Accessibility Testing Starter Checklist

A starter checklist for validating keyboard access, semantic structure, visible focus, labels, contrast, forms, media, and common accessibility risks.

Purpose

Use this checklist to introduce accessibility testing into normal QA work before release, during design review, and while building regression coverage.

1. Keyboard and Focus

- All interactive controls can be reached, operated, and exited using only the keyboard.
- Focus order follows the visual and logical reading order of the page or workflow.
- Visible focus indicators are clear, high contrast, and not hidden by overlays, sticky headers, or custom styling.
- Modals, menus, dialogs, drawers, and popovers manage focus correctly when opened and closed.

2. Structure and Semantics

- Pages use meaningful headings, landmarks, lists, tables, buttons, links, and form controls.
- Interactive elements use the right semantic control instead of clickable non-semantic containers.
- Headings describe the content structure and do not skip levels in a confusing way.
- Tables include headers and relationships when data requires row or column interpretation.

3. Labels and Instructions

- Inputs, selects, checkboxes, radio groups, switches, and custom controls have clear accessible names.
- Required fields, formats, constraints, helper text, and error messages are communicated programmatically.
- Buttons and links describe their action or destination without relying only on surrounding context.
- Icon-only controls have accessible labels and do not depend on color, shape, or position alone.

4. Visual and Content Checks

- Text and meaningful UI elements have sufficient color contrast in normal, hover, disabled, focus, and error states.
- Information is not communicated by color alone; patterns, labels, icons, or text are also available.
- Text can resize and reflow without clipping, overlapping, or hiding critical controls.
- Images, charts, media, and documents include useful alternatives or summaries when they convey meaning.

5. Assistive Technology Smoke Test

- Screen reader navigation announces page title, landmarks, headings, controls, state changes, and errors clearly.
- Dynamic updates such as validation messages, loading states, notifications, and results are announced when needed.
- Automated accessibility scans are run, but manual keyboard and screen reader checks are still performed.
- Accessibility findings include user impact, reproduction steps, affected assistive technology, and expected behavior.