Brightspace Accessibility Guide

Objectives

By following the guide, you will be able to:

Part 1: Add headings to Create a File.

Part 2: Add alt-text to images.

Part 3: Create lists using tools provided by Brightspace.

Part 4: Provide meaningful display text for each web-based link.

Part 5: Format tables to be accessible to users.

Part 6: Use appropriate fonts and settings in a document.

Part 7: Recognize challenges with integrated checker.

Part 1: Add headings to Create a File.

Check: When files are created within Brightspace, do they use provided headings?

Why is this important?

1. People using assistive technology rely on headings for navigation, and subheadings provide clear structure for everyone.
2. Headings:
   a. Serve as cognitive signposts for memory and understanding.
   b. Group related content into sections
   c. Help readers skim, focus, or revisit specific parts of the document.

To add content with headings, follow these steps:

These instructions are for making files, but you can also make headings in Assignments, Quizzes, Discussion Forums, Announcements, and other places where the HTML editor is used.

1. Navigate to Content
2. Select the module in Brightspace where you would like to add content.
3. Select the Upload/Create button.
4. From the drop-down menu, select Create a File. (See screenshot below that shows the first four steps)
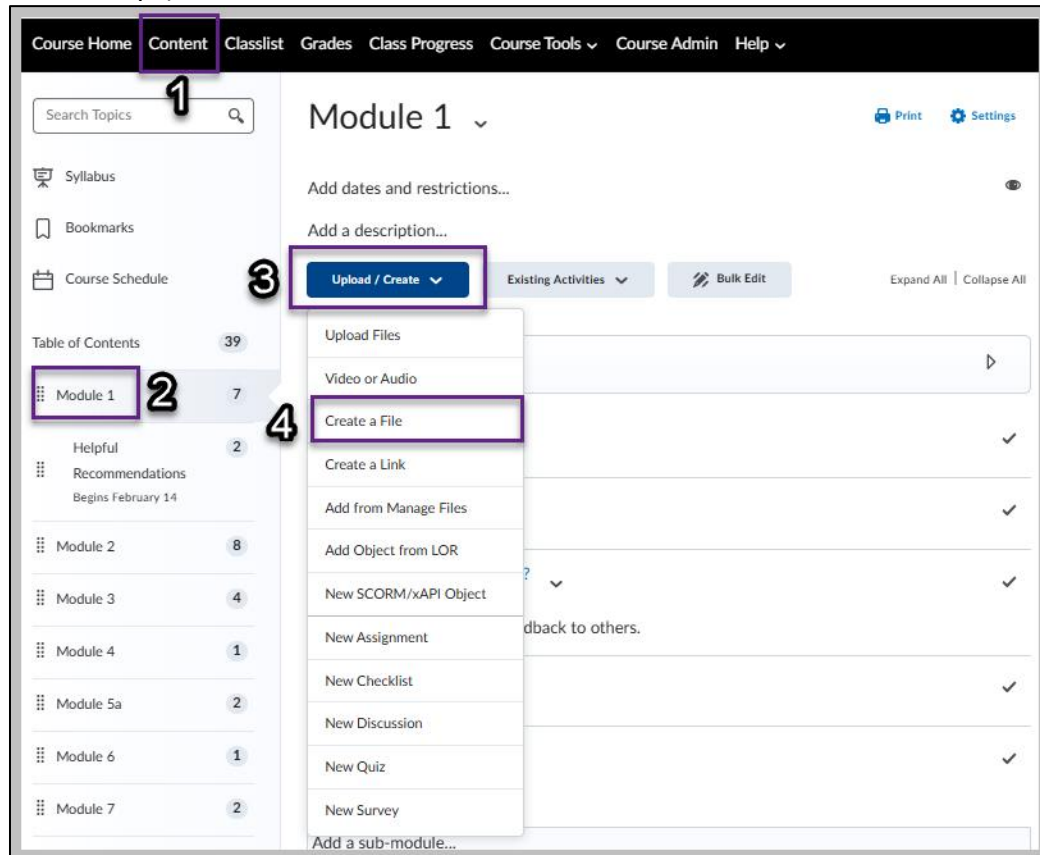
5. Using the first menu on the HTML editor, select Heading 1.
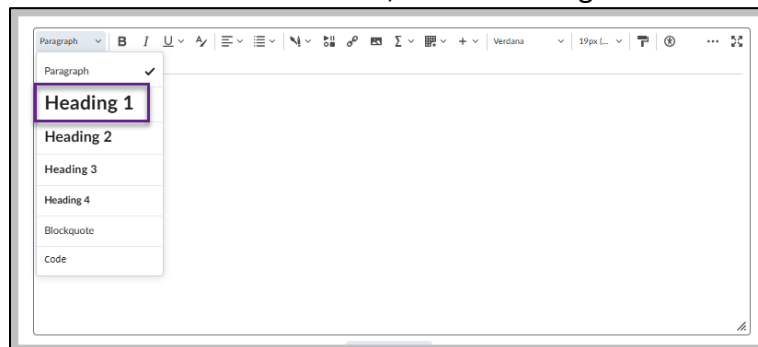
6. Input the title of your page – this will likely be the same as what you name the overall file, such as: Week 1 Overview: Becoming Creative. **Note:** Heading 2 should be used next. Heading 1 functions as the title of the file; there should be one title per file.

