



ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY

Alternative text (alt text) is an important tool for ensuring that our social media is fully accessible to everyone, unfortunately, a lack of clear guidance means that it is easily and often forgotten about. Alt text provides a textual description of non-textual content like images and is vital for people who use screen readers and other aids.

It may seem that this is not common or important but in 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) established that approximately 2.2 billion people globally are visually impaired to some extent. This means that many individuals will use a screen reader, which is an assistive technology that translates text and images into speech and/or braille. In addition to visual impairments, alt text is often helpful for neurodivergent people as it can help put images into a wider context.

The internet and social media hold a significant place in modern day life and it is important that efforts to make things more accessible to disabled/neurodivergent people extends to the online world.

When alt text is not provided for an image, this can result in some people not having the full or intended experience of the content being distributed. The solution to this problem is as simple as including alt text in your post. Remember, alt text is not a caption. Alt text is supposed to be a literal and detailed description of a photograph. This allows disabled people or those with additional needs to digest their online content fully.

Do's

If possible, confirm how people would like to be described.

Be descriptive of the entire content of the picture.

Above all, be respectful.



Don'ts

Don't make assumptions about someone's identity e.g. ethnicity, gender.

Don't include "image of" or "photo of".



EXAMPLES OF ALT TEXT



Two people sit around a camera pointed at an object



Image description/alt text: A person with shoulder length blonde hair sits to the left of the frame, while an individual with black hair twists and moustache is sat to the right, behind a camera. The camera rests on a camera stand facing a small photography light box with an artefact - possibly an axe head.



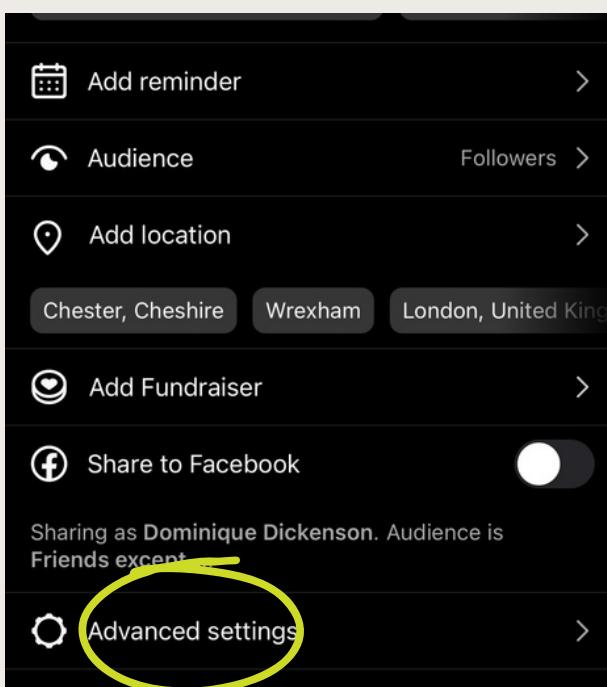
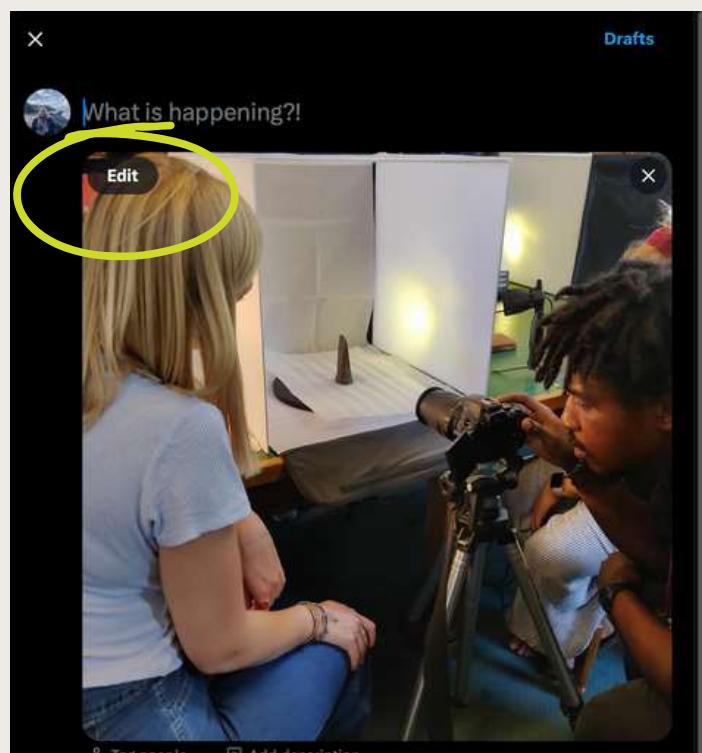
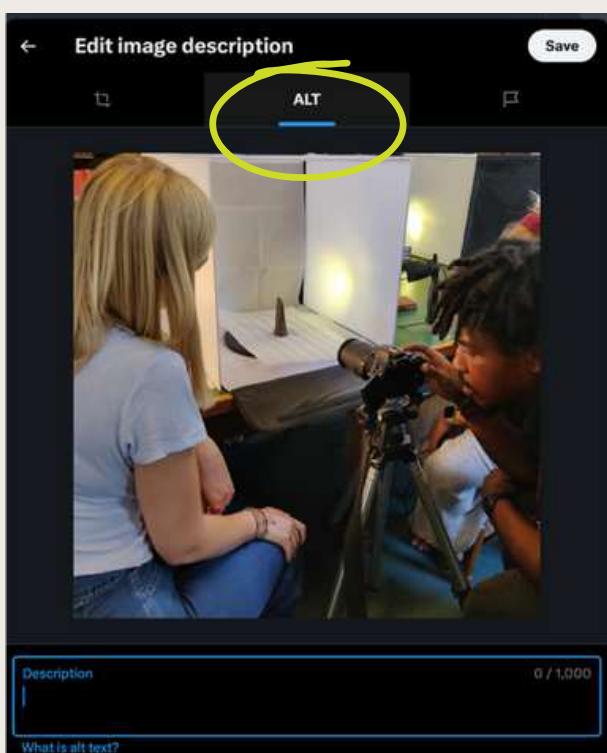
Three people stand in a row taking a picture of the person in front of them.

