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Implementing WCAG Guidelines for Instructional Designers

If you want to create accessible e-learning but feel intimidated by the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#), this resource is for you. We'll demystify WCAG by breaking it down by content type and offering tips for creating accessible courses using Articulate apps.

When you're ready, select **Start**.

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About this resource

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- “ Start with the little things, give an audio description in your next meeting, ask a new colleague if they need any accommodations, connect people across departments or host an event where someone can speak about their disability, better yet, hire someone with a disability.

Katherine Lewis, LinkedIn

What is WCAG?

If you’re looking more closely at what it takes to create accessible e-learning, no doubt you’ve run into the acronym “WCAG.” WCAG stands for [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#). These guidelines are a broad set of standards for making all types of web content more accessible—including e-learning.

Because WCAG is a set of standards and not regulations or laws, they’re pretty high-level. The guidelines don’t tell you how to create accessible e-learning, but rather the specifications or criteria that inform whether web content is considered accessible. It’s up to you to interpret those guidelines and then apply them to your projects for your audience.

And that's where things can get tricky. Interpreting those standards can be a daunting task. Because the guidelines are broadly applicable to all types of web experiences, the wording is often abstract or overly technical—making them difficult to parse. Reading the guidelines may leave you with questions like ...

- How am I supposed to know which standards apply to e-learning?
- How do I know I've correctly interpreted these standards after developing my course?
- Can I even apply the standards in my preferred authoring app?

We get it. We've been in your shoes—uncomfortable and a bit overwhelmed about all that we don't know. And that's why we've created this resource.

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How should I use this resource?

We've designed this resource to simplify the WCAG guidelines as they apply to e-learning. We've reorganized them by content type to make them easier to follow and explained them in clear terms to help you understand what you—the course creator—actually need to do.

We've also included tips for implementing WCAG guidelines using Articulate apps to help you translate theory into practice.

You can use this resource as both a learning tool and a quick-reference guide as you're creating your projects.

However you decide to use it, we hope this resource is a helpful companion on your course creation journey and makes it a little easier for you to take more confident strides towards e-learning accessibility.



“Go and do intentionally, and in a wide variety of ways ...
Progress, not perfection.”

- Katherine Lewis, LinkedIn

Excerpted from "[The Accidental Accessibility Evangelist](#)", Axe-Con 2022

[View the conformance levels](#)

Conformance levels

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Designing accessible e-learning is about more than checking a box. It's about building courses that all learners can equally access—including those with auditory, visual, mobility, or learning disabilities.

The WGAC guidelines use a set of three conformance levels to help guide your e-learning accessibility efforts: Level A, Level AA, and Level AAA. Let's take a look at what they mean.

A

Level A is the minimum level of conformance. These standards are considered must-haves, but most organizations don't stop here when it comes to their accessibility efforts.

AA

Level AA (Double A) is an intermediate level of conformance. Most organizations consider level AA to be achievable and make implementing these standards their goal.

AAA

Level AAA (Triple A) is the highest level of conformance. While these standards are considered the "best practice," many of them are quite difficult to achieve and are considered a stretch goal.

These levels don't apply to the entire course, but rather to individual criteria. Some organizations aim for at least a Level AA, but you don't have to stop there. Always strive to meet a higher level where you can.

Let's take a look at the accessibility criteria in more detail along with how it works in Articulate apps.

[View the accessibility criteria](#)

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Features

Include both portrait and landscape modes

When you build your course, make sure learners have the option to view it in both portrait and landscape modes.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Content automatically reflows and works beautifully in both landscape and portrait modes.
Storyline 360	Courses work in both landscape and portrait modes. However, it's possible to restrict learners to one mode or the other , so make sure you don't choose that option.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.4 Orientation](#) – Level AA

Allow learners to enlarge text



Learners should be able to:

- Enlarge text by 200% without using assistive technology and without cutting off any of the content or being unable to interact with the course (Level AA).
- Scale content to 400% without having to scroll excessively in either direction (Level AAA).

Learners shouldn't have to use a horizontal scroll bar to read a line of text (even when enlarged at 200%) when in full-screen mode (Level AAA).

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Content scales and reflows as needed when learners interact with their browser zoom features. Content reflows as learners zoom in so they never need to scroll horizontally.
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Storyline 360

If you use the [modern player](#), learners can switch to [modern player zoom mode](#) and use the zoom settings in desktop browsers to make slides bigger and easier to see. On mobile devices, learners can use pinch-to-zoom gestures.

If you use the classic player (locked at optimal size), learners can use the zoom settings in desktop browsers to make slides bigger and easier to see. On mobile devices, learners can use pinch-to-zoom gestures.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.4 Resize Text](#) – Level AA
- [WCAG 1.4.8 Visual Presentation](#) – Level AAA
- [WCAG 1.4.10 Reflow](#) – Level AAA

Allow learners to adjust text size and spacing

Learners should be able to change the spacing between text without it cutting off any of the content or preventing them from interacting with the course.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360

Learners can use custom stylesheets or browser extensions to change the font size and spacing in most cases. There are a few exceptions (For example, the continue block) that we plan to improve.

Storyline 360

Learners can use custom stylesheets or browser extensions to adjust text properties—such as font size or line spacing—to make content easier to read. See how Storyline 360 supports [accessible text](#), allowing learners to control their experience.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.12 Text Spacing](#) – Level AA

Allow learners to adjust text formatting

Allow learners to customize the way text looks—including foreground and background colors, paragraph width, alignment, and line spacing.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not currently supported.
Storyline 360	Learners can use custom stylesheets or browser extensions to change the text formatting.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.8 Visual Presentation](#) – Level AAA

Don't impose time limits

Don't set time limits for activities unless the learner can turn them off, adjust them, or extend them.

Exceptions:

- Any activity where timing is essential to understanding (For example, a simulation of a real activity that needs to be completed in a set amount of time)

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not applicable. Rise 360 doesn't use timed content.
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Storyline 360

Supported. It's up to the course author to ensure they're not incorporating unnecessary time limits, advancing slides automatically, or animating text to make it disappear after a certain amount of time.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.2.1 Timing Adjustable](#) – Level A

Colors

Don't use colors alone to convey meaning

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When using a different color to make a word or phrase stand out, make sure to also use different formatting—such as **bolding** or underlining.

When using color to convey meaning—for example, red for incorrect and green for correct—make sure to also include text or an icon.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360

Provide alternatives when color is used to convey important information or instructions. Learners with color blindness might not see the differences in your color choices. Here are a couple of ways to meet this criterion:

- Use a 3:1 contrast ratio between clickable text and static text so learners can tell the difference.
- Use patterns, textures, or text to make different areas of an image stand out. For example, use different patterns or textures for each product on a chart. Or, add on-screen text

to identify colors when asking learners to select one of several color swatches.

Provide alternatives when color is used to convey important information or instructions. Learners with color blindness might not see the differences in your color choices. Here are some examples:

- Use icons or text labels. For example, display “Required” to indicate required data-entry fields rather than (or in addition to) color formatting, such as red highlights.
- Use a 3:1 contrast ratio between clickable text and static text so learners can tell the difference.
- Use patterns, textures, or text to make different areas of an image stand out. For example, use different patterns or textures for each product on a chart. Or, add on-screen text to identify colors (red, blue, etc.) when asking learners to select one of several color swatches.

Storyline 360

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.1 Use of Color](#) – Level A

Choose colors with sufficient contrast

Buttons and icons in the interface must have a [contrast ratio](#) of at least 3:1 against the background color and any items they appear next to.

Buttons without any space between them must be sufficiently contrasted with each other and the background.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

	Rise 360 interface elements meet non-text contrast guidelines.
Rise 360	Be sure your Rise 360 accent color and block background color have a 3:1 contrast ratio or higher.
	Use a contrast ratio of 3:1 or higher for images and background elements so learners with low vision can see them. For example, make sure buttons and icons are easily distinguishable from the slide background.
Storyline 360	The modern player automatically exceeds minimum contrast requirements for non-text elements. If you use the classic player , be sure to choose colors with a contrast ratio of 3:1 or higher for non-text elements.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.11 Non-Text Contrast – Level AA](#)

Labels

Write clear instructions and button labels

Make sure learners can understand how to interact with your course without having to rely on the sensory characteristics of an object—like the shape, colors, size, visual location, orientation, or sound. For example, write "Select the Menu button" rather than "Select the blue rectangle at the top right-hand corner."

