

Blackboard Ally

Improving the accessibility of your course files

Blackboard Ally is a tool to help you enhance the usability and accessibility of your course documents. It reviews and provides an accessibility score for each uploaded file in your course. Files with low accessibility scores are provided with steps on how to address and improve the document's accessibility.

What are accessibility scores?

Files uploaded to your course will show an accessibility score, represented as colored gauges. These accessibility score icons appear right next to your file.



0-33% (red icon): The file is not accessible and needs immediate attention.



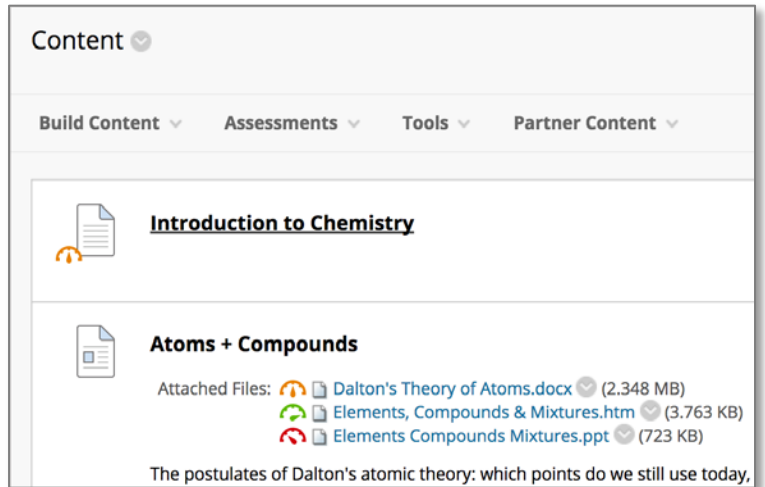
34-66% (orange icon): The file is somewhat accessible.



67-99% (light green icon): The file is accessible but could be improved.



100% (green icon): The file has perfect accessibility. No action needed.

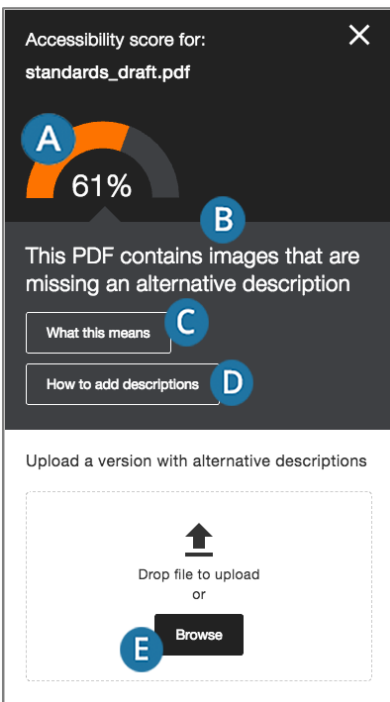


The screenshot shows a 'Content' view with a navigation bar for 'Build Content', 'Assessments', 'Tools', and 'Partner Content'. Two files are listed:

- Introduction to Chemistry**: Shown with an orange gauge icon.
- Atoms + Compounds**: Shown with a light green gauge icon. Below it, 'Attached Files' are listed:
 - Dalton's Theory of Atoms.docx (2.348 MB) with an orange gauge icon.
 - Elements, Compounds & Mixtures.htm (3.763 KB) with a light green gauge icon.
 - Elements Compounds Mixtures.ppt (723 KB) with a red gauge icon.

Below the files, a text snippet reads: "The postulates of Dalton's atomic theory: which points do we still use today."

Improving file accessibility



The screenshot shows an 'Accessibility score for: standards_draft.pdf' panel. It features a gauge showing a score of 61% (orange) and a letter 'A' in a blue circle. Below the gauge, text states: "This PDF contains images that are missing an alternative description".

