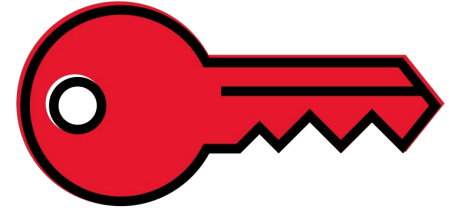


# Digital Accessibility Series

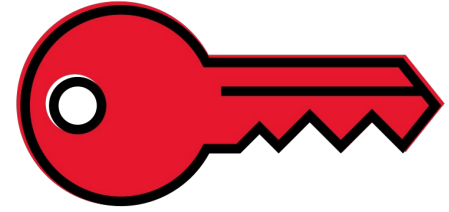
Part 5: Adobe PDFs

# Today's Objectives



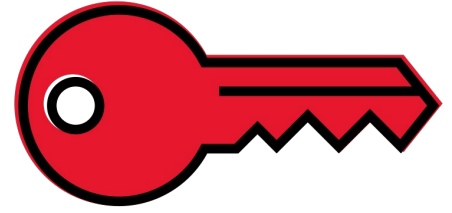
- Familiarity with WCAG 2.1 AA text-related requirements
- Understanding of the types and accessibility limitations of various PDF types
- Awareness of remediation workflows for existing PDFs
  - Text-based
  - Non-text based
  - Forms
- Ability to discern best practices when choosing file types

# WCAG 2.1 AA Refresher



- Applies to digital content produced, hosted, or shared by public universities
- Including but not limited to Blackboard Content
- P.O.U.R. -- Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust
- “Make content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including accommodations for blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these, and some accommodation for learning disabilities and cognitive limitations”

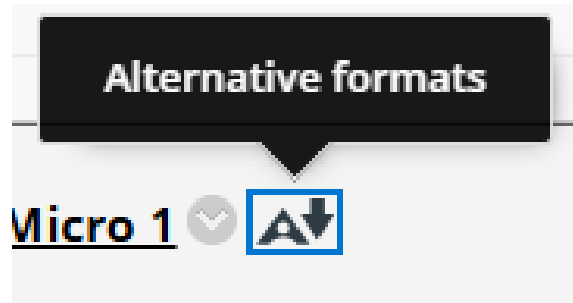
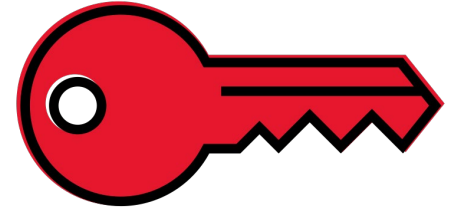
# Common Myths About PDFs



- They're unchangeable
- They're secure
- They're universally accessible



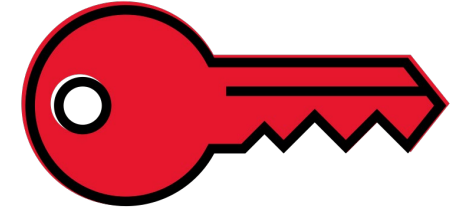
# If students need PDFs



This only works if  
the parent file is  
formatted and  
tagged correctly!

A screenshot of a "Download alternative formats" menu. The menu is dark grey with a close button (X) in the top right. It lists the following options:

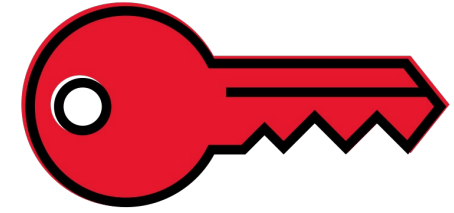
- Selected file:**
  - 01-Biology 350 -- Foundations of Micro 1(1).pptx  
As provided by your instructor
- Tagged PDF**  
Structured PDF for improved use with assistive technology
- HTML**  
For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices
- ePub**  
For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers
- Electronic braille**  
BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays
- Audio**  
MP3 version for listening
- BeeLine Reader**  
Enhanced version for easier and faster on-screen reading
- Immersive Reader**  
Aid reading comprehension and grammar skills. Internet required.
- Translated version**  
A machine translated version of the original document



# The number 1 issue with PDFs

- Designed to be compressed, printer friendly versions
- **Not** designed to be rich text with embedded metadata
- However, this metadata is what makes the file screen reader friendly – without it you just have images of text!

# Recognizing accessible content



820

DAISY HERNÁNDEZ

MLA CIT:  
Woolf, V  
No  
20

820

DAISY HERNÁNDEZ

## MLA CITATION

Woolf, Virginia. "The Death of the Moth." *The Norton Reader: An Anthology of Nonfiction*, edited by Melissa A. Goldthwaite et al., 15th ed., W. W. Norton, 2020, pp. 818–19.

## QUEST

1. Trace How does she use
2. Choose Dillard's description of the how; if not
3. Henry small living
4. Write the other the differences

## QUESTIONS

1. Trace the sequence in which Virginia Woolf comes to identify with the moth. How does she make her identification explicit? How is it implicit in the language she uses to describe the moth?

2. Choose one of the descriptions of a small living creature or creatures in Annie Dillard's "Sight into Insight" (pp. 846–56), and compare it with Woolf's description of the moth. Does a similar identification take place in Dillard's essay? If so, how; if not, why not?

3. Henry David Thoreau, in "The Battle of the Ants" (pp. 725–27), also humanizes small living creatures. How do his strategies differ from Woolf's?

4. Write two descriptions of the same living creature, one using Woolf's strategies, the other using Thoreau's. Or, alternatively, write an essay in which you analyze the differences between them.

820

DAISY HERNÁNDEZ

## Accessibility tags

Tags

