

EssayArc Accessibility Conformance Report

WCAG 2.1 levels A and AA · Based on VPAT® Version 2.5Rev (WCAG edition, February 2025)

Report Information

Name of Product/Version

EssayArc web application (www.essayarc.com), production release of October 2026

Report Date

October 24, 2026

Product Description

EssayArc is a web application for undergraduate writing. Students draft and revise papers in the Writing Studio, think through ideas in The Foil, develop a thesis in Thesis Forge, study sentence craft with the StyleBot, practice skills, and share chosen versions with a Peer Learning Facilitator (PLF), who reads them in The Desk. It runs in current desktop and mobile browsers.

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Accessibility statement: <https://www.essayarc.com/accessibility>

Notes

- Scope. This report covers the whole web application. Each remark separates the core writing tools from the other areas. Core writing tools: the public site and sign-in pages, Your desk, Writing Studio (including Google Docs, PLF conversations and feedback on a paper), The Foil (including Think Out Loud), Thesis Forge, the StyleBot, Practice, Your Arc, College Essay Mode, My Readers, The Desk, the PLF Lounge and Account and privacy. These were reviewed against WCAG 2.1 AA and the issues found were fixed. Other areas: The Colony, The Writer's Room, The Pony Express, Wit & Giggles, Lessons, Five by Five, The Masters (including its ten interactive labs, which load in a frame inside The Masters) and the Craft tools other than the StyleBot. These have not been fully reviewed; the known defects are listed in the remarks.
- Third-party and user content. Signing in with Google and choosing a Google Doc use Google's own screens, which EssayArc cannot change; students can type or paste a paper instead. Photos and voice notes that people send in Pony Express letters, and papers that students write, are user content; EssayArc asks senders to describe photos and voice notes but cannot require it.
- Documents. The two public research PDFs are not tagged. Each has a web version with the same content (/research/writing-as-thinking and /research/stylebot-benchmark), checked word for word against the PDF.
- This is a self-assessment. It has not been audited by an independent accessibility specialist, and EssayArc has not yet been tested by people who use screen readers.

Evaluation Methods Used

- Automated checks with axe-core (WCAG 2.0, 2.1 and 2.2 level A and AA rules, plus best practices) on every code change: 36 application screens rendered from the real components with test data, and 18 public pages of the production build. Each check also confirms one main landmark and a level-one heading first.
- Automated browser tests (Playwright, Chromium) of keyboard operation, focus order and focus return, dialogs, live announcements, timing controls and captions.
- Automated reflow, zoom and text-spacing tests (Playwright) on the same screens and pages: at 320 and 640 CSS pixels wide (640 is a 1280-pixel screen at 200% zoom), nothing may need sideways scrolling or be cut off, and with the WCAG 1.4.12 text-spacing settings applied at desktop and phone widths, no text may be cut off.
- Unit tests of the color palette against the WCAG contrast ratios, including focus indicators and form-field borders.
- Strict accessibility linting (eslint-plugin-jsx-a11y) of all interface code except nine files in the other areas, which are listed for later remediation, and two components that no screen shows.
- Code review against each success criterion, assisted by AI tools, by the EssayArc product team.
- Not yet done: testing with screen readers by people who use them (planned with VoiceOver and NVDA), and an independent audit.

Summary

Number of WCAG 2.1 success criteria at each conformance level.

Conformance level	Level A	Level AA
Supports	18	11
Partially Supports	11	8
Does Not Support	0	0
Not Applicable	1	1
Not Evaluated	0	0

Applicable Standards/Guidelines

This report covers the degree of conformance for the following accessibility standard/guidelines:

Standard/Guideline	Included In Report
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0	Level A (Yes) · Level AA (Yes) · Level AAA (No)

Standard/Guideline	Included In Report
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1	Level A (Yes) · Level AA (Yes) · Level AAA (No)
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2	Level A (No) · Level AA (No) · Level AAA (No)

Terms

The terms used in the Conformance Level information are defined as follows:

- **Supports:** The functionality of the product has at least one method that meets the criterion without known defects or meets with equivalent facilitation.
- **Partially Supports:** Some functionality of the product does not meet the criterion.
- **Does Not Support:** The majority of product functionality does not meet the criterion.
- **Not Applicable:** The criterion is not relevant to the product.
- **Not Evaluated:** The product has not been evaluated against the criterion. This can only be used in WCAG Level AAA criteria.

