



Center for  
Excellence in  
Learning and  
Teaching

# Improve Accessibility with BB Ally & UAS Tech Tools

Presenter: Kaia Henrickson (she / her)

Convocation, 2023

# Agenda

- General accessibility guidelines
  - Blackboard Ally
    - Accessibility checker / report
    - Alternative formats
  - Other UAS tools
    - MS Office accessibility checker
    - Grackle for Google Suite
    - Foxit PDF editor
-

# General Accessibility Guidelines

- Clear and consistent design, language, [fonts](#)
- Strong [color contrast](#) & avoid color as only indicator
- Meaningful hyperlink text
  - Avoid “click here” or writing out URLs
- [Alt text](#) for images
- Use built-in styles
- Tables are complicated - use for data not formatting

[CELT Create Accessible Documents](#)

---

# A Special Note About PDFs

- Most scanned PDFs are not accessible without [additional work](#):
    - Text recognition (OCR), alt text for images, and tagging
  - Post documents in their original formats (Word, PPT, etc) rather than make PDFs
    - With Ally, students can download these as PDFs if needed
  - At a minimum, make sure PDFs are:
    - Oriented the correct way for reading
    - Legible (text not cut off / blurred, no extraneous black marks)
-

# Video

- Must have synchronous closed captions
  - Capitalization & punctuation
  - Spelling is correct
- Audio description
  - Use when essential visual content has no oral description
- Transcripts are also helpful\*\*
  - For longer videos, include timings when possible

\*\*For audio-only content, transcripts are required

---

# Closed Captioning Options (Free)

- 3Play Media
    - Check with CELT
  - YouTube
    - Automatic closed captioning (requires editing)
    - Can also upload a script and use auto-timings
  - Zoom
    - Easier to edit than YouTube, can do live captioning (AI generated)
    - Can download transcript file and upload to YouTube
  - ScreenPal
  - Google Slides
    - Live captioning - does not meet standards, but may be helpful
-




















# Blackboard Ally

---

# Accessibility Ratings for Uploaded Content



## PDFs for Training

-  [BioTextbook.pdf](#)  
-  [BioTextbook - Ocred.pdf](#)  
-  [BioTextbook - Ocred and FoxIt.pdf](#)
-  [HorizontalPages.pdf](#)  
-  [CrookedHalfPage.pdf](#)  
-  [InnerPageIssues.pdf](#)  
-  [Scanned\\_PDF\\_Example.pdf](#)  



# Accessibility Guidance During Item Creation

Text

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).

42%

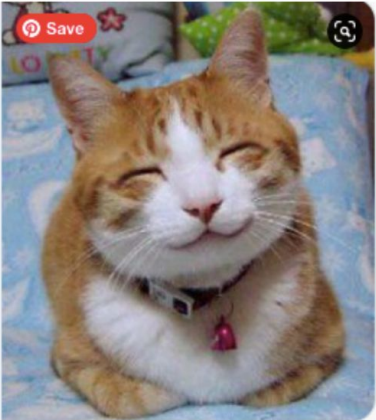
**B** *I* U ~~S~~ Paragraph Arial 10pt

✂️ 📄 📌 🔍 ↶ ↷ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ×² ×₂ 🔗 🌀 ⤴ ⤵ - 📌 ABC ✓

¶ ” Ω 😊 📌 📄 × 📄 📄 📄 📄 📄 📄 📄 <> {} 👁️ ? 🔄 +

This is test type.

Here is a test image:



Here is some hard-to-read text.

# Assistance Provided to Correct Issues

1 Text fragment with insufficient contrast

Accessibility score: 40% All issues

This item contains text with insufficient contrast

What this means

Try one of these colors instead:

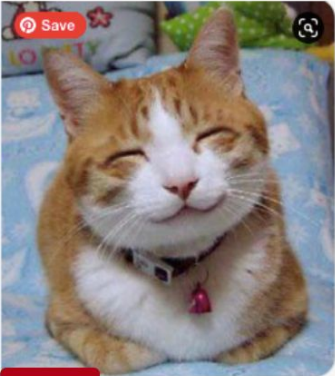
Apply

Help

B I U Paragraph Arial 10pt

This is test type.