Image description/alt text: Three children stand in ascending height order, the shortest being at the left, and tallest at the right. Each child is seemingly taking a picture of the person in front of them. They are stood in the sunshine, on grass in front of a stone wall.

Where to find accessibility aids:

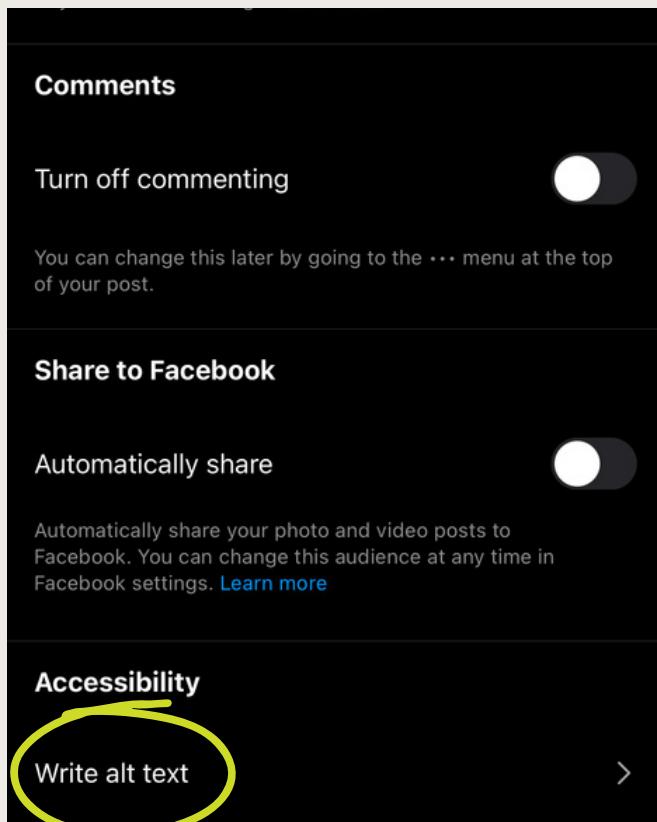
Twitter (X)

When adding a picture to a post, select 'edit' on the top left-hand side of the screen. Then, select 'ALT' and write your image description in the space provided.



