

Guidelines for Accessible D2L Courses

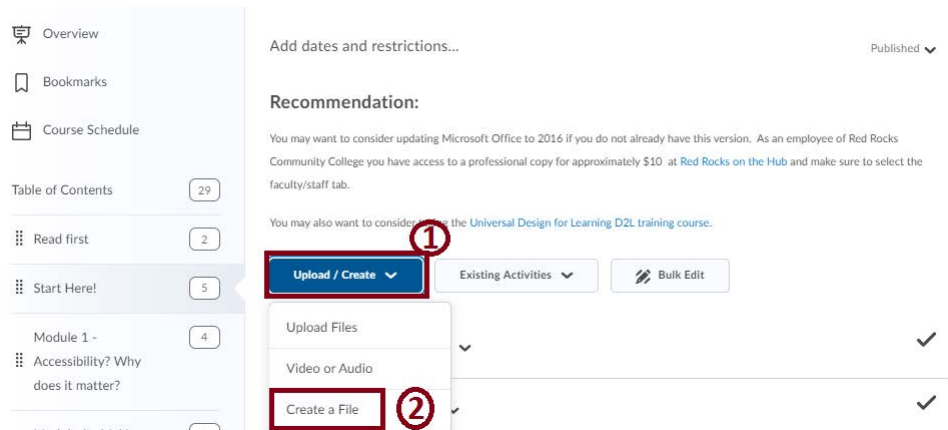
Organization

A good practice to meet the learning needs of all your students is to thoughtfully organize your course. Desire2Learn has developed guidelines to help with [Accessible Course Design](#). Courses that are organized with the Quality Matters rubric in mind are also more easily accessible to all learners. If you would like some help organizing your course, feel free to stop by the Instructional Technology office, [email elearning@rrcc.edu](mailto:elearning@rrcc.edu), or call to schedule an appointment (303.914.6600) and we'll help you get started.

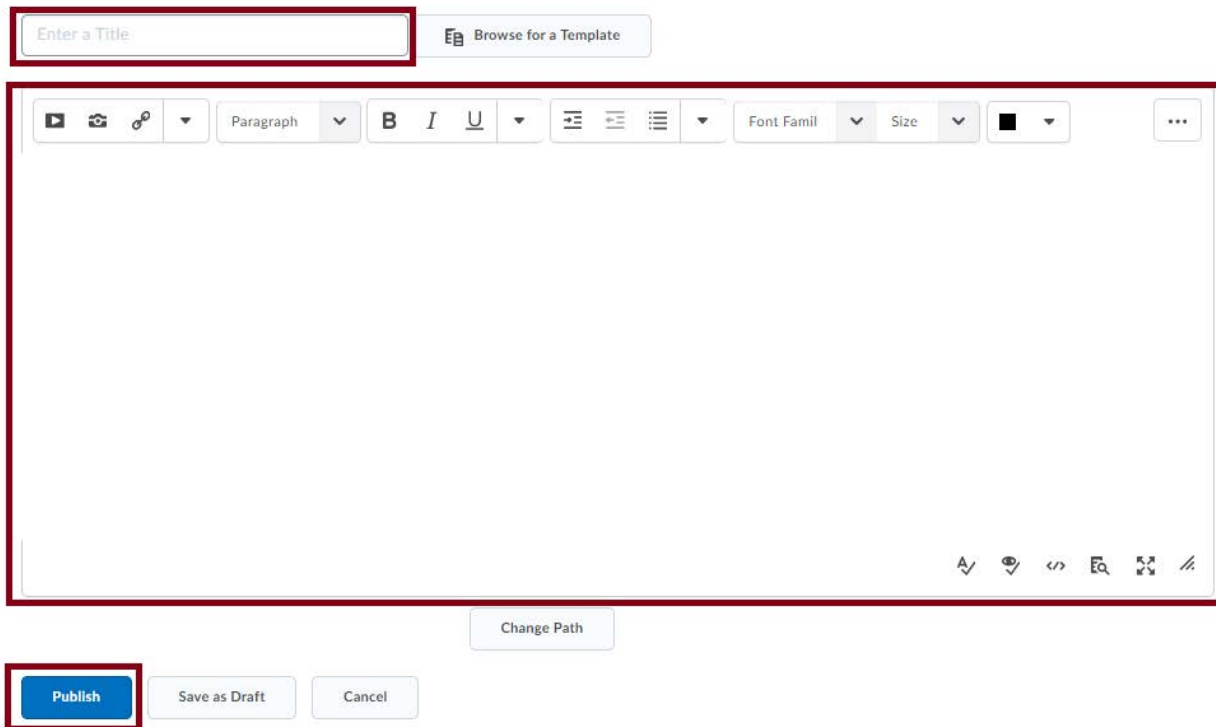
Create a File

To better assist in content formatting and readability, D2L has created a number of features to help you create accessible course content. In your course content area, select Create a File and D2L will open a simple html editor.

