

WGU Assessments

an accessible content case study

WGU Background and Context

Western Governors University is a nonprofit online university.

- Founded by 19 U.S. governors
- Competency-based
- Affordable
- Flexible
- Student-focused



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WGU Background and Context

Our Students

- More than 70,000 students
- All 50 states
- Minorities, first-generation college students
- Those with modest incomes, working adults
- Some live in rural locations where higher education is not readily accessible
- Average student age: 37

Our team

- Program Development department: 220



WGU Background and Context

Our content

Students demonstrate competency by passing assessments.

This means that assessment content is critical for students.

Assessment content presents some unique accessibility challenges.

Example: Alt text must allow a student to correctly answer a question, without giving away the answer or providing extra hints or clues.



Our Problem

We have lots of content.

Our content is not as accessible as it needs to be.

How do we make our existing content more accessible?



Our Solution Process

1. Conduct Initial Research
2. Begin Drafting
3. Enlist the Experts
4. Establish a Process
5. Create an Accessibility Style Guide
6. Expand Accessibility
7. Revise and Keep Learning



1. Conduct Initial Research

Look for resources

Learn more about accessibility requirements

Some top sources we found:

- WebAIM
- Penn State Accessibility
- National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) Math and Science Images



2. Begin Drafting

Start writing alternate text for a few projects

Test your alt text (What is working? What is not working?)

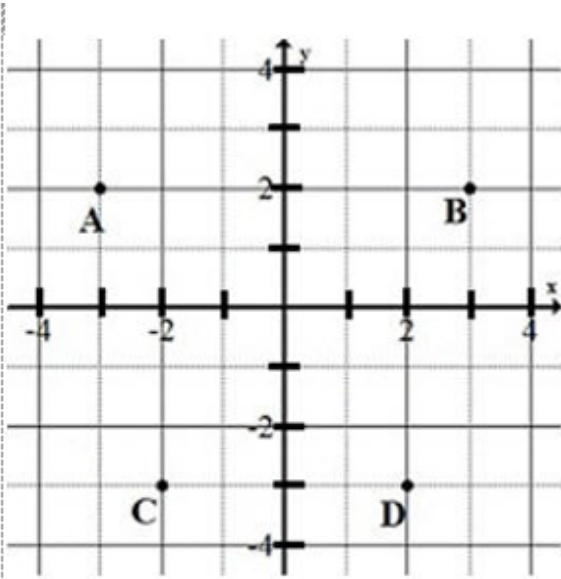
Consult with a subject matter expert (SME)

Consider your student or reader

Just get started.



How to approach this



Which point on the graph above represents the coordinate pair $(2, -3)$?

What needs to be described in order to answer the question?

How can we describe this without giving away the answer to the question?

What is the construct?

3. Enlist the Experts

Ask outside experts for

- Advice
- Best practices
- Training

Working with experts

- Adds authority to your project
- Helps increase buy-in from your organization



4. Establish a Process

Set up a process and begin training other editors to help.

We created spreadsheets to track our projects, created space to save our projects, and provided resources to refer to for our projects.

- Our expert provided good example resources that helped us expand our knowledge and define our process.



5. Create an Accessibility Style Guide



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 Search this site

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 - Common Examples
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WGU Accessibility Guide Home

Welcome

Welcome to the WGU Accessibility Guide. This guide was created to help us be consistent when making content accessible for WGU students. Accessibility is about making tests and courses equivalent for all students regardless of any limitations.

We hope you find what you are looking for. If you are a **WGU vendor**, [click here](#). If you are a **WGU employee**, [click here](#), and make sure you are logged in to your WGU Google account.

What and Why of Accessibility

Accessibility is about equal access and allows students, regardless of limitations, to be able to use and benefit from the information in front of them. An accessible assessment allows all students to have access to the material and an equal opportunity to demonstrate their competence. Millions of people have disabilities that affect their computer use, and as an online university, WGU provides accessibility as a way to improve the overall student experience for those students with visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological impairments.

