

When it comes to crafting effective image descriptions, these are some of the tips that I keep in mind.

- **Avoid flowery language.** Focus on describing the physical aspects of the photo and speak in plain language.
- **Keep the text short.** Most screen readers break up alt text after 125 characters.
- **Exclude “picture of” or “image of”.** It’s already assumed that your alt-text will be for a photo or image.
- **Avoid posting images with text.** If your image has text, you are going to need to add alt text for the copy within the image. This is referred to as “flattened text” in the graphic design world.
- **Using Identifiers.** It is ok to use proper nouns (if the person is well-known for example). Also, extra identifiers such as race, gender or ethnicity are acceptable, particularly when it is helpful for your content as a whole, or the identifier is contextually important.
- **Avoid acronyms if possible.** Type out the full name or title of a person, place, organization, or initiative. Screen readers don’t always read acronyms correctly. If an acronym is absolutely necessary, place dashes in between each letter (U-N-M instead of UNM).

These tips were adapted from the article [“The Art of Alt-Text,”](#) by Alexa Heinrich, Aug. 19, 2020. Visit the article for additional tips and more information on Alt-Text for social media.