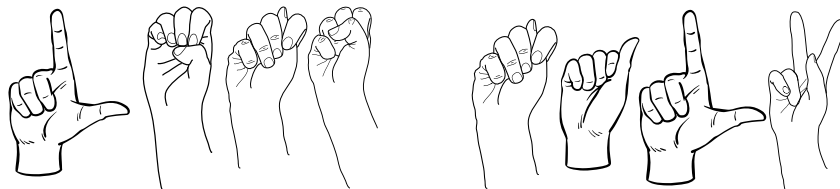
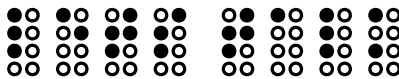


# Ad is for Access

An Interactive Beginner's Guide for  
Starting Conversations About Disability

**Let's talk.**





# is for Access

## An Interactive Beginner's Guide for Starting Conversations About Disability

I approach this work as an able-bodied, Latinx brown woman, a lifelong learner, artist, mother, and K-12 educator who is in the early stages of cultivating deeper understanding of the complex, intersecting dimensions of disability. While I bring over 25 years of experience advocating for and teaching students with disabilities, I have come to recognize the absence of a critically informed disability framework in my earlier practice—one capable of confronting systemic ableism and engaging disability as a political, cultural, and relational identity (Erevelles, 2011; Goodley, 2014). My doctoral studies introduced me to the fields of Disability Studies, Critical Disability Studies (CDS), and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), which collectively inspire and inform this work. These frameworks challenge dominant deficit-based models of disability and call for an intersectional approach that accounts for how race, class, gender, and other sociocultural factors mediate experiences of dis/ability (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016).

Within this learning journey, I have come to understand the significance of developing a shared, justice-centered vocabulary—rooted in CDS and DisCrit—as a foundation for meaningful participation in conversations about disability, access, and educational equity. Language, in this context, is not neutral; it can either reinforce ableist and racist norms or disrupt them by naming and valuing non-normative ways of being (Baglieri & Bacon, 2020). Acquiring this vocabulary has been instrumental in helping me reimagine what inclusive and liberatory education might look like.

This resource is intended as an entry point for educators, scholars, and community members who seek to engage with critical concepts, key terms, and multimodal approaches to access, inclusion, and intersectionality in disability justice. Rather than offering a fixed or exhaustive guide, it proposes a flexible, creative format for exploration and dialogue. The inspiration for this project emerged from a workshop in which disabled artists modeled multiple ways of participating in a collective art-making process. As an artist myself, I found these alternative modes of engagement familiar and intuitive. Artistic creation often requires adaptability and an embrace of nonlinearity—qualities that echo the values of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2016). Where dominant culture may perceive limitation, artists—and many disabled individuals—perceive innovation, resilience, and possibility.

