

Rise Accessibility Guide

Everything you need to understand, fix, and prevent the accessibility issues that show up again and again in Rise courses. Pairs with the Rise Accessibility Quick Checklist.

Reading time

~15 min

Topics

11

Pairs with

Quick Checklist

Why this matters

Every Rise course you build will eventually be used by someone you did not picture while building it. A learner using a screen reader. Someone who cannot use a mouse. Someone who needs captions because they are in a loud office, or because they are deaf. Rise handles more of this automatically than Storyline does, but it does not handle all of it, you still have to write real alt text, add real transcripts, and test your interactive blocks by hand.

The mistakes that show up again and again are not complicated. They are a small, predictable set: missing alt text, missing transcripts, an untitled lesson, a Sorting block with no keyboard alternative, repeated on course after course because nobody explained why they matter or how to check for them quickly.

That is what this guide is for. Each section below covers one thing to get right: why it matters, what commonly goes wrong, and exactly how to check and fix it in Rise, plus whether A11yCheck can catch it automatically or whether it still needs your eyes.

If you just need a fast checklist to run through before publishing, use the Rise Accessibility Quick Checklist instead. Keep it open next to Rise while you review a course. Come back here when you want to understand why an item on that checklist matters, or when something does not look right and you are not sure how to fix it.

How Rise differs from Storyline

Rise is built differently from Storyline, and that changes what you need to check.

Platform differences between Storyline and Rise

STORYLINE	RISE
Free-form slide layout	Block-based lesson layout
Manual tab order, can drift from visual layout	Reading order always follows block layout order
Accessibility features require manual setup, including a global on/off toggle	Many accessibility features are built into the platform by default
Timeline and auto-advance are possible	Learner-paced by default, no auto-advance mechanism exists
Greater layout flexibility	More built-in accessibility safeguards

These platform differences are why some checks work differently in this guide than they do in the Storyline Guide, and why a few Storyline topics do not appear here at all. Timing is the clearest example, it is not a shorter section in this guide, it is missing entirely, because auto-advance does not exist in Rise, so the problem it solves cannot happen. Reading Order and Structure are both still covered, but reframed around what can actually go wrong on this platform, not copied from Storyline's version of the same concept.

None of this means Rise courses are accessible by default. You still have to write real alt text, add real transcripts, name your blocks clearly, and test custom interactive blocks like Sorting and Categorize by hand, Rise's platform guarantees do not extend to the content you create inside it. Each section below tells you plainly whether A11yCheck checks that item automatically or whether it is still a manual review step today.

Structure

Whether your lesson and course titles are clear, descriptive, and different from each other, so a screen reader user can tell where they are.

Why it matters. Rise does not have an accessibility toggle to turn on, its output is accessible by default. But a lesson titled "Untitled" or a duplicate lesson title still leaves a screen reader user unable to tell where they are in the course or find a specific lesson again.

Common mistakes:

- Leaving a lesson with its default or blank title
- Copying a lesson and never renaming it, so two lessons share the same title

How to check it. Open your course outline and scan every lesson title at a glance. Duplicates and blanks are easy to spot once they are all in front of you.

How to fix it in Rise. Open the course outline, click each lesson's title, and rename it to describe what is actually in it.

✗ CONFUSING TITLES "Untitled", "Untitled", "Lesson 3" A copied lesson that never got renamed. Two lessons with no real title.	✓ CLEAR TITLES "Welcome and Overview", "Identifying Team Conflict", "Practice Scenario" Each title describes what is actually in that lesson.
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Checklist reference: "Confirm the course title and lesson titles are descriptive" and the duplicate-title check in Before publishing.

A11yCheck automatically flags a lesson left blank or titled "Untitled." Checking for duplicate titles across your course is still a manual step today.

Rise best practice

Keep lesson titles short and specific. A learner scanning your course outline should know exactly what each lesson covers before opening it.

Language

The language setting that tells a screen reader which pronunciation rules and voice to use for your course.

Why it matters. A screen reader set to the wrong language mispronounces almost everything, sometimes badly enough that the content is genuinely hard to follow. This happens most often when a course gets translated but the language setting is never updated.

Common mistakes:

- Translating a course and forgetting to update the language setting in Course Settings
- Assuming Rise detects the language automatically, it does not

How to check it. Open Course Settings and check the current language.

How to fix it in Rise. Course Settings, set the correct language from the dropdown.