Select Content, then Upload/Create, then Create a File. Type a topic Title and then enter your content. When you are finished, click the **Publish** button at the bottom of the screen.



Create a File in "Start Here!"

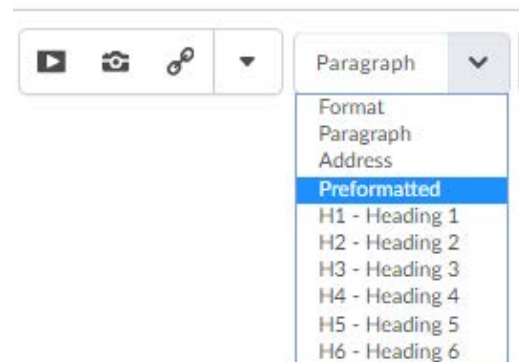


Headings

The html editor in D2L works just like a word processor, so it is a quick and easy way to create content for your courses. If you want your content to be fully accessible, you need to structure the page properly, to do that you need to use headings.

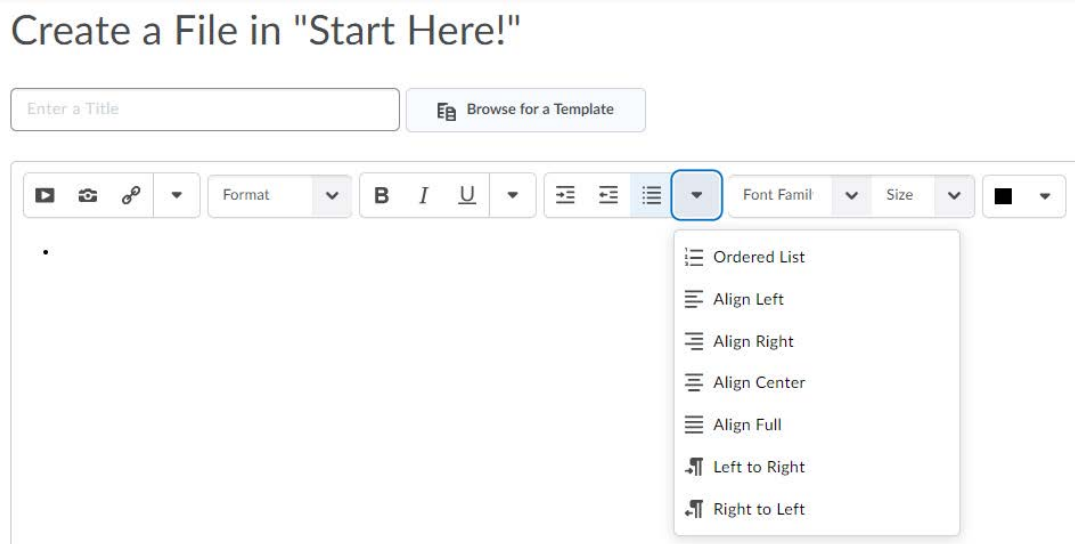
Headings break up your content so it is easier for everyone to read. They are also an important way of navigating with a screen reader. It isn't enough to make headings big and bold. Headings need to be formatted as headings and used in the correct order. **Heading order is similar to an outline.** Heading 1 is the title of your document. It is like the title of a book and there is just one Heading 1 per document. Heading 2s are like chapter titles. Heading 3s are sub-sections of those chapters, and so on.

DO NOT skip heading levels. In general, headings should be one line long. This makes it easier for readers to quickly navigate the document.



