

Alternative Format Creation

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CAPER-BC



**Centre for
Accessible
Post-secondary
Education
Resources**

Accessibility Bites

Accessibility Legislation – Alternate Formats – Assistive Technology

About CAPER-BC

- Funded by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
- Provide alternate format course materials to BC post-secondary students with print disabilities

Accessibility Legislation

- The *Accessible BC Act* passed in 2021
- 8 standards will apply to publicly funded organizations
- Education standard will likely impact faculty and classroom materials

Potential education standard requirements

- Based on draft standards from Nova Scotia and Ontario
 - Textbooks, reading packages, and course materials must be available in multiple formats
 - Timeframe for provision of alternate formats
 - Instructional materials should be created in an accessible format that may be converted (ON)
 - Alternative means of representing content if accessible formats unavailable

What are alternate formats?

- A different version of a standard print text
 - Physical: Braille, Large Print, Tactile Graphics
 - Electronic: PDF, EPUB, Word, BRF, MP3, MathML
- Students may use alternate formats to supplement print
- Students may use different alternate formats for different purposes
- Class materials available in multiple formats allow students to choose what works best for them

What are assistive technologies (AT)?

- Software or hardware that help users to access information
- High and low tech options
 - Low tech: Magnifiers used with print books
 - High tech: Refreshable Braille displays
- Common assistive technology used by CAPER students
 - Text-to-speech
 - Screen readers
- Alternate formats must be properly formatted to work with assistive technologies

How can I help students who use AT?

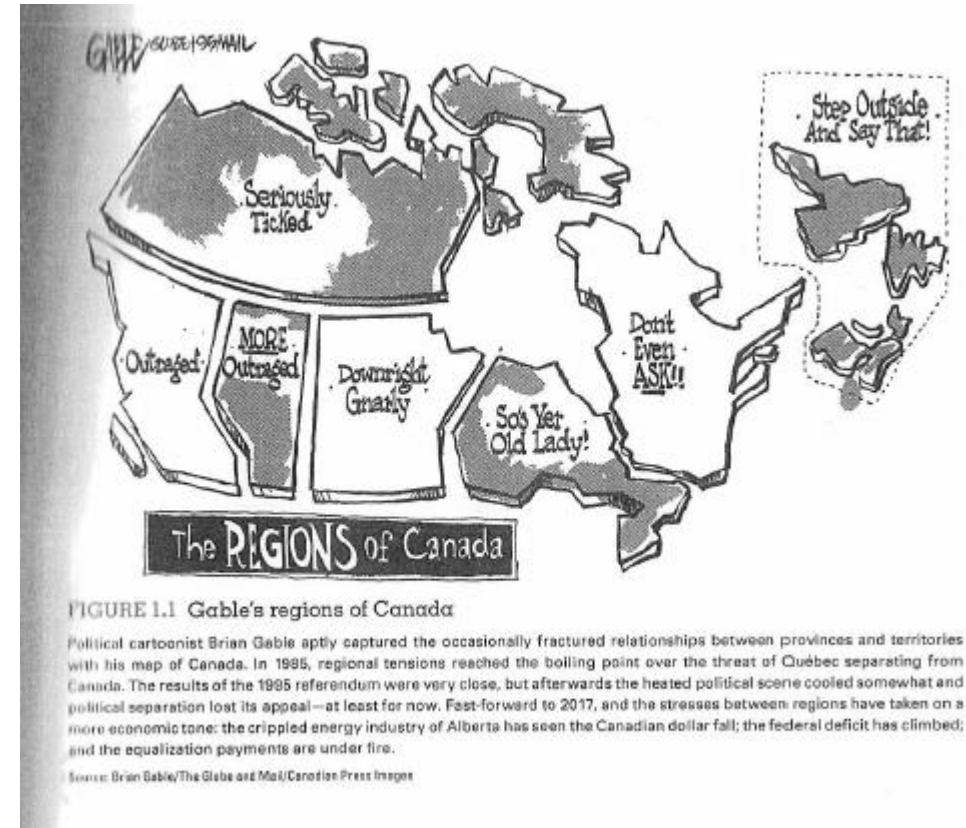
- Accessibility issues for many AT users are easy to solve
- When creating your course materials:
 - Provide them in multiple file formats
 - Text must be machine readable
 - Include navigation features like headings
 - Keep a logical reading order and simple layout
 - Use descriptive link text
 - Use sufficient text size and contrast
 - Include alt text for images

Digital doesn't mean accessible

- Common accessibility issues in course materials
 - Photocopied or scanned course packs
 - Lack of navigation
 - Screen captures, images of text, images that convey information

Course packs or course readings

- Course packs and readings photocopied or scanned from print are not usually accessible
- Find born digital versions if possible
 - The library can be a big help with this
- Include a clear citation list
 - Students or CAPER staff can track down digital versions of the readings



Lack of Navigation

- Navigation features are necessary for moving around within a document
 - Especially important for screen reader users
- When creating documents in Word use heading styles to create a meaningful structure
- In Power Points use slide layouts that include a title field and use it
 - The titles become the navigation system and are maintained if you SAVE to PDF

Images that convey information

- Images of text and annotations on images are not picked up by AT
- Many images convey information (ex. graphs and charts)
- Primarily impacts students who are blind or have low vision
- Alternate text should be included
 - What do you want the student to learn from the image?



Shown here is a somewhat pixelated, low resolution aerial photo of partial building ruins in the desert. There are some walls with arched fronts that are partly crumbled, and one large central arch. There is metal scaffolding and what appears to be construction or excavation work around the ruins.

Things that will probably go to CAPER

- Complex or visual content for screen reader users
 - Math content
 - Complex layout PDFs
 - Image heavy content
 - Computer software screen captures
 - Diagrams, charts, graphs
- Alternative methods may be needed to communicate content
 - Human readers
 - Tactiles

Course material accessibility tips

- Let students know if there are multiple formats available
- Ask your students with alt format accommodations what works best for them
- Reflect on your existing course materials
 - Do they need to be in PDF?
 - Do they have machine readable text?
 - Have I followed best practice for accessible Word documents/Power Points?

Questions?

Resources

- [Accessibility Handbook for Teaching and Learning](#)
 - [Word document structure – headings, tables, lists, columns](#)
 - [Word document alt text, images, and links](#)
 - [Layout and structure for Powerpoint](#)
- [Contrast checker from WebAIM](#)

Accessible document checklist

- Has my document been properly formatted?
- Are there headings?
- Is link text descriptive?
- Is the font size big enough?
- Is there sufficient contrast?
- Have images of text and images that convey information been described?
- Are tables and lists accessible?
- Has any content in other languages been defined?

This list was pulled from the [accessible documents checklist](#) from Accessible Libraries