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DESIGN THAT CONNECTS

CREATIVE MARKETING & VISUAL STORYTELLING WITH CANVA + AI FOR K-12

Tricia Aylward &

Megan Boebinger

CONTENTS

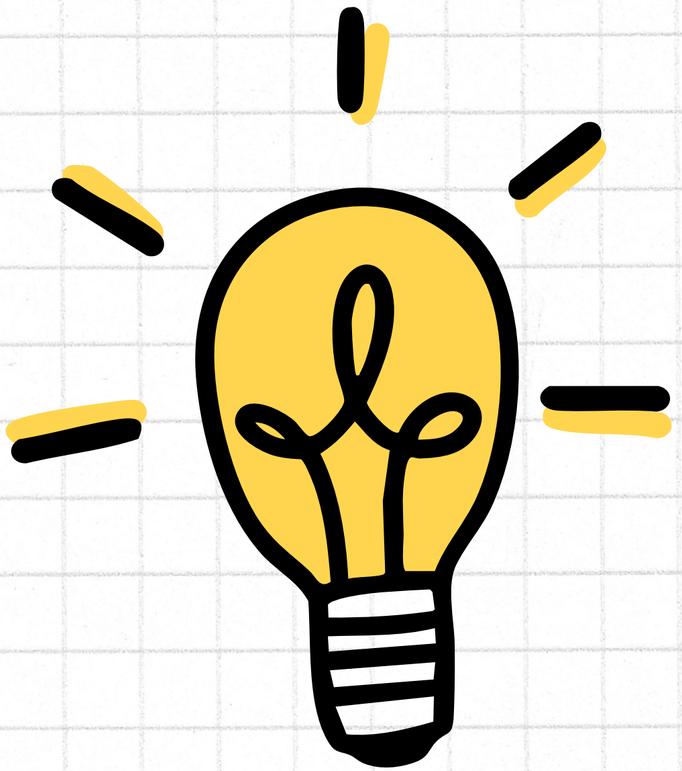
MARKETING

WHAT GOES INTO SALES AND MARKETING?

THE POWER OF FOMO

AUTHENTICITY

PLAYING OFFENSE



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THE TOOLS TO MARKET: USING CANVA + AI



1 DESIGN THAT COMMUNICATES CLEARLY

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3 COLLABORATION, WORKFLOW & TIME-SAVING STRATEGIES

4 ETHICAL, ACCESSIBLE, & RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

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MARKETING

- Visual storytelling goes a long way in marketing your school and district
- This section explores the deceptively-simple methods in which we can bring in a larger audience & showcase the best of our schools

"WHY AM I HERE? I ALREADY KNOW HOW TO DO THIS"

THEY SAY TO "MARKET YOUR SCHOOL, SELL YOUR DISTRICT, MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO GO THERE"

BUT WHAT DOES THAT REALLY *MEAN*?

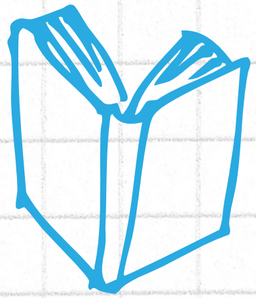
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SELL? HOW DO YOU MARKET?

HOW DO YOU MAKE PEOPLE WANT WHAT YOU HAVE?

WHAT GOES INTO SALES AND MARKETING?

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

- How well do you know your schools?
- What do you have to offer?
- What makes a school stand out from other schools?
- Can other people see that you have these things?
- Why should they invest their time and money into our schools?



KNOW YOUR COMPETITION

- Our schools don't need to compete with each other - we need to compete with non-traditional schools
  - Charter
  - Private
  - Homeschool
- We are also in competition with other school districts (but not really)

WHAT GOES INTO SALES AND MARKETING?

VISIBILITY

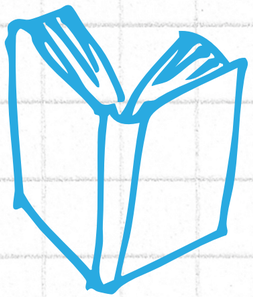
- Where can people see your products?
- How easy is it for people to find what you offer?
- Scenario: a new restaurant opened up down the street that you're considering trying. What do you look for to see if you want to go there?
- Think about our district like the NFL...



WHAT GOES INTO SALES AND MARKETING?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER





- Know what you have
- Know what you're up against
    - What do you have that they don't?
    - What culture do you create that they can't?
- Show people what you have in any way you can
- No one has merch of the NFL

THE POWER OF FOMO

FOMO = FEAR OF MISSING OUT

- The fear of missing out is a great way to capture your audience's attention
- As a school, you can invoke FOMO by:
  - Showcasing a welcoming, fun community
  - Highlighting fun events
  - Providing testimonials from students, parents, and teachers

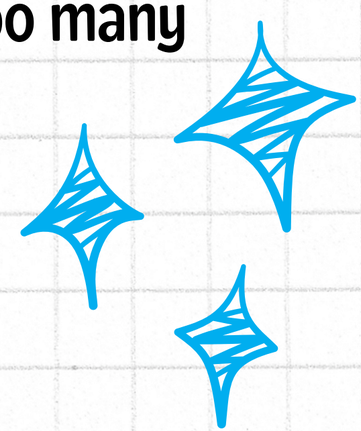
"OK, BUT I'M NOT A BUSINESS"

- True! But you have more to offer than just a product
- People are naturally inclined to sales and can't resist what they think is a good deal
- **Public school is FREE!**
- By leveraging our position as a taxpayer-funded entity, we can market ourselves as "the service you're already paying for," in a sense. Or, we can market ourselves as "free - no voucher needed."

THE POWER OF FOMO

CUSTOMER MINDSET

- Customers want to know what products others have bought and enjoyed, so social comparisons are effective
- People like choices, but not too many
- That's where we come in



CHOOSE THIS, NOT THAT

- By providing comparison, we can take the frustration of choice out of the equation
  - "Why buy into a charter school when a free option is available with twice the amenities?"
  - "Why buy into a private school when our free option has more rigorous coursework and better teachers?"

AUTHENTICITY



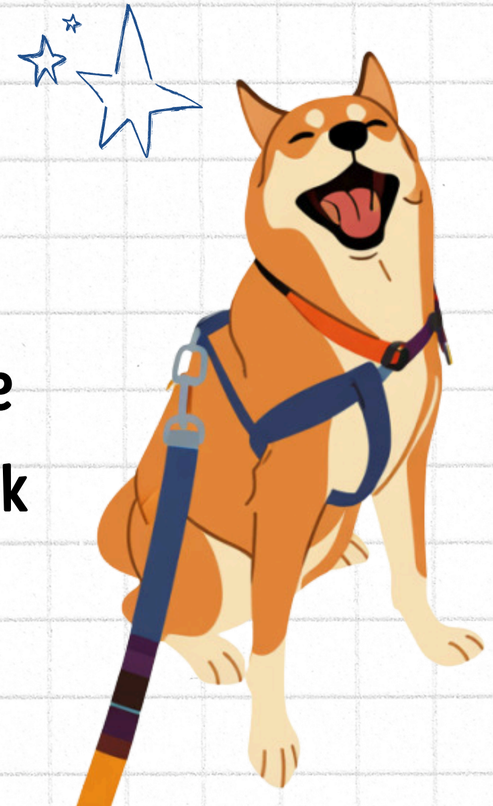
"I'M NOT A SALESPERSON"

- People like people. People don't like salespeople.
    - Think about all the times you've been to a car dealership - did you like your salesperson?
- We are people before we are professionals, and it's ok to show that
- This authenticity goes a long way in establishing and building relationships with parents and students
- This kind of relationship seems difficult for us to develop as professionals - and it is - but as *people*, we can make a difference in parents' and students' lives
- Be true to yourself, and don't be afraid to be silly, make mistakes, or have fun!