<Document>

<P>

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<P>

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V. Norton,

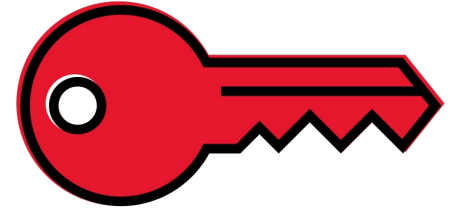
ith the moth,  
the language

ures in Annie  
oolf's descrip-  
s essay? If so,

so humanizes

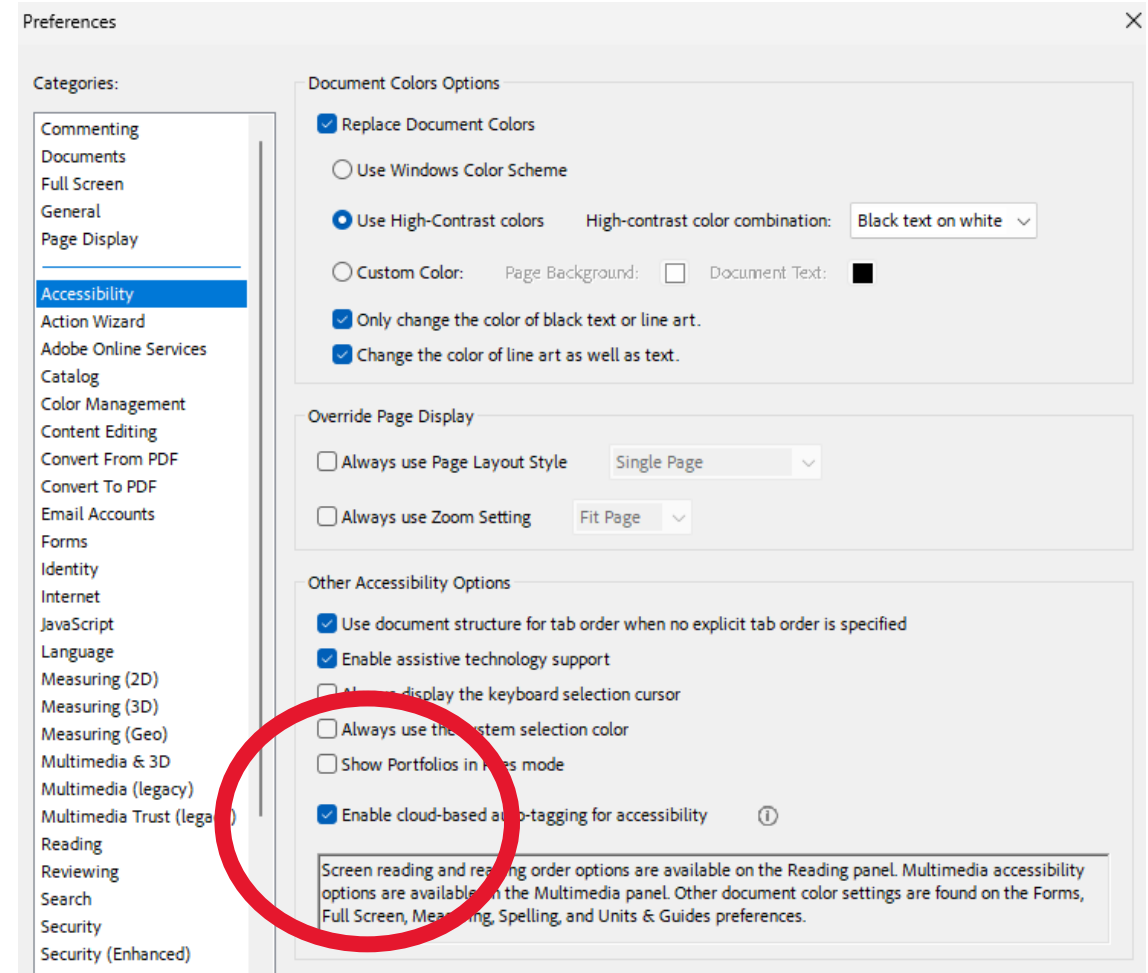
lf's strategies,  
1 you analyze

# Logistics: How do I remediate a PDF?

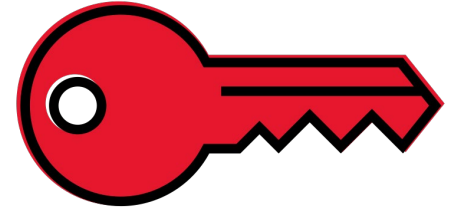


- 3 Main Steps

- Is it text?
- Is it tagged?
- Is it described?



# Is it text?



Here's a demo on how to tell if a PDF has a text layer and what to do if it doesn't.

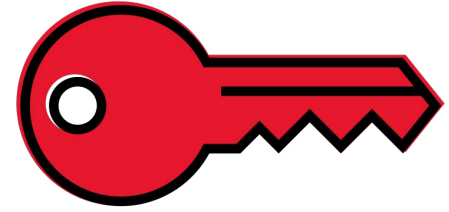
## Step-by-Step

1. Search/select
2. Scan and OCR
3. Correct

## Considerations

1. Can you go back to the original and use that?
2. Does this have handwriting?
3. Do I really need this?

# Is it tagged?



Here's a demo of what an accessibility tag is, how to create them, and how to correct them.

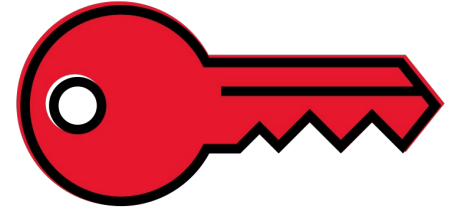
## Step-by-Step

1. Enable tag menu
2. Auto-tag
3. Quick Check
4. Reading Order

## Considerations

1. Can you go back to the original and use that?
2. Can I break it into smaller chunks?
3. Do I really need this?

# Is it described?



Here's a demo of how to add alternative text/image descriptions in Adobe PDFs.