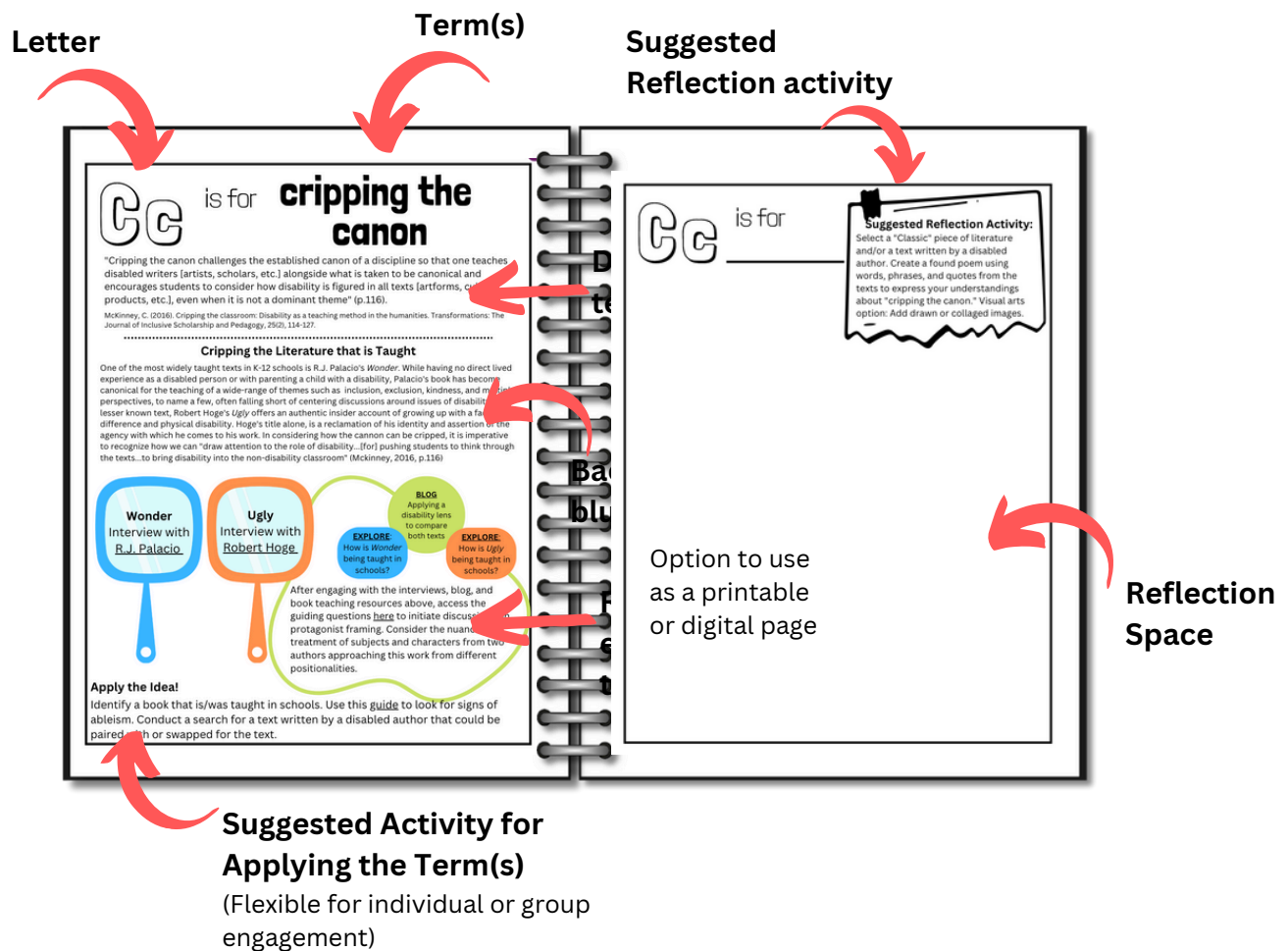
My vision for this project is that it remains a living and collaboratively constructed resource—one that resists closure and invites participation. I warmly welcome others to contribute their own “letter pages” featuring curated terms, concepts, and provocations related to access and disability justice. To participate, please click the button below to access a template. The following page outlines suggested guidelines for structuring contributions, and existing entries may be explored as points of reference.

[\*\*Contribute a Page\*\*](#)

A note about the structure:

While the alphabetized organization appears at first linear, this structure merely serves to locate terms and ideas more efficiently. There is no chronological order that requires each letter to be followed in succession. Facilitators and participants may engage with any letter/word at any time.

# How this Resource is Structured



There are many ways to use this resource. Here are a just a few options.

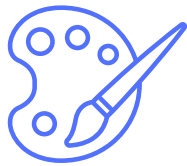
- Compile these pages into a printed notebook
- Upload these pages to a digital platform such as Google Slides or Canva to create digital notebooks
- Adapt these pages to become part of an alphabetized Word Wall
- Adapt these pages into larger posters created by participant groups

# Reflection Space

The Reflection Space can be used as a hard copy for pencil-paper engagement, as a digital copy, or it can be adapted for a spin-off activity that best suits participant preferences. Each letter and word(s) is paired with a page for reflecting on new understandings. This "Reflection Space" is for holding your ideas, feelings, and various forms of expression about the words and activities engaged. In addition to the general suggestions below, a specific reflection activity is offered on each letter page as a starting point for inspiration. You are invited to reflect in a way that is meaningful to you. This is your space.

