

# POUR Questions for a Digitally Accessible Classroom

## POUR

Digital accessibility is a measure of the absence of barriers to digital information. It is considered by four principles: is the information perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust? Together, these principles form the acronym, and mnemonic, POUR.

Here are some essential questions to ask when selecting and creating POUR materials for your class. Many were inspired by the document [Is It Accessible? Questions to Ask Before Selecting Educational Materials](#), by the National Center on Accessible Educational Materials.



## P: Perceivable

- Can the information be perceived with more than one sense?
- Can we customize the display, including enlarging it or changing its brightness?
- Are there text alternatives to embedded media?
- Is text readable and legible?
- Are there accessible alternatives for equations and special notations?

## O: Operable

- Are there flexible options to control or respond to websites and materials?
- Is there a shortcut or aid to navigation (e.g., table of contents, page numbers) so we know where we are?
- Do we know where a link will take us without having to click on it?
- Can we control timing and movement of media?
- Is flashing content, which may induce harm such as seizures, avoided?

## U: Understandable

- Are the tone, style, words and phrases contextually appropriate for the intended audience?
- Are acronyms and lesser-known terminology explained the first time they're used?
- Is the resource organized in a logical manner so that it is intuitive and consistent?
- Are interactive elements, including hyperlinks, understood without “clicking”, or interacting? This includes knowing what will happen, or what we will see – such as opening a website, showing a video, or downloading a document.
- Is there guidance to complete a task, including avoiding unnecessary errors?

## R: Robust

- Can the resource be saved or exported to a different format without losing structure and context?
- Does the resource work on different devices (laptop, phone)?
- Are there any restrictions to accessing and using the resource?

## For More Information

BSPH Center for Teaching and Learning. 2023. *Best Practices in Accessibility*.  
<<https://www.ctltoolkit.com/best-practices-accessibility>>.

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials at CAST. n.d. *AEM Center: Designing for Accessibility*.  
<<https://aem.cast.org/create/designing-accessibility-pour>>.

—. "Is It Accessible? Questions to Ask Before Selecting Educational Materials." 2023. *AEM Center: The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning at CAST*. PDF Document.  
<<https://aem.cast.org/binaries/content/assets/aem/create/aem-pour-onepager-202307-a11y.pdf>>.

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). 2024. *Accessibility Principles*.  
<<https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles/>>.

—. "How People with Disabilities Use the Web." 2024. *Accessibility Fundamentals*. <  
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/people-use-web/>>

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). 2023. *Introduction to Understanding WCAG 2.0*.  
<<https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/intro.html>>.