WCAG 2.1 Report

Note: When reporting on conformance with the WCAG 2.x Success Criteria, they are scoped for full pages, complete processes, and accessibility-supported ways of using technology as documented in the WCAG 2.0 Conformance Requirements.

Table 1: Success Criteria, Level A

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.1.1 Non-text Content (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: informative images and charts have text alternatives; the StyleBot and Studio charts have data tables; Your Arc has a table view; decorative images have empty alt text; icon-only buttons are named. Other areas: the ten Masters labs have not been reviewed. Photos in Pony Express letters are described only when the sender writes a description.
1.2.1 Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Partially Supports	EssayArc publishes no audio-only or video-only media of its own. Voice notes in Pony Express letters are recorded by senders; each letter shows the words the sender wrote for a voice note, or says that none were added.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Supports	The one tutorial video (College Essay Mode) has synchronized captions, on by default. A video is not shown without a captions file (tested).
1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded) (Level A)	Partially Supports	A written transcript of the College Essay Mode video's narration is shown under the player. Some on-screen text in the video (the Common App prompts, the sample essay and its feedback, checklist dates and the closing title card) is not described in the narration or the transcript; the prompts, the feedback format and the checklist themselves are available as text in the product.
1.3.1 Info and Relationships (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: landmarks, one level-one heading per page, heading order, labeled form fields, grouped controls and data tables with header cells (checked automatically on the opening screen of every area). Other areas: Lessons, The Pony Express and Rhetoric Lab skip heading levels; six form fields in the other areas lack an associated label; the Masters labs have not been reviewed.
1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence (Level A)	Supports	Reading order in the code matches the visual order; layouts reflow without reordering content.
1.3.3 Sensory Characteristics (Level A)	Supports	Instructions do not rely on shape, color, size, position or sound alone; states in Your Arc are shown as words as well as shapes.
1.4.1 Use of Color (Level A)	Supports	Links in text are underlined; errors, states and chart series also use words, icons or patterns; plan comparisons use an icon and text, not color alone.
1.4.2 Audio Control (Level A)	Supports	No audio plays automatically; the tutorial video starts only when the user plays it.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
2.1.1 Keyboard (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: every function works from the keyboard (tested), including a typed alternative to selecting a quotation with the mouse when a PLF comments on a Google Doc. Other areas: some clickable areas in The Colony, The Writer's Room, Vocabulary Lab and Lessons are not keyboard controls, and ordering items in Lessons uses drag and drop; the Masters labs have not been reviewed.
2.1.2 No Keyboard Trap (Level A)	Supports	Focus can always be moved away with standard keys. Dialogs keep focus inside while open, close with Escape and return focus (tested).
2.1.4 Character Key Shortcuts (Level A 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: no single-character shortcuts. Other areas: while its flashcards are open, Vocabulary Lab rates a card when the 1, 2 or 3 key is pressed outside a field or control, and these shortcuts cannot be turned off.
2.2.1 Timing Adjustable (Level A)	Supports	Flow State in The Writer's Room no longer deletes words unless the writer turns that on, and a session can be extended while writing or after time is up (tested). EssayArc's own code does not sign people out for inactivity. Waiting for AI feedback is a processing limit, not a limit on the user; nothing typed is lost.
