



[bit.ly/AccessibilityCCLI](https://bit.ly/AccessibilityCCLI)

# Disability Visibility: Making Inaccessible Digital Learning Materials Visible

Bridgid Fennell, MLIS, M.Ed.  
California Conference on Library Instruction 2025





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# Alice Wong

The Disability Visibility Project is an online community dedicated to creating, sharing, and amplifying disability media and culture.

Wong, A. (2020). *Disability visibility: First-person stories from the twenty-first century*. Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

Wong, A. (2022). *Year of the tiger: An activist's life*. Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

Wong, A. (2024). *Disability intimacy: Essays on love, care, and desire* (1st ed.). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.



By John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation -, CC BY 4.0



# What do you find frustrating when it comes to making digital content accessible?





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# Objectives

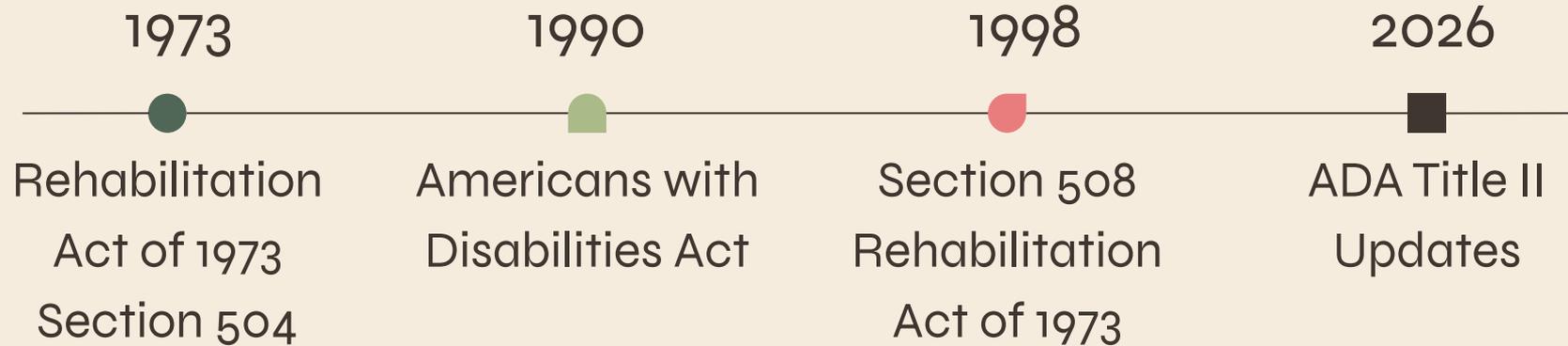
- O1 Differentiate between alt text, long descriptions, and decorative images
- O2 Produce alt text and long descriptions for images
- O3 Assign a heading structure to a document





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# US Disability Legislation



Association of Research Libraries.  
(2024). [ADA Title II regulations:  
Implications for libraries.](#)



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01



# Alt Text

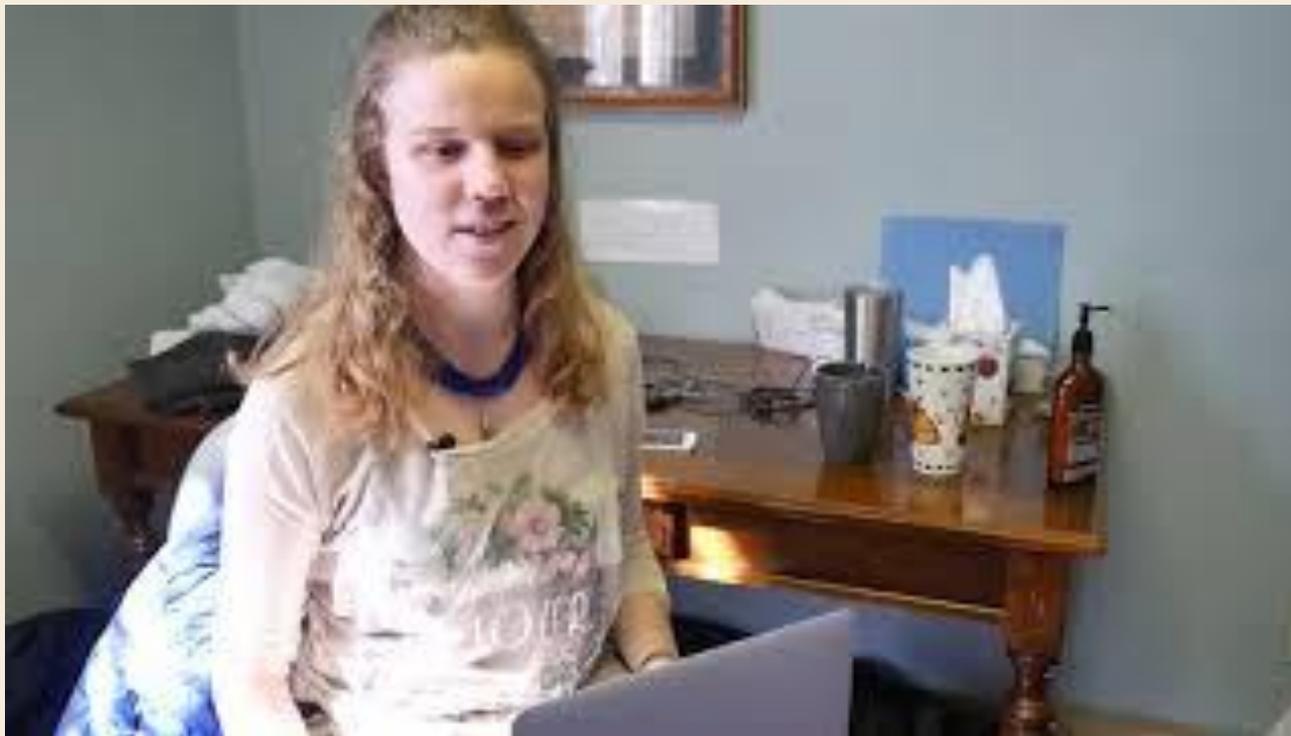
WCAG 2.1 Success Criterion 1.1.1 Non-text Content (Level A)

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for [some exceptions].



