



**PURCHASE
ACCESSIBLE
LEARNING
MATERIALS**

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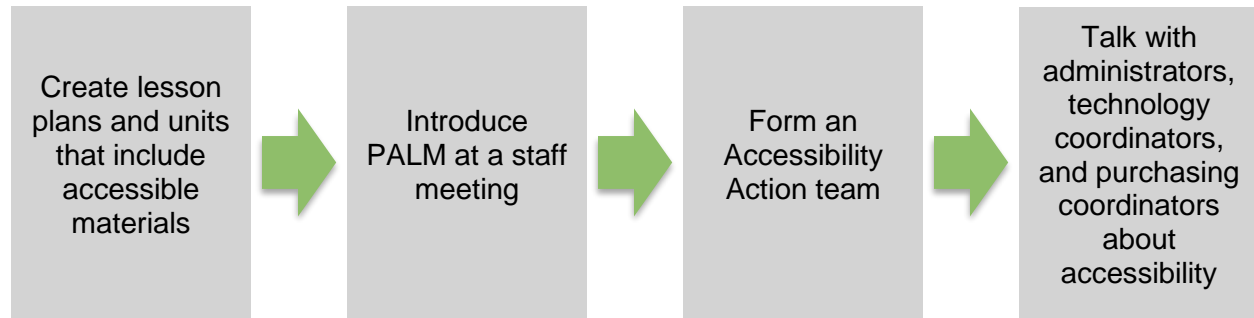
Guidance for Educators

Instructional materials represent a critical aspect of any learning environment. For teachers, it is important that the materials used in the classroom are of high quality, and this means using materials that are accessible.

Generally, materials are considered accessible if they give students with disabilities the opportunity to gain the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as students without disabilities. When materials are accessible from the start, all students have access to the general education curriculum without the need for costly accommodations.

Steps you can take

Below are 4 steps you can take to help ensure the materials in your classroom and school are accessible.



1. Create lesson plans and units that include accessible materials

- Think carefully about what materials are already used in lessons and units
 - Can all students currently use the materials?
 - If the materials are not accessible, are there alternative, accessible versions that could be used?
- Talk with other teachers about how they have used accessible materials successfully in their classrooms
 - How can you collaborate with those teachers?

2. Engage others by introducing PALM at a staff meeting

- Create a PALM packet for staff and administrators that includes—
 - Overview hand-outs

- Guidance documents
- Give an overview of the PALM Initiative using the PALM Overview PowerPoint
- Share the PALM introductory document PALM Initiative: A Call to Action

3. Form an accessibility action team in your school or district

- Find others (other educators, administrators, parents/guardians) in the school who also care about accessibility
- Think about both short-term goals and long-term goals for accessibility within the school
 - How can the group influence purchasing decisions within your school?
 - What can be done right away?
 - What do you want to have accomplished five years from now?
- Discuss some of the following questions:
 - What materials are currently being used in your school?
 - Are they accessible?
 - Can all students use the materials?
 - What types of learning materials should be purchased?
 - How can the group ensure that accessible materials are included within all classrooms?
 - How can accessible materials be utilized within classrooms?

4. Talk with administrators, technology coordinators, and purchasing coordinators about the importance of purchasing accessible products

- Share PALM resources with each of these individuals, in particular, the Guidance for Purchasers document
- Have a discussion about the following questions:
 - Are the materials already purchased accessible?
 - Are they aligned with accessibility standards?
 - WCAG 2.0 (minimum level AA compliance)?
 - Section 508 (or Section 508 Refresh once approved)?
 - Were they created using best practices
 - Were they tested for accessibility, including by users with disabilities?
 - What can be done to ensure that all materials purchased in the future are accessible?
- Discuss including accessibility requirements in purchasing contracts. See Guidance for Purchasers document for draft sample language.

If you are an educator who is purchasing materials, please read the Guidance for Purchasers document. This document will give you practical advice on how to ensure you are purchasing learning materials that are accessible.

Learn more about the PALM Initiative at: <http://aem.cast.org/navigating/palm.html>

Updated: May 2015