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

	<p>Provide text-based instructions for content that can only be understood by shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound.</p>
Rise 360	<p>Matching drag-and-drop questions and sorting activities aren't fully accessible yet. We're working on these block types now.</p>
Storyline 360	<p>Provide text-based instructions for content that can only be understood by shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound.</p>

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.3 Sensory Characteristics](#) – Level A

Label input fields clearly



Make sure any input fields you include that contain personal data are labeled clearly (on-screen and in alt-text) so all learners can easily understand their purpose.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

	<p>Rise 360 doesn't have input fields for learners' personal info, such as phone numbers, addresses, birthdays, or payment methods.</p>
Storyline 360	<p>Storyline 360 doesn't currently support programmatic input-field identification or auto-filling forms.</p>

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.5 Identify Input Purpose](#) – Level AA

Use consistent naming identifications

Whenever you include interactive items that function the same throughout your e-learning course—such as text/icons on a button—make sure the visible labels or icons are consistent as well as the accessible names. For example, don't include a search bar that says "Search" in one section, "Find" in the second section, and a magnifying glass icon in the third section.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 consistently identifies built-in components. When you use an object or interaction more than once, be sure to identify it the same way each time. For example, if you use button blocks to jump to other locations, label them consistently throughout your course.
Storyline 360	<p>When you use an object or interaction more than once, identify it the same way each time.</p> <p>For example, if you use a clickable icon to let learners download a resource, use the same icon for all downloadable resources in the course. And label it consistently—for example, on-screen text or alternative text might read "Download" followed by the title of the document.</p>

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.2.4 Consistent Identification](#) – Level AA

Add a descriptive page title

Help learners understand what is going to be covered on each page before they navigate into page content. The page title should focus on the primary topic or purpose. Unique titles allow screen readers to distinguish individual pages and also enhance search results.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 automatically gives each lesson in your course a page title that follows this format: Course Title – Lesson Title Rise 360. Titles appear on the browser tab, and screen readers announce them as learners navigate through the course.
Storyline 360	Storyline 360 automatically uses your course title as the page title that appears on the browser tab. Screen readers announce the course title (i.e., the page title) when the course first launches.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.2 Page Titled](#) – Level A

Use descriptive headings

Let learners know what to expect from a section or slide by having headings that describe the topic or purpose. Additionally, make sure any labels provided for interactive items clearly describe the purpose of the interaction.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Built-in controls are properly labeled and identified. For lesson content, authors can use heading blocks to organize and label content.
Storyline 360	Use text boxes to add headings and labels to slide content so learners understand the course information. Headings and labels must be clear and descriptive.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.6 Headings and Labels](#) – Level AA

Structure

Organize content in a logical order

When the reading order of content is important to understanding its meaning, make sure assistive technologies, such as screen readers, can read through the content in the correct sequence.

For example, if you have a set of tabs, it should read the first one first, then the second one, and so on.

Here's how to do that in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 follows a logical navigation order for all content, except matching drag-and-drop questions, which are in development.
Storyline 360	Follow the steps outlined here to change the focus order for each slide.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence](#) – Level A

Let learners find the same content multiple ways

Content should be accessible using several different methods. For example, an e-learning course that you can navigate via the menu, the next/previous buttons, or the search bar.

Here's how to do that in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 courses have a cover page with an interactive outline, sidebar navigation features, and a search field for finding content.
Storyline 360	Use the built-in navigation features , such as the course menu, search field, and previous and next buttons. Or, create your own custom navigation features with interactive objects, such as buttons , hyperlinks , layers , lightboxes , and triggers .

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.5 Multiple Ways](#) – Level AA

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Text

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Format

Choose colors with sufficient contrast

All text that's smaller than 14 bold or 18 regular must have a [contrast ratio](#) of at least 4.5:1 with the background for Level AA (7:1 for Level AAA).

Anything larger than that can have a contrast ratio as low as 3:1 for Level AA (4.5:1 for Level AAA).

The only text that doesn't require a minimum level of contrast is text that's:

- Decorative
- Part of an inactive or disabled user interface component
- Part of a logo or brand name

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 interface elements meet minimum contrast guidelines. Be sure to use a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 or higher for on-screen text so learners with low vision can read it.
Storyline 360	Use a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 or higher for on-screen text so learners with low vision can read it. The modern player automatically exceeds minimum contrast requirements. If you use the classic player , be sure to choose colors with a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 or higher.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.3 Contrast \(Minimum\)](#) – Level AA
- [WCAG 1.4.6 Contrast \(Enhanced\)](#) – Level AAA

Avoid embedding text in images

Text that's embedded in images can't be read by accessibility tools. You must insert it directly into the authoring app—unless the learner has the option to customize its formatting to fit their needs (Level AA).

Text embedded in images is only acceptable in the following cases (Level AAA):

- when used as decoration
- within a logo
- when used to demonstrate a particular visual aspect of the text—such as a font family
- when the text is part of a picture that contains significant other visual content—like graphs, screenshots, and diagrams—which visually convey important information through more than just text

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 interface elements don't rely on images of text. Be sure to use text blocks to convey important information rather than importing images of text, which can't be read by assistive tools.
Storyline 360	Use on-screen text to convey important information rather than images of text, which can't be read by assistive tools.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.5: Images of Text](#) – Level AA
- [WCAG 1.4.9 Images of Text \(No Exception\)](#) – Level AAA

Structure

Define headings, lists, etc. as such

When creating content, define headings, links, lists, and other elements so screen reader users can understand and explore content easily.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	This is done automatically. Rise 360 output is semantically formatted for easy screen reader navigation.
Storyline 360	This is done automatically for paragraphs, links, lists, and other elements. Course authors should use text styles to identify headings and blockquotes so learners can easily explore headings and quotes using built-in screen reader navigation features .

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.1 Info and Relationships](#) – Level A

Language

Identify the main language used in the course

Make sure your course file includes functionality that tells assistive technology what language the content is in. This ensures:

- Screen readers use the correct pronunciation
- Media captions display the correct characters, punctuation, and text reading direction

If the content is in multiple languages, Level A compliance simply requires setting the course language as the one that appears most. To meet Level AA compliance, the course also needs to tell assistive technology which passages or phrases are in another language.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Set the course language in your text labels and screen readers will use that language to properly pronounce the interface elements and course content.
Storyline 360	A language identifier is automatically added to the published output for screen readers. You can set the course language in your player properties (text labels).

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.1.1 Language of Page](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 3.1.2 Language of Parts](#) – Level AA

Explain words or phrases used unusual ways

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Certain disabilities make it more challenging to understand when words or phrases aren't used literally, like with idioms or jargon. When these terms can't be avoided, include explanations in the copy or somewhere else in the course that's easy to locate—such as a footnote or glossary.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.1.3 Unusual Words](#) – Level AAA

Explain all abbreviations

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Define all abbreviations and make sure learners can access the expanded form. A common way to do this is to include the full term with the abbreviation in brackets immediately following (or vice versa) the first time it's used in the copy. A glossary is another option to consider.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.1.4 Abbreviations](#) – Level AAA

When a word has multiple pronunciations, clarify which one is intended

Some words have different meanings depending on how they're pronounced—for instance bass (an instrument) versus bass (a fish). When using text with different meanings, clearly communicate the meaning you intend.

It's often possible to tell which pronunciation you mean with the surrounding copy. When it's not, consider linking to a sound file of the pronunciation or including a pronunciation guide in a course glossary.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.1.6 Pronunciation](#) – Level AAA

Write content in a simple way

Write content as simply as possible. Aim for copy no more complex than a lower secondary education reading level. When that's not possible, provide an easily readable alternative or supplementary content.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.1.5 Reading Level](#) – Level AAA
- [PlainLanguage.gov](#)

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Informational Images

Add alternative (alt) text

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When images (or other non-text objects) convey information, it's important to include [alt text](#) so people who use assistive technologies—such as screen readers—can perceive the purpose of

the content. Alt text should be meaningful and concise.