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# Alt text demonstration





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# Dolt Center Screen Reader Video





# What is alt text and why is it important?

## Alternative text (alt text)

- Used for images, pictures, illustrations, infographics, and diagrams
- Assistive technology
  - People who use screen readers
    - WebAIM Screen Reader User Survey
    - Refreshable braille display
- Low internet bandwidth
- Improves SEO

Andreas Nylin's [Image Alt Text Viewer](#)

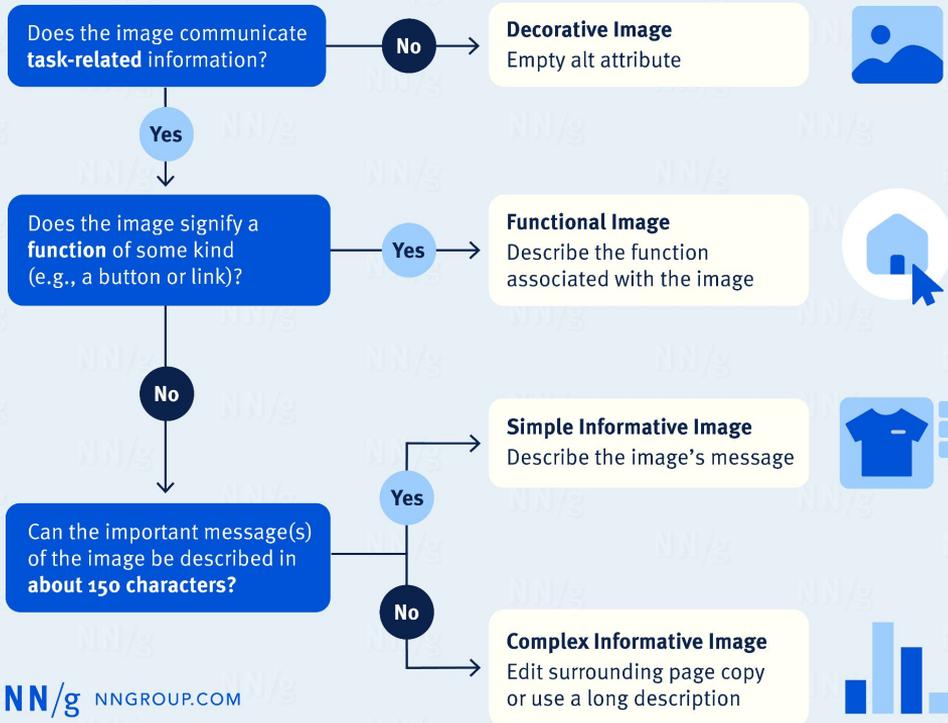
UNIVERSITY

### USC commencement 2025: Great quotes from great speakers

Why limit yourself to words of wisdom from just one speaker? Watch the video to see highlights from several of the inspiring addresses that took place during last week's ceremonies.

MAY 20, 2025

# What Kind of Alt-Text Should You Use?



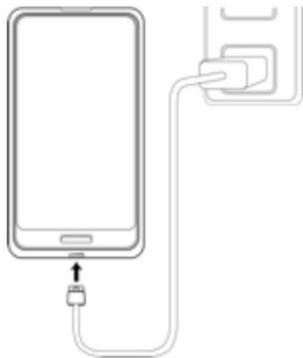
## Alt text decision tree

[Alt Text: What to Write](#) from Norman Nielsen Group

See also WebAIM's [An alt Decision Tree](#)

# Use alt text to convey important information

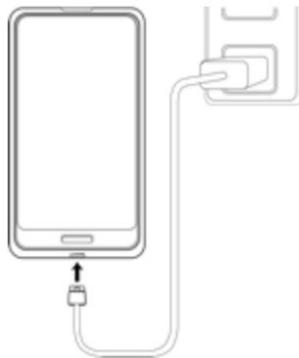
## ✘ Uninformative



Charging the phone: Connect the phone to a power outlet using the cable and power adaptor provided.

**Alternative text for image:** "Charging phone"

## ✔ Informative



Charging the phone: Connect the phone to a power outlet using the cable and power adaptor provided.

**Alternative text for image:** "Plug cable into the bottom edge of the phone."

*Alternative text is usually not visible; it is included in this example just so you can see what it is.*

# Alternative text guidelines

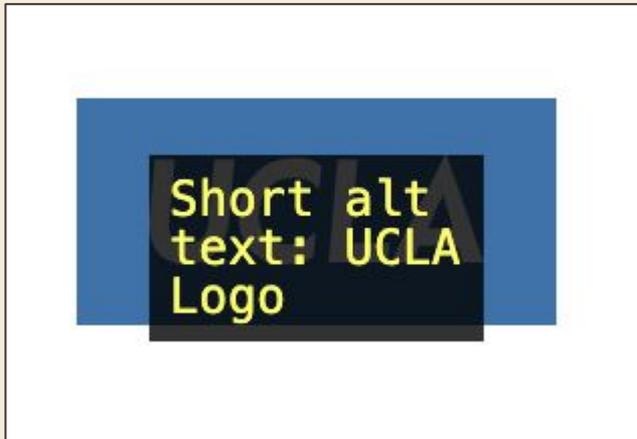
- All images need alt text.
- Include relevant content provided by the image, rather than simply describing how the image looks.
- Do not include extra or unnecessary information.
- Do not start with “image of” or “picture of”.
- Avoid images with text, but if necessary only include words in the image in the alt text.
- Be concise, 125-150 characters or under is ideal.
- Use proper capitalization and punctuation. End alt text with appropriate punctuation.
- Alt text must be in the same language as the main content.
- Do not stuff alt text with keywords to promote search engine optimization (SEO).



# Logos

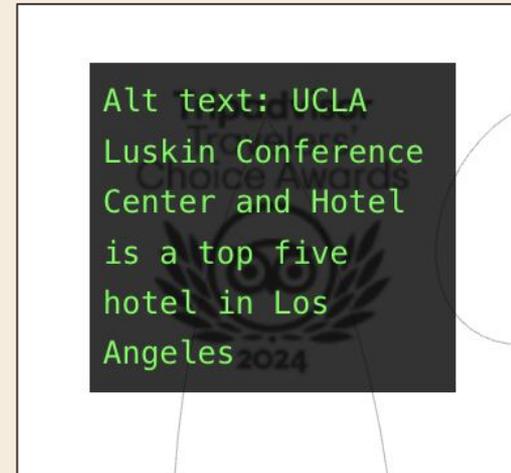
## Do

Only include the words in the image



## Don't

Write alt text that does not reflect the words in the image





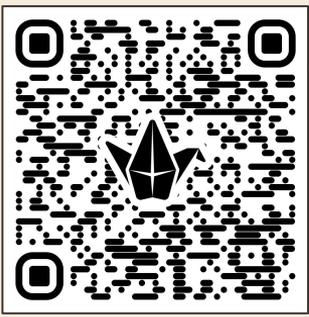
# Let's practice

How would you write alt text for this image? Share your answer in our [RefWorks Alt Text Activity Padlet](https://bit.ly/4joYh2Z).

