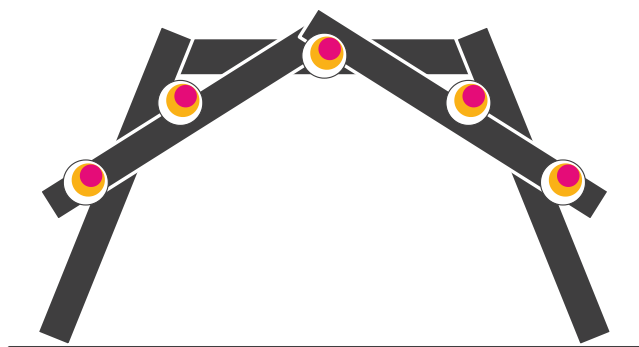


THE BRIDGE METHOD

Designer kit

A design review checklist, a sample palette with approved pairs and a guide to the Figma annotation kit.



What is in this kit

This kit holds the three tools I use on every project to catch barriers while they are still drawings. They follow the five phases of The Bridge Method, so each one has a moment in the work.

The three tools and when to use them

Tool	What it does	When to use it
Design review checklist	57 checks, each with a yes or no test and the WCAG criterion behind it.	Phase 3 while you design, and Phase 4 on the built pages.
Sample palette with approved pairs	A worked example of a palette where every text and background pair is tested before anyone designs with it.	Phase 2, when you define the visual system.
Figma annotation kit	Components to mark reading order, focus order, headings, landmarks, alternative text and states in the design file.	Phase 3, before the handoff to developers.

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Not legal advice. These tools help you prevent barriers in the design. They do not by themselves make a site conform to WCAG or comply with ADA Title II. Conformance needs testing of the built site, ideally with people who use assistive technology.

Universal or U.S. only?

Everything in this kit is universal. It is built on WCAG, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines published by the W3C, an international standard used in many countries. Laws then decide which level is required and by when: in the United States, the ADA Title II rule requires WCAG 2.1 Level AA for state and local governments; in the European Union, the standard EN 301 549 includes WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Outside the U.S., check the law of your country. The design rules in this kit stay the same.

Each section is labeled so you can tell them apart: **Scope: universal** or **Scope: United States only**.

How to read the references

Each check names the WCAG success criterion behind it, for example **1.4.3** for text contrast. In the United States, the Department of Justice rule for ADA Title II requires WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Checks marked **2.2** come from WCAG 2.2: they go beyond what the rule requires, and I include them

because they cost almost nothing to design in. Checks marked **Method** are rules of The Bridge Method that make a WCAG criterion easier to meet or to check.

The column “When”

- **Design:** check it in the design file, before the handoff.
- **Build:** check it on the built page, in a browser.
- **Both:** decide it in the design file and confirm it on the built page.

Design review checklist

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country.

Go through one group at a time. A check passes only when the answer is yes for every template and every state. If a check does not apply to the project, write “N/A” and the reason.

1. Color and contrast

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Body text reaches at least 4.5:1 against its background.	Measure every text and background pair with a contrast checker. Use the approved-pairs table.	1.4.3	Both
☐	Large text reaches at least 3:1. Large means 24 px regular or 18.67 px bold and up.	Measure headings and large numbers on every background they appear on.	1.4.3	Both
☐	Icons, field borders, focus outlines and chart lines that people need to see reach 3:1 against what is next to them.	Measure the part of the component that identifies it, not decorative borders.	1.4.11	Both
☐	Links inside text are underlined, or differ from the text around them by more than color.	Look at a paragraph in grayscale. If you cannot find the link, it fails.	1.4.1	Design
☐	Status, errors, required fields and chart series never rely on color alone.	Add text, an icon or a pattern. Check the file in grayscale.	1.4.1	Design
☐	Every text and background pair in the file comes from the approved-pairs table.	Search the file for colors that are not in the palette.	Method	Design
☐	Text over photos sits on a solid or darkened area that still reaches 4.5:1.	Measure against the lightest part of the image behind the text.	1.4.3	Both

2. Typography

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Body text is 16 px or larger, with a line height of 1.5.	Inspect the text styles. Footnotes and captions count as body text.	Method	Both
☐	Lines of text hold about 80 characters or fewer.	Measure the widest text column at desktop width.	Method	Design

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Text can be enlarged to 200% without losing content or function.	Zoom the browser to 200% and read every template.	1.4.4	Build
☐	Text boxes grow with the text. Nothing is clipped when spacing increases.	Apply a text spacing bookmarklet: line height 1.5, letter 0.12, word 0.16, paragraph 2 times the size.	1.4.12	Build
☐	No text is part of an image, except logos.	Look for words in banners, flyers, buttons and charts.	1.4.5	Design
☐	Headings follow a logical order: one H1 per page, then H2, H3 without skipping levels.	Annotate heading levels in the file; check them with a headings tool on the build.	1.3.1	Both
☐	Headings and labels say what the section or field is about.	Read only the headings. Do they work as a table of contents?	2.4.6	Design

