



Coursera

University of
Michigan

Alternative Text for Visual Materials Guide

What is “alt text” and why is it important?

- alt text is a short, plain text description of the image that you are expecting users to perceive by clicking the image, and is used for people who cannot see the image.
- alt text is used by screen readers to describe the image to users who are blind or have low vision. It is only used if the image is not decorative.
- alt text is also used by search engines to help them understand the content of the image.

Complex images

If the image contains too much information to include in concise alt text:

- Use a long description to provide more detail about the image.
- Use a caption to summarize the image.
- Image name: A short, plain text description that is included in the text with a reference to the image.

See [Accessibility and Usability](#) in their accessibility and usability page.

Tips

- Describe information not aesthetics
- Consider the context to determine what information is important to convey. See “ *)/ 3/ \$. /# (*./ - \$/ \$
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- Use normal punctuation and be sure to end with a period
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