



# ADA Accessibility

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Each year, approximately 700,000 students with reported disabilities enroll in 2-year and 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions. These included:

ADD or ADHD	31%
Mental illness/psychological or psychiatric condition	18%
Health impairment/condition, including chronic conditions	15%
Mobility limitation/orthopedic impairment	11%
Difficulty hearing	7%
Difficulty seeing	4%
Cognitive difficulties or intellectual disability	3%
Traumatic brain injury	3%
Autism Spectrum Disorders	2%
Difficulty speaking or language impairment	2%
Other impairments	1%
	3%

Source: Students With Disabilities at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions (NCES 2011-2018), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011

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**How can we design our online  
courses to be accessible to these  
students?**



# ADA and Campus Resources

To meet the needs of these students, your materials will most likely have to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

- Talk with your ADA office for services and guidelines
- They can help you make appropriate accommodations such as formatting changes, allowing additional time for exams, and providing access to equipment.

\*\*\*Be sure to include information about accommodations in your syllabus\*\*\*

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# Creating Accessible Course Materials



# General Website Formatting Considerations

Websites should have:

- one font
- dark font on light background to create sufficient contrast
- links with text descriptions
- Images with alternate text descriptions

Website should avoid

- extremely bright colors for backgrounds
- blinking images
- excessive CAPS and bolding
- underlining words (underlined words may be mistaken by screen readers as navigation links).



# LMS Formatting for low-vision or blind students

It is important that everything on the LMS is accessible through a screen reader. A screen reader cannot access unformatted pdf documents, so all documents are more accessible if done in Word or Google docs. Find out who you can reach out to about converting assignments to accessible formats

- Canvas: Instructors have the option to make visible or invisible an "assignments" tab. Without this visible, it is difficult for the screen reader to find assignments, so make this tab visible.
- All images should have [alt text](#).
- When having a list of items, use [bullets](#) instead of dashes (a screen reader does not read dashed items as a list).
- When having paragraphs of items, use the "[heading](#)" function. This way, the screen reader can skip between them. If they are just listed one under the other in paragraphs, the screen reader is not able to skip between sections.
- Hyperlinks should be linked to text (otherwise a screen reader will read out the whole link)
- [Blackboard specific accessibility info](#)



**Need to change the time allotment on your  
LMS for an individual student's assignments or  
exams?  
Here's how:**

[Blackboard instructions](#)

[Canvas instructions](#)





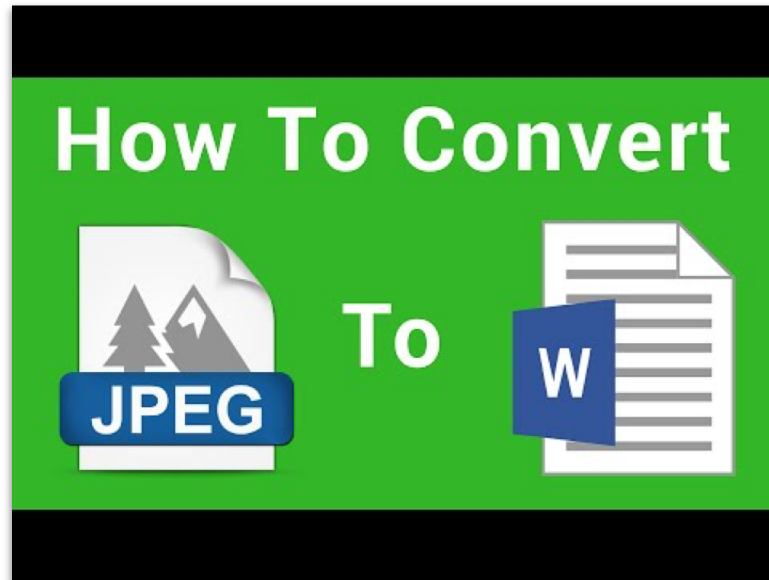
# Guidelines for Documents and Written Materials

All of your written materials should have:

- Clear hierarchical headings
- Text descriptions of images
- Large font. Ko and Rossen suggest 12 pt font
- PDFs that are searchable (not images that are saved as PDFs). You will need to convert your scanned pages.