<https://bit.ly/4joYh2Z>

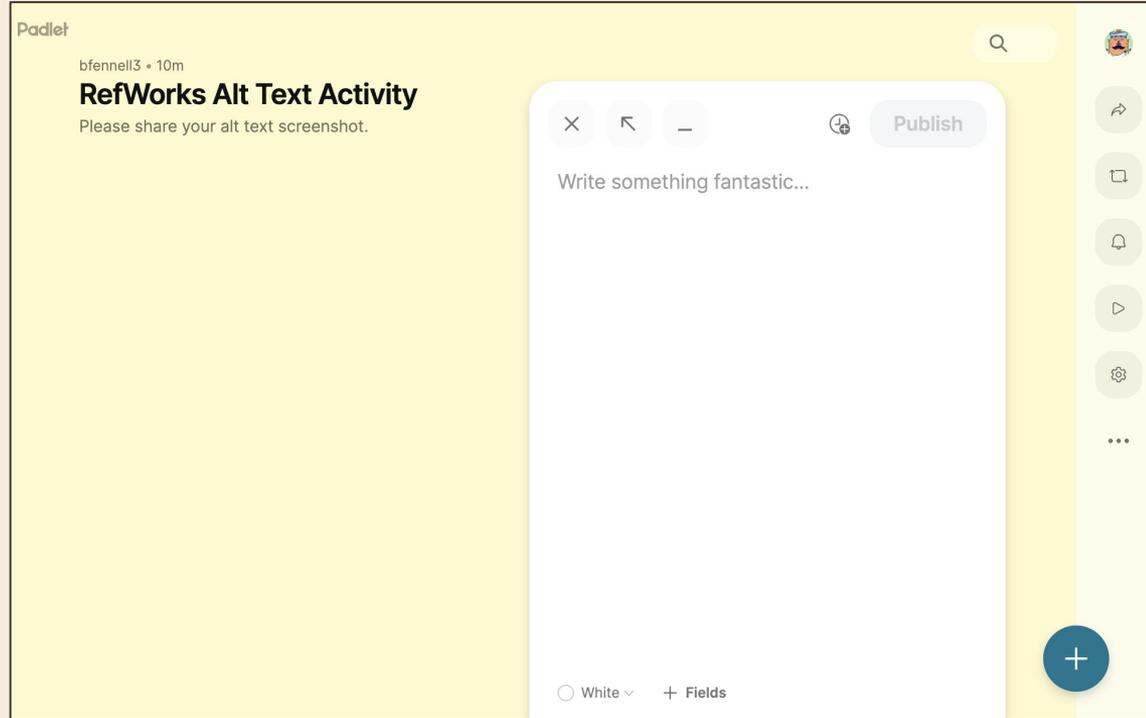


The screenshot shows an article page in RefWorks. On the left is a vertical menu with options: TOP, SEND TO, VIEW ONLINE, DETAILS, and CITATIONS. The main content area includes the IRR ODL logo, the article title "Instructor Leadership and the Community of Inquiry Framework: Ap Theory to Higher Education Online Learning", authors "Meech, Sally ; Koehler, Adrie A.", publisher "Athabasca University Press (AU Press)", and volume information "International review of research in open and distance learning, 2023-05, Vol.24 (2)". Below this is an "OPEN ACCESS" badge and two links: "Download PDF" and "View Issue Contents". A "Send to" menu is open, showing various sharing options. A red arrow points to the "REFWORKS" button, which is highlighted with a red rounded rectangle. Other options in the menu include PERMALINK, CITATION, EXPORT RIS, ENDNOTE, EXPORT TO EXCEL, MENDELEY, and QR.



# Padlet

1. Activate the QR code or visit the [RefWorks Alt Text Activity Padlet](#) or <https://bit.ly/4joYh2Z>
2. Click on the plus sign in the lower right corner.
3. A white “pad” will appear.
4. Write your answer in the pad and click on “Publish” to share with the group.





# My alt text

RefWorks icon is listed under Send to in the USC Libraries Catalog record for a journal article.

The screenshot displays a journal article record. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with options: TOP, SEND TO, VIEW ONLINE, DETAILS, and CITATIONS. The main content area shows the article title "Instructor Leadership and the Community of Inquiry Framework: Ap Theory to Higher Education Online Learning" by Meech, Sally; Koehler, Adrie A., published by Athabasca University Press (AU Press) in 2023-05, Vol.24 (2). It is an open access article. Below the article information are links for "Download PDF" and "View Issue Contents". A "Send to" section is located at the bottom, containing icons for Permalink, Citation, RefWorks (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow), Endnote, Mendeley, Print, Share, Export RIS, Export to Excel, and QR code.

ARTICLE

**Instructor Leadership and the Community of Inquiry Framework: Ap Theory to Higher Education Online Learning**

Meech, Sally ; Koehler, Adrie A.  
Athabasca University Press (AU Press)  
International review of research in open and distance learning, 2023-05, Vol.24 (2)

OPEN ACCESS

Download PDF

Available Online >

View Issue Contents

Send to

PERMALINK    CITATION    REFWORKS    ENDNOTE    MENDELEY

PRINT    SHARE    EXPORT RIS    EXPORT TO EXCEL    QR



# Add Alt Text to LibGuides Part 1

To add default alternate text to an image:

1. From your LibApps dashboard, click on the Image Manager link on the command bar.
2. Click on the thumbnail of the image you want to edit.

LibApps

Home My Account My 1 Image Manager Help

Springshare Training / LibApps / Image Manager

## Image Manager

Upload images directly to your guides, making adding, reusing and sharing images a snap!

### LibApps Image Manager Library

Personal Library Shared Library

FOLDERS

- [ ROOT ]
- \*resource icons
- AZ Database Images
- Campus Peer Guides
- Election Icons
- Example: Templates for Planning Calendar
- Examples: Gallery Box
- Examples: LC EQ & Spaces
- Examples: LC Events
- Examples: Spinning

UPLOAD AN IMAGE - Supported formats include JPG, JPEG, G

Upload New Image

\*resource icons Folder: 6 Files

Search file name, keywords This folder only

Click a thumbnail below for a larger view, or to add/edit keywords

audiobook.png bookclub.png ebook.png heart-



## Add Alt Text to LibGuides Part 2

1. In the Edit Image Properties modal, enter your descriptive text into the Alternative Text field. This will appear in the image's alt attribute (e.g. `<img alt="Your alternate text displays here">`).
2. Click the Save button.

