

ALT TEXT

(ALTERNATIVE TEXT)

NOUN. A label or description that is *tagged* (assigned) to a visual element so that it can be “read” by screen readers. (Elements without alt text are ignored.) Because content varies by element, the alt text for a single item may range from a few words to several paragraphs! Some visual elements (such as maps) contain both graphics and text. For items like these, the alt text must describe the graphics AND include any text that the (human) reader would need to interpret the element correctly.

EXAMPLE: VISUAL WITH NO ALT TEXT & SURROUNDING CONTENT

Locate the capital of Ohio on the following map.

[A map of Ohio is shown.]

Now, locate the capital of Oklahoma on the next map.

THE SCREEN READER WILL READ

BACK: Locate the capital of Ohio on the following map. Now, locate the capital of Oklahoma on the next map.

EXAMPLE: VISUAL WITH ALT TEXT & SURROUNDING TEXT

Locate the capital of Ohio on the following map.

[A map of Ohio is shown and it has been tagged with the following alt text: *A map shows several cities in Ohio. Its capital, Columbus, is located in the central region of the state, northeast of Cincinnati and east of Dayton.*]

Now, locate the capital of Oklahoma on the next map.

THE SCREEN READER WILL READ BACK: Locate the capital of Ohio on the following map. A map shows several cities in Ohio. Its capital, Columbus, is located in the central region of the state, northeast of Cincinnati and east of Dayton. Now, locate the capital of Oklahoma on the next map.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Visual elements that are used for decoration do not need alt text.
- Inclusion of alt text with applicable elements on websites is required for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines.