

# Accessibility Requirements for UC Press Journals Authors

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## What is Accessibility and Why is it Important?

Accessibility is widely understood as the processes and practices involved to make information, environments, products, and services available to everyone. Your article, if accepted for publication, is required to meet accessibility criteria that comply at levels in accordance with government mandates. This document outlines requirements that apply to the article that you submit. Please ensure your submission meets these requirements.

Accessibility is important for a number of reasons, including:

- **Inclusivity:** Making your research accessible promotes inclusivity by helping to provide better access to information. Inclusivity promotes equal access to learning and gained knowledge.
- **Discoverability:** By including alternative text, search engine optimization for the article is improved.
- **Audience:** Prioritizing accessibility increases the potential audience reach for research, increasing the chances of greater engagement and research impact.
- **Accessibility policies:** Importantly, **meeting accessibility standards complies with legal requirements, including the [European Accessibility Act](#).**

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## Image Formatting

### *Color*

Color is important for accessibility because it can affect the way someone receives information visually. Which colors are used in the images, figures, and tables in articles can affect the work's accessibility.

## **Best practices in using color for accessibility**

- Provide enough contrast between the text and the background
- Don't rely on color alone to convey a message to the audience.
- Ensure any links are a different color to the main body of the text.

## **Color contrast requirements**

The minimum contrast value required to adhere to the basic standard of acceptable accessibility is 3.00. The contrast between the text and the background needs to be greater than or equal to 4:5:1.

## **How to use color and color contrasts correctly for accessibility**

There are online tools available to help you check this, including WebAIM's contrast checker:

<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

## *Alt Text for Images*

### **What Is Alt Text?**

Alternative text, or "alt text," describes the visual content of images, charts, and tables. For visually impaired readers, screen reader software will play this text aloud when an image is navigated to. Alt Text is required for all images.

### **Do's:**

- **BE INFORMATIVE:** Describe what you see as concretely as possible. Consider *why* you chose this image instead of describing every detail.
- **KEEP IT SHORT:** In most cases, one sentence will be enough to describe the image so keep it to 1–2 sentences.
- **REPEAT TEXT VERBATIM:** If an image contains text, repeat that text verbatim in the alt text.
- **INFORM CONTENT TYPE:** If an image is a logo, illustration, painting, cartoon, map, musical score, screenshot, or video still, do include that information.
- **PROVIDE ALT TEXT ALONG WITH CAPTIONS:** Include your alt text descriptions along with your figure captions, wherever that may be according to the manuscript preparation guidelines.

### **Don'ts:**

- **AVOID REDUNDANCY:** If information is available in the main text or the captions, do not repeat it in the alt text.
- **DO NOT USE "IMAGE OF" OR "PICTURE OF":** Screen readers will automatically say "image of" or "picture of" before reading the alt text.
- **DON'T MAKE IT COMPLICATED:** Use plain language and be concise rather than use excessive jargon or figurative language.

- DO NOT SOLELY RELY ON WORD'S ALT TEXT TOOL: Word allows the embedding of alt text under Format Picture and Tables Properties, but please include alt text in the Word doc next to the figure captions.
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## Table Formatting

Here are the best practices for creating accessible tables that can be read by screen readers.

### Do's:

- Keep the overall table structure as simple as possible.
- Create your table in Word and use the table tool rather than creating it with manual spaces and tabs.
- Include a *designated*\* header row. The first row of the table should state what kind of information is contained in each column.
- Make sure your table title (or caption) is descriptive and portrays the overall context or purpose of the table.
- If a table includes images, provide alt text for each image.
- Fill any blank cells with "n/a" or a dash ("-") to indicate there is more to come otherwise it will indicate that there is no further content.
- Provide alt text for your table to provide the main point of the data being presented.
- Once complete, try navigating through your table using only the tab key. If you can use the tab key to move through the table cell by cell and row by row starting at the top left cell and ending in the bottom right cell, a screen reader will have no trouble reading it.

\* To designate a row, highlight it, right click, and select table properties. In Table Properties, select the Row tab and check the box "Repeat as header row at the top of each page." Make sure that the box "Allow row to break across pages" is unchecked.

