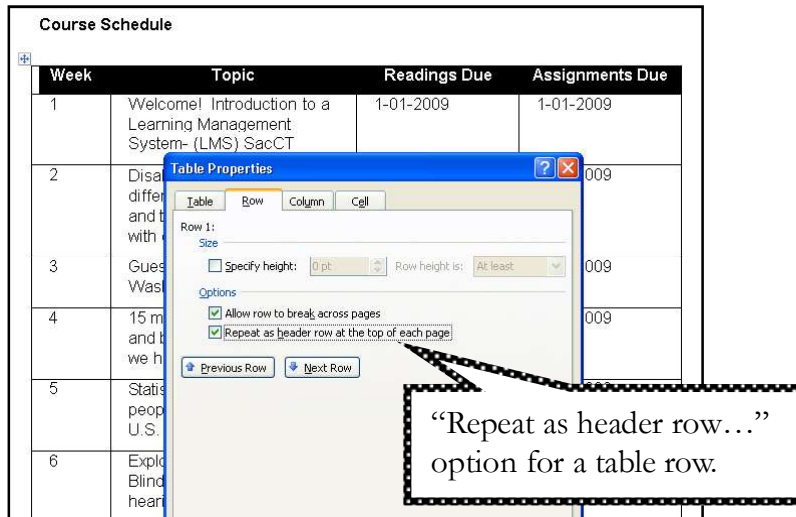## Identifying Table Headers

If a table in a PDF is missing identified headers, it will be listed in an accessibility report as a possible problem. Tables that are used strictly to position content do not need headers identified.
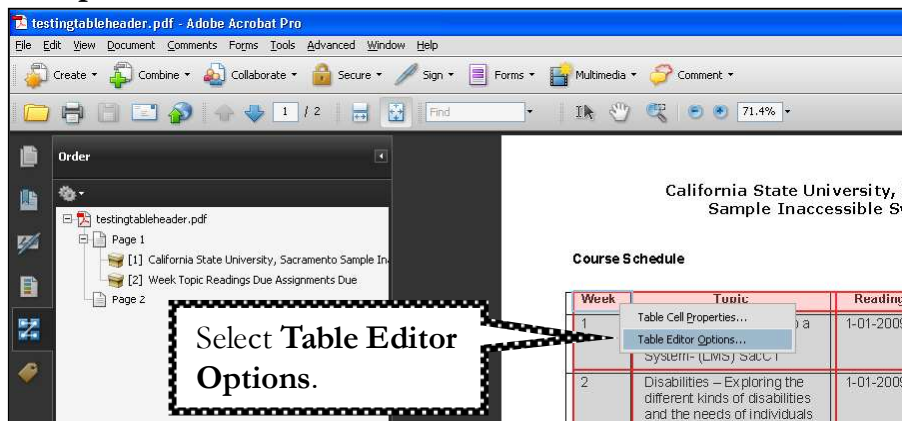
Check if Table Contains Identified Header Cells

If a table was assigned header cells correctly in the source document (e.g. Word document), then when it was converted into a PDF, Adobe Acrobat will automatically assign a **Table Header** or **TH Tag** to table header cells. Normally, when the option "Repeat as Header Row" is selected for header cells in a table in word (see screenshot below), this assigns the **TH** tag.
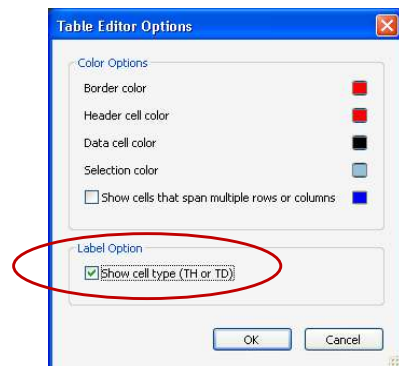
"Repeat as header row…" option for a table row.

