



Accessible Images



Rebecca Cottongim (rcottong)
Instructional Designer

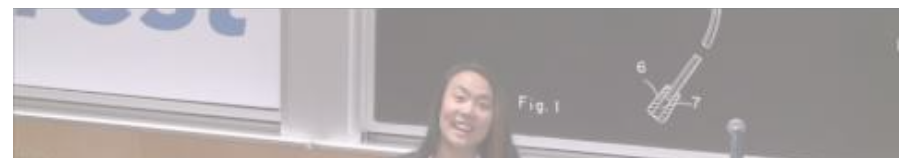
This page aims to answer the following questions:

- [Who benefits from accessible images?](#)
- [What is alternative \(alt\) text?](#)
- [What's the difference between decorative and functional images?](#)
- [How do I make decorative images accessible?](#)
- [How do I make functional images accessible? How do I write good descriptions?](#)
- [What tools are available to help me make images accessible?](#)
- [Where can I learn more about accessible images?](#)

Who benefits from accessible images?

Accessible images benefit **everyone**, especially:

- Users who are blind or have low vision.
- Anyone using assistive technology.





- Anyone experiencing the webpage failing to load (alt text denotes where the missing image should be).

Students at MIT created a portable device, Tactile, that converts print to braille. Cool!

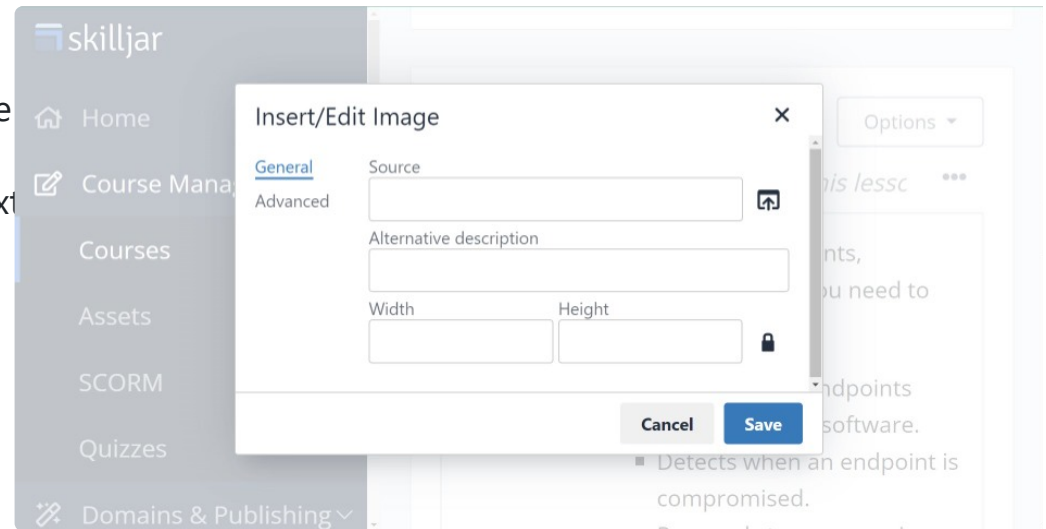
What is alternative text?

Before we jump into how to make images accessible, it's important to understand what alternative (alt) text is.

Alt text is a part of the code of an image. If someone is using a screen reader, text-to-braille translator, or other assistive technology, alt text is what's used to translate

or describe the image. It is indexed by search engines. It also displays on the page if the image fails to load.

Programs are equipped to allow for input of alternative text. When you insert an image, there's a field to enter alternative text. It's not always easy to locate the alt text field, but all programs have the ability to add it.



In Skilljar, you can add images to HTML content blocks. When you click Add Image, the Insert/Add Image window appears. Alternative text can be added to the "Alternative description" field.

✓ Note: Auto-generated descriptions

What's the difference between decorative and functional images?

To make your image accessible, you must first determine if the image is decorative or if it serves a purpose or function.

Decorative Images

- Can be deleted from the content and have no effect on the learning experience.
- Add to the aesthetic of content.
- Add to the user's enjoyment of the content.
- Don't teach or demonstrate anything.

