



**YOUTH
MUSIC**

Accessible Communications

About us

We're the UK's **biggest young people's music charity.**

Every year, we invest over **£10m in over 400 projects** to reach more than 80,000 young people.

We believe that every young person should have the chance to change their life through music.



Grants & Learning Officers

Content

- An in-depth look at what we mean by the term disability, and the Social Model of Disability.
- Tips, tricks and tools to make your digital content more accessible.
- Practical applications.
- Resources and next steps to support you in your accessibility journey.

This presentation is not:

- Going to cover everything.
- Going to make you all experts.
- Going to give you all the answers.

But this is the first step!

Why be accessible?



- **Human imperative:** It's the right thing to do. We should want a happier, productive society where everyone can benefit & contribute.
- **Equality, equity and inclusion!**
- **Supports everyone's needs** – not just those of disabled people.
- **Reach more people:** making information accessible means you can reach more people more quickly and easily.
- **Legal requirements/risk.**
- **Business sense.**

Section 1

Overview

Key Facts

Source

[Scope.org: Disability Facts and Figures](https://www.scope.org.uk/disability-facts-and-figures)

- There are around 14.6 million disabled people in the UK.
- 17% of disabled people were born with their impairment.
- 21% of working age adults have a disability.
- 12 million people in the UK have a form of hearing impairment.
- Around 5% of disabled people are wheelchair users.

The Equality Act

Under [The Equality Act 2010](#), a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment.
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform day to day activities.

Who are Disabled People?

People with the following conditions may be covered under the Act:

- Wheelchair users
- People with mobility impairments
- People with vision impairments
- People with hearing impairments
- Deaf people who use BSL
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health conditions
- People with progressive conditions
- People with non-visible impairments

Discrimination

The Equality Act works by protecting people from discrimination when accessing education, employment or goods and services.

Discrimination can come in one or more of these forms:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Discrimination by perception
- Discrimination by association
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments

Disability Models

Medical Model

The principles of the medical model are based on cure, welfare and care. In this model, disability is seen as a problem, and the solution is to cure or fix the disability.

Within this model, disabled people:

- Are defined by their disability
- Are seen as being, or having, the problem
- Cannot fully participate in society because they are disabled

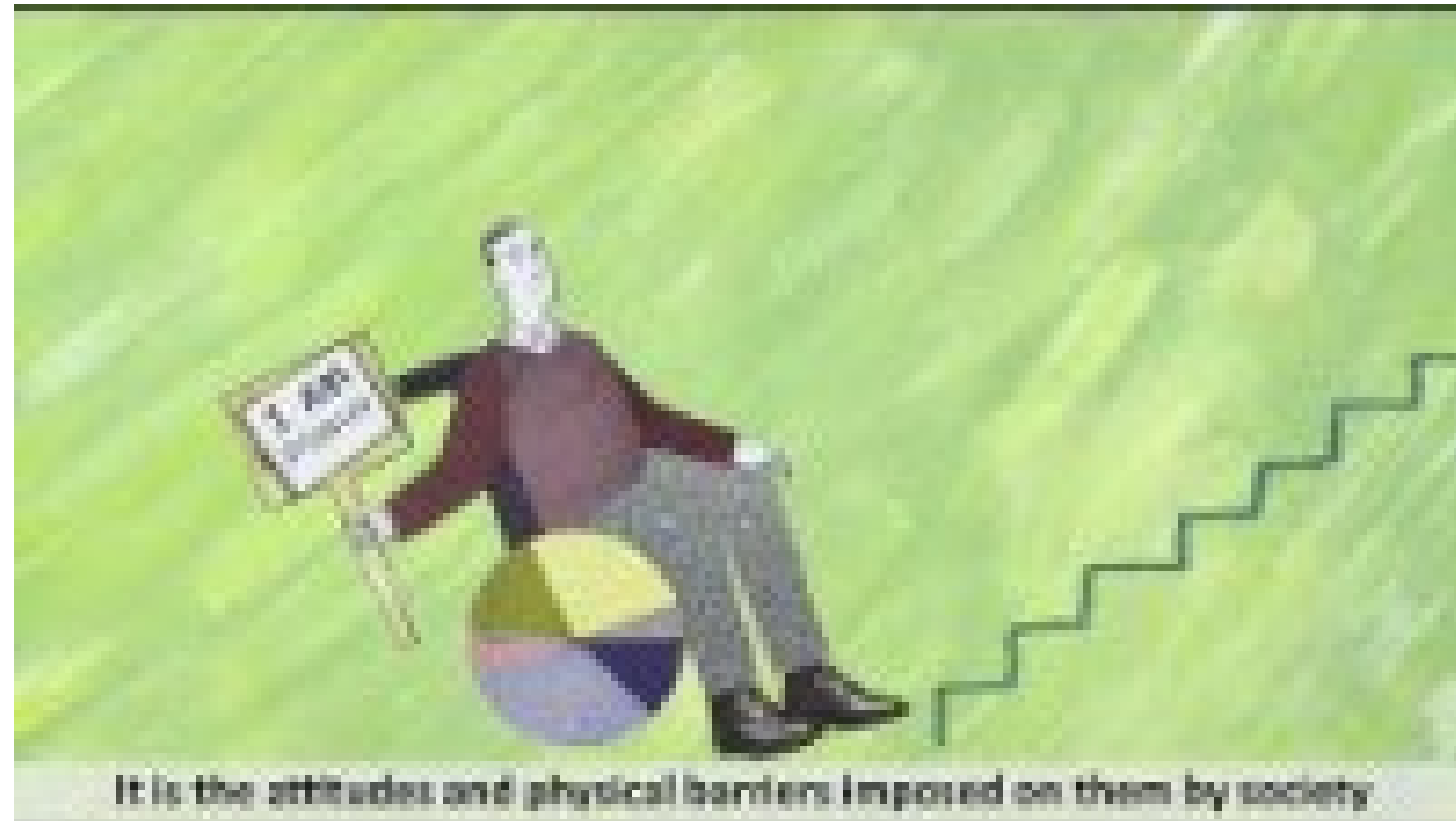
Tragedy Model

Disability is a tragedy. Disabled people:

- Suffer with their conditions
- Are inadequate, expensive or needy
- Can be a drain on everyone else's resources
- Only achieve their goals by using bravery, courage and heroism to "overcome" their disability

Helps fuel the tabloid view of "scroungers" or "superhumans".