You can check if tables within your PDF document contain **TH** tags by:

step 1. Click on the TouchUp Reading Order tool.

step 2. Locate the table on the page.

step 3. Click on the number located in the upper left-hand corner of the item block (table).

step 4. Click the button on **TouchUp Reading Order** window labeled **Table Editor** (In Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro this option is called "Table Inspector"). The table will be selected. Rows and columns will be outlined. The outlines may not match up to the table grid lines, this is ok.

step 5. Right click (or ctrl-click for Mac Users) the first header cell in the table and select **Table Editor Options.**

Select **Table Editor Options**.

step 6. The **Table Editor Options** window displays. Under **Label Option** select the check box next to the option "Show cell type (TH or TD) (see screenshot at right). What this does is automatically label cells in your table with a TH (Table Header Cell) or TD (Table Data Cell) indicating whether it is a header cell or a data cell.

step 7. What this does is automatically label cells in your table with a TH (Table Header Cell) or TD (Table Data Cell) indicating whether it is a header cell or a data cell.

Notice that the table colors for TH are red and the TD cells are colored in black. You can change these color assignments by editing them in the Table Editor Options dialog box.
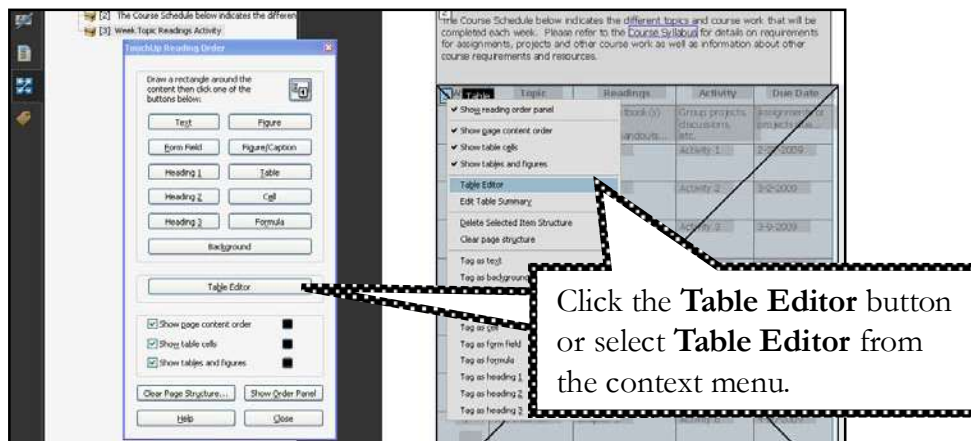

Identifying Column and Row Headers in a Table

step 1. Click on the **TouchUp Reading Order** tool.

step 1. Locate the content on the page that needs to be tagged correctly.

step 2. Click on the number located in the upper left-hand corner of the item block (table).

step 3. Click the button on **TouchUp Reading Order** window labeled **Table Editor** (In Adobe Acrobat 8 Pro this option is called "Table Inspector").

Click the **Table Editor** button or select **Table Editor** from the context menu.

The table will be selected. Rows and columns will be outlined. The outlines may not match up to the table grid lines, this is ok.

step 4. Right click (or ctrl-click *for Mac users*) the first header cell in the table and select **Table Cell Properties** from the context menu (see screenshot below).

step 5. The **Table Cell Properties** window displays. Under *Type* select **Header Cell**.
step 6. From the **Scope** drop down menu select **Column** if this is a column header cell. If you are working with Row Heading cells, select a Scope of **Row** for the header cell.
step 7. Click **OK**. Follow this process for all the header cells in the table.

You can select several cells at a time by clicking on the first cell in the table > hold down the shift key on your keyboard > and clicking on the remaining cells you want to select until they are all selected. Click the table cell properties option. In this example (below) we would select all the table header cells and proceed to assign "header" as **Type** (in this example headers are already identified for the table) and a **Scope** of "Column" and click the OK button.

