# Canvas Accessibility Checklist

## Step 1: Run the Accessibility Checker:

You can use the Ally accessibility checker in Canvas to improve the accessibility of your course. While no automated tool fully ensures compliance with Title II regulations, Ally helps reduce the number of issues you will need to fix manually. It evaluates content created directly in Canvas, as well as PDF, Word, PowerPoint, and image files that have been uploaded to Canvas. **It** **will not evaluate** items that have been embedded or linked within Canvas pages (for example, using OneDrive or Google Docs links), so that content should be assessed manually.

To get started, view the [Ally Quick Start Guide for Instructors](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Instructor/Quick_Start) and check out this two-minute [video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljqOwhd1xtU).

## Step 2: Implement Each Title II Standard

The categories below are the general features that need to be implemented. Many items list the relevant [WCAG 2.1 AA standard](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) with a link to a remediation guide. Items without a listed standard reflect best practices that are not specified in the WCAG standards. To meet these requirements, the answer to all of the following questions should be "yes".

This recording of a [Canvas Accessibility Workshop](https://unl.yuja.com/V/Video?v=12424520&node=54192619&a=177664152) shows how to implement many of the items below.

### Links

1. Are all URLs given as hyperlinks embedded in meaningful text that clearly indicates the link’s purpose or destination? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/); [2.4.4](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-4-link-purpose-in-context/)
   * [How to create descriptive links](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-create-hyperlinks-to-external-URLs-in-the-Rich-Content/ta-p/872)
   * The full URL should not be given. Avoid links that include verbs or verb phrases like “click here” or “go here for more information”. Email addresses can be written out (i.e., [iteach2@unl.edu](mailto:iteach2@unl.edu)).
   * You can use the [course link validator](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-validate-links-in-a-course/ta-p/1001) to check to see if the URLs in the course are functioning properly.
2. Is underlining used only for hyperlinks and not for other textual emphasis?
   * To emphasize text, bold the text.

### Images

1. Do all images either have alternative text giving an accurate and concise description **or** have a ‘decorative image’ designation if the image is non-informative? [1.1.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-1-1-non-text-content/)
   * [How to add alt text](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/How-do-I-manage-alt-text-and-display-options-for-images-embedded/ta-p/618226)
   * [How to write good alt text](https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/120076/pages/stem-alt-text)
   * [How to tell if an image is decorative](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/digital-accessibility/toolbox/best_practices/alternative_text/decorative-images)
2. Are equivalent alternatives to complex images like graphs and infographics provided? [1.1.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-1-1-non-text-content/)
   * Complex images should have a short description in alt text **and** a longer description, which can be in a caption near the image or in a linked separate page or document.
   * [Complex image guidelines](https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/120076/pages/stem-long-descriptions)
3. Do charts contain axis labels, legends, titles, and alt text? [1.1.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-1-1-non-text-content/)
   * Charts cannot be created directly in Canvas, but need to be imported from another program. Make sure the charts have axis labels, legends, and titles before you import them into Canvas.
   * Alt text should be added in Canvas using the steps outlined under #1 in this section. Alt text should describe the type of chart and what it demonstrates. For complex charts, a [long description](https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/120076/pages/stem-long-descriptions) might also be needed.
     + [Add alt text to charts](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/topic/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-chart-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669)
   * Consider changing the colors of the chart elements so they have a high color contrast. Online color contrast checkers, such as [WebAIM's contrast checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/), can help.
   * When elements of the chart are touching (such as bars or pieces of a pie chart), a line in a different color between the elements helps visually distinguish between them.
4. Is text presented as text rather than an image including text? The only exception to this is when the text is part of a logo or other branding. [1.4.5](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-5-images-of-text/)
   * To fix this issue, the image should be replaced by text rather than adding alt text to the image.
   * If the image is a logo, give that information in the alt text.

### Structure

1. Does each page have a unique title that tells the reader a general description of the content of that page? [2.4.2](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-2-page-titled/)
   * The title for each Canvas page is given in the Page Title box when you are creating or editing the document.
2. Was a descriptive heading structure added to the document using the “Styles” feature with headings in order and no heading levels skipped? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/)
   * Headings should describe the content in that section [2.4.6](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-6-headings-and-labels/)
   * The accessibility checker will only tell you if Styles are used and if heading levels are skipped but will not tell you if the appropriate heading levels were used
   * [Creating accessible headings](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-LMS-Blog/Beginner-s-Accessibility-with-the-Rich-Content-Editor/ba-p/272937)
   * [Understanding document structure using heading hierarchy](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/#headings)
3. Are all lists created using the numbered or bulleted list feature? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/); [1.3.2](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-2-meaningful-sequence/)
   * [How to create accessible lists](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Archived-Blogs/ARCHIVED-Making-Lists-Accessible-in-Canvas/bc-p/268904)
4. Is the majority of the text left-aligned if the text is in English? For other languages, the text should be aligned based on the norms for that language. [1.4.8](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-8-visual-presentation/)
   * Is center-aligned text used only for short pieces of text such as headings, quotes, or invitations? [1.4.8](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-8-visual-presentation/)