Social Model



- This model is developed by and for disabled people.
- It is based on the idea that the “problem” does not lie with the disabled person.
- The fact that society is organised in a way that creates discrimination and inaccessibility.
- This model moves the focus away from a person’s impairment and focuses on removing the barriers that disable people.

Break

5-minute comfort break
Grab a drink, pen and
paper!



Section 2

Tips, tricks and
tools for being
more accessible

What is content?

We use 'content' to describe one or a combination of text (copy), video, and images. For example:

- Text for job descriptions
- Emails
- Tweets
- Press releases
- Newsletters
- Blogs
- Presentations
- Information on websites

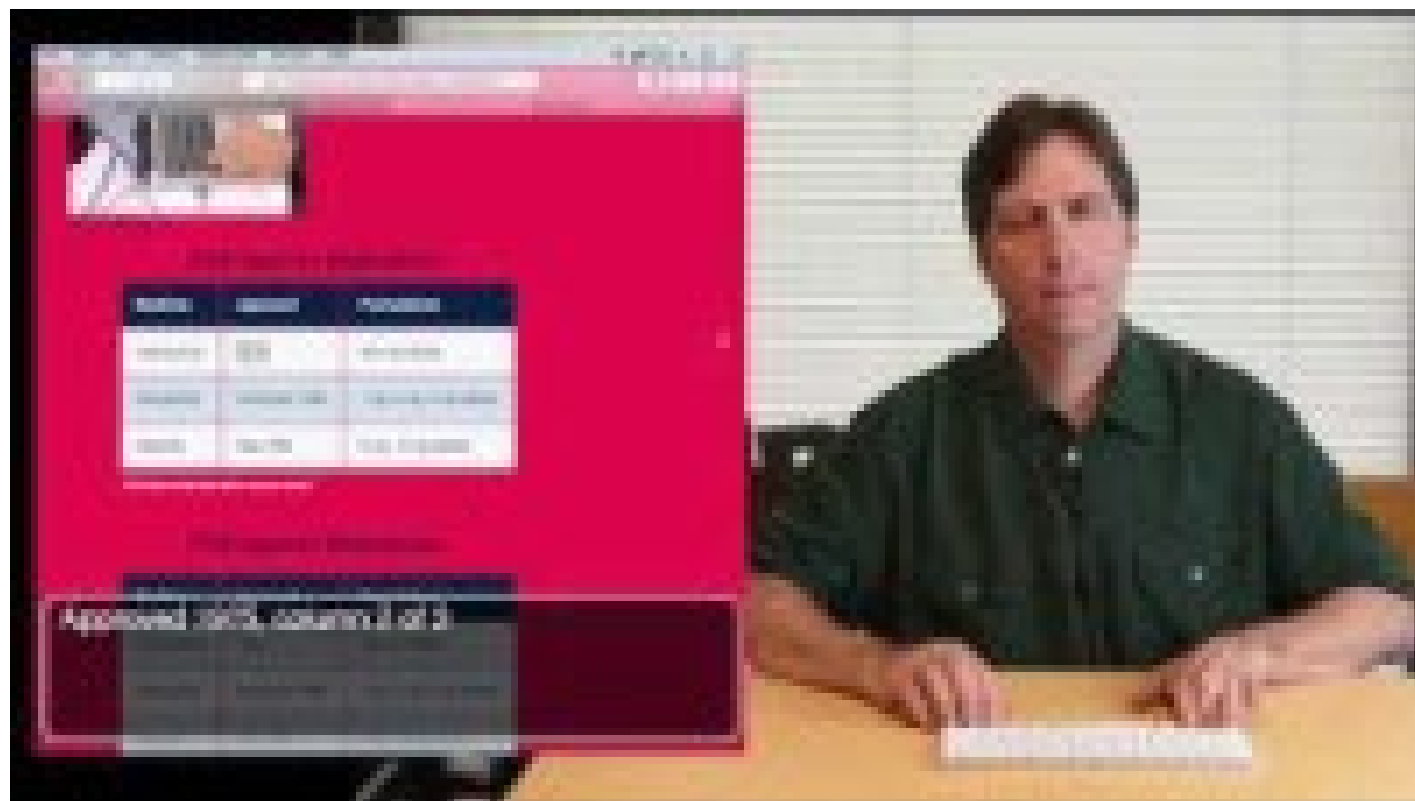
Some users will use assistive technology to access your content. Below are some examples of tools to access online content:

- **Screenreaders (speech & Braille):** JAWS, Supernova, Zoomtext, NVDA, VoiceOver, Narrator
- **Magnifiers:** Magic, Supernova, Zoomtext
- **Reading:** Dragon, Read & Write, ClaroRead
- **Recognisers:** Seeing AI/Enable AI, KNFB Reader, NGTS, Be My Eyes
- **Others:** Dwell Clicker, Workspace, Eye Gaze, Grid3

However, in order to use these tools effectively your content needs to be made accessible!

