





Overview: Alt Text is a description of an image that is used to present information to individuals who are blind or have low vision and therefore cannot see the image. Attaching Alt Text to images in Microsoft Office software is covered in the **Creating Accessible Word Documents and PDF Files** support document. This document presents tips in how to write the content.

Writing effective Alt Text takes practice, but keeping a few guidelines in mind will make it easier.

- 1) All images need Alt Text. If you have an image that is purely decorative, like a scroll border, you can create an Alt Text that just includes an empty space, but it still needs Alt Text.
- 2) Ask yourself “What do I want my students to get from this image?” Put this essential information in the Alt Text and leave out irrelevant details. See Example 1.
- 3) Keep the text short, usually between 5 to 15 words. See Example 1.
- 4) Don’t use the name of the file as the Alt Text. See Example 2.
- 5) Although the Alt Text should be brief, make sure that it contains all relevant information. See Example 3.
- 6) If you have an image of text, then the Alt Text should be the same as the words in the image. See Example 4.
- 7) If you need more than 15 words to present all of the pertinent information, there are other solutions. For help with these or anything else related to writing Alt Text, Beth Case (beth.case@louisville.edu or 502.852.7689) can help you come up with the best solution.

	Image	Poor Alt Text	Good Alt Text*	Reason
1		Brown-haired young woman in jeans and a pink short-sleeved shirt with a blue backpack sitting alone on steps outside smiling at the camera.	Female student sitting on steps and smiling at the camera.	Leave out irrelevant details and use 5-15 words.
2		Greatwall.jpg	Great Wall of China	Don't use the file name as the Alt Text.
3		Kentucky	Outline of the state of Kentucky with tobacco plant, banjo and horse.	Include sufficient detail to make the Alt Text useful.
4		Picture of a computer key with the word Home.	Home	When the image contains text, the Alt Text should be exactly the same as the text in the image.

* These are examples. The purpose of the image must always be taken into consideration.