NVDA Quick Reference

Remember

Your testing is not the real test. It gets your course ready for real screen reader users.

Get started

- **Open NVDA:** Ctrl + Alt + N (if you created the desktop shortcut)
- **Modifier key:** Insert, or Caps Lock if you chose it at setup
- Leave "Start NVDA after I sign in" unchecked unless you use NVDA every day.

Set up once

- **Highlighting:** modifier + N > Preferences > Settings > Vision > Enable Highlighting
- **Speech Viewer:** modifier + N > Tools > Speech Viewer > check "Show Speech Viewer on Startup"

Testing keys

Key	What it does
Up / Down arrows	Move through the page
Modifier + Down arrow	Say all (read from here to the end)
Tab / Shift + Tab	Next / previous interactive element
Space / Enter	Activate buttons, links, and checkboxes
H / Shift + H	Next / previous heading
Modifier + Space	Switch browse / focus mode (text fields switch on their own)

Control the speech

Key	What it does
Ctrl	Stop speaking
Shift	Pause (press again to resume)
Modifier + S	Cycle speech modes (if NVDA goes quiet, check this first)
Modifier + Q	Quit NVDA

Listen for

- Content that reads in a logical order
- Buttons and links announced as "button" and "link"
- Alt text that gives real context
- Everything reachable and usable with the keyboard alone
- Focus moving to new content when a layer opens
- Nothing important hidden in hover states