Functional Images

- Provide significant value, and, if removed from the content, alter its learning experience.
- Teach something new.
- Add to the learning experience.

✓ Examples: Decorative and Functional Images

How do I make decorative images accessible?

Do:

Indicate to assistive technology (screen readers, etc.) that the image is decorative. This tells the screen reader it can skip over the image. This will save the user time and mental effort trying to figure out if what they're hearing is important. To mark an image as decorative:

- **Type double quotations** ("") in the alt-text field.
- If it's available, **check a box** to indicate that the image is decorative.

Don't:

- Describe the image.
- Leave the alt text field blank. If an alt text field is blank, some screen readers will attempt to describe the image to the user.

✓ Examples: Indicating images are decorative

How do I make functional images accessible? How do I write good descriptions?

Do:

Describe the image in the alt text field. To do this:

- Use **plain language**.
- Consider the **context** of the image. Include information that is important for the learner to know.
- Convey the **“why”** of the image as it relates to the content of a document or webpage.

Note: Writing alt text for functional images is more of an art than a science. Two people could write two different alt texts and both be correct and helpful for the learner.

Don't:

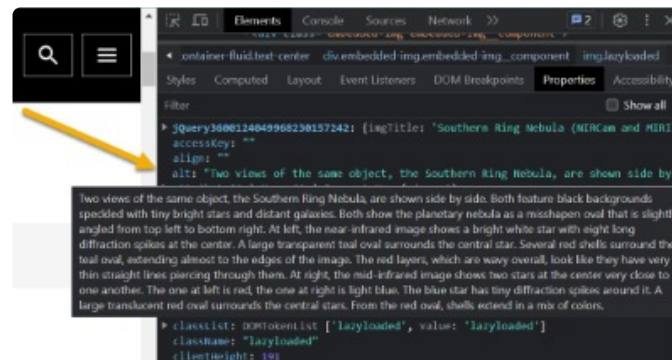
- Describe every aspect of the image in detail. Stick to what's important for the learner.
- Include "image of" or "photo of" in your description; the screen reader will do this automatically.
- Repeat what's in the text of the page.

✓ Note: Functional images in other contexts

✓ Examples: Alt text

What tools are available to help me make images accessible?

- [An alt Decision Tree](#): Use this decision tree to help you decide if an image is decorative or functional.
- To read the alt text on images on webpages:
 - Right-click the image.
 - Click **Inspect**.
 - Under the Elements tab, click **Properties**.
 - Hover over the alt line of code to make the full alt text appear.
- Use your screen reader to listen to the alt text. To turn your screen reader on and off, hold down the following keys:
 - **Windows**: Windows logo key + Ctrl + Enter
 - **Mac**: Command + F5.



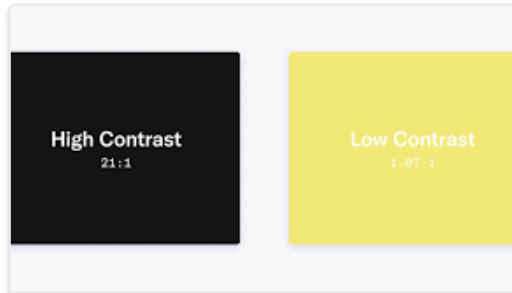
Alt text can be found in the inspection pane of your browser

Where can I learn more about making images accessible?

- [Alternative Text](#): This guide by WebAIM will walk you through what alt text is, what to include, and more.
- [Write Good Alt Text to Describe Images](#): See examples of alt text written for a variety of contents.
- [Image Tutorial](#): Learn about other categories of images and how to make them accessible.
- [Webb's First Image Gallery](#): Use the inspection pane or your screen reader to read or listen to more examples of alt text (see tools section above).
- Cisco Learning & Development has several courses available that tie to International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) certifications:
 - [Fast Track to Accessibility for Non-Technical Roles](#)
 - [MS PowerPoint Accessibility Techniques](#)
 - [Accessibility Fundamentals - Disabilities, Guidelines, and Laws](#)
 - [MS Word Accessibility Techniques](#)



Reviewing for Accessibility



Accessible Text



Accessible Links



Accessible Videos