Note: This option only works for cell value Types and not for Attributes meaning you cannot use this to batch associate header id's to all cells in a column/row.

Identifying Blank Table Header Cells Correctly

For Column or Row heading cells that are **blank** mark these as **Header** cells for *Type* but select **None** for the *Scope*.
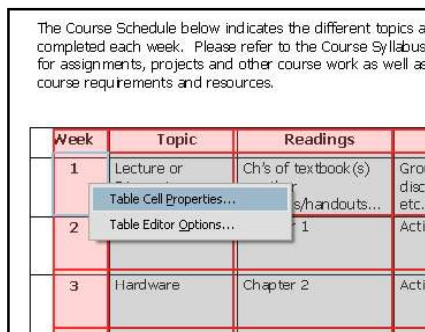
Adding a Table Summary

Adobe Acrobat also gives you the option of adding table summaries to your tables. A table summary is equivalent to alternative text for an image in that it should be clear and concise in describing the table. To create a table summary:

step 1. Click on the **TouchUp Reading Order** tool.
step 2. Locate the table and right click (or ctrl-click *for Mac users*) on the item block (table).
step 3. From the menu select **Edit Table Summary**. The **Table Summary** box displays.
step 4. In the **Table Summary** box type a description.
step 5. Click the **OK** button.

Associating Data Cells to Row and Column Headers

In addition to identifying Row and Column headers in your table, depending on the layout of the table, you may also need to associate data cells to row and column headers to facilitate the understanding and navigation of table content for users of assistive technology. Screen readers will read table information from left to right and a blind user can quickly lose track of what headers are related to each data cell in the table, especially if your table is formatted in a way that data cells are related to more than one header or if the table contains much data. By associating data cells to their corresponding header cells, this enables screen reading software to read the headers associated with the data cell before it announces the data cell content. *Please note that the Associated Header Cell feature is only available in Adobe Acrobat Professional version 9.*

step 1. Locate the table in your document and click on the number located in the upper left-hand corner of the item block (table).
step 2. On the **TouchUp Reading Order** window click the **Table Inspector** button. The table will be selected. Rows and columns will be outlined. The outlines may not match up to the table grid lines, this is ok.
step 3. At this point you should have already identified the row and column headers in your table (see *Identifying Column and Row Headers in a Table* section above) from the previous step. Now we will be adding **ID's** to column and row headers in order to associate data cells to these.
step 4. Right click (ctrl click for *Mac users*) on a column or row header cell in your table and select **Table Cell Properties** (see screenshot below).
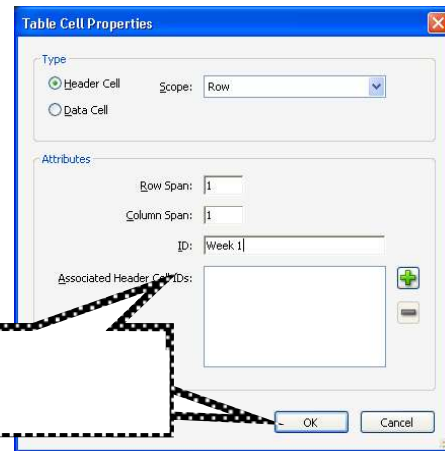

The **Table Cell Properties** dialog box displays.

step 5. You will notice that the header cell has already been identified correctly under Type.

step 6. Under **Attributes**, in the **ID** field, enter a name that identifies the first column header of your table. For this example the row header is called "1" and stands for Week 1 of the semester. We are going to identify it as "Week 1" and type this into the **ID** field.

step 7. Click the **OK** button to save the **ID** for the column or row header. Repeat this process for each column and row header. These ID's will serve for the association process of data cells to row and column headers.

