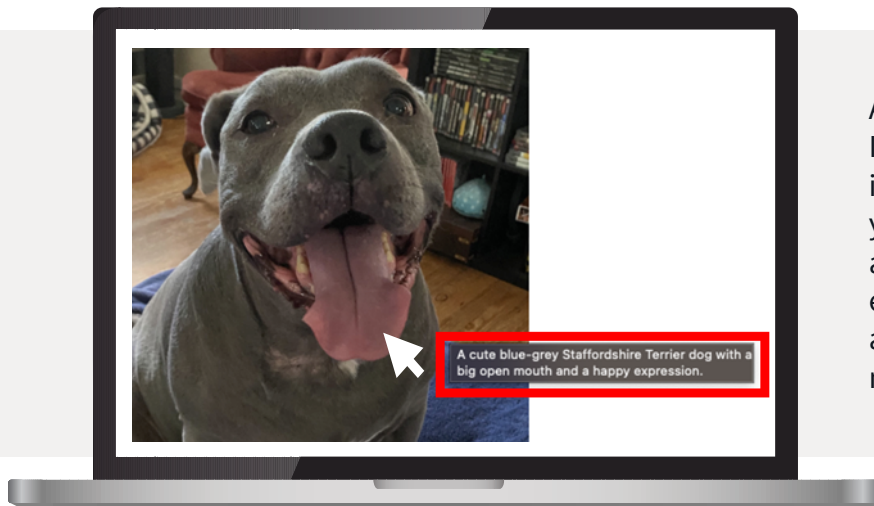


Alternative Text

Making images, graphs, and charts ADA compliant

Alternative text, or “alt text,” is a description of an image embedded directly into the website or document containing the image. This description is read aloud by screen reader applications or can be viewed by hovering your cursor over the image.



A screen reader can't interpret an image. It can tell you it has encountered an image, but not what's in the picture. So, you must add your own description that a screen reader will read aloud when it encounters the image(s). Alt text can also add context to shared images for students not using assistive devices.

Faculty must include alt text for all still images in their lecture content—this includes photos, illustrations, charts, and graphs. Physical, in-classroom handouts must also have alt text.

Tips for Alternative Text

Keep alt text short and think of how it will help someone listening to a screen reader. The goal of alt text is to give students who cannot see the images the same experience as students who can.

- Do not begin alt text with “an image/picture of...” Since screen readers will identify when an image is on the screen before reading the alt text, this is redundant.
- If relevant, you can indicate if the image is a logo, illustration, cartoon, etc.
- Focus on describing the image itself in the simplest terms needed.
- End the alt text sentence with a period.

Simple Images

If it is only important for students to know there's a dog in an image added to your course, you can simply write "A dog." for the alt text. This is straight to the point but is not descriptive and doesn't do a great job at helping a student visualize the image.

A better alt text would be a bit more descriptive, to create a better visualization for the learner. For example, "A small brown dog in a red collar." If you added a picture of a dog to your course to convey an emotion or idea, additional details are helpful to create context for the visuals.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"A large white dog showing its teeth with ears back in an aggressive stance."

or

"A blue-grey Staffordshire Terrier dog with a big open mouth and a happy expression."

Complex Images

If you need more than 120 characters to provide an adequate description of the image, then also include a longer description in the document's visible text. Charts and graphs often need longer descriptions.

Charts and Graphs

Conveying the visual information of charts and graphs can be challenging depending on their complexity. A link or attribution for the source should be included with any charts/graphs added to your material.

Important information to include:

- Chart/graph type
- Type of data
- Reason for including the chart/graph

Decorative Images

For some images, alternative text would not add meaning and might be redundant. These "decorative" images could include screen shots in a tutorial where the alt text wouldn't add anything that's not already in the main text, or accent images to decorate your document.