Here's how to do that in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	<p>Give learners text-based alternatives for non-text content. Use alt text to describe images. Use text blocks or interactive markers to provide expanded descriptions for complex images, such as charts and maps. For audio and video blocks, use the caption field to describe the purpose of the media.</p> <p>Scenario blocks don't currently support alt text. It's coming soon.</p>
Storyline 360	<p>Give learners text-based alternatives, such as text boxes or slide notes, for non-text content. You can also use alt text to describe objects for learners with screen readers.</p>

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.1.1: Non-Text Content](#) – Level A

Decorative Images

Hide from accessibility tools

If an image doesn't convey any information, it's best to hide it from accessibility tools.

Here's how to do that in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select Edit2. Click on Edit alt tag
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Storyline 360

3. Type "!"

1. Right-click on the object
2. Choose **Size and position**
3. Select **Accessibility**
4. Uncheck the **Object is visible to accessibility tools** box

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.1.1: Non-Text Content](#) – Level A



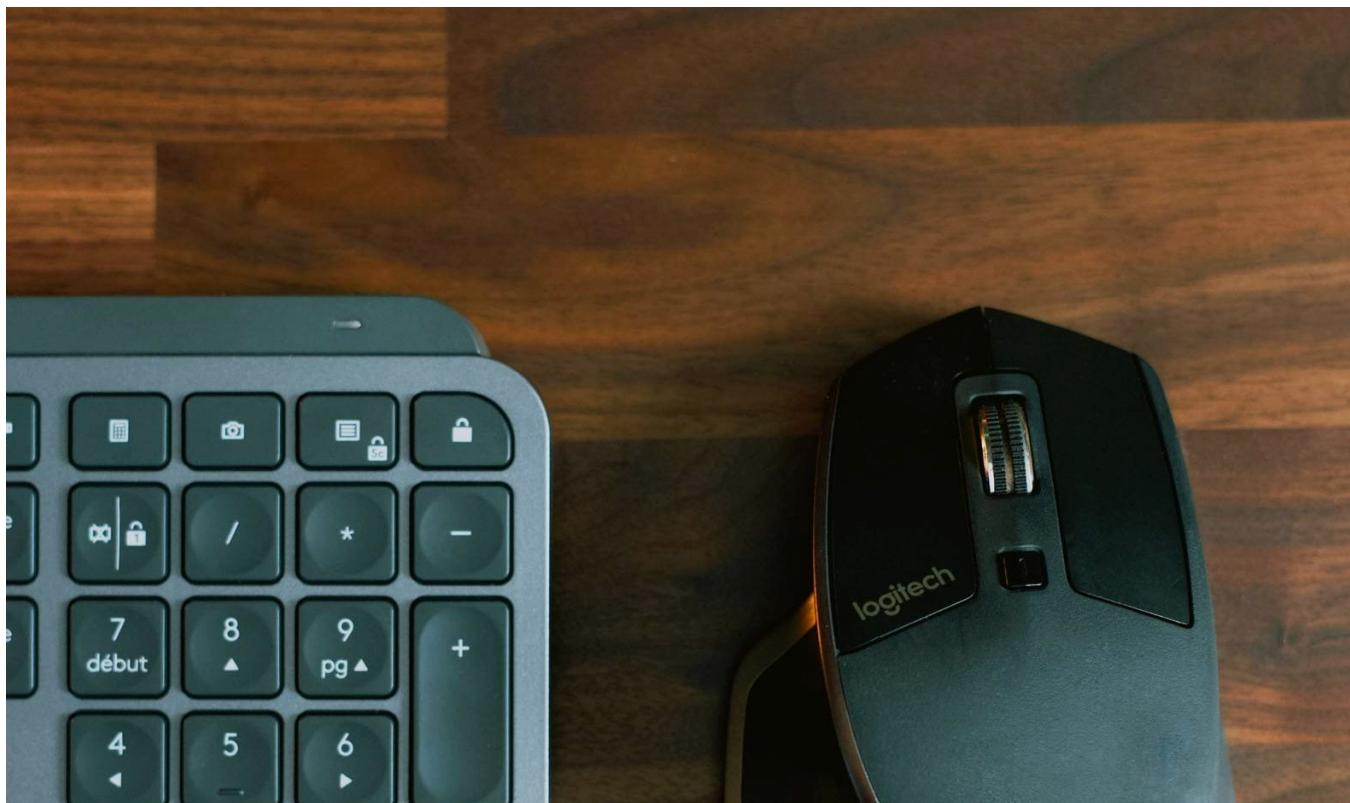
Not sure if an image is informational or decorative? Ask yourself this question, "**If I removed this image, would the learning experience be impacted?**" If the answer is yes, it's an informative image. If the answer is no, it's likely a decorative image.

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Interactions

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Design hover states for mouse and keyboard navigation

When learners hover over or use the keyboard to focus on an interactive item, make sure all users can:

- hover over it
- dismiss it

- perceive it before it disappears

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Automatic. Content that appears only when an element has focus (for example, a tooltip) is dismissible, hoverable, and persistent.
Storyline 360	Partially supported automatically. We're working on making object hover states dismissable via keyboard and making tooltips in Likert scale questions hoverable and dismissible.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.13 Content on Hover or Focus](#) – Level AA

Ensure interactions are predictable when learners change focus

When learners move focus—with a mouse, tab key, or assistive technology—make sure it doesn't trigger major actions, like opening pop-ups or new destinations. Avoid surprising learners with a focus action they wouldn't expect.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 courses don't change context when learners change focus.
Storyline 360	Storyline 360 courses don't change context when learners change focus.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.2.1 On Focus](#) – Level A

Avoid unexpected behaviors when learners interact with an input field

Interactions that store learner inputs—like data entry fields, radio buttons, and check boxes—should function in a predictable way. Alternately, you can provide a warning to learners when the input item may behave differently than expected—for example, if selecting a radio button automatically submits their choice too.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Learners can select form controls—such as radio buttons and enter info in text-entry fields—but Rise 360 doesn't change context when they do.
Storyline 360	Course creators need to explain to learners what will happen before they perform an action that changes context.

The Level AAA version of this guideline applies this standard of predictability to anything that happens on the page or screen. Changes on the screen should happen as a result of direct learner action or learners should be able to switch off automatic changes.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.2.2 On Input](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 3.2.5 Change on Request](#) – Level AAA

Put navigation items in a consistent place in your layout

If you have repeated navigation items—for example, a Home button—make it easy for learners to find them by putting them in a consistent place on any screen they appear on.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Built-in navigation elements always appear in the same
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	location.
Storyline 360	The built-in navigation elements appear in the same location throughout a course. When you use custom navigation elements, create them in the same order and location on each slide.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.2.3 Consistent Navigation](#) – Level AA

Identify input errors and provide suggestions for correction

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If learners make a mistake when interacting with input items—such as data entry fields, radio buttons, and check boxes—clearly describe what went wrong using text. An error can apply to learners not selecting or giving information that's required or by filling data fields in with the wrong format or with values outside the range (Level A).

When learners make a mistake when interacting with input items, give them suggestions on how to correct those mistakes (Level AA). For example, if a form field requires input and the user leaves it blank, highlight the field and explain what's required.

- Exception: This is exempt if the suggestion for the mistake could be a threat to security—For example, password hints.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 communicates errors when they occur.
Storyline 360	Storyline 360 automatically warns learners when they leave questions blank. And you can use triggers , states , and layers to create custom validation and error messages.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.3.1 Error Identification](#) –Level A
- [WCAG 3.3.3 Error Suggestion](#) – Level AA

Provide clear instructions or labels for input items

When learners need to answer a quiz question or type in an input field, give clear instructions or labels so they know what to do. Clearly label each data entry field with the input requirement—like ‘First name’ or ‘Email address.’ Make it known if a field is mandatory or if there are formatting requirements—for example, case sensitive (Level A).

Provide extra support when learners are filling in data entry fields—For example, help icons next to each field that gives additional guidance or examples (Level AAA).

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 provides instructions for interactions, except sorting activities and matching drag-and-drop questions. As we work to make these interactions fully accessible, use a text block to provide instructions if you use these interactive blocks.
Storyline 360	Give learners instructions when they need to interact with slide content. For example, provide on-screen instructions when learners need to type information in a data-entry field so they know what's expected of them.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.3.2 Labels or Instructions](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 3.3.5 Help](#) – Level AAA

Make sure learners can reverse, check, correct, or confirm sensitive data

When learners are required to input information with legal or financial implications or make updates or changes to personal data, make sure they can reverse, check, or confirm data before submitting (Level AA).

