Alternative Text

The Meaning Behind the Image

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What is Alternative Text?

Definition: Alternative text provides a clear and concise description of an image, chart or graph. It should not duplicate nearby document text.

Special Note: Context is **KEY** to meaningful alt text

Avoid: "image of" or "graphic of". A screen reader will already identify that an image is being encountered.

Decorative/ Null Alt Text

Images that are purely decorative add visual interest but don't add meaningful information. Purely decorative images, such as spacer elements, can be marked as "decorative" or "null"

Special Note: The page author must decide if an image is truly and purely decorative or has meaning

Hyperlinked Images

What is the function of the image? Example below: alt text would be NC State University home

Complex Images

- Give the image a succinct name
- Add information to the document
- Can use a data chart to share information as well

Fruit:	Apple	Orange	Banana	Kiwifruit	Blueberry	Grapes
People:	35	30	10	25	40	5
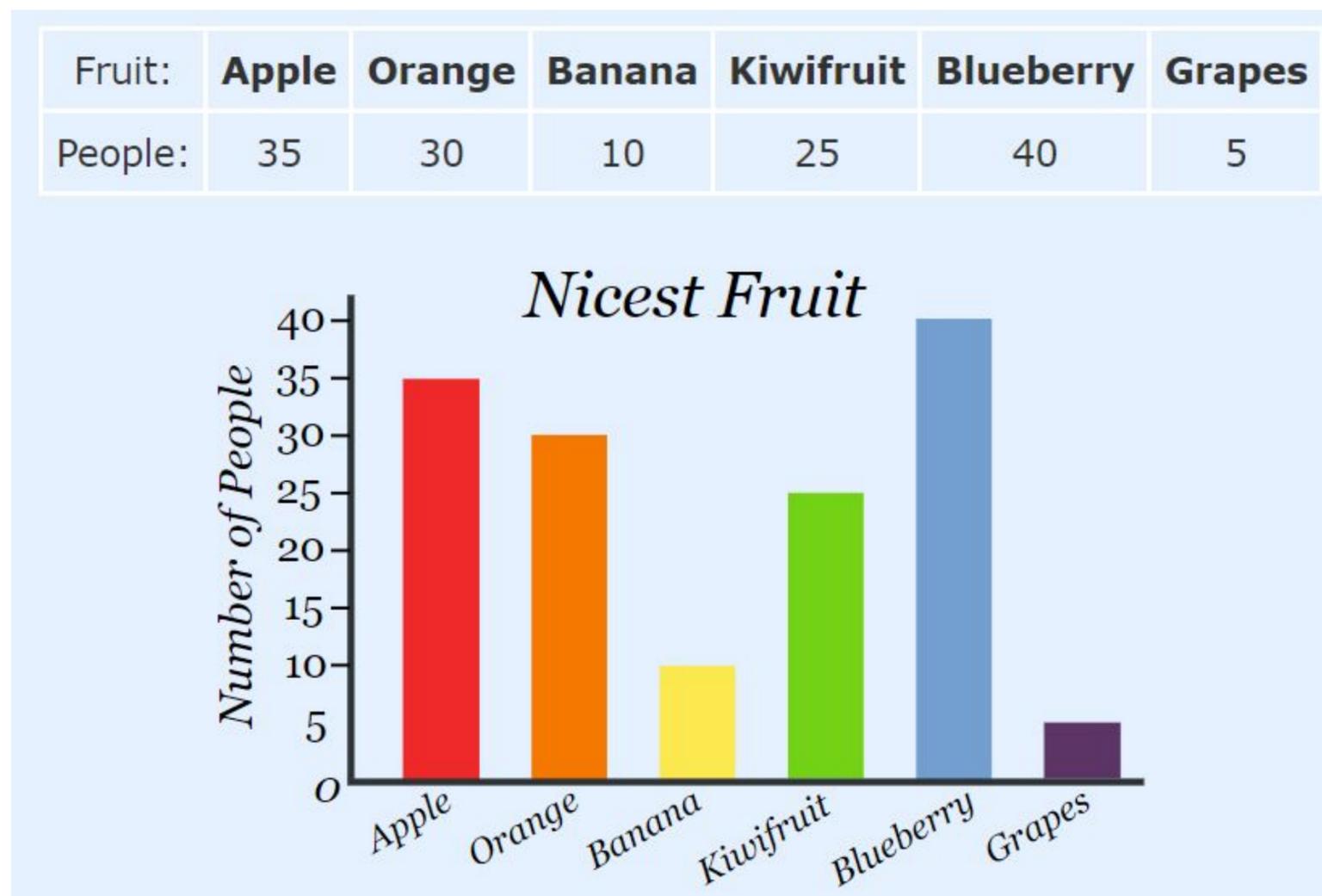
Decision Tree

Step 1: Does the image contain text?

