

How to make your social media accessible and inclusive for all

Hello!



Prue Watson,
Senior Social Media Manager, cat
wrangler, wannabe florist

Inclusive content matters



**Accessibility is a
love note.
It says "we want
you here too."**



Inclusive content matters



**Accessibility is a
love note.
It says "we want
you here too."**

R N I B
See differently

Online accessibility means that **everyone can join in** the conversations, the memes and all the weird and wonderful things that happen online.

We love that you're here and you want to learn more.

So, let's get started!

Alt text and image descriptions

Do you use alt text?



If not, why not?

Let's have an open discussion



Why use alt text?

It includes
disabled
people



If you're not using alt text, there are around **2 million people** who can't enjoy the content you worked hard on

Why use alt text?

It includes
disabled
people



If you're not using alt text, there are around **2 million people** who can't enjoy the content you worked hard on

It puts you in
a very
exclusive club



Sadly, hardly any brands or social media users add alt text. The ones which do (eg innocent) get well-earned **bragging rights**

Why use alt text?

It includes disabled people

If you're not using alt text, there are around **2 million people** who can't enjoy the content you worked hard on

It puts you in a very exclusive club

Sadly, hardly any brands or social media users add alt text. The ones which do (eg innocent) get well-earned **bragging rights**

It makes you look good

Using accessibility features marks you out as a socially conscious person or brand, which can only be a good thing in this world of "**purpose driven** comms"

Why use alt text?

It includes disabled people

If you're not using alt text, there are around **2 million people** who can't enjoy the content you worked hard on

It puts you in a very exclusive club

Sadly, hardly any brands or social media users add alt text. The ones which do (eg innocent) get well-earned **bragging rights**

It makes you look good

Using accessibility features marks you out as a socially conscious person or brand, which can only be a good thing in this world of "**purpose driven** comms"

You could make more money

Blind people will become **advocates for your company**. Plus, if you're an agency, you could **charge clients more** for your time to draft alt text.

What is alt text?

What image descriptions are

- Alternative, or alt, text is a **written description of an image**. It's also referred to as an image description.
 - Image descriptions or alt text should be added to **all images, GIFs and memes**.
 - Alt text goes in the designated alt text box
 - Image descriptions go at the end of your post, after your copy.
 - The alt badge is your best friend on X (Twitter) and Threads!
-

What is alt text?

What image descriptions are

- Alternative, or alt, text is a **written description of an image**. It's also referred to as an image description.
- Image descriptions or alt text should be added to **all images, GIFs and memes**.
- Alt text goes in the designated alt text box
- Image descriptions go at the end of your post, after your copy.
- The alt badge is your best friend on X (Twitter) and Threads!

What image descriptions aren't

- For extending your copy
- Inside jokes
- Adding photo credits
- Boosting your search engine optimisation (SEO)



Why use alt text?

**Be
descriptive,
but don't write
a novel**



You don't need to include every single detail, **just the main elements** that need to be conveyed

Why use alt text?

**Be
descriptive,
but don't write
a novel**



You don't need to include every single detail, **just the main elements** that need to be conveyed

**Get the main
message
across**



What's the **main thing you want to communicate** with your image? Make sure that comes across

Why use alt text?

Be descriptive, but don't write a novel



You don't need to include every single detail, **just the main elements** that need to be conveyed

Get the main message across



What's the **main thing you want to communicate** with your image? Make sure that comes across

Use the same tone as the content you're describing



If it's funny, be funny!
If it's serious, be serious. **Conveying the tone of the image** as well as the message is important

Why use alt text?

Be descriptive, but don't write a novel

You don't need to include every single detail, **just the main elements** that need to be conveyed

Get the main message across

What's the **main thing you want to communicate** with your image? Make sure that comes across

Use the same tone as the content you're describing

If it's funny, be funny!
If it's serious, be serious. **Conveying the tone of the image** as well as the message is important

Include any text in the image, too

If there's text on your image, for example important stats, **write it all out in your description**

But I forget!

Add an alt text reminder on X/Twitter in three steps:

1. Go to 'settings and privacy'.
2. Choosing 'accessibility, display and languages.'
3. Tick '**receive image description reminder**'.

We'd love for every social media platform to have an alt text reminder feature. For now, **create your own reminder**: have it on a handy post-it note, or set a reminder on your phone.

Examples

RNIB RNIB 🌟
@RNIB

We've written image descriptions to help blind and partially sighted people decide which thirst trap is their favourite.

