How to Use Ally

Ally is implemented and embedded in all FA18 courses in Canvas. Ally is a tool to assist faculty in making sure course documents are accessible in Canvas. Ally checks accessibility for your existing and newly uploaded course files. To measure accessibility, Ally assigns your file an accessibility score, represented by a number and a colored gauge. File accessibility icons can be found next to your files.

In addition, Ally generates alternative accessible formats including audio files. This tool provides a description of any issues and step-by-step help to improve them.
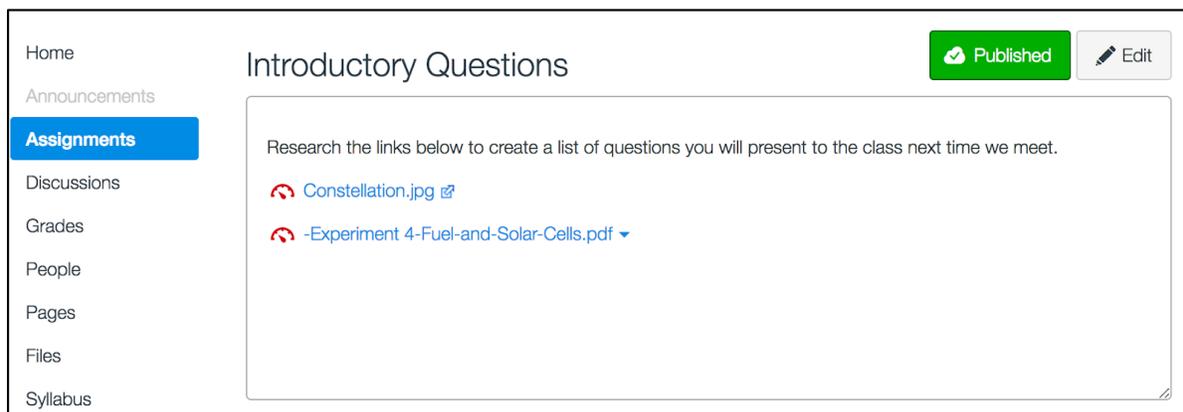
Where is Ally in Canvas?

Ally is found anywhere there are files in the course. Look for the accessibility icons represented by a colored gauge. They are located to the right of the file in the Accessibility column in the Files section of your course.

In Files:

Look for the accessibility icon in-line to the left of the file when embedded in a page, assignment or discussion.

In an Assignment:

In a Page:

What File Types Does Ally Check?

- Images
- PDF files
- Office files (Word and PowerPoint)
- OpenOffice/LibreOffice files (Writer and Impress)
- Uploaded HTML files

What are the Accessibility Score Indicators?

Ally measures the accessibility of each file attached to your course and shows you at-a-glance how it scores. Scores range from Low to Perfect. The higher the score the fewer the issues.

- **Low**: (0-33%) File is not accessible and needs immediate attention.
- **Medium**: (34-66%) File is somewhat accessible and could use improvement.
- **High**: (67-99%) File is accessible but could be improved.
- **Perfect**: (100%) File is accessible. No improvement needed.

For files with Low to High scores, Ally shows you the issues and gives a step-by-step guide on how to fix them.

How Do I Know What to Fix?

Ally provides you detailed feedback and support to help you become an accessibility pro. Learn about accessibility issues, why they matter, and how to fix them. Green is the goal!