Prompt

Watch a Youtube video of a user using a screenreader to understand their experience (or download a free one and try it out!).



Exercise 1

Look at the text below. Focussing on the language, how can we make this text more accessible?

“If you have any questions, suggestions, spot something that does not seem right, feedback, or simply need advice don’t hesitate to get in touch with the YM accessibility champions.

YM is devoted to inclusivity and as such we have designed this document to support you when writing content that will be considered by those who are outside the organisation. This guidance is designed to help you pinpoint and eradicate barriers to access.

Content can range from job descriptions, call outs, press releases and newsletters, presentations, to copy on social media and websites.

It is important to note that it is not possible to remove every barrier that all disabled users may face when engaging with our content, in fact, removing barriers for some may create different ones in some instances for others.

In a nutshell, this guidance has been designed to help you to identify and remove as many disabling barriers as possible, and to help us achieve a baseline standard of accessibility across the organisation.”

Text

Examples of active & passive voice

Active Voice	Passive Voice
I bought some new shoes.	Some new shoes were bought by me.
Our team is winning the game.	The game is being won by our team.
James met his sister by the gate.	James's sister was met by the gate by him.
We will ride the bus to New York City.	The bus to New York City will be ridden by us.
We are going to have a long day tomorrow: we will race cars, eat a big lunch, and then enjoy the concert.	A long day is going to be had tomorrow by us: cars will be raced by us, a big lunch will be eaten by us, and then a concert will be enjoyed by us.

Thesaurus.com

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- Use plain English, avoid jargon and formal language. For example, use 'drinks' instead of 'beverages'.
- Avoid acronyms, unless commonly used like the NHS.
- Avoid using the passive voice, and use the active voice.
- No figurative language (like "in a nutshell").
- Keep your sentences and documents short.
- Front load information as much as possible, so the most important points are read first.
- Provide reminders and prompts so readers don't have to remember things from previous pages.

Tools to make your text more accessible

- [Hemmingway app.](#)
- [Plain English A to Z alternative words.](#)

