Developing an Aphasia-friendly Video Abstract

How to create a video abstract of your research for people with aphasia

The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia

Centre of Research Excellence in Aphasia Recovery and Rehabilitation

CATs Collaboration of Aphasia Trialists
www.aphasiatrials.org

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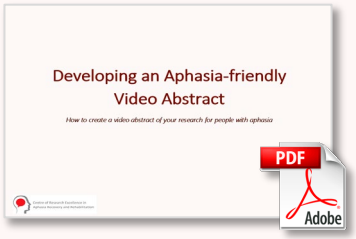
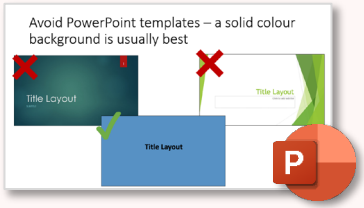


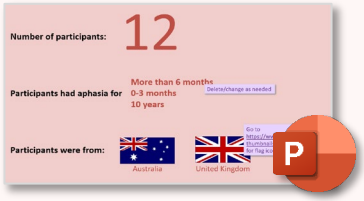
Developing an Aphasia-friendly video abstract (This document)

The ‘why’ and ‘how’ of creating an abstract. Read first!



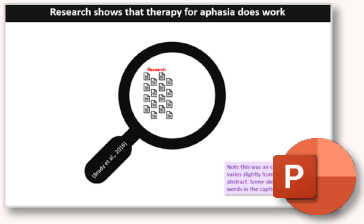
[Video abstracts – PowerPoint tips]

Tips and tricks for things like animations, images, etc., held within a PowerPoint document



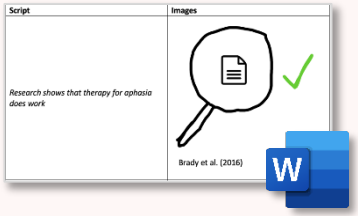
[Template for aphasia-friendly video abstracts]

A template PowerPoint to get you started – edit as needed



[Pierce et al. abstract]

The original PowerPoint document of a completed video abstract – to show you how it comes together



[Storyboard template]

A template table to make a storyboard

Introduction

- The aim of this guide is to help researchers to produce a video abstract for people with aphasia.
- An aphasia-friendly video abstract allows people with aphasia to understand your research
- This guide contains practical support in terms of 'top tips' and reflections on video production, examples of aphasia-friendly video abstracts, slide/video templates, and software and technology suggestions.

This project guides researchers to create a video abstract that communicates research, specifically aimed at people with aphasia.

Why make a video abstract?

A video abstract, or video research abstract, disseminates research through video and can accompany a traditional research article. A video abstract can promote key highlights of the study and can even encourage a broader audience for your research findings. Video abstracts are growing in prominence within scientific journals; however, there is minimal guidance for researchers on how to produce video abstracts generally, and no guidance on how to make them more accessible to people with communication difficulties, including people with aphasia. With adaptations and accommodations, video abstracts can be more accessible to people with aphasia.

Why aphasia-friendly?

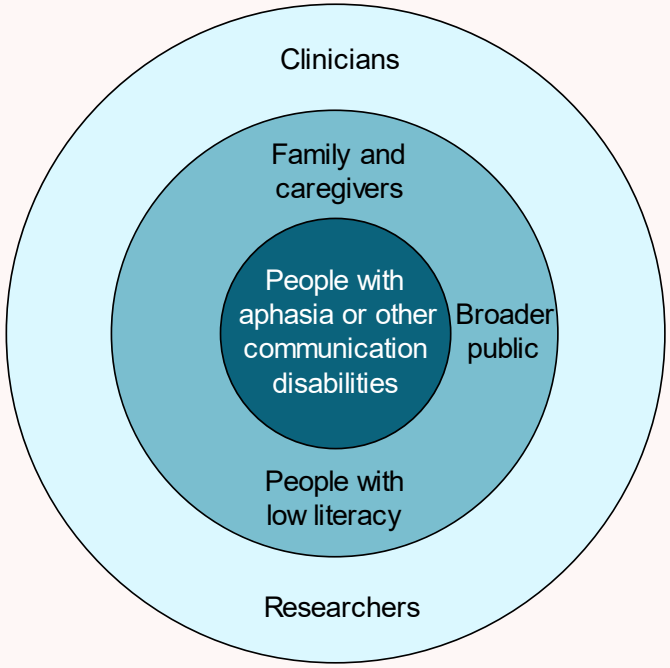
An aphasia-friendly video abstract can enable more stakeholders of research to understand the key messages of a research study. This is vital for implementation. It can potentially result in positive impacts for people with communication difficulties, carers, family members and communities by:

