How to underline links

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to identify the best practices for displaying and styling underlined links to improve accessibility and clarity for all users especially those with color vision deficiencies or cognitive impairments.

Key Findings

- Underlined text is the most recognizable indicator of clickable links, improving usability for all users.
- Relying solely on color to distinguish links fails WCAG 2.1 guidelines if contrast is insufficient.
- Avoid removing underlines unless another clear visual indicator (like a border or hover effect) is used.
- Color contrast ratio between links and body text should be at least 3:1.
- Use consistent link styling across the site for predictability.

Implementation Notes

Default Underline with CSS:

```
a {

 color: #0645AD;

 text-decoration: underline;

}
```

Custom Hover Effect:

```
a:hover, a:focus {
  text-decoration: underline;
  color: #0B66C3;
}
```

Avoid removing underlines globally:

```
a { text-decoration: none; }
```

Use Cases

- Reinforce link visibility in text-heavy pages and documentation.
- Improve accessibility for users with color blindness or low vision.
- Support keyboard navigation by preserving visible focus and hover states.