See the alt text for more 👁️ and tell us - which one do you choose?



Examples

RNIB RNIB
@RNIB

We've written image descriptions to help blind and partially sighted people decide which thirst trap is their favourite.

See the alt text for more and tell us - which one do you choose?



Image description

A film photo of Jeremy Allen White standing in front of a red sofa on a rooftop in New York City, wearing only white Calvin Klein briefs. His curly hair and lean, toned physique is silhouetted against the pale evening sky. He stands with his arms by his side, smiling off-camera.

Dismiss

Examples

RNIB RNIB
@RNIB

We've written image descriptions to help blind and partially sighted people decide which thirst trap is their favourite.

See the alt text for more and tell us - which one do you choose?



Image description

A film photo of Jeremy Allen White standing in front of a red sofa on a rooftop in New York City, wearing only white Calvin Klein briefs. His curly hair and lean, toned physique is silhouetted against the pale evening sky. He stands with his arms by his side, smiling off-camera.

Dismiss

Image description

A film photo of Jeremy Allen White standing in front of a red sofa on a rooftop in New York City, wearing only white Calvin Klein briefs. His curly hair and lean, toned physique is silhouetted against the pale evening sky. He stands with his arms by his side, smiling off-camera.

Dismiss

Examples

The infographic is set against a pink background. It features two white rounded rectangular boxes. The left box has a green header with the word 'Do' and a star-struck face emoji. The right box has a red header with the word 'Don't' and a sad face with a sweat drop emoji. Each box contains a list of guidelines, with 'Do' items marked with a checkmark and 'Don't' items marked with an 'X'.

Do 🌟

- ✔ Limit emojis to no more than one per post
- ✔ Check the meaning of your emoji on Emojipedia as the meanings don't always translate
- ✔ Use emojis that work well on both light and dark backgrounds

Don't 😓

- ✘ Don't put emojis in the middle of a sentence or to replace any words.
- ✘ Don't put emojis before an important message or call to action
- ✘ Don't use repeated or too many emojis

ALT

Examples

Do

- ✔ Limit emojis to no more than one per post
- ✔ Check the meaning of your emoji on Emojipedia as the meanings don't always translate
- ✔ Use emojis that work well on both light and dark backgrounds

Don't

- ✘ Don't put emojis in the middle of a sentence or to replace any words.
- ✘ Don't put emojis before an important message or call to action
- ✘ Don't use repeated or too many emojis

ALT

Image description

There are two lists of dos and don'ts that in in a white box overlaid on a pink background.

To the left is a list of the Do's. The list of text reads Limit emojis to no more than one per post, check the meaning of your emoji on Emojipedia as the meanings don't always translate and use emojis that work well on both light and dark backgrounds.

To the right, there is a list of the Don'ts. The list of text reads 'Don't put emojis in the middle of a sentence or to replace any words, don't put emojis before an important message or call to action and don't use repeated or too many emojis.

Examples



Using the alt text field to add an image credit is a bit of a Messi move 🐾

This should only be used to describe the image for blind and partially sighted people, like this! 🗣️



Examples



Using the alt text field to add an image credit is a bit of a Messi move 🐾

This should only be used to describe the image for blind and partially sighted people, like this! 🗣️



Image description

Messi, the border collie who starred in Anatomy of a Fall, at the Oscars ceremony. He's sitting in his very own plush purple chair and looking over his shoulder at the camera. He's white with grey markings and has bright, pale blue eyes. His tongue is out and a bow-tie is peeking out on his collar.

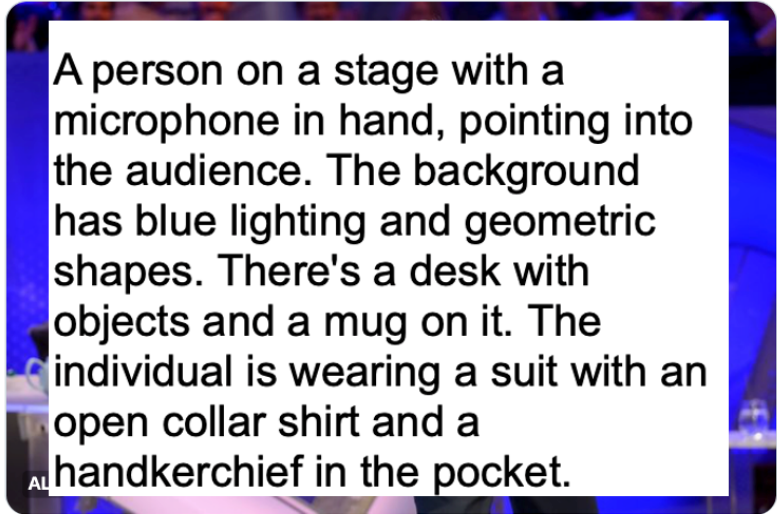
Dismiss

Can't AI do it?