No: Continue

Yes:

A) And the text is also present as real text nearby
   a) Mark as null/decorative
B) And the text has a specific function, for example an icon
   a) Alt text should communicate the function of the image
C) And the text in the image is not present otherwise
   a) Alt text should include the text in the image

Insert and tap your Security Key to enroll...

Powered by Duo Security
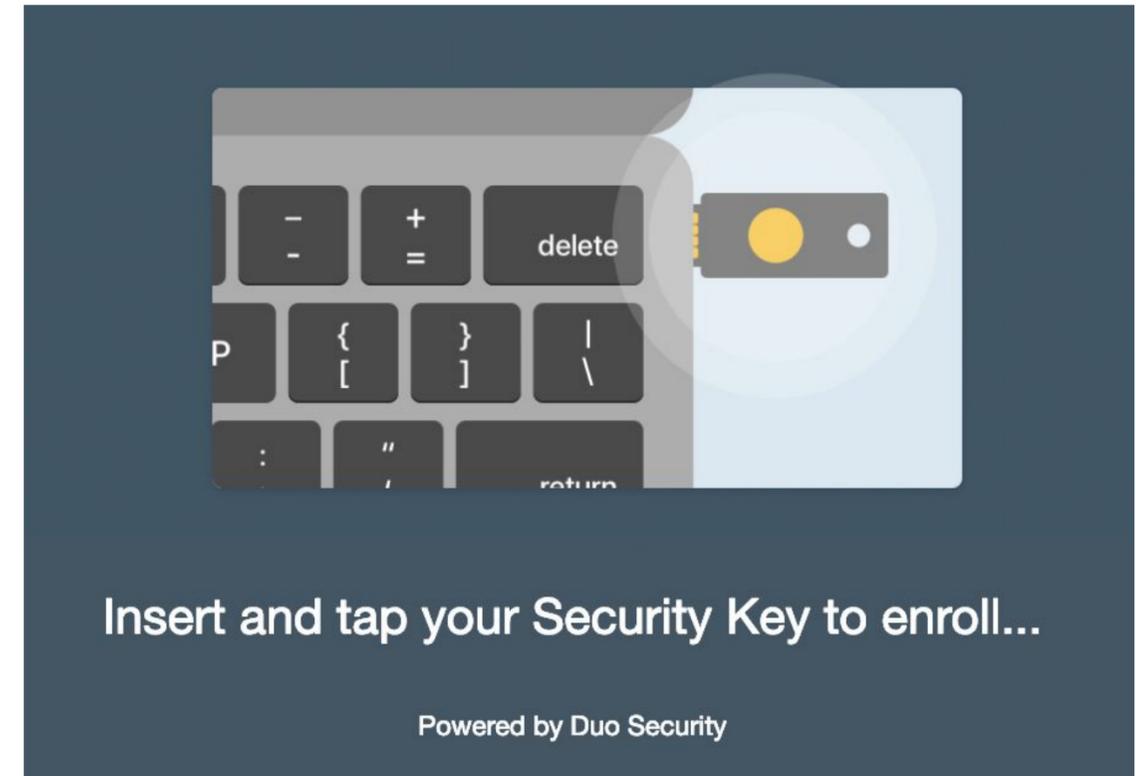
Step 2: Is the image a link or a button?

No: Continue

Yes: Alt text should communicate the destination of the link or action taken.

Example:

Step 3: Is the image meaningful?

