

# The *Walk Me Through It* Framework

*A practical diagnostic tool for content that works across every format.*

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## The four steps

<b>1</b>	<b>Read the content aloud</b> Human voice or screen reader -- either works. Don't follow along visually. Just listen.
<b>2</b>	<b>Explain the hierarchy without looking</b> Ask the content creator to walk through the structure verbally -- without referencing the page. What's the core message? What supports it? What's the call to action and why does it live where it does? If they have to look at the visual to answer, the content has a gap.
<b>3</b>	<b>Identify where things get lost</b> Where does the listener get confused? Where does the thread drop? These moments are your diagnostic markers -- they point directly to the underlying problem.
<b>4</b>	<b>Fix at the root</b> Not by adding design. Not with a bolded callout or a new section header. Fix the underlying strategy, structure, or messaging issue that caused the confusion. Clarity first. Polish second.

## What audio typically reveals

These four patterns appear consistently across content types. The format changes. The root causes don't.

<b>Too many voices</b> When multiple stakeholders shape a single piece, there's often no through-line -- because nobody owned the through-line.	<b>Added content</b> Post-brief layers and last-minute additions don't connect to the core argument. Audio exposes exactly where they land.
<b>Tight deadlines</b> When there's no time to fix the strategy, design becomes the shortcut. Audio removes that shortcut.	<b>Lack of messaging hierarchy</b> When everything is equally important, nothing is. Invisible in a well-designed layout. Obvious in audio.

## What textbooks don't tell you

You can follow every accessibility guideline and still miss things that only become obvious when you actually use the technology.

<b>File naming matters as much as alt text</b> A logo file named 'logo_hor.png' has no alt text to override it. Screen readers read it as 'logo whore.' Fix the filename first.	<b>Heading hierarchy needs words, not just levels</b> Screen readers don't convey visual weight. If hierarchy matters, the words themselves have to carry it.
<b>Layout-created organization disappears in audio</b> A grid of features looks organized because of spatial grouping. In audio that vanishes -- the copy itself has to establish structure.	<b>Transitions between contributors are invisible</b> Visual separators do real orientation work. In audio they disappear. Without verbal scaffolding, listeners lose track.

## Building audio-too into your process

Not audio-first. Audio-too. Test clarity before design goes in -- not after.

<b>Draft phase</b>	Read it aloud before it goes to design. Human voice or screen reader.
<b>Before design</b>	Does it work sequentially? Fix the structure now, while it's cheap to fix.
<b>Review checklist</b>	Add 'works in audio?' alongside 'brand compliant?' and 'approved?'
<b>Design phase</b>	Now make it beautiful. Clarity first. Polish second.

## Start this week

Four things you can do without changing a single tool or process.

<b>1</b>	<b>Run the framework on one piece of content going out this week</b> Pick something in production right now and run all four steps on it.
<b>2</b>	<b>Ask a team member to describe content verbally without looking at it</b> Watch where they stumble. Those moments are your diagnostic.
<b>3</b>	<b>Add 'works in audio?' to your content review checklist</b> Just that one question changes what people pay attention to in review.
<b>4</b>	<b>Turn on your screen reader and listen to something your team created</b> Do it once. It will change how you write.

## The Walk Me Through It checklist

Use this in your next content review. Work through it with the piece in front of you -- or hand it to the creator before they send you a draft.

<b>Before you write</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is there a clear brief with a single owner?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the core message agreed before writing begins?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are there more than two stakeholder voices shaping this content?</li></ul>
<b>Step 1: Read aloud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Read the full piece aloud -- or run it through a screen reader</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not follow along visually while listening</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Note any moment where you stumble or lose the thread</li></ul>
<b>Step 2: Explain the hierarchy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask the creator: what is the core message of this piece?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask: what supports that message?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask: what is the call to action, and why does it live where it does?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did they need to reference the visual to answer? If yes -- gap found.</li></ul>
<b>Step 3: Identify gaps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Where did the audio version lose you?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Where did the thread drop or the logic jump?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is jargon used without being defined in context?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are transitions between sections or contributors clear without visual cues?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the opening orient the listener before diving into content?</li></ul>
<b>Step 4: Fix at the root</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify whether the gap is a strategy, structure, or messaging issue</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Resist fixing it with design -- a callout box, bold text, or new header</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Rewrite the content to carry its own structure</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Re-run steps 1-3 after revisions</li></ul>
<b>Before publishing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the content work read aloud start to finish?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are all image file names either descriptive or overridden with alt text?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does heading hierarchy rely on words, not just visual weight?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Would a listener know where they are in the content at every point?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Works in audio? ✓</li></ul>