

Guide: Describing images of yourself

Sometimes, you may be asked to describe a picture of yourself, such as a headshot. When this happens, it is up to you to decide how you want to describe important aspects of your identity and appearance.

Try and describe everything that shows up in the picture and is relevant to who you are. Sometimes, when people are part of a visible majority, they avoid describing that part of themselves. But it's important to describe it, to move away from treating it as the 'default' for how people are.

Below are some suggestions for how to write your image description:

- Describe your hair colour, length and style
- Describe your facial hair, if you have any
- Describe your racial identity and/or skin tone
 - If you are white and want to describe your skin tone, avoid using the term "light skin" and instead use words like "pale" or "light pink" or "light beige"
- Describe your gender
- Describe whether you have glasses or other assistive devices that show up in the photo
- Describe your body shape, if it is visible in the photo
- Describe what you are wearing
- Describe your facial expression
- Describe the background in very general terms (e.g., "outdoors", "plain", "sunny sky")
- Use third person
- Don't begin your description with "photo of..." or "picture of..." – just say what's in the picture!

Most image descriptions don't need to be extremely detailed. They exist to give an idea of the important information that someone would gain from looking at an image.

Below is an example of someone's headshot and the image description that they wrote for it.



Image description: A white nonbinary person in their thirties, with chin-length, wavy, light blond hair and blue eyes. They are smiling slightly and wearing rectangular black eyeglasses, and a navy ribbed turtleneck. Beside them is an exuberant-looking aloe plant with dark, reddish-brown leaves.