DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

How to make your images accessible in Microsoft Word

It is important to make all images accessible.

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service provides a wide variety of public resources on our website. The most common files are fact sheets and newsletters. These files are typically created using Microsoft Word. When you create documents using Microsoft Word it's important for you to abide by federal and state accessibility laws to ensure your content is readable by individuals with disabilities.

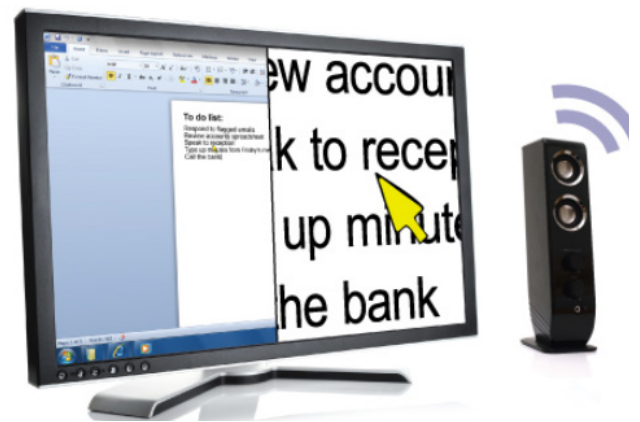## Visually impaired individuals use screen readers to access digital content.

Visually impaired individuals use software called screen readers to read the text in a document aloud to them.

If an image in a Word file has no description, caption, or alt text, a visually impaired person will be unable to understand the purpose of the image.

The image above shows how a screen reader enlarges text on a page while also translating the text into spoken words for visually impaired individuals.

Missing descriptive information is troublesome for charts, graphs, or instructional photos that give important information to the reader.

You can add descriptive information by including "alt-text" to images.

In the next two pages we will step you through the process of adding alt-text using Microsoft Word.

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to instruct Cooperative Extension Service employees on how to make their images accessible using Microsoft Word 2013, 2016, and Word 365 on a Windows operating system.

System and User Requirements

Internet connectivity is not required unless you are using Word in Office 365.

Some basic knowledge of and previous experience using Microsoft Word is required prior to attempting this procedure.

These instructions assume you have already created a Word file with images that are not accessible.

If you have not already created a Word document with images, please do so prior to beginning the first step of this tutorial.

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How to make your images accessible in Microsoft Word.

1. Open your Word document.

2. Scroll to a page with an image.

3. Determine the purpose of your image.

Determine if your image is:

- *Informative* - Photographs or illustrations. Describe what's happening in the image or who is in the photo and why they are important.

- *Decorative* - Clip art. Tell the audience it's for decoration.

- *Functional* - Clickable buttons. Tell the audience what the button does.

- *Images of text* - Infographics, logos, images with text. Tell the reader what's in the text.

- *Complex* - Charts or diagrams. Provide a full-text equivalent so visually impaired readers can understand the content.

- *Groups of images* - Collage or montage. Tell the reader the underlying meaning behind the collage as if it's one image.

4. Right-click on the image with your mouse.

Definitions

Alt text - a word or phrase that can be inserted as an attribute in documents to tell Web site viewers and screen readers the nature or contents of an image.

Screen reader - A "screen reader" is the generic term for a program that helps blind people use a computer. Simply put, a screen reader will "read" (speak) the content of a page to the blind user.

TIP

If the text in your body copy refers to the image in some way, then the image is informative and needs a description. If the image is clip art or ornamental, tell the reader the image is decorative.
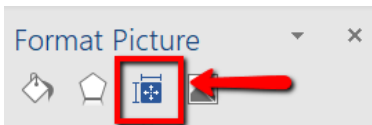
Still not sure?

Go to the alt decitions tree page on the w3schools website. www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decision-tree/

5. Select **Picture** (Word 2013) in the menu.
In Word 2016 select **Format Picture**.
In Word 365 select **Edit Alt Text**.