✗ MISMATCHED French narration, language setting: English A screen reader reads the French content using English pronunciation rules.	✓ MATCHED French narration, language setting: French The screen reader uses the correct pronunciation and voice.
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Checklist reference: "Confirm the course language is set correctly"

A11yCheck automatically flags a course with no language set at all. It cannot yet tell whether the language you picked actually matches your narration, that still needs a quick listen.

Rise best practice

If you maintain translated versions of the same course, double check the language setting every time you duplicate it. It is the single easiest step to forget.

Audio

Whether each audio and statement block's narration has a transcript attached.

Why it matters. Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners get nothing from narrated audio without a transcript. Rise does not have a course-wide captioning switch like Storyline, each block carries its own transcript, so there is no setting to turn on and forget, but it is just as easy to add the audio and skip the transcript.

Common mistakes:

- Adding narration to an audio or statement block and never adding the matching transcript
- Writing a transcript that is a rough summary instead of what was actually said

How to check it. Click through every audio and statement block and confirm a transcript is attached or visible.

How to fix it in Rise. Open the block and add the full transcript text in its Transcript field.

✗ NO TRANSCRIPT Audio narration, no transcript attached Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners get no access to the audio.	✓ COMPLETE Audio narration, full transcript attached Every learner gets the same information.
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Checklist reference: "Verify this block's narration has a transcript"

A11yCheck automatically flags audio content with no transcript.

Rise best practice

Write transcripts as you write your narration script, not after. It is faster, and you are less likely to summarize instead of transcribing.

Video

Whether embedded video has its own captions, keyboard-accessible controls, and an audio description for anything important the narration does not already say.

Why it matters. A video with no caption track leaves deaf and hard-of-hearing learners with no access to it. Controls that only respond to a mouse block keyboard-only learners from pausing or replaying. And a video that shows something important with no matching narration leaves blind learners missing information a sighted learner gets automatically.

Common mistakes:

- Uploading a video with no caption file, Rise does not generate captions for you
- Recording a screen demo where the meaning is all visual, with narration that never describes it

How to check it. Play each video and look for a caption or CC control. Then use the keyboard alone to confirm you can reach and operate play, pause, and volume.

How to fix it in Rise. Add a caption file when you upload the video to the Video block. Where the visuals carry information the narration does not cover, rewrite the narration to describe it or add a short description in a Text block below the video.

x NO CAPTIONS Video plays with no caption file attached Deaf and hard-of-hearing learners get no access to the video's audio.	✓ CAPTIONED Video has a caption file attached The video works for every learner.
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Checklist reference: "Verify any video on this block has captions"

A11yCheck automatically checks for missing captions, missing playback controls, and a missing audio description.

Rise best practice

Keep videos short and focused. A 90-second video is much easier to caption accurately, and much easier for a learner to rewatch, than a 10-minute one.

Images

Whether meaningful images have alt text that describes them, and whether purely decorative images are marked so a screen reader skips them instead of announcing them.

Why it matters. Without alt text, a screen reader announces an image as just "image," or reads its filename aloud, meaningless to the learner. On the other side, if every decorative icon and background graphic gets read aloud too, the course becomes exhausting to listen to.

Common mistakes:

- Leaving alt text blank, or using the filename as alt text
- Marking a genuinely informative image as decorative because it seemed faster

How to check it. Click each image block and check its alt text field. Ask whether the image is adding information, or just decoration.

How to fix it in Rise. Open the image block's settings, type a description for meaningful images, or mark it decorative so Rise skips it.

✗ INACCESSIBLE alt = "quarterly-chart-final-v3.png" A screen reader announces the filename verbatim.	✓ ACCESSIBLE alt = "Bar chart showing a 20% increase in customer satisfaction" Describes what the image actually communicates.
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Checklist reference: "Check that every meaningful image has alt text describing it" and "decorative images are marked to be skipped"

A11yCheck automatically checks for missing or filename-only alt text.

Rise best practice

Write alt text the way you would describe the image over the phone to someone who cannot see it. Specific enough to be useful, short enough to not be a paragraph.

Color and Contrast

Whether text is easy to read against its background, and whether any information, like a right or wrong answer, is shown using color as the only signal.

Why it matters. Low vision and colorblind learners can miss information that only exists as a color difference. Faint gray text on a white background is hard for almost everyone to read, not just people with a diagnosed vision impairment.

Common mistakes:

- Choosing a custom theme color that looks clean but does not have enough contrast against the background
- Marking correct answers in green and wrong answers in red with no other signal, like an icon or label

How to check it. Look at your text against its background and ask honestly whether it is easy to read. For color-only signals, imagine the course in grayscale, does the meaning survive?

