

Course Design Style Guide

One brand, every way you **teach**.

A quick-reference for everyone who builds learning — instructional designers, developers, facilitators, and video producers. The same tokens, type, and components carry across every delivery format, so learners recognise us everywhere.

FRAUNCES + HANKEN GROTESK

TEAL / TERRACOTTA






WCAG AA BASELINE

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01 Cheat-sheet

The shared visual system. Copy the `:root` token block into every file; these are the values and rules behind it.









Core colors

 Text · <code>--text</code>	 Text 2 · <code>--text-2</code>
 Surface 2 · <code>--bg-2</code>	 Divider · <code>--divider</code>
 Navy (dark cards) · <code>--card-dark</code>	

Actions

 Primary teal · <code>--blue / --btn-bg</code>	 Link terracotta · <code>--link</code>
 Accent · <code>--accent</code>	

Accent palette · one per category · AA

 Cobalt · <code>--c-blue</code>	 Teal · <code>--c-teal</code>
 Emerald · <code>--c-green</code>	 Coral · <code>--c-orange</code>
 Indigo · <code>--c-purple</code>	 Magenta · <code>--c-pink</code>
 Amber · <code>--c-gold</code>	 Signal red · <code>--c-red</code>

Type scale

Display — Fraunces 600 — hero H1, one per page	36–72px
H2 — Fraunces 600 — section headings	36–60px
H3 — Fraunces 600 — card / sub headings	20px
Lead — Hanken 400 — intro paragraphs	17–20px
Body — Hanken 400 — default copy	≥16px
Eyebrow — uppercase — labels above headings	.14em tracking

Shape, space & motion

Radius	8 · 12 · 16 · 24px · 999px (pill)
Icon sizes	16 · 20 · 24 · 28px
Section gap	64px desktop · 48px mobile
Shadow	rest · hover · floating (modals)
Touch target	44px minimum
Motion	cubic-bezier(.4,0,.2,1) · 200/350/600ms

✓ ALWAYS

- ✓ Class names on every element
- ✓ Colors via `var()` tokens only
- ✓ Visible focus ring + 44px targets
- ✓ Left-align body; AA contrast

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Hard-code hex in component CSS
- ✗ Underline links (use the chevron)
- ✗ Color as the only signal
- ✗ More than one display headline

Self-paced web modules — SCORM, xAPI, or native LMS. The full web component system applies; these are the rules for authored courseware.

● CANVAS & LAYOUT

Design frame	16:9 stage (1280×720 reference) but build fluid — reflows to phone width. Never a fixed pixel canvas.
Reading width	60-75 characters per line via <code>.wrap</code> ; don't run text full-width.
Targets	Every clickable element ≥ 44px (<code>--touch-target</code>).

● TYPE & COLOR

Body minimum	≥16px learner-facing body. Never smaller.
Accent	One <code>--c-*</code> per module; actions use <code>--btn-bg</code> , links use the chevron — no underlines.
Meaning	Never use color alone for correct/incorrect — pair an icon or label.

● INTERACTION & ASSETS

Components	Knowledge checks as cards, term/definition as flip cards, branching as tabs.
Keyboard	Operable by keyboard with a visible focus ring; add ARIA roles/labels.
Media	Raster @2x, alt text on every meaningful image, caption all audio/video.

✓ DO

- ✓ One idea per screen; ~5-7 min units
- ✓ Persistent progress + exit-and-resume
- ✓ Caption narration and add a transcript
- ✓ Test the whole module by keyboard only

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Auto-advance audio with no pause/replay
- ✗ Trap the learner — always offer Back/Menu/Exit
- ✗ Bury the only “next” below the fold
- ✗ Hard-code colors or fonts off-system

03 Slideshows & Decks

Presenter and leave-behind decks. PowerPoint and Google Slides can't read CSS tokens, so rebuild the palette as theme colors and match the values exactly.

● CANVAS & LAYOUT

Slide size Widescreen 16:9 = 13.333 × 7.5in (1280×720pt). 4:3 only for legacy rooms.

