

# Effective Strategies for Crafting Inclusive E-Learning

Inclusive Learning Solutions: Best Practices for Accessible E-Learning Design with Headway



Designing e-learning content that is accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities, is crucial.

At **Headway**, we excel in creating courses that adhere to Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 standards, utilizing advanced tools like Articulate Storyline.

Below, we share essential strategies for designing inclusive e-learning courses that ensure all learners can engage fully with the material.

## **Topics**

1. Ensuring Full Keyboard Accessibility in Your Courses
2. Crafting Descriptive and Concise Alt Text for Images
3. Structuring Content for Optimal Accessibility
4. Designing Intuitive and Accessible Navigation
5. Integrating Audio and Video Thoughtfully
6. Do's and Don'ts

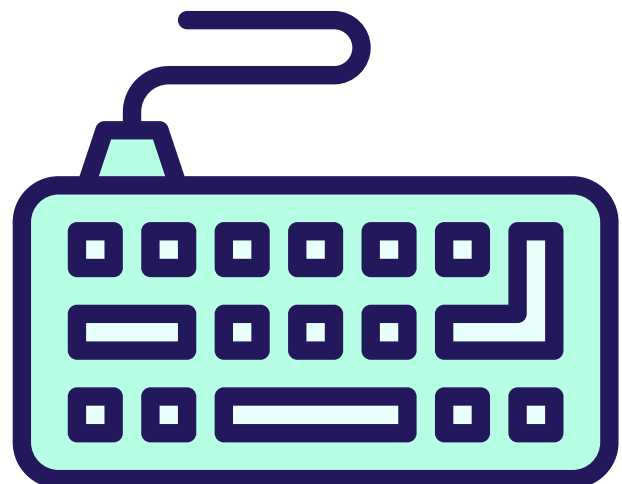
# Ensuring Full Keyboard Accessibility in Your Courses

One of the foundational steps in designing an accessible course is making sure that every element can be navigated using a keyboard. This is vital because it ensures compatibility with **assistive technologies** like screen readers and keyboard overlays, which are indispensable for learners with disabilities.

To achieve this, avoid activities that require mouse interaction, such as drag-and-drop assessments and rollover effects. These types of activities exclude visually impaired learners who rely on keyboard navigation. By focusing on keyboard accessibility, you make your content usable for a wider audience, ensuring no learner is left behind.

## Key Points for Keyboard Accessibility:

- **Avoid Mouse-Dependent Activities:** Ensure that all meaningful activities can be completed using a keyboard.
- **Assistive Technology Compatibility:** Make sure your course is compatible with screen readers and other assistive devices.
- **Consistent Navigation:** Provide a logical and predictable tab order throughout your course.



# Crafting Descriptive and Concise Alt Text for Images

Alt text is a critical component for making visual elements accessible to learners who use screen readers. Good alt text should succinctly convey the same information as the image it describes. It's essential to strike a balance between being concise and providing all necessary details.

When writing alt text, avoid redundant phrases such as “image of” or “graphic of” and focus on the content itself. Also, ensure that the information provided in the alt text is not already covered by on-screen text. This practice not only aids visually impaired learners but also enhances the overall clarity and usability of your course.

## Best Practices for Alt Text:

- **Clarity and Relevance:** Ensure the alt text provides relevant information that enhances understanding.
- **Avoid Redundancy:** Do not repeat information already presented in other on-screen text.
- **Be Specific:** Use clear and descriptive language to convey the exact meaning of the image.



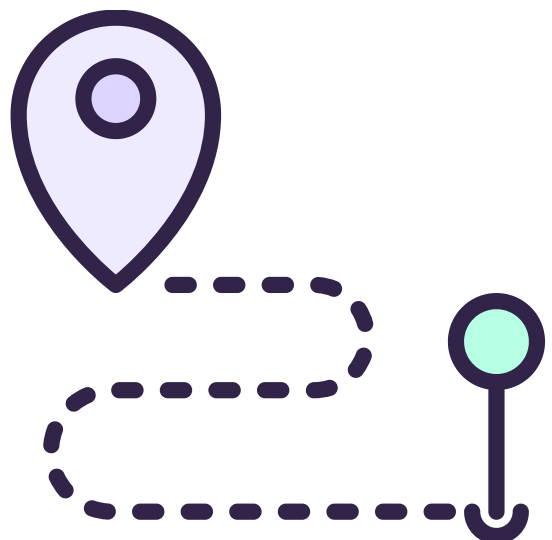
# Structuring Content for Optimal Accessibility

The way you order objects and text on a slide significantly affects the accessibility of your course. Screen readers typically navigate from left to right, top to bottom, so arranging your content in this order helps visually impaired learners follow along more easily.

For example, when creating quiz slides, ensure the question appears before the answer choices. This logical progression prevents confusion and enhances the learner's experience. Additionally, avoid using multiple columns of text, as screen readers read left to right without distinguishing between columns, leading to disjointed information delivery.

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# Designing Intuitive and Accessible Navigation

Creating an accessible course goes beyond just making content available; it involves ensuring that navigation is intuitive and user-friendly. Persistent navigation elements that appear on every slide can be particularly troublesome for screen reader users, as they can become repetitive and annoying.

