

# Accessibility Checklist

Accessibility means whether something can be used by people of all abilities. This checklist will help you understand what makes course materials accessible to your students. You can go to **File, Make a copy** to make your own copy of this checklist and check items off the list as you look at one of your courses.

## Building Accessible Documents and Self-checking for Accessibility

### Text/Layout

- ☐ Spelling and grammar have been checked
- ☐ Font size of at least 12 pt
- ☐ Sans Serif typefaces (like Arial, Tahoma, Verdana, or Calibri)
- ☐ Text is not in ALL CAPS
- ☐ Text is not underlined unless it is a hyperlink
- ☐ Formatting (font, color, or style) is not utilized exclusively to transmit information (use more than one way to communicate)
- ☐ Text is left justified (full justification adds uneven spacing between words)
- ☐ Line spacing between lines of text is at least 1.15
- ☐ No more than two repeated characters: spaces, tabs, or enter/return (set tabs and insert page breaks instead)
- ☐ Slide content uses font size of 24 pt or more and unique descriptive slide titles; use slide templates to maintain proper [reading order](#)

### Color Contrast

- ☐ There is high contrast between text and background color (light colored text on dark background or dark colored text on a light background). You can verify sufficient contrast between text and background using the [Contrast Checker from WebAIM](#). Blackboard Ultra provides only limited colors for this reason.
- ☐ These color combinations are avoided: red/black, red/green, and blue/yellow
- ☐ Text is not placed over backgrounds with designs or images
- ☐ Color is not the only thing used to convey meaning - e.g., **Team Red** and **Team Blue** (instead of **Team** and **Team**)

### Links

- ☐ Hyperlinks are constructed using text rather than URLs (for online documents)
- ☐ [Hyperlinks use descriptive text](#) to provide meaning and context for links (not “read more” or “click here”)

## Lists

- ☐ Bulleted and numbered lists are created using the toolbar buttons (you should see a hanging indent like in this item where the “s” is aligned under the “B”)
- ☐ Numbered lists are used for ordered items; bulleted lists are used for unordered items
- ☐ Lists are not the sole mode for formatting instructional content



## Images

- ☐ Images include [alternative text \(alt-text\)](#) that conveys the meaning of the image's full intent (try this [decision tree to determine what alt-text you need](#))
  - ☐ Text, [equations](#), and tables are not presented as images (avoid screenshots)
  - ☐ For images containing words (e.g., memes, logos), the text in the image is the alt-text
  - ☐ Images that are purely decorative are used sparingly (check the “decorative” box instead of adding alt-text)
- ☐ No blinking, flashing, or shimmering animation
- ☐ Complex images, diagrams, and charts have detailed text explanations (inline or caption)

## Headings (Document Structure created with Styles)

- ☐ Headings have been created using the software's built-in heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3). Tip: View document structure (Word: View > Navigation pane or Google: View > Show document outline, click icon on left)
- ☐ A logical heading structure is used so subcategories are appropriately ranked. Use the heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2...) in ascending order without skipping a level

## Audio/Video

- ☐ Audio content is transcribed accurately
- ☐ Videos include accurate captions that sync with the audio

## Tables

- ☐ Tables are used for data, not layout (use columns or tabs for layout)
- ☐ Tables have straight columns and rows; no merged, split, or empty cells

- ☐ [Tables](#) include properly identified column and/or row headings; headings appear at the top of a new page if table spans multiple pages

*Sample table (used for demonstration but also to share resources)*

Resources	Purpose
<a href="#">Understanding the Accessibility Principles</a>	What does POUR stand for?
<a href="#">Accessibility Tools for Microsoft</a>	Information for Microsoft products
<a href="#">Word and PowerPoint Accessibility Evaluation Checklist</a>	How to check for accessibility in Word and PowerPoint

## Checking for Accessibility of Blackboard Course Design and Content

- ☐ The course layout and content is consistent and predictable
- ☐ The course materials are grouped into effective modules or folders
- ☐ Spelling and grammar have been checked
- ☐ Embedded images include text descriptions (alt tags); images do not flash
- ☐ Text uses [plain language](#) (remember to define acronyms and avoid jargon)
- ☐ [Blackboard Ally](#) flagged content is addressed (or alternative content provided)
- ☐ Web pages have been checked for accessibility using a browser extension such as the [WAVE tool from WebAIM](#)