Safe margin 0.5in margin; nothing critical near the edge. One message per slide.

Master One Slide Master carries the brand colors to every new slide.

● TYPE & COLOR

Titles Fraunces (Georgia fallback) 36–44pt.

Body Hanken (Arial fallback) ≥24pt; ≤6 lines, ≤6 words per bullet.

Theme map Text #1c1c1e · BG #ffffff/#f4f4f6 · Accent 1 #0f6b5d · Accent 2 #a8552c.

● FOOTERS & ACCESSIBILITY

Footer Slide number + course title on every slide but the cover.

Contrast Light text on the #1e2a3a navy, not mid-tones. Keep AA.

Export Embed fonts; deliver PDF so layout never shifts.

✓ DO

- ✓ One headline-sized idea per slide
- ✓ Real charts, not screenshots of charts
- ✓ Consistent footer + divider system
- ✓ Run the Accessibility Checker before sharing

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Paste paragraphs and read them aloud
- ✗ Mix more than two body type sizes
- ✗ Low-contrast brand tints behind text
- ✗ Stretch logos/images off aspect ratio

Training Websites

LMS landing pages, resource hubs, and microsites. This is the system's native home — everything in Foundations applies directly.

● STRUCTURE

Skeleton Sticky nav → hero → alternating bands → footer; bands carry the accent rhythm.

Spacing `--section-gap` between sections; `.wrap` (1040px) centered.

Responsive Single breakpoint at 1080px swaps nav to a menu; fluid below.

● TYPE, COLOR & THEMING

Type `.display` once; `.h2/.h3` for sections. Class names only — never restyle tags globally.

Color All values via `var()` tokens; dark mode automatic — never hard-code hex.

States Visible focus ring on every control; hover lifts via the hover shadow.

● PERFORMANCE & SEO

Semantics One H1, logical heading order, landmarks, a skip-link.

Head Set title, meta description, Open Graph, canonical, theme-color (light+dark).

Speed Preconnect fonts, lazy-load below-fold images, @2x only where needed.

✓ DO

- ✓ Reuse the `:root` token block verbatim
- ✓ Honour the saved theme (pre-paint script)
- ✓ Provide a keyboard-reachable skip-link
- ✓ Left-align body text

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Invent new class names
- ✗ Use plain `vh` (use `dvh` / `svh`)
- ✗ Underline links — the chevron is the cue
- ✗ Center multi-line paragraphs

ILT — Classroom

In-person facilitation: printed facilitator guides, participant workbooks, job aids, and room slides.
Designed for paper and projection, not personal screens.

● PRINT CANVAS

Page	US Letter 8.5×11in (A4 regional). Portrait for guides/workbooks, landscape for job aids.
Margins	0.75in; 1in on the bind edge for spiral/3-ring.
Guide layout	Script left, timing & cues right; icons for Say / Ask / Do / Activity.

● TYPE & COLOR FOR PRINT

Body	11-12pt at 1.4 line spacing; Fraunces headings, Hanken body.
Contrast	Survive black-and-white printing — never rely on color; proof in grayscale.
Accent	Cover + dividers use one accent band; keep interiors ink-light.

● ROOM SLIDES & JOB AIDS

Projection	≥24pt on slides; high contrast; readable from the back row.
Color-safe	Color-blind-safe pairings; label, don't only color-code.
Job aids	One page, laminate-ready, rounded panels, QR to the digital version.

✓ DO

- ✓ Matched set — guide, workbook, slides, aid
- ✓ Print a grayscale proof before finalizing
- ✓ Consistent margin system for cues/timing
- ✓ Number everything for “turn to page...”

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Depend on color to distinguish in print
- ✗ Cram full scripts onto slides
- ✗ Fonts the printer can't embed cleanly
- ✗ Body type below 11pt

VILT — Virtual

Live virtual sessions on Zoom, Teams, or Webex. Slides compete with small screens, webcams, and chat — so type runs larger and layouts leave room for the human.