Here is a test image:

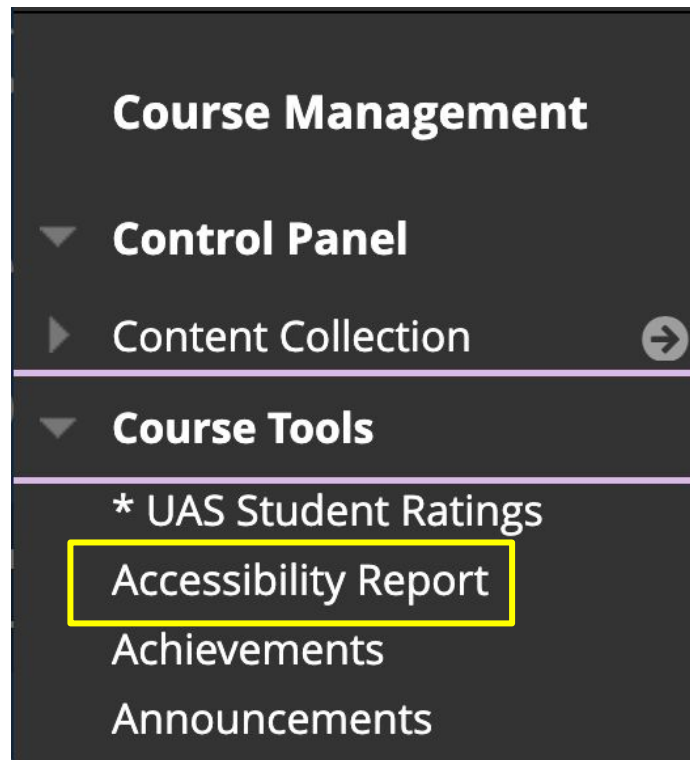


1/1

Here is some hard-to-read text

# Ally Course Report

- Located in the Course Tools Menu
- Runs a report for whole course
- Has options for fixing content



# Course Report Snapshot

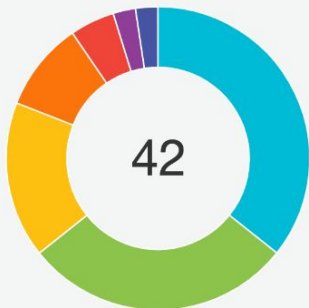
Course accessibility score



## Test KBHENRICKSON-TEST01: Kaia KBHENRICKSON Test Course

Overview

Content



All course content

PDF document	15
Item	12
Word document	7
Image	4
Presentation	2
HTML file	1
Page	1

View



Content with the easiest issues to fix

5

Start



Fix low scoring content

11

Start

# Alternative Formats

- Students can download material in alternative formats that may be more accessible for them
- Faculty can use alternative formats to help create more accessible PDFs from scanned documents
- [Chart with details about each format](#)



# Ally Alternative Formats Menu

PDFs for Training ▼

**Alternative Formats Drop-down menu**

- [BioTextbook.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [BioTextbook - Ocred.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [BioTextbook - Ocred and FoxIt.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [HorizontalPages.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [CrookedHalfPage.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [InnerPageIssues.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓
- [Scanned\\_PDF\\_Example.pdf](#) ▼ **A** ↓

Download alternative formats ▼ ×

Selected file:

**PDF** BioTextbook.pdf **Use this option for scanned PDFs**

**OCR PDF** Automatically extracted text for improved reading and searching

**HTML** For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices

**ePub** For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers

**Electronic braille** BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays

**Audio** MP3 version for listening **Beneficial tools for students**

**BeeLine Reader** Enhanced version for easier and faster on-screen reading

**Immersive Reader** **NEW** Aid reading comprehension and grammar skills. Internet required.

**?** Help

By downloading an alternative format, you agree with the [Terms of Use](#)

Cancel **Download**

# Other Accessibility Tools

---

# Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker

- Check and fix your Word, PPT, and Excel documents

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Word ribbon interface. The **Review** tab is selected and highlighted with a red box. Within the Review tab, the **Check Accessibility** icon is also highlighted with a red box. To the right, the **Inspect Document** task pane is open, showing a list of checks. The **Check Accessibility** item is highlighted with a red box. A green horizontal line is present at the bottom of the image.