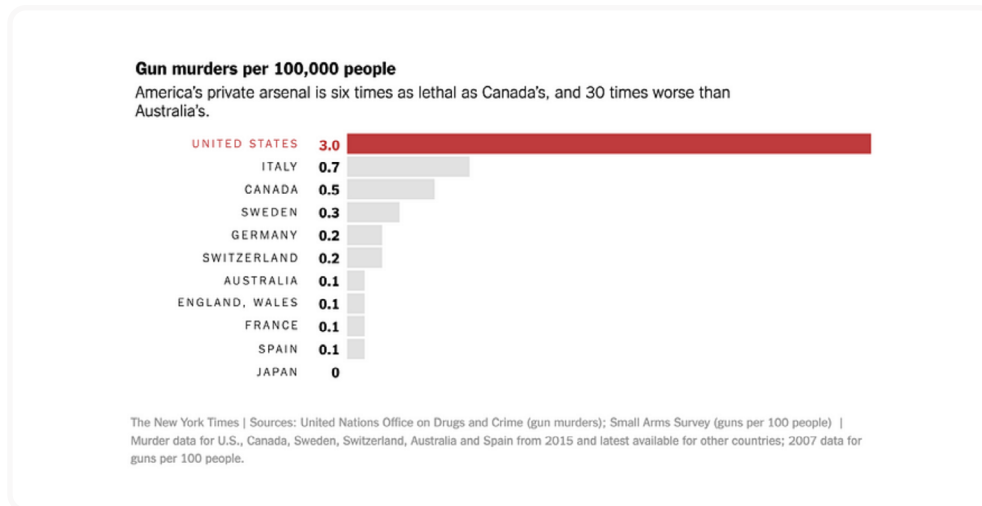
Ask yourself if it would be a waste of time for someone with a screen reader to listen to a description of an image. If so, you can skip the alternative text.

Physical Handouts

Include a short description next to the image, graph, or chart on the printed handout.

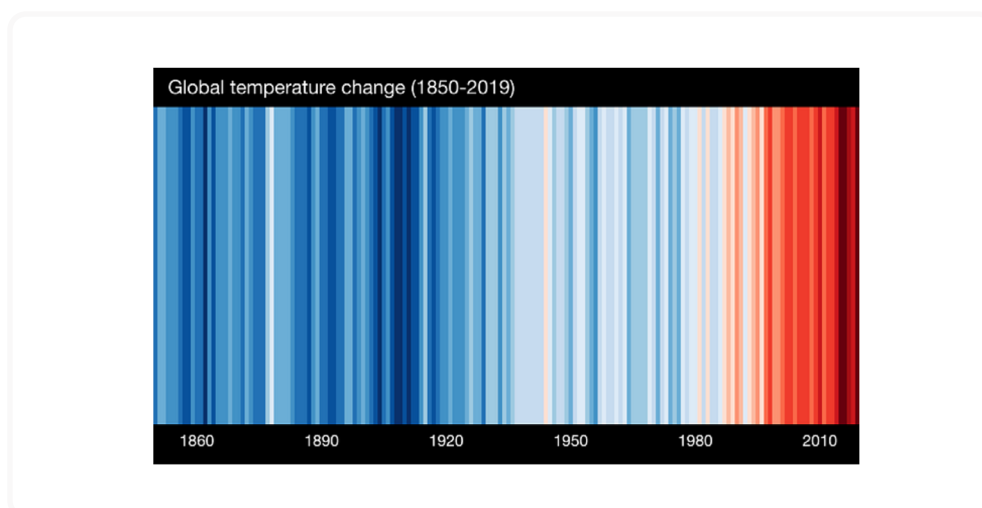
Simple Chart/Graph

Example alt text might read “A bar chart of gun murders per 100,000 people where America’s murder rate is 6 times worse than Canada, and 30 times Australia.”



Complex Chart/Graph

This chart is harder to describe. Example alt text might be, “Colored stripes of chronologically ordered temperature where they increase in red to show the warming global temperature”



How-To Guide for Alt Text

**NOTE
on AI:**

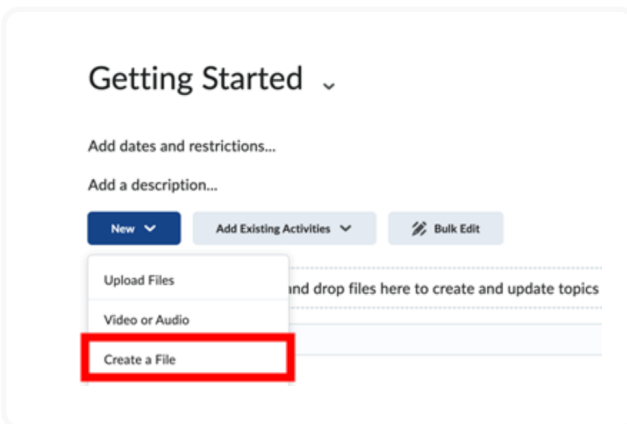
It is possible to upload images to generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT to create alt text descriptions, which can be copied over to the desired platform.

This can be a useful starting point, but any AI-generated alt text should be refined manually, as AI cannot make judgments about the relevancy or context of an image that you may want to highlight with its inclusion.

Pilot

1. Upload an image to Pilot using the HTML editor

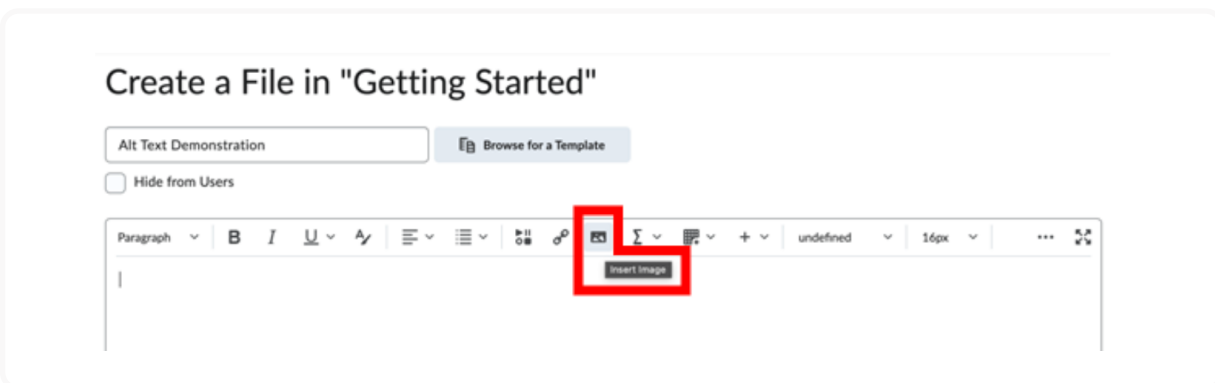
1.1 While viewing your course, choose the module you'd like to work in. While viewing the module, select the "New" button that appears on the left-hand side. Next, select "Create a File" from the dropdown menu that appears.



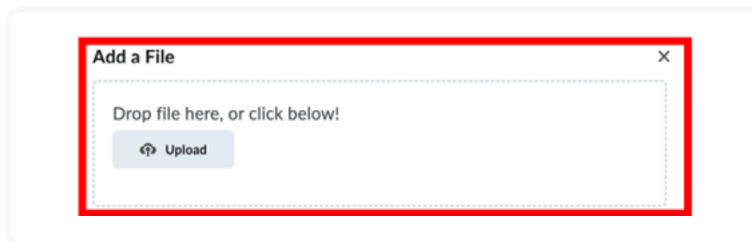
1.2 This will open the HTML editor.

1.3 The large text box has a toolbar along the top with a variety of tools to help you build content in your course.

1.4 To upload an image, select the "Insert Image" button, which is in the middle of the toolbar, depicted by an icon of a landscape photo.

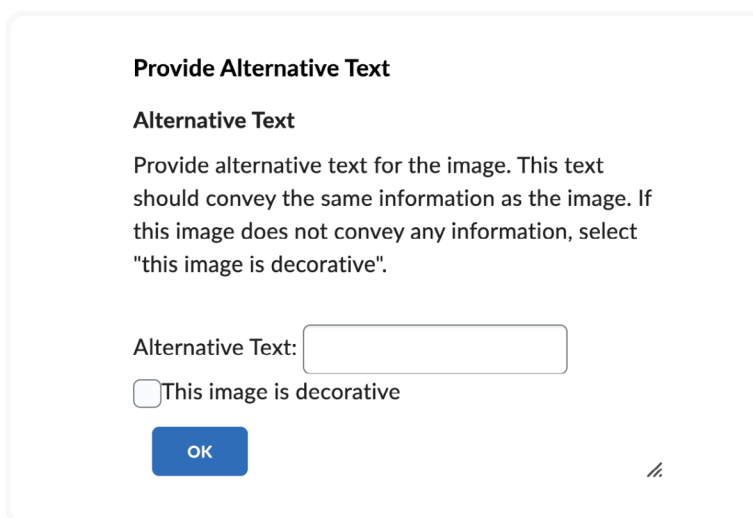


1.5 Selecting “My Computer” will open the “Add a File” window. Follow the instructions on-screen to either select the “Upload” button to browse your files on your computer or drag-and-drop the desired image into this space.



