



# SUPPORTING ACCESSIBILITY IN MOODLE

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## Purpose

This job aid describes some of the accessibility tools available to Assiniboine students, both inside and outside of Moodle. As well as some things that you as an instructor can do to make your Moodle course as accessible as possible.

## Background

Accessibility refers to the principle that all students, without discrimination, are able to access the information and participate fully in course activities. While Moodle as a platform aims to be accessible to all learners with tools that support accessibility, there are things you as course creator can do to help ensure that the course is accessible.

## How To

In the following section, the tools that are available to students (both inside and outside Moodle) and things that you as an instructor can do to help to create an accessible course for your students.

### Accessibility Block

This is a block that can be turned on your Moodle course. The Accessibility Block has tools which increase the accessibility within Moodle (will not work for links external sites) including text to speech, spell checker, change font style, and dictionary users (both students and instructors) can change the font size and colour scheme (*Moodle Plugins Directory: Accessibility*, n.d.). To learn more about blocks and how to turn them on see [Blocks on the Moodle Docs site](#).

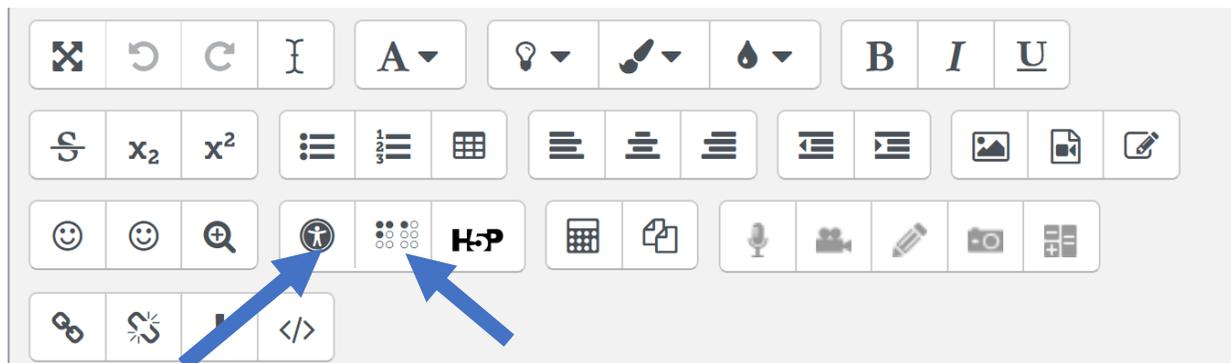
### Read&Write

Read&Write is software with tools designed for reading, writing, study, and research support. It has reader software that works within the web (for example in Moodle), as well as pdf or word files on a users computer. Read&Write has features which allows you to have documents or webpages read aloud to you, understand unfamiliar words by using the text or picture dictionaries, as well as other tools that assist students in studying.

Read&Write does not need to be added to the Moodle course by the instructor, rather it is a plug in that students can use both inside and outside of Moodle. For more information about Installing Read-and-Write see this video by the Learning Curve: [Accessibility – Installing Read and Write](#) (note you need to be signed into an Assiniboine Office 365 Account to view this video).

### Text Editor Accessibility Tools

Moodle’s text editor has two built in Accessibility Tools: Accessibility Checker and Screen Reader Helper.



#### Accessibility Checker

The Accessibility Checker button (marked with a circular accessibility symbol) brings up an automated accessibility checker which checks for some common errors in the text, such as:

- Images or tables with missing or empty alternative text
- Contrast of font color and background color is sufficient
- Long blocks of text are sufficiently broken up with headings
- Tables missing captions and header rows

#### Screenreader Helper

The screen header helper button (marked with a braille pattern) brings up a tool for screen-reader users. It provides a summary of what text styles, images, and links are used in the text box.

### Best Practices

The following best practices will help any content that you add directly to Moodle to be accessible and useable for those using accessibility tools.

#### Headings

Use headings on your pages. Headings allow users to quickly and easily navigate a page or document using assistive software and provide structure which improves the readability for all users.

(*Accessible Course Design - MoodleDocs*, n.d.)

To add a heading in Moodle:

- Select the text to be made into a heading.
- Click the Styles button in the text editor and choose a large, medium or small heading as appropriate.

For more information about using Headings and Titles see this resource from [Universal Design Centre](#)

Hyperlinks

### *Consistent Link Behaviour*

Links should be set to be opened in consistently (either in the same window or a new window).

The following link behaviour is recommended:

- Links within the course should open in the same window.
- Links to external sites should open in a new window.

To set the link behavior in a URL activity you can make the choice under the “Appearance” subheading either new window (which will open in a new tab or new window) or automatic which will open in the same tab or window.

### *Descriptive Links*

A descriptive link is a link which describes where the link will lead to in the link text. For example, the sentence "Information can be found on the [Assiniboine Website](#) includes a descriptive link; "[Click here](#) to learn more about Assiniboine." does not.

Plain URLs such as <https://www.assiniboine.net> should be avoided, as users of assistive technology must listen to the URL being read out.

To add a descriptive link in Moodle

1. Select the descriptive link text.
2. Click the link button in the text editor.
3. Enter the URL and tick 'Open in new window' if appropriate
4. Click 'Create link'.

While the Moodle Platform aims to meet accessibility guidelines, as instructors add their own resources and activities to their course it is important to consider accessibility in the materials you add to the course and in your course design (*Moodle Accessibility Features | Digital Accessibility for Teaching & Learning | Amherst College*, n.d.).

## **Uploaded Files**

For information about creating documents which are accessible for upload (Word, PDF, Powerpoint, etc.) See the [Creating Accessible Documents](#) for more information on creating files that accessible.

## References

*Accessible course design—MoodleDocs.* (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2022, from

[https://docs.moodle.org/35/en/Accessible\\_course\\_design](https://docs.moodle.org/35/en/Accessible_course_design)

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(n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2022, from <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/it/academic-technology-services/digital-accessibility-for-teaching-learning/moodle-accessibility-features>

*Moodle plugins directory: Accessibility.* (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2022, from

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