## Suggestions for Reflecting

This is a non-exhaustive list and these ideas can be mixed and matched in multiple ways:



- Doodle or sketch (you can add labels)
- Create a collage of words/images
- Create an acrostic poem
- Create a comic



- Write and record a monologue
- Record a spoken reflection
- Record a spoken poem



Choreograph or perform a movement (you can record it or describe it with words or sketches)

## ABC

- Write a poem
- Create an acrostic poem
- Find an image and compose a lyrical, detailed description of the picture as Alt text
- Write a monologue
- Write a 12-line scene between two people



- Compose a song
- Select a relevant existing song and perform it

# Ad is for access

In the context of an external environment, access can be defined as affording a person access to move, to enter, or to make contact with something, or operate the facilities of a site. Access in this context is associated with architectural features and technologies including wheelchair ramps, widened toilet stalls, lever shaped door handles, Braille lettering, and closed-caption video. Access is also defined as the rights and opportunities for social and political participation for disabled persons such as access to good jobs, access to good housing, access to quality health care, and equitable economic opportunities

## Access is Imperfect

The article and illustration below, convey how competing accessibility needs problematize one-size-fits-all approach to access. Brooke Winters's (2018) article describes how different people have different needs and their own bodies can be sites of tension when these needs compete with one another. Blanket solutions or "one-and-done" approaches done out of mere compliance, advance binary views of disability as fixed. That is, a disability is identified, a modification is applied, and the matter is considered resolved. There is little room for considering intersectional or competing dimensions within an individual or across individuals. Understanding access as imperfect provides greater opportunities for conceiving access as unfinished work that is always in need of refinement and rethinking.

### Engage



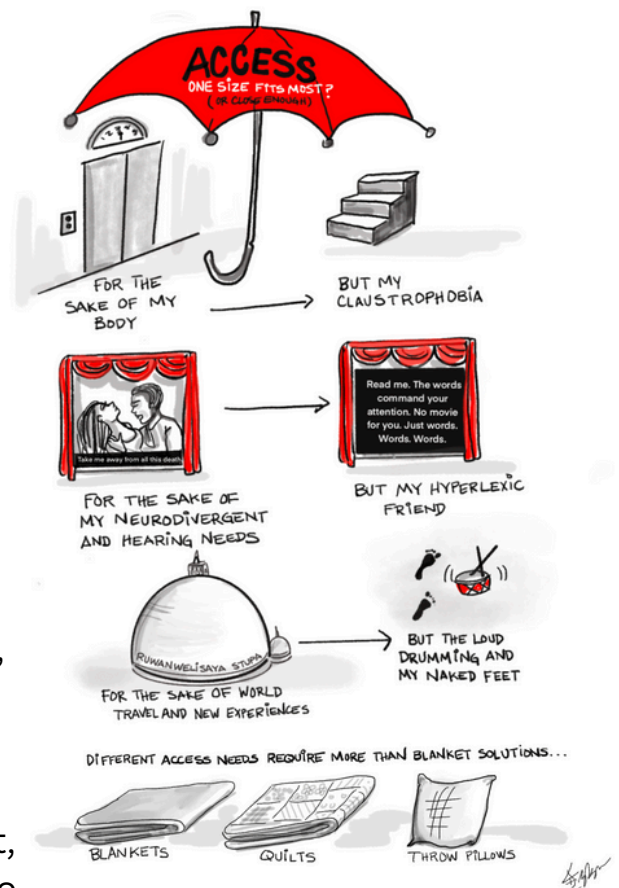
#### Understanding Competing Accessibility Needs %

Competing access needs are real. Accessibility is too important for us to ignore just because it can be difficult or unpopular.

THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO AUTISM / Oct 18, 2018

### Apply the Idea!

Gather a few items available to you (paper, pencils, cups, building blocks, glasses, etc.). Move and arrange the items around each other to illustrate various ways in which access is created or impeded. You can also use your bodies, hands, feet, words, or your mind to create your composition. Do some objects have greater access than others in different scenarios? Present your composition.



**Aa** is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

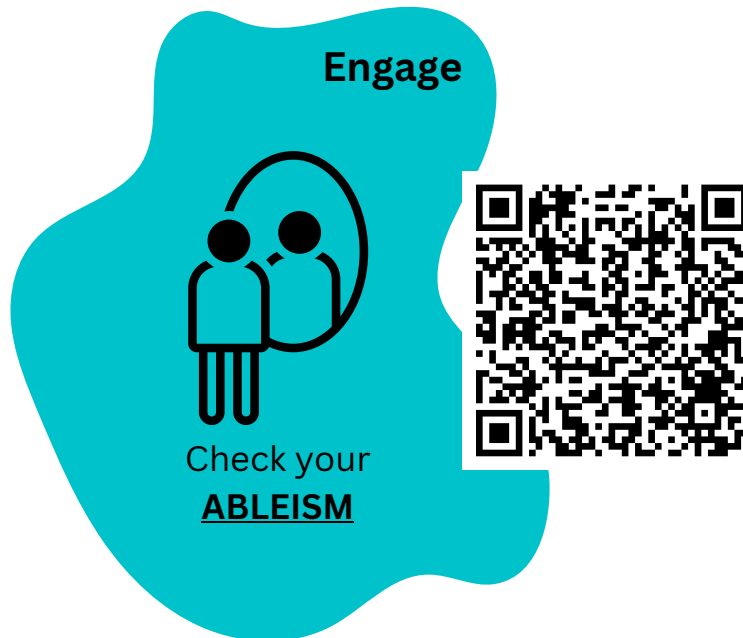
Think about a time when you were denied access to something, someone, or somewhere. In a mode of your choice (visual, written, spoken, performed, etc.) describe the event and how it made you feel. Offer a piece of advice to another person who experiences a similar phenomenon.