Help learners with disabilities avoid consequences that may result from making a mistake when submitting form data. Allow users to undo or edit their form submission (Level AAA).

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not applicable. Rise 360 doesn't cause legal commitments or financial transactions to occur.
Storyline 360	Ask learners to confirm their responses before submitting them. For example, when learners are required to enter text in a data-entry field, ask them if the information they entered is correct and give them the opportunity to change it before moving on. You might display a Yes/No confirmation question on a layer. If learners click Yes to confirm that the information is correct, proceed to the next slide. If learners click No, close the layer and allow them to change their responses before continuing.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 3.3.4 Error Prevention \(Legal, Financial, Data\)](#) – Level AA
- [WCAG 3.3.6 Error Prevention \(All\)](#) – Level AAA

Give your links context

Make your links clear and easy to understand, ideally from just the link text itself—for example, **My Blog** vs **Click Here**. At the very least, describe the purpose of the link in the same sentence, paragraph, list item, or table cell as the link.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Use meaningful text for every link so learners know what each one does.
Storyline 360	Add text to every button and hyperlink so learners know what each one does. It's also a good idea to add alternative text to

buttons and hyperlinks for learners with screen readers.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.4 Link Purpose \(In Context\)](#) – Level A

Make buttons at least 44 by 44 pixels

Make buttons large enough so all learners can easily select them, especially on touch screens.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 creates targets, like buttons, and their size for you. At this time, not all of them meet this criterion.
Storyline 360	Make sure clickable areas or objects—such as buttons—are at least 44 pixels wide and 44 pixels tall.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.5.5 Target Size](#) – Level AAA

Always offer a single-touch option

All operations must use simple gestures that need only a single touch. Gestures that need two fingers or complicated movements can be hard to operate for people with hand tremors or limited movement.

Example: A website includes a map view that supports the pinch gesture to zoom into the map content. User interface controls offer the operation using plus and minus buttons to zoom in and out.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 doesn't use touchscreen gestures.
Storyline 360	Storyline 360 courses support touchscreen gestures , but learners aren't required to use them.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.5.1 Pointer Gestures](#) – Level A

Make it easier for users to prevent accidental or erroneous input

For functionality that can be operated using a single touch, at least one of the following should be true:

- **No Down-Event:** The down-event of the pointer is not used to execute any part of the function
- **Abort or Undo:** Completion of the function is on the up-event, and a mechanism is available to abort the function before completion or to undo the function after completion
- **Up Reversal:** The up-event reverses any outcome of the preceding down-event
- **Essential:** Completing the function on the down-event is essential

As an example, for interface elements that have a single tap or long-press as input, the corresponding event is triggered when the finger is lifted inside that element.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Click events happen when learners release the mouse button, not when they press the mouse button down. This helps learners recover if they accidentally click the wrong target. They can move the mouse away from the target before releasing the button if they don't want to activate the target.
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Storyline 360

Click events happen when learners release the mouse button, not when they press the mouse button down. This helps learners recover if they accidentally click the wrong target. They can move the mouse away from the target before releasing the button if they don't want to activate the target.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.5.2 Pointer Cancellation](#) – Level A

Make content accessible via multiple inputs

Your learner must be able to switch between different input devices while working with your content. Don't assume that a mouse user will always use a mouse or that a keyboard user will always use a keyboard.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.5.6 Concurrent Input Mechanisms](#) – Level AAA

Continue

Keyboard navigation

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Ensure the course is navigable with a keyboard

Learners should be able to navigate and interact with all course content using only their keyboard, except when the path of their movement is required (such as drawing a graphic). Also, there should be no time limits imposed on the learner to navigate through content (Level A).

For stricter compliance, all functionality of the course content should be operable with a keyboard—without exception and without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes (Level AAA).

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360

Much of the learning experience is already [keyboard accessible](#), but we're working on keyboard improvements to these block types—image and quote carousels, process interactions, drag-

and-drop interactions, and charts. For AAA compliance, do not use interactive blocks that don't have keyboard accessibility.

Storyline 360

Most Storyline 360 features are keyboard accessible, except for drag-and-drop interactions and Likert scale questions. Use alternative accessible solutions for these options.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.1.1 Keyboard](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 2.1.3 Keyboard \(No Exception\)](#) – Level AAA

Ensure learners can always navigate away from content

Learners who use a keyboard to navigate through content must be able to navigate away from any content that receives focus so they don't get stuck. They should be able to navigate using standard keyboard shortcuts ("Tab," "Shift + Tab," "Escape," or arrow keys).

If non-standard keys are required, explain to learners how to navigate away from the element.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360

This is done automatically. Rise 360 courses don't trap keyboard focus in subsections of content. Learners can use keyboard navigation without getting stuck.

Storyline 360

This is done automatically. Storyline 360 courses don't trap keyboard focus in subsections of content. Learners can use keyboard navigation without getting stuck.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap](#) – Level A

Avoid single-key shortcuts

By avoiding single-key shortcuts, you help reduce accidental activation of these shortcuts by learners who use keyboard navigation. If you must create a single-key shortcut, allow learners to do at least one of the following:

- Turn these shortcuts off
- Modify them with modifier keys—such as Ctrl, Alt, or Shift.
- Activate them only when a particular object has focus.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not applicable. Rise 360 output doesn't use keyboard shortcuts.
Storyline 360	The built-in keyboard shortcuts don't use single keys, and they can be turned off.
	Course authors can custom create key-press triggers (for example, keyboard shortcuts), but they only work when specific objects have focus, which meets the purpose of this criterion.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.1.4 Character Key Shortcuts](#) – Level A

Let learners skip repetitive blocks

Learners who navigate using a keyboard should be able to skip repetitive content and jump straight to the main content. For example, e-learning navigation items—such as menus or glossaries.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Learners can skip repetitive sidebar navigation elements to access lesson content immediately when tabbing through a course with a screen reader. The skip-navigation feature is automatically enabled in all courses.
Storyline 360	Learners can skip repetitive navigation elements to access slide content immediately when tabbing through a course with a screen reader. The skip-navigation feature is automatically enabled in all courses.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.1 Bypass Blocks](#) – Level A

Move learners through content logically

Learners need to find their way around content in sequential and meaningful order. Learners who navigate with a keyboard or screen reader will follow the focus order you set, so it's essential your chosen order preserves meaning and usability. For example, a table where they move through one row or column at a time.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	The navigation order of focusable elements, such as links and form controls, is logical and intuitive.
Storyline 360	Define a custom focus order (tab order) for interactive objects so learners using keyboard navigation understand the meaning of the content.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.3 Focus Order](#) – Level A

Show learners what part of the content has the focus

Make the keyboard focus indicator visible so keyboard-only users can see where they are on the page. For example, a highlight box around a specified area.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	A rectangle highlights the object that currently has focus when learners use keyboard navigation. There's one exception: flashcards. We're working on improvements for flashcard blocks. Stay tuned for updates.
Storyline 360	A rectangle highlights the object that currently has focus when learners use keyboard navigation. The focus rectangle defaults to yellow, and you can change the color to complement your course design.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.4.7 Focus Visible](#) – Level AA

Continue

Audio

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Include a pause/stop button and volume control

If audio plays automatically for more than 3 seconds, give learners a way to pause, stop, or control the volume. The computer audio controls do not count—learners need to be able to control the course audio independently.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not applicable. Rise 360 doesn't autoplay audio.
Storyline 360	Use the built-in controls , such as the play/pause button and the volume controller, or create your own controls using buttons , links , and triggers . (All controls can be accessed by keyboards and screen readers.)

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.2 Audio Control](#) – Level A

Add closed captions

Add synchronized captions to pre-recorded media which includes audio. These captions should describe everything in the audio track—including dialogue, the identities of the speakers, and sound effects. Captions can be open (always visible) or closed (capable of being turned on and off).

Here's how to do that with Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Import closed captions for videos that have narration. Rise 360 doesn't currently support captions for audio blocks.
Storyline 360	Import caption files or create your own with the built-in editor.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.2 Captions \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level A

Provide a transcript

Whenever you include audio-only content, add a text transcript in addition to captions. The transcript should describe everything in the audio track—including dialogue, the identities of the speakers, and sound effects.