- making the findings of publicly funded research more accessible to consumers – this accords with ethical guidelines
- increasing knowledge and health literacy

- promoting research and clinical innovations
- increasing help-seeking behaviour in healthcare
- respecting people with aphasia's preference for aphasia-friendly materials (Rose et al., 2011a)
- enhancing autonomy and self-management

Who is the target audience?

The primary audience is, of course, people with aphasia, but other audiences may also benefit from a very accessible summary:



Does it need to be of professional quality?

While a high quality, well-produced video can be developed with minimal financial cost, the visual appeal of the abstract is less important than the clarity of your message.

What features make a video aphasia-friendly?

A survey of a group of people with aphasia from the Aphasia Recovery Connection Facebook[1] group indicated some key features of video abstracts were important:

- Most people preferred captions to accompany the video, though some did not mind either way
- About half of respondents indicated they wanted a single sentence or keywords on each slide, but others were happy with more, or said it depends on the content
- A video of the narrator/presenter in the corner was preferred
- A simplified, aphasia-friendly title was preferred over a formal research title

We recommend producing a video that is accessible to all people with aphasia (mild to severe) and so in this guide we recommend the *most* accessible design features.

[1] Throughout this guide, we will reference specific feedback from this group as “Finch et al., 2020".

Written instructions

Here we cover seven important steps with a focus on making the final product aphasia-friendly:

1. Write a script (and why this saves you time)
2. Create a quick storyboard
3. Compile the presentation (see the accompanying PowerPoint files for this)
4. Get feedback from people with aphasia
5. Record the narration
6. Finishing touches (optional, depending on your perfectionism)
7. Submit to the journal

1. Writing your script

Why write a script?

Perhaps you have experience presenting and teaching, or experience talking to people with aphasia – if so, you are probably keen to get on to *making* the video. Why should you start with a script? There are some very good reasons:

- Firstly, having a script will actually **save you time** because your presentation will be shorter and simpler. That means less narration, fewer visuals and less editing. A video abstract should generally be three to five minutes of content *even for audiences without aphasia.* The fact is that people lose interest quickly and start skipping through videos, and for people who have experienced a stroke there are often difficulties with attention and memory to consider, so you want to hit the main points and leave out unnecessary detail. A script will help you to find where you're including too much detail, and lets you ask a family member or friend to check it over before you've put too much time into it.
- Second, writing a script means you can put the text into a readability checker, either in Microsoft Word or online (see next section for information on this). This will help you find and edit language and terminology that is not accessible, and overall, support people's understanding by increasing the readability of your information / text
- If you want somebody to translate your video abstract into another language, you will need a written version.

- Some journals request a transcript of the video abstract on submission.
- Finally, the majority of people with aphasia want captions to help with comprehension (Finch et al., 2020). Our PowerPoint template has a space for you to put captions. You can edit and alter the template as much as you like.

A script might seem like additional work, but in our experience, the script is the **most important step** in producing a clear and aphasia-friendly video abstract.

Drafting the script

For the overall structure, you can use your written journal abstract as a starting point but focus on the **introduction** and **discussion**. The method and results should be present but in a brief summary. As a researcher, you are used to being detailed about methods, but people watching your video abstract want to know *what did you find out* and *what does it mean for people with aphasia?* Any information that doesn't answer these questions may be too much detail and you should consider cutting it out (Stroke Association, 2012).