**Word** Document

Search (Alt + Q)

File Home **Insert** Layout References **Review** View Help

Editor Word Count **Check Accessibility** Translate New Comment Delete Previous Next Show Comments

Review Tools Word Count Translate Comments

**Inspect Document**

Before publishing this file, be aware that it contains:

- Document properties, author's name and related dates
- Headers

**Check for Issues**

**Inspect Document**  
Check the document for hidden properties or personal information.

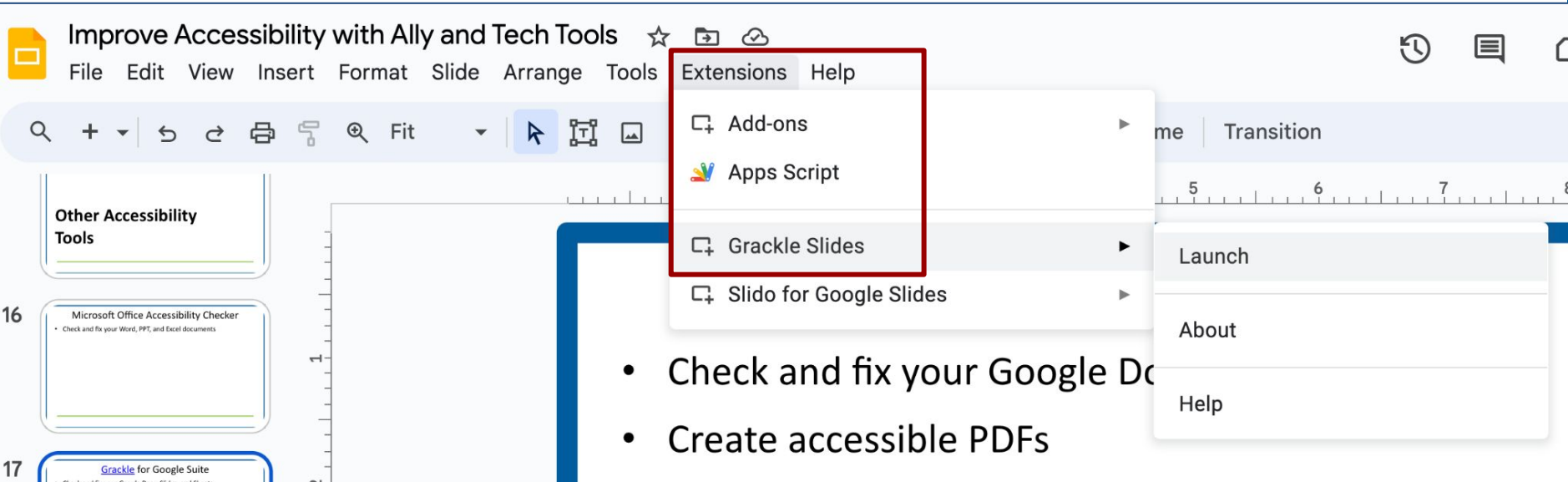
**Check Accessibility**  
Check the document for content that people with disabilities might find difficult to read.

**Check Compatibility**  
Check for features not supported by earlier versions of Word.



# Grackle for Google Suite

- Check and fix your Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets
- Create accessible PDFs



The screenshot shows the Google Slides interface. The title bar reads "Improve Accessibility with Ally and Tech Tools". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Slide", "Arrange", "Tools", "Extensions", and "Help". The "Extensions" menu is open, showing a list of add-ons: "Add-ons", "Apps Script", "Grackle Slides", and "Slido for Google Slides". The "Grackle Slides" option is highlighted with a red box. A sub-menu for "Grackle Slides" is also visible, containing "Launch", "About", and "Help". The slide content includes a list of accessibility tools: "Other Accessibility Tools", "Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker", and "Grackle for Google Suite". The slide number "17" is visible in the bottom left corner.

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions Help

Grackle Slides

- Check and fix your Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides
- Create accessible PDFs

# Grackle Report

The image shows a presentation editor interface. The main slide area contains the text "Grackle Report" centered on a white background with a blue border. A green horizontal line is visible at the bottom of the slide. The top of the editor has a toolbar with icons for undo, redo, search, and various editing tools, along with tabs for "Background", "Layout", "Theme", and "Transition".

