

Accessibility is about progress, not perfection.

Inspired by Meryl K. Evans: [Progress Over Perfection](#)



The Aiming for ALL Collection

bit.ly/AimingForALL-Collection

Activity **2 Pathway 2: Foundations**

POUR Barrier Sort

Printable version with an answer key on the last page.

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About This Activity

Identifying a barrier is the first step to reducing it. Read twelve everyday barriers from schools and learning communities. Decide which of the four POUR principles each one falls under. Then check the answer key, which also shows a way to reduce each barrier.

- Read the barrier, then tick Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, or Robust.
- Some barriers touch more than one principle. The answer key names the main one.
- Work alone or with a group. There is no score and no time limit.

What Counts as a Barrier

Barriers

- Never in the learner.
- Always in the design.
- We can reduce them.

Important factors

- Valued parts of identity and context, such as disability, language and culture.
- We do not design them away.
- We design for them.

Every barrier in this activity sits in a video, a worksheet, a website, a letter or a tool. None of them sits in a learner.

The Four POUR Principles

 **Perceivable:** Everyone can take in the information, through more than one sense.

 **Operable:** Everyone can use it and move through it, in more than one way.

 **Understandable:** Everyone can make sense of the content and how it works.

 **Robust:** It works with many devices, browsers, and assistive technologies, now and as they change.

POUR comes from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The icons are a visual reminder of each principle: an eye, tools, a lightbulb, and devices. They are not official WCAG symbols.

The Barriers

Barrier 1

A science video plays in class with no captions. The video leaves out a learner who is deaf.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐  Perceivable
 ☐  Operable
 ☐  Understandable
 ☐  Robust

Barrier 2

A slide deck has a key diagram with no alt text. A learner using a screen reader hears only “image.”

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐  Perceivable
 ☐  Operable
 ☐  Understandable
 ☐  Robust

Barrier 3

A worksheet uses light grey text on a white background. The low contrast makes it hard for several learners to read.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐  Perceivable
 ☐  Operable
 ☐  Understandable
 ☐  Robust

Barrier 4

An online quiz can only be completed by dragging answers with a mouse. The quiz shuts out a learner who uses a keyboard.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐  Perceivable
 ☐  Operable
 ☐  Understandable
 ☐  Robust

Barrier 5

A timed online test closes after ten minutes, with no way to ask for more time.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐  Perceivable
 ☐  Operable
 ☐  Understandable
 ☐  Robust

Barrier 6

The menu on a school website traps keyboard focus. The menu stops a keyboard user from reaching the rest of the page.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

- ☐ 👁 Perceivable
 ☐ 🦿 Operable
 ☐ ♿ Understandable
 ☐ 🛠 Robust

Barrier 7

A letter home to families is full of jargon and long sentences. The wording makes it hard for many families to follow.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

- ☐ 👁 Perceivable
 ☐ 🦿 Operable
 ☐ ♿ Understandable
 ☐ 🛠 Robust

Barrier 8

An online form only says “Invalid input” when something is wrong, with no hint of what to fix.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

- ☐ 👁 Perceivable
 ☐ 🦿 Operable
 ☐ ♿ Understandable
 ☐ 🛠 Robust

Barrier 9

Each page of a learning platform puts the menu in a different place. The changing layout makes it hard for learners to find their way.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

- ☐ 👁 Perceivable
 ☐ 🦿 Operable
 ☐ ♿ Understandable
 ☐ 🛠 Robust

Barrier 10

A class website uses a custom button that looks like a button, but a screen reader announces nothing when a learner reaches it.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

- ☐ 👁 Perceivable
 ☐ 🦿 Operable
 ☐ ♿ Understandable
 ☐ 🛠 Robust

Barrier 11

After a learner submits homework/home learning online, a “Saved” message appears on screen, but a screen reader does not announce it.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐ 👁 Perceivable ☐ 🖱 Operable ☐ ♿ Understandable ☐ 📱 Robust

Barrier 12

A learning app only works in one browser and stops working when learners use their own assistive technology.

Which POUR principle does this barrier fall under? Tick one.

☐ 👁 Perceivable ☐ 🖱 Operable ☐ ♿ Understandable ☐ 📱 Robust

Take It Further

Think of one barrier in your own setting. Which POUR principle does it fall under, and what is one step you could take to reduce it?

Answer Key

Barrier	Main principle	How to reduce this barrier	Resource in the collection
Barrier 1	👁️ Perceivable	Add accurate captions and a transcript, so the information can be read as well as heard.	Making Audio and Video Media Accessible
Barrier 2	👁️ Perceivable	Write alt text that gives the meaning of the diagram, and a longer description if it holds a lot of information.	Image Accessibility Creator
Barrier 3	👁️ Perceivable	Use strong colour contrast between text and background, and check it before sharing.	Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA)
Barrier 4	👤 Operable	Give every task a keyboard-friendly way to complete it, such as choosing from a list.	WebAIM: Building for Accessibility
Barrier 5	👤 Operable	Let learners turn off, extend, or adjust time limits, or remove the time limit when time is not what is being assessed.	No linked resource
Barrier 6	👤 Operable	Make sure keyboard users can reach, use, and leave every part of the page, and test it with a keyboard alone.	Silktide: Accessibility Checker
Barrier 7	🗣️ Understandable	Write in plain language, and offer an Easy Read version with short sentences and clear pictures.	Plain Language and Easy Read
Barrier 8	🗣️ Understandable	Name the problem in plain words and say how to fix it, next to the field that needs attention.	No linked resource
Barrier 9	🗣️ Understandable	Keep navigation in the same place, in the same order, on every page.	No linked resource
Barrier 10	🗂️ Robust	Use real buttons and links with clear names, so assistive technologies can recognise them and tell learners what they do.	No linked resource
Barrier 11	🗂️ Robust	Code status messages so assistive technologies announce them without moving the learner's focus.	No linked resource
Barrier 12	🗂️ Robust	Choose tools that are tested with a range of browsers and assistive technologies, and ask suppliers how they test.	WCAG: What Educators Need to Know

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