Design & Layout

Don't use this

Use this

Don't do this

Do this

Don't do this

Do this

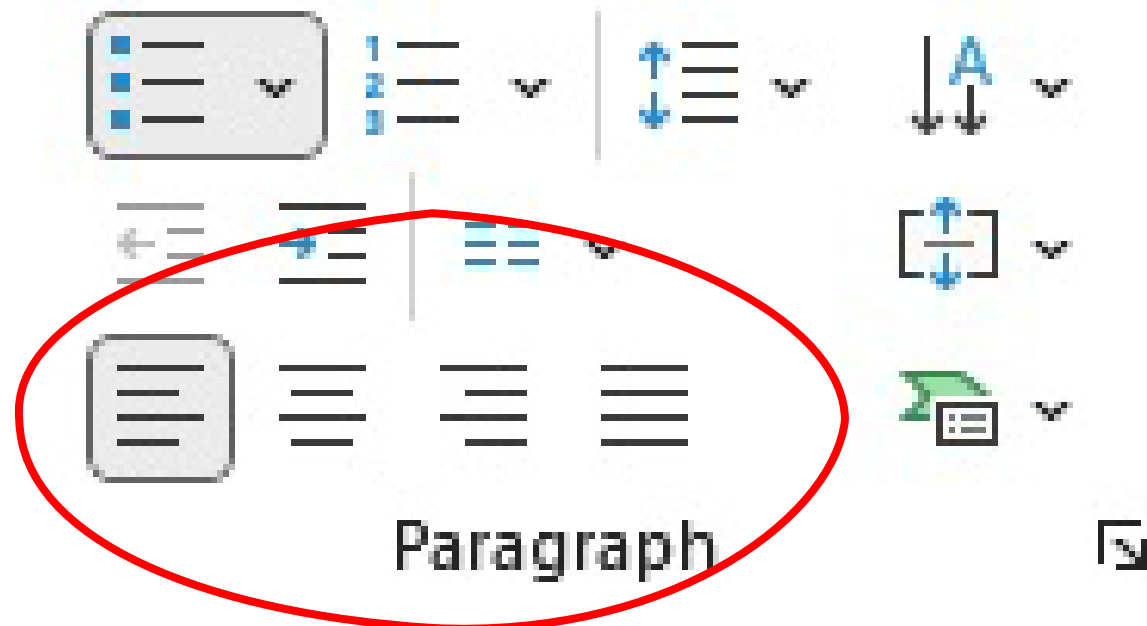
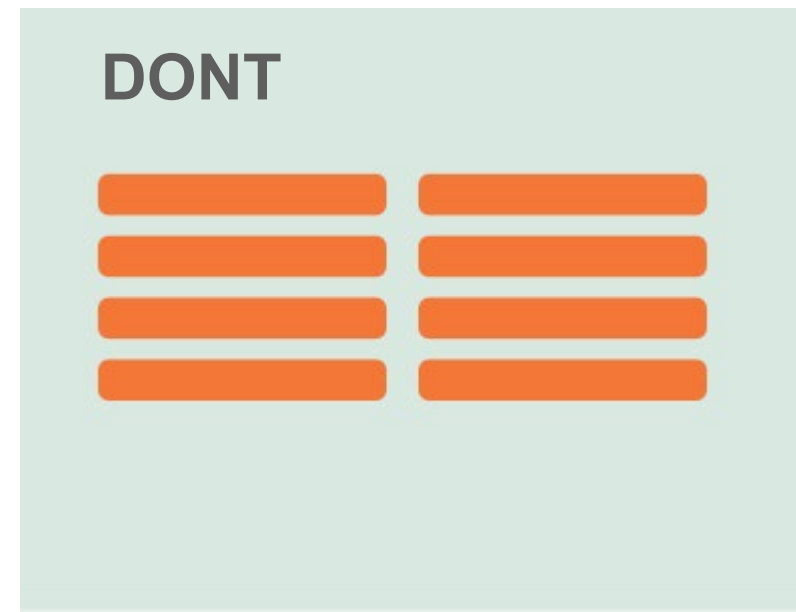
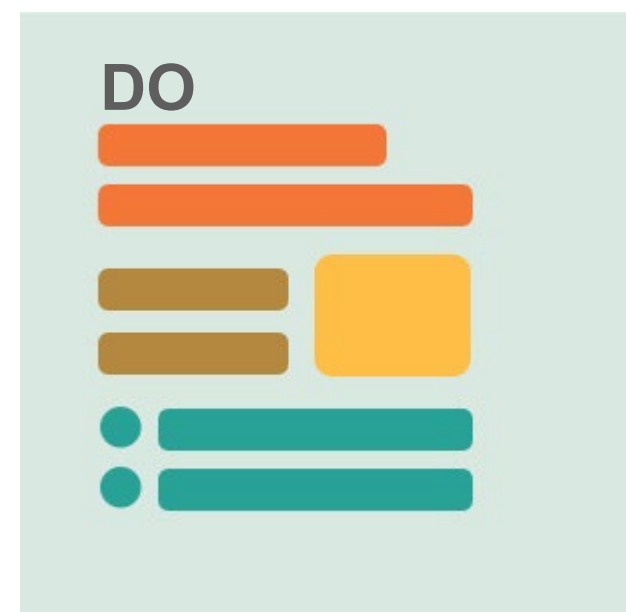
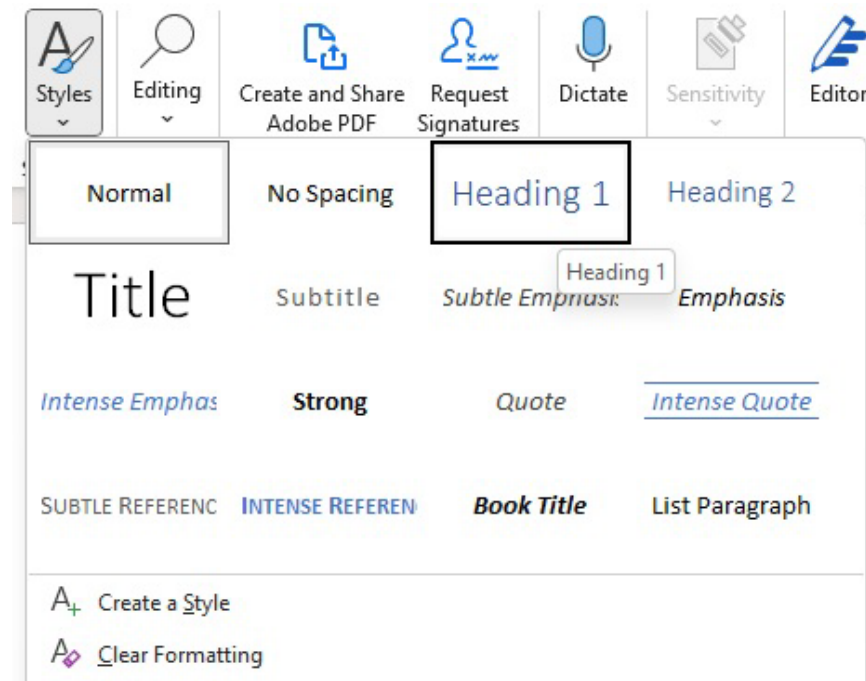
Colour, contrast, and font size

- Don't use an overly designed font.
- Use a readable font style for example, Arial, Helvetica, Calibri etc..
- Use a readable font size; recommended 16pt for websites and 12pt for print.
- Use simple colours and good contrasts, for example black text on yellow background.
- Don't only use colour to convey meaning!

Tools to make your design more accessible

- [Check colour contrast online.](#)
- [List of most readable fonts.](#)

Design & Layout



Format and layout

- Use headings and subheadings to allow those using a screen reader to read your documents in the correct order.
- Use bullet points, images, and videos to break up text. Avoid a wall of text and cluttered layouts.
- Use 1.15pts spaces to make sure bullet points are clearly readable.
- Avoid BLOCK CAPITALS, underlining and *italics* – this can make things confusing.
- Align your text to left and don't use the justify text formatting tool.
- Keep each line to below 70 characters (12 to 15 words) on average – short columns are best for readability!
- Ensure text flows and is visible when magnified to 200%.
- Build simple, logical, and consistent layouts.

Exercise 2

Look at the text below. Focussing on the layout, how can we make this text more accessible?

Accessibility Guidance

If you have any questions, suggestions, spot something that does not seem right, feedback, or simply need advice don't hesitate to get in touch. Youth Music (YM) is devoted to inclusivity and as such we have designed this document to support you when writing content that will be considered by those who are outside the organisation. This guidance is designed to help you pinpoint and eradicate barriers to access.

At youth music we are of the opinion that content can range from, job descriptions, call outs, press releases and newsletters, presentations, to copy on social media and websites. It is important to note that it is not possible to remove every barrier that all disabled users may face when engaging with our content, as in fact, removing barriers for some may create different ones in some instances for others. In a nutshell, this guidance has been designed to help you to identify and remove as many disabling barriers as possible, and to help us achieve a baseline standard of accessibility across the organisation."



