

Understanding Success Criterion 1.4.12: Text Spacing

Success Criterion [1.4.12 Text Spacing](#) (Level AA): In content implemented using markup languages that support the following [text style properties](#), no loss of content or functionality occurs by setting all of the following and by changing no other style property:

- Line height (line spacing) to at least 1.5 times the font size;
- Spacing following paragraphs to at least 2 times the font size;
- Letter spacing (tracking) to at least 0.12 times the font size;
- Word spacing to at least 0.16 times the font size.

Exception: Human languages and scripts that do not make use of one or more of these text style properties in written text can conform using only the properties that exist for that combination of language and script.

DO NOT EDIT ANYTHING ABOVE THIS SEPARATOR

Link to Official Published Document for reference:

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/text-spacing.html>

Intent

The intent of this Success Criterion (SC) is to ensure that people can override text spacing to improve their reading experience. Each of the requirements stipulated in the SC's four bullets helps ensure text styling can be adapted by the user to suit their needs.

This SC focuses on the ability to increase spacing between lines, words, letters, and paragraphs. Any combination of these may assist a user with effectively reading text. In addition, ensuring that users can override the author's settings for spacing also significantly increases the likelihood that other style preferences can be set by the user. For example, a user may need to change to a wider font family than the author has set in order to effectively read text.

Author Responsibility

This SC does not dictate that authors must set all their content to the specified metrics. Rather, it specifies that the visual display of an author's content has the ability to be set to those metrics

without loss of content or functionality. The author requirement is both to not user's ability to override the author settings, and to ensure that content thus modified does not or “break” break content display or access in the manners shown in figures 1 through 4 in Effects of Not Allowing for Spacing Override.

Applicability

If the markup-based technologies and platforms being used are capable of overriding text to the Success Criterion's metrics, then this SC is applicable. For instance Cascading Style Sheet/HTML technologies enable successful use of the specified spacing metrics without loss of content or functionality. Plugin technologies would need to have a built-in ability to modify styles to the specified metrics. Currently, this SC does not apply to PDF as it is not implemented using markup.

Examples of text that are typically not affected by [style properties](#) and not expected to adapt are:

- Video captions embedded directly into the video frames and not provided as an associated caption file

- [Images of text](#)

For this SC, [canvas](#) implementations of text are considered to be [images of text](#).

User Responsibility

The ability to read and derive meaning from the overridden spacing rests with the user. If the increased spacing impacts those abilities, the user will adjust or they will return to the default view. Regardless, the user needs the flexibility to adjust spacing within the bounds set in the SC. Such changes may be achieved via user stylesheet, bookmarklet, extension, or application.

Replacing above paragraph and changes with the following:

When the text spacing SC guidelines are met with no loss of content or functionality, and text spacing property changes are initiated by the user, the user assumes responsibility for interpreting the content. If the user initiated adjustments negatively impact the content or functionality when the SC guidelines have been met, it is the user's responsibility to return to the default state. Such changes may be achieved via user stylesheet, bookmarklet, extension, or application.

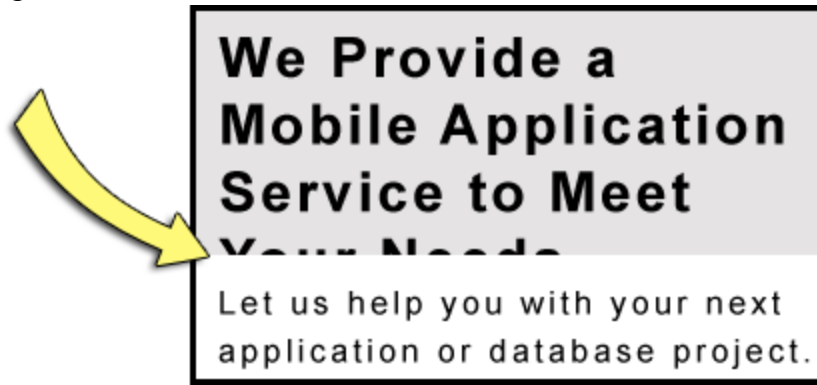
Effects of Not Allowing for Spacing Override

The following images show some types of failures when authors do not take into consideration that users may override spacing to the metrics specified in this Success Criterion.