2.2.2 Pause, Stop, Hide (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools and public pages: the home page's repeating animations can be paused with a button and stop when the device is set to reduce motion (tested). The Writing Studio's analysis animation, which can run for minutes, has a Pause animation button. The Think Out Loud recording light pulses only while recording, and loading indicators show only while something loads. Other areas: the countdown on a sealed Pony Express letter updates every second and cannot be paused or hidden, and the Flow State flame in The Writer's Room pulses while words are vanishing unless the device is set to reduce motion.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
2.3.1 Three Flashes or Below Threshold (Level A)	Supports	Nothing flashes more than three times per second.
2.4.1 Bypass Blocks (Level A)	Supports	Skip links on pages with large navigation blocks, and a main landmark on every EssayArc page. The Masters labs load in a frame inside The Masters page, which provides these; the lab documents have no main landmark of their own and have not been reviewed.
2.4.2 Page Titled (Level A)	Supports	Every EssayArc page has a title naming the page and EssayArc (tested for every route). Each Masters lab loads in a frame whose title names the lab.
2.4.3 Focus Order (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: focus follows the visual order; after an action removes or replaces content, focus moves to a sensible place, and dialogs return focus (tested). Other areas: three pop-ups (sharing in The Writer's Room, creating a circle in The Colony, word details in Vocabulary Lab) are not yet proper dialogs and do not manage focus.
2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context) (Level A)	Supports	Link text or its surrounding sentence describes the destination; repeated links such as "View source" carry the source name for screen readers, and links that open a new tab say so.
2.5.1 Pointer Gestures (Level A 2.1)	Supports	No function needs a multipoint or path-based gesture.
2.5.2 Pointer Cancellation (Level A 2.1)	Supports	Actions run on release (standard click). A dialog closes on its backdrop only when the press both starts and ends there.
2.5.3 Label in Name (Level A 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: accessible names contain the visible label; mismatches found in the Writing Studio were corrected. Other areas: the Flow State writing box in The Writer's Room is named "Flow State writing", which does not include its visible placeholder text.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
2.5.4 Motion Actuation (Level A 2.1)	Not Applicable	No function is operated by moving or shaking the device.
3.1.1 Language of Page (Level A)	Supports	Every page declares English (lang="en"), checked on every public page.
3.2.1 On Focus (Level A)	Supports	Moving focus never changes the page or submits anything.
3.2.2 On Input (Level A)	Supports	Changing a field or a selection updates content in place (for example, a chart) but does not open another page or paper, start an analysis or submit anything. In the Writing Studio, choosing a paper from the list or a section or paragraph to analyze only selects it; an Open or Analyze button then acts (tested).
3.3.1 Error Identification (Level A)	Supports	Errors are described in text, linked to the field they concern and announced to screen readers (tested on sign-in, sign-up, Help and saving a paper).
3.3.2 Labels or Instructions (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: every field has a visible label, and limits are stated with a count beside the field. Other areas: six fields in The Pony Express composer, The Colony, Transition Coach, Vocabulary Lab and Tell Us More rely on a placeholder or an unassociated label.
4.1.1 Parsing (Level A)	Supports	Applies to WCAG 2.0 and 2.1; under the September 2023 errata this criterion is always satisfied for HTML. It is obsolete and removed in WCAG 2.2.
4.1.2 Name, Role, Value (Level A)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: controls expose their name, role and state (pressed, expanded, selected, checked), dialogs use the native dialog element, and tabs and checklists use the matching roles (checked automatically and in tests). Other areas: some clickable areas in The Colony, The Writer's Room, Vocabulary Lab and Lessons are not exposed as buttons; the Masters labs have not been reviewed.

