Accessible Online Training Checklist

From *Accessible eLearning: WCAG for the Rest of Us* by Rachael Lundin

Items labeled (Best practice) are strongly recommended but aren't WCAG 2.1 AA requirements. Everything else maps to a WCAG success criterion (see Appendix Three in the book).

Mark it up

Print it and write your mark on the line next to each item. Want to fill it in on screen? Use the Word version of this checklist.

Reading the book? ✓ I already know how to do this · ★ I'm curious · ? I've never heard of this

Reviewing a course? ✓ Passes · ★ Working on it · ? Not sure how to do this · N/A Doesn't apply

Text and Visual Elements (Chapter Three)

Color Contrast

_____ Check your ratios with the WebAIM Contrast Checker
- 4.5:1 for normal text (under 18pt)
- 3:1 for large text (18pt or 14pt bold and above)

_____ Never rely on color alone. Add text, icons, or patterns

_____ Buttons, icons, form field borders, and focus indicators have at least 3:1 contrast against their background

Text Formatting

_____ Text sizing:
- Content must remain readable when zoomed to 200%
- At 400% zoom, content reflows so learners only scroll in one direction
- Text boxes configured with proper overflow handling
- Course content works in both landscape and portrait modes without loss of information or functionality

_____ Use readable, well-supported fonts:
- Minimum web size is 14pt font (Best practice)
- Use sans-serif fonts for digital displays (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Open Sans) (Best practice)
- Avoid decorative or overly stylized fonts for body text (Best practice)
- Ensure consistent font usage throughout the interface (Best practice)

- Maintain comfortable text spacing between lines and characters (Best practice)

_____ Text still works when learners increase line, letter, and word spacing in their own settings

_____ Links are clearly identified

_____ Use actual text instead of images of text (except logos and branding, which need alt text)

Visuals and Graphics

_____ Decorative images marked as such

_____ Meaningful images have alt text

_____ Graphics are free of watermarks or other visual interference (Best practice)

_____ Graphs are accessible by the screen reader and/or have a written explanation

_____ Text boxes typically left without alt text (unless needed for pronunciation and guidance) (Best practice)

_____ Sources properly cited (Best practice):

- Quoted text
- Graphics and animations
- Audio and video content
- References provided on slide or dedicated references slide

Text Accuracy

_____ Define acronyms at first use (Best practice - WCAG AAA)

_____ Review and correct auto-generated captions

_____ Proofread carefully (Best practice)

_____ Make sure visible text matches screen reader text

_____ Listen to your course with a screen reader (Best practice)

_____ Course language is set, and passages in another language are marked with that language

Navigation and Structure (Chapter Four)

Focus Order

_____ Logical focus order (including within and between layers)

_____ Focus indicator clearly visible (users can see what element has the focus, including in layers)

_____ Focus returns to logical location when layers close

Heading Structure

_____ Maintain logical heading hierarchy (H1, H2, H3) without skipping levels

_____ H1 heading on the slide matches the slide title (Best practice)

_____ Slide titles unique and meaningful

Keyboard Navigation

_____ Users must be able to navigate to and away from all elements using keyboard only

_____ At no point are users “stuck” on a slide where the only way to move forward is to use their mouse

_____ Drag-and-drop interactions have keyboard alternatives

_____ No single-key keyboard shortcuts, or learners can turn them off or change them

Navigation Options

_____ Navigation elements are in consistent locations throughout the course

_____ Use consistent identification and labeling for components with the same functionality across the training

_____ Multiple navigation options available: course menu, previous/next buttons, search functionality, and custom navigation as needed

_____ Skip navigation feature enabled to allow users to bypass repeated content

_____ Help and support features appear in consistent locations throughout the course

Visual Indicators

_____ When an element receives keyboard focus, it is at least partially visible on screen (WCAG 2.2 best practice)

_____ All course elements accessible via keyboard-only navigation

_____ All course elements accessible via mouse navigation

Test Navigation

_____ Keyboard only (Tab, Shift + Tab, Enter, Space, Arrow keys)

_____ Screen reader to verify:

- Content reads in logical order
- Headings provide clear structure
- All interactive elements are announced properly via screen reader
- Alt text makes sense and is useful

Media and Content (Chapter Five)

Captions and Transcripts

_____ Closed captions for videos

_____ Full-course transcripts provided, and transcript matches captions/narration (Best practice)

_____ Captions limited to two lines and don't obscure onscreen text (Best practice)

_____ Even when captions are auto-generated, double-check that they align with audio content

_____ Audio-only content has a transcript; video with no audio has narration or a text description

Closed Caption Bonus (Best practice, not required by WCAG)

_____ Check that captions split at natural breaks (periods or commas)

_____ Avoid ending one sentence and starting a new sentence in one caption

Audio Quality and Narration

_____ Audio is clear, free of disruptions and unintended background noise (Best practice - WCAG AAA)

_____ All words pronounced correctly in narration (Best practice)

_____ Multiple audio tracks properly synchronized without overlap (Best practice)

_____ Narration paced appropriately for content comprehension (Best practice)

Video Requirements

_____ No flashing content (fewer than 3 flashes per second)

_____ Player controls are accessible (e.g., keyboard-navigable, properly labeled, provide feedback)

_____ Provide audio descriptions when visual information is necessary for understanding but not already described in the audio. For example:

- Actions and movements
- Character expressions
- Scene changes
- On-screen text
- Important visual details not mentioned in dialogue
- Audio descriptions should be:
    - Timed to fit between dialogue
    - Clear and concise
    - Focused on essential visual information

- If extended audio descriptions are needed (where natural pauses are too short), provide a version of the video where it can be paused automatically to allow for longer descriptions

_____ Timeline trimmed to remove excess time in all layers (Best practice)

Interactive Elements (Chapter Six)

Form Fields

_____ Form fields properly labeled (like “name,” “email,” and “address”)

_____ Error messages are clear

Instructions

_____ Clear instructions provided

_____ Path-based gestures (dragging, swiping, drawing) can also be done with a single click or tap

_____ Actions happen when the mouse button is released, not the instant it's pressed

_____ Multiple ways to interact

_____ When referring to content elements, don't rely solely on sensory characteristics (e.g., shape, size, location, orientation, sound) to convey meaning

- Instead of “Select the round button,” say “Select the Submit button.”
- Instead of “Select the item on the right,” say “Select Lesson 2: Getting Started.”
- Instead of “The red text indicates an error,” say “Items marked with an asterisk (*) and highlighted in red are required.”
- Instead of “When you hear the chime,” say “When you hear the chime and see the ‘Activity Complete’ message.”

Timing and Control

_____ No timing requirements (or learners can extend them)

_____ Ability to pause animations

_____ No auto-advancing content

_____ Video/audio controls available

_____ Selecting an option or tabbing to an element doesn't automatically submit, advance, or open anything

Feedback and Visibility

_____ Clickable elements are minimum 44x44 pixels unless alternatives are provided (Best practice - WCAG AAA)

_____ All interactive elements clearly indicate what will happen when activated

_____ Add descriptive alt text to all states of interactive objects/buttons

_____ Button/control text that is visible on screen matches what is announced via screen reader

_____ Custom interactive elements have their name, role, and state (selected, checked, expanded) announced via screen reader

_____ Feedback messages (“Correct!” “Saved”) are announced via screen reader when they appear

_____ Pop-up content (tooltips, hover text):

- Can be dismissed without moving cursor/focus
- Remains visible until dismissed
- Stays visible when moving to pop-up content

Quiz Accessibility

Storyline's built-in quiz features include accessible error handling and feedback.

_____ When building custom quiz interactions, make sure:

- Clear error messages explain what went wrong
- Users can review answers before final submission
- Feedback is specific and actionable

Content and Materials (Chapter Seven)

Plain Language

_____ Reading level targets lower secondary education (around grade 9) (Best practice - WCAG AAA)

_____ Content uses plain, concise language (Best practice)

_____ Terminology and concepts are explained clearly (Best practice)

_____ Instructional steps are easy to follow (Best practice)

Inclusive Language

_____ Use person-first language for inclusive terminology (Best practice)

_____ Apply gender-neutral language throughout content (Best practice)

Accessible Supplementary Materials

_____ All linked or downloaded documents meet accessibility standards

_____ Supplementary resources (handouts, job aids, etc.) are accessible. See the Accessible Documents Checklist

Structure and Flow

_____ Consistent content structure (Best practice)

_____ Learning objectives are clearly stated and easy to locate (Best practice)

_____ Content flow and organization is intuitive and logical (Best practice)

Four Slides Every Course Needs (Chapter Eight)

These slides are best practices rather than WCAG requirements, but they head off so many problems that I build them into every course.

Pro tip

Build these slides into your course template so every project starts with them already in place.

1. Welcome and Course Overview

“Welcome to [Course Title]. This training is designed for [specific audience]. It will take approximately [time] to complete. The course includes [number] quizzes, and you'll need to score at least [percentage] to demonstrate competency.”

2. Accessibility Statement

“This course is designed to meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards. If you encounter any barriers accessing course content, please contact [Training email].”

3. How to Navigate This Course

Example:

- **For keyboard users:** Use Tab to move between interactive elements. Press Space or Enter to activate buttons and make selections.
- **For screen reader users:** This course includes audio narration. Please allow narration to complete before advancing to the next slide. Use arrow keys to review all content on each slide. Use Tab to move between buttons and interactive elements.
- **Playback speed:** You can adjust the narration speed using the player controls if you prefer slower or faster delivery.
- **Course menu:** Access the course menu at any time using the menu button in the player. You can jump to any completed section.
- [Include any other course-specific navigation notes]

4. Completion/Exit Instructions

Congratulations! You have completed [Course Name].

Your completion has been recorded in the [LMS name].

To exit the course, close this browser window.

Recommended Additional Slides

- Learning objectives
- Help/support information
- Transition slides as applicable
- Resources

Testing Your Online Training (Chapter Nine)

Testing isn't a WCAG requirement on its own. It's how you find out whether you've met the requirements.

_____ **Keyboard Testing:** Navigate the entire course using only the keyboard. No traps, logical focus order.

_____ **Screen Reader Testing:** Listen to the whole course with a screen reader such as NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access).

_____ **Real User Testing:** Colleagues with different roles and abilities test specific tasks.

_____ **Content Review:** Spelling, grammar, captions, and transcripts reviewed.

_____ **Platform Testing:** Course tested in the browsers, devices, and LMS your learners will use.

Note: This checklist is meant to facilitate compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA, not replace it.

Download fresh copies of all the checklists at rachaellundin.com/accessibility-resources.

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