Instagram

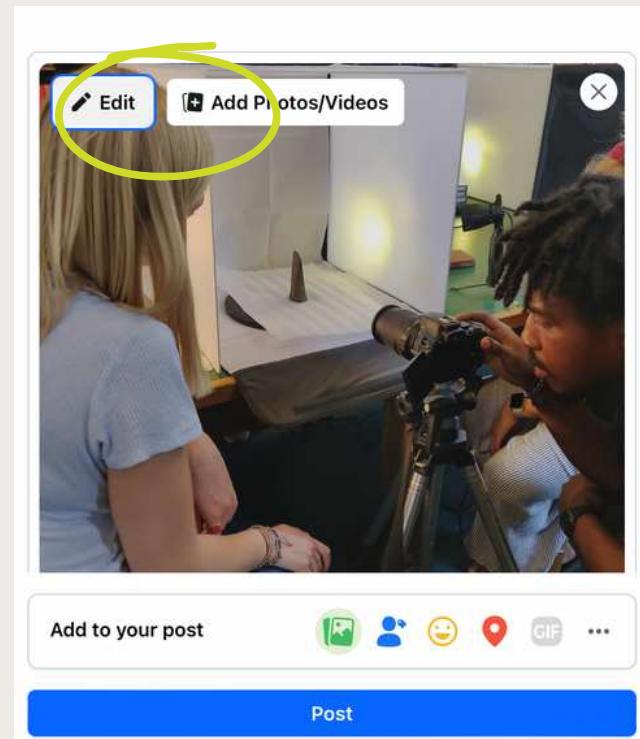
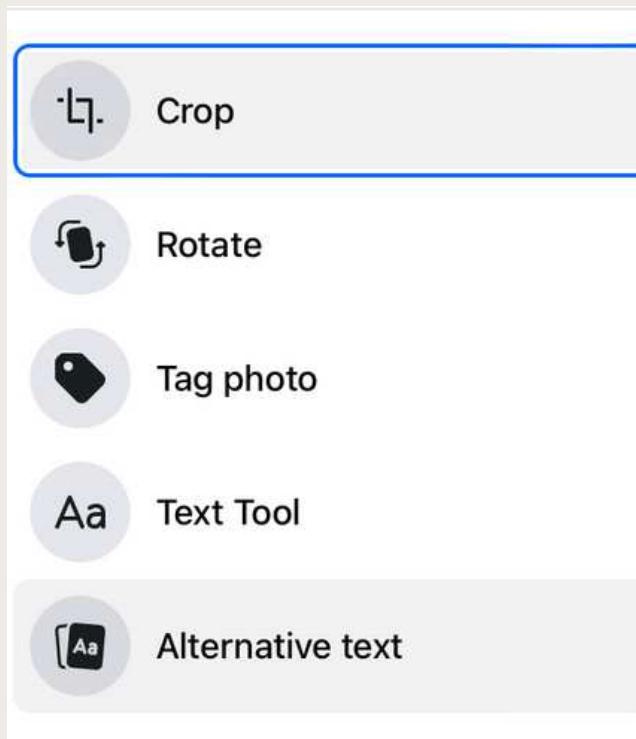
Begin by selecting the picture you want to post, when you get to this point, scroll to the bottom and select 'advanced settings'



Once you are on the advanced settings page, selecting 'write alt text' at the bottom of the page. This will allow you to write your image description.

Facebook

Begin by adding your picture to your post. Select the 'edit' option in the top left of the screen. Select the 'alternative text' option and proceed to add your alt text



Created by Dominique Coleman on behalf of the CBA,
as part of an industry placement organised by the University of Chester

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