Select the Accessibility score to open the instructor feedback. Follow the steps in front of you to go step-by-step. Select All issues to see every issue in the file and decide what issues to fix first.
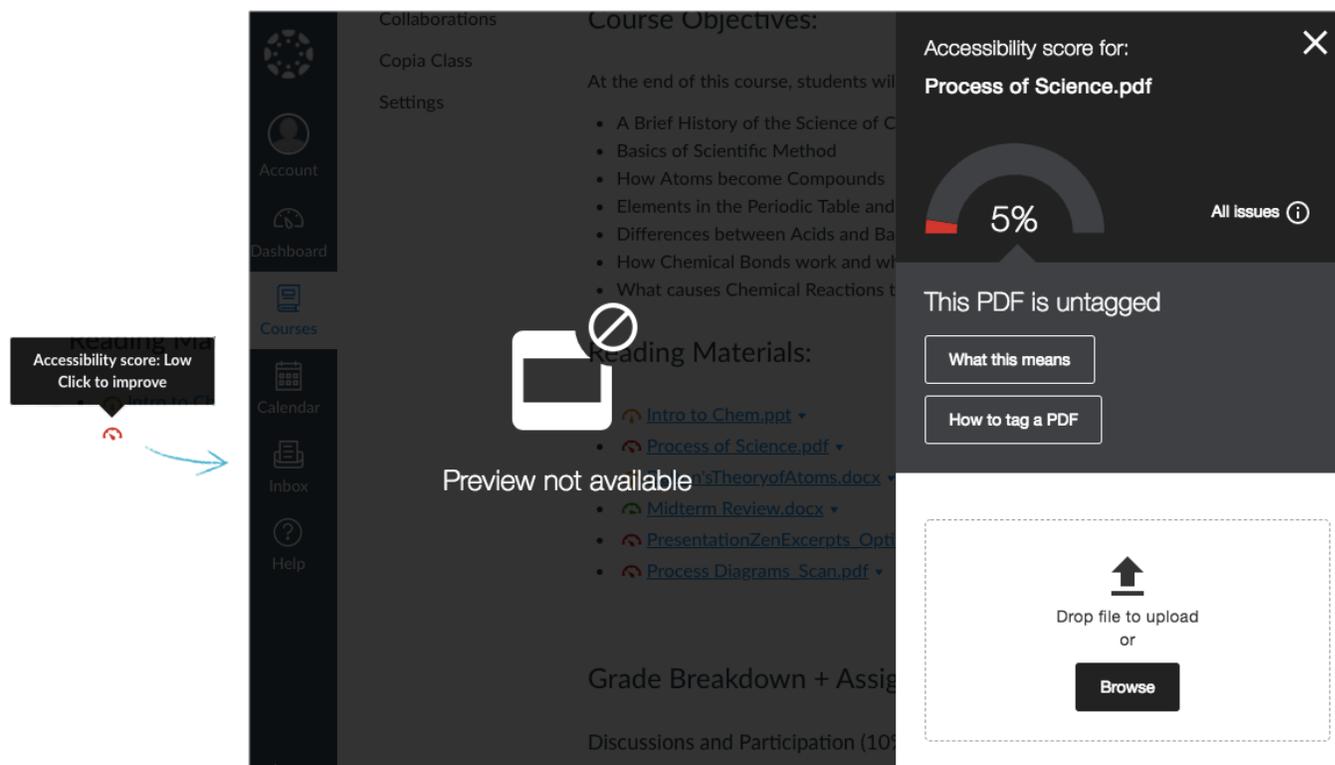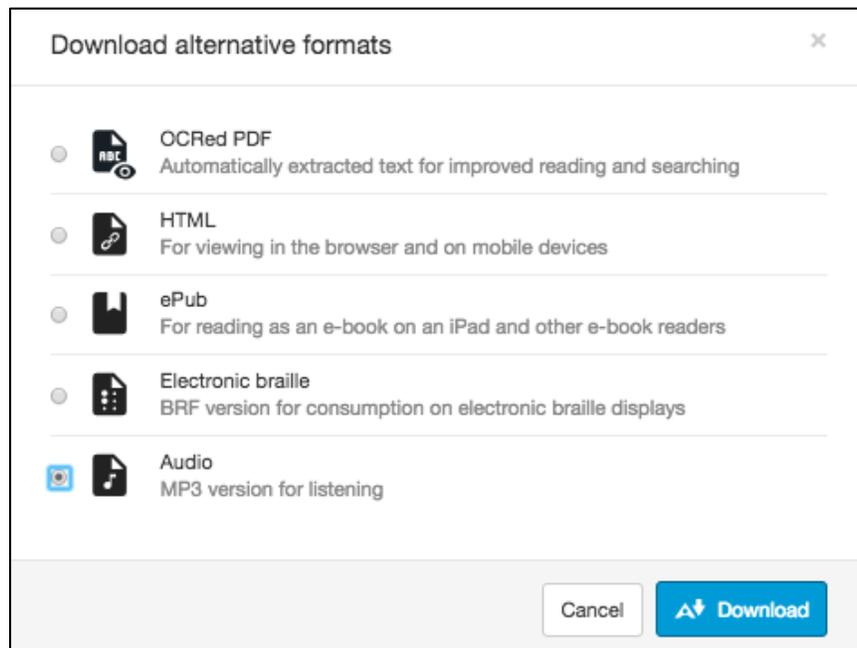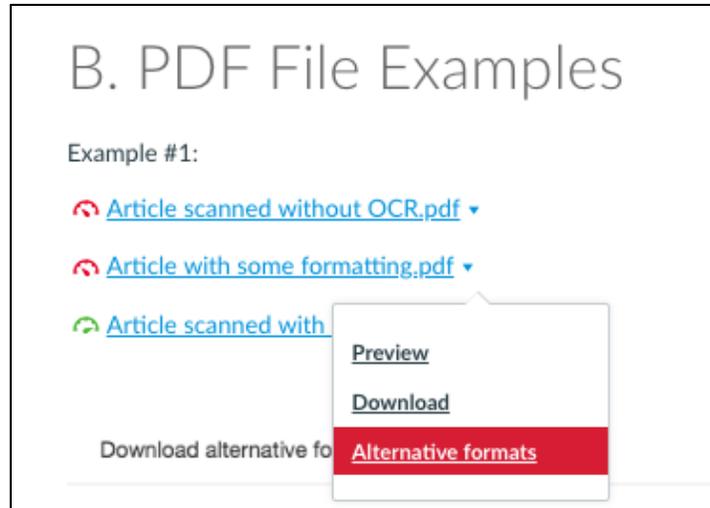