Even if your results aren't life-changing in themselves for people with aphasia (and any one paper probably isn't!), it's fine to present the results and then talk about how certain/uncertain the findings were, and what else needs to be researched. This helps people answer the second question, *what does it mean for people with aphasia?*

Further tips:

- Don’t try to write a teaser trailer or a script that entices people to read the full article. Video abstracts broaden the audience for your research, but they don’t necessarily increase reads of the article itself (Rees et al., 2015). Instead, **summarise** the research project.
- Write as you would talk, or better yet, explain the topic to someone who has no idea about aphasia or research and copy down what you say. Also take note of the gestures you use to explain concepts as these might be the basis for the figures and graphics you use.
- We recommend 100-200 words which should translate into *approximately* three minutes.
- Consider changing the title of your paper into an aphasia-friendly question or statement (Finch et al., 2020).
- Word frequency (i.e. how frequently a word is used) influences sentence reading performance (Devlin & Tait, 1997). Therefore, use more commonly used words.
- Use highly imageable words (Aleligay et al., 2008). This will also help you to pick the images you include in your video abstract.
- Avoid metaphors and abstract language (Elman, Parr & Moss, 2003)
- Don’t use jargon (Parr, 1997)
- Use whole words, rather than slang or abbreviations.

Checking how aphasia-friendly your script is

Once you have a draft:

1. Read your script aloud. Ensure it has a logical flow and there are no acronyms, jargon or abbreviations
2. Paste your script into app.readable.com
    - On the right panel you will see feedback on the readability of your script
    - Guidelines for written accessibility suggest a Flesch-Kincaid Grade score of **five or less** (Stroke Association, 2012), so this is probably a good target. If writing in a language other than English, you will need to consider other measures and tools for readability.
    - To improve the readability score, focus on shorter sentence length and less complex words. Hovering over highlighted parts of your text will show the problem areas.
    - You will probably have to distil your message to some extent in order to reach the target score of Flesch-Kincaid Grade ≤5.
3. Ask a family member or friend with no experience in your field to read it over
4. Ideally, ask someone with aphasia to read it over or listen to you read it.

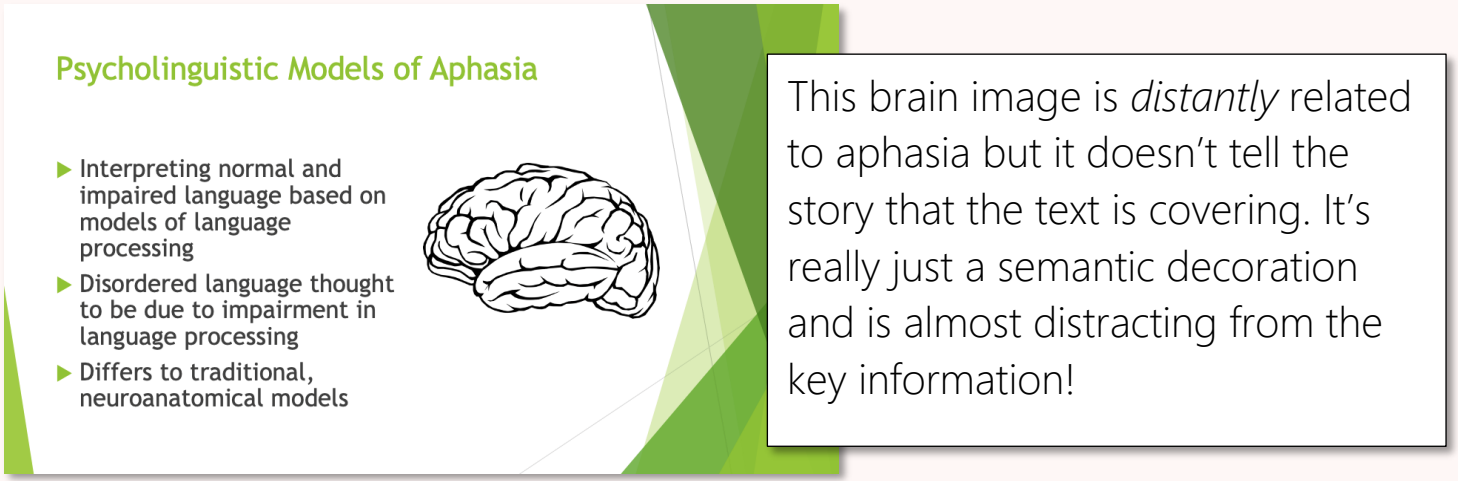
Readability tips:

- Try to reduce the use of pronouns in sentences. For example, instead of saying 'We had funding to…', be explicit and indicate who has the resource e.g. 'The council gave us funding' (Stroke Association, 2012).