No: Continue

Yes:

A) And it's a simple image

  a) Alt text should convey meaning of the image

B) And it's complex or a graph

 a) Alt text should be the name of the graph or complex image and rest of the information should be included in *real* text elsewhere on the page

C) And it shows content that is redundant to *real* text nearby

  a) Alt text should be decorative/null

Existing U2F Users: Security Key Update

If you're a user who enrolled a U2F token for Duo authentication before the security key update, you'll be prompted to update your security key registration for that device the next time you log in with Chrome or Edge using that U2F authenticator.

Simply click **Continue** and tap the security key.

Let's Update Your Security Key

This update will allow you to use your security key in more browsers.

A pop-up window will prompt you to tap your key to update.

Continue   Skip this update
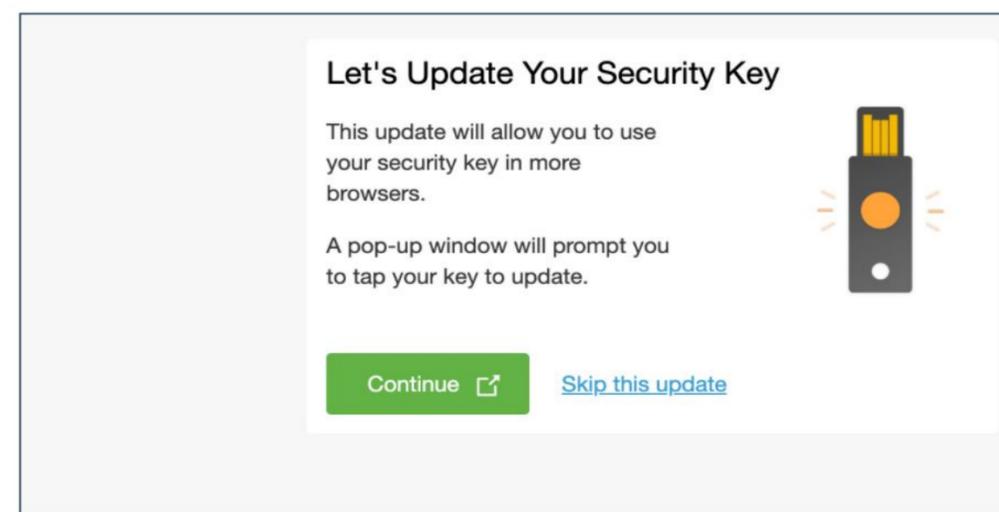
Step 4: Is the image purely decorative?

No: Continue

This decision tree does not include every image type. Contact us for questions about complicated images.