Alternative Formats

Ally creates alternative formats of your course files based on the original. These formats are made available with the original file so students can find everything in one convenient location.

You don't need to do anything. The alternative formats are created for you. Select the menu beside your file and select Alternative formats to see the different formats now available to your students.

After instructors attach a file to their course, Ally creates alternative formats of the file based on the original. For example, if an instructor uploads a PDF, Ally creates audio, electronic braille, and ePub formats of the same content. These formats are made available with the original file so everything is in one convenient location.

What Formats are Available?

Audio:
- The audio alternative reads aloud the text in the original file. This also includes alternative descriptions for images, if they are provided.

- The audio format is saved as an MP3. MP3s are compressed, high-quality sound files that can be played on any computer or mobile device.

- Audio formats are only available when the original document has less than 100,000 characters.

Electronic braille:

- The electronic braille alternative creates a BRF file that can be read on a portable braille reading device.

ePub:

- The ePub alternative creates a digital publishing file that can be viewed on our mobile devices. ePub files are reflowable. This means that the content displayed automatically adapts to the device it is viewed on.

Semantic HTML:

- What is Semantic HTML? Tags and elements—such as blockquote, paragraph, and headings—are added to add meaning to a page. It aids screen reader users with good content structure.

- Semantic HTML is viewed in a browser and adapts to the device you are viewing it on.

- Semantic HTML is available offline on your mobile device, if you don't close your browser.

OCR PDF:

- OCR stands for Optical Character Recognition. The OCR PDF alternatives are created when the original file is PDF of an image. OCR technology analyses the document and converts the image into searchable text.

- The conversion is only as good as the quality of the original file. If the file is difficult to analyze, there may be mistakes.

Tagged PDF:

- A Tagged PDF alternative uses tags and elements—such as blockquote, paragraph, and headings—to add meaning to a page. It aids screen reader users with good content structure.

Library Reference:

- If an instructor provides library reference information for their files it can be seen when viewing alternative formats.

- Find a file and select the menu for it. Select Alternative formats and Library reference.

- If there is no library reference information provided, you don't see the option.