# Ad is for **ableism**

Placeholder Text

Placeholder Text

Placeholder Text



**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

**A**d is for **ableism**



Suggested Reflection Activity:



# Bb is for **body**

Provide a definition or explanation of the term. Please cite any sources you use that will assist participants in extending their learning through additional readings.

.....

## **Subtitle for the Resources Section**

A brief blurb about the curated resources and how to engage with them.

### **Engage**

[Accommodation](#)

By Camisha L. Jones



## **Apply the Idea!**

Design an interactive activity for participants to practice and extend their learning. Try to come up with as many ways in which individuals can participate by hearing, speaking, moving, seeing, imagining, etc.

Bb

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Cc is for **cripping the canon**

"Crippling the canon challenges the established canon of a discipline so that one teaches disabled writers [artists, scholars, etc.] alongside what is taken to be canonical and encourages students to consider how disability is figured in all texts [artforms, cultural products, etc.], even when it is not a dominant theme" (p.116).

McKinney, C. (2016). Crippling the classroom: Disability as a teaching method in the humanities. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, 25(2), 114-127.

## Crippling the Literature that is Taught

A widely taught text in K-12 schools is R.J. Palacio's *Wonder*. While Palacio has no direct lived experience as a disabled person or with parenting a child with a disability, her book has become canonical for the teaching of a wide-range of themes such as inclusion, exclusion, kindness, and multiple perspectives, but often falls short of centering discussions around issues of disability. In a lesser known text, Robert Hoge's *Ugly* offers an authentic insider account of growing up with a facial difference and physical disability. Hoge's title alone, is a reclamation of his identity and assertion of the agency with which he comes to his work. In considering how the cannon can be crippled, it is imperative to recognize how we can "draw attention to the role of disability...[for] pushing students to think through the texts...to bring disability into the non-disability classroom" (Mckinney, 2016, p.116)

### Engage/ Watch



### Explore

**BLOG**  
Applying a disability lens to compare both texts



**EXPLORE:**  
How is *Wonder* being taught in schools?



**EXPLORE:**  
How is *Ugly* being taught in schools?



After engaging with the interviews, blog, and book teaching resources above, access the guiding questions [here](#) to initiate discussions on protagonist framing. Consider the nuanced treatment of subjects and characters from two authors approaching this work from different positionalities.



### Apply the Idea!

Identify a book that is/was taught in schools. Use this [guide](#) to look for signs of ableism. Conduct a search for a text written by a disabled author that could be paired with or swapped for the text.

Cc is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Select a "Classic" piece of literature and/or a text written by a disabled author. Create a found poem using words, phrases, and quotes from the texts to express your understandings about "cripping the canon." Visual arts option: Add drawn or collaged images.

# Dd is for disability doula

“...the transition itself, of becoming disabled or moving along the ability spectrum, is frequently invisibilized, to the point that these changes do not even have a name...”  
(Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 240).

---

## Placeholder Text

Placeholder Text

### Engage



### Apply the Idea!

Placeholder Text

Dd is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Ee

is for

# enrichment

Traditionally, “enrichment” implies an additive process that increases desirability, improvement, or value. Violinist and songwriter Gaelynn Lea redefines the term within a disability rights context, positioning it in contrast to conventional notions of “progress.” She frames enrichment as inclusive of those who may not have, in a given moment, the capacity to actively pursue life-enhancing opportunities. Instead, she theorizes a receptive model of enrichment—one in which individuals benefit from the compassionate contributions of others. This reframing emphasizes the experiential and relational aspects of enrichment, rather than its material or goal-oriented outcomes.