Part 2: Add alt-text to images.

Check: Do all images have effective alt-text?

Why is this important?

1. Screen readers read Alt-Text out loud.
2. For users with visual impairments, Alt Text is their only information about an image or diagram – such as how something works or the key data it presents.

To add alt-text to images, follow these steps:

1. Insert the image into the HTML editor by selecting the image icon.
2. Locate image in files or drag into pop-up window.
3. In the next pop-up window, enter the alt-text. Write 1-2 sentences to clearly describe the content to a vision impaired user.
4. Alternatively, if the image is decorative and not enhancing the text provided, you can select **Mark as Decorative.** (see below)

## Part 3: Create lists using tools provided by Brightspace.

Check: Are the listed items in the file using bullets or numbers?

Why is this important?

1. Screen readers and text-to-speech tools work best with lists made using built-in features, especially nested lists (multi-level lists).
2. Screen reader users benefit from hearing when a list begins.
3. Related list items are easier to remember.

To create a list using tools provided by Brightspace, follow these steps:

- Use the bullet list tool from the HTML Editor toolbar to start a bulleted list, when the sequence or order is not prioritized. Such as a list of books to choose from for an assignment.
- Use the numbered list tool in provided in the drop-down menu on the HTML editor tool bar to start a numbered list.
    a. Note: Use the numbered list when the order matters or implies a sequence.
- You can also select existing text and then apply either tool.
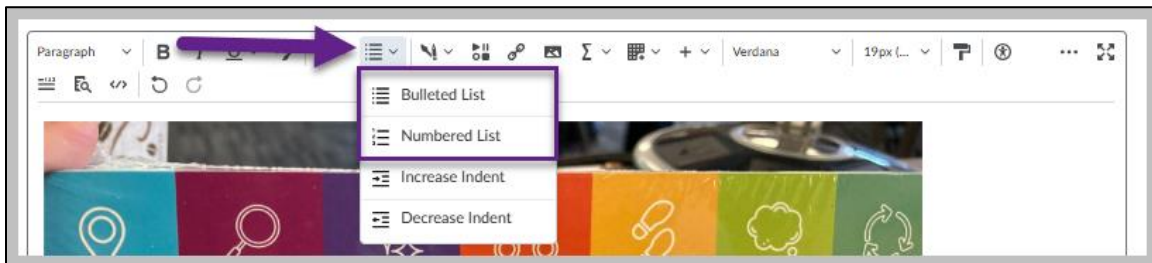
# Part 4: Provide meaningful display text for each web-based link.

Check: Are there any links in the file where the visible text is just the URL rather than a descriptive phrase?

Why is this important?

1. Without meaningful display text, screen readers read a link's URL character by character, making it hard to follow.
2. If using phrases like "Click Here", add context: "Click here to view assignment 1 details"
3. When possible, use the site's title as the link text.