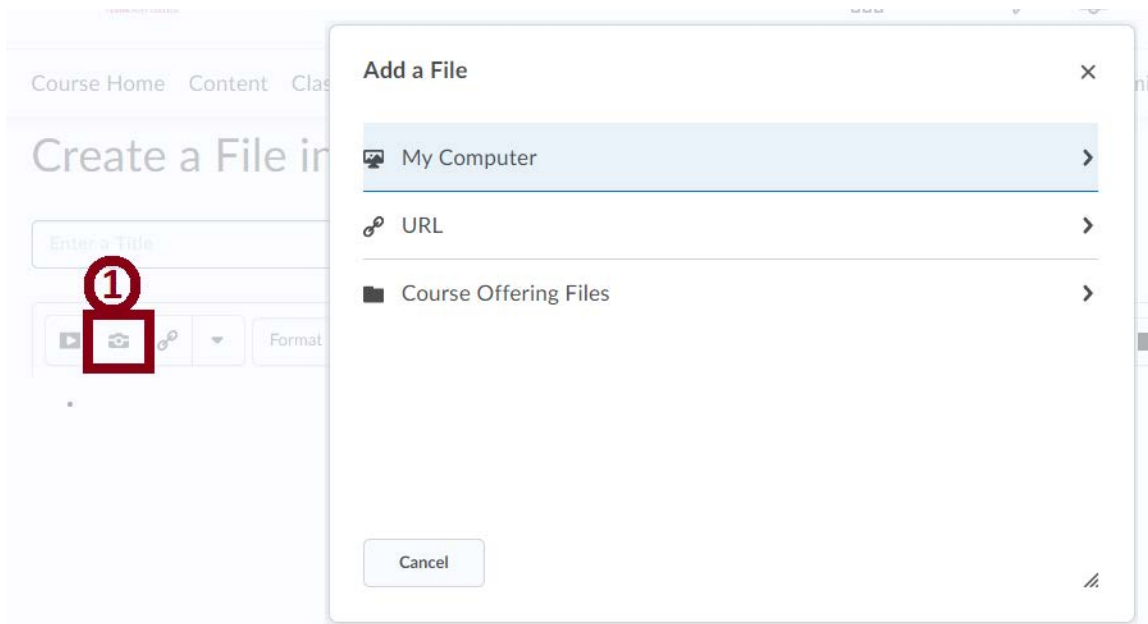
Lists

Formatting lists, headings, and links help screen reader users understand the content in context. To create a list in the D2L html editor, select the content you want to make into a list. Then on the toolbar, click either the **Unordered List** icon if the order doesn't matter, or the **Ordered List** icon if the order does matter (unordered list will be bullet points, ordered list will create numbered items).



Images and Graphics (including Graphs, Maps & Shapes)

Like any other file format, alternative text descriptions of images (ALT text) will allow users of screen reader users to benefit from the information conveyed in graphics, graphs, maps and other images. To insert an image into a new D2L content file, place the cursor where you want to insert the image, and click on the **Insert Image** icon from the toolbar (1 below). The Add a File window will open you can drag-and-drop a file in the upload window (2 below) or click upload and navigate to where the image is and click on **Add**. The Provide Alternate Text window will open. Type in clear, concise, contextual descriptive text for the image. It is important to write a description that conveys the reason you are including the image. Why is it important? What point are you trying to make with it? If the image is only for decorative purposes, just click on **the image is decorative** box and **ok**.



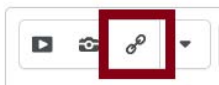
Hyperlinks

Links are a useful method of navigating for everyone, but they are especially important for screen reader users. Links that are phrased in meaningful text are much more useful. It is much easier for a screen reader user to listen to an accurate short description of the link rather than a long web address or 'read more'. Ensure links make sense if read by itself, out of context, and avoid phrases such as 'click here.' To insert a link in a content file, click on the **Insert Quicklink** icon.

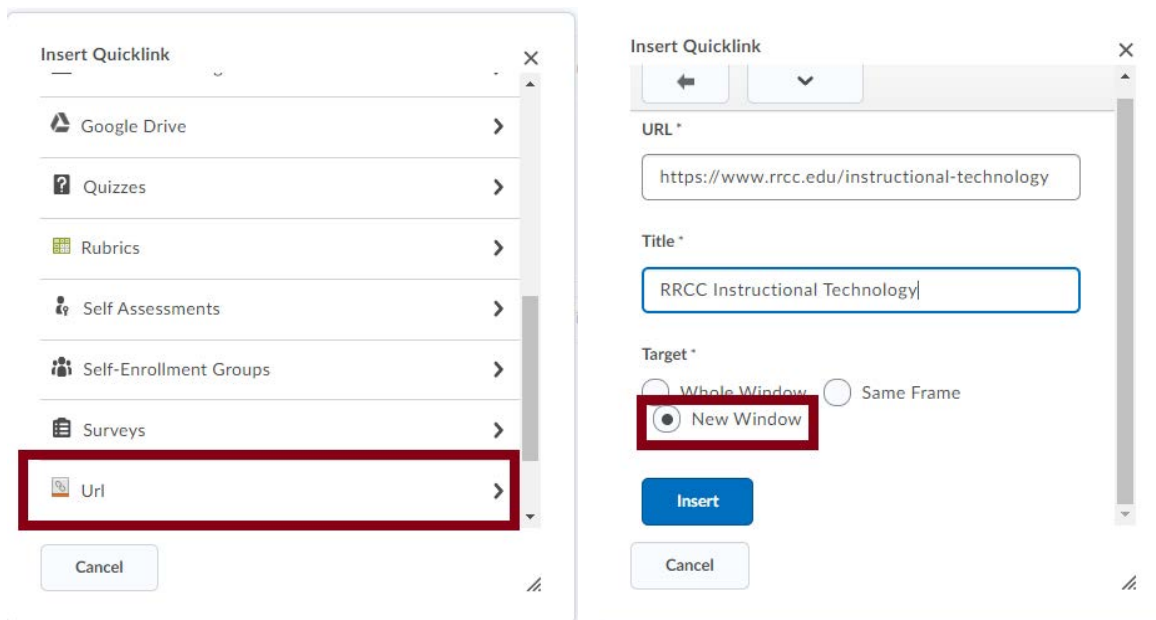
Correct: Read more about [Red Rocks Community College](#)