## Enrichment Over Progress

### Watch/Listen



### Engage

Gaelynn Lea's Blog where she theorizes Active and Passive Enrichment

### Blog and Website



### Apply the Idea!

Think about a time when you experienced or provided passive enrichment. Share how the act of compassion enriched your own life or someone else's life.

Ee is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

In her blog, Gaelynn Lea points out the pitfall of confusing compassion for pity. Reflect on the difference between compassion and pity and create a numbered list of suggestions to help distinguish an act of compassion, versus an act of pity.



Ff

is for

**forced intimacy**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Ff is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

Gg

is for

**glitch**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Gg

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

Hh

is for

**handicap**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

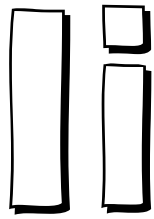
Hh

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



is for

# intersectionality

A single person can have several identities. These identities can fall under categories of marginalization or privilege depending on a given social, economic and/or political context. Thus, "...the very experience of disability itself is being shaped by race, gender, class, gender expression, historical moment, relationship to colonization, and more (p. 227).

Berne, P., Morales, A. L., Langstaff, D., & Invalid, S. (2018). Ten principles of disability justice. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 46(1), 227-230.

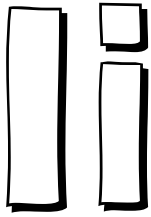
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## Placeholder Text

Placeholder Text

## Apply the Idea!

Placeholder text



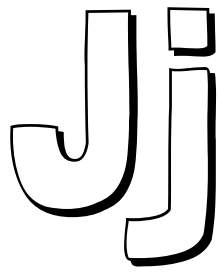
is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text





is for

**justice**

Placeholder Text



**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Jj

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Kk is for **keyboard**

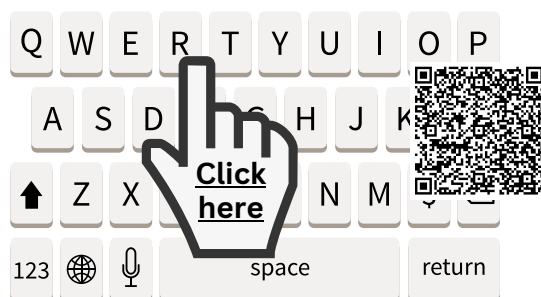
A keyboard is generally defined as an auxiliary device featuring a panel of keys used to operate a typewriter or computer. In the context of accessibility, keyboards take on a more sophisticated appearance and significance as tools that can facilitate movement and communication. Keyboards can serve as conduits to participation and interaction with one's environment.

## Accessibility in Technology

Exploring access through innovative keyboard designs provide another lens for understanding how technology responds to the diverse needs of individuals. From ergonomic keyboards to Braille displays, to head/mouth stick keyboards, to no keyboards, the article below can push us to think about ways in which we can create access for others in our own lives. We can think of each keyboard as linked to a particular user and consider how the specific design offers a platform for various bodyminds to communicate. The video below features Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette at an international speaking engagement as they demonstrate and describe their keyboarding communication styles. To humanize our understandings, it is imperative that we go beyond the facts and information and seek out the individual stories of those who benefit from, inspire, and innovate new technologies.

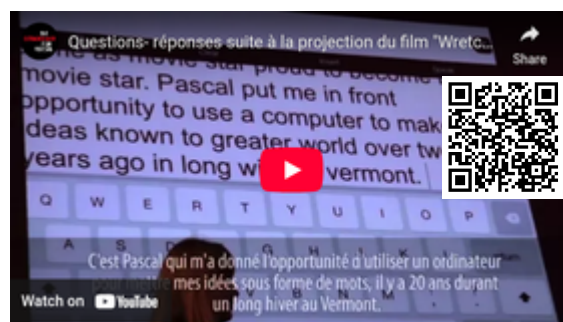
### Engage

This article provides descriptions of several types of keyboard and mouse alternatives and adaptations.



### Watch/Listen

Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette during the Q & A session for their film "Wrteches and Jabberers", at the International Extraordinary Film Festival in Belgium, November, 2015.



### Explore



Tracy and Larry's website to learn more about their film and their advocacy work.



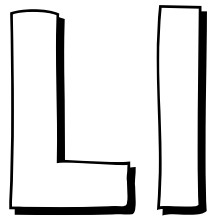
### Apply the Idea!