Yes: Decorative/ null alt text

Example:
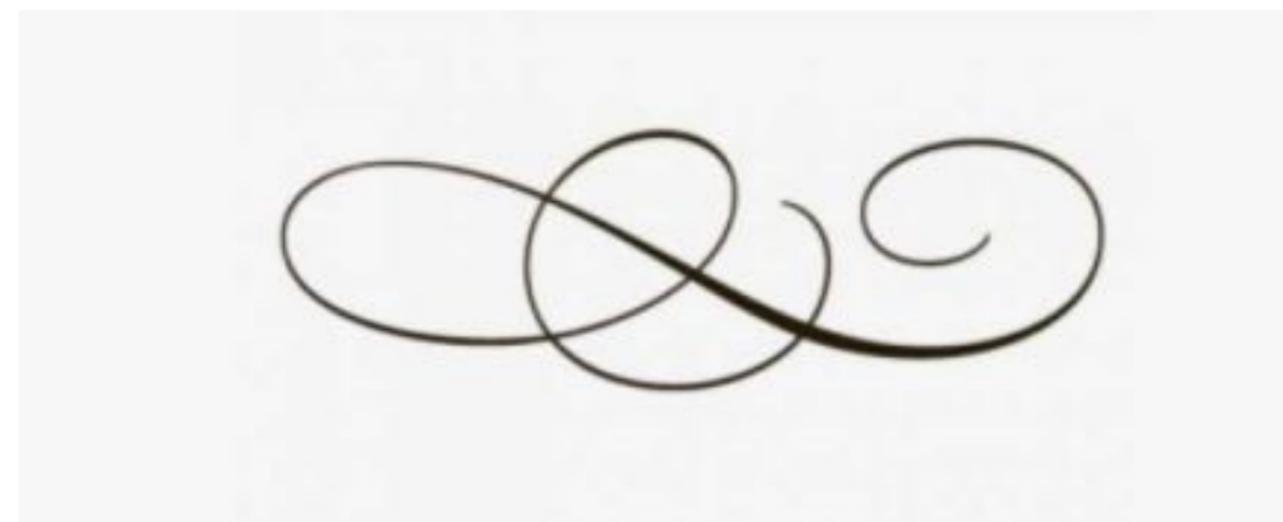
Examples

Example 1

Current Physical Accessibility Projects

> Updating the campus transition plan to include updated physical accessibility concerns and recommendations
> 2019 Student Government accessibility funds project (project identification coming soon)

Event Sponsors:

> Student Government
> Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity
> Office of Information Technology
> Disability Resource Office
> Facilities Division
> Campus Wellness and Recreation
> University Housing

Which would be the best alternative text for this image?

A) null/ decorative/ """"
B) Script line with swirl details
C) Image of script line with swirl details