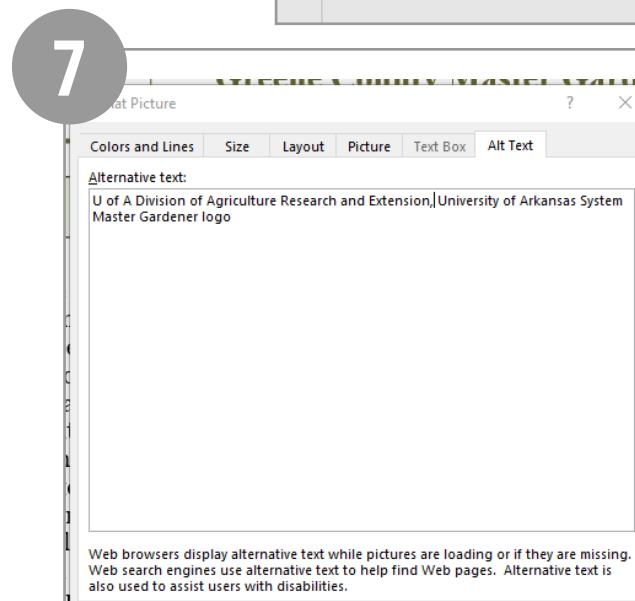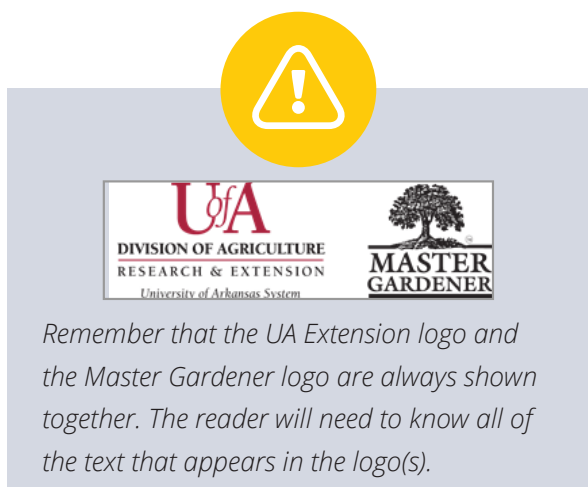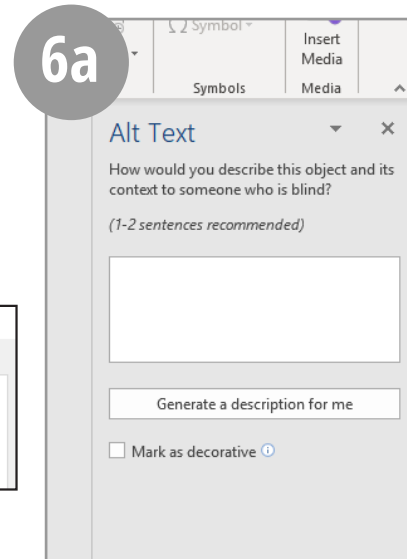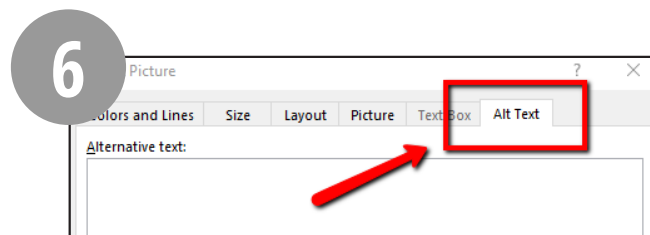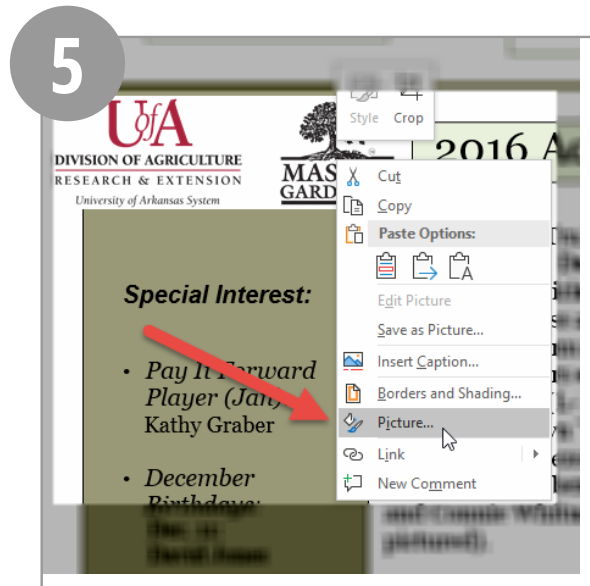6. Select **Alt Text** (Word 2013) from the tab options. See image 6.

