Canvas Checkpoint 1.1: Alt-Text

> **Guideline 1.1:** Provide text alternatives: Include alt-text or decorative labels for graphic representations / images **or** provide text descriptions of graphics in surrounding text. The text should serve as a replacement for the image.

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Why it matters

Alternative text (alt-text) is important for people who depend on screen readers, including people who are blind or visually impaired. Screen readers cannot interpret non-text components, so critical visual information will not be conveyed without the use of alternative text. Alt-text should convey the relevant information from any graphic. If a longer description is needed to describe the graphic fully, the explanation can be incorporated into the surrounding text.
Non-text content includes images, charts, graphs, diagrams, audio recordings, animations, buttons, or image maps.

How to test for accessibility

There are several ways to check for alt-text in Canvas, (Option 1) using the Canvas **Accessibility Checker**, (Option 2) by checking the HTML code, and (Option 3) by using a screen reader. Choose the one that works best.

Option 1. Canvas Accessibility Checker

For a detailed explanation of what the tool checks and instructions on how to use it, see the Canvas forum page.

1. Open a page and select "Edit" on the upper right side of the page. This will open the Rich Content Editor. Click on the Canvas **Accessibility Checker** icon in the bottom right corner of the tool bar.
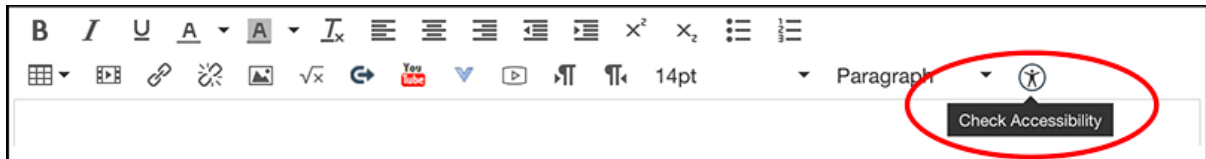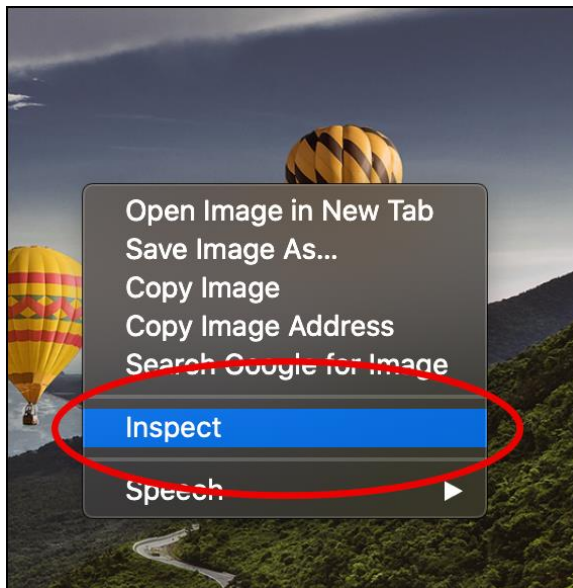

2. Canvas will check to see whether there is alt-text, whether the alt-text is the name of a file, and the total length of the alt-text. It cannot check whether the alt-text makes sense or is a good description of the image.
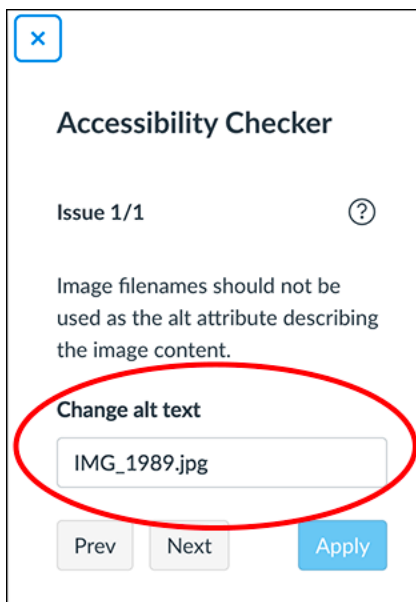
Option 2. Individual image code check

1. Right-click or command (⌘) click on the image. Open "Inspect."

2. Check the highlighted html code for the alt tag. Edit as needed.


```
<img style="display: block; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;
max-width: 802px;" src="https://utk.instructure.com/courses/87297/
files/3933099/preview" alt="I T 570 Course Header image of a hot air
balloon floating over the mountains. " width="1494" height="540"
data-api-endpoint="https://utk.instructure.com/api/v1/courses/87297/
files/3933099" data-api-returntype="File"> == $0
```

Option 3. Page check using a screen reader

Using a screen reader or native accessibility features of the device, have the page read and listen for alt-text. This will reveal in what order the alt-text is being read in relation to the surrounding text.