D) Four inch black line with fan detail in the middle

Example 2

Which would be the best alternative text for this image?

A) null/ decorative/ ""
B) Metal wolves on the Brickyard
C) Wolves
D) Picture of wolves

Example 3

Which would be the best alternative text for this image?

A) null/ decorative/ ""
B) Correct way to wear a mask
C) Correct way to wear a mask covers chin, nose, and mouth.
D) Picture of facemask on face

NC STATE

Implementing Alt Text

WordPress

- Add you alt text to the **Alternative Text** or **Alt Text** field.
- Leave field blank for decorative images in current versions WordPress

Google Docs

1. Right click and select **Alt text**
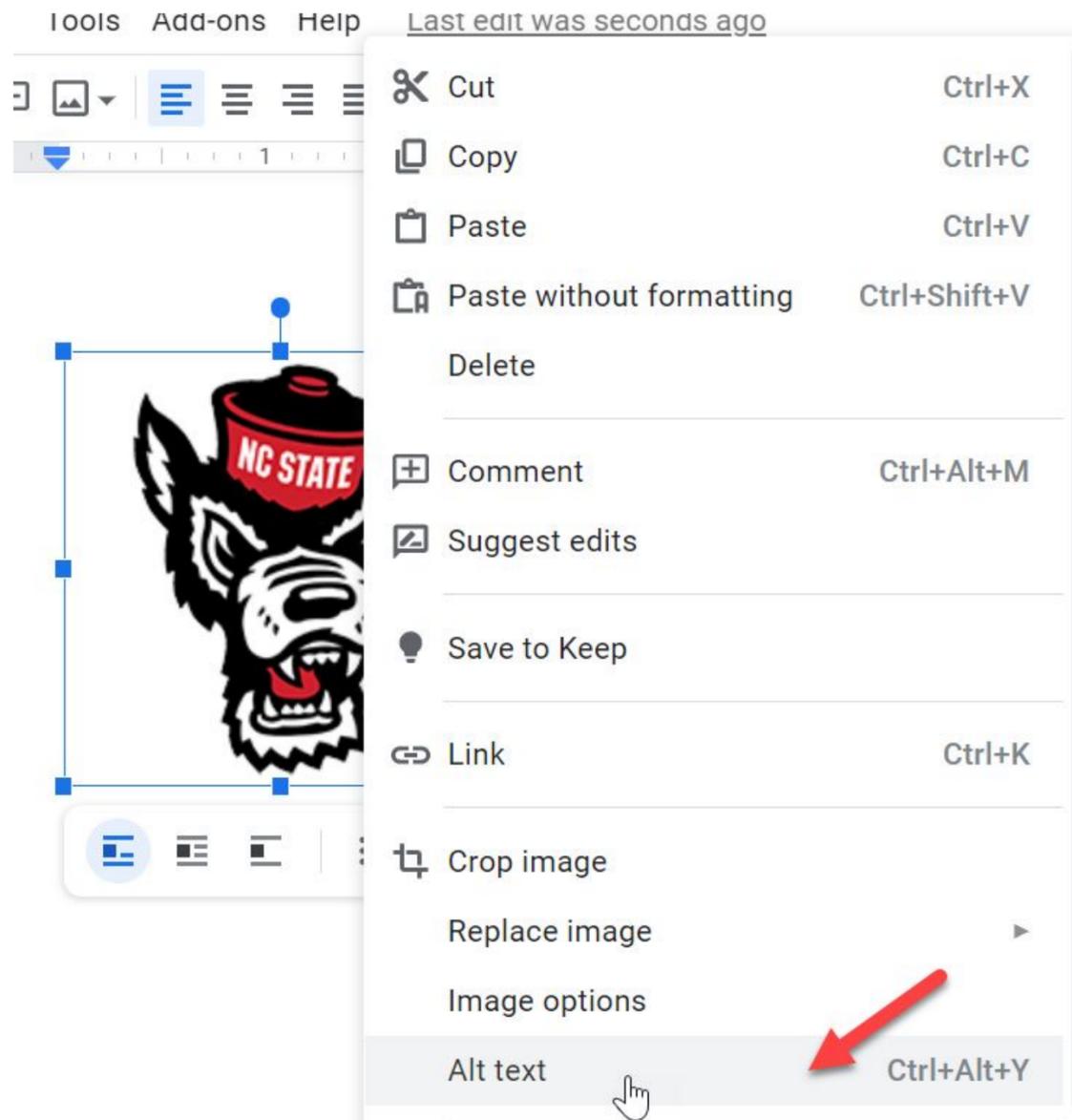
2. Add alt text to **Description** field.