3. Layout and order

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	At 320 px wide the content needs no side scrolling, except data tables and maps.	Design a 320 px frame for every template. On the build, set the window to 1280 px and zoom to 400%.	1.4.10	Both
☐	The reading order is annotated and matches the visual order.	Number the blocks in the file. On the build, turn off CSS or use a screen reader.	1.3.2	Both
☐	The focus order is annotated for every interactive element and follows the reading order.	Number the stops in the file. On the build, move through the page with the Tab key.	2.4.3	Both
☐	Landmarks are annotated: header, navigation, main, complementary, footer.	Mark each region in the file. On the build, check the landmarks with a screen reader or a browser extension.	1.3.1	Both
☐	Navigation appears in the same place and order on every page.	Compare the header and footer of every template.	3.2.3	Design
☐	Help and contact options appear in the same place on every page.	Check the header, footer and any help links across templates.	3.2.6 (2.2)	Design

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Every page has a unique title that says what the page is.	List the page titles in the content plan.	2.4.2	Both
☐	A skip link to the main content is designed and visible on focus.	Draw it in the header component with its focus state.	2.4.1	Both

4. Components

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Every interactive component is drawn in all its states: default, hover, focus, active, disabled, selected or expanded, and error.	Open each component set and count the variants.	2.4.7	Design
☐	The focus indicator is a 3 px outline that reaches 3:1 against the background.	Measure it on light and dark backgrounds.	2.4.7, 1.4.11	Both
☐	The focused element is never fully hidden by sticky headers, banners or chat windows.	Tab through the page with sticky elements on screen.	2.4.11 (2.2)	Build
☐	Click and touch targets are at least 24 by 24 px. Primary actions on mobile are 44 px.	Overlay the target-size component on buttons, links and icons.	2.5.8 (2.2)	Both
☐	Every control has a written name, and it starts with the visible label.	Annotate the accessible name of icon buttons and controls with hidden text.	2.5.3, 4.1.2	Both
☐	Content that appears on hover or focus can be dismissed, can be hovered, and stays until the user moves away.	Check tooltips, menus and popovers.	1.4.13	Both
☐	Link text says where the link goes, also out of context. Links to files say the type and size.	Read the links alone, as a screen reader list would show them.	2.4.4	Design
☐	Anything that can be done by dragging can also be done with a single tap or click.	Check sliders, maps, sortable lists and carousels.	2.5.7 (2.2)	Design

5. Forms

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Every field has a visible label above it. Placeholder text never replaces the label.	Hide all placeholders. Is every field still clear?	3.3.2, 1.3.1	Design

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Required fields are marked in text, and the form explains the mark once at the top.	Look for an asterisk without explanation, or a color-only mark.	3.3.2	Design
☐	Error messages are drawn in the file, say which field failed and how to fix it.	Write the message for each validation rule.	3.3.1, 3.3.3	Design
☐	Long forms show an error summary at the top with links to each field.	Draw the summary state of the form.	Method	Design
☐	Fields that ask for personal data are annotated with their autocomplete purpose.	Name, email, phone, address and organization get an autocomplete note.	1.3.5	Both
☐	Radio buttons and checkboxes are grouped with a visible question (legend).	Check that the question sits above the group, not only in the label of the first option.	1.3.1	Both
☐	Nothing has a time limit, or the user can extend it.	Ask the team about session timeouts and payment windows.	2.2.1	Build
☐	The form does not ask again for information the user already gave in the same process.	Walk through multi-step forms from start to finish.	3.3.7 (2.2)	Design
☐	Signing in does not depend on remembering or transcribing a code without help, such as paste or a password manager.	Try to paste into every sign-in field.	3.3.8 (2.2)	Build

6. Images and icons

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Every image is marked in the file as informative or decorative.	Use the alt text annotation on each image.	1.1.1	Design
☐	Informative images have alt text that gives their purpose in one short sentence.	Read the alt text without the image. Does the page still make sense?	1.1.1	Both
☐	Charts, maps and diagrams have a text version on the page: a table, a list or a summary.	Look for the text alternative next to each complex image.	1.1.1	Design
☐	Icon-only buttons have a written name.	Annotate the name of every icon button.	1.1.1, 4.1.2	Both

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Logos have the organization name as alt text. Linked logos say where they go.	Check the header and footer logos.	1.1.1, 2.4.4	Both