Here's how to do that with Articulate apps:

	<p>Give learners text-based alternatives for audio-only content.</p> <p>For audio, use a text block or an accordion interaction with a single tab to display a transcript. If the transcript is short, you can even use the caption field for the audio block.</p> <p>If your course uses a lot of audio, it's also a good practice to include a downloadable transcript at the beginning of the course using an attachment block, so learners can follow along that way if they'd like.</p>
Rise 360	<p>Give learners text transcripts of audio content. You can use text boxes, layers, interactive markers, or slide notes to display transcripts.</p> <p>If your course uses a lot of audio, it's also a good practice to include a downloadable transcript at the beginning of the course using a hyperlink, so learners can follow along that way if they'd like.</p>
Storyline 360	

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.1 Audio-Only and Video-Only \(Prerecorded\)](#) - Level A
- [WCAG 1.2.8 Media Alternative \(Prerecorded\)](#) - Level AAA

Lower or eliminate background audio

Background sounds must be quiet enough for users with hearing disabilities to separate the narration from the background audio. You can either:

- Not use background audio
- Allow users to turn off background audio
- Make background audio four times quieter (20 decibels lower) than the narration

Note: This requirement doesn't apply to audio CAPTCHAs or logos, singing, or rapping.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.4.7 Low or No Background Audio](#) – Level AAA

Continue

Video

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Pre-Recorded Video

Add closed captions

You should add synchronized captions to any videos with audio. These captions should include the words spoken, identify who is speaking, and describe any meaningful sound effects. Captions

can be open (always visible) or closed (capable of being turned on and off).

Here's how to do that with Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Import closed captions for videos that have narration.
Storyline 360	Import caption files or create your own with the built-in editor.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.2 Captions \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level A

Provide a transcript

Whenever you include a video, you should also include a text transcript—even if there's no sound.

The transcript should include the narration or dialogue, descriptions of any sound effects, etc. (if applicable) as well as descriptions of what's going on visually.

Here's how to do that with Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Give learners text-based alternatives for video content. Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add a text description in the audio block caption.• Add a text block below the audio block.• Add a single-tabbed accordion block below the audio block. If your course includes multiple videos with audio, it's also a good practice to include a downloadable transcript at the beginning of the course using an attachment block, so learners can follow along that way if they'd like.
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	<p>For videos that don't have narration, you can offer a text description of what happens in the video. Use a text block or the caption field. You also have the option of using an audio block to narrate the video.</p>
Storyline 360	<p>Give learners text transcripts of videos that don't have descriptive audio information. You can use text boxes, layers, interactive markers, or slide notes to display transcripts.</p> <p>If your course includes multiple videos with audio, it's also a good practice to include a downloadable transcript at the beginning of the course using a hyperlink, so learners can follow along that way if they'd like.</p>

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.1 Audio-Only and Video-Only \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 1.2.8 Media Alternative \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level AAA

Provide an audio description track

Create an alternative audio track that describes what's going on visually in addition to any narration or dialogue (Level AA).

If the video doesn't have long enough pauses between speech to allow you to insert the necessary audio descriptions, edit the video to extend the pauses (Level AAA).

Here's how to do that in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	<p>Audio descriptions must be created in a separate app, then imported into Rise 360. For example, sync audio descriptions with a video in Storyline 360, and then publish the slide as a video file.</p>
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Storyline 360

Give learners text or audio descriptions as alternatives to video content. Use text boxes or slide notes for text-based descriptions. Record narration or import audio files for audio descriptions, then synchronize them with the video content.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.5 Audio Description \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level AA
- [WCAG 1.2.7 Extended Audio Description \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level AAA

Provide sign language interpretation

For videos with audio narration or dialogue, provide sign language interpretation.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.6 Sign Language \(Prerecorded\)](#) – Level AAA

Live Video

Provide closed captions

Provide synchronized captions for live presentations with audio content—like webinars or lectures.

Articulate apps don't currently support live video.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.4 Captions \(Live\)](#) – Level AA

Provide a transcript

Provide live-captioning of audio content or offer a transcript if the content follows a set script.

Articulate apps don't currently support live video.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.2.9 Audio-Only \(Live\)](#) - Level AAA

Continue

Animations

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Allow learners to pause, stop, or hide content with automatic motion

Give learners the ability to pause, stop, or hide any content that starts automatically and moves, scrolls, or blinks for longer than five seconds.

Give the same option for content that automatically updates or refreshes and appears next to other content.

Exceptions:

- Animations that need to move to show that they haven't frozen or broken (for example, a progress bar)
- Standalone content that doesn't appear next to other content (for example, an animation that appears alone on a page while something downloads)
- Any automatically moving content that is essential (automatically updating financial information on a stock website)

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not applicable. Rise 360 doesn't have auto-updating info or content that moves, scrolls, or blinks for more than five seconds.
Storyline 360	Course authors can enable the built-in play/pause button or create their own to give learners control over pacing.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.2.2 Pause, Stop, Hide](#) – Level A

Ensure nothing blinks more than 3 times per second

Some people with seizure disorders can have a seizure triggered by flashing visual content. Most people are unaware that they have this disorder until it strikes. Ensure that content that is marked as conforming to WCAG 2.0 avoids the types of flash that are most likely to cause seizures when viewed even for a second or two.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Don't use videos or animations that flash or blink more than three times per second.
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Storyline 360

[Here's a helpful tool](#) that analyzes videos for content that might cause seizures.

Don't use videos or animations that flash or blink more than three times per second.

[Here's a helpful tool](#) that analyzes videos for content that might cause seizures.

Learn more:

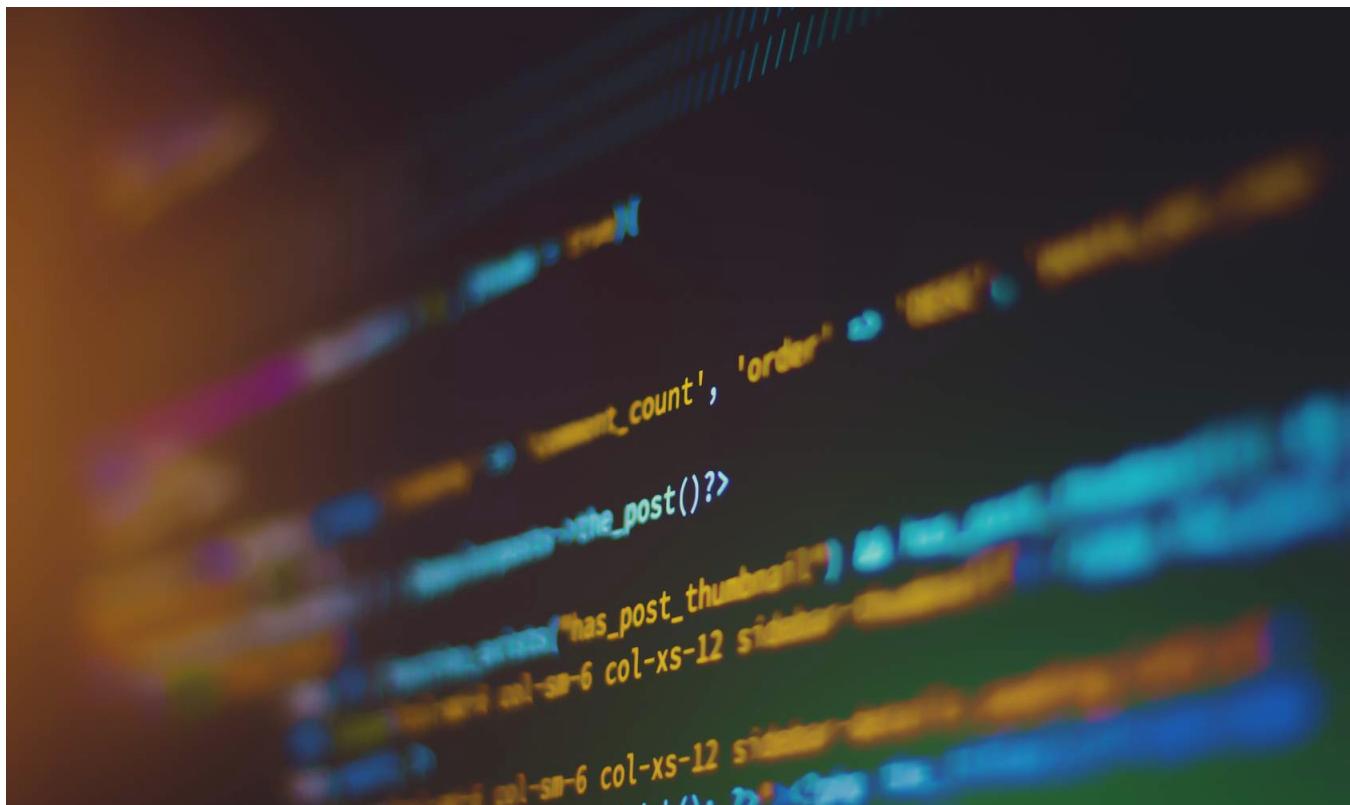
- [WCAG 2.3.1 Three Flashes or Below Threshold](#) – Level A
- [WCAG 2.3.2 Three Flashes](#) – Level AAA

Continue

Code

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Use appropriate codes for the user interface

Ensure the interface is coded in a way that allows assistive technologies to make it understandable to learners. For example, navigation menus and main content areas should be labeled as such using [ARIA](#) landmarks.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Not currently supported.
Storyline 360	The Storyline 360 player uses ARIA landmarks to identify regions.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 1.3.6 Identify Purpose](#) – Level AAA

Ensure the visible and programmatic names of interface components match

Make sure the words used to visually label a component of the interface match the ones associated with the component in the code so that people navigating using speech recognition or text-to-speech software can use the words they see to navigate.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	This is done automatically.
Storyline 360	Make sure alternative text matches on-screen labels.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 2.5.3 Label in Name](#) – Level A

Ensure code is error-free

If HTML code is incomplete or contains errors, content might not be recognized or announced by screen readers.

Make sure that:

- Elements have complete and correct opening and closing tags
 - Complete tag example: <h1>
 - Incomplete tag example: <h1
- Elements are nested according to specification
- IDs attribute values are unique
- Elements don't contain duplicate attributes

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 generates well-formed HTML output.
Storyline 360	Storyline 360 generates well-formed HTML output. If you add custom JavaScript triggers to your course, make sure your code is properly formatted.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 4.1.1 Parsing](#) – Level A

State the name, role, and value of interactive elements

Make sure that code is used to communicate the name, role, and value of interactive items to assistive technology—like alerting learners if a checkbox is selected or not. This allows learners using assistive technology to know what interactive items are for, what they can do, and what state they're in.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360	Rise 360 uses distinct semantic groups, ARIA landmarks, and structured controls that follow a consistent order and hierarchy.
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Storyline 360

There are a few exceptions, which we're working on improving.

The Storyline 360 player uses distinct semantic groups, ARIA landmarks, and structured controls that follow a consistent order and hierarchy.

Authors should make sure slide objects are labeled correctly so learners with screen readers know what they are and how to interact with them. Use on-screen text or alternative text to describe objects throughout your course.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 4.1.2 Name, Role, Value](#) – Level A

Assign roles or properties to status messages

If your authoring app uses a markup language, make sure assistive technology recognizes and announces status messages—including ones that don't receive keyboard focus so you don't interrupt the learners' work.

Example: After a user enters incorrectly formatted text in a data entry field labeled "date mm/dd/yy" a message appears stating "invalid format" which the screen reader announces.

Here's how that works in Articulate apps:

Rise 360

Status messages don't appear without a change in context—except for matching drag-and-drop interactions and sorting activities, which are in development.

Storyline 360

Status messages don't appear without a change in context.

Learn more:

- [WCAG 4.1.3 Status Messages](#) – Level AA

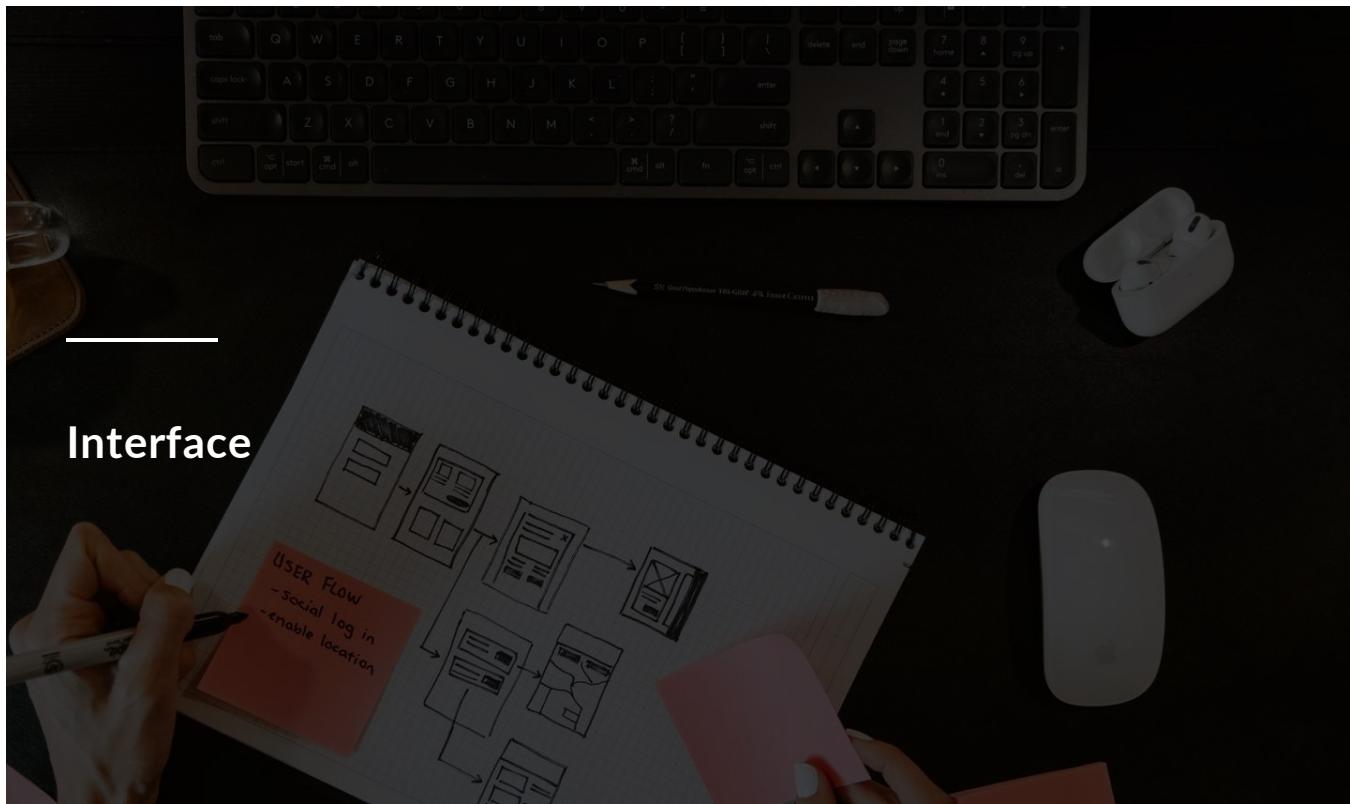
[View the criteria checklist](#)

Checklist

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Here are all the guidelines we just went through in checklist format, so it's easy for you to go through your courses and ensure you've met all the criteria. If you don't remember what a guideline means, please refer back to the previous sections of this course.



Features

- Include both portrait and landscape modes (Level AA)
- Allow learners to enlarge text (Level AA and AAA, depending)
- Allow learners to adjust text size and spacing (Level AA)
- Allow learners to adjust text formatting (Level AAA)
- Don't impose time limits (Level A)

Colors

- Don't use colors alone to convey meaning (Level A)
- Choose colors with sufficient contrast (Level AA)

Labels

- Write clear instructions and button labels (Level A)
- Label input fields clearly (Level AA)
- Use consistent naming identifications (Level AA)
- Add a descriptive page title (Level A)
- Use descriptive headings (Level AA)

Structure

- Organize content in a logical order (Level A)
- Let learners find the same content multiple ways (Level AA)



Format

- Choose colors with sufficient contrast (Level AA or AAA, depending)
- Avoid embedding text in images (Level AA or AAA, depending)

Structure



Define headings, lists, etc. as such (Level A)

Language



Identify the main language used in the course (Level A & AA)



Explain words or phrases used unusual ways (Level AAA)



Explain all abbreviations (Level AAA)



When a word has multiple pronunciations, clarify which one is intended (Level AAA)



Write content in a simple way (Level AAA)



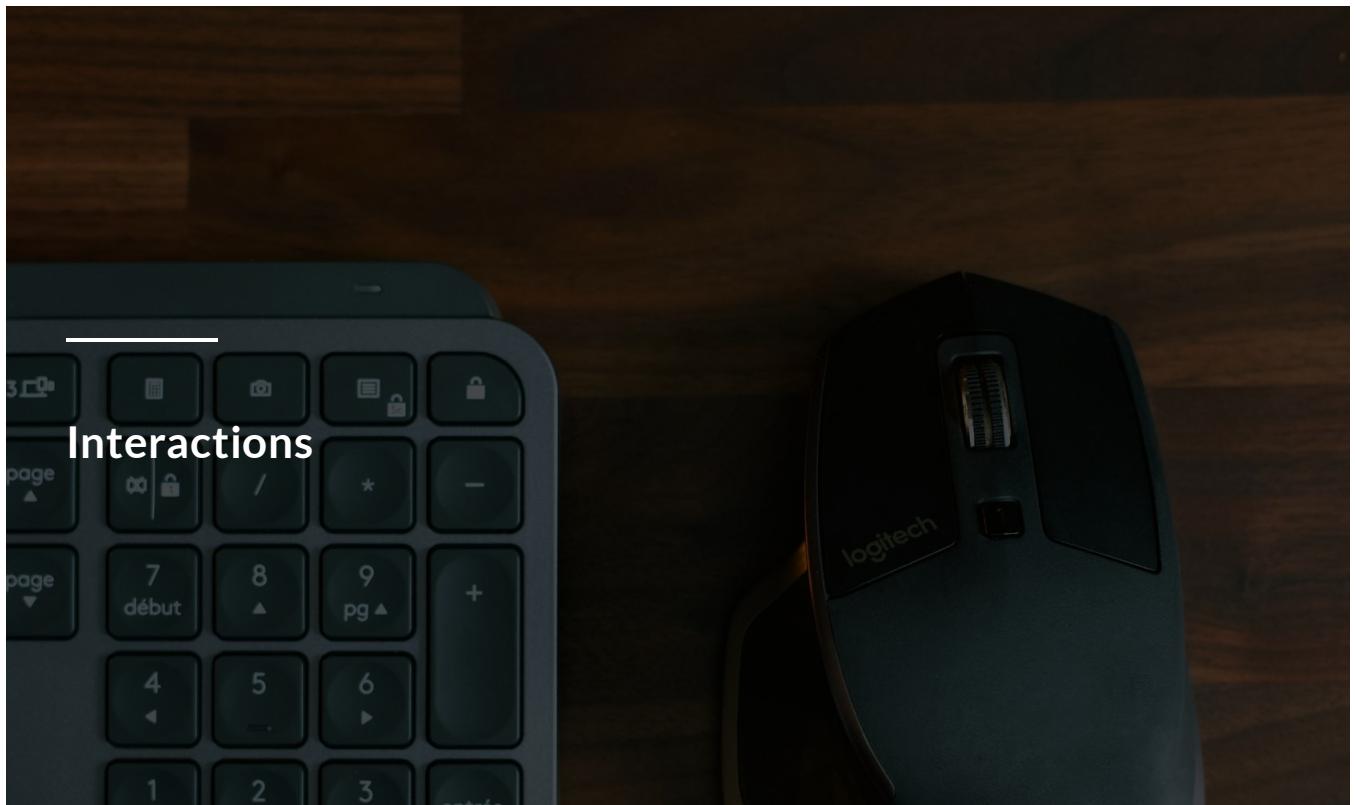
Images

Informational Images

- Add alternative (alt) text (Level A)

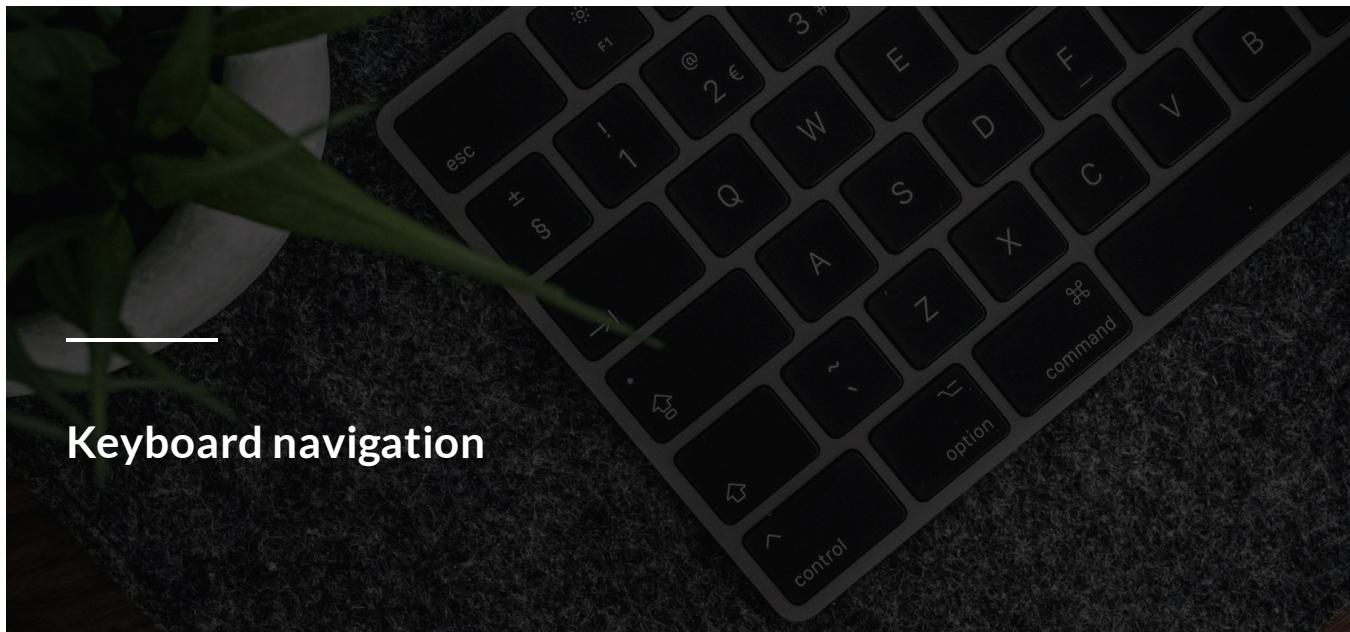
Decorative Images

- Hide from accessibility tools (Level A)



