PDF Accessibility Common Errors Checklist

The Portable Document Format (PDF) Accessibility Checklist supports document creators and reviewers ensure accessibility compliance with the (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards. The checklist contains WCAG criteria for the most common errors identified in PDF documents.

Criteria to validate

Item	Criteria
1	The PDF title is specified and entered correctly using the title entry in Document Properties.
2	The language of the PDF is set in Document Properties under the Advanced tab (e.g., English).
4	Pages are appropriately bookmarked for easier navigation.
5	Headers and/or footers are included so users always know their location in the PDF.
6	Pages are numbered.
7	The reading order of the PDF is correct, allowing screen readers to read the contents logically.
8	Users can navigate through the PDF using the tab key for all input fields and links, in the correct order.
9	Headings with subheadings are included as needed.
10	Tables are correctly tagged so that they are recognized by assistive technology.
11	Lists are tagged correctly as lists and list items.
12	Visuals that do not add any additional value to the content and contain no text are marked as decorative and ignored by screen readers.

Item	Criteria
13	Images always have an alternative text. Complex images have a long description in the body of the document.
14	When using colors, shapes, or visual aids to convey a message, other written descriptors are also used.
15	Text and images of text have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1. Large text (size 14 bold or size 18+) requires a contrast ratio of 3:1.
16	Links are marked and contain descriptive text.
18	Form controls are properly displayed and indicated on the form for users to easily access and identify.
19	All fields have a proper name, role, and value attached for users.
20	All text fields have associated descriptive text for assistive technology recognition.
21	When a user fails to input information correctly in a field, a clear error indicator visually and auditorily informs the user of the error, how to correct it, and how to fill out the field properly.
22	The submit button or equivalent is marked so users know how to submit the form.
24	Use sans serif fonts.

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