BUILD SAFELY · BEGINNER · 12 MIN READ

# Accessibility for builders

Make apps everyone can use, including people using screen readers, keyboards, captions or zoom, and how to check with AI and free tools.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Access Ally” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/accessibility-for-builders

## Who you're building for

Many people use the web differently: with a screen reader that reads the page aloud, with only a keyboard, with zoom at 200 percent, with captions, or with colour vision differences. Accessible apps work for all of them, and they're usually easier for everyone to use. In many places accessibility is also a legal requirement for businesses and schools.

The widely used standard is WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), levels A and AA.

## The big five

- Text alternatives: alt text for meaningful images; captions for video.
- Keyboard: everything works with Tab, Enter, Space and Escape, with a visible focus outline.
- Labels: every form field has a real label; buttons say what they do ('Save note', not just an icon).
- Contrast and size: text readable against its background; works when zoomed.
- Structure: one main heading, headings in order, lists as lists, so screen readers can navigate.

## Ask AI to build it in

Add 'accessible: semantic HTML, labelled form fields, keyboard friendly, visible focus, WCAG AA contrast' to your build prompts. AI-generated interfaces often miss labels and keyboard support unless asked.

## Check it

- Unplug your mouse: can you do everything with the keyboard?
- Zoom to 200 percent: does anything break or overlap?
- Run an automated checker such as axe or Lighthouse in your browser's developer tools.

- Try a screen reader for five minutes (VoiceOver on Apple devices, NVDA on Windows, TalkBack on Android).
- Automated tools catch only part of the problems; real people and manual checks catch the rest.

## Key terms

**Accessibility (a11y)**
Making apps usable by everyone, including people using screen readers or keyboards.

**Screen reader**
Software that reads a page aloud and lets people navigate without seeing the screen.

**Colour contrast**
How different text is from its background; enough contrast keeps text readable.

**WCAG**
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: the common standard for accessible websites.

**Alt text**
A short description of an image for screen readers and search engines.

**Keyboard navigation**
Using a site with Tab, Enter, Space and Escape instead of a mouse.

## Try it: A 10-minute accessibility check

1. Run Lighthouse or axe on one page you built and list the issues.
2. Do the whole page with only the keyboard; note anything you can't reach.
3. Ask your AI tool to fix the top three issues and explain each fix.
4. Re-run the check and compare.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

# Accessibility for builders

5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

### 1. What does WCAG stand for?

A. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
B. World Coding Academy Group
C. Website Colour and Graphics
D. Worldwide Committee for Accessible Graphics

### 2. How can you quickly test keyboard accessibility?

A. Use only a mouse
B. Use the page with only Tab, Enter, Space and Escape
C. Turn off the screen
D. Make text smaller

### 3. Which button label is most accessible?

A. An icon with no label
B. 'Click here'
C. 'Save note'
D. 'Button'

### 4. Do automated checkers find every accessibility problem?

A. Yes, if the checker gives the page a perfect score of 100
B. They only check colours and spelling, not the page structure
C. They make it worse
D. No; manual checks and real users catch the rest

### 5. What is a screen reader?

A. Software that reads the page aloud
B. A screen protector that reduces glare for people with low vision
C. A large monitor that makes text easier to read
D. A browser extension that blocks ads

## Official sites

W3C: WCAG overview: https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/
axe DevTools: https://www.deque.com/axe/devtools/
Chrome Lighthouse: https://developer.chrome.com/docs/lighthouse/overview

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

# Accessibility for builders

**1. A: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines**
WCAG is the widely used web accessibility standard.

**2. B: Use the page with only Tab, Enter, Space and Escape**
If you can't reach or use something by keyboard, many people can't either.

**3. C: 'Save note'**
Labels should say what the button does.

**4. D: No; manual checks and real users catch the rest**
Automated tools help, but manual testing is still needed.

**5. A: Software that reads the page aloud**
Screen readers are used by blind and low-vision people, among others.