7. Motion and media

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	No carousel or banner rotates on its own. Anything that moves for more than 5 seconds can be paused.	Look for autoplay in the prototype and the build.	2.2.2	Both
☐	Nothing flashes more than three times in one second.	Review animations and videos.	2.3.1	Both
☐	Space is designed for captions, and every prerecorded video has captions.	Check that captions do not cover key information.	1.2.2	Both
☐	Videos where images carry meaning have audio description or a descriptive transcript.	Watch with the sound off and then with the screen off.	1.2.5	Build
☐	No audio plays on its own.	Load each page with the sound on.	1.4.2	Build
☐	Animations can be reduced: the design defines a calm version for reduced motion.	Turn on reduce motion in the operating system and reload.	Method	Both

8. Documents and content

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Information people need is published as a web page first.	List the PDFs and decide which ones become pages.	Method	Design
☐	PDFs that remain are tagged: title, language, headings, reading order, alt text and table headers.	Check them with a PDF accessibility checker and a screen reader.	1.3.1, 1.1.1	Build
☐	Forms people must complete are web forms, not only fillable PDFs.	Look for PDF forms linked from the site.	Method	Design
☐	The language of the page is set, and passages in another language are marked.	Annotate the language in the file; check the lang attribute on the build.	3.1.1, 3.1.2	Both
☐	Content uses plain language: short sentences, common words, terms explained the first time.	Read it aloud. Explain any term a resident would not use.	Method	Design

Done	Check	How to check	WCAG	When
☐	Instructions do not depend only on shape, color, size or position, such as “click the round button on the right”.	Search the copy for visual-only directions.	1.3.3	Design
☐	Status messages, such as “Saved” or “3 results”, are announced without moving the focus.	Note them in the file; test them with a screen reader.	4.1.3	Both

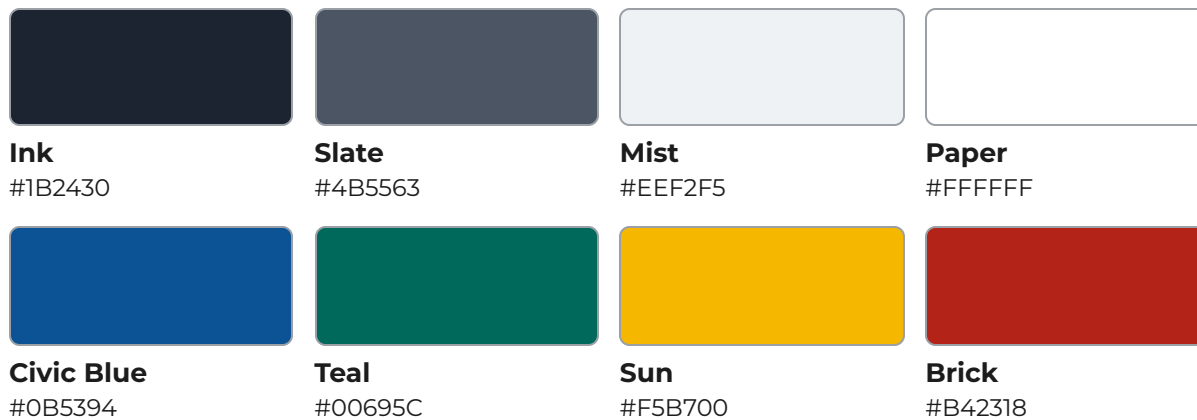
Before you sign off the build

- Move through every template with the keyboard only: Tab, Shift+Tab, Enter, Space and the arrow keys.
- Zoom to 200% and to 400% at 1280 px wide.
- Listen to each critical task with a screen reader: VoiceOver on Mac and iPhone, NVDA on Windows.
- Run an automated checker on every template. It finds part of the problems, not all of them, so it never replaces the steps above.
- Complete each critical task once with a person who uses assistive technology, when the project allows it.

Sample palette with approved pairs

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country.

In Phase 2 the palette is not finished until every text and background pair has been tested. This sample shows how. It is an example for practice, not a brand: replace it with your client's colors and run the same test.



Approved pairs

Contrast is calculated with the WCAG formula. Use a pair only for the job its column allows.

