WCAG 2.1 AA Website Accessibility Checklist

1. Automated Baseline (The Quick Wins)

- [ ] Run the homepage and key subpages through the [WAVE Accessibility Tool](#).
- [ ] Run a Google Lighthouse Accessibility Audit in Chrome Developer Tools.
- [ ] Document all automated errors (e.g., missing Alt Text, broken ARIA tags, empty links) and assign them for fixing.

2. Keyboard & Navigation (The "No Mouse" Test)

- [ ] Verify the site features a hidden "Skip to Main Content" link at the very top of the page (visible when pressing `Tab`).
- [ ] Ensure every single link, button, and form field can be accessed using only the `Tab` key.
- [ ] Confirm there is a highly visible focus outline (a box or highlight) around elements when they are selected with the keyboard.
- [ ] Verify that interactive elements (menus, dropdowns, forms) can be opened or submitted using the `Enter` or `Spacebar` keys.
- [ ] Check that any pop-ups, modals, or dropdown menus can be easily closed by pressing the `Esc` key.

3. Visuals & Contrast (The Readability Test)

- [ ] Check that all normal text has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 against its background using the [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#).
- [ ] Check that large text (18pt or 14pt bold) has a contrast ratio of at least 3:1.
- [ ] Ensure error states in forms don't rely on color alone (e.g., add the text "Error:" or an icon next to a red border).
- [ ] Zoom the browser to 200% and 400%—verify that text does not overlap, disappear, or require horizontal scrolling to read.

4. Content & Media (The Screen Reader Test)

- [ ] Ensure all informative images have descriptive `alt` text explaining what the image shows.
- [ ] Ensure all purely decorative images have a null alt attribute (`alt=""`) so screen readers ignore them.
- [ ] Verify that all embedded videos have accurate, synchronized closed captions.
- [ ] Provide a text transcript for any audio-only content (like podcasts).
- [ ] Run all downloadable PDFs through [Adobe Acrobat's accessibility checker](#) to ensure they are properly tagged.

5. Developer & Code Structure (Under the Hood)

- [ ] Ensure the site's language is declared in the HTML header (e.g., `<html lang="en">`).
- [ ] Verify the page uses proper heading hierarchy (`<h1>`, `<h2>`, `<h3>`) in chronological order without skipping levels for styling purposes.
- [ ] Check that form fields have descriptive, programmatically linked `<label>` tags (not just placeholder text inside the box).
- [ ] Ensure dynamic content updates (like a shopping cart counter changing or a success message appearing) are announced to screen readers using `aria-live` regions.