R N I B **RNIB** 🌟
@RNIB

...

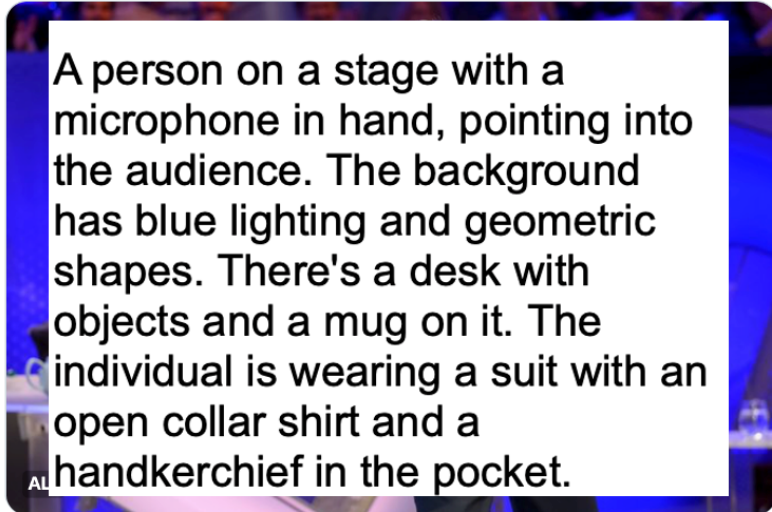
#IsItOK that we had to add alt text to your image for people with sight loss, even though your show promotes positive disability representation? 🙄



Can't AI do it?

RNIB 
@RNIB

#IsItOK that we had to add alt text to your image for people with sight loss, even though your show promotes positive disability representation? 🙄



RNIB 
@RNIB

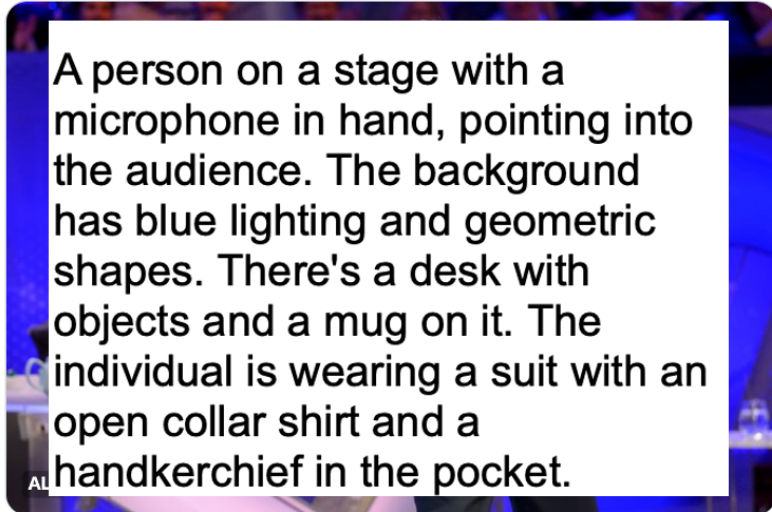
#IsItOK that we had to add alt text to your image for people with sight loss, even though your show promotes positive disability representation? 🙄



Can't AI do it?

RNIB @RNIB

#IsItOK that we had to add alt text to your image for people with sight loss, even though your show promotes positive disability representation? 🙄



RNIB @RNIB

#IsItOK that we had to add alt text to your image for people with sight loss, even though your show promotes positive disability representation? 🙄



Image description

Adam Hills wearing a suit on the set of The Last Leg, pointing accusingly at something off-camera. His desk (featuring a teapot, headphones and various other trinkets) and the studio audience are in soft focus in the background.

Dismiss

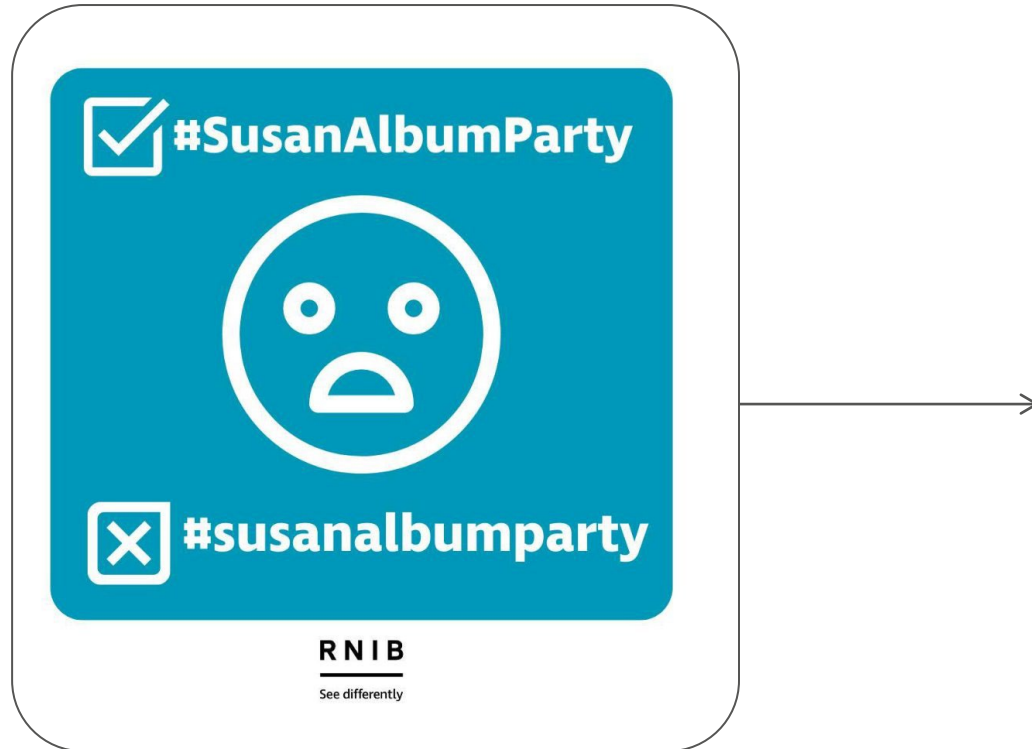
Hashtags

Hashtags

The diagram illustrates a social media post with a blue background. At the top left, there is a white checkmark icon followed by the hashtag **#SusanAlbumParty**. In the center is a white sad face emoji. At the bottom left, there is a white 'X' icon followed by the hashtag **#susanalbumparty**. Below the blue square is the RNIB logo, consisting of the letters **R N I B** above the tagline **See differently**. A horizontal arrow points from the right side of the blue square towards the right edge of the frame.



Hashtags



Camel Case, also known as Pascal Case, refers to **capitalising the first letter of each word within hashtags.**

This ensures that the words are **read out correctly by screen readers.** It also makes them easier to read for everyone.

You might also avoid a PR disaster...

Hashtags

Limit hashtags to **one per post, two maximum**

Don't use them one after the other, unless right at the very end of your post

For people listening to the internet through a screen reader, **they have to listen and navigate between each hashtag**. It's pretty tedious...

Emojis

How many emojis is too many?