Approved pairs in the sample palette

Color A	Color B	Contrast	Approved for
Ink #1B2430	Paper #FFFFFF	15.65:1	Body text, large text and interface
Ink #1B2430	Mist #EEF2F5	13.90:1	Body text, large text and interface
Ink #1B2430	Sun #F5B700	8.69:1	Body text, large text and interface
Paper #FFFFFF	Civic Blue #0B5394	7.84:1	Body text, large text and interface
Slate #4B5563	Paper #FFFFFF	7.56:1	Body text, large text and interface
Mist #EEF2F5	Civic Blue #0B5394	6.96:1	Body text, large text and interface
Slate #4B5563	Mist #EEF2F5	6.71:1	Body text, large text and interface
Paper #FFFFFF	Teal #00695C	6.61:1	Body text, large text and interface
Paper #FFFFFF	Brick #B42318	6.57:1	Body text, large text and interface
Mist #EEF2F5	Teal #00695C	5.88:1	Body text, large text and interface
Mist #EEF2F5	Brick #B42318	5.84:1	Body text, large text and interface
Civic Blue #0B5394	Sun #F5B700	4.35:1	Large text, icons and outlines only

Color A	Color B	Contrast	Approved for
Slate #4B5563	Sun #F5B700	4.19:1	Large text, icons and outlines only
Teal #00695C	Sun #F5B700	3.67:1	Large text, icons and outlines only
Sun #F5B700	Brick #B42318	3.65:1	Large text, icons and outlines only

Pairs that look fine but fail

Color A	Color B	Contrast	Approved for
Ink #1B2430	Civic Blue #0B5394	2.00:1	Not approved for text or meaning
Slate #4B5563	Civic Blue #0B5394	1.04:1	Not approved for text or meaning
Mist #EEF2F5	Paper #FFFFFF	1.13:1	Not approved for text or meaning
Mist #EEF2F5	Sun #F5B700	1.60:1	Not approved for text or meaning
Paper #FFFFFF	Sun #F5B700	1.80:1	Not approved for text or meaning

Rules that come out of the table

- Sun is a surface color. Put Ink text on it, never Paper or Mist text.
- Sun can mark large text, icons and focus outlines on Civic Blue, Teal, Brick or Slate, but not body text.
- Mist and Paper are too close to each other (1.13:1) to show the edge of a card or a field. Use a Slate border when the edge has meaning.
- Civic Blue, Teal and Brick are too close to Ink to use one as text on the other.
- Brick is reserved for errors, and every error also has an icon and a message in text.

How to build the table for a real project

1. List every color in the brand, including tints used in the interface.
2. Test every pair in both directions of use: text on background and background behind text.
3. Sort each pair into one of three groups: body text (4.5:1 and up), large text and interface elements only (3:1 to 4.49:1), and not approved (under 3:1).
4. Publish the table in the design file next to the color styles, and give developers the same table.
5. When the brand changes, test the new colors before anyone designs with them.

Figma annotation kit

Scope: universal. Based on WCAG, an international standard. Use it in any country.

Developers cannot build what the design file does not say. The annotation kit puts the decisions that are invisible in a mockup on the canvas: the order, the names and the purpose of each element. Get the Figma file from emirdesigner.com/resources.

Components in the annotation kit

Component	What it marks	Checks it supports
Reading order	Numbered markers that show the order a screen reader will follow.	1.3.2
Focus order	Numbered markers for every stop of the Tab key.	2.4.3
Heading level	H1 to H6 tags placed on each heading.	1.3.1, 2.4.6
Landmark	Labels for header, navigation, main, complementary, footer and search regions.	1.3.1
Alt text	A note that marks the image as informative, with its alt text, or as decorative.	1.1.1
Accessible name	The name a control will announce, for icon buttons and repeated links.	2.5.3, 4.1.2
Contrast pair	The two colors of a pair and their ratio, taken from the approved-pairs table.	1.4.3, 1.4.11
Target size	24 px and 44 px overlays to check click and touch areas.	2.5.8
State	Labels for default, hover, focus, active, disabled, selected and error states.	2.4.7
Form note	Label, hint, error message and autocomplete purpose for a field.	1.3.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.2
Language	Marks a passage written in another language.	3.1.2
Developer note	A free note for behavior the other components do not cover.	4.1.2

How to use it

1. Duplicate the file or add it to your team library.
2. Place the annotations on a copy of the final frames, on their own layer, so the design stays clean.
3. Start with landmarks and headings, then reading order and focus order, then images, names and forms.

4. Review the annotated frames with the developer before the build starts.
5. Keep the annotated frames as the reference for the review in Phase 4.

The kit uses the eMirDesigner annotation colors: magenta #C10A65 with white text (5.7:1) and ink #1C1C1C with white text. Both pass for text, so the notes themselves are readable.

License and credit

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If you use the kit on a project, I would like to hear how it went: emirdesigner.com/contact

About the author

Emir Manrique is a Digital & Graphic Designer and the founder of eMirDesigner LLC. Since 2003 she has designed public websites, intranets and e-learning platforms, first for a national judiciary and, since 2024, as a design partner to AndiSites Inc., a U.S. web firm that serves justice organizations and public colleges. She is a member of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) and the author of The Bridge Method.

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