How to fix it in Rise. Increase the contrast between text and background in your theme's color settings. For color-only feedback, add an icon or the word "Correct" or "Incorrect" alongside the color.

x COLOR ONLY

"Correct" shown as a plain green highlight

A colorblind learner may not register the feedback at all.

✓ COLOR PLUS TEXT

"Correct" shown as a green highlight with a checkmark and the word "Correct"

The meaning survives even without color.

Checklist reference: "Check that text has enough contrast to read easily (aim for 4.5:1)" and "color is not the only way information is shown"

A11yCheck automatically checks contrast ratios and flags feedback that relies on color alone.

Rise best practice

Stick to your theme's built-in color palette instead of introducing one-off custom colors. It is the easiest way to keep contrast consistent across an entire course.

Motion

Whether an embedded video or GIF flashes rapidly enough to be a seizure risk.

Why it matters. Rise does not let you build custom flashing animations the way Storyline does, but an embedded video or GIF can still flash more than three times a second, and that is a real seizure risk for people with photosensitive epilepsy.

Common mistakes:

- Embedding a GIF without checking what it actually does on loop
- Using a stock video clip with a rapid strobe or flash effect without previewing it first

How to check it. Watch each embedded video or GIF for a few seconds. If you are losing count of the flashes because it is too fast, that is already a warning sign.

How to fix it in Rise. Replace the file with a slower version, or choose different footage. Rise does not give you frame-by-frame editing control, so the fix usually means swapping the source file, not adjusting it inside Rise.

✗ RISKY A GIF that flashes rapidly on a continuous loop Rapid, repeated flashing is a real seizure risk.	✓ SAFE A short clip that appears once with a brief fade-in Gets attention without any flash risk.
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Checklist reference: "Confirm no embedded video or GIF flashes more than 3 times per second"

A11yCheck automatically checks flash rate on embedded video and GIFs.

Rise best practice

Preview every stock video or GIF at full length before publishing, not just the first few seconds. Flash effects often show up later in a clip.

Keyboard Navigation

Whether every interactive block, including custom ones like Sorting and Categorize, can be reached and used with only the Tab key.

Why it matters. Rise's native blocks are generally keyboard-reachable by default, a real advantage over Storyline. But that guarantee does not cover how you use interactive blocks. A Sorting or Categorize block with no keyboard alternative is a real barrier; drag-and-drop is a known weak point in Rise's own interaction model.

Common mistakes:

- Assuming every block is automatically keyboard accessible because most of them are
- Publishing a Sorting or Categorize block without testing whether it can be completed by keyboard alone

How to check it. Stop using your mouse. Press Tab through the lesson and confirm you can reach and activate every interactive block, including Sorting and Categorize.

How to fix it in Rise. Native blocks usually just work. For Sorting and Categorize, there is no built-in keyboard alternative today, pair it with a Multiple Choice or Knowledge Check block covering the same content.

x MOUSE ONLY

A Sorting block requires drag-and-drop, no keyboard alternative

Keyboard-only learners cannot complete this block at all.

✓ KEYBOARD REACHABLE

A Multiple Choice block covering the same content, fully keyboard accessible

Every learner can complete the activity.

Checklist reference: "Press Tab through the lesson and confirm every interactive block can be reached" and "Confirm Sorting and Categorize blocks have a working keyboard alternative"

A11yCheck automatically checks whether native blocks and buttons are keyboard reachable. Sorting and Categorize blocks are still a manual check today, there is no automated way yet to confirm a working keyboard alternative exists.

Rise best practice

If you use Sorting or Categorize blocks often, build the keyboard-accessible backup into your lesson template from the start. It is easier than retrofitting it later.

Focus

Whether it is visually obvious where keyboard focus currently is as you tab through a lesson.

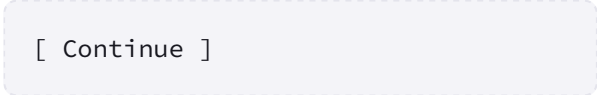
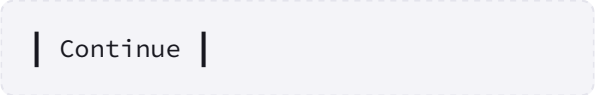
Why it matters. Rise shows a focus indicator by default, that is a real advantage over Storyline, where you have to turn it on yourself. But a custom theme or heavily styled block can still make it hard to see, so it is still worth confirming, not assuming.