Incorrect: To read more about Red Rocks Community College [click here.](#)

Incorrect: Read more about Red Rocks Community College: [https://rcc.edu/about-us.](https://rcc.edu/about-us)



You can choose to link to another area in your course, or link to an outside webpage. To link to an outside webpage, select **URL** in the **Insert Quicklink** window. Type (or paste) the web address into the **URL** field. Enter text that describes the link's destination in the **Title** field. You will have three options to designate where the link will open. It is a good idea for your students to have the link open in a **New Window**, so it is easy for them to navigate back to your course and all of the other content you want them to see.

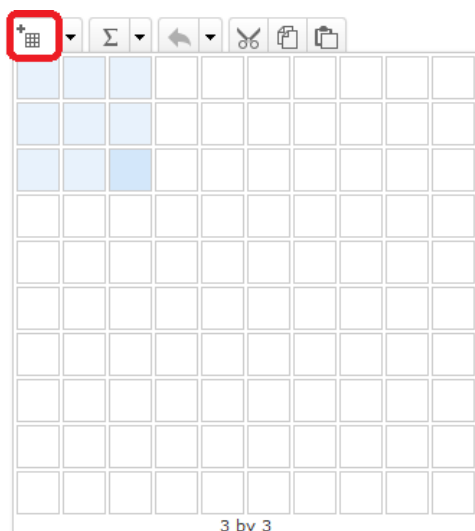


Tables

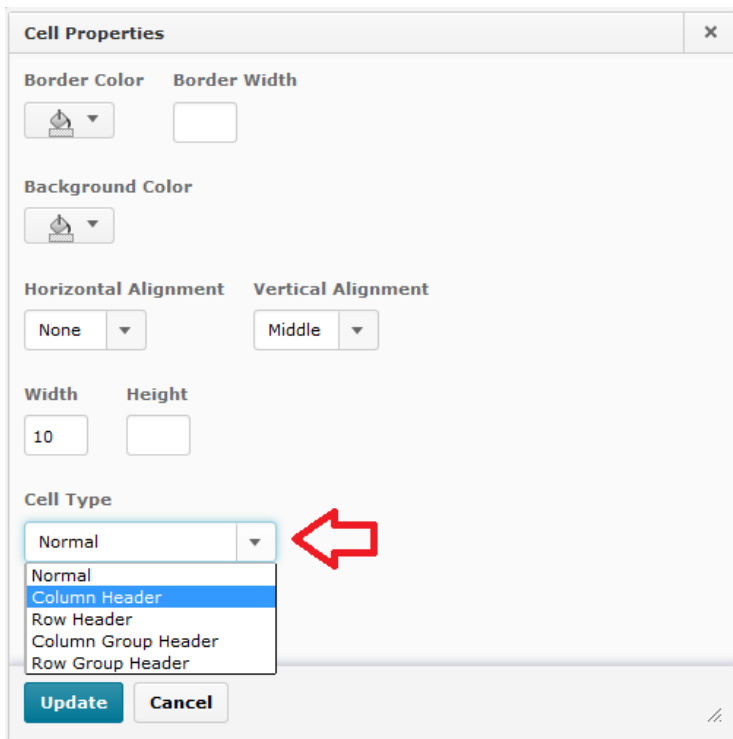
Tables are often used online to present data. Accessibility guidelines advise against using tables to layout page content. Screen readers read tables from left to right, top to bottom, one cell at a time. If cells are split or merged, the reading order can be thrown off. To test your table, read your table left to right, top to bottom. Does it make sense? Your table should have appropriate column headers. Designating column headers in a table is essential to screen reader users understanding how the information is laid out.