CLICK HERE

Choose file No file chosen

Upload a file

<https://vocaleyes.co.uk/services/resources/digital-accessibility-and-inclusion/self-description-for-inclusive-meetings/>

Versus

[Guide to self-description for inclusive meetings by Vocaleyes.](#)

Clickable links tips

- Make hyperlinks specific to the page or copy they are linking to. For example '[read more about this in our applicant guidance notes](#)' rather than '[click here for more info](#)'.
- Don't write out the entire URL (unless it's for printed material). Use a descriptive links instead.
- Make your buttons descriptive. For example avoid using 'click here' instead use 'Attach files'.

Other online considerations

- Make buttons large and easily clickable.
- Don't bury further information in downloads. It should all be published on the web pages.
- Structure content using style headings, rather than relying on text size and placement for structure.

Break

5-minute comfort break





What is alt-text?

Alt-text (alternative text) describes the appearance or function of an image on a page.

Why do we need to use alt-text?

- Alt-text is a key principle to web accessibility.
- It's read aloud by screen readers used by visually impaired users.
- It displays in place of an image if it fails to load.
- It is indexed by search engine bots to better understand the content of your page.

If you don't use alt-text you're probably excluding a portion of your audience! (Not only those who use screen readers).

Exercise 3

Look at the images shared on this slide and think about how you would write alt-text for them.

Be ready to share your thoughts with the group.

Context

Image A: is in an article about signing female artist to music labels.

Image B: is what you see when you click on the membership tab of the webpage.

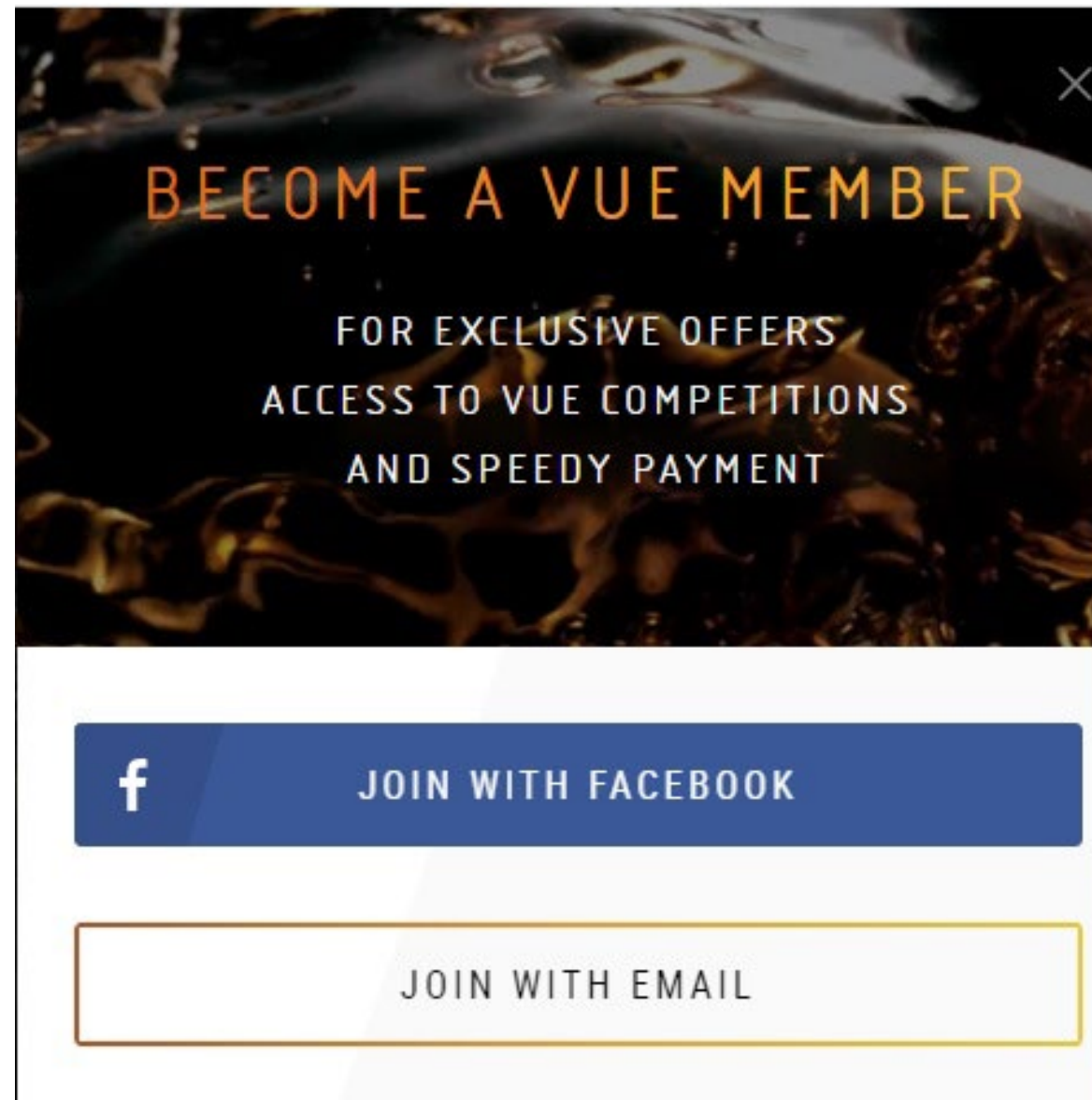
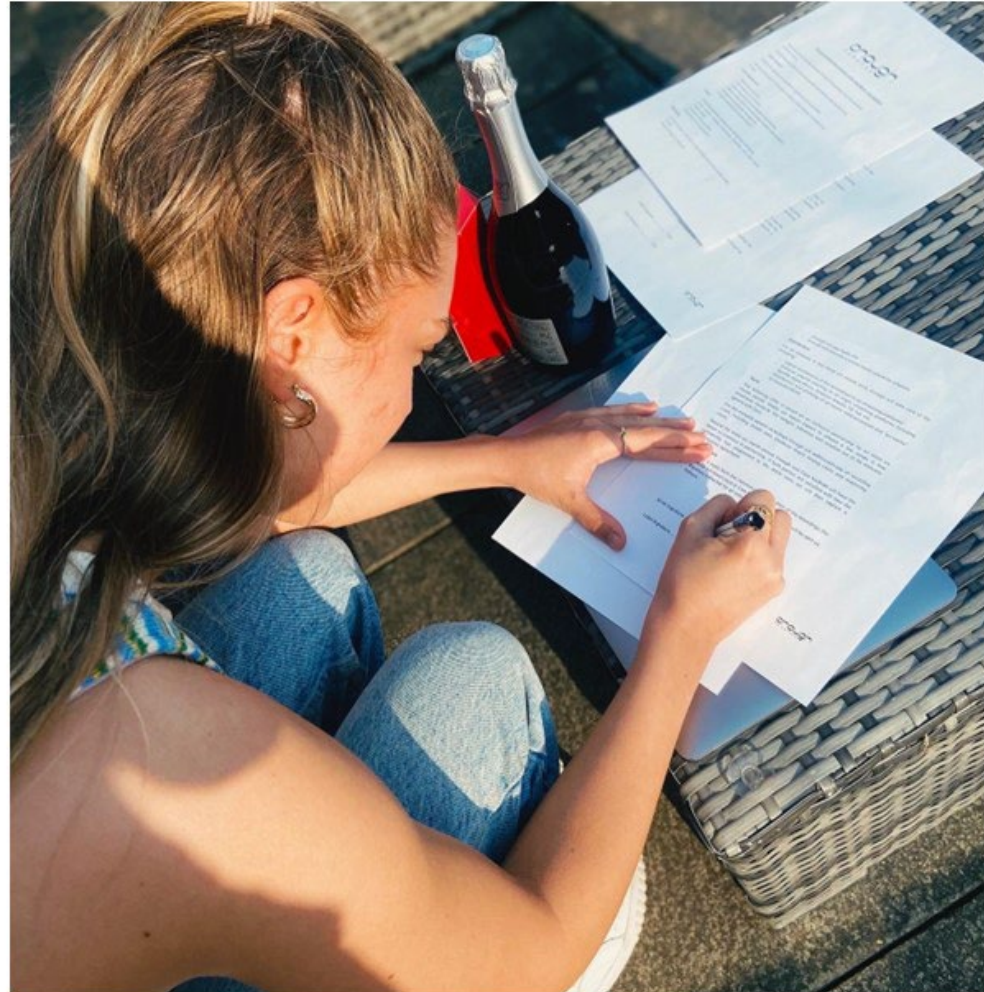
Image C: is placed on the corner of every page of a document.