In Word 2016 click the **Layout & Properties** icon.

In Word 365 skip this step. See image 6a for the **Alt Text** panel. *NOTE: In some cases, Word 365 may attempt to auto-generate a description of your image. You may need to rewrite it for accuracy.*

7. Type your alternative text (see image 7).*

8. Click **OK**. The image is now accessible.

Remember that the UA Extension logo and the Master Gardener logo are always shown together. The reader will need to know all of the text that appears in the logo(s).

* The next section will describe different examples of images and how to add proper alt text.

All images need descriptions or context.

There are five images on the same page of the Master Gardener newsletter (below).

We need to determine the purpose of each image.

The Advanced Training Class Committee met December 5 to begin strategizing for our October 21st class at the Paragould Community Center. Members of the committee are (L-R): Holly Fletcher, Marilyn White, Agent Dave Freeze, Joy Gatlin, Patti Roberts, Lead and Connie Whitman (not pictured).

1

The class will be called: **Rocking On the Ridge with Masters for Monarch Butterflies.** Sub-Committees will include: 1. Speakers; 2.Registration; 3. Decoration, Set up, Clean up; 4. Copy, Binder, Handouts; 5. Lunch & Refreshments; 6. Door Prizes, Gifts, and Plants.

2

Monarch AND Milkweed
by Helen Frost and Leonid Gore

Since we have the date and location taken care of, we're

now working to secure speakers. Everything we do,

3

4

from *Application Part A* to *Application Part B* to our speakers, must be approved by the Advanced Training Oversight Committee and County 76. It's so nice we have a guide to follow.

5

In the coming months we'll all learn what amazing creatures Monarchs truly are, how important milkweed is to them, and what we can do to help them survive.
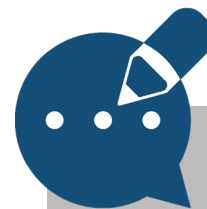
Connie Whitman

TIP

When you save your file as a PDF, the accessible description will be retained in the PDF file, too.

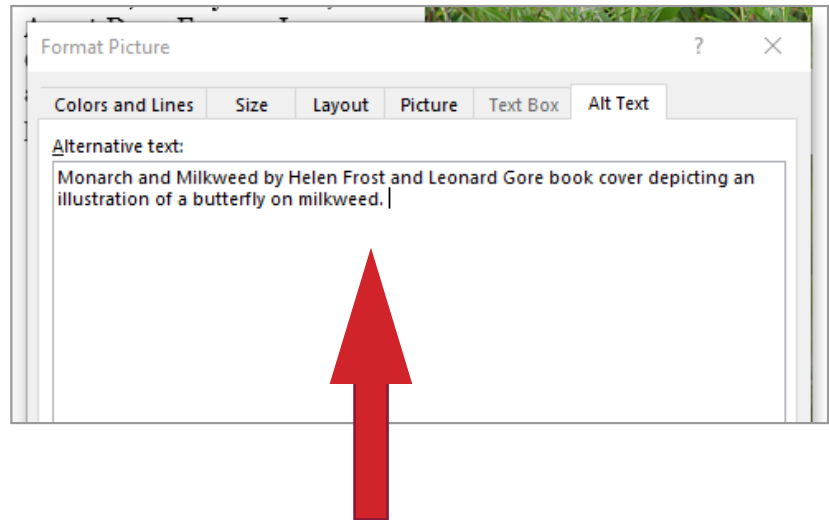Image "1" is described by the content in the document. It does not need alt text.

