

Creating accessible videos

We want our video content to reach the widest possible audience and for them to find it engaging and useful. How well we achieve that goal is based on the decisions we make.

To ensure our content is inclusive, easily perceived and understood, we must empathise with our user's needs and create our content to defined, international [accessibility standards](#).

Understanding your audience's needs

Your audience is far more diverse than you may realise. Human variability is the norm, not the exception.

Disability is diverse and dynamic. It may be permanent or temporary. It may have existed from birth or may have been acquired due to an injury, illness or as part of the ageing process. Disability increases with age, from an average of 1 in 5 in the general population to 1 in 1 by the age of 80-85.

- **People who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have difficulty processing auditory information** get audio information from transcripts or captions.
- **People who are blind or have low vision** get their visual information from audio description of visual information.
- **People in loud environments** where they cannot hear the audio **or in quiet environments** where they cannot turn on sound benefit from the use of closed captions.

A general rule...

If the pre-recorded video has **speech or other audio** that is needed to understand the content, you must include:

- transcript, separate from the audio
- captions synchronised with the audio
- otherwise, inform your users.

If the pre-recorded video has **visual information** that is needed to understand the content, you must include:

- a transcript that includes descriptions of the visual information
- audio description of the visual information

Learn more about captioning, transcripts and audio descriptions below.

Captions, transcripts and audio descriptions

Captions

What is it?

Closed captioning goes above subtitling by providing an on-screen text alternative for spoken dialogue as well as a text alternative for audio cues, background noises and other audible sounds.

Captioning can also be used for locating content within the video.

What is it used for?

People in loud environments where they cannot hear the audio or in quiet environments where they cannot turn on sound benefit from the use of **closed captions**.

What are closed and open captions?

Closed captions are captions that are able to be turned on and off via a control on the video player. Open captions are “burnt-in” to the video content and cannot be turned off.

How to produce it?

Your script is a useful starting point when creating a closed caption track.

You can either caption the video yourself using easy tools like Synchrimedia's [MovieCaptioner](#) or alternatively use a dedicated captioning service, such as [Rev](#), [3PlayMedia](#) or [CaptionSync](#).

Apple's [free iOS app Clips](#), enables you to quickly and easily create open-captioned videos. The Live Titles feature allows users to easily create animated captions and titles — just by talking. Simply speak while recording and text automatically appears on screen, perfectly synced with your voice. Tap the clip to easily adjust text, add punctuation or change the style of your title.

Transcripts and summaries

What is it?

A transcript is a text version of the video content that can be easily read by a user or screen reader. It describes the entire video including spoken dialogue and speakers, descriptions of meaningful audio (music, sound effects etc), and descriptions of meaningful visuals, scenes, and actions.

What is it used for?

Transcripts are a great resource for individuals with hearing or vision impairments. Like closed captions, they can also be used for locating content within the video. Transcripts are designed to be consumed separately from the video player, whereas captions are embedded in the video player experience.

How to produce it?

There are different ways to produce transcripts. You could use a text-to-speech software or alter any pre-written scripts for the production of the video, so they read as transcripts.

If your video has no audio or there is visual-only content that was not properly narrated, create a written summary of the content so that those with vision impairments can still access the content.

How to display it?

If you're embedding your video on a web page, include a single show/hide with the title 'Video transcript'. All speaker attributions should be Heading 4 since the show/hide title is Heading 3.

If you choose to provide the transcript as a separate document, keep in mind best practices for [accessible Word documents](#).

Audio descriptions

What is it?

An audio description is a narration track that describes what is visually happening within your video. It should indicate changes or transitions in scenes, settings, movements, gestures, props, and important visual content such as written content on screen but not spoken, introduction and closing titles, segment slides, names and titles of speakers, URLs and more.

What is it used for?

Audio description was designed for people who are blind or have low vision. If a video is of someone speaking or it has a voiceover to narrate what is going on, then an audio description may not be required.

Do you need to use it?

To determine if the visual content of your video requires audio descriptions or not it is recommended that you use this simple decision tree from [Vision Australia](#).

1. **If your video contains important visual elements and the elements are referred to in the narration or dialogue** - provide descriptions during pauses near the point when the references occur.
2. **And the elements are critical for understanding on-screen action** - describe relevant on-screen elements during pauses in the audio.
3. **And the audio does not provide sufficient information about what is happening visually, or about elements which provide important visual context** - describe relevant on-screen elements during pauses in the audio.
4. **And there is text displayed on the screen** - verbalise the text in an audio description.
5. **And if pauses in the dialogue or narration are available, but they are not long enough to accommodate sufficient descriptions** - provide extended descriptions.
6. **And if no pauses are available** - provide a pre-description.

How to produce it?

Similar to creating a closed caption track, you can either add an extra audio track to the video yourself or alternatively use a dedicated service such as [Rev, 3PlayMedia](#) or [CaptionSync](#).

Pre-production tips

- Be clear about the purpose and message of your video. Keep it clear, concise and expressed simply.
- Use the department's brand colours to ensure the text and background colour combinations meet minimum colour contrast standards. These standards also apply to all visual content used in the video. To help you meet the standard, you can use free apps such as Paciello Group's free [Color Contrast Analyzer](#) or [WebAIM contrast checker](#).
- Write a script for all spoken content in advance. Speakers should state their name and title/affiliation audibly. Use clear and concise language written in a plain English style.
- Identify any important visual content that will need to be described audibly (such as on-screen text, graphs, equations or images) for individuals with vision impairments.
- Ensure that all visual content is clear and easy to read. Use an easy to read font such as the department-approved Montserrat with a line spacing of 1.5 lines. Make sure any charts and graphs are pared down to only include the necessary information.
- Do not include rapidly blinking or flashing content in your video to avoid triggering seizures in individuals with photosensitive epilepsy.

Production and filming tips

- Speakers should state their name and title/affiliation audibly.
- Narrate any important visuals, such as graphs, equations or images that need to be conveyed for the listener to fully understand the content.
- Be specific when talking about visuals on the screen. If the speaker uses locational references like “here” or “there”, they should also include a description of the item they are referencing.
 - Don't say: “This part over here represents the slope of a line.”
 - Do say: “In this equation, “y equals mx plus b” represents the slope of a line.”
- Lighting should be strong and clear so that the presenter can be easily identified.

Post-production tips

To provide real time equal access, all videos we publish must include:

- a transcript of all spoken content
- a closed caption track of all spoken and auditory content
- an audio description track (where appropriate) of any meaningful visual content.

Test your video

A simple quality assurance test to check if the video provides equal access involves:

1. Turning on closed captions and watch the video with the sound off.
2. Now, turn the sound back on, close your eyes and re-watch the video with your eyes closed.

In both instances, ask yourself 'was the video still engaging and useful?', 'did it still make sense?'

- If your answer is **yes**, you are nearly ready to publish.
- If your answer is **no**, go back and fix the parts that do not provide equal access before you can publish.

Need more help?

If you would like to do more to make your video content accessible, you can:

- [register for accessibility training](#) (staff only)
- explore the [accessibility toolkit](#) for more resources
- read the [accessibility standards](#)
- ask the [education.nsw team](#) for an accessibility scan
- refer to the [video guidelines](#) for video requirements and production options offered by the department.

Category:

- Communication and engagement
- Technology

Topics:

- Accessibility
- Governance
- Video

Business Unit:

- Communication and Engagement

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This information is current as at "18/7/2023 1:28:18 pm", Australian Eastern Time. For the most up-to-date information, go to <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/how-we-communicate/accessibility-basics/creating-accessible-videos>

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