AUTHENTICITY

HOW TO EXPRESS AUTHENTICITY & HUMANIZE YOUR MESSAGE

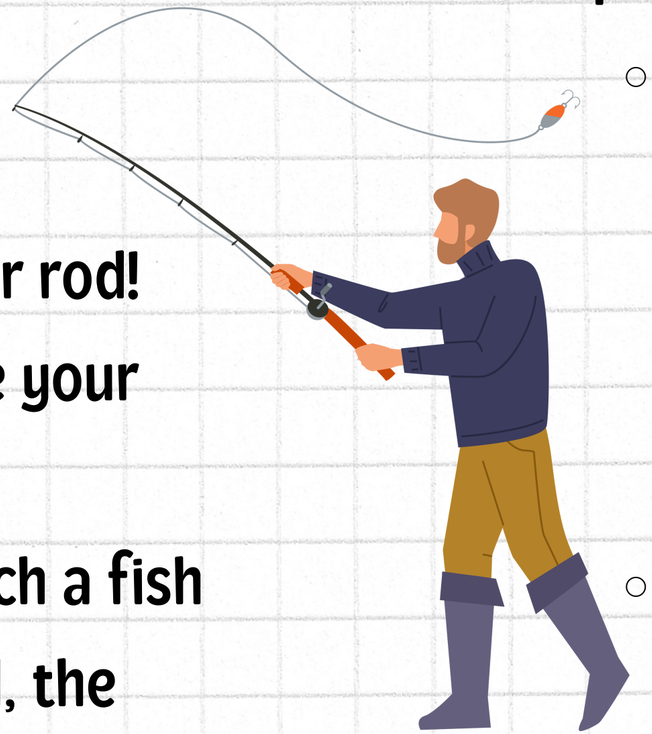
- Ways that we can exhibit this idea of authenticity are:
  - by increasing our responding to individual positive comments on social media
  - by interacting with the public in a friendly, relatable way
  - by changing the way we post on social media
    - By adopting a sillier, more playful angle in the way we post, we potentially allow people to see the relatable nature of our work
- <u>Jumping on trends, making memes, and playful engagement are great ways to do this!</u>



PLAYING OFFENSE

CONFIDENCE, NOT AGGRESSION

- Sales is like fishing: throw the bait and wait
  - but you must have the confidence to cast your rod!
  - Not every fish will take your bait
  - Not every cast will catch a fish
  - But if your bait is good, the fish will come

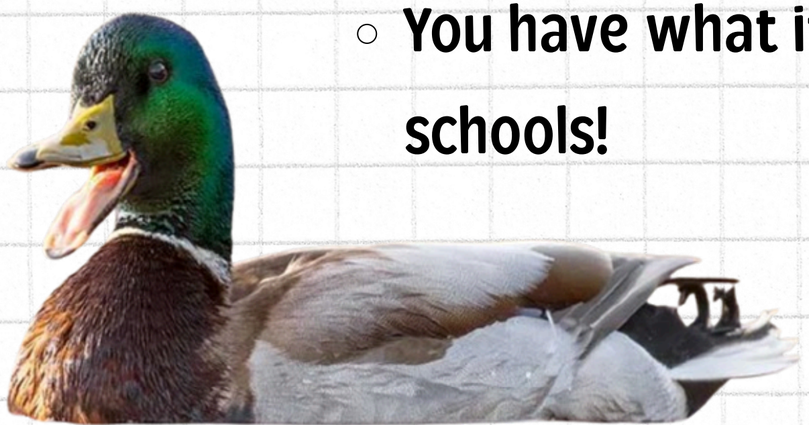


- Rip off the Band-Aid
  - People are going to be mad about anything and everything, but if you don't have confidence and conviction behind what you stand for, then you will only upset yourself
  - Don’t live in fear of the haters, because haters gonna hate
- Don’t be afraid to be innovative!

PLAYING OFFENSE

CONFIDENCE, NOT AGGRESSION

- You can bend over backwards to accommodate and be as helpful as you can
    - Never sacrifice your passion for education for the happiness of the haters
- Remain confident in your position that your school is THE school for students to attend
- Keep the ambition without the aggression
    - Be confident and assertive, but not a bully
    - Let failure roll off you like a duck
    - You have what it takes to sell your schools!



KEY TAKEAWAYS

KNOW YOUR PRODUCT & COMPETITION

HARP ON FOMO

BE AUTHENTIC

DON'T BE AFRAID TO PLAY OFFENSE

1

DESIGN THAT COMMUNICATES CLEARLY

- Visual hierarchy
- White space: less clutter = clearer message
- Color and contrast for readability
- Font choices for accessibility
- Designing for mobile first

CANVA BRAND FEATURES

TEMPLATES

Shared templates with locked brand elements

BRAND

District/School colors, fonts, and logo placement

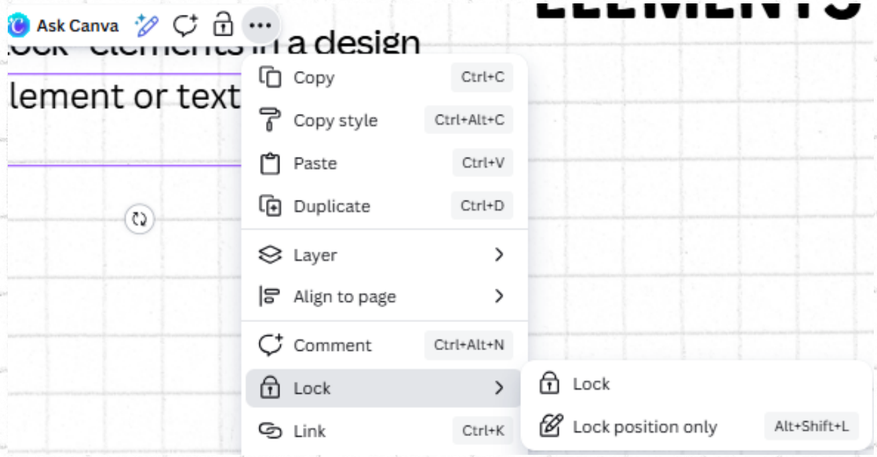
BULK CREATE

Consistent and free from spelling mistakes

HOW TO SHARE AS A TEMPLATE WITH "LOCKED" ELEMENTS

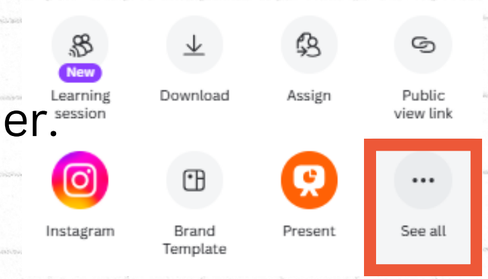
1 How to "lock" elements in a design

Select the element or text you would like to lock. Select the three dots and select **Lock**