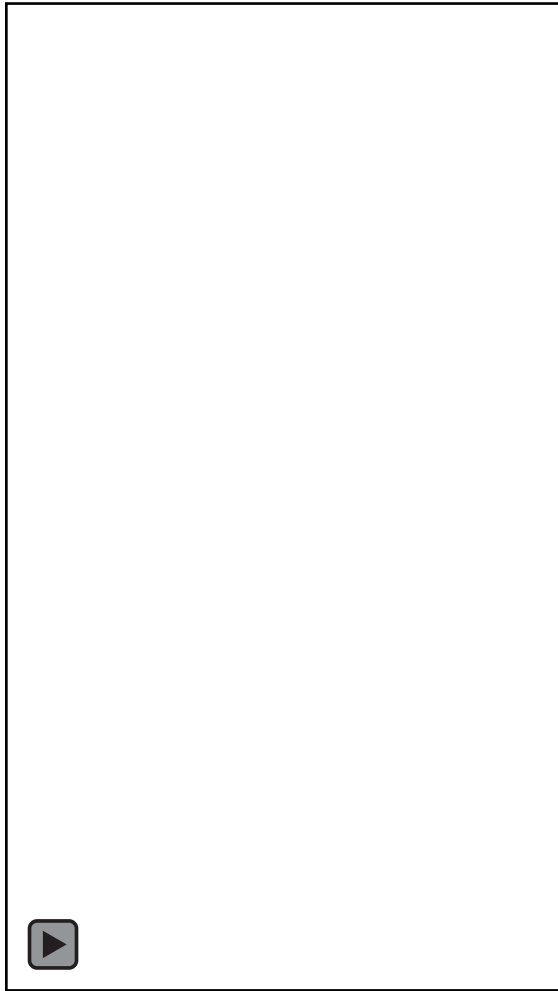


Emojis

We love emojis, you love emojis. But **screen readers read out the name of every single one** you include in your copy. Here are our top tips:

- Limit emojis to **one per post, two maximum.**
- Don't put them between each word.
- Don't use them one after the other.
- Don't use a different emoji for each bullet point.
- Be mindful of emoji names and don't rely on them to get a message across. You might think 'crying laughing emoji' is one thing, but a screen reader will say, 'face with tears of joy'. When in doubt, check [EmojiPedia](#).

Emoji misuse in action



Making your videos accessible

**What video accessibility features are
out there on social media?**



Making your videos accessible

Always add subtitles to your videos: It's not just people who are deaf or hard of hearing who find captions useful, lots of people do. [Headliner](#) is a great app, and so is CapCut.

Captions with **white text on black backgrounds** are easiest for blind and partially sighted people to read. That's important as most blind or partially sighted people can see something - 93% in fact.

Note: make sure to **check auto-generated subtitles** before posting. There can be some pretty interesting mistakes in there!

Audio-led vs audio described

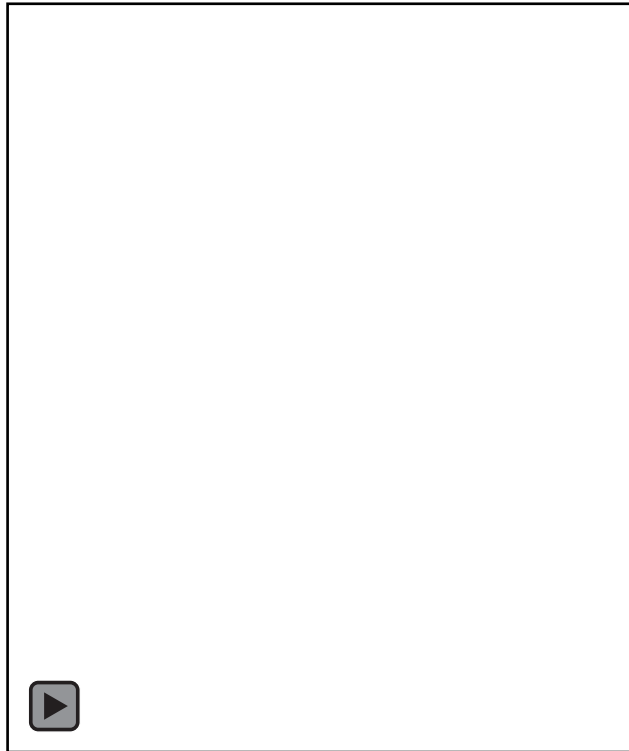
Audio-led videos are when the intended message is shared audibly and visually.

Audio described videos include a narration of what's happening, describing the visual elements.

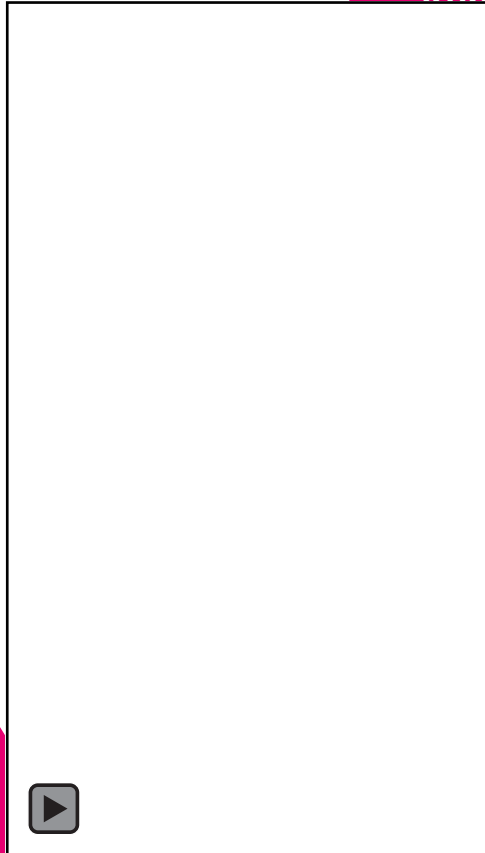
Always aim for audio-led or audio described content, and **always have a voiceover reading the text on screen**. Your funky music and cool visuals look good, but they aren't accessible.