To enhance navigation, consider using hotkey shortcuts and providing clear instructions for navigating through the course. This not only aids visually impaired learners but also improves the overall user experience. Tools like Articulate Storyline can help automate some of these processes, ensuring smoother navigation for all learners.

## Enhancing Navigation:

- **Avoid Persistent Elements:** Reduce or eliminate navigation elements that repeat on every slide.
- **Implement Hotkeys:** Use keyboard shortcuts to streamline navigation.
- **Clear Instructions:** Provide explicit instructions for navigating through the course.



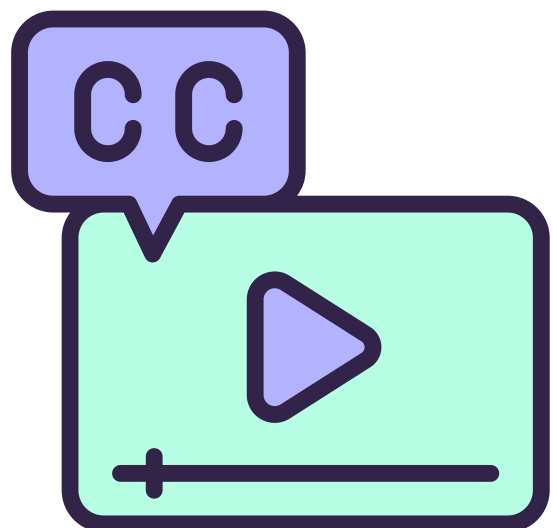
# Integrating Audio and Video Thoughtfully

Incorporating audio and video into your e-learning courses can greatly enhance engagement, but it's crucial to make these elements accessible. This means providing captions and transcripts for all audio and video content, ensuring that learners with auditory disabilities can fully benefit from the material.

Captions should be timed accurately with the audio and video to ensure a seamless experience. Additionally, transcripts should not only provide a verbatim account but also include descriptions of visual elements to make the content accessible to visually impaired learners. This comprehensive approach ensures that no learner is excluded from the course.

## Key Considerations for Audio and Video:

- **Accurate Captions:** Ensure captions are timed accurately and provide equivalent content.
- **Detailed Transcripts:** Include descriptions of visual elements in transcripts.
- **Flexible Playback:** Allow learners to control video playback to suit their needs.





# Do's and Dont's

Checklist provided by articulate.com



Make sure all course elements are keyboard accessible

Don't use course elements that are only accessible with a mouse.

Provide a textual alternative to non-text content (such as images and form fields) that conveys meaning or context.

Don't provide textual alternatives for graphic elements that don't impart meaning or context.

Use high-contrast colors.

Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning; print your course in grayscale to make sure that you can understand course elements without color.

Provide audio-timed captions and a transcript for videos and audio, and include job aids as supplements.

Don't rely only on visuals in a video to convey information. Also don't assume that the screen reader will capture all items entering and exiting the slide.

Use talking head videos and include audio descriptions of what's happening in the video, providing full playback control to the learner.

Don't automatically start videos and audio.

Place objects on the slide from left to right, top to bottom in the same order you want them read by a screen reader.

Don't include timers or other persistent objects (such as a side menu or Player tabs) that a screen reader will read on each slide.

Use only keyboard-accessible effects on objects that convey meaning or context.

Don't use rollover or hover effects; they are not keyboard accessible.

Use variables to provide alternatives to slides with animations, nondescriptive audio, etc.

Don't have items appear and disappear because items can disappear before screen readers can read.



# Do's and Dont's (cont)

Checklist provided by articulate.com



Use multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, numeric, short answer, multiple response, pick one, pick many, how many, matching drop-down, sequence drop-down, ranking dropdown, and essay question types; use Likert with caution as this question type may be difficult to parse.

Provide full-text equivalent for software training (remembering that a transcript is not a full-text equivalent).

Break content up on separate slides if it won't fit on one slide.

When publishing to Flash, include links to the Adobe Flash Player before the learner launches the course. Also provide links to Acrobat Reader or other plug-ins learners may need to view the content.

Use markers with text content.

Use a variety of assessments, giving learners all the time they need to complete them.

Add content to the Notes panel.

Don't use word bank, matching drag-and-drop, sequence drag-and-drop, ranking drag-and-drop, which word, or hotspot question types.

Don't use software simulations without careful consideration of accessibility.

Don't use scrolling panels.

Don't assume your learner has all the software they need to view course elements.

If your authoring software has markers, don't use markers with video or images that convey meaning; you might not be able to add alt text to objects within a marker.

Don't include timed tests.

Don't put the same text on every Notes panel.

# Why Headway?

At Headway, we are dedicated to creating inclusive e-learning experiences that meet the highest accessibility standards. Our expertise in using cutting-edge tools like Articulate Storyline, combined with our commitment to best practices, ensures that our courses are not only effective but also accessible to all learners.

Partner with us to make your training programs more inclusive and impactful.

For more information on how Headway can help you design accessible e-learning courses, visit our website or contact us today!