## Improving the accessibility of Course Content

### **PDF files pose the most common accessibility issue in UAA courses.**

First check to see if the PDF file is actual text? Scanned PDF files which are images (not text) are not accessible. How do you know? Click and drag to see if you can select some text in the scanned PDF file. If you cannot select text, then you have a scanned image which is not accessible. You can start fresh or remediate. Find or make a new file or try using Foxit PDF Editor's [Optical Character Recognition \(OCR\)](#) to convert the picture of text to actual text. Another option is to try using Google Docs to convert to text only: Upload your scanned PDF file to Google Drive and then Open With Google Docs (this option doesn't always work).

For your own documents, avoid using PDF files if possible.

- Faculty can post Word or Google Docs in Blackboard instead of PDF files.
- Consider building your content in a [Blackboard Ultra Document](#) instead of attaching a file.

If you must to convert your files to PDF format, here are the most accessible options:

- [Microsoft: Create accessible PDFs](#) (Use Save As or Export; do not Print to PDF)
- Use [Grackle](#) to Export to PDF (Use the Export to PDF button in Grackle instead of File > Download PDF)

Improve other files flagged by Ally for accessibility issues:

- Fix Microsoft Word and PowerPoint files in Word or Powerpoint using “[Check Accessibility](#)” to find and fix accessibility problems in the document/presentation.
- Fix Google Docs, Slides, or Sheets, using [Grackle](#) (video)
- Images in Blackboard will show the [Ally score](#) to indicate if there is alt-text, but only you know the message behind the image that you chose to use.

## Accessible Videos

### Closed Captions (CC)

For pre-recorded videos with audio information that is needed to understand what the video is communicating, captions are needed to provide the audio content to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing and many others.

- Your **Kaltura** My Media videos will be machine-captioned automatically soon after you create them. Access My Media by logging into [Mediaspace](#) to edit the captions.
  - Zoom recordings automatically go to your Kaltura account. Watch this [video to learn how to generate more accurate captions](#) using Kaltura.
  - You can upload a YouTube video into your Kaltura My Media account.
- Video owners can edit the automatic captions from **YouTube**. YouTube captions will be auto-generated within a few hours, then [edit the captions](#).
- **VoiceThread** users can edit the automatic [captions in VoiceThread](#) for voice comments in the VoiceThread. Automatic captions typically appear within an hour.

### What if you didn't create the video?

If a video you don't own doesn't have captions or has inaccurate captions, there are a few possibilities.

- Contact the video owner to see if they will provide a transcript or a captioned version of the video. (This is good practice to advocate for accessible content.)
- Provide an accurate transcript along with the video. (More information on transcripts is provided below)
- Search for an accessible version of the video or find a different accessible video
- You may be able to caption the video using a tool such as [Amara](#)

## Transcripts

“Basic transcripts are a text version of the speech and non-speech audio information needed to understand the content.” ([W3C](#)). You can create and edit a transcript from the automatic/machine captions created in YouTube or Kaltura and provide the transcript document along with your video.

- YouTube: Below the video, click the description or “more” then “show transcript.” Drag to copy all the times and text of the transcript and paste it into a document and make the needed corrections to the transcript including punctuation and capitalization.
- Kaltura: Click the name of the video in My Media. Then click Actions > Edit > Captions > Download (down arrow icon). It will be an SRT file so you need to go to your downloads folder and rename the file with an RTF extension so you can open it in a word processor and edit it for accuracy.

## Audio Description (AD)

[Audio Description](#) provides content to people who are blind or have low vision. AD describes visual information needed to understand the content, including text displayed in the video. Integrate descriptions into your own videos at the time of recording. Describe all relevant visual information and have each speaker identify themselves as you record the video.

## Learn More

- [Accessibility | Office of Academic Affairs | University of Alaska Anchorage](#)
  - [UAA Accessibility Quick Guide](#)
- [Accessibility @ UAA YouTube Playlist](#) (Short videos about captioning in YouTube and Kaltura, use of color, links, headings, accessibility checkers in Google Docs and Microsoft Office 365, creating accessible content in Ultra and using Ally)
- [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities - Microsoft Support](#)
- [Navigation is also part of accessibility](#) (try navigating the LMS/Blackboard content using only your keyboard)