Sometimes, a video that you're sharing, say from a content creator, might not be totally audio-led or audio described. We recommend adding **a video description in your copy** (like alt text for images).

Examples



Audio described



Audio led

 **RNIB** 
@RNIB

Video description: Lucy walks up steps with her guide dog. The Canon logo appears. She sits with Yagazie. Yagazie leads her towards prints we can't see. A 'World Unseen' title. Yagazie places Lucy's hand on a tactile image. Lucy puts her hand to her face. They hug. 'Watch now']

12:15 PM · Mar 15, 2024 · **620** Views

Video description

TikTok: text-to-speech

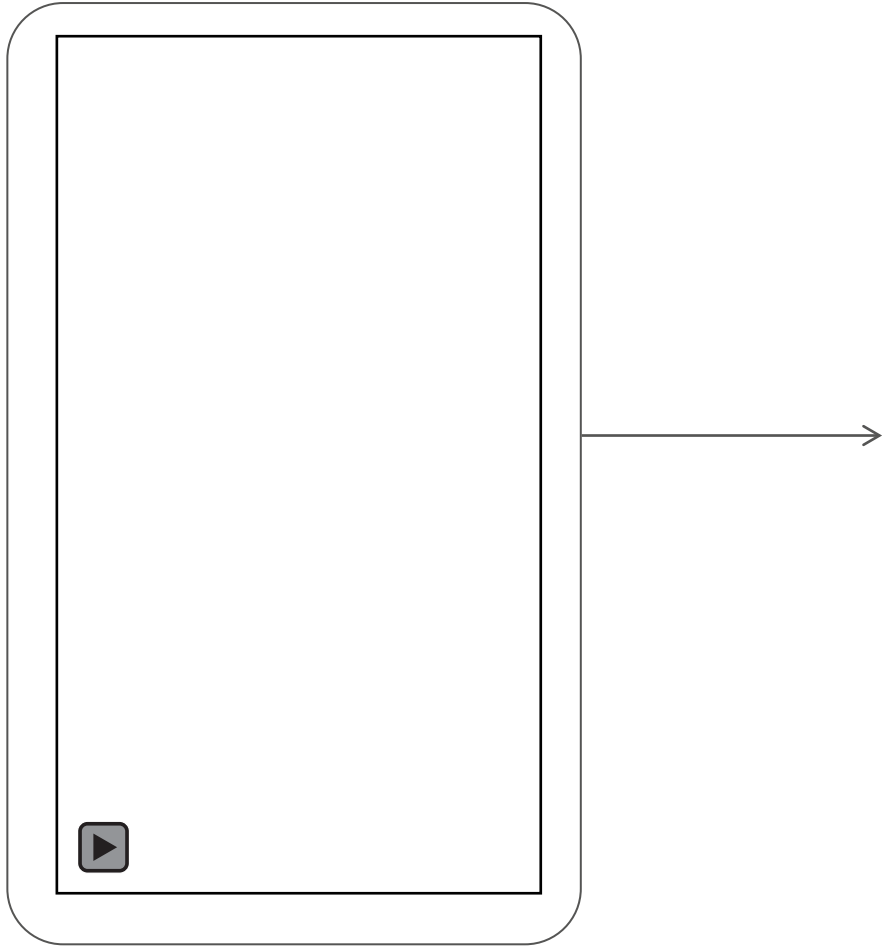
The main thing to remember on TikTok is that **screen readers cannot access the text you overlay onto your videos or carousels.**

That means that the majority of content on TikTok is not accessible to people with sight loss.