Image D: is the image used to in article about music technology.

When writing alt-text think about:

- The context in which the image appears. Is the image adding meaning to your content? Is it a focal point?
- How you would describe the image to someone who can't see your content. What do you think is worth mentioning or including?

B



D



C



Tips for writing alt-text

- Don't put important information as text image. In fact, avoid using images of text!
- You can mark images as decorative if they're not adding any meaning or don't have a function.
- Always add alt-text on images in social media if the platform allows it.
- You don't need to say 'image of' in your alt-text - however context is helpful, so you could say 'screenshot of', 'illustration' or 'headshot' for example.
- Be specific and succinct (like a tweet), however in certain contexts where the image is the focal point details add value.
- Write what you see. Don't editorialise or make assumptions about ethnicity, gender, what's happening out of shot, a subject's motivations.

Prompt

There are many style guides on how to write alt-text. Visit different websites to read how others have written theirs. Try to find examples that resonate with you.

Examples of alt-text



A portrait of a woman staring at one side.



Bathed in lush green light, three dancers arch backwards, legs in a wide stride, bare muscular arms raised overhead and fists clenched. They wear orange sleeveless tops in the style of life jackets and softly draped leggings.



WeRateDogs® @dog_rates · 12h

This is Ruby. She is patiently waiting for dinner, minus the patiently part. 12/10