Stretch your imagination beyond the realistic to design your own keyboard, mouse, or any hybrid. There are no barriers to your design. You can sketch, describe, use a computer, use legos, or create any 3-D model of your design. Share out your design and include a description of the intended users for whom your keyboard is created.

**Kk** is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



is for

**love**

Placeholder Text



**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

L I

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

**Mm** is for **mad**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Mm is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



# Nn is for **neurodiversity**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

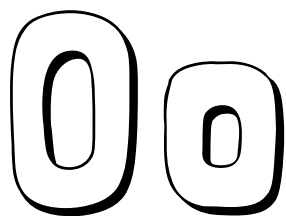
Nn

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



is for

# opportunities

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Oo

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

Pp

is for

**pedagogies of  
pathologization**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Pp

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

Qq

is for

**queer**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Q q is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



**Rr** is for **resistance**

Placeholder Text

.....  
**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Rr

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

Ss

is for

**stimming**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Ss

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Tt is for **text (alt text)**

Alt Text is short for alternative text. The purpose of alt text is to describe the attributes and appearance of an image or the function of an image on a page of content. Alt text expands access to visual content for persons with visual impairments. The American Federation of the Blind delineates the basic requirements of standard descriptions for the blind to be able to access visual materials. Depth of alt text descriptions can vary in detail and are typically non-interpretational accounts of representations.

## AltText

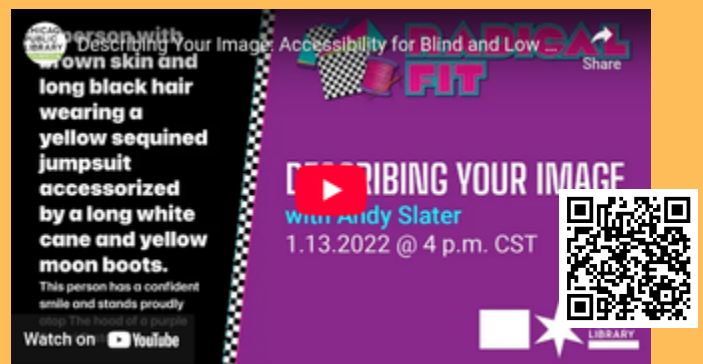
The article below serves as a primer for understanding the purpose of alt text, its various uses, and offers some general guidelines for generating alt text. For those seeking to imagine access creation as art, however, alt text offers a way to push beyond more mechanical descriptions. When alt text is refashioned as poetry, the endeavor becomes reciprocally experiential for both creator and receiver, with rich descriptions that convey deep emotion and personal style. The video resource below opens with echoing many of the article's key points. It then extends alt text toward more artful dimensions, culminating in footage of a 2018 show by Radical Visibility (YOUmediaChicago, 2022). The fashion show features brightly colored and edgy designs set to music whose lyrics narrate the clothing presented and models' performances. This bold and inspired application of alt text is both an expression and an embodiment of access as art.

### Engage

Alt text primer



### Watch



## Apply the Idea!

Select an image and create an alt text description with as much rich detail as possible. Or select an existing alt text description and determine how it can be improved. Rewrite an enhanced description.

Tt is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Create an alt text description for yourself. It can be in prose form, in poetry, or any other format.

# Uu is for **Universal Design**

Placeholder Text

.....

**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Uu

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text





is for

# vulnerability

Placeholder Text



**Placeholder Text**

Placeholder Text

**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder Text

Vv

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Ww is for Warren "Wawa"

Wawa is the acclaimed creator of "Dip Hop" (hip hop through deaf eyes).

## A Primer on Warren "Wawa" and "Dip Hop"

The resources below introduce Wawa and his creative contributions as a deaf performer. The first resource is a news article that highlights the significance of including deaf performers for the first time in a Super Bowl halftime show. The second resource is a video of Wawa's Super Bowl debut performance alongside fellow deaf rapper Sean Forbes. The third resource is a link to Wawa's website with more information about his life, his musical aesthetic, and additional links to sample tracks and performances.

### Engage



#### Dr. Dre Adds Two Deaf Rappers As Part of Super Bowl Halftime Show for 1st Time

The Super Bowl will include a spectacular halftime show, as usual.

NBC Chicago / Feb 12, 2022

### Watch/Listen

(Wawa's Performance at the 2022 Super Bowl Halftime Show)



As you engage with the video, consider: Where and how are Wawa and Forbes situated in relation to the main performers? What does this reveal about the work that must still be done?