On the right side, there is a panel titled "Grackle Slides" which contains an "Accessibility Check" section. This panel is highlighted with a red border. It shows the following details:

- Accessibility Check** | Slides Structure
- Buttons: Re-Check, Export to PDF
- Status: 15 of 16 checks passed
- Presentation** (1 error)
  - ✓ Presentation title is required
  - ✓ Document language should be specified
- Slides** (1 error)
  - ✓ A slide should have a title
  - ✓ Slide title should be unique
  - ✓ A slide should not be empty
- Tables** (Passed)
  - ✓ Tables should be tagged and described
  - ✓ The use of merged cells is not recommended
  - ✓ The use of empty cells is not recommended
- Elements** (7 errors)

# Foxit PDF Editor

The screenshot displays the Foxit PDF Editor interface. The top menu bar includes File, Home, Convert, Edit, Organize, Comment, View, Form, Protect, Foxit eSign, Share, **Accessibility**, and Help. The Accessibility menu is highlighted with a red box, and a red arrow points to a cyan box labeled "Accessibility Tools Menu".

The main window shows a document titled "HorizontalPages - Ocr...". The Accessibility Check tool is active, displaying a list of issues on the left sidebar:

- Document (4 issues)
  - Accessibility permission flag - Passed
  - Image-only PDF - Passed
  - Tagged PDF - Passed
  - Logical Reading Order - Needs m
  - Primary language - Failed
  - Title - Failed
  - Bookmarks - Passed
  - Color contrast - Need
- Page Content (1 issue)
  - Forms
  - Alternate Text
  - Tables
  - Lists
  - Headings

A red arrow points to the "Primary language - Failed" item, which has a context menu open with the following options: Fix, Skip Rule, Explain, Check Again, Show Report, and Options. A cyan box labeled "Right click on red items and choose 'Fix.'" is positioned over the context menu.

The main document content shows a paragraph of text: "a strung argument in the first place. And if you draw on them frequently enough, using them should eventually become second nature. To be sure, it is possible to overuse transitions, so take time to read over your drafts carefully and eliminate any transitions that are unnecessary. But following the maxim that you need to learn the basic moves of argument before you can deliberately depart from them, we advise you not to forgo explicit transition terms until you've first mastered their use. In all our years of teaching, we've read countless essays that suffered from having few or no transitions, but we cannot recall one in which the transitions were overused. Seasoned writers sometimes omit explicit transitions but only because they rely heavily on the other types of connecting devices that we turn to in fire rest of this chapter. Before doing so, however, let us warn you about inserting transitions without really drinking through their meanings—using "therefore," say, when your text's logic actually requires "nevertheless" or "however." So beware. Choosing transition terms should involve a bit of mental sweat, since the whole point of using them is to make your writing *more* reader-friendly, not less. The only thing more frustrating than reading Billy-style passages like "Spot is a good dog. He has fleas" is reading mis-connected

Another paragraph of text is visible on the right: "Connecting the Parts" and "those," "their," and "such" (as in "these pointing words" near the start of this sentence) and simple pronouns like "his," "he," "her," "she," "it," and "their." Such terms help you create the flow we spoke of earlier that enables readers to move effortlessly through your text- In a sense, these terms are like an invisible hand reaching out of your sentence, grabbing what's needed in the previous sentences and pulling it along. Like transitions, however, pointing words need to be used carefully. It's dangerously easy to insert pointing words into your text that don't refer to a clearly defined object, assuming that because the object you have in mind is clear to you it will also be clear to your readers. For example, consider the use of "this" in the following passage:

Alexis de Tocqueville was highly critical of democratic societies, which he saw as trending toward mob rule. At the same time, he accorded democratic societies grudging respect. *This* is seen in Tocqueville's statement that - - .

When "this" is used in such a way it becomes an ambiguous or free-floating pointer, since readers can't tell if it refers to Tocqueville's critical attitude toward democratic societies, his grudging respect for them, or some combination of both. "This what?"

# Questions?





**UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
SOUTHEAST**

Center for  
Excellence in  
Learning and  
Teaching

## Contact Us:

### Instructional Designers:

Juneau - Ramona Broussard 907-796-6557

Juneau - Kimberly Matsuura 907-796-6009

Sitka - John Ingman 907-747-7725

Ketchikan - Nick Utterback 907-228-4507

### Faculty Liaisons:

Kaia Henrickson 907-796-6515

Jill Dumesnil 907-796-6242