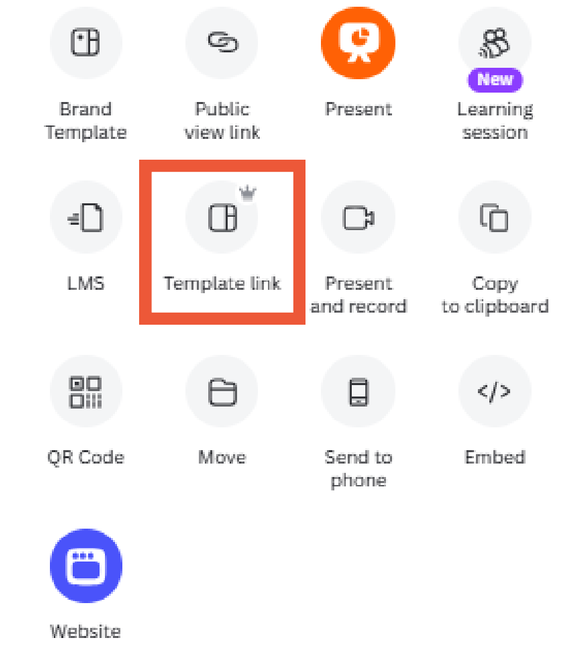
2 Sharing

Select **Share** in the upper right corner. Select the three dots to see more options



3 Sharing Templates

Select Template link from list of options. *NOTE - **New** - items locked can not be unlocked by students



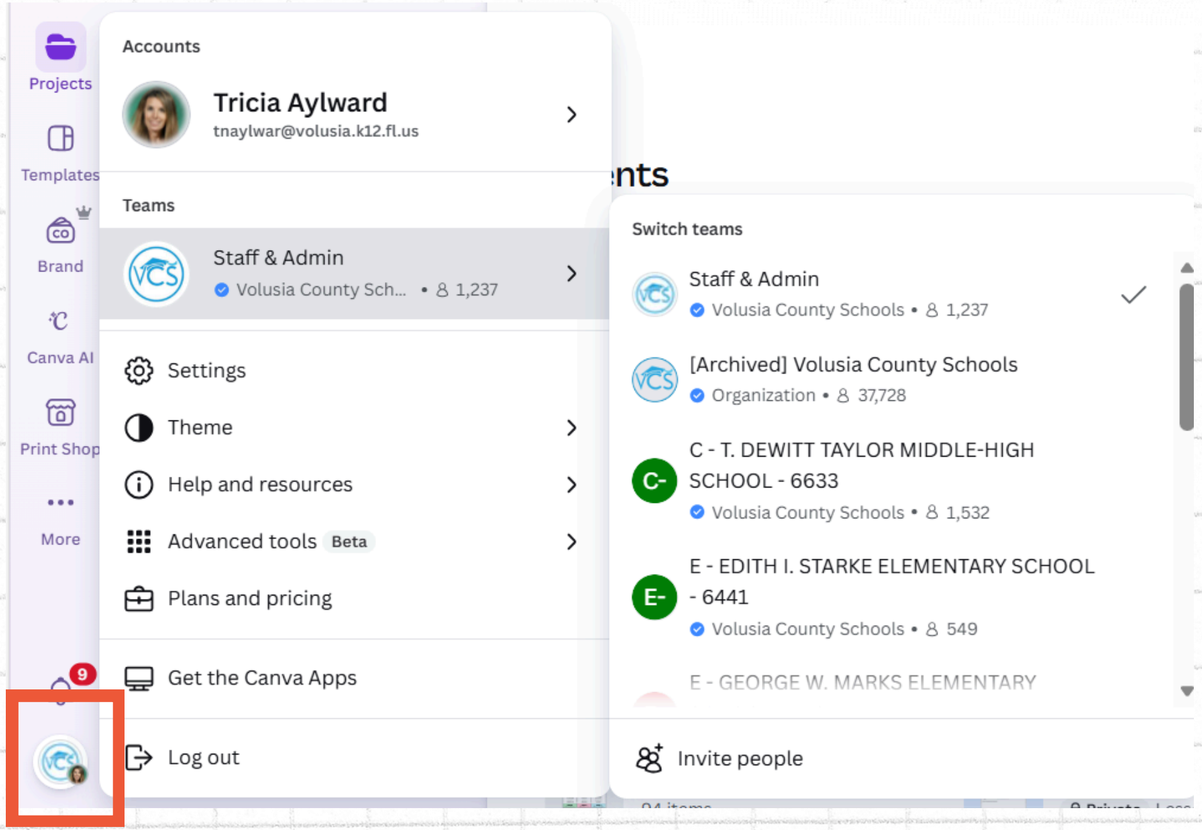
WORKING WITH BRAND KITS

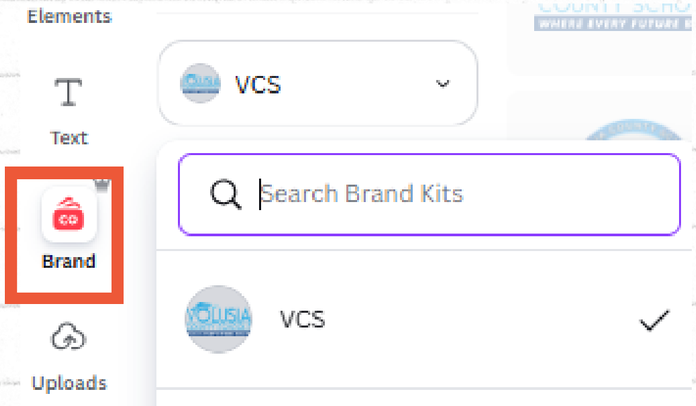
1 Create a new presentation

From the homepage make sure you in the Team (School or Department) with the correct Brand Kit. Next, create a new presentation or **tap here** to open a blank presentation.

2 Brand Kits

Within the design, select Brand from the left-hand navigation bar. If there is more than one brand, select others from down menu.