● SLIDE CANVAS

Size 16:9, 1280×720pt. Keep a corner clear for a floating webcam.

Density Lighter than in-room: one idea, large visuals. Assume a 13in laptop or phone.

Lower-third Name + role band, bottom-left, on an accent bar.

● TYPE & CONTRAST

Body ≥28pt body, ≥40pt headlines — text compresses over video.

Contrast Maximize it; avoid thin weights and mid-tone tints.

Accent Use the #1e2a3a navy backdrop for emphasis moments.

● ENGAGEMENT & ACCESS

Interaction Poll / breakout / chat prompts styled as card call-outs.

Pacing An interaction every 5-7 min; dedicated “your turn” slides.

Access Live captions on; share deck + transcript in advance.

✓ DO

- ✓ Write type as if the learner is on a phone
- ✓ Interaction slides on a 5-7 min cadence
- ✓ Webcam-safe zone + consistent lower-thirds
- ✓ Captions on; share materials ahead

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Reuse dense in-room slides unchanged
- ✗ Rely on hover the audience can't trigger
- ✗ Put key info where a webcam covers it
- ✗ Read slides verbatim

07 Video

Recorded learning — micro-lessons, demos, explainers. The brand shows up as motion: title cards, lower-thirds, captions, and a consistent color grade.

● CANVAS & EXPORT

Resolution	Master 1920×1080 (1080p), 16:9, 24-30fps; export H.264 MP4.
Safe areas	Titles in 90% title-safe, action in 93%; nothing at the edge.
Vertical cut	Reframe a 1080×1920 9:16 version for mobile — don't blind-crop.

● ON-SCREEN TYPE

Text size	≥30px-equivalent; hold each line ≥1.5s.
Fonts	Fraunces title cards, Hanken labels; embed/outline so they render anywhere.
Lower-third	Name 28-32px, role beneath, bottom-left, accent bar — identical each time.
Scrim	Gradient scrim behind text over footage to keep AA contrast.

● CAPTIONS, BRAND & AUDIO

Captions	Always — burned-in or .srt; ≥16px, bottom-center, max 2 lines.
Bookends	Open/close on a branded card — display font + teal.
Audio	Normalize voice to ~ -16 LUFS; duck music; no clipping.

✓ DO

- ✓ Caption every video, no exceptions
- ✓ Consistent title cards + lower-thirds
- ✓ Design for muted, mobile, autoplay
- ✓ One grade + one audio level per series

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Text outside the title-safe area
- ✗ Flash text too briefly to read
- ✗ Rely on audio alone for key info
- ✗ Clashing grades or mismatched intros

08 Rules & Anti-patterns

Follow these and every asset your team ships — in any format — feels like it came from the same hand. Break them and the system fractures.

✓ ALWAYS

- ✓ Use class names on every element — never override tags globally
- ✓ Use `var(--token)` for every color — never hard-code hex
- ✓ Use `dvh` / `svh`, never plain `vh`, for full-height
- ✓ One primary button per section — chevrons for all other links
- ✓ Minimum 44px touch targets on interactive elements
- ✓ Test in dark mode and by keyboard only
- ✓ Add `aria-expanded`, `aria-label`, `role` on controls
- ✓ Left-align body text

✗ NEVER

- ✗ Underline links — the chevron is the affordance
- ✗ Use the display style more than once per page
- ✗ Hard-code hex values in component CSS
- ✗ Invent new class names — extend tokens or reuse classes
- ✗ Apply the gradient to more than one word
- ✗ Use `vh` for full-height layouts (iOS Safari)
- ✗ Skip focus rings on interactive elements
- ✗ Place two primary buttons side by side

The shared accessibility baseline

Every format, no exceptions: **WCAG AA** contrast · captions and transcripts for all audio & video · full **keyboard** and **screen-reader** support · meaningful **alt text** · and **never color as the only signal**. Accessibility is part of the brand, not a final-stage checklist.