To create a descriptive hyperlink using the small toolbar, follow these steps:

1. Select the text that you want to function as a hyperlink.
2. A small toolbar will appear (see below), but you can also select the link icon from the main toolbar (see next section of instructions for these steps).
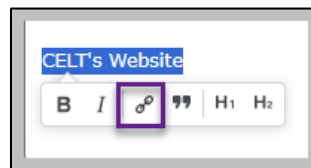

3. **This is for an external-to-Brightspace URL** (such as a link to the Writing Center), in the new window, input your external URL.
   a. **Notes:**
      i. The Add Link box already inputs https:// into the text bar. You can use this for your own links, or delete it before pasting your URL. If you do not use or delete the https://, it will cause a broken link.
      ii. The **New Window** radio button is the default setting and should remain selected. This promotes accessibility for students navigating to external links.
      iii. The Add Link box also offers an option for **Insert a Quicklink**. Quicklinks are links internal to the course and Brightspace, such as a quiz, another module, announcements, and so on.
4. Verify the Text to appear (in the example below is CELT's Website, gives a clear indication of where the students are navigating).
5. Select the **Apply** button.
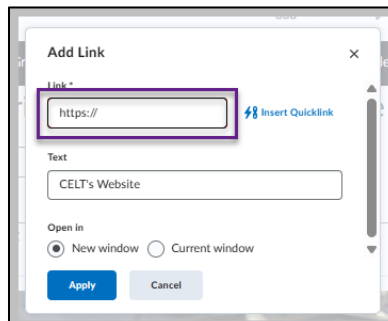
To create a descriptive hyperlink using the Quicklink Tool on the toolbar, follow these steps:

1. Select the **Insert Quicklink** tool on the toolbar.
2. In the Insert Quicklink box, select the appropriate option. If you are wanting an **internal link,** such as an assignment, select Assignment from the menu of options and then identify the appropriate item. If you want an **external link**, such as a link to the Writing Center, select Link from the menu of options.
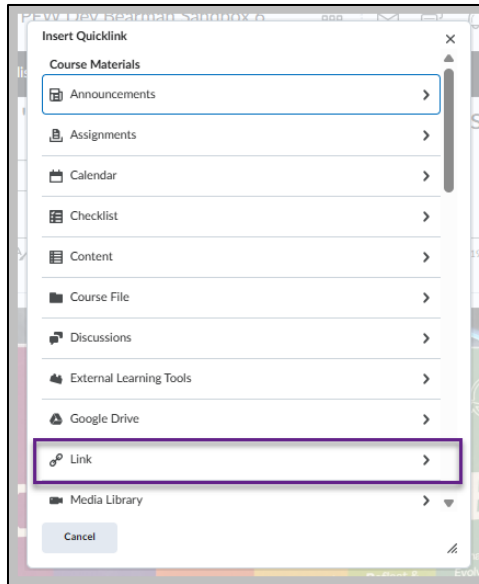
3. Input the Link text in the text bar
   a. **Note:** The text box already inputs https:// into the text bar. You can use this for your own links, or delete it before pasting your URL. If you do not use or delete the https://, it will cause a broken link.
4. Input the descriptive text which will be shown, such as The Writing Center One-on-One Support Page.
5. Verify **New Window** is selected.
6. Select **Insert** button.

Part 5: Format tables to be accessible to users.

Check:

1. Do all tables have a Header Row that describes the contents?
2. Tables have no merged cells.
3. Is the table complex or inserted as an image?

Why is this important?

1. Screen readers and text-to-speech tools understand table structure when built-in features are used.
2. Some screen readers can repeat column labels which help with large data tables.
3. Merged or split celts disrupt the count, making it hard for screen readers to give useful information.

To format an accessible table, follow these steps:

1. Choose the **Table** icon on the toolbar.
2. Select **Insert Table** from the drop-down menu.
3. Choose the number of boxes desired for the columns or rows.
    1. **Note:** If the table exceeds the number of boxes on the interactive guide, you can add columns and rows after inserting a table by accessing the same Table menu and select **Table Properties.**

To add a header row, follow these steps:

1. To identify a header row:
    1. Select the row you want to be the header row (usually the first row).
    2. Select Table icon.
    3. Select Row from the menu.
    4. Select Row Properties.
   5. From the drop-down menu, select Header.
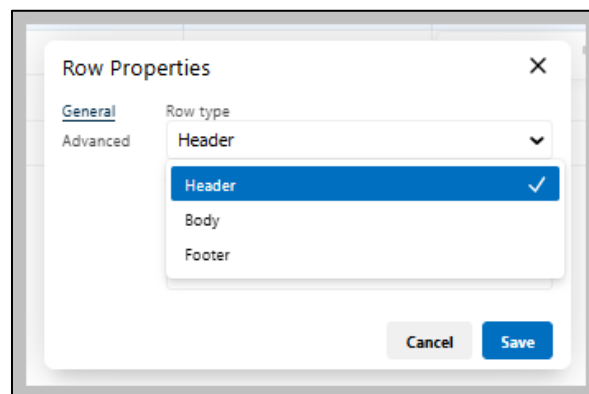
To unmerge cells, follow these steps:

1. Select the cells that are merged.
2. Select the **Table** tool from the toolbar.
3. Select the **Cell** option from the menu.
4. Select the **Split Cells** button from the sub-menu. Note: Unlike Microsoft, Brightspace will not ask how many cells to split the selected cell into.

To add a caption to a table, follow these steps:

It is beneficial to include a caption on a table regardless of complexity or format. However, if merged cells are unavoidable, the table is complex, or if it is inserted as an image, effective alt-text is necessary.

1. Select the table or image of a table.
2. Select the **Table** tool from toolbar.
3. Select **Table Properties** from the menu.
4. In the Table Properties box, select the **Show Caption** box.
5. Select **Save.**
6. In the table in the HTML editor, write an effective description for the table caption.
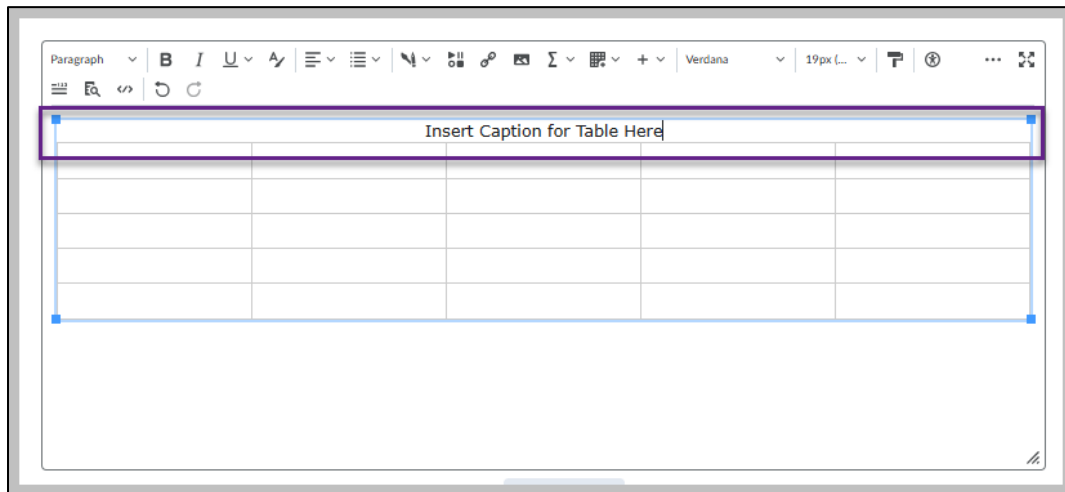
Part 6: Use appropriate fonts and formats in a document.

Check:

1. Does the document use clear, readable fonts, preferably sans serif?
2. Does the document avoid excessive use of italics, bold, and underlining for emphasis?
3. Does the document avoid using color alone to convey meaning?

Why is this important?

1. Sans serif fonts, without decorative strokes, are easier to read for users with visual impairments.
   - Note: Well-designed serif fonts like Georgia, Arial, and Lato can also be accessible if used at sufficient sizes and contrast. Avoid hard to read fonts like Times New Roman, Courier, Comic Sans, and decorative or script styles.
2. Use character formatting sparingly; reserve underlining for hyperlinks to limit confusion for users. Use bold sparingly for emphasis or headings; use italics carefully as it may reduce visibility for some users.
3. Text should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text (such as 18pt or 14pt bold). Use tools like the WebAIM Contrast Checker to test.

