Describe Your Visuals

**WHAT:** If there are photographs, diagrams, pictures, charts, graphs, maps, or other graphics that are conveying non-text information to students, a **descriptive alternative text**, also called “alt text”, should be created for each image that can work as a replacement.

**WHY:** Consider what a course page or resource would look like if the images didn’t load. Alt text will be available to **sighted students** when images are missing, and screen readers will read them to students with **visual impairments**. Alt text can help instructors make sure that the image communicates its intended purpose.

**HOW:** Alternative text is rarely a literal description of the image. Rather than providing what the image looks like, alternative text should convey the **content and the purpose** of the image.

Transcribe Your Media

**WHAT:** Transcripts are **text versions of the spoken word** presented within multimedia resources. Text captions are synchronized with the audio in a video presentation and are important when people need to see what’s happening in the video and get the audio information in text at the same time.

**WHY:** A transcript provides students with **equivalent information to the audio and video content**, which will help them learn if they were **not able to hear** the audio, **see** the video portion, or if they have **difficulty hearing, seeing or understanding** the spoken word, dialect, or language.

**HOW:** Transcripts provide all speakers’ names, all speech content, and descriptions of relevant non-speech audio. Text captions can easily be added **in YouTube** or revised from the platform’s **auto-captioning system**. Transcripts can be used by all students for additional study and review.
**Make Your Text Readable**

**WHAT:** Font size is the size of text visible on the screen, and colour contrast refers to the brightness of a colour against the darkness of the colour it appears on top of (e.g., text against the background of a page or document).

**WHY:** When documents or web pages have text that is too small or colours that do not provide enough contrast between foreground and background elements, students will have difficulty reading the content. Students who are colour blind might miss important information if it is given through colour alone (e.g., correct answers are in green).

**HOW:** For most documents, text should be around 12 points and be able to be zoomed to 200%. Never use colour alone to provide important information (or show emphasis), and ensure high colour contrast. For example, if you have white text on a light-coloured background, the contrast is probably insufficient for many students.

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**Structure Your Page**

**WHAT:** Organized content allows students to clearly see how concepts are related. Headings help to identify the hierarchical structure of a document (e.g., sections, subsections).

**WHY:** Headings are one of the main ways that students using a screen reader navigate through a digital resource. Headings provide a visual cue that helps sighted readers quickly navigate through sections of a document. Similarly, headings create logical divisions in the content.

**HOW:** Use heading levels in sequential order to represent the structure of a page rather than making the text appear like a heading by applying visual elements such as bold text and a larger font size. Headings can be easily created in many word processing programs.

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**Accessible design benefits all learners.**

For more information visit the UBC OER Accessibility Toolkit at: open.ubc.ca/teach/oer-accessibility-toolkit