### Explore



#### Wawa's World

Home page of Wawa's World, a hip hop group. A Rapper who happens to be deaf...

diphopwawa.com

### Apply the Idea!

Research another deaf performer and post their contributions to a social media platform.

W w is for \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Dream up ways in which deaf performers can be centered in popular culture. Create a poem using the pattern "What if..." as you imagine various hypothetical scenarios that place talent from the deaf community at the forefront.

**Xx**

is for

**x-ray**

Placeholder Text

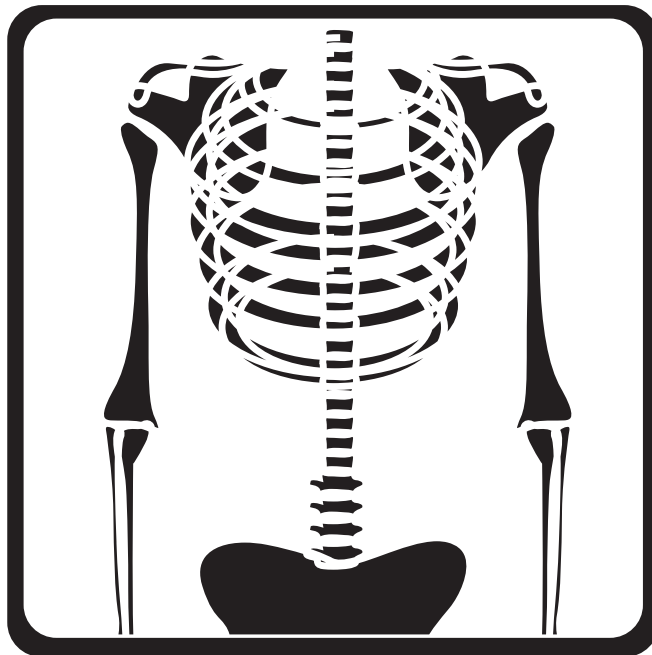
Placeholder Text

Placeholder Text

**Frida Kahlo**



**Bhavna Mehta**



**Apply the Idea!**

Placeholder

Xx

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text

# Yy

is for

# Yellow Crayon

"When a woman with a mental disability is handed a yellow crayon with which to write, an assumption is made that both a woman and a person with a mental disability has nothing to say" (Richardson, 2019)

.....



## placeholder text

In art education, it is important to consider and challenge the ways in which we approach students with assumptions like those who hand out a yellow crayon, investigate barriers that impede the participation of researchers and students in university settings, and reflect on what narratives pertaining to mental disability experiences are shared and missing....the inclusion of artists with disabilities in curriculum often remains either a blank page, by which I mean not even included, typed as a footnote, relegated to a “special” chapter or an entirely different book, or only included within a particular narrative arc. These texts in art education can result from positioning disability within a medical model, through a limiting storyline, and from the intersections of ableism and sanism with other systems of oppression. All of these issues impact how we prepare future teachers. We must ask ourselves, as a field, if we have yet to view disability as integral to discussions of marginalization, equity, and diversity.

Richardson, J. E. (2019). The yellow crayon: rhetoricity, mental disability, and art education. IMAG InSEA MAGAZINE N. 8, 8.

## Apply the Idea!

Placeholder Text

Yy

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Placeholder text



# Zz is for Zero Project

Put simply, the Zero Project is a non-profit organization committed to forging a world with zero barriers. Located in Vienna, Austria, the organization focuses on promoting research, access to information and resources, storytelling, and innovative solutions aimed at "improving the daily lives and legal right of persons with disabilities" (Zero Project, n.d.)

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## Looking at Access and Disability Globally

On a global scale, concerns about access and disability remain largely in process. Several countries, especially those facing economic, social, and political pressures, are in need of extensive supports to better understand the wider meaning of access and materialize infrastructures committed to persons with disabilities. In accordance with Article 32 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Zero Project coalesces stakeholders worldwide to further its mission of removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

### Engage

The organization's mission, projects, and resources.



### Watch/Listen

The Zero Project anthem in 19 sign languages



### Explore

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)



## Apply the Idea!

Create/describe a postcard for a place in the world where an innovation has just occurred that expands access for persons with disabilities. Write/describe to someone about the innovation and the impact it is having.

Zz

is for

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Reflection Activity:**

Explore some of the life stories featured on the Zero Project website and learn more about some of the solutions they have innovated and are looking to expand around the world. Which one piqued your interest and why?