

Best Practices for Images and Multimedia

When you are selecting images or graphics to integrate in your onscreen content, you will want to make sure that you are selecting images that encourage and enable the learner to make sense of the material you are covering. You will want to be careful about what images and multimedia you select, as well as how you integrate them in your content.

Best practices you should keep in mind when selecting and integrating images with your text include:

- Make sure that the images you use are relevant to the onscreen content.
- Apply the contiguous principle by placing images close to the relevant text on the screen. This applies to explanations of graphics or images, directions or feedback for exercises, or directions or feedback for interactive activities.
- Select images that help learners understand the text, not just decorate the page. For example, avoid adding background images to make the screen “pretty.”
- Use illustrative graphics for facts and concepts.
- Use graphics and animation to teach processes, procedures, and principles that demonstrate the relationship between information.
- Use graphs or interpretative illustrations to show relationships between variables.
- Replace onscreen text and accompanying images or graphics with audio narration when possible. This will help reduce the cognitive load for processing the visual images and text, and it divides it among visual and aural channels.
- Avoid using onscreen text that is identical to audio narration. You will want to edit your onscreen text so that it is a summary of the audio narration, so as not to be redundant.
- Avoid using extraneous sounds, like background music or environmental sounds.
- Remove non-essential text when using multimedia, presenting only the main point and concise texts.