Canvas Accessibility Checklist

Last reviewed and updated: November 26, 2024, by Monica Olsson

Before creating content in Canvas, it's recommended that you visit and review the **Beginner's Accessibility with the Rich Content Editor** blog post, which is supported by the checklist below.

Content Language and Tone

☐ **Language use**: **Use plain language** that is clear and easy to understand. For example, instead of "utilize," use "use."

☐ **Active voice:** Use active voice vs. passive voice to make sentences more direct and easier to understand. For example, "The team completed the project" instead of "The project was completed by the team."

☐ **Capital letters**: Avoid using all capital letters. For example, use "Important Notice" instead of "IMPORTANT NOTICE."

☐ **Consistent terminology:** Use consistent terminology, abbreviations, and capitalization rules throughout your document.

☐ **Abbreviations and acronyms:** Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first use, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. For example, "World Health Organization (WHO)."

☐ **Jargon:** Avoid using jargon or technical terms without explaining them. For example, instead of saying, "The campaign leverages omnichannel strategies," say, "The campaign reaches customers through multiple platforms, like email, social media, and ads."

☐ **Numbers:** Write out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above. For example, "three participants" and "15 students."

Content Structure

☐ **Title:** Provide clear and descriptive titles for your pages, discussions, quizzes, announcements, and calendar events. By default, the title serves as the content item's Heading 1 style.

☐ **Rich Content Editor (RCE):** Use the built-in styling tools in the **Rich Content Editor** in Canvas to **add, edit, and format content**.

- ☐ **Headings and styles:** Use built-in **headings and style in Canvas** to organize lengthy content.

- ☐ **Lists:** Use **lists** to create a clear hierarchical structure. To **make lists accessible in Canvas**, use numbered lists for sequential items and bulleted lists for non-sequential items.

- ☐ **Descriptive hyperlinks:** Use **descriptive text for links** to indicate the link's destination or purpose. For example, avoid using generic phrases like "click here" or "read more," and instead use meaningful text like " Explore course resources." **Create and edit the link text in Canvas** using the Link menu options.

- ☐ **Alt text:** If you include images, charts, or other graphics in your content, add **alternative text**. Remember to mark all non-relevant images and graphics as decorative. Learn how to add alt text from **Alt Text options using the Rich Content Editor** and **5 Principles for Creating Accessible Canvas Pages**.

- ☐ **Tables: Use tables in Canvas for data only, not for visual layout**. Present data in paragraphs with headers whenever possible.

- ☐ **Table structure**: Use simple structures and avoid merged or split cells.

- ☐ **Table headers**: **Add table column and/or row headers** when using tables in Canvas.

- ☐ **Table captions: Create a table caption** that provides a brief description of the table's purpose and contents. While the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) do not require table captions, they are considered best practice.

- ☐ **Captions:** Provide accurate captions for all multimedia and pre-recorded video content. Audio description may also be needed depending on the content. Refer to the **YouTube Video Captioning Guide** and the **Create Accessible Videos Guide**.

- ☐ **Transcripts**: Provide accurate transcripts for prerecorded video with audio and audio-only content.

Fonts, Spacing, and Color

- ☐ **Font and typeface:** Use readable sans-serif **typefaces and fonts**.

- ☐ **Font size: Adjust the font size in Canvas** as needed to ensure readability. Use at least 11 points for body text (14 or 16 points recommended).

- ☐ **White space**: Allow for breathing room or empty space, when possible, to avoid visually crowded information.

- ☐ **Color:** Do not use color as the only way to convey information.

- ☐ **Color contrast:** Use **high-contrast color schemes**. Check your contrast with **WebAim's Contrast Checker**.

Time, Dates, Months, and Years

- ☐ **Time format:** Use the 12-hour clock format with AM and PM or the 24-hour clock format consistently.

- ☐ **Time AM/PM:** Capitalize AM and PM without punctuation. When all the times listed are the same, do not repeat the use of AM and PM. Only use AM or PM once after the last time listed. For example, "The party is from 2:00 until 5:00 PM."

- ☐ **Date format:** Use a clear and consistent date format, such as "month day, year" or "day month year." For example, "January 15, 2024" or "15 January 2024." Avoid formats like "01/15/2024" that can be confusing due to different regional formats.

- ☐ **Time and date symbols:** Use "to" or "through" or "and" or "until" instead of dashes, as dashes are not read by screen readers. For example, "The party is from 2:00 until 5:00 PM."

- ☐ **Names of days and months:** Write out days of the week and the names of months fully, as screen readers are unpredictable as to whether they read abbreviations correctly. For example, "The party is Thursday, July 4, 2024, from 2:00 until 5:00 PM"

Checking for Accessibility

- ☐ **Canvas Accessibility Checker**: **Check accessibility while you work in Canvas**.

- ☐ **Ally Accessibility Checker: Check accessibility in Canvas with Ally**.

- ☐ **Text to speech**: **Test accessibility with Immersive Reader in Canvas**.

Learn More and Practice

Sign up for the SBCTC **Accessibility Micro-Courses** to earn badges while getting the chance to practice creating accessible content including Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, Canvas content, and more. The **Library of Accessibility Resources** is publicly available.