1.6 Once the image is uploaded, select the “Add” button on the bottom to continue.

1.8 After selecting “Add,” a window prompting you to provide alternate text will pop up.

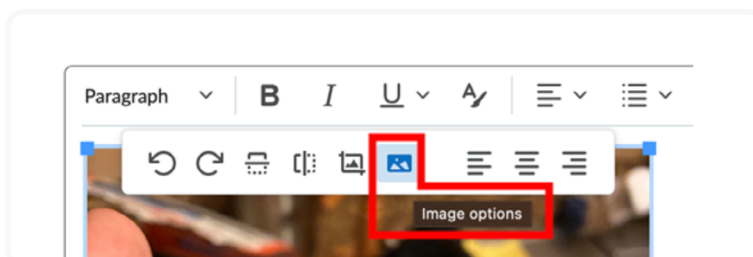


1.9 Write your alt text in the text box in this window. If your image is redundant to information already present in text, or is purely decorative, then select “This image is decorative” to give the alt text a null value that will be skipped by screen readers.

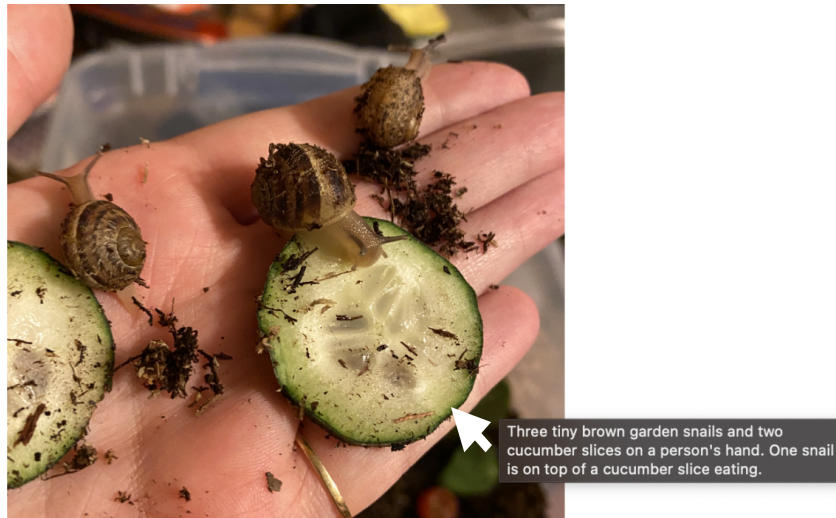
1.10 After you’re done, select the “OK” button at the bottom.

1.11 Your selected image will be inserted into the HTML editor with the alt text embedded.

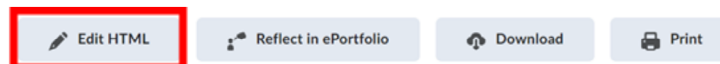
If future edits to the alt text need to be made, click on the image. A toolbar will appear for the image. Select the “Image options” button in the middle to access the settings for that image. There, you can edit the alt text as needed.



1.12 Once you're done working in the HTML editor, select "Save and Close" at the bottom of the screen. You will be redirected to your module as it will be viewed by students. Screen readers will now be able to read the alt text for this image. Hovering the cursor over the image will display the alt text.



1.13 Future edits can be made by selecting the "Edit HTML" button beneath the content.



Microsoft Documents:

For detailed instructions on adding alt text to Microsoft documents (word, excel, etc.) visit this resource from Microsoft:

Adobe Acrobat:

For detailed instructions on adding alt text to Adobe Acrobat PDF files, visit this resource from Adobe: