



Accessibility Tools for Designers

Use these tools to prevent accessibility issues during design.

Color & Contrast Checking

Free

- [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) – Quick text and background contrast checks
- [Color Oracle](#) – Simulate color vision deficiencies
- [TPGi Color Contrast Analyzer](#) – Desktop contrast testing tool
- [Deque Color Contrast Analyzer](#) – Reliable contrast calculations

Paid

- [Stark](#) – Contrast checks and color blindness simulation (Figma)

Check contrast early and often. These tools help ensure text remains readable for users with low vision or color vision deficiencies. Free options cover most design needs, while paid tools integrate directly into your workflow.

Figma Accessibility Plugins

Free

- [Able](#) – Contrast, text size, and hierarchy checks
- [A11y Color Contrast Checker](#) – Lightweight contrast checking
- [Contrast](#) – Test text and background combinations

Paid

- [Stark](#) – Accessibility checks and simulations inside Figma

Run accessibility checks without leaving Figma. These plugins catch issues like insufficient contrast, improper heading hierarchy, and text size problems before handoff. Install at least one free plugin to integrate accessibility into your design process.

Plain Language & Readability

Plain language makes content accessible to users with cognitive disabilities, non-native speakers, and anyone scanning quickly. These resources help you write clearly and test readability.

Guidelines

- [Plain Language Association International](#) – Evidence-based plain language principles
- [U.S. Government Plain Language Guidelines](#) – Practical, task-focused guidance
- [UK Government Content Design](#) – Plain, accessible digital writing standards
- [W3C Making Content Usable](#) – Plain language for cognitive accessibility

Testing Tools

- [Hemingway Editor](#) – Identify complex sentences and readability issues
- [Readable](#) – Readability scoring and clarity checks



Structure & Layout Validation

Free

- [WAVE](#) – Visualize structure and accessibility issues
- [NVDA](#) – Free screen reader for basic design validation

Paid

- [axe DevTools](#) – Accessibility inspection with visual output

Test how assistive technologies experience your designs. WAVE helps visualize heading hierarchy, landmarks, and alt text. NVDA lets you hear how screen readers announce content. Use these tools to validate structure before development begins.

Design System & Pattern References

Use proven accessible patterns instead of reinventing interactions. These design systems provide tested components with built-in accessibility.

WAI-ARIA Authoring Practices

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/ARIA/apg/>

Accessible interaction patterns for common UI components like tabs, modals, and menus.

GOV.UK Design System

<https://design-system.service.gov.uk/>

Accessible-by-default components tested with real users and assistive technology.

IBM Carbon Design System

<https://carbondesignsystem.com/accessibility/>

Enterprise-grade accessible patterns with detailed implementation guidance.

Microsoft Fluent UI

<https://developer.microsoft.com/en-us/fluentui#/accessibility>

Practical component guidance with keyboard navigation and screen reader support.

Handoff & Annotation Support

Free

- [Figma](#) – Native comments, sections, and annotations
- [Zeroheight](#) – Design system documentation (free tier)

Paid

- [Zeplin](#) – Design handoff and documentation

Document accessibility requirements during handoff. Use annotations to specify heading levels, alt text, focus order, and keyboard interactions. Clear documentation prevents accessibility issues from being lost in translation.