To make WGU assessments accessible, we add alternative text to all images. We not only have to describe the image but also provide a description that is useful and fair. You may not need to include every detail, and you may be able to skip over purely decorative images, but those that contain critical information need to be clearly described. The alternative text is read by screen readers in place of images, allowing the content to be accessible to those with impairments.

You can read more about the importance of accessibility at <http://webaim.org/intro/>.

Points of Contact

Any questions about your specific assessment should be directed to the WGU employee you are working with. If you have any concerns or suggestions for the guide, please fill out [this form](#) with as much detail as you can. If you have questions about the guide, they can be directed to michelle.ostrowski@wgu.edu, rob.hickey@wgu.edu, and lindsay.hayes@wgu.edu.

Navigation

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WGU employee
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Sitemap

Recent site activity

Project details

Internal resources

Outside (vendor) view:

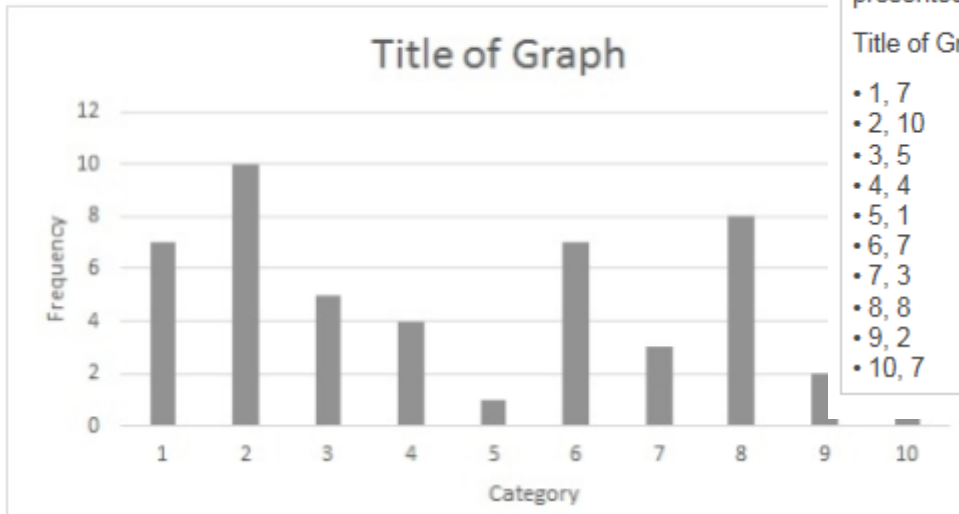
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Sitemap

Recent site activity

Accessibility Guide Example

Example 1: Vertical Bar Graph (no legend)



Vertical Bar Graph (no legend)

A bar graph titled [Title of Graph] shows the [frequency] of [ten categories]. Data is presented as a list by [category] and [frequency].

Title of Graph:

- 1, 7
- 2, 10
- 3, 5
- 4, 4
- 5, 1
- 6, 7
- 7, 3
- 8, 8
- 9, 2
- 10, 7

6. Expand Accessibility

Additional Content and Solutions

- Captioning projects for course videos
- Color contrast
- HTML tables
- Accessible curriculum



7. Revise and Keep Learning

This step is ongoing.

- Webinars
- Research studies
- Conferences



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Current Status Report

Accessible Content at WGU

- Training additional editors and new hires
- Designing with accessibility in mind
- Requiring our vendors to make their content accessible
- Accessibility point-person in our department, working with our accessibility office
- Growing interest in accessible content across the university

Conclusion and Takeaways

- How to get the conversation started at your organization
- Where to begin
- Where to learn about this
- Small, practical steps any editor can take to increase accessibility

What are some additional resources?





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Q&A

Michelle Ostrowski - michelle.ostrowski@wgu.edu

Heidi Doxey - heidi.doxey@wgu.edu