



## Creating Alternative Descriptive Text – Microsoft Office

Alternative Descriptive Text, often called Alt-Text, is an accessibility tool used to provide persons who are blind, have low vision, or have visual processing difficulties the ability to interpret the information presented in a picture, table, or graph. Alt-Text provides this access through the creation of text for photos and figures. This text must be filled with rich adjectives and free from popular expression. The following steps explain how to place Alt-Text on a photo and provides some guidance to the content of the text.

For Mac users: ‘Right-click’ by clicking with two fingers on the mouse pad

### Adding Alt-Text:

- 1) *Right-click* on the figure and look for **Edit-Alt Text**.
  - a. If you see **Edit-Alt Text**, *select* it and type your Alt-Text in the box that appears on the right-hand side of your document. Repeat for every image (See Tips for Writing Alt-Text at the bottom of this guide).
  - b. If you do not see **Edit Alt Text**, follow the remaining steps.
- 2) *Select* **Format Picture**; a sidebar labeled ‘Format Picture’ will appear on the right side of the screen.
- 3) *Click* the **Layout & Properties Icon**



Figure 1: Layout & Properties Icon

- 4) *Select* **Alt-Text** from the menu on the sidebar. This will open two sections labeled ‘Title’ and ‘Description’
- 5) *Type* the title of the figure to the appropriate line
- 6) *Type* the Alt-Text in the box under ‘Description’.
- 7) *Close* the sidebar by pressing the **X** in the upper-right corner.

You have now completed adding Alt-Text to a photo.

### Tips for Writing Alt-Text

- 1) Consider the purpose of the image and be sure to explain it concisely.
- 2) Be as specific as possible.
  - a. Don’t just say, “The Beatles.” Instead say, “The rock group The Beatles.”
- 3) Describe/explain only the most essential elements of the image.
  - a. The Alt-Text is only there to identify the image. Conceptual information (e.g. the symbolism in a painting) should always be explained in text outside of the photo.
- 4) Avoid figurative language, idioms, colloquialisms, and subjective adjectives (e.g. beautiful).

### Additional Resources:

1. For more information on making your documents accessible, reference the guide titled, ***Creating an Accessible PDF Document – Microsoft Word***
2. For more information on creating Alt-Text in other programs, reference the guides titled ***Creating Alternative Descriptive Text – Adobe Acrobat***



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