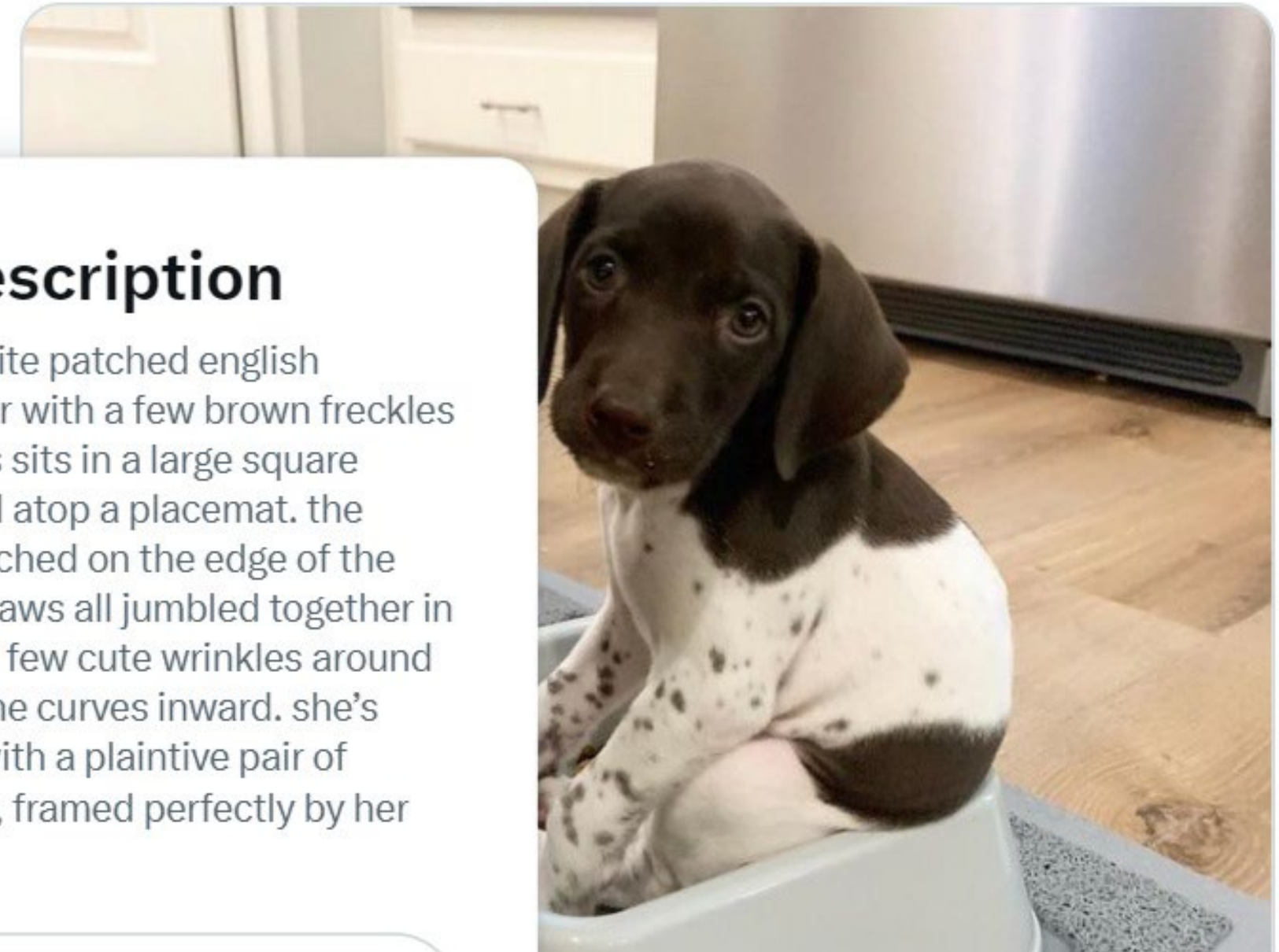


Image description

a brown and white patched english shorthair pointer with a few brown freckles on her front legs sits in a large square plastic dog bowl atop a placemat. the dog's rear is perched on the edge of the bowl, with her paws all jumbled together in the basin, and a few cute wrinkles around her tummy as she curves inward. she's looking at you with a plaintive pair of puppy dog eyes, framed perfectly by her big brown ears.

Image description

The image is divided horizontally by an undulating line between a cloudscape forming a nebula along the bottom portion and a comparatively clear upper portion. Speckled across both portions is a starfield, showing innumerable stars of many sizes. The smallest of these are small, distant, and faint points of light. The largest of these appear larger, closer, brighter, and more fully resolved with 8-point diffraction spikes. The upper portion of the image is blueish, and has wispy translucent cloud-like streaks rising from the nebula below. The orangish cloudy formation in the bottom half varies in density and ranges from translucent to opaque. The stars vary in color, the majority of which, have a blue or orange hue. The cloud-like structure of the nebula contains ridges, peaks, and valleys – an appearance very similar to mountain ranges. The largest

of stars. @NASAWebb reveals the Carina Nebula, where ultraviolet winds shape colossal walls of dust. [webbfirstimages](#)



Accessibility check demo



Readability Statistics

Counts	
Words	218
Characters	1,339
Paragraphs	7
Sentences	8
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	4.0
Words per Sentence	20.7
Characters per Word	5.0
Readability	
Flesch Reading Ease	40.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	12.8
Passive Sentences	50.0%

OK

Accessibility

Inspection Results

Errors

- > Missing Object Description (2)
- > Image or Object Not Inline (1)

Warnings

- > Hard-to-Read Text Contrast (1)

Keep accessibility checker running while I work

- Make your video visually and audibly accessible. This means that you should provide alternative ways of delivering your content that do not only rely on images or sounds.
- It's good practice to provide a transcript of your video or add subtitles.

Tips and tools

- YouTube lets you add subtitles as you upload your video. Here's a [guide on how to add captions on Youtube.](#)
- You can also find many free apps online that do it for you (although it's worth reviewing at the end, to ensure accuracy).
- Consider using timestamps on video content to help users navigate your video. Here's a [guide to adding timestamps on YouTube.](#)

Social Media

- Always use alt-text on social media if the platform supports it.
- Photos with written words in them cannot be read unless you add the text in as alt-text or in the post!
- Hashtags are helpful for many people to gain context and more easily find content – but don't forget to capitalise hashtags. For example: #socialmediatips versus #SocialMediaTips.
- Don't leave out punctuation on social media posts, as the post will make much less sense to a screen reader.
- Don't overuse emojis - Text-to-speech software reads out a description for every single emoji. Check out this [Emoji dictionary](#) to see how they are read by a screen reader.
- Keep alerts for new accessibility features.

Web and apps



Legislation requires that government bodies meet the [international WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard](#).

WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard is based on four accessibility principles (POUR):

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

Tips

- If you are redesigning or designing a new website app/ask your developer if they know/can meet AA standard.
- Ask about their approach to accessibility.
- Start thinking about accessibility from the beginning it's not an add on! This will help make your journey into accessibility easier and cheaper!

Prompt

Download the [Wave tool](#) to check on the accessibility of your (or other) websites. This will probably look like gibberish to none-web developers but it can help you understand the elements needed for web accessibility.

Reminder

Creating for different needs

It's important to note that it isn't possible to remove every barrier that users face. Sometimes, removing barriers for some can create ones for others.

We really like these [do's and don'ts infographic posters](#) as they clearly show the different accessibility and design needs different people have.

Designing for users on the autistic spectrum

Do...	Don't...
use simple colours	use bright contrasting colours
write in plain English	use figures of speech and idioms
use simple sentences and bullets	create a wall of text
make buttons descriptive	make buttons vague and unpredictable
build simple and consistent layouts	build complex and cluttered layouts

Designing for users of screen readers

Do...	Don't...
describe images and provide transcripts for video	only show information in an image or video
follow a linear, logical layout	spread content all over a page
structure content using HTML5	rely on text size and placement for structure
build for keyboard use only	force mouse or screen use
write descriptive links and headings	write uninformative links and headings

Designing for users with low vision

Do...	Don't...
use good colour contrasts and a readable font size	use low colour contrasts and small font size
publish all information on web pages	bury information in downloads
use a combination of colour, shapes and text	only use colour to convey meaning
follow a linear, logical layout	spread content all over a page
put buttons and notifications in context	separate actions from their context

Designing for users with physical or motor disabilities

Do...	Don't...
make large clickable actions	demand precision
give form fields space	bunch interactions together
design for keyboard or speech only use	make dynamic content that requires a lot of mouse movement
design with mobile and touchscreen in mind	have short time out windows
provide shortcuts	tire users with lots of typing and scrolling

Designing for users who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Do...	Don't...
write in plain English	use complicated words or figures of speech
use subtitles or provide transcripts for videos	put content in audio or video only
use a linear, logical layout	make complex layouts and menus
break up content with sub-headings, images and videos	make users read long blocks of content
let users request an interpreter for appointments	don't make telephone the only means of contact with users

Designing for users with dyslexia

Do...	Don't...
use images and diagrams to support text	use large blocks of heavy text
align text to the left and keep a consistent layout	underline words, use italics or write in capitals
consider producing materials in other formats (for example, audio or video)	force users to remember things from previous pages - give reminders and prompts
keep content short, clear and simple	rely on accurate spelling - use autocorrect or provide suggestions
let users change the contrast between background and text	put too much information in one place

Break

5 min break





Applying your knowledge

Break out room exercise

In pairs, look at a piece of content, it could be a website, a newsletter, a video:

- Consider how/if it is accessible.
- Discuss what/how you could make it more accessible.
- Are there other tips and tools that came up in your discussion?
- Feel free to explore and use some of the tools we talked about to test this!

Please make notes, be ready to feedback in the main group.

Section 3

Access Statements

Access Statement

- Access statements are an opportunity for you to share your organisations ethos when it comes to accessibility.
- It isn't intended to cause panic! It is designed for you to share your ambitions of your development in terms of providing equal access to your services

What to include?

- Opening paragraph – this is for you to set the tone of how your organisation intends to work, or is working towards accessibility.
- What you are already doing, or intend to do, around minimum access provisions.

Tips

- Consult disabled people

Examples

“X is committed to ensuring all our projects, performances and activities are open to anyone who wants to engage with them.

Our aim is to produce activities that are as accessible as possible to everybody, be that audiences, participants, leaders, producers, artists, volunteers, staff members and all the other titles and adjectives we can use to describe the people we are and encounter.

The potential for everyone to engage and expand their practice, learn and develop is core to the activities we want to make.”

Examples

“Any activity undertaken by X will have these minimum provisions as standard:

- Be held in an accessible location or be able to move to an accessible location with prior notice.
- Have an accessible toilet.
- Will have a conversation with participants to ensure access requirements are met. These could include: level access, BSL translation, presenting information in different ways, such as large print, easy read, or audio files.”

Applying your knowledge

Break out room exercise

In small groups:

- Discuss where your organisation is at with access statements – do you have one? Does it need to be updated?
- Have a go at drafting an access statement for your organisation.
- Use the example provided as a template if you are starting from scratch.

Please make notes, be ready to feedback in the main group.

Next Steps

- Start applying this knowledge when creating new content.
- Audit your content and make an action plan to embed accessibility principles.
- Talk to managers and senior leadership – we've found that the best way to make sure we're being accessible is by making it everyone's responsibility and embedding it within our practices.
- Share this presentation with your colleagues.

Final Thoughts

- Can you identify one thing you learned today that you can start applying asap?
- Any thoughts, questions comments?

Links in the presentation

- [Hemmingway app.](#)
- [Plain English A to Z alternative words.](#)
- [Online colour contrast checker.](#)
- [List of most readable fonts.](#)
- [Guide to using accessibility features on Word.](#)
- [Guide on how to add captions on Youtube.](#)
- [Guide to adding timestamps on YouTube.](#)
- [Emoji dictionary](#)
- [International WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard](#)
- [Wave tool](#)
- [Do's and don'ts infographic posters](#)

Additional Resources

- [Guide to self-description for inclusive meetings by Vocaleyes.](#)
- [Easy content accessibility checklist from Substrakt.](#)
- [Five tips on designing colour-blind friendly visualisations by Tableau.](#)
- [Guide to understanding different Readability Scales](#)
- [Deep dive into what makes fonts readable.](#)



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THANK YOU