- Convey your message with short words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs (Rose et al., 2011a; Aleligay et al., 2008; Dalemans et al, 2009); The Stroke Association (2012) recommend using about five words in a sentence.
- Minimize the use of complex sentences (Aleligay et al., 2008) or vocabulary (Elman, Parr & Moss, 2003).
- Use straightforward / plain speaking language, that gets straight to the point (Parr et al., 1997; Howe, Worrall & Hickson, 2008; Parr, Wimbourne, Hewitt & Pound, 2008) and keep to the point (Stroke Association, 2012).

2. Storyboard

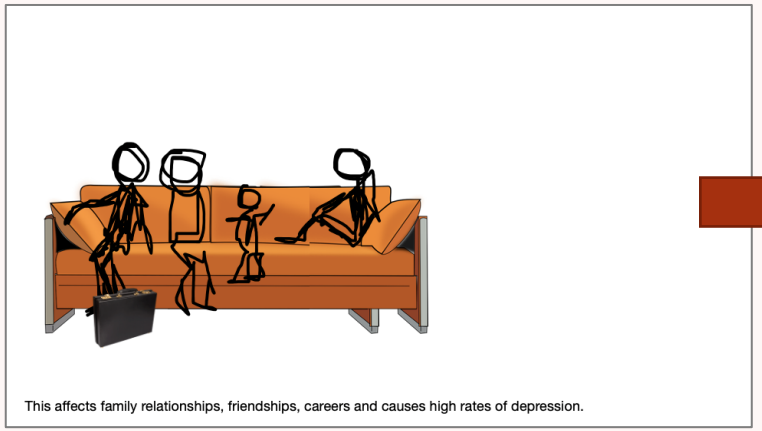
When most people create a presentation, their first step is to open up PowerPoint, type onto slides and perhaps add a relevant graph or table. Then, for the slides that only have text on them, people will search for loosely related photos or clip art to paste in. The result is something like this:



For an aphasia-friendly piece, and actually for all presentations, we want to minimise text on the slides and let the visuals **precisely complement** the narration to tell the story. See this example – there are very few written words and no sentences, other than the captions. The brain cannot simultaneously process differing written and spoken sentences, so any time spent reading words that don't complement the narration is time spent not listening. This is more important when sharing information with people with aphasia, where we want to limit distracting stimuli. For people with aphasia, graphics aid understanding

and make information more interesting, however, they should not be ambiguous (Rose et al., 2011a) and don't use too many pictures, as they can become redundant and confusing (Parr, Wimbourne, Hewitt & Pound, 2008).

A **storyboard** helps with these problems**.** A storyboard will help focus you on exactly what images you are looking for, making your video abstract clear and helping you focus your search for appropriate graphics. Here are some examples storyboards made within PowerPoint and Word using the Draw tools[2] and some clipart:

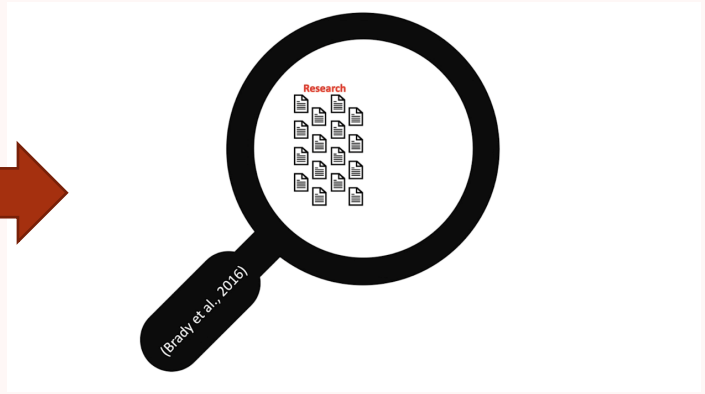


Storyboard

Eventual finished slide

[2] Not available in older versions of PowerPoint

Script	Images
Research shows that therapy for aphasia does work	 Brady et al. (2016)



Storyboard

Eventual finished slide

Storyboards can be quick-and-dirty - they don't need to be pretty!

To easily make a storyboard, open our storyboard template document and you will see a table with two columns. In the left column, put **each line** of your script into a cell. On the right is where you can plan your images. You can create them using the Draw tools, clipart or printing and sketching. A storyboard scribbled by hand is fine as well!