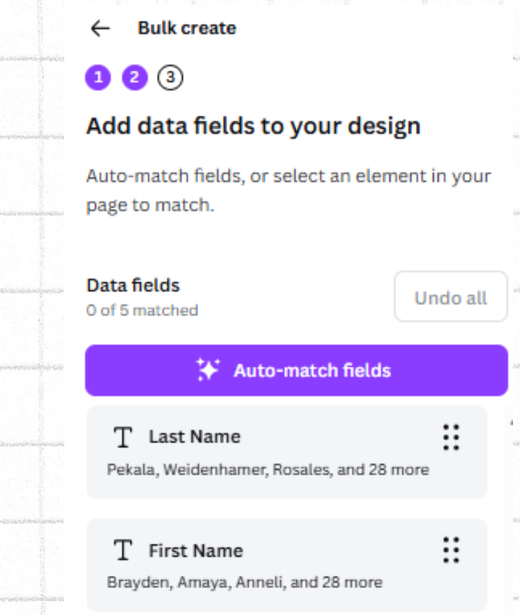


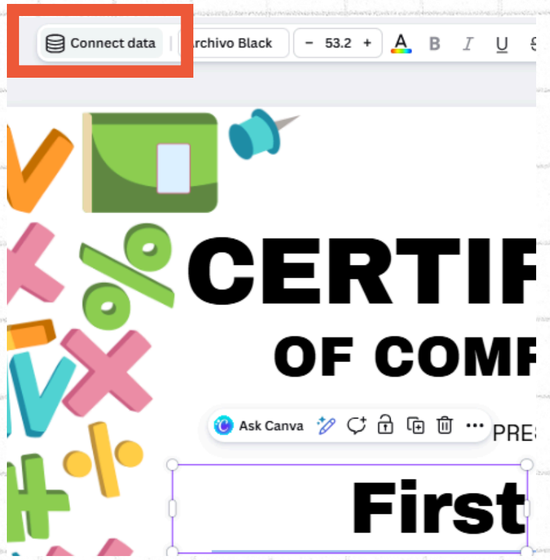
3 Options

Choose brand logos, colors, fonts, brand voice etc. to add to your design.

BULK CREATE

1. **Need to create a design/certificate to share with multiple people?**
   Develop a design and incorporate placeholders for the information that requires updates.
2. **Find the information**
   Find and download a csv file of the information needed (e.g Focus or Canvas)
3. **Bulk Create**
   Select the page and then select **Edit** then Page from the tool bar. Upload the csv file by selecting **Upload data** button
4. **Connect Data**
   Allow the AI to **Auto-match fields** or manually connect data by selecting text and then selecting **Connect data** in the tool bar
5. **Create Design**
   Verify all the data is correct and select the designs to create.





WHERE CANVA AI HELPS

MAGIC WRITE

to shorten text and clarify language

ASK CANVA AI

AI layout suggestions that improve hierarchy

RESIZE

AI-assisted resizing for different formats (flyer ➡️ post ➡️ slide)

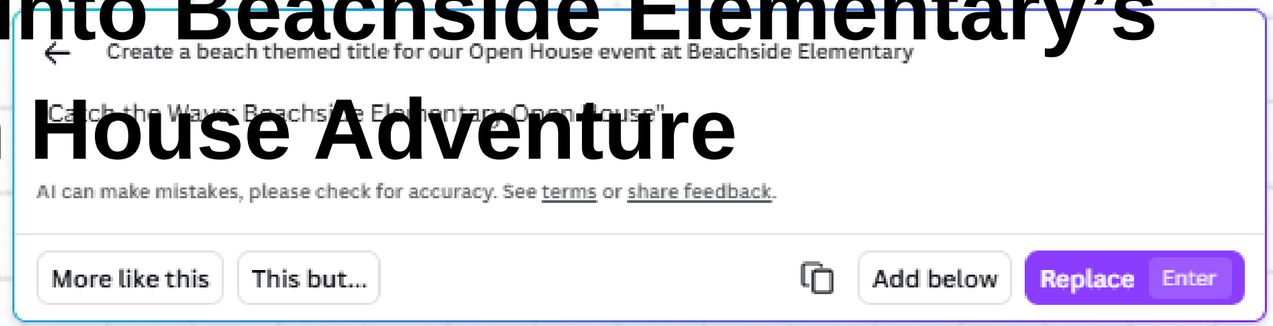
MAGIC WRITE

1 Type a title for your event

From the presentation, flyer or post, select the text and then select the **Magic Write** icon

Join us at Beachside Elementary’s Open House

Dive into Beachside Elementary’s Open House Adventure



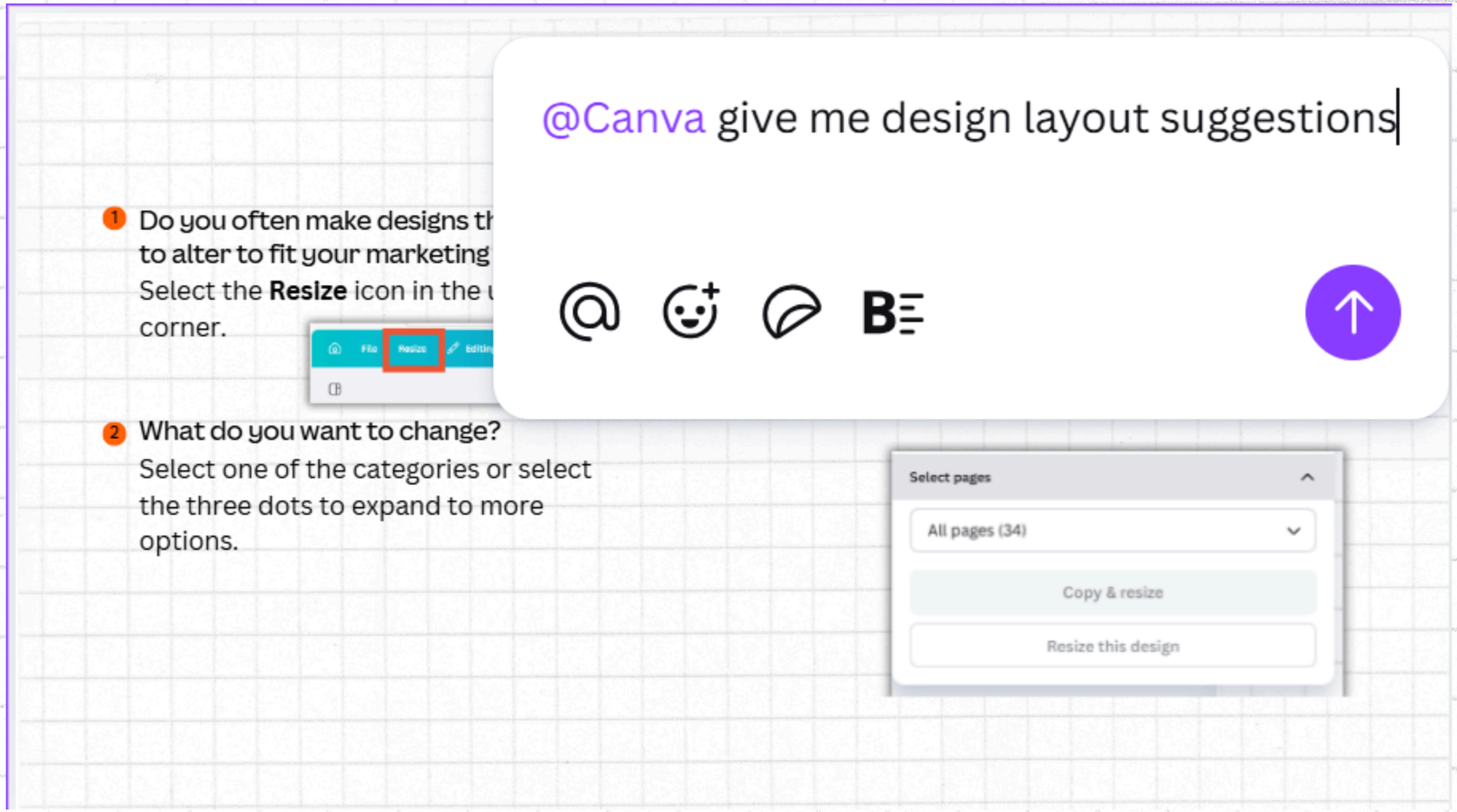
2 Let Magic Design do the work

Select the **Transform Text** from the drop-down, type your prompt and select Submit arrow , and decide if you like the title or you would like to alter your prompt with **More like this** or **This but...**

"Catch the Wave: Beachside Elementary's Open House"

Once you like your title, either choose **Add below** or **Replace.**

ASK CANVA AI FOR LAYOUT IMPROVEMENTS



1 new

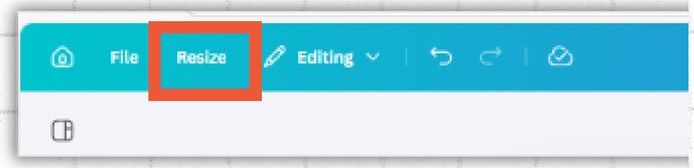
Canva 10:59 AM, today

The steps feel clear, but the whole page looks a bit empty because everything is pushed to the sides.

You could bring the two text groups a little closer together so they feel like part of one story instead of two distant pieces. This gives the center more energy and keeps the reader from drifting off the page.

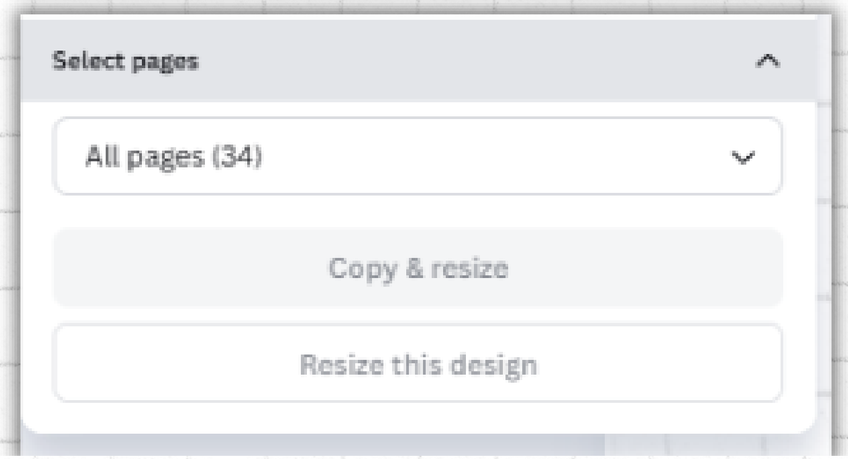
RESIZING

1. Do you often make designs that you want to alter to fit your marketing needs?
   Select the **Resize** icon in the upper left corner.



2. What do you want to change?
   Select one of the categories or select the three dots to expand to more options.

3. Convert design or New design
   Choose the page(s) you wish to convert and determine whether you prefer a copy of the design with the new dimensions or if you would like to replace the existing design with the updated size.



2

CREATIVE CONTENT IDEAS THAT SPARK ENGAGEMENT

Inspiration and ideation - using AI to expand possibilities not replace creativity

WHERE CANVA + AI HELPS

FORMS

Craft to Foster Engagement in Your Communication

AI VOICE

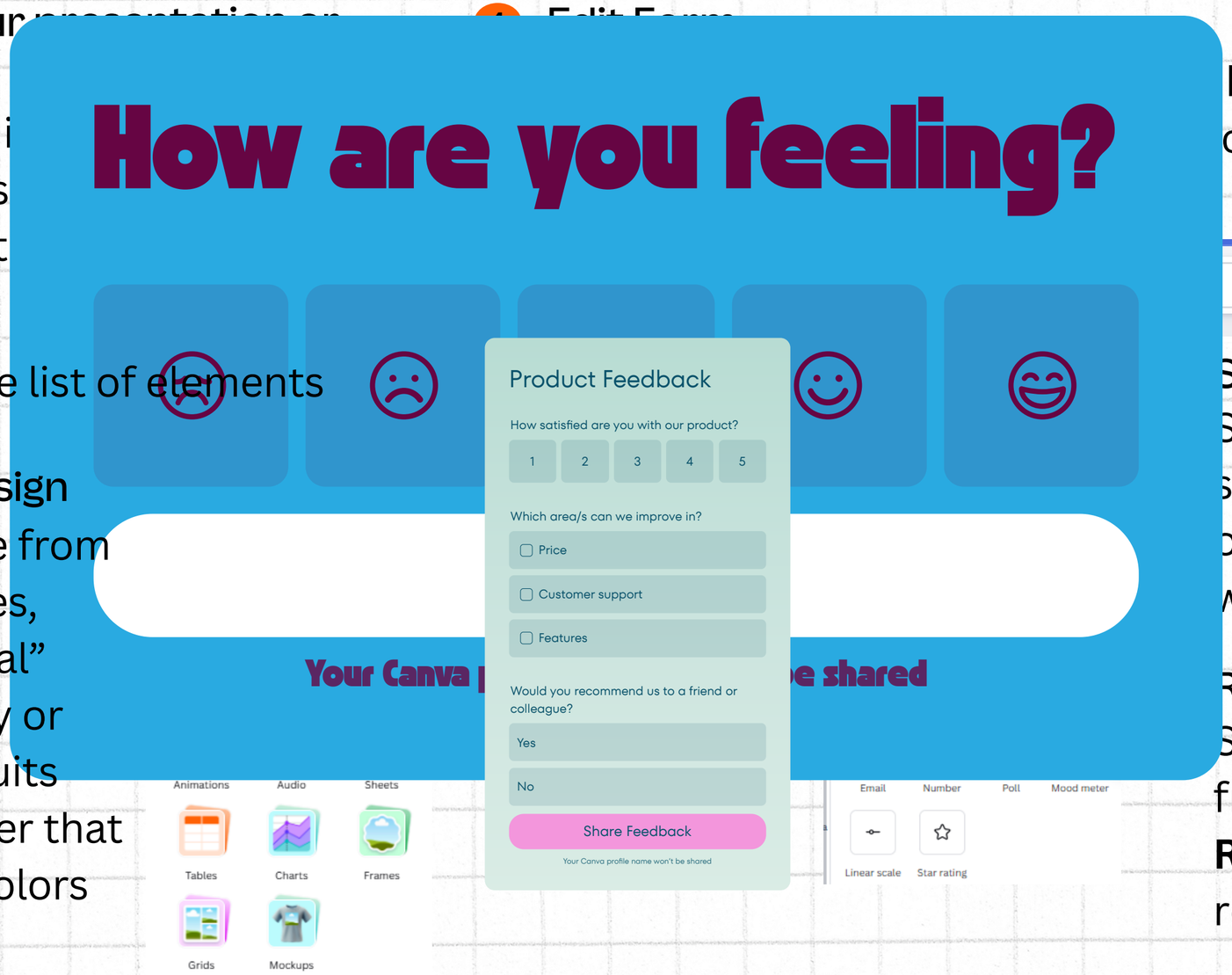
Bring your text to life with the power of an AI voice.

FORMS

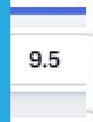
1. Want feedback in your presentation or website?
   Select **Elements** icon i
   navigation with a pres
   whiteboard, or websit

2. Forms
   Select **Forms** from the list of elements

3. Type of Form and Design
   Choose the form type from the provided examples, along with the “general” layout for your survey or feedback form that suits your needs. Remember that you can modify the colors and text as desired.



bar select **Edit** to make
o change the colors select



Sharing
Select **Share** and then
select Public View Link
or share the URL of the
website.

Responses
Select the form and
from the tool bar select
Responses to see the
results

AI VOICE

1. **Within Apps type**

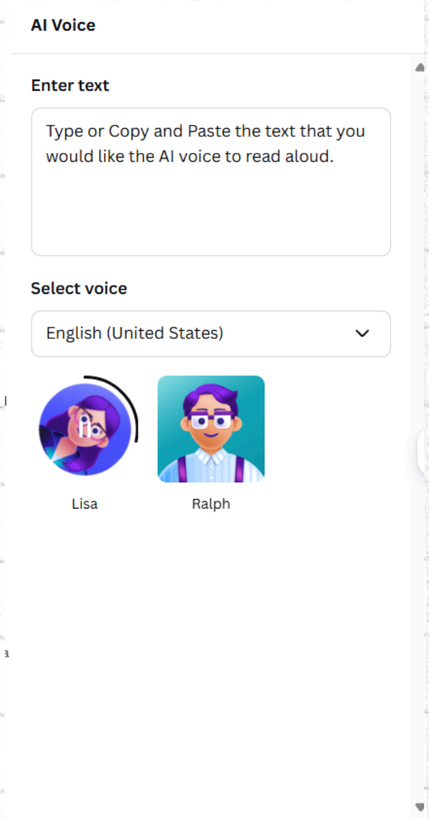
   Select **AI Voice** icon in the left-hand navigation within your design.

2. **Script**

   Type or Copy and Paste the text that you would like the AI voice to read aloud.

3. **Select voice**

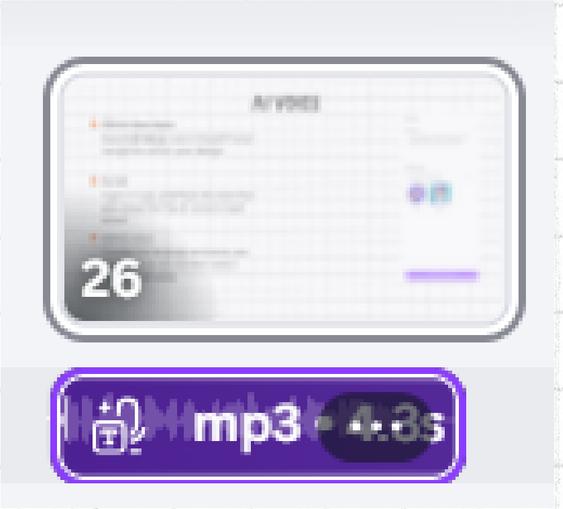
   Choose the language and voice you would like to use and then select **Generate AI voice**



Type or copy

4. **Recording**

   The audio recording will appear below the presentation as an MP3 file.



3

COLLABORATION, WORKFLOW, AND TIME-SAVING STRATEGIES

- Shared ownership of visuals
- Reducing duplicate work
- Updating instead of recreating
- Supporting schools with ready-to-use templates

WHERE CANVA AI HELPS

MAGIC DESIGN

Quickly generates layout ideas from a prompt or content

ASK CANVA AI

AI layout suggestions that improve hierarchy

STYLE

Copies the style of an element to modify other elements to mimic and add consistency

MAGIC DESIGN

1 Create a new presentation

From the homepage, create a new presentation or tap here to open a blank presentation.



2 Let Magic Design do the work

Select the **Templates** tab, and type your presentation prompt in the search bar. Watch as Magic Design instantly creates presentations from a prompt.



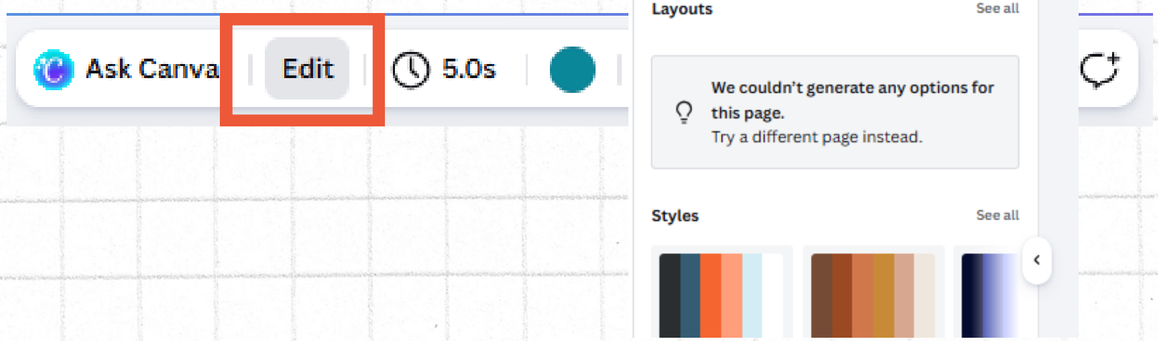
3 Apply your design

Select your favorite and tap **Apply all pages**, review the content and make any changes.



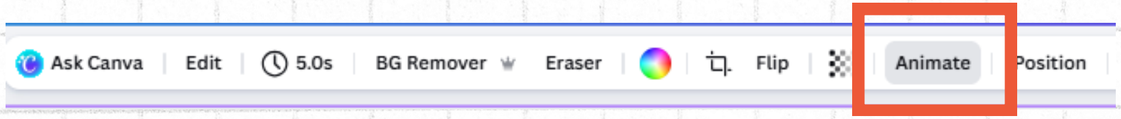
4 Add flair with Styles & Layouts

Change colors and fonts in a snap. Select the page and then select **Edit**, select **Styles** and choose the combination you like best.



5 Wow participants with Magic Animate

Select the background of a page, then go to **Animate**. Tap **Magic Animate** and choose the recommended style or your preferred style. Your new presentation is now ready!



ASK CANVA

Leadership Messaging & School Branding



🏫School Vision & Culture

- “Create a clean, professional school vision poster for K–12 stakeholders that emphasizes student success, belonging, and future-ready learning. Use inclusive imagery and accessible fonts.”
- “Design a one-page school culture infographic highlighting collaboration, innovation, and achievement for a public school audience.”

📢Principal & District Messaging

- “Create a branded announcement graphic from a principal welcoming families to the new school year. Tone: warm, confident, and community-focused.”
- “Generate a professional leadership quote graphic focused on instructional excellence and student growth for LinkedIn.”

🎒Family & Community Engagement

💬Parent Communication

- “Design a family-friendly school newsletter layout that communicates important updates clearly, using icons, short text blocks, and high contrast colors.”
- “Create a flyer explaining a new digital learning initiative to families using plain language and visual supports.”

📌Community Events

- “Design an inviting flyer for a school open house that appeals to families and community partners, with a welcoming tone and clear call to action.”
- “Create a social media graphic promoting a school showcase event highlighting student creativity and learning.”

