



Accessible Document Checklist



Use the checklist below to ensure that you have considered the important aspects of accessible document design. While the checklist will help to reduce accessibility barriers, a knowledgeable understanding of accessibility best practices and [WCAG PDF techniques](#) will be needed to employ proper accessibility approaches. Following these items will reduce accessibility barriers but will not guarantee WCAG compliance. Accessibility requires a series of automated and manual checks, followed by testing with a screen reader to ensure compliance.

InDesign

Description	WCAG Success Criteria	Level	Yes or No
Did I set the document title for my InDesign Document? (File> File Info)	SC 2.4.2	A	
Is the base language of my document properly set?	SC 3.1.1	A	
If I am using other languages for word or paragraphs, have I properly identified the language in the style (Advanced Character Formats)?	SC 3.1.2	AA	
Did use master pages for page elements like headings, footers and page numbers and other decorative page treatments?	SC 1.1.1	A	
	SC 3.2.3	AA	
	SC 2.4.8	AAA	
Did I set the reading order via the Articles or Layers panel (either can be used)?	SC 1.3.2	AA	
Do the on-page numbers of my document match the page numbers in the PDF?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.8	AAA	
	SC 3.2.3	AA	
Does my document contain visual headings that are mapped to accessible heading names either by proper name or via the Paragraph Style > Export tagging dialog box? Standard names are H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6. (Avoid H. Not a standard tag)	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.1	A	
	SC 2.4.6	AA	
	SC 2.4.10	AAA	
Did I maintain a consistent logical heading structure and order without skipping a heading level? (bad example - H1, H2, H4)	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.1	A	
	SC 3.2.4	AA	
Did I map any non-standard styles to standard styles using the export tagging option inside the paragraph styles dialog box? Non-mapped styles revert to <P>	SC 1.3.1	A	
Did I avoid manual bullets and always use paragraph styles with proper list properties?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Did I properly use character styles for bold, italics, colored individual words etc.?	InDesign Best Practice	None	
Did I turn Ligatures off? (Otherwise risk character encoding issues)	InDesign Best Practice	None	
Did I use "Space before" or "Space After" in my paragraph styles to avoid extra hard returns in my document?	Eliminated blank content boxes in PDF	None	
Did I structure my document via the Articles tab or using proper layers and threading to maintain proper reading order when exported to PDF?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.1.1	A	
	SC 2.1.3	AAA	
	SC 2.4.3	A	
Are my tables free from merged heading cells for easy compliance? Note: Merged cells are not against WCAG and can be remediated with advanced techniques inside the PDF	SC 1.3.1	A	
Are my tables live content and not images of text?	SC 1.4.5	AA	
Do my tables all have Column Headings or Row Headings?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.6	AA	



InDesign Checklist Continued

Description	WCAG Success Criteria	Level	Yes or No
Did I set my first row as a heading row in all tables I create?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.6	AA	
Did I avoid filling in blank cells with double hyphens or other extra characters?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Did I avoid creating artwork inside InDesign and only use linked artwork?	InDesign Best Practice	None	
Did I avoid grouping items that require alt-text to avoid PDF export issues?	Known Bug in InDesign	None	
Did I avoid stacking frames on top of each other to achieve visual layouts for things like background boxes or other stylized elements?	InDesign Best Practice	None	
Do all my hyperlinks have alt-text descriptions telling the user where they are going when they click the link?	SC 2.4.4	A	
	SC 2.4.9	AAA	
Did I apply alt-text descriptions to all meaningful graphics and figures?	SC 1.1.1	A	
Did I designate decorative elements as artifacts via the object export options?	SC 1.1.1	A	
Did I use built in features for the footnotes, TOC and cross references?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Did I ensure my resulting PDF contains bookmarks if it is more than 9 pages?	SC 2.4.5	AA	
Did I “Save as Interactive PDF” with “Create tagged PDF” and “Use structure for tab order” option enabled?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.3	A	
Am using color contrast combinations of at least 3:1 for graphical images?	SC 1.4.11	AA	
Do my text colors maintain a 3:1 or 4.5 to 1 minimum color contrast?	SC 1.4.3	AA	
Did I avoid using red and green combinations to differentiate items (colorblind barrier)?	SC 1.4.1	A	
Am I avoiding Images of Text whenever possible?	SC 1.4.5	AA	
If I must use images of text, did I apply Actual Text properties and not alt-text?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Am I avoiding the use of color as the only means to differentiate one item from another?	SC 1.4.1	A	
Do all my form elements have tool tips?	SC 3.3.2	A	
If my form field requires a specific format, is that format repeated in the tool tip? Example (YY/MM/DD)	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 3.3.2	A	

Useful Tools

- [Color Contrast Analyser](#) - Checks for proper color contrast between items
- [Colorblind Simulations](#) - Provides colorblind simulation



Acrobat Checklist



It is suggested that you read through the checklist before taking any actions on your PDF to minimize errors and workload. Some of the checks listed are duplicates of the InDesign checklist, but it is always good to double check that things like alt-text and object properties successfully export to the PDF document. These steps do not include all applicable success criteria, but will maximize the likelihood your document meets compliance.

Description	WCAG Success Criteria	Level	Yes or No
Did I Export with tags from source document?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.3	A	
Do you know the standard you are complying with? PDF/UA, WCAG 2.0 AA, WCAG 2.1?	SC 5.2.1	none	
Does my document have a root tag of <Document> (PDF/UA required)?	PDF/UA		
Does my accessibility standard require the Order panel to appear in sequence?	SC 1.3.2	AA	
	SC 1.4.10	AA	
a) if so, did I edit the Order Panel BEFORE walking the tags tree?	SC 1.3.2	AA	
Have I walked the tags tree to ensure all meaningful content is focusable?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Does all meaningful content focus in the correct order while walking the tags tree?	SC 1.3.2	AA	
Are all decorative items artifacted?	SC 1.1.1	A	
Is my document free from <Artifact> tags (these are not valid tags)	SC 1.3.1	A	
Are visual headings tags as an H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 or H6?	SC 1.3.1	A	
	SC 2.4.6	AA	
Are lists appropriately tagged as lists?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Are all hyperlinks properly tagged and have alt-text applied?	SC 2.4.4	A	
	SC 2.4.9	AAA	
Do all font colors pass minimum contrast for their size?	SC 1.4.3	AA	
Do I have improperly nested figure tags? (you should not)	SC 4.1.1	A	
Do the meaningful parts of my graphics meet 3 to 1 color contrast?	SC 1.4.11	AA	
Do my graphics have meaningful alt-text	SC 1.1.1	A	
Do I have red/green colorblind barriers?	SC 1.4.1	A	
Do my graphics, charts and graphs use more than one way to differentiate info?	SC 1.4.1	A	
Have I artifacted all empty containers (different than empty tags)	SC 1.3.1	A	
Have I deleted all empty tags (not mandatory but helps older screen readers)	SC 1.3.1	A	
Are all my tables live tables and not images?	SC 1.4.5	AA	
Have I set the scope and spans for all my tables?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Have I removed repeat headings for tables that span more than 1 page?	SC 1.3.1	A	
Have I run the Adobe Checker (as a starting point) to reveal basic errors?	not applicable		
Have I fixed all Adobe Checker errors?	not applicable		
If my standard is PDF/UA have I properly set the PDF/UA Identifier?	PDF/UA		
If my standard is PDF/UA have I run PAC 3 and cleared any errors?	PDF/UA		
Have I tested my document with NVDA or JAWS? (Read Aloud is not a valid method)	SC 5.2.4	none	