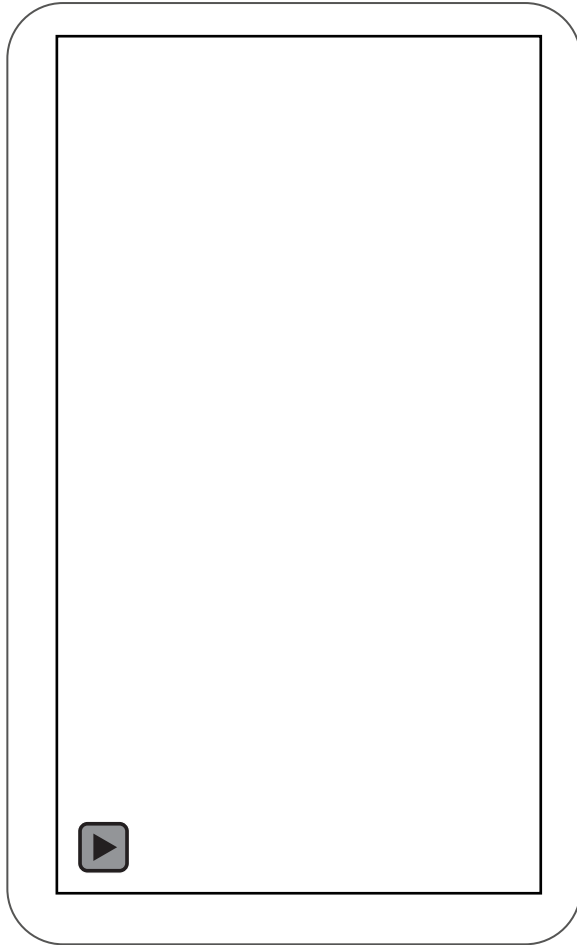
So, you **must use the text-to-speech function** to bring any text written on your video to life – like the Jennifer Lawrence example!

1. Record/upload your video
2. Tap text and type in your caption.
3. Tap on the text again and select the text-to-speech option and the voice you want to use.

TikTok: voiceovers



TikTok: voiceovers



Voiceovers on TikTok are a wonderful tool to help you make sure your **videos are audio-led, while fitting in seamlessly with other content on the platform.**

Take this OOTD video as an example, it's a familiar format that very naturally describes what's on-screen for people who are blind or partially sighted.