STYLE

1. **Create a new presentation**
From the **Elements** tab, describe the graphics you are looking for and add them to your design.

2. **Let Magic Design do the work**
Select the image that you want to duplicate. Select **Style** from the menu. Next, hover it over the other images in your design that you would like to have the same style.



4

ETHICAL, ACCESSIBLE, AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

- Accessibility considerations: font, color contrast, clear, plain language
- Representation and inclusivity in AI-generated visuals
- Age-appropriate imagery
- Student privacy awareness
- AI as a support tool - not an authority

CANVA AS A DISTRICT-FRIENDLY PLATFORM ENHANCED WITH AI

ACCESSIBILITY IN CANVA

Utilize the accessibility checker in Canva to identify any potential issues.

LANGUAGE

Make use of the Translate feature in Canva to create designs tailored for individuals who speak different languages.

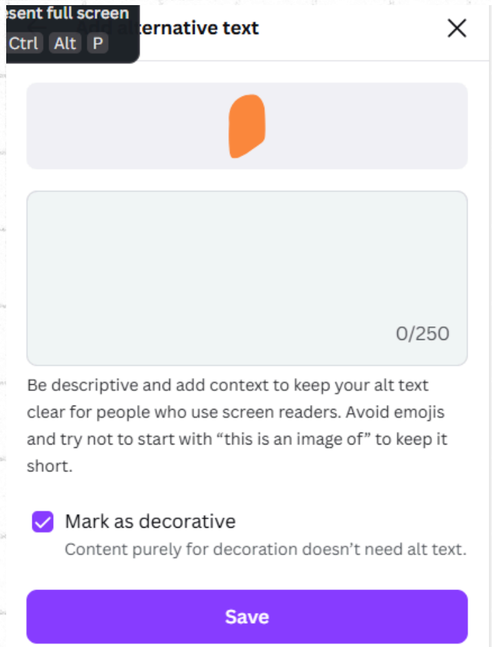
ACCESSIBILITY STEPS

1 Within your design

From the **File** drop-down, select **Accessibility** and then **Check design Accessibility**

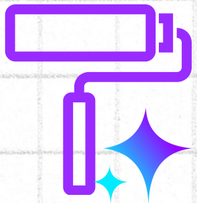
2 Accessibility options

From the **Design Accessibility** window, review the **Typography**, **Color contrast** and **Alternative text** issues.



3 Alternative text

When you create a design, add alternative text to anything that feels important to the message.



Official rules for Alternative Text

📌**TIP: If you are copying pages in a design set the alt. text for the page first.**

CLOSED CAPTIONS PART 1

1 Within your design

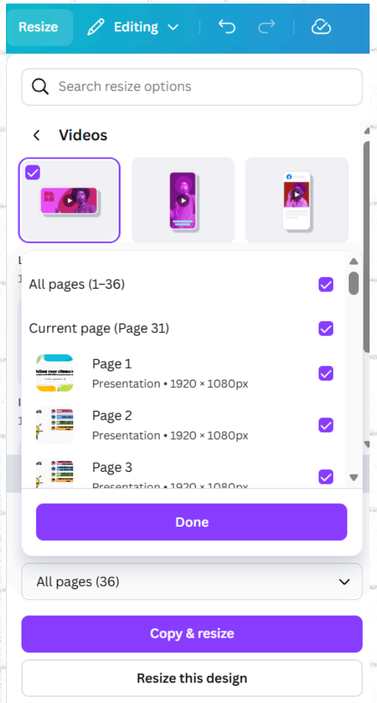
For closed captions to be turned on the design/slide must be a **video**.

2 Resize to Video

Select **Resize** from top navigation bar. Select **Video**. If your design is a presentation select the **Landscape video**

3 Choose slide(s)

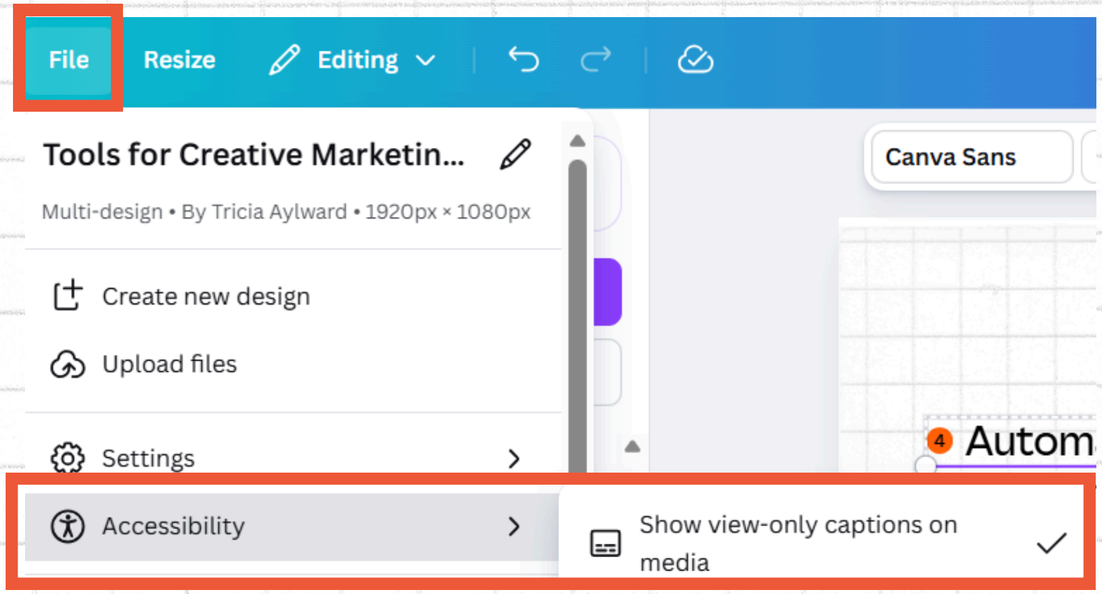
From the drop down choose which page/slide you would like to convert and select **Resize this design**



CLOSED CAPTIONS PART 2

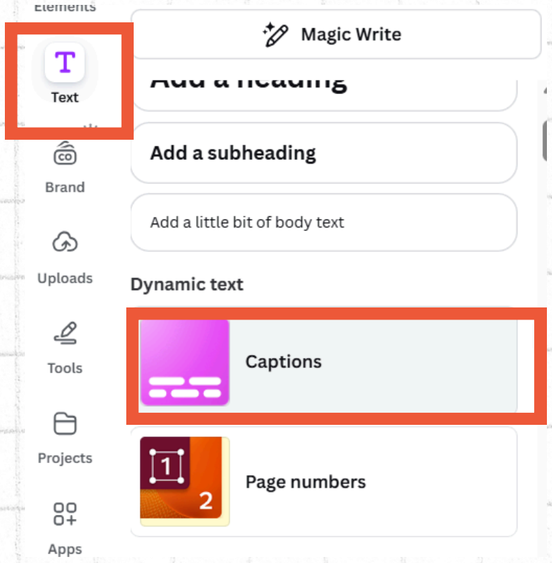
4 Automated Captions

From **File**, select **Accessibility** and make sure Show view-only captions is checked.