### Edit Image Properties

**audiobook.png (1.06 KB, Uploaded Apr 8, 2021 1:56 PM)**



**Keywords**  
headphones audiobook

**Alternate Text**  
3 audio book available

**Folder**  
\*resource icons

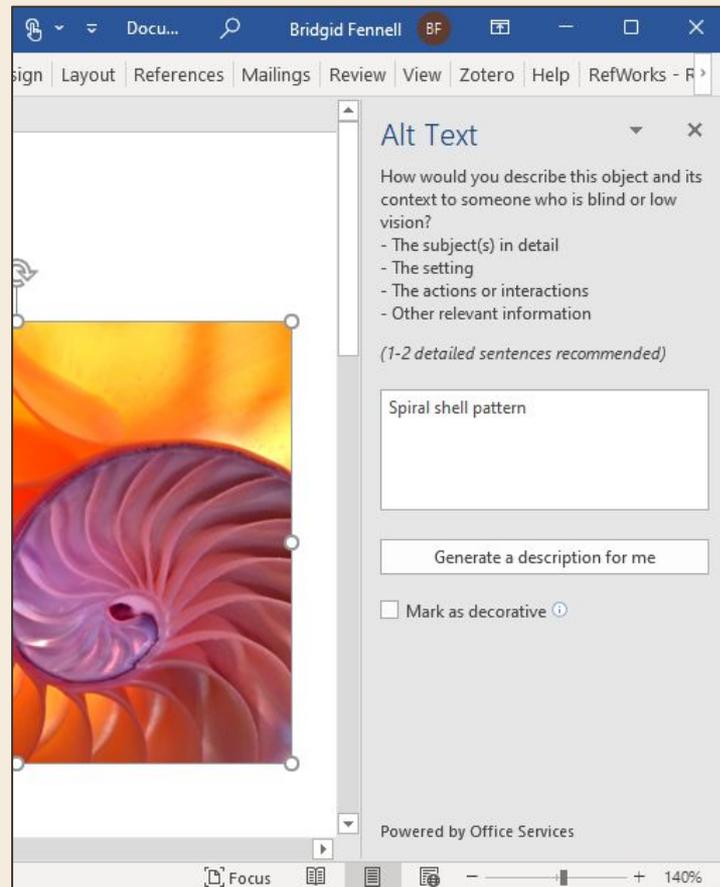
Save 4



# Add Alt Text to Word Document

Microsoft Support: [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#)

- Do one of the following:
  - Right-click the object and select Edit Alt Text.
  - Select the object and then select the format menu for the object, for example, Picture Format. Select Alt Text.
- In the Alt Text pane, type 1-2 sentences in the text box to describe the object and its context to someone who cannot see it.



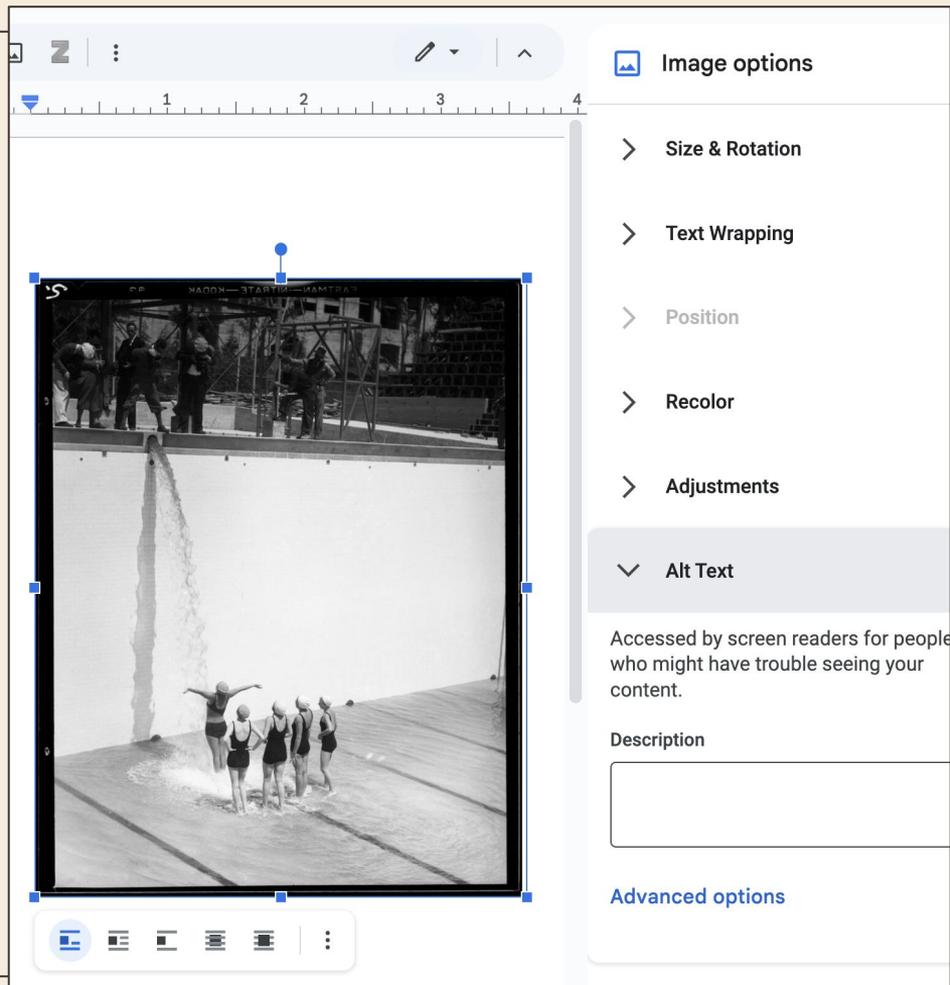


# Add Alt Text to Google Docs

Google Support: [Make your document, presentation, sheets & videos more accessible](#)

In Google docs either right click on the image to access the image options menu, Add alt text in the description field.

Alternatively, select the image, then navigate to the Format menu and select Image and then Options to add an alt text description.



The screenshot shows the Google Docs interface with an image of swimmers in a pool. The image options menu is open on the right, and the 'Alt Text' section is expanded. The 'Description' field is empty and highlighted.

Image options

- > Size & Rotation
- > Text Wrapping
- > Position
- > Recolor
- > Adjustments
- ▼ Alt Text
  - Accessed by screen readers for people who might have trouble seeing your content.
  - Description

Advanced options



# Decorative Images

- Purely decorative image
- Does not contribute meaning to the information
- Null alt text, HTML code alt=" "
- Actively enter an empty “space” or mark as decorative
- Some rich content editors allow you to check a decorative image box

WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools

## **h1** The Importance of the European Accessibility Act to Canada and the United States

by Irene M.H. Herold, VCU Libraries | May 15, 2025

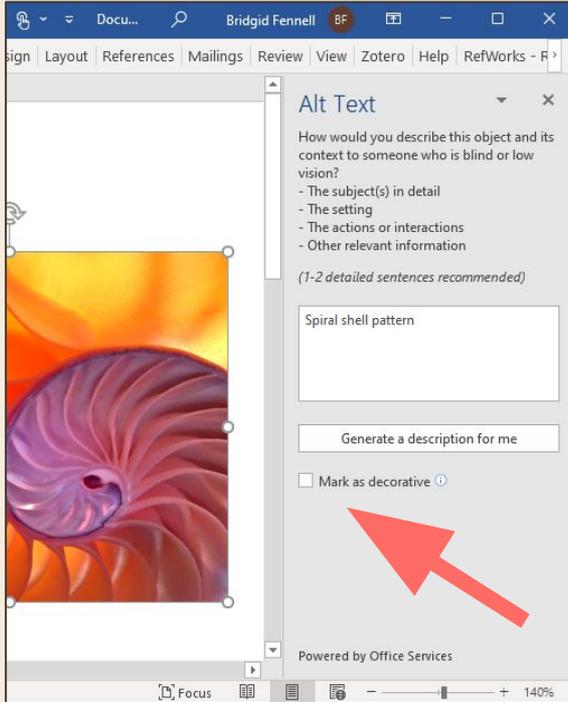


Last Updated on May 15, 2025, 5:11 pm ET

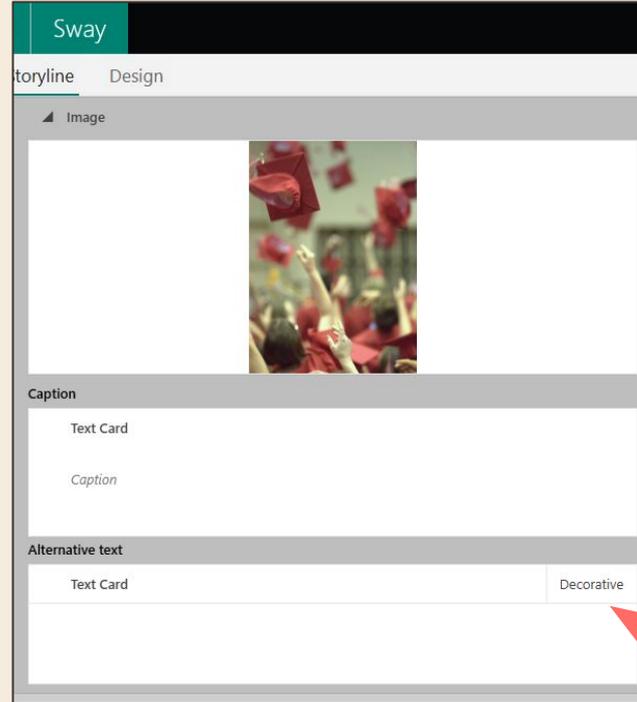


Irene M.H. Herold

# Decorative Images in Rich Content Editors



Microsoft Word



Microsoft Sway



# Cover Art in LibGuides

Add/Edit Content

ISBN: 9811322627

Title: Encyclopedia of Educational Innovation

Author/Editor:

Publication Date:

Call Number:

URL: https://uosc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USC\_

Use Proxy?  Yes  No

Description:

Description Display:  Do not display

\* = Original guide location

Cover Art

 Encyclopedia of Educational Innovation

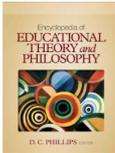
Syndetics

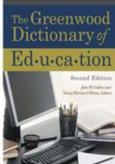
Small - 90px wide

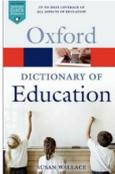
ALT Text:

Design Resource Icons

Syndetics provides generic alt text called Cover Art which isn't helpful.

 **Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy by D. C. Phillips (Editor)**  
ISBN: 1483346218  
Publication Date: 2014-01-01

 **The Greenwood Dictionary of Education by John W. Collins (Editor)**  
ISBN: 1283159457  
Publication Date: 2011-01-01

 **\*Cover Art\* A Dictionary of Education by Susan Wallace**  
ISBN: 0199679398  
Publication Date: 2015-02-02

Using the null alt text attribute, assistive technology will ignore the image.



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02



# Long Description

WCAG 2.1 Success Criterion 1.1.1 Non-text Content (Level A)

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for [some exceptions].

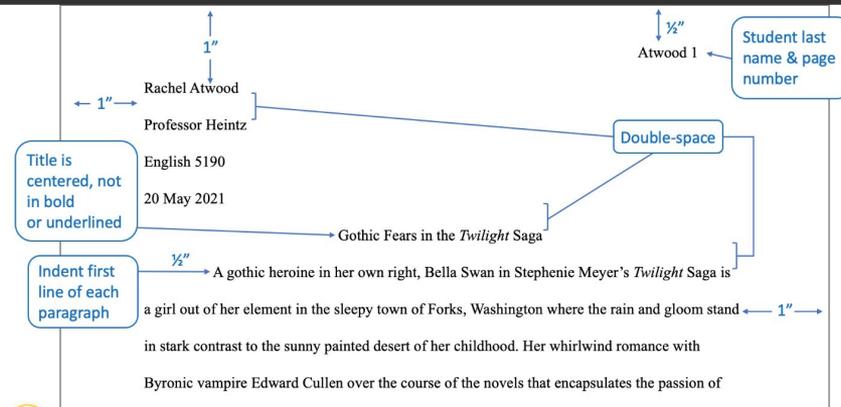


# Provide Context in Document

- Write brief alt text and indicate where reader can find detailed informative explanation.
- Include narrative description of image in the text of the document
- Universal Design for Learning

Alt text: A sample student paper formatted in MLA 9th edition style. Checklists below the image detail formatting guidelines.

## MLA Paper Formatting: First Page



Acknowledgements to Rachel Atwood for sharing her paper, "MLA Paper Formatting: First Page" by Bridgid Fennell is licensed under Creative Commons attribution 4.0.

### Formatting checklist:

- Use 1" margins at the top, bottom, left, and right sides of the page.
- Right-align the running head at the top of every page, include your last name and page numbers.
- Use a readable typeface like Times New Roman in 11-13 points.
- Align the text at the left margin only.
- Double-space the entire paper, including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited.
- Indent .5" from the left margin at beginning of each paragraph.
- Leave one space not two after a period or other concluding punctuation.

### Title formatting:

- In the top left write your name, instructor's name, course, and date (Day Month Year with no commas ie. 3 January 2023). Start a new line for each item.
- Double-space between the date and the title.
- The title is centered with no bold, underlining, quotation marks, or end punctuation marks.

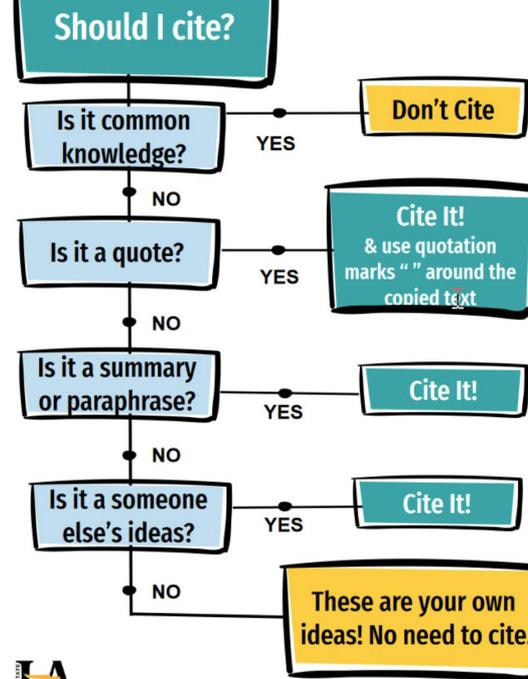


# Provide Supplementary Document

- Write brief alt text and indicate where reader can find detailed informative explanation.
- Include accessible text version