**Other
handy tips!**

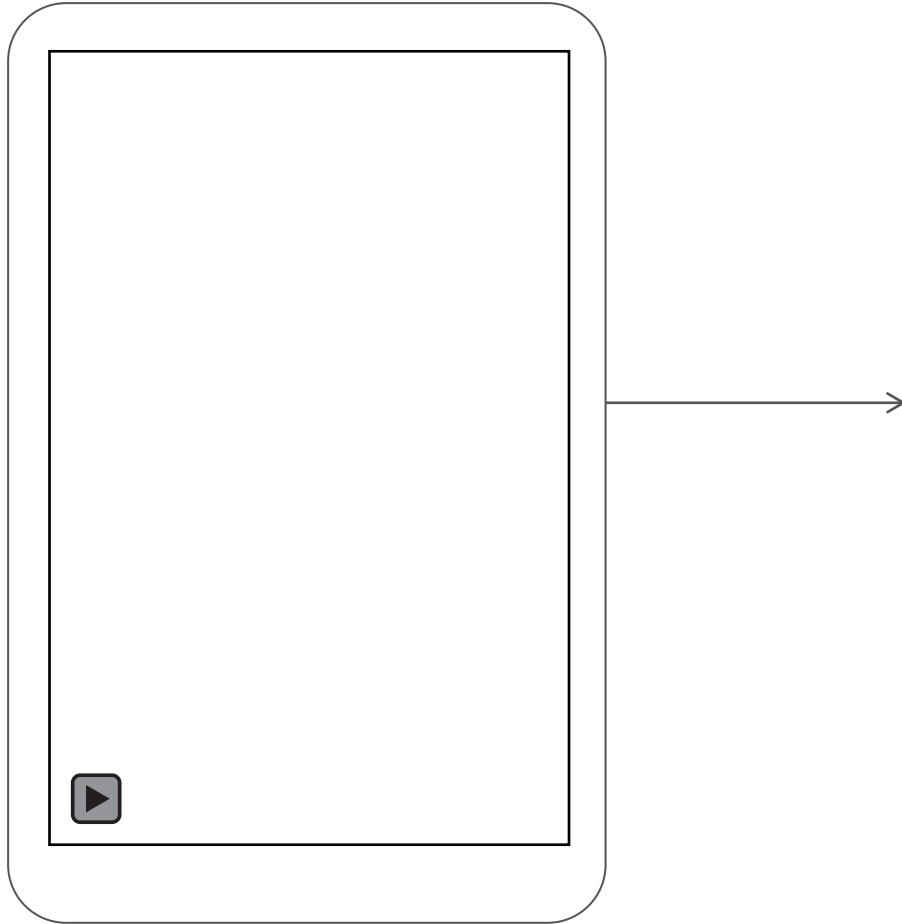
Make your links accessible

Shorten links using a URL shortener, like bit.ly, and customise the link to **minimise the number of characters and make the link relevant**. It's more accessible for screen reader users when navigating through posts.

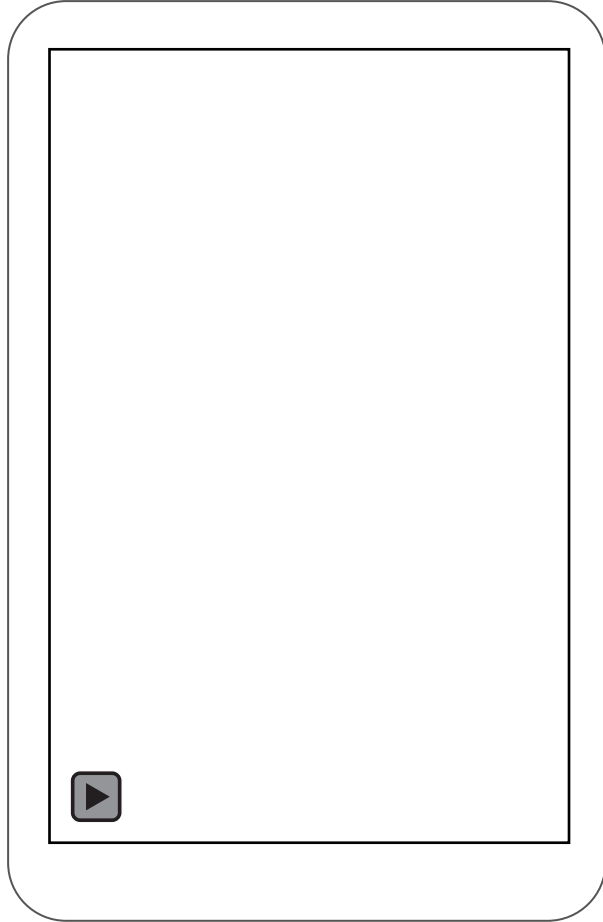
Like this: bit.ly.com/AccessibleSocialMedia

Ensure what you're linking to is accessible and if it isn't, let your followers know. They'll appreciate your transparency.

Repeated sentences are annoying



Repeated sentences are annoying



You might think that repeating sentences multiple times helps to get your point across, but **it's a nightmare for screen reader users.**

Using all caps is annoying too

The thing with screen readers, yeah? They sometimes say 'capital letter' out loud before every capital letter, so while this meme is legit funny, it can be painful for anyone using screen reading technology, so I'm just gonna talk directly into your ear canal, alright?



Using all caps is annoying too

The thing with screen readers, yeah? They sometimes say 'capital letter' out loud before every capital letter, so while this meme is legit funny, it can be painful for anyone using screen reading technology, so I'm just gonna talk directly into your ear canal, alright?



Using capital letters can add a sense of drama. **But screen readers read out every single letter** so it can be unintelligible to the person listening. Avoid using all caps.

Make a difference by being an ally

Don't get defensive if someone points out your content isn't accessible: take it as an opportunity to learn and improve.

Aim for progress, not perfection: If you aim for perfection, you'll never make progress, but if you do your best and aim for progress, you'll get a lot further.

Keep learning: **accessibility is forever evolving**, and always changing. Take it as an opportunity to learn and develop. Follow us on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Threads and X/Twitter. And follow blind and partially sighted people.

Demand change: If a social media platform doesn't allow you to easily make your content accessible, let them know! **Disabled people shouldn't need to demand change alone.** We must all play our part.



Questions?





Prue Watson
Senior Social Media Manager
Prue.Watson@rnib.org.uk





Useful links

[CharityComms etiquette guide.](#)

[CharityComms guide on inclusive and accessible comms.](#)

[Accessible Social](#) by Alexa Heinrich