Think about what photographs, images or shapes you can put to represent the narration. You don't need to source them now, just draw or write what you are looking for. Use a picture to help introduce new information and for each new concept (Stroke Association, 2012)

If your research is more abstract, think visually – what would you draw on the back of a napkin if you were explaining your study? Perhaps boxes and arrows? What gestures and shapes would you use to explain to somebody with aphasia? The images must directly support the statements (Elman, Parr & Moss, 2003).

3. Compiling the PowerPoint presentation

Now that you have a script and storyboard, it's time to put the PowerPoint presentation together! We have a PowerPoint tips file to look through, and we have also included the original PowerPoint document of a completed video abstract, in case you want to see how it comes together. The key steps are:

1. Paste each line of your script into a new slide, in the captions box at the bottom
2. Find (or create) the images you want based on your storyboard, paste them into PowerPoint. See below for help with sourcing images.

To make things easier, we have a PowerPoint template that is already set up to be aphasia-friendly. You can edit and change this template as much as you need. You'll notice it has:

- A title page with spaces for photographs of the authors
- A caption box to paste your script into
- Fonts:
    - It uses sans-serif font throughout (Stroke Association, 2012; Rose et al., 2011a). Sans-serif fonts are those **without** small strokes on the ends of the letters, serif fonts are those **with**. Calibri, Verdana and Ariel are examples of Sans-Serif fonts.

← A serif font with the serifs highlighted red

User:Chmod007, CC BY-SA at Wikimedia commons

Some additional notes on fonts:

- **Thick fonts** rather than thin (Elman, Parr & Moss, 2003; Rose et al., 2011a).
- Large font size (Brennan, Worrall & McKenna, 2005; Stroke Association, 2012):
  - Headings at least two sizes larger than other text (Stroke Association, 2012)
  - Use at least 14-point font (Rose et al., 2011a) and between size 14 and 18 font for the main text (Stroke Association, 2012).
- Use black or a dark font (Rose et al., 2011a).

Additional text tips

- Depict numbers in numerals, not words (Rose et al., 2011a). However, some people with aphasia have difficulty with numbers, it can be good to include both the word and the numeral e.g. Six (6).
- **Bolding** and *italicizing* of words should be used to highlight key information (Rose et al., 2011a; Parr, 1997; Parr, Wimbourne, Hewitt & Pound, 2008). Avoid capitalising or underlining key concepts and don't use unnecessary capital letters (Elman, Parr & Moss, 2003)
- Bulleting can be used to convey the key points (Rose et al., 2011a; Parr, Wimbourne, Hewitt & Pound, 2008)

Animation

If you want things to be **animated**, there are some tips in our PowerPoint guide on how to do this. But animation isn't essential for explaining your research – just ensure your graphics demonstrate what your narration is saying.

Sourcing images and audio

Because your video abstract will be published online, you need to ensure you use copyright-free images – *you can't just grab whatever you like from Google Images!* If you are publishing for a journal article, the journal will probably ask for a declaration that nothing you used is copyrighted.

How do I know what I can use?

The following pages contain some explanations of licencing.

Public Domain – Ideal. The author has completely cast-off ownership and you can use or edit as you wish! Also known as CC-0.

Creative Commons – Potentially useable. The author will allow use of the image or video for free, but with a few conditions. The authors choose and publish the CC licence conditions with a combination of the terms below:

> **BY** –Creative Commons licences all contain "BY" which means you must state whom the work is by (with the exception of CC-0 which is Public Domain - see above). In other words, you must attribute the author somewhere. This can be at the end of your video abstract or alongside the image, but it is **required**.
>
> **ND** – No Derivatives, meaning you can't change the original image or video. Unless you are using the entire image unedited, images with ND are often impractical for video abstracts.
>
> **SA** – Largely irrelevant for video abstracts. SA stands for "Share Alike" which means you can't share your end product using that work with a different licence. For example, you can't take an image that is CC-BY-**SA** and then sell it.
>
> **NC** – Largely irrelevant for video abstracts. NC means Non-Commercial. As you won't be selling your video abstract, this shouldn't matter. We're guessing your video abstract isn't so good that people will pay to see it - no offence.

For example, if you see an image marked **CC-BY-SA**, it means it is Creative Commons (CC), must be attributed (BY) and the video abstract must also be CC-BY-SA. If you see an image marked **CC-BY**, you can use it with attribution.