Common mistakes:

- Choosing a custom theme accent color that makes the default focus outline hard to see against certain backgrounds
- Assuming the default is enough without ever actually tabbing through a lesson to check

How to check it. Tab through a lesson and watch closely. If you cannot tell which block currently has focus without guessing, that is a fail.

How to fix it in Rise. If your theme's colors make the default outline hard to see, adjust your theme's accent color so it has enough contrast against every background used in the course.

✗ NO OUTLINE  Tabbing to the button produces no visible change.	✓ VISIBLE OUTLINE  A high-contrast outline appears the instant it receives focus.
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Checklist reference: "Confirm a visible outline appears on whatever you tab to"

A11yCheck automatically checks whether a visible focus indicator appears on interactive elements.

Rise best practice

Test your focus outline against your darkest and lightest theme backgrounds, not just the default one. Contrast problems usually show up at the extremes.

Reading Order

Whether the order you arrange blocks in a lesson is a logical, easy-to-follow sequence.

Why it matters. Rise does not let you manually override tab order the way Storyline does, blocks are always announced in the same order they are laid out in the lesson. That removes one entire failure mode, tab order cannot secretly disagree with visual layout in Rise. What is left is a content design question: are your blocks actually arranged in an order that makes sense?

Common mistakes:

- Adding a new block in the middle of a lesson without checking whether the surrounding flow still makes sense
- Putting an interactive block before the instructions that explain what it is for

How to check it. Read your lesson outline top to bottom and ask honestly whether the sequence makes sense, would a screen reader user understand each block before reaching the next one?

How to fix it in Rise. Drag blocks in the lesson editor to reorder them into a sequence that reads logically from top to bottom.

✗ ILLOGICAL Continue button, Heading, Body text A learner hears the button before knowing what it is for.	✓ LOGICAL Heading, Body text, Continue button The order matches how the lesson reads.
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Checklist reference: "Confirm blocks are arranged in a logical, easy-to-follow order"

A11yCheck does not check this automatically for Rise. Since Rise always keeps tab order and layout order in sync, there is no technical mismatch to detect, whether the order makes sense is a judgment call, not something a scanner can decide for you.

Rise best practice

Read your lesson out loud, block by block, top to bottom, before publishing. If it sounds like a logical sequence out loud, it will work for a screen reader user too.

Assessments

Whether Knowledge Check answer choices and feedback can be reached, selected, and read using only the keyboard.

Why it matters. A Knowledge Check that cannot be completed without a mouse blocks keyboard-only learners from finishing the course entirely. Feedback that only appears visually, with nothing announced to a screen reader, leaves them unsure whether they even answered correctly.

Common mistakes:

- Assuming Knowledge Check blocks are fully accessible by default without ever testing one with the keyboard
- Feedback that appears as a color change or icon with no text a screen reader can announce

How to check it. Tab through a Knowledge Check block. Confirm you can reach every answer choice, select one, submit, and that the feedback is something a screen reader would announce.

How to fix it in Rise. Use Rise's built-in Knowledge Check block types where possible. If feedback relies on color alone, note it as a known limitation for now.

x MOUSE ONLY Correct feedback shown as a green checkmark icon with no text A screen reader user gets no indication of the result.	✓ KEYBOARD AND SCREEN READER FRIENDLY Feedback includes the word "Correct" alongside the icon Every learner, keyboard or screen reader, gets the same information.
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Checklist reference: "Check that Knowledge Check answers and feedback are reachable with the keyboard"

A11yCheck's keyboard checks generally confirm answer choices can be reached and activated. Whether feedback is announced to a screen reader is still a manual check today.

Rise best practice

Keep Knowledge Check questions short and specific, one concept per question. It is easier for every learner to follow, not just those using assistive technology.

What's next

You do not need to memorize any of this. Keep the Rise Accessibility Quick Checklist open next to Rise while you review a course, it covers everything in this guide in a fast working format built for speed, not explanation. Come back to this guide whenever you want the reasoning behind an item, or when something does not look right and you are not sure why.

Once your manual review is done, a free A11yCheck scan catches what is easy to miss by eye, and clearly tells you which checks it ran automatically and which ones still need your review.

This guide focuses on what shows up most in Rise courses. A11yCheck also checks mobile and responsive accessibility, that is a big enough topic to earn its own guide, so it is not covered here in depth.

Ready to check your work?

Run a free accessibility and course quality scan with A11yCheck. It takes about five minutes and catches what a manual pass can miss.

Run a free scan →



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