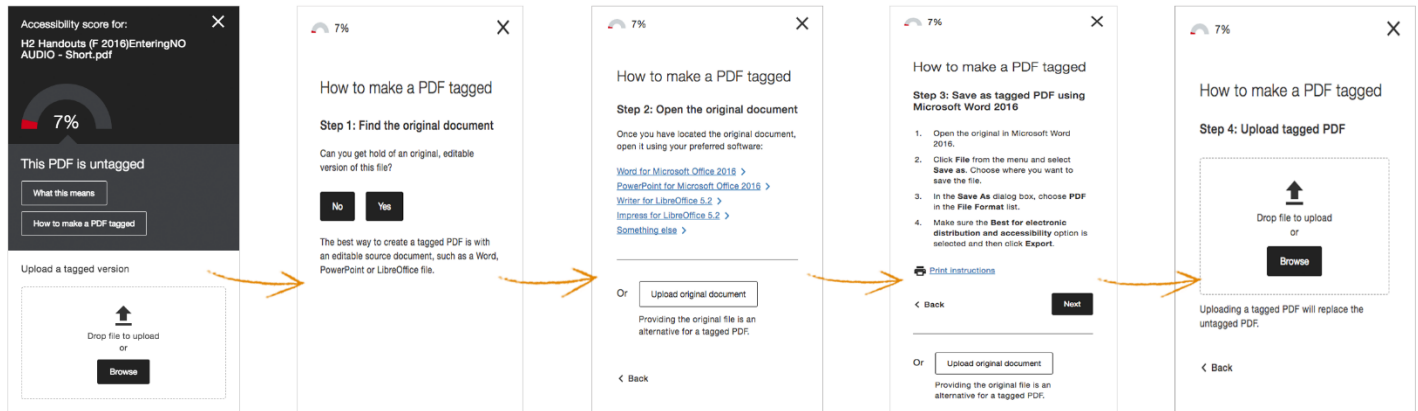
Two buttons are visible: "What this means" (labeled C) and "How to add descriptions" (labeled D). At the bottom, there is a section for "Upload a version with alternative descriptions" with a dashed box containing an upload icon and a "Browse" button (labeled E).

When you select a file's score, a panel opens to show the numerical score value along with information on the file accessibility.

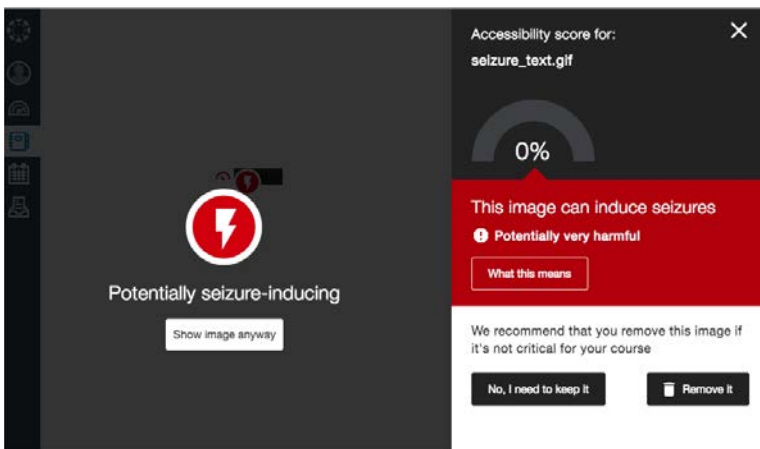
- Accessibility Score:** The file's accessibility color and numerical score based on severity of accessibility issue.
- Description:** The description of the accessibility issue affecting the file.
- Additional information:** Detailed information about how the issue affects accessibility and why it is important to correct.
- Instructions to improve:** Step-by-step instructions for your preferred software that show you how to improve file accessibility.
- Direct file upload:** A drag-and-drop area to upload original or fixed files.

In the example panel, the PDF file shows an accessibility score of 61%, and that the PDF contains images that are missing an alternative description. The Blackboard Ally panel provides other options, such as providing additional information about the issue, and steps on how to add the image descriptions. At the bottom of the panel, an area is provided for you to upload the new, accessibility-improved PDF file.

Ally provides instructions to improve file accessibility within the instructor feedback panels. Ally produces feedback for both images and text. Image feedback often single-step, and involves adding a description for clarity.



Text feedback will often include multiple step instructions for your preferred software, such as Microsoft Word or LibreOffice. Common issues include untagged PDFs or contrast issues.



Ally might prompt you to add additional information or to upload resources to make the file more user friendly. Depending on the issue, there could be several steps you need to take to make sure your file is accessible.

After you make your file more accessible, the accessibility score updates next to the file in the course. If you are unable to make your file more accessible, the file will remain with a low accessibility score. If you have multiple issues within your file, Ally will alert you of the next issue to fix.