## Should I Cite?

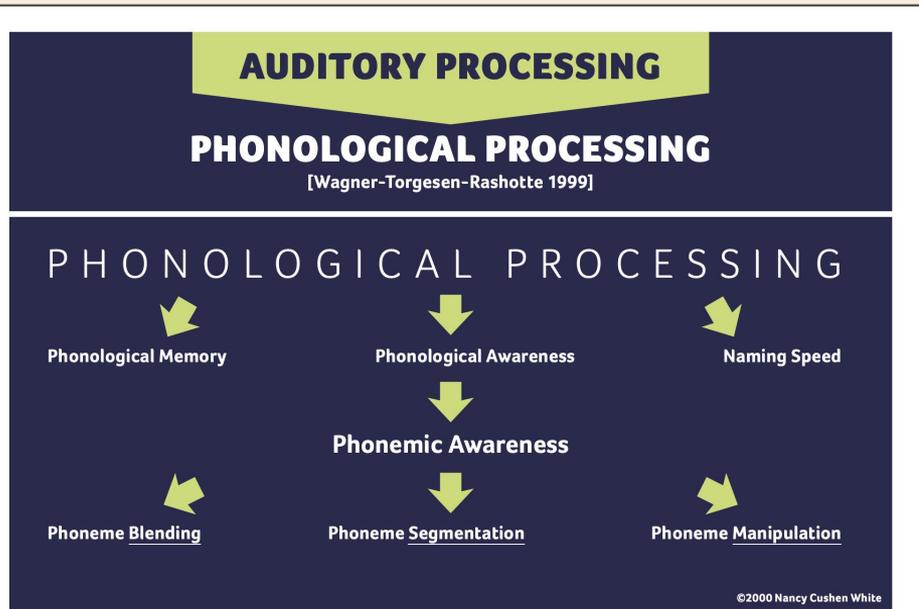
Alt text: Decision Flow Chart



"Should I Cite?" by Kendall Faulkner is licensed under Creative Commons (CC) attribution 4.0. This graphic is adapted from Should I cite? flowchart by Cardiff University Library CC 4.0.

- [Should I cite flow chart alternate text only version](#)

# Accessible Online Documents



**Figure 3.1.** The elements of phonological processing. Developed by Nancy Cushen White and used with permission.

[Long Description for Figure 3.1](#)

California Dyslexia Guidelines. (2017). California Department of Education.

**Figure 3.1.** The elements of phonological processing.

The figure shows the relationship between the elements of phonological processing. At the top “Auditory Processing” is listed. “Phonological Processing” appears below as a subtype of “Auditory Processing.” The three components of “Phonological Processing” are listed as “Phonological Memory,” “Phonological Awareness,” and “Naming Speed.” “Phonemic Awareness” appears as a key subset of “Phonological Awareness.” “Phoneme Blending,” “Phoneme Segmentation,” and “Phoneme Manipulation” are listed as three Phonemic Awareness skills.

Developed by Nancy Cushen White and used with permission.

[Return to figure 3.1.](#)

# Long Description in S

Salmons, J. (2022). Research skills:  
Defining terms within theory. In SAGE  
Skills: Student Success.  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071881835>

Figure 1. Theory by Scope



[Long Description](#)

As [Figure 1](#) indicates, a macro-level theory looks at relationships of large-scale issues or problems

The figure shows three tables, namely, the Micro-Level Theory, the Meso-Level Theory, and the Macro-Level Theory. The Micro-Level Theory reads, Theories that explain relationships, problems, perspectives, or phenomena involving individuals, families, or small groups. The Meso-Level Theory reads, Theories that explain relationships, problems, issues, or phenomena involving communities, cultural or ethical groups, organizations or institutions. The Macro-Level Theory reads, Theories that explain large-scale global, societal, national problems, issues, or phenomena.

[Close Window](#)



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03



# Headings and Structure

WCAG 2.1 Success Criterion 2.4.10 Section Headings (Level AAA)

Section headings are used to organize the content.



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# Headings demonstration



# Headings Best Practices

- Use levels in hierarchical and chronological order <h1> through <h6>
- Don't skip levels.
- Use <h1> only once per webpage.
- In long documents more than one <h1> is acceptable.
- Be succinct and descriptive.
- Do not use visual formatting like bold, underlining, or changing font size instead of a heading structure.

[Paul J. Adam's JavaScript Bookmarklets for Accessibility Testing](#)

USC Libraries USC University of Southern California

[? Ask Us / FAQs](#)

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**Research Guides**

**<h1>\*Education: Finding Books</h1>**

Library Resources for the field of Education

- Home
- Finding Research Materials**
- Reference Sources
- Google Scholar
- News Sources
- Empirical Articles
- Finding Books**
- Dissertations
- Workshops and Webinars
- Statistics and Data
- Tests & Measurements
- Citation Managers
- APA Style
- Scan & Deliver and Interlibrary Loan
- Educational Counseling
- Educational Leadership
- Global Executive Ed.D.
- Marriage & Family Therapy
- Organizational Change & Leadership
- TESOL
- Literacy Education

**<h2>Digital Book Collection</h2>**

USC Libraries strategically invests in a digital collection of books, journals, databases, and other electronic resources. As a policy we collect electronic resources when those formats are available and purchase print items if digital formats are unavailable. This allows users to instantly access library resources, promotes accessibility, and grants online learners uninterrupted access to the collection.

**<h3>Find Ebooks and Print Books</h3>**

This video (3 minutes) will show you how to find ebooks and print books in the USC Libraries catalog.



**<h2>Print Book Collection</h2>**

Most education books are located in **Doheny Memorial Library**. Plan your visit by reviewing the **Doheny Memorial Library Self Guided Tour** or find information about accessible navigation at **Accessibility & Disability Services at USC Libraries**.

**<h3>How to Use USC Libraries' Catalog to Search for a Book</h3>**

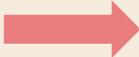
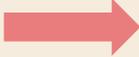
This video (3 minutes) will show you how to search and find a book in the library catalog which is located on the **USC Libraries homepage**. The goal of this tutorial is to familiarize catalog users with the



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# Headings knowledge check

Which statement is true?

- A. Use a bold font to create headings in a document.
-  B. Headings organize document content for sighted, blind, and low-vision readers.
-  C. Headings provide HTML code so screen reader users can efficiently navigate a digital document.

True or False?

Headings can be used in any order.

Answer: False, use headings in a hierarchical and chronological order `<h1>` through `<h6>`.

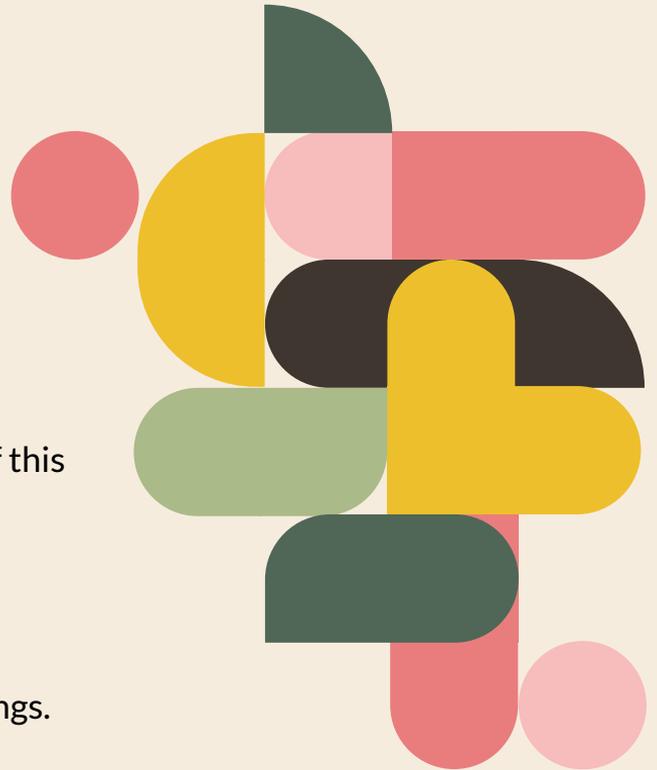




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# Guided Activity

1. Visit <https://bit.ly/ActivityCCLI> to access a read-only version of this document. Make a copy to your Google Drive.
2. Read the text. Determine where to assign Level 1 and Level 2 headings. On the paper, mark where you will assign headings.
3. We will work together through guided practice to assign headings.