To set appropriate fonts, follow these steps:

1. Select the text in the HTML editor.
2. Select a font from the drop-down menu, such as Arial, Ezra SIL, or Lato.

To select an appropriate font color, follow these steps:

1. Input text into the HTML editor.
2. Select the text.
3. Select the **Select Color** icon from the tool bar. It looks like an A with a paintbrush.
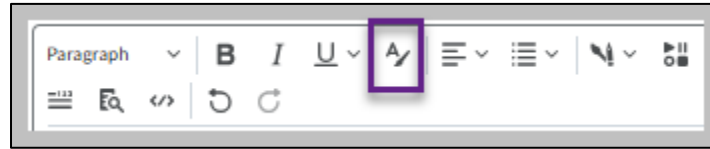
4. Review the contrast checker in the Select a Color window.
   a. In the left screenshot below, a shade of green is selected. When the text is small, there isn't enough contrast for the green to be accessible.
   b. In the right screenshot below, black is selected. Regardless of the size of the text, there is enough contrast for the black to be accessible to users.
   c. Use the contrast checker to verify colors selected are accessible.
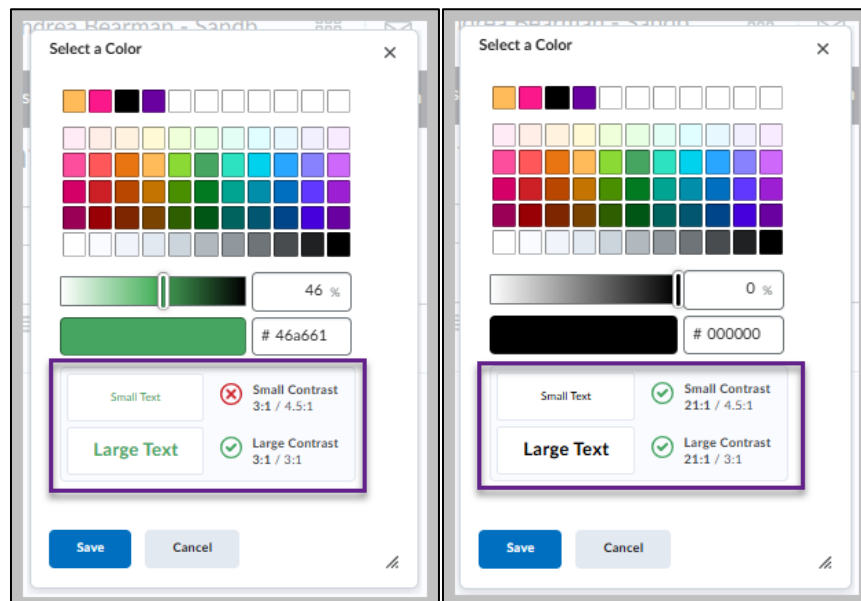
## Part 7: Recognize challenges with integrated checker.

The integrated accessibility tool in Brightspace can be a helpful start in updating files to be accessible. However, this tool should not be the only way of reviewing a file. Once you have completed a review of the document using the integrated accessibility tool, you should still manually check your document.