Table 2: Success Criteria, Level AA

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.2.4 Captions (Live) (Level AA)	Not Applicable	EssayArc has no live audio or video.
1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded) (Level AA)	Partially Supports	The College Essay Mode video's narration describes the main actions shown. It has no separate audio description, and some on-screen text (see 1.2.3) is not spoken.
1.3.4 Orientation (Level AA 2.1)	Supports	No screen is restricted to portrait or landscape.
1.3.5 Identify Input Purpose (Level AA 2.1)	Supports	Fields that collect the user's own information declare their purpose with autocomplete: name, email and password when signing up, signing in and resetting a password, and the sender's name, city and state in a Pony Express letter. Fields for another person's email turn autocomplete off.
1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum) (Level AA)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools and public pages: text meets 4.5:1 (3:1 for large text), checked automatically on the opening screen of every area and by unit tests of the palette. Other areas: some text in The Writer's Room, Five by Five, The Pony Express and Rhetoric Lab is below the required contrast.
1.4.4 Resize text (Level AA)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools and public pages: pages can be zoomed to 200% without loss of content or function (checked automatically on the opening screen of every area at 640 CSS pixels wide, the width of a 1280-pixel screen at 200% zoom). Text is not set in images, and the pages do not block zoom. Other areas: Lessons cuts its lesson descriptions to one line at every size.
1.4.5 Images of Text (Level AA)	Supports	Text is real text. The exceptions are the logo, the cover picture of the research report (whose title is also in the page text) and a chart image whose values are given in a table beside it.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
1.4.10 Reflow (Level AA 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools and public pages: content fits 320 CSS pixels without sideways scrolling and without text being cut off (checked automatically on the opening screen of every area; the home page has a menu button on small screens). Wide data tables and the Your Arc grid scroll inside their own box, as the criterion allows. Other areas: in The Writer's Room, a row of buttons and the date run past the edge of a 320-pixel screen, and Lessons cuts its lesson descriptions to one line at every width.
1.4.11 Non-text Contrast (Level AA 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: form-field borders, focus indicators, chart marks and state glyphs meet 3:1 (unit-tested). Other areas: some controls in The Colony, The Pony Express composer and the Mimicry Lab writing box are below 3:1.
1.4.12 Text Spacing (Level AA 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools and public pages: no text is cut off with the WCAG text-spacing settings applied (checked automatically on the opening screen of every area, at desktop and phone widths). Other areas: lesson descriptions in Lessons are cut to one line, and a date in The Writer's Room is cut off on a phone-sized screen with these settings.
1.4.13 Content on Hover or Focus (Level AA 2.1)	Supports	EssayArc does not show custom tooltips or pop-ups on hover or focus; the guided tour opens only when the user starts it and closes with Escape.
2.4.5 Multiple Ways (Level AA)	Supports	Pages can be reached from the sidebar, the page breadcrumb and Your desk and, for public pages, from the site footer and the legal links. This report is linked from the accessibility statement and from the home page footer.
2.4.6 Headings and Labels (Level AA)	Supports	Headings and labels describe their topic or purpose.
2.4.7 Focus Visible (Level AA)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: a visible focus ring on every control, with 3:1 contrast on light and dark backgrounds (unit-tested). Other areas: the Mimicry Lab writing box removes the focus outline without a replacement.

Criteria	Conformance Level	Remarks and Explanations
3.1.2 Language of Parts (Level AA)	Supports	EssayArc's own content is in English. Text that students write in other languages is user content.
3.2.3 Consistent Navigation (Level AA)	Supports	Where the sidebar or the page navigation bar appears, its links are in the same order on every page.
3.2.4 Consistent Identification (Level AA)	Supports	Controls with the same function have the same names and icons throughout (for example, Help, Save and Delete).
3.3.3 Error Suggestion (Level AA)	Supports	Error messages say how to fix the problem (for example, the minimum length of a Help message).
3.3.4 Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data) (Level AA)	Supports	Deleting a paper asks for confirmation; closing an account requires typing CLOSE MY ACCOUNT; accepting the user agreement needs a checkbox and then a button, with links to the full Terms and Privacy Notice. EssayArc takes no payments at present.
4.1.3 Status Messages (Level AA 2.1)	Partially Supports	Core writing tools: results, saves, errors, limits and waiting states are announced through live regions without moving focus, including inside dialogs (tested). Other areas: results in some activities are not yet announced.

Table 3: Success Criteria, Level AAA

Level AAA is not included in this report.

Legal Disclaimer (Quill, Inc.)

This report describes EssayArc as assessed by Quill, Inc. on the report date. It is a self-assessment, not a certification or an independent audit. The product changes over time; the current version of this report is published at <https://www.essayarc.com/accessibility/conformance-report>, and the accessibility statement at <https://www.essayarc.com/accessibility>.

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