A quick format menu will pop up. Select the Font Color option.
3. When that menu expands, select More Colors.
4. There will be values listed for Red, Green, and Blue. Record these. These are the RGB values.
   a. Enter the RGB values in the corresponding box, separating them by commas.
5. Use an online color contrast checker to find the contrast ratio.
   a. Enter the background and foreground RGB values into the contrast checker.
   b. The checker will provide a contrast ratio and also clearly identify whether it meets WCAG criteria.

6. If the contrast does not meet WCAG criteria, use the sliders to adjust the color to “Pass.”
   a. Record the new RGB values.
   b. Highlight the existing text within Word and navigate back to the More Colors menu using the previous steps.
   c. Enter the new RGB values.