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Glossary of Terms

This page is still under construction. The Production Coordinator will be bringing this page up in the next team meeting.

A big part of writing Alt-text is being as direct and concise as possible. The words we use have a big role in how this is accomplished. You can learn more about being direct and concise on the General Guidelines page.

On this page you will find a list of terms to use for describing trickier parts of images, including, but not limited to, facial expressions, culturally specific clothing, buildings, etc..

This is a resource for you! So please add to this list! You can add your additions directly to this wiki page, or email them to the Production Coordinator. If you add them directly, please inform the Production Coordinator so she can review them and share the update with the team!

When in doubt, post the image and your question in the Alt-text Q&A!

Suggested Words

In this section you will find options for descriptive words. This is an ongoing list that will be added to and adapted.

Clothing

Colour

For images in Black and White see Describing Colour in Images

Most colours you simply state what it is:

- Black
- Blue
- Red
- Green
- White
- Grey
- etc.

For descriptors of colours, you want to stick to the facts and be objective. Some context requires more

emotive descriptors, and this is based on the surrounding text and audience. When in doubt, post the picture and your question on the Alt-text Q&A

Some common descriptors include:

- Light
- Dark
- Pale
- Bright
- Shiny/Shining
- Glittery
- Glowing
- Vivid (Bright, intense colours)
- Subtle
- slight
- metallic
- Fiery (Burning or glowing like fire)
- Glistening (Sparkling or shining like glitter)
- Sepia (A reddish/brown colour, like old photographs)
- Blotchy (Discoloured or patchy)
- Translucent (Allowing light to pass through)
- Transparent (Clear; see-through)
- Tinted (or Slightly colored)
- Faded (Less bright)

Cultural and Religious Items

- coming soon

Body Movement

- Walks
- Runs
- Steps
- Reaches
- Stretches
- Lunges
- Swats
- Stands
- Leans
- Tilts head to the Side
- Tilts head forward

Facial Features

- Grins (smile that shows teeth)
- Grins widely

- Smiles (smile that does not show teeth)
- Smiles widely
- Crooked smile
- Smirk
- Frown
- Opens mouth in conversation
- Opens mouth to sing
- Laughs

Textures and Patterns

You don't always have to describe in detail the pattern of someone's shirt, and can often just state something like: `floral pattern` or `checkered` or `plaid`. If the context calls for more details, stick to the facts. The following words can help you. You can also provide an example of what a texture may be like, if it is clear in the context, for example: `smooth as glass`.

- Dotted (A series of small spots or marks)
- Polka Dots
- Flecked (Having a spot or small patch of color)
- Floral
- Plaid
- Checkered
- Smooth
- Bumpy
- Rough
- Sharp
- Diveted
- etc.

Words/Terms to Avoid

- Coniferous Tree(s): use pine tree, evergreen tree
- Neutral expression
- Open mouth
- Only describe mouth if it is a clear expression that gives meaning to the image

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