Title field can be left blank
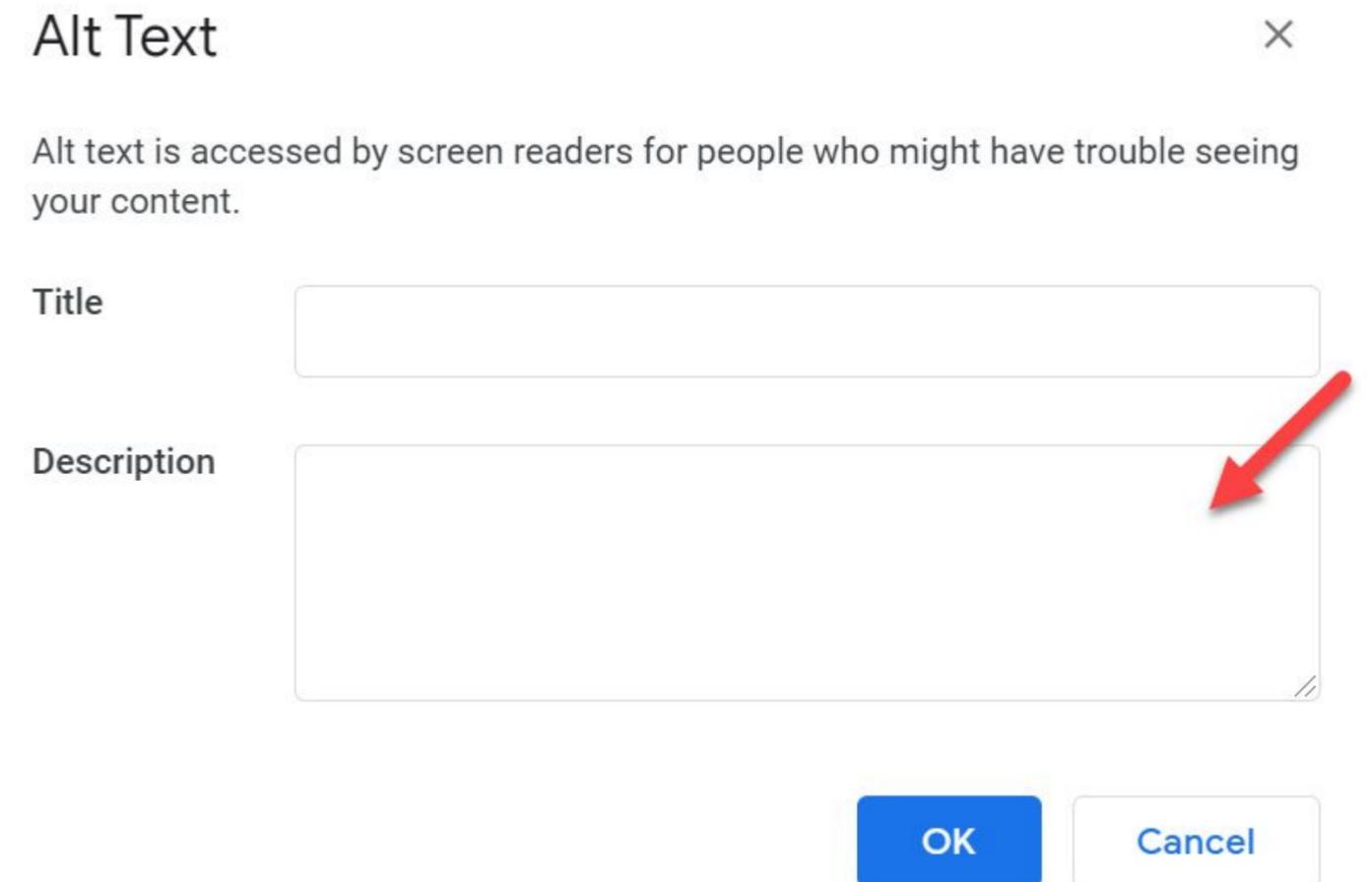
# Microsoft Word