- Mac OS users - VoiceOver, in the latest Safari browser.

  o Open VoiceOver (Command +F5) and place cursor at the beginning of text.
  o Press Ctrl + Option + A to read the entire selection.
  o Close Voiceover when finished.

- Windows 10 users - Narrator, in the latest Edge or Google Chrome browser.

  o Open Narrator (Windows + Ctrl + Enter).
  o Press Ctrl + Insert + R to start reading *or*
  o Insert + R to read from the cursor.
  o Press Ctrl to stop reading.
  o Exit Narrator (Windows + Ctrl + Enter).

How to make accessible

Best Practices for Alt-Text (**Webaim.org**)

- **Be accurate and equivalent** in presenting the same content and function of the image.

- **Be succinct.** This means the correct content (if there is content) and function (if there is a function) of the image should be presented as succinctly as is appropriate. Typically, no more than a few words are necessary, though rarely a short sentence or two may be appropriate.

- **NOT be redundant** or provide the same information as text within the context of the image.

- **NOT use the phrases "image of ..." or "graphic of ..."** to describe the image. It is usually apparent to the user that it is an image. And if the image is conveying content, it is typically not necessary that the user know that it is an image that is conveying the content, as opposed to text. If the fact that an image is a photograph or illustration, etc. is important content, it may be useful to include this in alternative text.

There are several ways to add alt-text to images:

Option 1. Using "Image Option" menu

1. Upload an image to Canvas from the toolbar on the right side of the page. Click "Browse."

2. Choose a file from the computer and there will be the option to add alternative text or to mark the image as decorative. Then, click "Upload" and the file is ready to be added to a page.

3. To add a previously uploaded image file, click on the "Embed Image" icon.

4. Add or edit alt-text under "Attributes," or mark the image as decorative before embedding into the page.
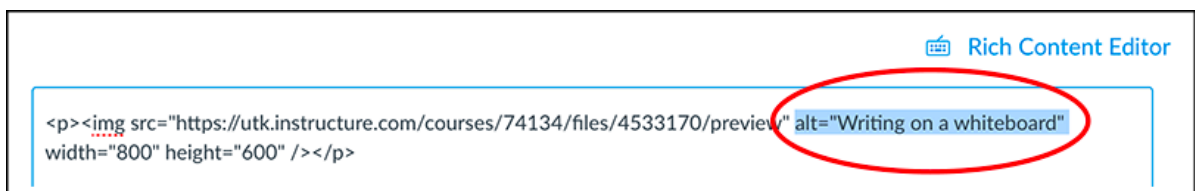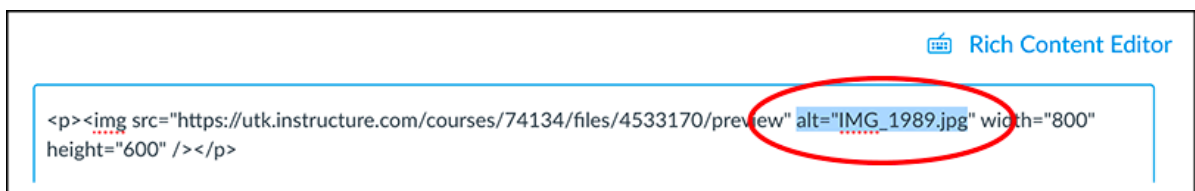

Option 2. Using the raw "HTML editor"

5. If an image has already been embedded into the page, check or edit the alt-text by opening the "HTML Editor," located above the right corner of the toolbar.
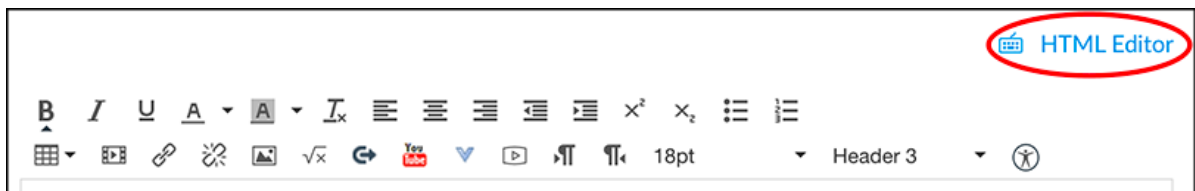
6. Find the alt tag associated with that image. Delete and edit the text between the quotation marks.

Special Considerations

There may be complex graphics or non-text elements (i.e., charts, graphs, tables) that cannot be adequately described in alt-text. If this is the case, include detailed descriptions of the relevant content (data and relationships) in the surrounding text instead of, or in addition to alt-text.

Tools/Resources

More powerful screen reader software for Windows

- [NVDA](#) (free) in the latest Firefox browser

- [JAWS](#) (paid, free 30 min. trial)