Royalty Free – this name is a trap! Royalty Free material is not free. It means you only have to pay *once*, rather than for *each use*. You can use Royalty Free images in your video abstract *if* you pay the licencing fee.

No mention of copyright – In many countries, copyright applies automatically and so no copyright statement *does not mean* it is public domain. Contact the author to ask, if you wish, but it's often easiest to find something else.

Where can I find images, videos and music that are public domain or creative commons?

This table outlines some of the best-known sources of copyright-free material. Sources for music and sounds are included in the table but in most situations, they are probably not necessary.

Stroke and aphasia research illustrations (developed with people with aphasia) https://www.aphasiatrials.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Example-of-information-sheets.docx	Illustrated specifically for research. Please attribute http://speakeasy-aphasia.org.uk/	Images	
Creative Commons Search https://search.creativecommons.org/	Creative Commons and Public Domain – check each image's licence.	Images	
Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page	Search bar at top right. Creative Commons and Public Domain – check licence on each page	Images	Video
Burst https://burst.shopify.com/	Professional-looking stock photography. No attribution required for most images (but no resales allowed)	Images	
Pexels https://www.pexels.com/	Public domain photographs and videos – high quality	Images	Video
Pixabay https://pixabay.com/	Public domain photographs, videos and clipart	Images	Video
Unsplash https://unsplash.com/	Professional-looking stock photography. No attribution required (but no resales allowed)	Images	

PxHere https://pxhere.com/	Public domain photographs	Images 		
MorgueFile http://MorgueFile.com	User-submitted and stock images. No attribution required (but no resales allowed)	Images 		
Freeimages www.freeimages.com	User-submitted and stock images. No attribution required (but no resales allowed). Beware popups and ads.	Images 		
YouTube Studio Audio Library https://studio.youtube.com/	Copyright free music & sound effects. Sign up for YouTube studio, then choose “Audio Library” from the left menu.		Sound effects 	Music 
Freesound.org https://freesound.org/	Creative Commons and Public Domain – check licence on each. Signup required.		Sound effects 	Music 
Microsoft Office icons and clipart	Click on *Insert* ribbon and then *Icons* For images, click on *Insert* ribbon > *Pictures* > *Stock Images*	Images 	Icons 	

Photographs, illustrations or icons?

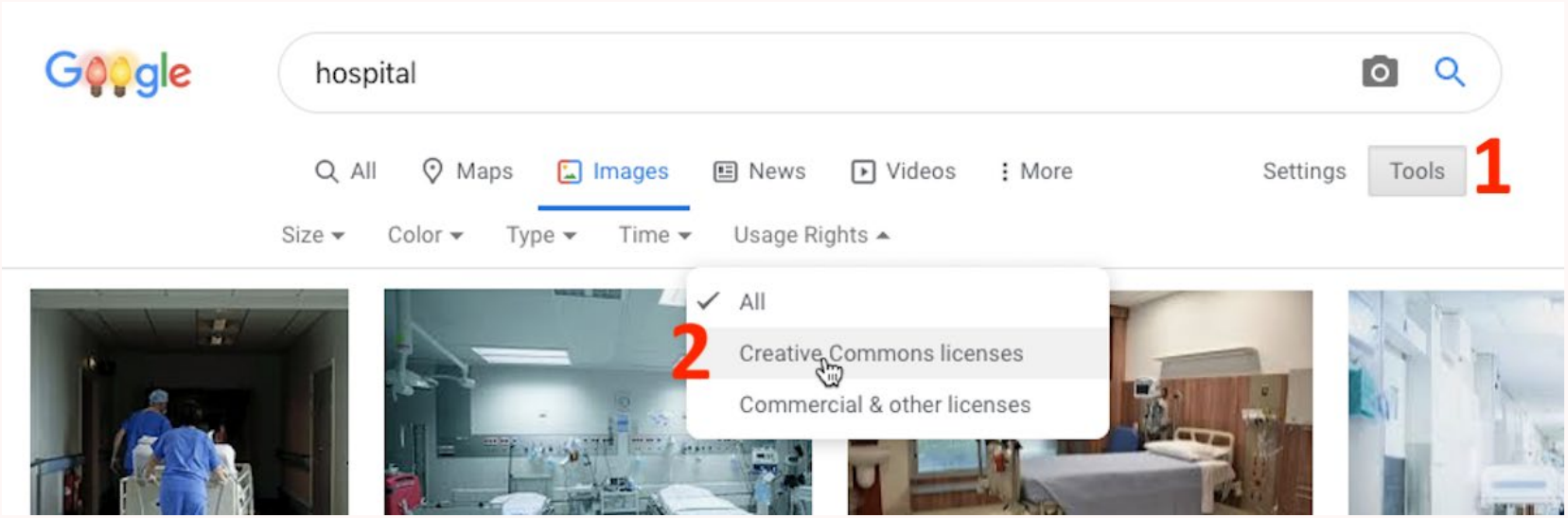
Photographs are preferred over illustrations and icons (Rose et al., 2011b; Dietz, Hux, McKelvey, Beukelman, & Weissling, 2009), although in one survey of over twenty people with aphasia, photographs and illustrations were equally welcomed (Finch et al., 2020).

