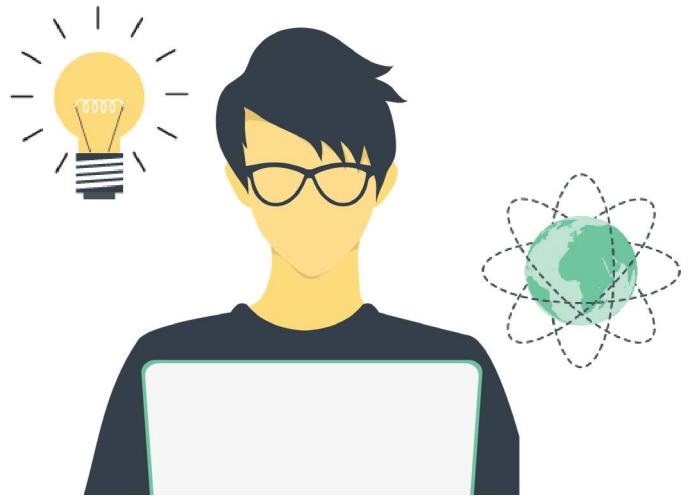# Accessible PDF Documents

Most people create PDF documents by scanning a paper copy of the original. Unfortunately, scanning creates only an image, not actual text. This means content isn't accessible to those who rely on assistive technology (such as a screen reader).

How can you tell if a PDF is a scanned image of the text and not the actual text?

SCANNED IMAGE OF TEXT	ACTUAL TEXT
❌ The page looks crooked or skewed.	✅ The page looks straight.
❌ No results when you search for a character that appears on the page.	✅ A search for a character on the page returns a result.
❌ Jagged edges on smooth characters when you zoom in.	✅ Smooth edges on all characters when you zoom in.

To make a PDF document accessible, it must be modified or "remediated" The team in the Office of Teaching and Learning can remediate PDF files, but the process is labor intensive and time-consuming.

What can you do instead?

E-books

Reserve books in the Fulton Library

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Link to or find an accessible alternative

If you must scan

Use a clean copy.
Do not underline or highlight text before scanning.

Get a quality copy of the file.
Make sure the text within the scanned image is straight and readable to a sighted reader.

Scan *only* what you need.
Adding unnecessary pages increases both the difficulty and the time it takes to remediate a file.

Avoid complex tables and diagrams.
Charts, graphs, and maps are difficult for screen readers to interpret correctly.