- **Tables should have appropriate table headers** (the <th> element, or header row designation). Data cells should be associated with their appropriate headers, making it easier for screen reader users.
- **Table structure should be clear.** Do not nest tables, merge or split cells inside of tables. Avoid using tables to layout pages or structure documents. Tables should only be used to present tabular data.

To create tables with column headers in D2L, create your table using the Table icon.



Highlight the row that you would like to designate as your column header and return to the **Table** icon. Select **Cell Properties**, and in the **Cell Type** dropdown, you can designate your row as the Column Header.

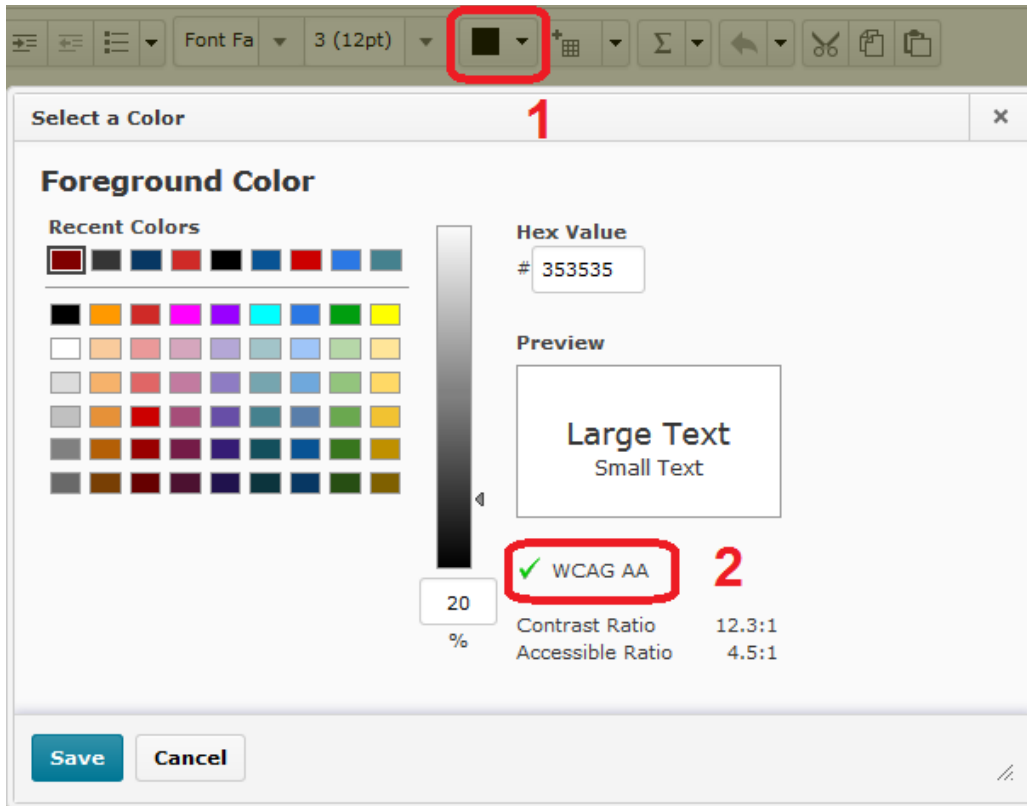


Color

If you print your color graphic on a black and white printer, would it be understandable? Without sufficient color contrast, people who are color blind or screen reader users may not be able to benefit from the information that is presented in color. **Don't use color alone to make a distinction, comparison, or to identify something in your content.**

Certain color contrasts may inhibit readability. For instance, red/green contrast cannot be read correctly by a person who is colorblind. Prefer high-contrast color schemes such as black/white or black/yellow.

D2L has a color tool that is very helpful for you to check color contrast. In the html content editing screen, select the text that you want to check and click the drop down menu next to the **Color** icon in the toolbar (1 below). When you select a color, the tool will automatically tell you if your selection meets WCAG AA standards with a green checkmark (2 below).



There are quite a few stand-alone color contrast checkers available.

- RRCC computer's Software Center provides Colour Contrast Analyzer download
- If you do a web search for "WCAG AA color contrast" you can find a number of downloadable tools and browser add-ons.

RRCC's requirements are to pass color contrast in the AA standards.