

# How can I make tables more accessible?

Users of screen readers cannot read tables the same way sighted users do. Sighted users can tell at a glance what column and row a given cell is associated with, but a screen reader user needs a properly coded table. To make tables usable, additional steps will need to be taken to make them accessible.

## Examples of Tables: Simple Table

John	Tomiko
Game of Thrones	Crime and Punishment
Ender's Game	Brothers Karamazov
Farewell to Arms	Sound and Fury

The image above displays a simple table: books read by two people. Only column headers are needed to identify who read which books.

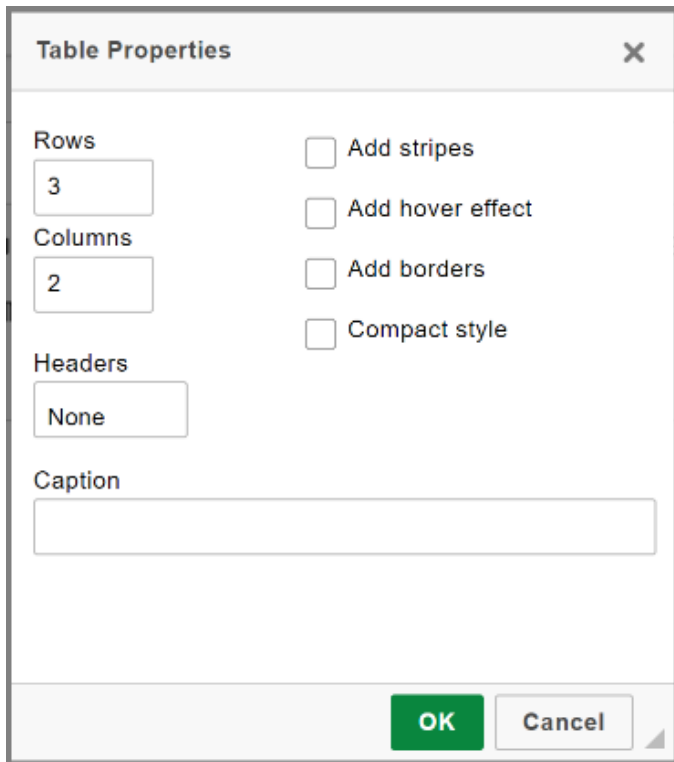
## Examples of Tables: Complex Table

	John	Tomiko
Week 1	Game of Thrones	Crime and Punishment
Week 2	Ender's Game	Brothers Karamazov
Week 3	Farewell to Arms	Sound and Fury

In the image above, there is a complex table: books read by two people each week. Both column and row headers are needed.

In the second example, a screen reader user will know that *The Sound and the Fury* was the book read by Tomiko on Week 3.

# Steps to Making Accessible Tables



The image shows a 'Table Properties' dialog box with the following elements:

- Rows:** A text box containing the number '3'.
- Columns:** A text box containing the number '2'.
- Headers:** A dropdown menu showing 'None'.
- Options:** Four checkboxes on the right side:
  - ☐ Add stripes
  - ☐ Add hover effect
  - ☐ Add borders
  - ☐ Compact style
- Caption:** A large empty text box.
- Buttons:** 'OK' (green) and 'Cancel' (grey) buttons at the bottom right.

When adding tables, add a row and/or column to be used as a heading for each as appropriate. The table creation menu contains **Headers** options that allow for selecting the first row, column, or both.

Add a **Caption**, if necessary, to the table to inform readers of the table's content. Good examples are "Data from recent study," "Table of inputs and outputs," etc.

Tables should only be used for tabular data, not for layout.