LECTURER:  
I'm Andrew Downie. In the previous video, we looked at using tables in Microsoft Word. Today, we are going to deal with putting images into Word.

First of all, some background. A picture is worth a thousand words. That is, a picture can be a very useful tool when trying to get across concepts and information. Unfortunately, online images are not accessible to people who use screen readers. Appropriate alternative text can help, but there are times when physical resources may be necessary. They can include tactile graphics and models and in this day and age of 3D printers, models have become a very viable option.

Select the image from the Illustration Group on the Insert tab of the Ribbon. Importantly, do not copy and paste the image in because screen readers and other assistive technology that uses speech output won't be able to access alternative text. Provide meaningful alternative text. To do that, right click the image, Select Edit Alt Text. I'll talk a bit more about what is meaningful in a little while.

Depending on settings, Word may have generated a description of the image, which may at least be useful to identify for those of us who can't see it. Alternative text should be meaningful in the context of surrounding text, therefore, write accordingly. In Word, you may want to write decorative as the description if the image is purely decorative. In HTML and PDF it is possible to provide code that will stop the screen reader from recognising the presence of decorative images, but that's not possible in Word.

OK, let's put an image into a Word document. Here's my document. I'm going to the Insert tab on the ribbon. I'll use ALT N to do that, but you can click with the mouse, and we'll go across to the Illustrations Group. And we're on Pictures. We'll choose this 'Andrew in shed' picture. I'll let you hear what the screen reader makes of this.

SCREEN READER:  
Graphic of a person in a blue shirt. Description automatically generated.

LECTURER:  
That description by Microsoft Word lacks some important details. It doesn't mention, importantly, that I'm wearing ear muffs and have my hand on the lever of a drop saw. To write the alternative text, it is necessary to right click the image. In earlier versions of Word, you may need to look for Format picture. In Office 365, we arrow down to Edit Alt Text. Here we could mark as decorative, but we won't do that, and now I'm on the description that Word has provided. I won't change it at this stage because I'll say a bit more about what would make that meaningful a bit later.

So I'll escape out of that. Writing alternative text, it is important that, wherever possible, the person who created the document writes the alternative text. That person knows why the image was put there and, therefore, should be the best person to write a description. Ideally, the alternative text conveys the same meaning as the image and that can sometimes be a challenge.

As I mentioned before, wording depends on the context in which the image is being used. Describe the scene rather than the image. If the image is a metaphor, explain it. What is an appropriate length for alternative text? Some people have raging debates about this. My comment is, while succinct, as long as necessary. And when should an image not include alternative text? When purely for visual decoration. And all of this also applies to PowerPoint and Excel files. I'm going to bring up another document. I'll just go to the top of the document, and I'll just let you hear the screen reader read a little bit of this document.

SCREEN READER:  
These are tri-colour Pembroke Corgi.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CORGI:  
Pembroke and Cardigan. Pembrokes are smaller than Cardigans. Graphic, Myffy is mostly honey brown with white on her chest and paws. There is also some black on her back. Ears are relatively large and erect and she is sitting on grass, looking excited.

ANDREW DOWNIE:  
So that was the screen reader reading the document, and reading the alternative text that I put there. That text might change under different circumstances. There are all sorts of other situations in which that text might have been written differently and some might argue that I could have done a better job on that one. In the next video, we are gonna look at Word's Accessibility Checker and converting Word documents to PDF. I'm Andrew Downie. Thank you for watching.