# Assign Headings in LibGuides

- Open the Rich Text Editor
- Highlight text to be formatted with a heading level
- Navigate to “Paragraph Format”
- Select the heading level
- Don’t forget to “Save and Close”

The screenshot shows the Rich Text Editor interface. At the top, there is a header "Rich Text Editor" and a section "Instructions for Paste and Spellcheck". Below this is a toolbar with "Styles" set to "Heading 3", "Font" options, and "Size" options. A "Paragraph Format" dropdown menu is open, showing options: "Normal", "Heading 3" (highlighted), "Heading 4", "Heading 5", and "Heading 6". The background text includes "USC Libraries st...", "electronic resour...", "access library re...", "Find Ebo...", "Books", and "This video (3 minutes) will show you how to find ebooks and print books". At the bottom, there is a status bar showing "body h3" and a yellow warning box: "You have pending changes that have not yet been saved." Below the warning box are three buttons: "Save & Close", "Save", and "Close".



# Assign Headings in Word

- Select the text you want to use as a heading.
- On the Home tab, move the pointer over different headings in the Styles gallery. Notice as you pause over each style, your text will change so you can see how it will look in your document. Select the heading style you want to use.
- Add a heading in a Word document video and instruction for Windows and Mac.



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface. The title bar reads "WRIT 150 - Saved to my Mac". The ribbon is set to the "Home" tab, and the "Styles" group is active. A red box highlights the Styles gallery, which contains four options: "Normal", "No Spacing", "Heading 1", and "Heading 2". The "Heading 2" option is currently selected, and its preview shows the text "WRIT 150: Education and Intellectual Development" in a blue, bold font. Below the gallery, the document content is visible, showing the same heading text applied to the document.

WRIT 150: Education and Intellectual Development

Magazine Articles and Trade Publications

ProQuest Research Library USC login required

Provides one-stop access to thousands of full-text periodicals from one of the broadest, most inclusive general reference databases ProQuest has to offer. Search from a highly-respected, diversified mix of scholarly journals, professional and trade publications, and magazines covering over 150 subjects and topics. It covers dozens of subject areas and indexes thousands of general and scholarly titles and provides full-text for a significant number of the articles included.

In many databases you can limit the source type to magazines and trade publications.

News Databases

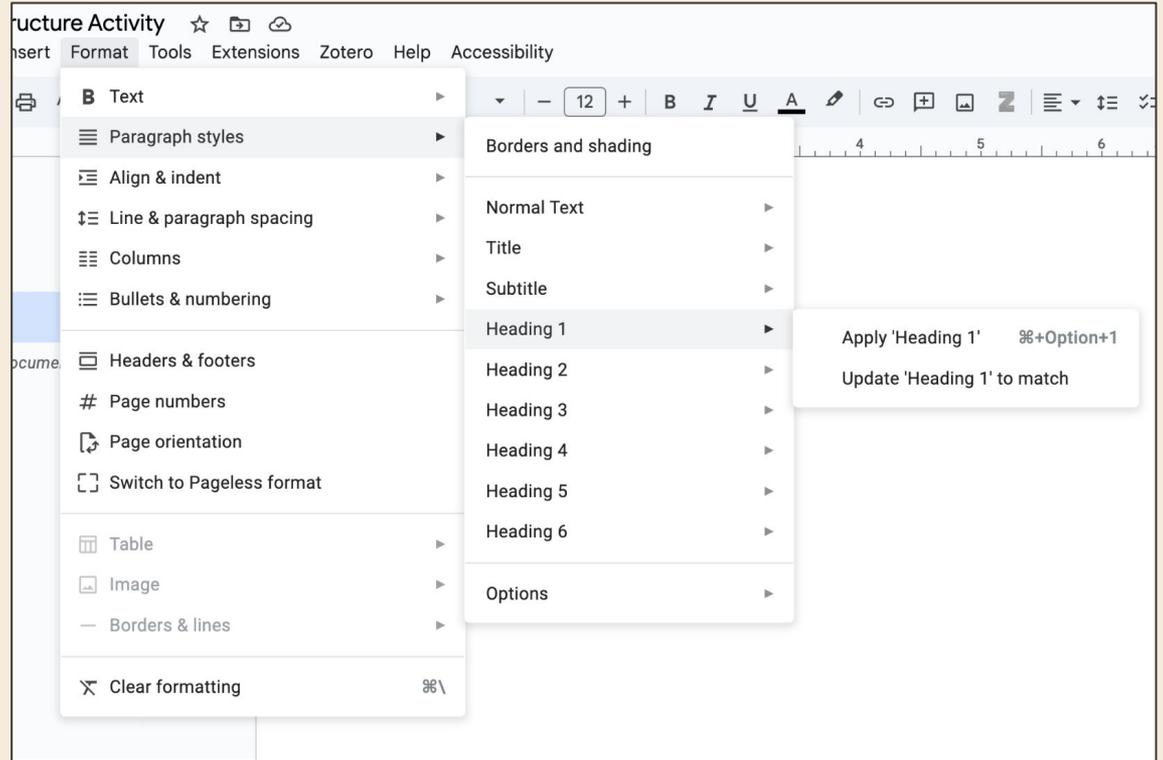
Newspaper articles can provide the latest information about a topic.



