

To Alt Text or Not Alt Text?

Does the image contain text?

Yes:

Text is also present as real text nearby: Use an empty alt attribute (alt=""). Mark as decorative.

Text is only shown for visual effects: Use an empty alt attribute (alt=""). Mark as decorative.

Text has a specific function (e.g., icon): Use the alt attribute to communicate the function of the image (e.g., alt="Print icon").

Text in the image is not present otherwise: Include the text of the image in the alt attribute (e.g., alt="Patient discharge instructions").

No: Continue to the next question.

Is the image used in a link or a button, and would it be hard or impossible to understand what the link or button does if the image wasn't there?

Yes: Use the alt attribute to communicate the destination of the link or action taken (e.g., alt="Submit form").

No: Continue to the next question.

Does the image contribute meaning to the current page or context?

Yes:

Simple graphic or photograph: Use a brief description that conveys the meaning (e.g., alt="Doctor examining a patient").

Graph or complex information: Include the information contained in the image elsewhere on the page and provide a brief alt text (e.g., alt="Graph showing patient recovery rates").

Content redundant to real text nearby: Use an empty alt attribute (alt="") or mark as decorative.

No: Continue to the next question.

Is the image purely decorative or not intended for users?

Yes: Use an empty alt attribute (alt=""). or mark as decorative.

No: Continue to the next question.

Is the image's use not listed above or it's unclear what alt text to provide?

Refer to detailed information on the provision of text alternatives in the [Images Tutorial](#) from the w3c.