TIP

Photos described in the body copy are accessible. Screen readers will read the body copy aloud and the person listening will understand what is happening. There is no need to repeat that information in alt text.

Image "2", is not referenced in the content of the newsletter. The image represents the cover of a printed material for an upcoming Master Gardener training.

Format Picture

| Colors and Lines | Size | Layout | Picture | Text Box | Alt Text |

Alternative text:

Monarch and Milkweed by Helen Frost and Leonard Gore book cover depicting an illustration of a butterfly on milkweed.

Add alt text that explains the purpose of the image. Include text inside the image.

Images with text are not accessible. If important information such as dates or deadlines are placed on top of an image, visually impaired readers will be unable to have access to that information. Images with text and no alt text violates federal and state accessibility laws.
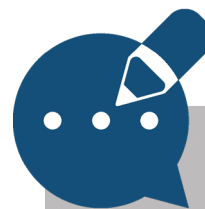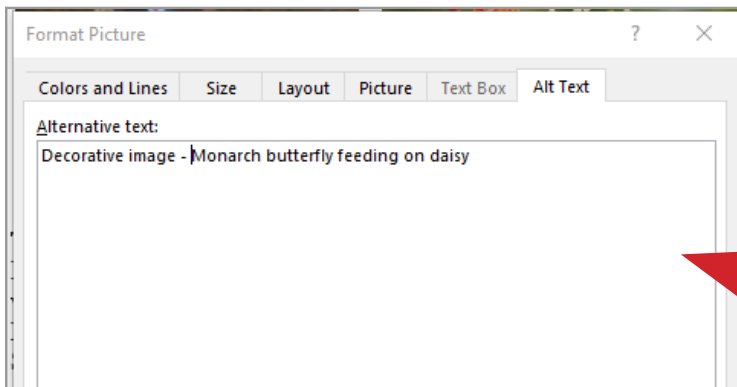
TIP

Some images such as charts or graphs require longer descriptions.
If more than120 characters are needed to provide an adequate description, include a longer description in the document's visible text.

For images 3-5, there is no text referring to the images. These images are photographs that do not serve a purpose other than visual interest.

TIP

For "decorative" photos, add alt text that indicates the images are decorative only.

Format Picture ? ✕

Colors and Lines | Size | Layout | Picture | Text Box | **Alt Text**

Alternative text:

Decorative image - Monarch butterfly feeding on daisy

Adding the phrase "decorative image" (in Word 2013 and previous versions) will inform the visually impaired reader that the image is not necessary to understand the concepts in the document.
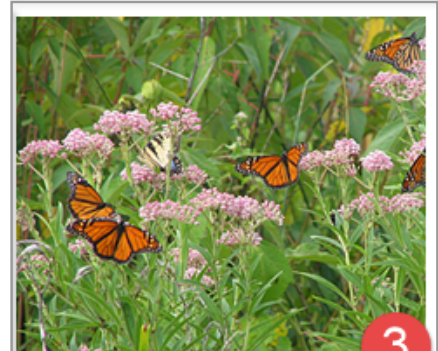
now working to secure speakers. Everything we do,

③

from *Application Part A* to *Application Part B* to our speakers, must be approved by the Advanced Training Oversight Committee and County 76. It's so nice we have a guide to follow.

④

In the coming months we'll all learn what amazing creatures Monarchs truly are, how important milkweed is to them, and what we can do to help them survive.