5 Edited Captions

Select **Text** from the left-hand navigation menu. Then, choose **Captions**. This will create a text box that you can edit, reposition, or change the colors of.



Ensure that you turn **OFF** Automated Captions in Step 4 if you are using Edited Captions.

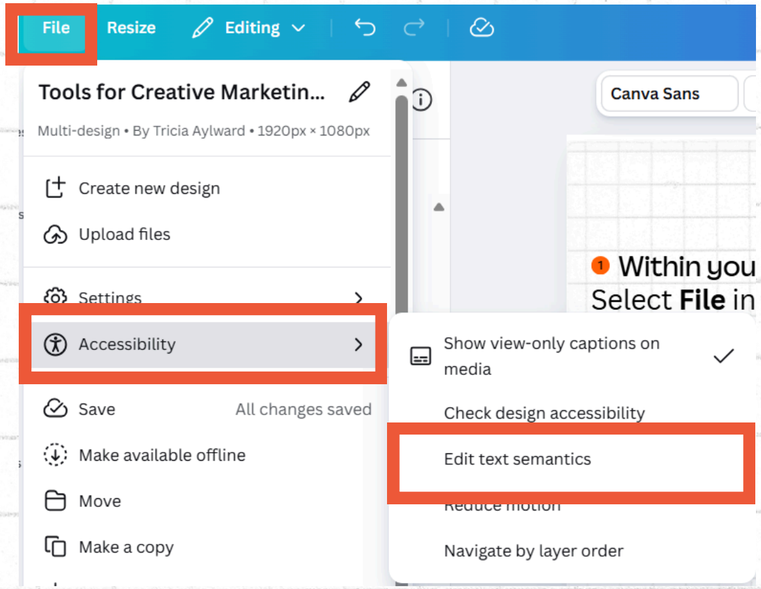
SCREEN READER

1 Within your design

Select **File** in the top navigation bar.

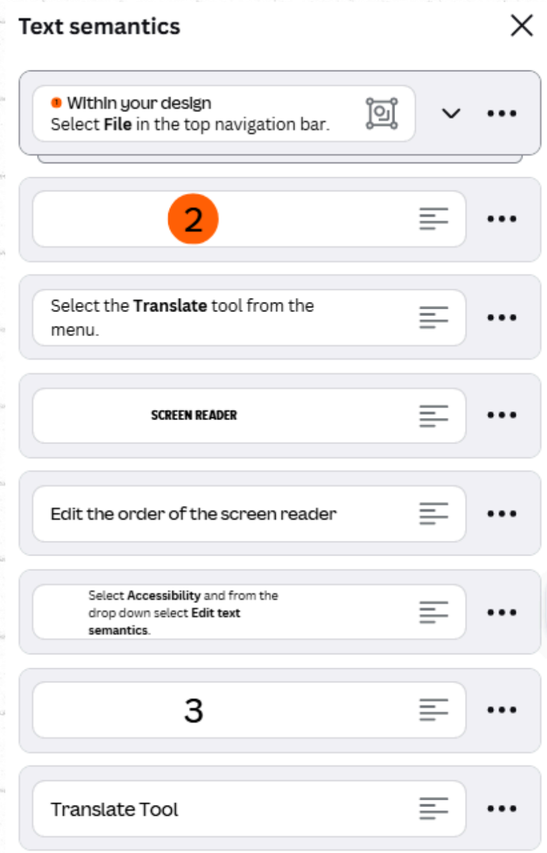
2 Edit screen reader

Select **Accessibility** and from the drop down select **Edit text semantics**.



3 Order the text

Drag and drop the order of how the text and images should be read.



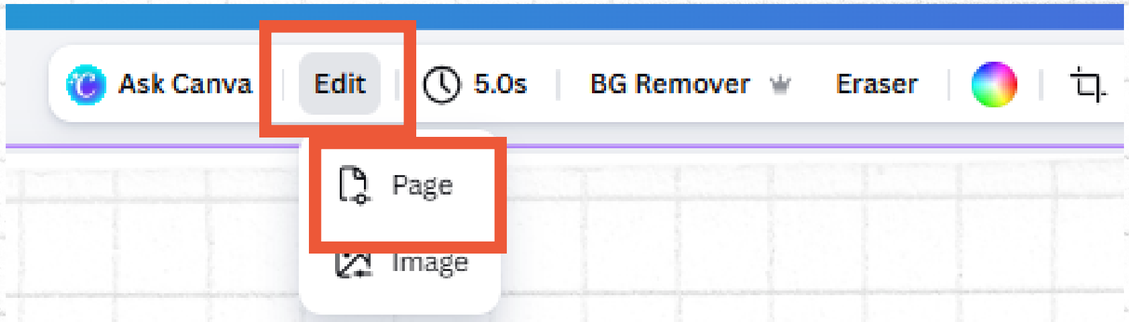
TRANSLATE STEPS

1 Within your design

Select the background of the page that you are working on

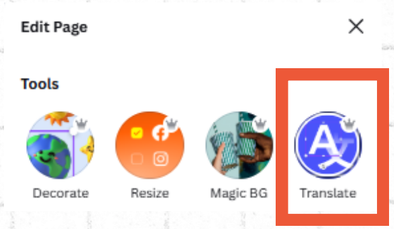
2 Edit the design

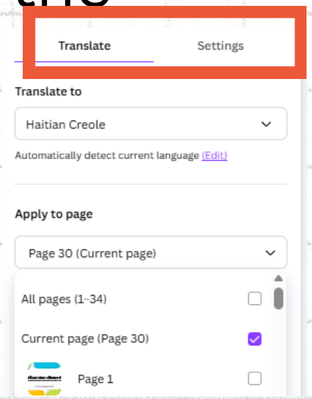
Select **Edit** from the tool bar and select **Page**.



3 Translate Tool

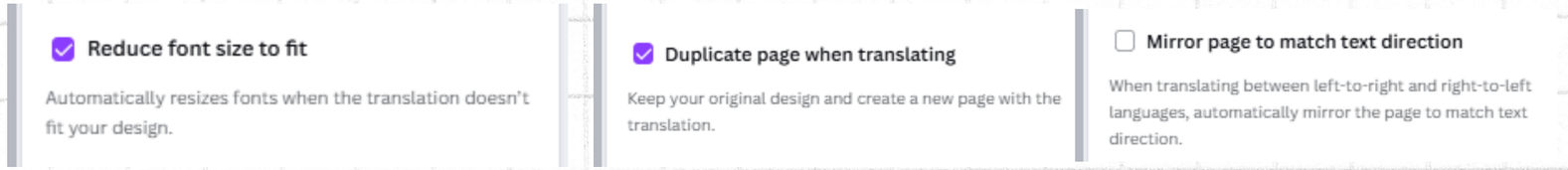
Select the **Translate** tool from the menu.





4 Settings

Pick the language you want, select the pages it applies to, and open **Settings** to choose what you want to enable.



REFLECTION

- What is one thing you could design better tomorrow using Canva or Canva AI?
- What could your school or department stop recreating from scratch?

CONTACT

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https://canva.link/vcscanvaai2026

THANK YOU!

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