step 8. After you have provided an **ID** for each column and row header, right click (ctrl + click for *Mac users*) on the first data cell in your table and select **Table Cell Properties**. Take note of the location of the cell and how it should be read to the user.
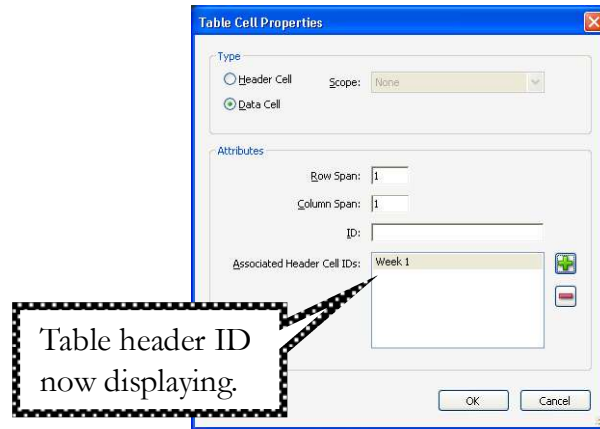
step 9. On the Table Cell Properties dialog box, click the **Add Table Header ID** button. The **Add Table Header ID** dialog box displays.

step 10. From the **Header ID** drop down menu, select the first row or column heading that should be associated with the data cell. For my example, I will select "Week 1".
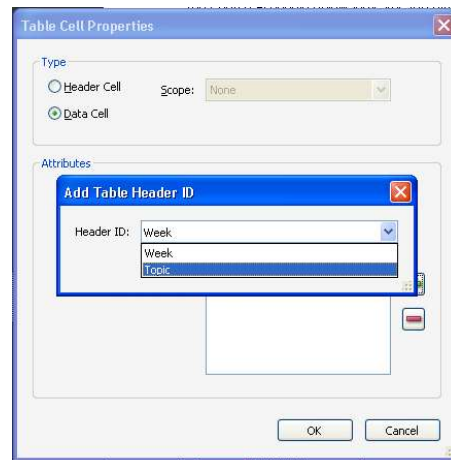
step 11. Click the **OK** button. The Table Cell Properties window re-displays (see next screenshot).

Table header ID now displaying.

step 12. The table header ID should now be displaying in the **Associated Header Cell IDs** box.

step 13. If there is more than one table header associated to a data cell in your table, for example the data cell has a row and column header associated with it, you will need to click the Add Table Header ID button, select the Header ID from the menu list and click **OK**.
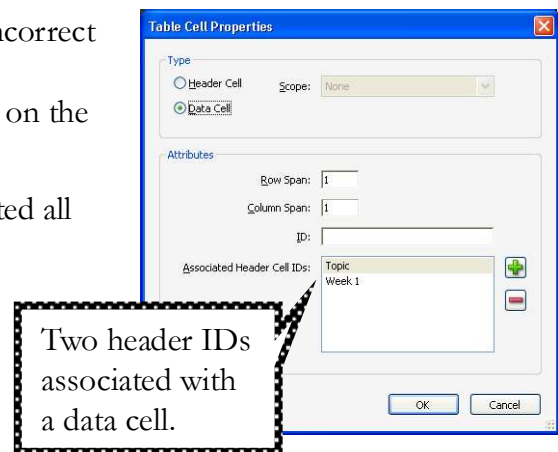

step 14. For our example, our data cell has the "Week 1" row header and "Topic" column header associated with it so these two Header ID's now appear in the **Associated Header Cell IDs** box.

step 15. If you make a mistake and have added an incorrect Header Cell ID, you can remove it from the Associated Header Cell IDs box by clicking on the **Remove Header Cell ID** button.

step 16. Click the **OK** button once you have associated all row and column headers to the data cell.

step 17. Repeat these steps for all data cells in your table. Remember, this process is most useful for tables in which you may have more than one header cell (e.g. row and column header cells) associated to a data cell.

Two header IDs associated with a data cell.

step 18. When a screen reader like JAWS reads the table cell, it will read the cells associated header cells and the content of the cell as well. This allows for better understanding of the meaning of the data cell and its relationship to the table as a whole.