- Right click and select **Alt text.**
- Add alt text to the **description** field, not the title field.

NOTE: Word 2019 has the ability to mark an image as decorative and ai generated alt text.

We **do not** recommend using ai generated alt text.
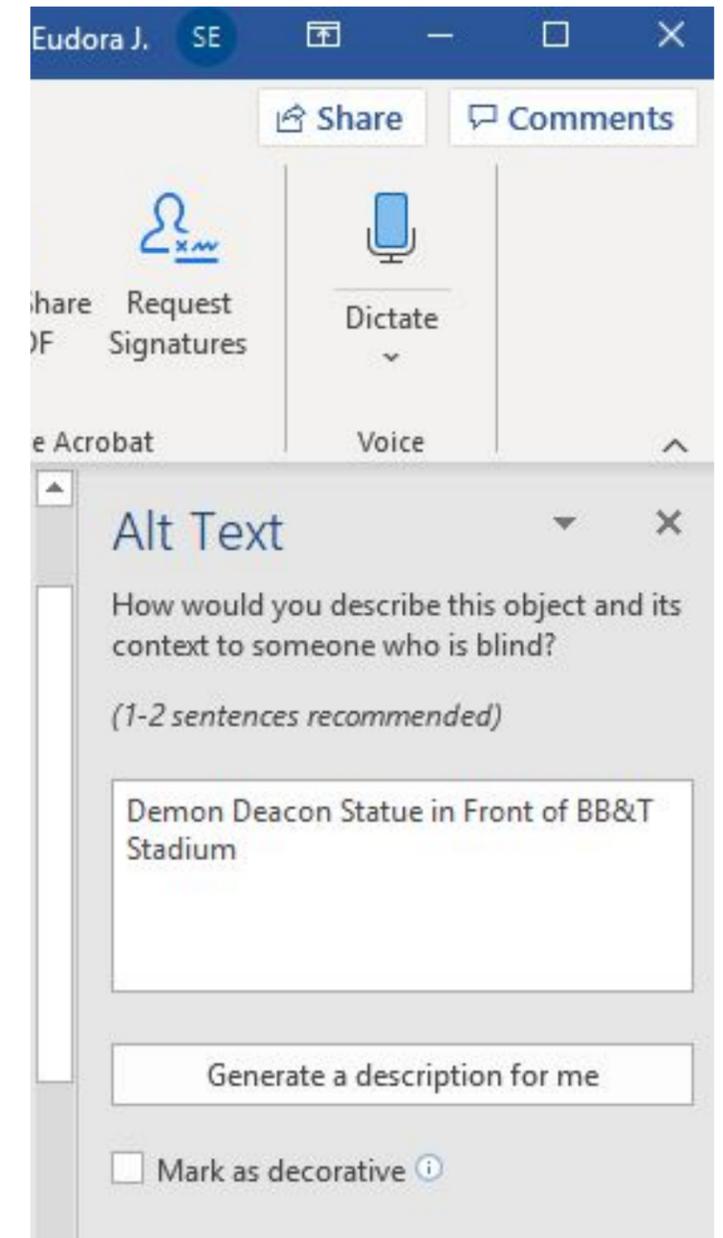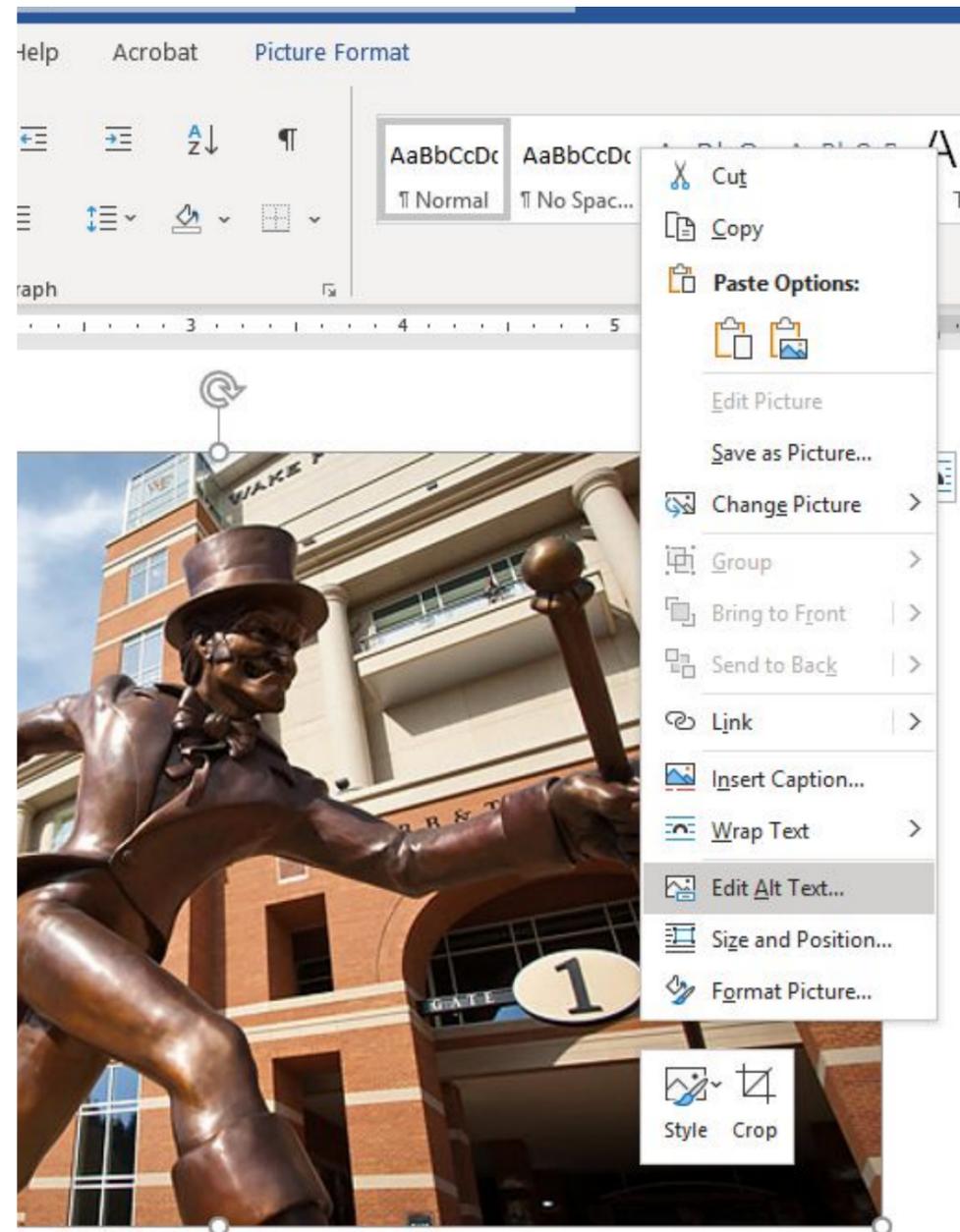
Questions & Discussion

Contact Information & Resources

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- W3C Alt Text Decision Tree
- WebAIM: Alt Text
- NC State University: Alt Text