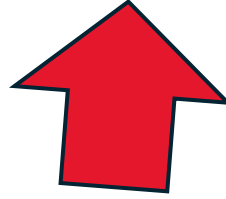
## Step-by-Step

1. Find the Image Tag
2. Right click -> Properties
3. Enter Alt text description
4. Save!

## Considerations

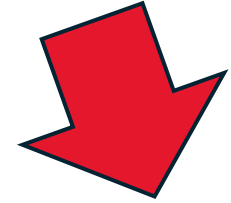
1. Is it decorative?
2. What purpose does this image serve?
3. What information does this image contain?

# Alternative Text









This decorative line does not need alt text

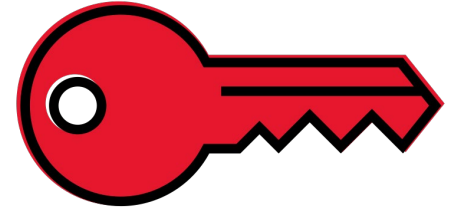
This descriptive image does need alt text



- On every content-containing image
- Context is king!
- Best practices in alt-text
  - Informative
  - Brief
  - Relevant
  - Non-redundant
- Never use images of text

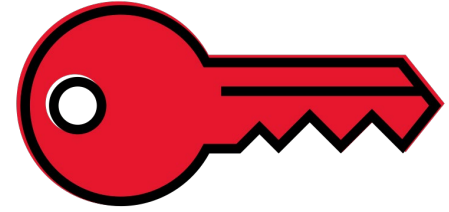
 Without Alt Text	 With Alt Text
	
 Img_1234	 Airplane landing

# Form Specific Concerns



- In addition to being text-based, tagged, and in reading order
  - Form Fields Labeled
  - Check Boxes Annotated
  - Tables
  - Keyboard functionality
- Many of these issues cannot be resolved in the accessibility windows – must go back to form builder!

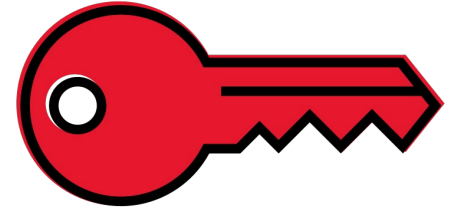
# Helpful PDF Checker



- PAC 2026 ([linked here](#)) you can check for WCAG 2.1 specific criteria
- Easier to understand and navigate than Adobe's built in checker
- Links directly to WCAG guidance

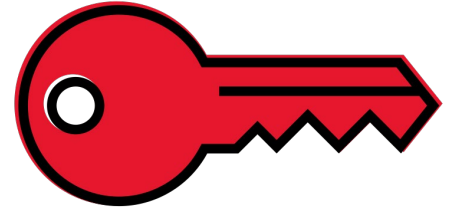


# Print to PDF is Your Enemy



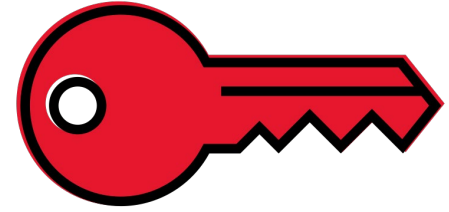
- No matter how diligent you've been in Word to format and alt text your document
  - Print to PDF eliminates ALL of the metadata
- This option turns your document into an X page list of images
- Consider – why does this need to be a PDF?

# A note about handwriting



- Handwriting in any file format is not accessible as it is nearly impossible to make compliant
- Please consider typing answer keys and notes to allow for accessible content
- If you are someone who using mathematical or other specialized notation, please consider using Microsoft equation builder, MathPix, MathKicker, or some software to convert these to digitally accessible formats

# Before using a PDF ask



- Is a PDF the best format for this content?
- Do I have this content in a more inherently accessible format?
- Is this a high-quality document that I'll be able to make accessible?
- Do I have the time to make this document accessible?