Colour photographs are preferred by people with aphasia to support their understanding (Rose et al., 2011b; Dietz, Hux, McKelvey, Beukelman, & Weissling, 2009). Photographs directly from your research are best but similar photographs could work.

People with aphasia have also reported that they like illustrations (Rose et al., 2011b; Dietz, Hux, McKelvey, Beukelman, & Weissling, 2009), computer-generated images (Pearl & Cruice, 2017) and pictograms (Dalemans et al., 2009).

Google search suggestions

Another option is to filter your google image search to include only creative commons results. Enter a search term in images.google.com, then select *Tools*, and in the dropdown *Usage Rights*, select *Creative Commons Licences.* You will still need to double check the licence on results by going to the page that contains it. As they are all at least CC-BY, you **will need to attribute the author** somewhere in your video.


Google
hospital
All
Maps
Images
News
Videos
More
Settings
Tools
1
Size
Color
Type
Time
Usage Rights
All
2
Creative Commons licenses
Commercial & other licenses

4. Feedback from people with aphasia

At this point in the process, it is worth showing the presentation to people with aphasia for their feedback. It is still easy enough to make changes to the visuals or script, whereas once you have recorded the narration and exported the video (steps 5 and 6), it is more work to incorporate feedback.

You can advance through the slideshow while verbally narrating it to give an idea of the finished product. Ideally, you would approach multiple people who have a range of aphasia presentations to ensure it is as broadly accessible as possible.

5. Recording the narration

Equipment

Microphone

You don't need a fancy microphone or sound engineering software to capture high-quality narration. There are a number of options for capturing voice recording on your computer.

1. Use your computer's built-in microphone. Built-in microphones vary widely in quality and can be sensitive to ambient noise.
2. Connect an external microphone. Some headphones have a built-in microphone which might serve you well.[3]

Test out your microphone. Experiment to see what gives you the best sound quality, e.g., using your headphones or just using the mic on your computer/laptop.

Location

[3] However, if you intend to record narration or present online routinely, it might be worth investing in a good quality USB microphone. At time of writing, very good microphones cost around €120/£110/$AUD200.

Create the right acoustics. You don't have to have access to a sound-proof room, but you can easily create one by surrounding yourself with soft furnishings, e.g., cushions. Even better, record your audio while under a blanket (honestly!) At the very least, be mindful of ambient noise that might be captured by your microphone. Avoid recording near anything with a fan (e.g., a desktop computer) or a motor (e.g., a fridge). If traffic is audible where you're recording, try to record at a time when the roads are less busy.

Software

There are many software options that will allow you to record narration for your video, depending on your computer and operating system.

One of the simplest solutions is to record narration within PowerPoint. Click the following link to view a 'how-to' video from Microsoft: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/record-a-slide-show-with-narration-and-slide-timings-0b9502c6-5f6c-40ae-b1e7-e47d8741161c

Some tips when recording narration in PowerPoint:

- You can record narration and play any animations at the same time in the same way that you would present to an audience, i.e., talk and click the mouse/arrow key to either advance to the next slide or start an animation. (Using arrow keys is quieter than clicking a mouse and less likely to be audible in your recording)

- Alternatively, PowerPoint allows you to record narration slide-by-slide (this process varies across different versions of PowerPoint). This is better as you don't have to try to say the whole presentation perfectly in one take – which is pretty difficult to do!
- Record a slide and listen back immediately so that you can make any changes. E.g., is your volume too loud/soft? Is there any background noise? Are you talking too fast/slow? As you get used to it, you can record a few slides at once.
- Avoid speaking during the transition of one slide to another. Unlike animations (movement within a slide), PowerPoint can't record audio while playing transitions.