### Tables

1. Are tables formatted as tables rather than pictures? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/); [1.4.5](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-5-images-of-text/)
   * If a table is a picture, [recreate the table](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/How-do-I-insert-a-table-using-the-Rich-Content-Editor/ta-p/618220) in Canvas
2. Do all tables have a title and/or a caption? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/)
   * You can add a title before the table and/or [add a caption](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Developers-Group/Table-Accessibility-in-Canvas/ba-p/277208) with a title or short description of the information in the table
3. Do all tables have headers? Are all the column headings unique? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/); [1.3.2](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-2-meaningful-sequence/)
   * [How to create an accessible table](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Developers-Group/Table-Accessibility-in-Canvas/ba-p/277208)
4. Do tables avoid using merged cells? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/)
   * To unmerge a merged cell, select the cell and click on the table icon in the rich content editor. Select cell and then split cell.
5. Are tables only used to organize data with a logical relationship rather than being used for layout structure or organization? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/)
   * Format tables so that the first (header) row and the first column (if applicable) contain meaningful labels, and each cell’s content depends on the intersection of those labels. If the table is just used for layout or organization, then table formatting should not be used. [See examples of the differences between these two types of tables.](https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/120076/pages/examples-of-data-vs-formatting-tables)
6. Do tables avoid having any empty data cells? [1.3.2](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-2-meaningful-sequence/)
   * In empty cells, put a dash or write NA, no data, not applicable, or no value. If you do not want sighted users to see it you can change the text in the cell to the same color as the background.

### Supplements

1. Are the font type and size adjustable (i.e., is the file editable and not 'read-only')? [1.4.4](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-4-resize-text/); [1.4.8](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-8-visual-presentation/); [1.4.12](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-12-text-spacing/)
2. Is there sufficient color contrast? [1.4.3](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-3-contrast-minimum/); [1.4.11](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-11-non-text-contrast/)
   * If you plan to use colors within your content, be sure there is sufficient contrast between text colors and background colors, as well is within visual elements such as images and graphs.
     + Text must have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5 to 1. Large text can be a 3 to 1 ratio if it’s over 24px, or bold and over 19px.
     + Usable components like form fields and buttons, and graphics like pie charts and line graphs must have a ratio of 3 to 1.
   * The accessibility checker does not necessarily catch all color contrast issues. Online color contrast checkers, such as [WebAIM's contrast checker,](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker) can help you determine whether there is sufficient contrast.
3. Is any information or navigation (such as grouping, importance, directionality, etc.) conveyed by visual cues (i.e., color, size, font, position, grouping, shape) also communicated in another non-visual way? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/); [1.4.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-4-1-use-of-color/)
   * If text needs to be emphasized, it is bolded rather than relying solely on visual formatting such as color or font.
   * When color is used to convey information, is there another non-visual method to convey that information (such as text, which can be ready by a screen reader)?
   * If spatial relationships between pictures or shapes communicate information, is this information included in another non-visual form (such as text description, which can be ready by a screen reader).
4. Is any information (such as importance, when to perform an action, if an answer is correct, etc.) conveyed by audio cues (i.e., sounds effects, music) also communicated in another non-audio way (such as text)? [1.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-1-info-and-relationships/)
5. Is nothing referred to just by its visual or audio characteristics, such as color, size, position, shape, or sound? [1.3.3](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-3-3-sensory-characteristics/)
   * For example, rather than saying "Press the red button" you could say "Press the square, red button in the lower right-hand corner that says 'save'"
6. Is the use of all capital letters used only for acronyms and not other textual emphasis?
   * If you want to emphasize text, bold the text.
7. Are sans serif fonts such as Courier, Arial, Verdana, and Calibri used?
8. Are equations and formulas presented in an accessible format? [1.1.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/1-1-1-non-text-content/)
   * [How to use the math equation editor](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/How-do-I-use-the-math-Equation-Editor-in-the-Rich-Content-Editor/ta-p/618231)
   * [Guide to making math equations accessible](https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/120076/pages/stem-math-equations)

### Other Canvas Accessibility Features

1. Are blinking images or content avoided? [2.3.1](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-3-1-three-flashes-or-below-threshold/)
   * Flashing images and content can cause seizures in people with epilepsy so [do not use flashing objects.](https://www.section508.gov/training/presentations/aed-cop-pptx12)
2. Do all of the file names and link text clearly convey to the user what will be accessed when using those links? [2.4.2](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-2-page-titled/); [2.4.4](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-4-link-purpose-in-context/); [2.4.6](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-6-headings-and-labels/)
3. Does all embedded content (i.e., YouTube videos, podcasts) have a title or short description? [2.4.6](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-6-headings-and-labels/)
   * Students should know what the embedded content is if it doesn't load properly or if they cannot see it.
4. Do navigational buttons inform the user what will happen when they're pressed? [2.4.6](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/2-4-6-headings-and-labels/)
   * Avoid using text such as "Click here" that is ambiguous. Reword the text on buttons so the user will know what will happen when they click the button.
5. Do the navigation and functional elements (such as buttons, icons, and call-to-action links) look and work the same across pages? [3.2.3](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/3-2-3-consistent-navigation/); [3.2.4](https://aaardvarkaccessibility.com/wcag-plain-english/3-2-4-consistent-identification/)