Use tables only when appropriate

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Some authors will get creative and use tables for things besides tabular data, like single-rowed tables to help format text and images side-by-side. AI tools don't always process tables well and they tend to assume that tables are for truly tabular data, so use a table only when it truly is the best way to format the information you're presenting.

Tips for using tables

Follow these tips for using tables:

- **Keep tables short**, ideally under 100 rows. If your rows contain a lot of text, you will want even fewer rows. Long tables may cause issues with chunking.
- Consider ways to **split very large tables into separate tables.**
- Include an **introductory sentence before your table** explaining what's in it.
- Use **a header row with descriptive column names.** The column headers provide information about what the table contains. Many tools will treat the first row as a header even if you don't mark it as such, so you may as well be explicit. To add a header row, select anywhere in the table and select the **H** icon for **Header**. This inserts a header row where you can add column headers.

RAG benefit of short, appropriate tables

A large table may not entirely fit in a single chunk and may also end up divorced from the heading and text that explain its purpose. Shorter tables can guarantee the entire table fits in a chunk and you may also get text around it for context.

Accessibility tree benefit of short, appropriate tables

Tables get marked as a separate element in the accessibility tree. Using tables only for truly tabular data rather than formatting text reduces ambiguity.

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