



Creating Accessible Content in Canvas

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), based on the definition from the National Center on Universal Design for Learning, is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. Creating accessible content doesn't necessarily mean a student with needs has been identified in your course. Creating accessible content is part of the UDL principle of giving all individuals an opportunity to learn.

This guide will list tips on designing your content in Canvas based on the principles of UDL. If you want to learn more about UDL go to the following website: [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](https://www.nclonline.com/universal-design-for-learning/)

Readability

Readability is the logical structure of the content which the instructor intends the students to absorb or digest. Although there are many ways to organize your content, the following have been proven to be helpful and effective for UDL.

1. Page Titles

Add clear page titles to each Canvas Content Page so students know what content to expect on the page. For example **Week 1 Learning Objectives**, can be the title of a page that will list Week 1's learning objectives. Or **Introduction to Tax Fraud (Video)**, can be the title of a page that will feature a video on the Introduction of Tax Fraud. To add Page titles to a page, read the guide on [How to Create a New page in Canvas](#).

2. Headers

Use headers for your content so students can absorb and digest the information in chunks in logical order. For example, the title of this document is **Header 1**, then the first topic "Readability" is **Header 2**, and the sub-topic below "Readability" is **Header 3**. The logic behind headers is to view the content as an outline. To apply headers in Canvas, read the section called **Use the Paragraph Drop Down** in the [How do I style text content in the Rich Content Editor](#).

3. Color Contrast

Use colors that have a significant contrast between each other. Sometimes using different colors makes it difficult to see text on a page. For example, using yellow text with a white background is difficult to see.



Examples of bad and good color contrast ([Bad Contrast](#)) ([Good Contrast](#))

Try to limit the use of colors to avoid difficulty in seeing the content. If you need to stress an important point, consider using **Bold** or *Italics* instead. To learn more about color contrast, view the [WebAIM: Color Contrast Checker](#).

4. Links

Websites

When linking to a website, use the Title of the Website as a hyperlink to the website (see the example below). Avoid using statements such as **Click Here** or **Click on the link**.

Example of how to link to a website:

View the latest baseball score at the [ESPN MLB Scoreboard](#)

Documents

When linking to a document, use the Title of the document as a hyperlink to the document (see the example below). Avoid using statements such as **Download this document**. Additionally, adding the type of document (e.g. .DOC for Microsoft Word documents or .PDF for Adobe Acrobat documents), and size (e.g. 180KB) will let students know what software they will need to view the document and the size of the document.

Add the instructions of what to do with the document, then the title, type of document in all caps, and lastly, the size of the document in parentheses. Also, make sure the title of the actual document matches the link title for consistency.

Example of how to link to a document:

Read the [Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](#) PDF (180KB)

5. Tables

Generally, tables are used for organizing data and numbers, but in reality tables are sometimes used to organize content. For best practice, it is suggested to reserve tables for data and numbers. Remember to organize content in a logical order.

Non-text Content

Non-text content is generally content used to make pages more visually interesting or to support the substantive content.

1. Alternative Text for Images

Images do indeed make pages more visually interesting and help the instructor convey their content in a different way. If you are going to use images, be sure to add alternative text. Alternative text or Alt Text provides textual descriptions to images, which can be read by assistive technology. For example, if the content on the page is talking about “How to teach a dog how to sit” and you have an image of a person giving their dog a command to sit, then you should provide alt text to the image describing the image, for example, “Image of a man giving his dog a command to sit.”.

To add an alternative text to your images in Canvas, follow the guide on [How to embed images from Canvas into the Rich-text Editor](#).

2. Video or Audio

To add contrast to text content, you may want to use other sources such as YouTube or TedTalk videos, podcasts from a website or perhaps you are interested in creating your own video presentation.

It is best practice that any video or audio content is captioned and that a transcript is provided. TedTalks provide both captions and transcripts. YouTube provides some captioning but it is often inaccurate. When choosing media, remember to determine:

1. Is the video captioned?
2. If so, is a transcript provided?

If there are not available, consider finding another video.

If you are creating your own video, it is recommended that you write out a script first, record and revise your script post-recording to make it your transcript.

Note: Be sure all transcripts include the same name as the title of the video. (See example in *Applying titles and transcripts for a Video in Canvas*)

Applying titles and transcripts for a Video in Canvas

To embed a video in Canvas, read the guide on [How do I embed a video in a page in a course?](#)

When you embed a video in Canvas, you should do the following:

1. Use **Header 2**,
2. Add the title of the video,

3. List the length of the video,
4. Embed the Video,
5. Add and link the transcript below the video.

Example of an embedded video in Canvas:

USF Campus Tour (10:28)

(Use Header 2) (Title of Video) (Length of video)



Download transcript: USF Campus Tour. PDF (14kb)

(Add purpose of document) (Title of Video) (Type of Document all in caps)(Size of document)

Avoid using general terms such as **Download link** or **Click here**. Add the instructions of what to do with the transcript, then the title of the document, type of document in all caps, and lastly, the size of the document in parentheses. Also, make sure the title of the actual document matches the link title for consistency.

Transcripts can be used as a study aid and for note-taking, as students watch or listen to the video or audio content.



Additional Resources

Here is a list of additional resources to help with Canvas and Universal Design for Learning:

[ITT Canvas Guides](#)

[Web Accessibility in Mind \(WebAIM\)](#)

[National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#)

[CAST Until learning has no limits](#)