

# Audio Description Guide:

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This is a guide on how to audio describe videos, performances and presentations. The guide contains tips and resources.

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## **What is Audio Description:**

Audio description is the practice of making video content accessible to blind audiences. This is done by adding an extra audio track where a voice narrates important visual aspects of a video. Examples include, setting up the scene, introducing characters and describing important actions/events. Think of it as the audiobook version of your video.

Audio description can also be used in news videos, documentaries, live performances and presentations. The same concepts apply with a few differences.

When describing a video, performance or presentation, you don't need to explain every single visual element. Instead focus on the important moments and be succinct.

## **Describing Films and TV shows:**

When describing a film, TV show or web series, include the following:

- Scene Time & Settings (Ex: Nighttime in NYC, In a city street)
- Characters. Use their names whenever possible, if they don't have one use an identifying feature such as "the man in black."
- Note whenever characters enter/exit a scene.
- Important character actions
- Read any text and logos that appear on screen

## **Describing News and Documentaries:**

For news, informational videos and documentaries, you should describe the following:

- Introduce any characters that are not introduced by the hosts
- Read any text that appears on screen
- When cutting to a scene or some b-roll footage, describe anything that the hosts do not mention
- Describe any statistics, graphs, or infographics that appear on screen if they are relevant to the story
  - Include significant information such as highest point, lowest point, upwards trend or downwards trend

# Describing Live Performances and Presentations:

- Describe the stage:
  - The stage has a large screen in the middle and a podium on the left.
  - For theater or dance performances, describe the backdrop
  - For musical performances, describe the arrangement of instruments
- Introduce people as they come on stage
  - Walei enters the stage. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt with black pants. He holds a black cane which he swings from right to left as he approaches the podium.
  - For theatre performances, describe what the character looks like and their costume
- Describe actions or gestures:
  - Walei raises two fingers in the shape of a peace sign.
- Describe slides
  - Read slide title
  - Describe images in the slides
  - Read bullet points

## **Examples of Audio Description:**

MOPD Becky Curran – NYC at Work Video Profile:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGTPHxyl9pw>

DOT Cycle Eyes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmvUJZfEKns>

NYCEM Ready New York - A well planned escape:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edcyH3bH0r4>

Apple Accessibility is for Everyone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SL7YSqIEd8k>

## **Resources:**

Audio Description in a few minutes – Rooted in Rights:

<https://youtu.be/DTvhox7yIEU>

Audio Description Project: A resource for content creators, viewers and audio description professionals.

<http://acb.org/adp/>

Audio Description Training and Education Resources:

<http://www.acb.org/adp/education.html>