Check out [Microsoft Office's accessibility checker](#) to ensure that your documents are accessible

**Need to convert a PDF from a text image to text? Here's help:**



Video showing  
how to convert  
text image files



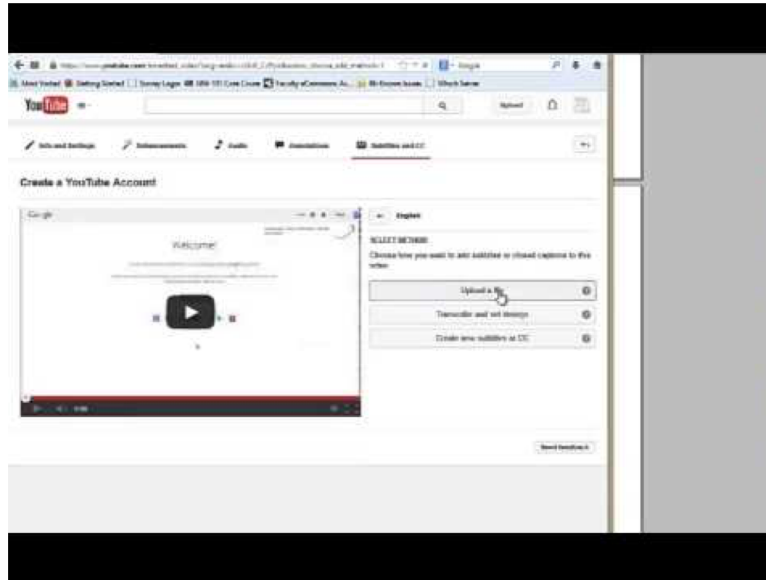
# Audio and Video Materials

## Video and Audio content:

- must have captions or transcripts
- must be clear

Your campus accommodations office is a good place to start if you need assistance with creating transcripts. Be prepared to work alongside them if your text is in a foreign language.

# Need to add captions to your YouTube video? Here's how:



Video showing how  
to add captions to  
YouTube videos

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# Special Considerations for Language Teaching Online



# Online Pedagogy Methods for Aiding Students with Learning Disabilities

Second-language acquisition research suggests that language courses present unique challenges for students with both existing and previously undiagnosed learning disabilities (Schwarz). In the online classroom, we can provide support for this student population through modified pedagogical approaches such as designing lessons with an emphasis on phonology and making content adaptations.

## Phonemic awareness:

In some cases, language-learning difficulties stem from deficiencies in native language linguistic codes (Ganschow and Sparks). Helping the student create phonological awareness can help address these deficiencies. In an online classroom, face-to-face lessons like the one in the video can be adapted to teach students to recognize phonemes, decode words, and apply the sounds to the written language.



Video showing how to incorporate phonemic awareness in lessons

# Modified Language Program with Hybrid Teaching

Modified language programs make content adaptations such as: reducing content coverage, slowing the pace of the course, limiting the vocabulary presented, providing constant review, and incorporating visual/tactile/kinesthetic (Orton-Gillingham method) elements in lessons. Online courses allow departments to include these modified courses and allow instructors to present information in a variety of formats. Online courses can be beneficial for these students because they can easily review materials.



Video showing UCB's modified course with telepresent students



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# Additional Support



# Checklists and Guides

- The University of Washington's Disability Resource Center has a useful [accessibility checklist](#) for online courses broken down by media type
- [University of Minnesota's Accessible Syllabus Checklist](#)
- [The University of North Carolina Wilmington guide for making accessible materials](#)



# Online Communities of Practice

The DO-IT Center at the University of Washington has developed a variety of [online Communities of Practice](#) (CoPs). These groups use email to share perspectives and expertise and identify practices that promote the participation and success of people with disabilities in education.



## Other resources

- [Making a Google Slides presentation accessible](#)
- [5 tips for ADA-Compliant Inclusive Design](#)
- [Article and podcast on teaching languages to students with learning disabilities](#)
- Consider the book [Foreign Languages for Everyone: How I Learned to Teach Second Languages to Students with Learning Disabilities](#) by Irene Brouwer Konyndyk



## Works Cited:

Blackboard accessibility

Canvas accessibility

National Center for Education Statistics

Schwarz, Robin L. "Learning Disabilities and Foreign Language Learning."

Sparks, Richard L., and Leonore Ganschow. "The impact of native language learning problems on foreign language learning: Case study illustrations of the linguistic coding deficit hypothesis." *The Modern Language Journal* 77.1 (1993): 58-74.

University of Minnesota's syllabus accessibility guide

University of North Carolina Wilmington's accessibility guide

University of Washington accessibility website



# Youtube links:

[Converting text images to text](#)

[Adding captions](#)

[Phonemic awareness](#)

[Modified teaching](#)