



Color Accessibility in Course Design

Design Guide

What is Color Contrast?

Color contrast describes the difference between foreground and background colors. Colors that have a larger ratio between foreground and background are often easier to view, while a smaller ratio is more difficult.

Ensuring sufficient color contrast is most important when working with text, images of text, buttons, and icons. Color can enhance the aesthetic appeal and effectiveness of a course but can not be difficult to read or understand. However, color should not be used alone to convey meaning, especially for instructions and meaningful content.

► **Read More:** [WebAIM Contrast and Color Accessibility](#)



Complimentary colors increase readability.



Similar colors blend together and are hard to read.



All required tasks must be completed by Friday, June 30.



All required tasks **must** be completed by Friday, June 30.

Color Contrast Standards

Normal Text

Larger ratios between foreground and background colors help ensure the effectiveness of course materials. When working with normal text, a ratio of at least 4.5:1 is needed to ensure readability. By default, the Canvas rich content editor uses 12 point text, which is a normal text size.



12 point black text on white background.

Contrast Ratio - 21:1



12pt pink text on white background.

Contrast Ratio - 3.1:1



Color Accessibility in Course Design

Color Contrast Standards

Large & Bold Text

Larger text, such as 18 point and larger text, and 14 point or larger bolded text, need at least a 3:1 ratio to ensure readability. Some heading styles in Canvas, particularly Heading 2 and Heading 3, are also subject to the 3:1 standard.



18 point black text on white background.

Contrast Ratio – 21:1



18 point pink text on white background.

Contrast Ratio – 3.1:1

Buttons & Icons

Buttons and icons, if used alone to convey meaning or importance, also need at least a 3:1 ratio. If a button or icon is accompanied by text to convey meaning, then it does not need to meet a 3:1 ratio.



Important



Canvas includes an Accessibility Checker within the rich content editor. The checker displays an alert when an accessibility issue is found. Color contrast issues are presented with a color selection tool to increase the contrast ratio, allowing a user to increase contrast and apply it immediately.

The same color contrast standards apply to documents, presentations, web content, and other files. Most word processing and presentation applications have built-in checkers, while a few need add-on tools.

► **Read More:** [How do I use the Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor?](#)