# Headings in Google Docs

Google Support [Add a title, heading, or table of contents in a document](#)

1. Click on the Format menu
2. Select Paragraph styles
3. Select the desired heading level to apply to text
4. Update will change the style of the heading





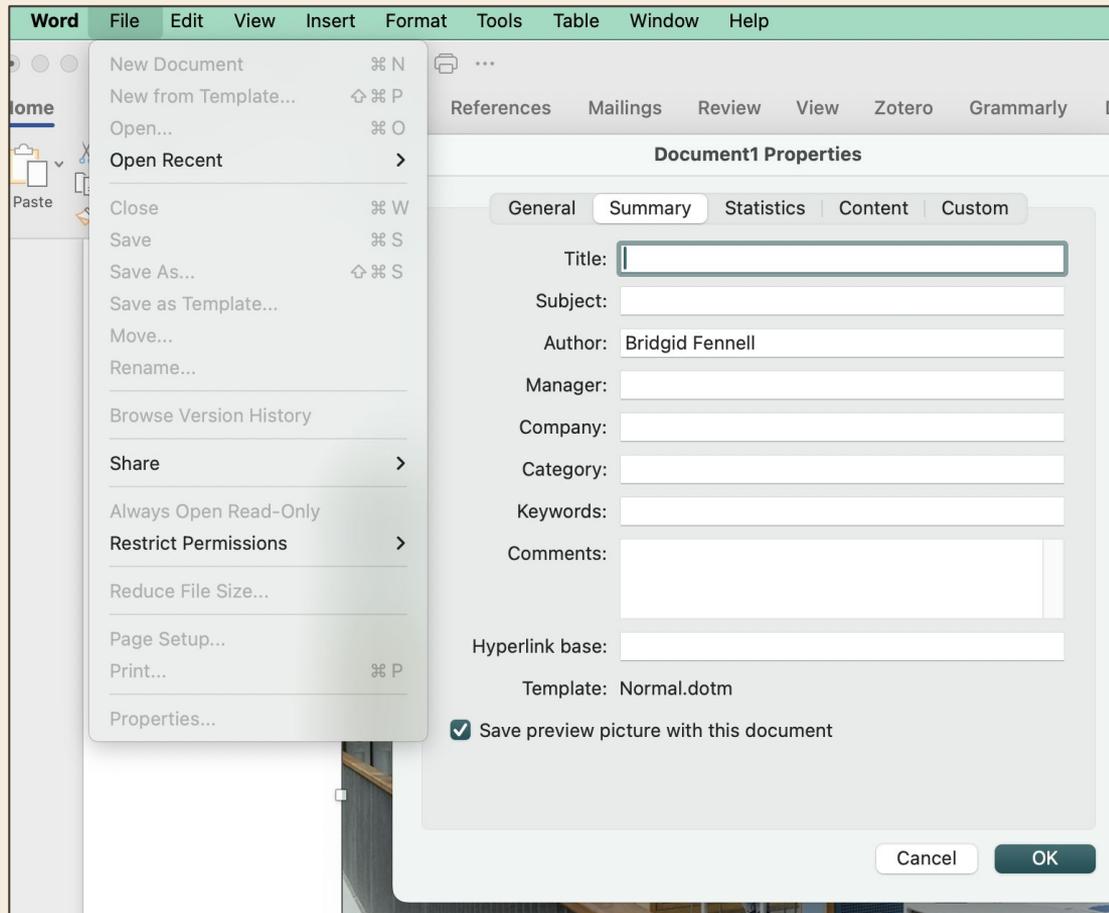
# Accessible Titles

The “title” heading level In Word is not accessible to assistive technology.

To add a title to a Microsoft Word or PowerPoint file, navigate to File > Properties > Summary to enter the document title.

In Google Docs, use the field located in the upper left corner of the document window. By default, new documents are assigned the title “Untitled document”.

See [Titles](#) at the University of Washington for more information.





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# Structure in Slide Decks

## Microsoft PowerPoint

- [Get accessible templates for Office](#)
- [Make slides easier to read by using the Reading Order pane](#)
- [WebAim PowerPoint Accessibility](#)
- [Create Accessible Presentations](#)

## Google Slides

- [Create Accessible Google Slides](#)  
Harvard University Digital  
Accessibility
- [Grackle Slides](#) accessibility checker



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# Listen to Stevie Wonder





# What is one thing you learned in this workshop that surprised you?





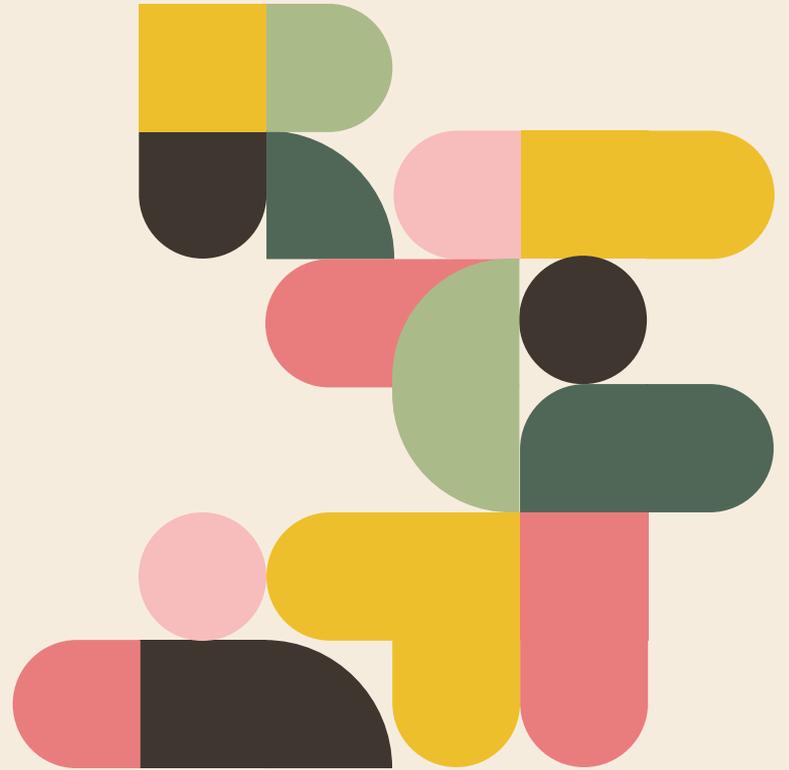
---

# Thanks!

Please take a few minutes to complete the [exit survey](#)

Do you have any questions?  
[bfennell@usc.edu](mailto:bfennell@usc.edu)

**CREDITS:** This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), and includes icons by [Flaticon](#), and infographics & images by [Freepik](#)





# Articles

- Liu, Y. Q., Bielefield, A., & Beckwith, J. (2024). ADA digital accessibility on academic library websites. *College & Research Libraries*, 85(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.2.166>
- Lomax, B. (2024, November 1). 10 Tips toward Accessibility. *American Libraries Magazine*. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2024/11/01/10-tips-toward-accessibility/>
- Miller, M., & Parogni, I. (2022, February 18). [The hidden image descriptions making the internet accessible](#). *The New York Times*.
- Wentz, B., Gorham, U., & Jaeger, P. T. (2023). Academic libraries and their legal obligation for content accessibility. *First Monday*. <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v28i1.12892>

# Resources



## Training

- [University of Michigan Self-Paced BTAA Cultivating Belonging: Library Accessibility Essentials](#)
- College/university compliance trainings and centers for teaching excellence

## LibGuide Accessibility

- [University of Tennessee Knoxville Library](#)
- [Harvard LibGuides Best Practices](#)
- [NYU LibGuide Accessibility](#)

## Accessibility Communities

- [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools](#)
- [Educause IT Accessibility Community Group](#)
- [Accessibility Summer Camp](#) June 13, 2025 \$15, [ASC YouTube Channel](#)
- [Axe-Con](#) from Deque Systems [Deque Systems YouTube Channel](#)