### Don'ts:

- Do not use the Draw Table Tool as it creates a graphic that is inaccessible to screen readers.
- Do not put the title within the table; it should go above the table.
- Avoid merged, blank, or split cells.
- Do not nest tables within tables.
- Avoid blank rows or columns.
- Avoid using color as the only means of conveying meaning.
- Do not use a screenshot or image of a table.

## *Alt Text for Tables*

### **What Is Alt Text?**

Alternative text, or “alt text,” describes the visual content of images, charts, and tables. For visually impaired readers, screen reader software will play this text aloud when an image is navigated to. Alt Text is required for all tables.

### **Do’s:**

- **SUMMARIZE TABLES AND GRAPHS:** For complex tables and graphs, alt text should be used in tandem with the caption to convey the main thrust of the data presented.

### **Don’ts:**

- **AVOID REDUNDANCY:** If information is available in the main text or the captions, do not repeat it in the alt text.
- **DO NOT USE “TABLE OF”:** Screen readers will automatically say “table of” before reading the alt text.
- **DON’T MAKE IT COMPLICATED:** Use plain language and be concise rather than use excessive jargon or figurative language.

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## Audio Formatting

### *Transcript or Description for Audio*

Basic transcripts are a text version of the speech and non-speech audio information needed to understand the content.

A Transcript or Audio Description is required to accompany all audio files.

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## Video Formatting

### *Closed Captions or Transcripts for Video*

Descriptive transcripts also include text description of the visual information needed to understand the content. Descriptive transcripts are required to provide video content to people who are both Deaf and blind.

Closed Captions and/or a Video Transcript is required to accompany all video files.

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## Further Resources

**Feeling overwhelmed?** Try this [Image Accessibility Creator](https://teachonline.asu.edu/image-accessibility-generator/) from Arizona State University to get acclimated with the idea of how to write alt text:

<https://teachonline.asu.edu/image-accessibility-generator/>

**WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools:** <https://wave.webaim.org/>

### **Additional Sources for Writing Alt Text:**

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/describe-content-images>

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/digital-accessibility/toolbox/best\\_practices/alternative\\_text/step-by-step-instructions-alt-text/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/digital-accessibility/toolbox/best_practices/alternative_text/step-by-step-instructions-alt-text/index.php)

[https://sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/digital-accessibility/toolbox/best\\_practices/alternative\\_text/step-by-step-instructions-alt-text/alt-text-examples/index.php](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/digital-accessibility/toolbox/best_practices/alternative_text/step-by-step-instructions-alt-text/alt-text-examples/index.php)

### **Additional Sources for Creating Tables:**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-accessible-tables-in-word-cb464015-59dc-46a0-ac01-6217c62210e5?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US>

<https://www.rickhansen.com/news-stories/blog/tips-designing-accessible-tables#:~:text=Avoid%20split%20cells%2C%20merged%20cells,helpful%20information%20about%20the%20table.>

<https://www.dallascollege.edu/about/accessibility/guidelines/pages/building-tables.aspx>

## Examples



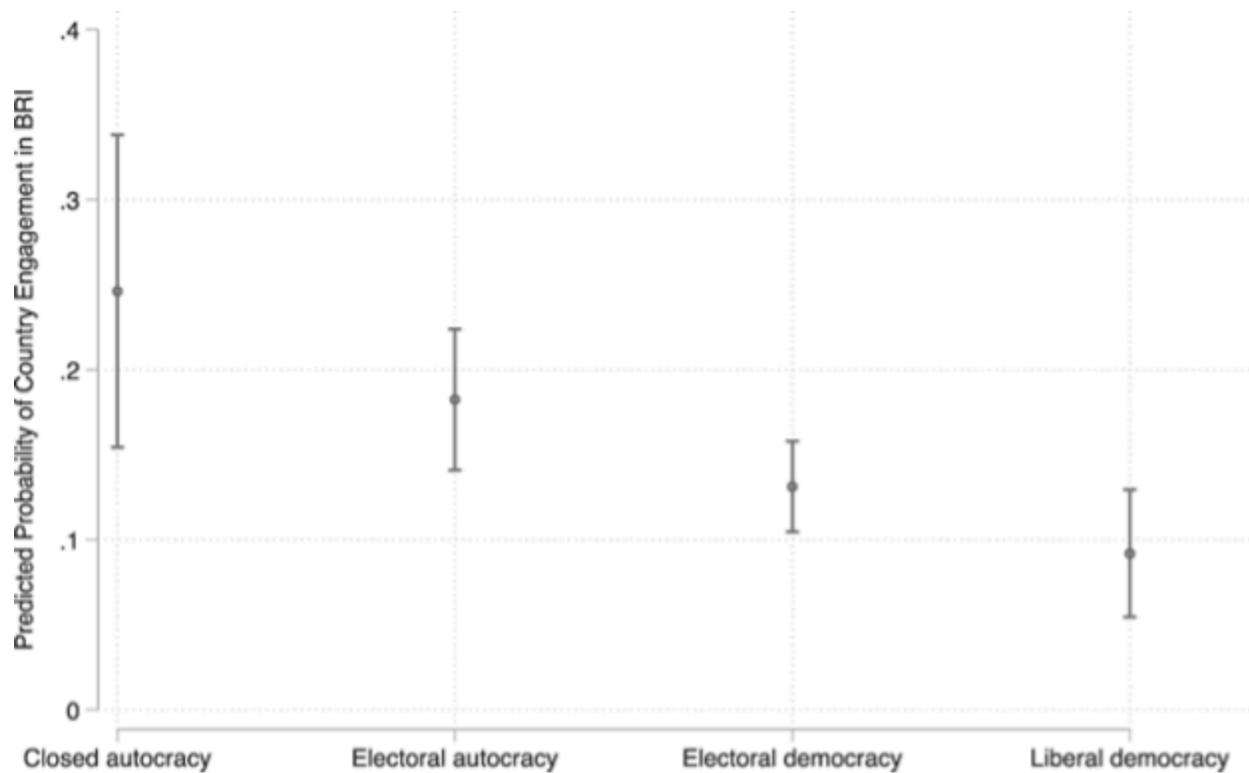
**Figure 1.** Entering Eurydice's chamber for the first time in Hades (2020). Screenshot by author from Nintendo Switch, April 7, 2024.

**Alt text:** Video game screenshot with a muscular male character in a fiery cavern with skeletal statues and lava pools. The character has a speech bubble containing only ellipses and the closed caption reads "What...singing...here?" with song lyrics "To all the earthly remains."



**Figure 2.** Summer wagashi. Photograph by Douglas Perkins via Wikimedia Commons CC0 1.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Summer\\_wagashi\\_10.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Summer_wagashi_10.jpg)

**Alt text:** Four Japanese wagashi sweets on a wooden surface, including a sunflower, translucent jelly, gelatinous form, and bud-shaped sweet.



**Figure 3.** Political Institutions and Probability of Engagement in the BRI

**Alt text:** Scatter plot of predicted probability of country engagement in BRI by governance type, showing a decreasing trend from Closed autocracy to Liberal democracy, suggesting a higher engagement in BRI under more autocratic regimes.



**Example 1.** Bassline ostinato played in “In-Between,” in C minor.

**Alt text:** Sheet music with two lines of musical notation showing bass clef, three flats, tempo 110, and dots indicating staccato beneath quarter notes.

**Table 1. Preference for Democracy or an Authoritarian Government, 2001-2003**

	Democracy	Doesn't matter	Authoritarian government	Other	Total
China	1,713 (53.8%)	518 (16.3%)	137 (4.3%)	817 (25.7%)	3,184
Taiwan	571 (40.4%)	367 (25.9%)	328 (23.2%)	149 (10.6%)	1,415
South Korea	741 (49.4%)	251 (17.4%)	498 (33.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1,268
Hong Kong	326 (40.3%)	259 (32.0%)	129 (15.9%)	96 (11.9%)	811
Japan	954 (67.2%)	144 (10.1%)	134 (9.5%)	186 (13.1%)	1,419

Source: Asian Barometer Surveys.

Note: These are responses to a survey question about whether democracy or an authoritarian government is preferable. Percentage may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Alt text:** Table showing the preferences for democracy versus authoritarianism. Japan has the highest favorability for democracy at 67.2% with Hong Kong having the lowest preference for democracy at 40.3%. South Korea shows the highest favorability for authoritarianism at 33.2% and China shows the lowest favorability for authoritarianism at 4.3%.

*If you have questions or concerns, contact the editor of the journal you are submitting to.*