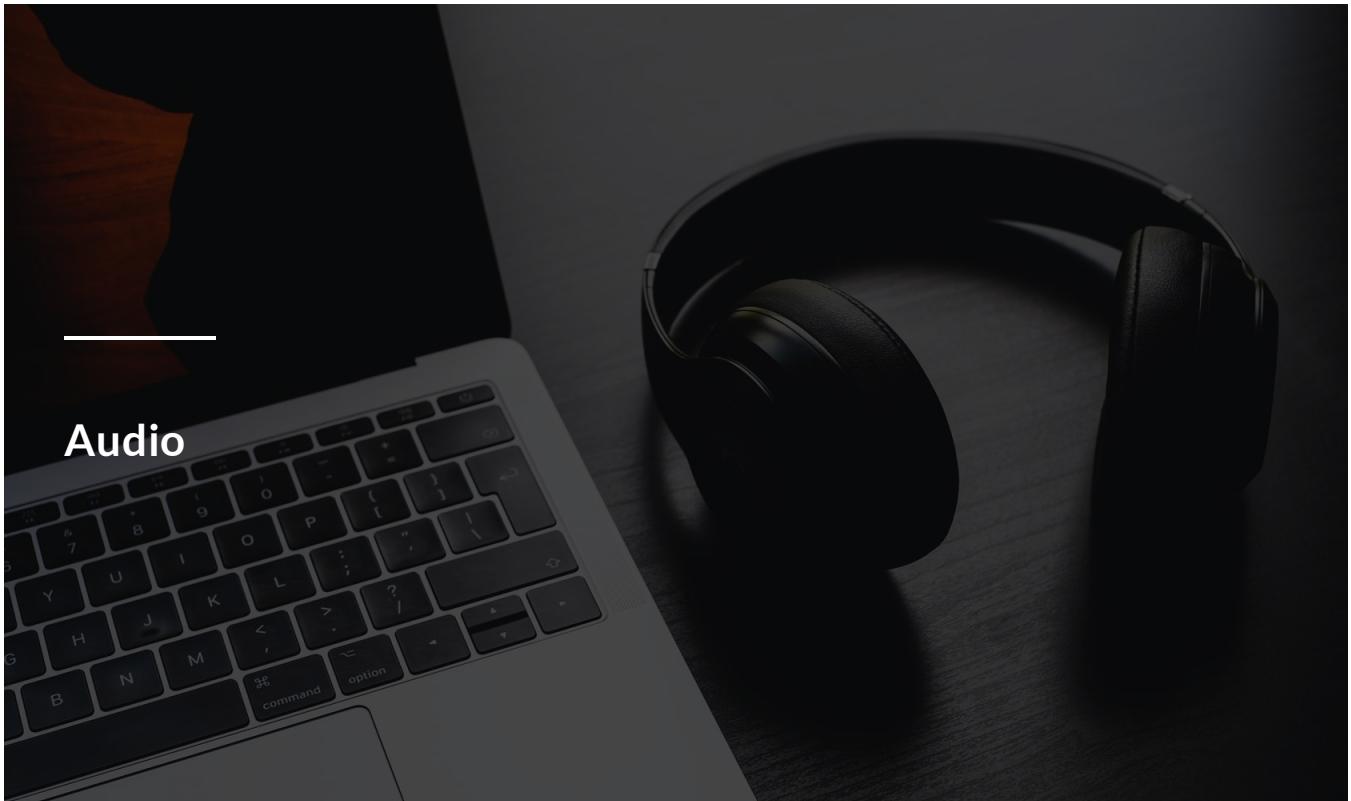
- Design hover states for mouse and keyboard navigation (Level AA)
- Ensure interactions are predictable when learners change focus (Level A)

- Avoid unexpected behaviors when learners interact with an input field (Level A & AAA)
- Put navigation items in a consistent place in your layout (Level AA)
- Identify input errors and provide suggestions for correction (Level A & AA)
- Provide clear instructions or labels for input items (Level A & AAA)
- Make sure learners can reverse, check, correct, or confirm sensitive data (Level AA & AAA)
- Give your links context (Level A)
- Make buttons at least 44 by 44 pixels (Level AAA)
- Always offer a single-touch option (Level A)
- Make it easier for users to prevent accidental or erroneous input (Level A)
- Make content accessible via multiple inputs (Level AAA)





- Ensure the course is navigable with a keyboard (Level A & AAA)
- Ensure learners can always navigate away from content (Level A)
- Avoid single-key shortcuts (Level A)
- Let learners skip repetitive blocks (Level A)
- Move learners through content logically (Level A)
- Show learners what part of the content has the focus (Level AA)



- Include a play/pause button and volume control (Level A)
- Add closed captions (Level A)
- Provide a transcript (Level A or AAA, depending)
- Lower or eliminate background audio (Level AAA)



Video

- ### Pre-Recorded Video
- Add closed captions (Level A)
 - Provide a transcript (Level A or AAA, depending)
 - Provide an audio description track (Level AA or AAA, depending)



Provide sign language interpretation (Level AAA)

Live Video



Provide closed captions (Level AA)



Provide a transcript (AAA)



Allow learners to pause, stop, or hide content with automatic motion (Level A)



Ensure nothing blinks more than 3 times per second (Level A & AAA)



Code

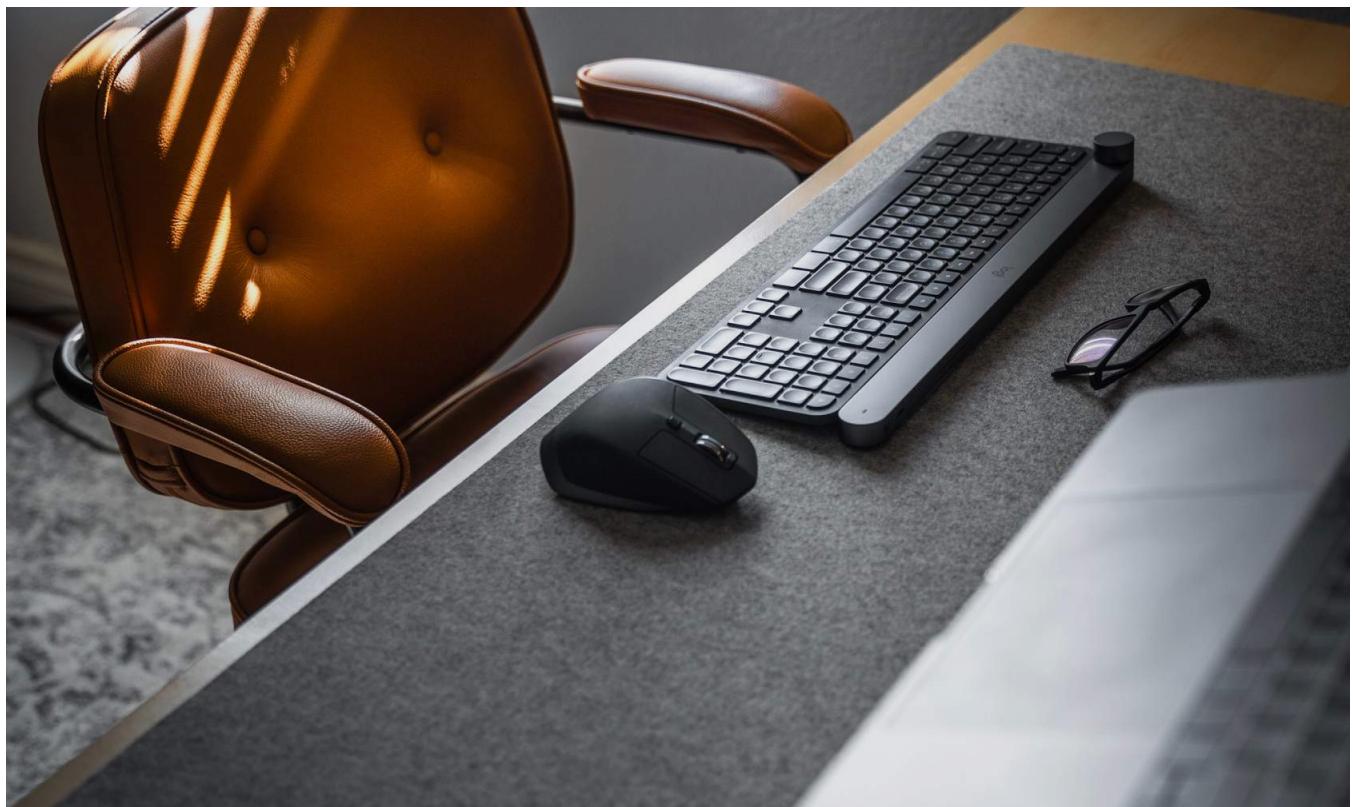
- Use appropriate codes for the user interface (Level AAA)
- Ensure the visible and programmatic names of interface components match (Level A)
- Ensure code is error-free (Level A)
- State the name, role, and value of interactive elements (Level A)
- Assign roles or properties to status messages (Level AA)

Continue

Helpful links

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Here are some links that you might want to bookmark and reference as you're creating your courses.

General info

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Go here to view the full text of the guidelines.

[VIEW](#)

Product-Specific Info

Rise 360 Accessibility Conformance Report (VPAT)

Here you'll find detailed information about how Rise 360 meets (or doesn't) each of the WCAG criterion.

[VIEW](#)

Storyline 360 Accessibility Conformance Report (VPAT)

Here you'll find detailed information about how Storyline 360 meets (or doesn't) each of the WCAG criterion.

[VIEW](#)

End of course.