To use the Brightspace Accessibility Checker, follow these steps:
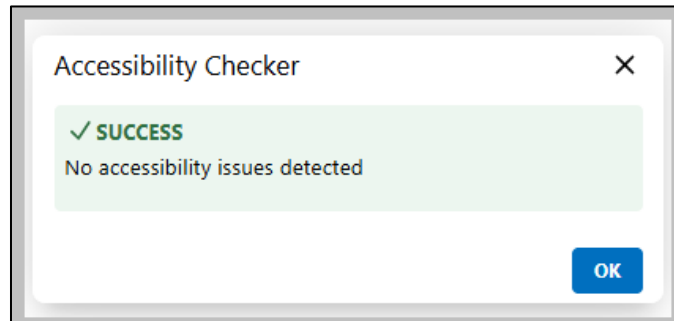
1. Select the accessibility tool on the HTML tool bar to review accessibility in the HTML editor.
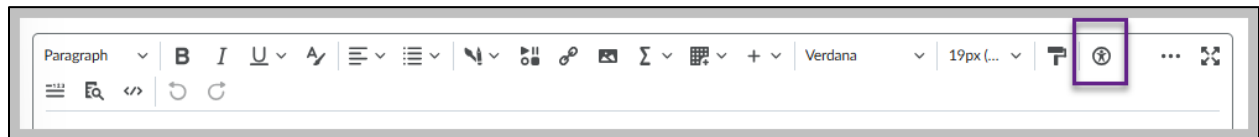
2. A small pop-up window will appear and allow you to review the accessibility issues and repair them. Some options can be fixed in the pop-up, others will need manual adjustment (such as color contrast of text).
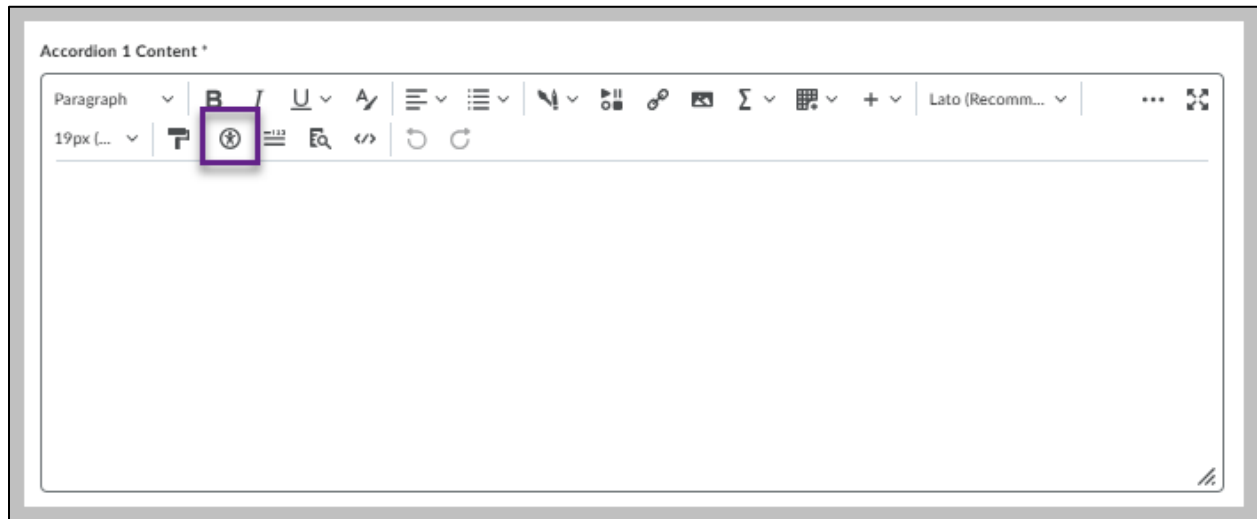   a. Use the up and down arrow to move through issues.
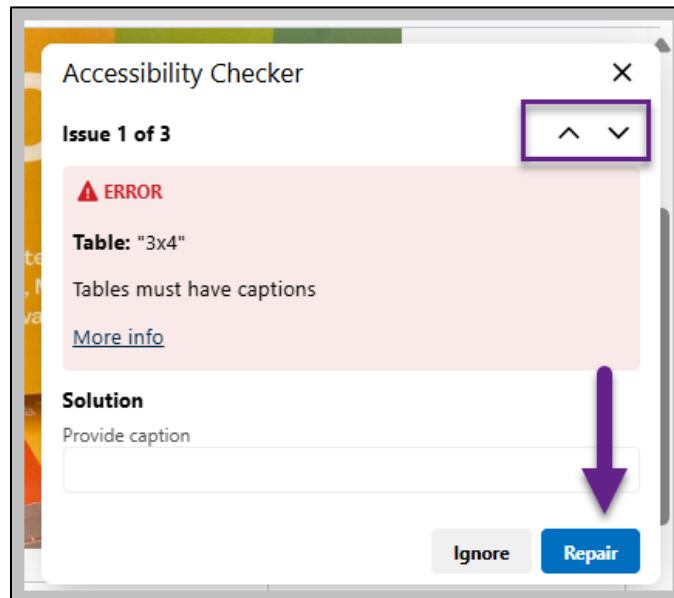
3. Update all issues until you receive a message that no accessibility issues are detected.

To use the Brightspace Accessibility Checker in **Creator+,** follow these steps:

1. Within the HTML editor for the specific Creator+ elements, select the accessibility tool.

2. Repeat your review of each HTML editor within the Creator+ elements.
   a. Note: You must check accessibility within each individual HTML editor within the Creator+ elements. The checker that runs in the larger HTML window, will not review the Creator+ content.
   b. Note about Creator+: Most places where text is input into Creator+ elements have the accessibility checker. Exceptions, where it is not possible for text to be reviewed are: Stylized Quote, Flip Cards, and Carousel. To ensure accessible text, please avoid the use of all caps text so it can be properly read by a screen reader.
   c. Note: Users are prompted to add alt-text anytime an image is added, including in Creator+ elements.