⑤
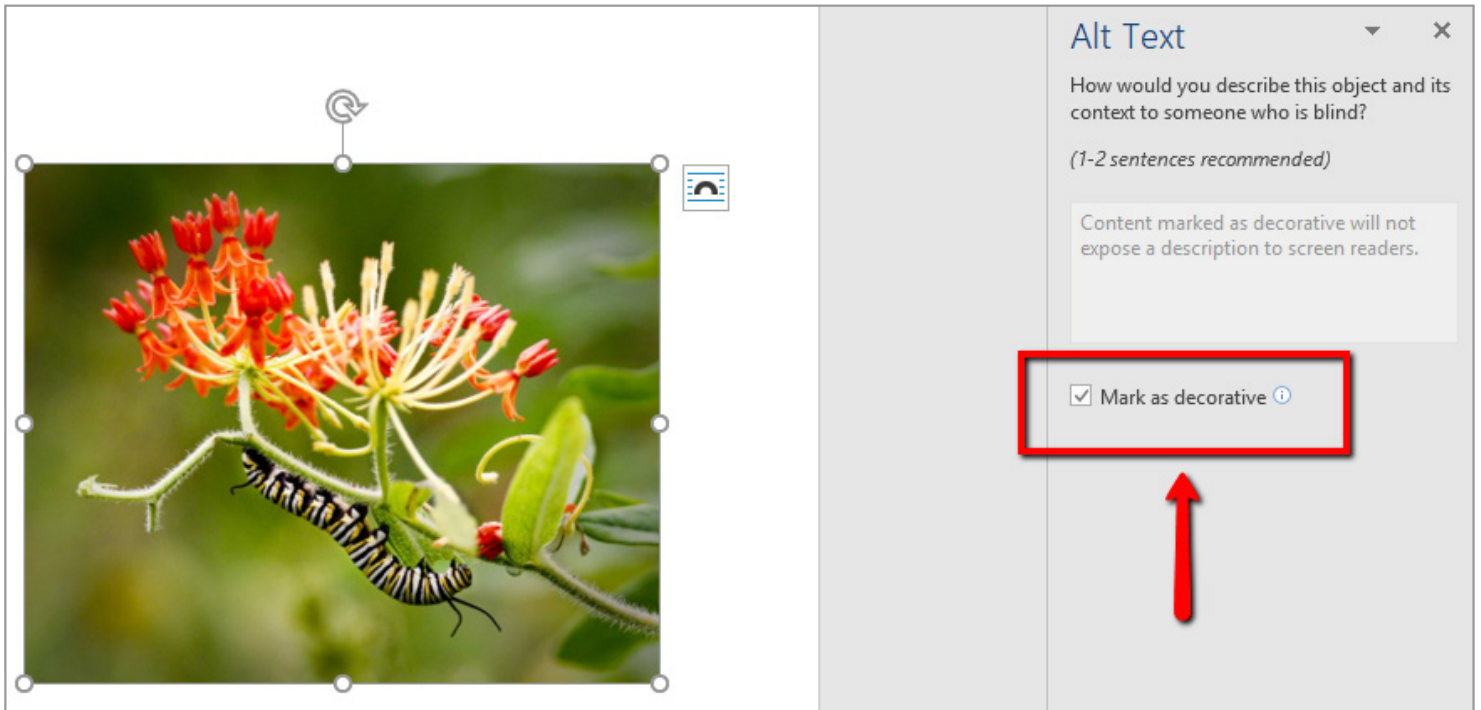
In Word 365 select **Mark as decorative**. This will silence the image for screen readers.

How to write accessible captions.

Captions are a good alternative to alt text because they allow readers to understand how the image relates to the rest of the content.

Below are two examples of revised captions.

The first caption (below) does not contain sufficient information for a visually impaired reader to understand what is happening in the photo.
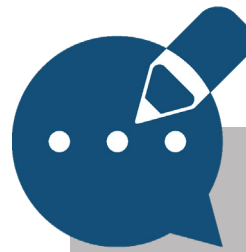
Revised caption suggestion: *"Judy Harmon (left) and Carolyn Palmer (right) holding gardening tools at the county garden project."*

(L-R) Judy Harmon and Carolyn Palmer

TIP

If your photo already has a caption that indicates what is happening, you do not need to add alt text. The screen reader will read the descriptive caption instead.

The caption on the right reads "Greene County Library." However, this is not an image of a library.

Revised caption suggestion: *"The Greene County Library Master Gardener garden is in bloom with red bushes and native herbs. A whimsical sculpture of a girl reading a book is surrounded by annuals."*

Greene Garde...

Greene County Library

Project Updates

Plant Sale: Marilyn White, Cora Flanery, Joy Gatlin & Holly Fletcher, Chairs. The date