

Top Access Tips: Describing Images

Step one

- ◆ State briefly if there are two or more images shown on a page.
- ◆ Are there any important defining features that help set the overall scene of the image or images?
- ◆ Some accessible images will have a marker that a blind or partially sighted person can use to make sure the image is the correct way up.
- ◆ State if there is any location marker present and its position to orientate the picture correctly before they start to read the rest of the image, for example
'There is a locator dot shown, which will be at the top left of the page when the image is the right way up.'
- ◆ If there is a border to the image, for example a dashed line; describe this, for example, 'This image has a dashed line image border.'
- ◆ If there is an accompanying key, state here that a key supports this image and briefly mention the details the key covers, for example; 'an accompanying key lists all the abbreviations that are marked on the image.'
- ◆ If Braille labels have been used on an image state if any particular coding has been used, for example scientific code, capitals / non capitals.

Step two: Give a brief overview of the image:

- ◆ State what the key features are without going into detail. Give this in a logical sequence across or around the image, rather than describing features in a random order:
- ◆ If the image is mainly about people state how many there are.
- ◆ State which direction people or animals are facing – are they facing forward, to the left / right?
- ◆ If facing the side, state how many eyes are seen, as this is a key feature a blind person can find.
- ◆ If describing an animal, describe it from head to tail after stating the direction it is facing.
- ◆ If describing people, describe from head to foot.
- ◆ If describing an object state which direction the features of the object will be described; for example clockwise / anticlockwise around the image, from the centre of the page outwards.

- ◆ Describe important features such as a scale line, or direction indicator, like a north-ern arrow on a map, state these here.
- ◆ Describe the units a scale line is marked in, for example, 'there is a scale line marked in meters from 0-6 meters.'

Step three: Describe the detail in more depth

- ◆ Regardless of the type of image; describe the features in more depth, following the same direction as the brief overview if possible.
- ◆ State people's facial expressions if this is important; smiling, sad, frowning etc.
- ◆ If a person's hairstyle is significant include this; for example, state if it is neat, un-ruly, curly, or if they have a moustache or beard.
- ◆ Describe how people are dressed – include important / significant features or ac-cessories such as jewellery, belts; shoes, boots or barefoot. If describing an animal describe its identifying features, for example; a large / small head; long / short neck; small / large body etc.

Step four: Tell the story of the image

- ◆ Once the navigation of the image has been provided, the story of the image or the data within the image can be given.
- ◆ Relate this back to the navigation so the features within the image can be related to and understood

Supporting a person reading a large print or tactile diagram

- ◆ When supporting a person using a tactile diagram avoid moving their hands off the image and moving it to another part of the diagram.
- ◆ This will not enable them to develop any image reading skills for themselves.
- ◆ If you need to assist them to find an area you are describing, nudge their hands to that spot, without taking them off the page.
- ◆ In this way they will be able to feel and relate different parts of the image to the area you are describing.