Once you have finished recording, return to the normal PowerPoint view. You will see an audio button in the top right corner of the slide – you can keep the audio, delete it or record over the top of it. You can also click and drag the icon off the slide so it is not visible during playback.

There are many options for recording the narration externally to PowerPoint and editing the exported PowerPoint video with the narration in 3rd party software. Some software options include (but are not limited to) Camtasia, iMovie, and Adobe After Effects.

"Talking head" narration

Some people with aphasia indicated a preference for a "talking head" narration (Finch et al., 2020). This involves a video of the narrator/researcher speaking being embedded into the video abstract. In 2021,

PowerPoint added this feature under “Record slide show”, however this functionality is new and it has a few bugs.

It may be easier to record the “talking head” separately using other software (such as Zoom, QuickTime, or Camtasia) and editing the PowerPoint video and the "talking head” together using 3rd party software. We would recommend searching online for “Picture-in-picture video editing” to find an up-to-date tutorial for achieving this.

Remember your audience

Remember that people with aphasia can have a range of difficulties with spoken language and co-morbid difficulties (e.g. with processing and/ or attention) that may make a narrated PowerPoint inaccessible. We would recommend adopting supported communication techniques (Kagan, 1998) when recording your narration:

- Slow down your speech and keep an even pace
- Pause between slides to allow for processing time
- Maintain an even volume (don’t trail off at the end of sentences)
- Use natural stress and prosody.

6. Final touches

When you are happy with the slideshow, you will want to export it as a video to share far and wide!

Select File > Export…

Depending on your version of PowerPoint, you may be asked to select the video quality. When selecting video quality, consider how you intend to share the video: if you intend to email the video around, choose a smaller video size (lower quality). Alternatively, if the video will be saved on a publisher's server, be guided by their requirements. Always check the quality of the video after exporting – there will always be some compression and loss of quality; make sure you're happy with the product before sending it off.

We also recommend keeping a copy of the PowerPoint file itself. If someone volunteers to translate your video abstract, you can easily alter the captions and have them re-record the audio.

Optional: If you have a perfectionist streak and the know-how, you can import the video into a video editor such as iMovie, Camtasia or Final Cut Pro. This will allow you to finetune timing and pauses.

7. Submitting to a journal

Video abstracts are not especially common and so your experience publishing one alongside your paper will vary according to the journal.

Journals generally state in the *Instructions to Authors* or elsewhere that they are happy to accept video abstracts. In our experience, some journals will indeed have a specific process set up, while others may seem initially shocked that somebody is *actually submitting* a video abstract and take some time to work out the process. Even if the journal does not explicitly state that it accepts video abstracts, it is worth asking as every journal wants more traffic!

You do not need to submit your video abstract until your paper has been accepted, but it is good idea to let the editor know in your cover letter that you intend to submit one.

Peer review of videos

In a strange loophole, it seems that many journals do not have a peer-review process established for video abstracts – in our experiences, the publisher simply asked us to provide them when they were ready to publish. This may not be the case with all journals and will hopefully change in future. Naturally, you should try to stay true to your findings and not overstate their strength.

Some journals ask for the written script of the video abstract (luckily, a script is part of the process in these instructions!) and provide a copyright agreement to sign. Similar to the article manuscript, the agreement

gives ownership of the video abstract to the journal ☹ but resharing is typically allowed with a **CC-BY-NC-SA**[4] licence, which means it can be put on YouTube and Social Media as long as you link to the article.

In terms of *how* to provide the article to the publisher, they might ask you to email it, but the file can often be too big to email. They might have a cloud drive to upload it to, or you can share it from a OneDrive/Dropbox/Google Drive location or use WeTransfer.

[4] Remember the Creative Commons licences in section 3? This particular licence means the video abstract must be attributed with a link to the article page (BY), cannot be profited from (NC) and should be shared with the same licence requirements (SA).

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Reflections on making a video abstract

Reflection from Sam Harvey

Reflection from John Pierce