Text Cut Off

The bottom portion of the words "Your Needs" is cut off in a heading making that text unreadable in Figure 1. It should read "We Provide a Mobile Application Service to Meet Your Needs."

Figure 1: Vertical text cut off is a failure.



In Figure 2 the last portion of text is cut off in 3 side-by-side headings. The 1st heading should read "A cog in the wheel." But it reads "A cog in the whe". Only half of the second "e" is visible and the letter "l" is completely missing. The 2nd heading should read "A penny for your thoughts". But it reads "A penny for your". The 3rd should read "Back to the drawing board." But it reads "Back to the drawi".

Figure 2: Horizontal text cut off is a failure.



Text Overlap

In Figure 3 the last 3 words "Groups and Programs" of the text heading "Technologists Seeking Input from Groups and Programs" overlap the following sentence. That sentence should read, "You are invited to share ideas and areas of interest related to the integration of technology from a group or program perspective." But the words "You are invited to share ideas" are obscured and unreadable.

Figure 3: Overlapping text is a failure.

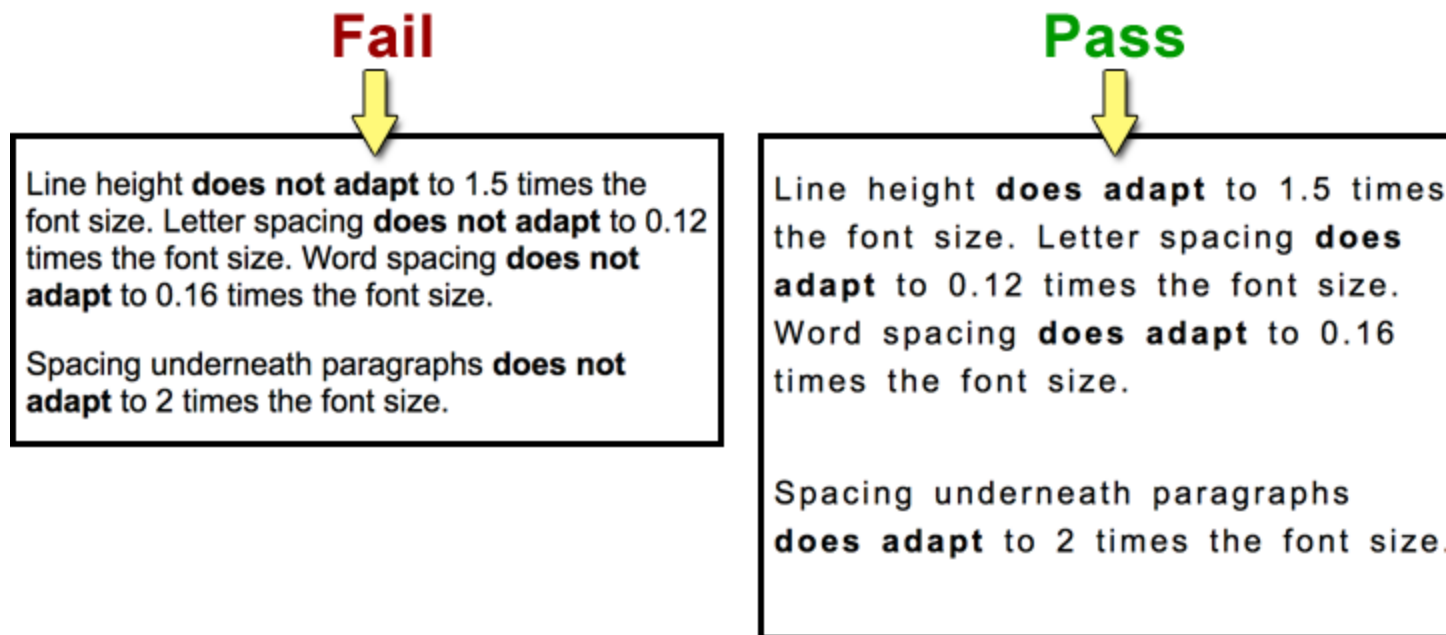


Fixed Text

Text fails the SC when it is fixed and not able to be overridden to the Success Criterion's metrics.

Text that allows for overriding to the metrics passes. Line height must be able to adapt to 1.5 times the font size. Letter spacing must be able to adapt to 0.12 times the font size. Word spacing must be able to adapt to 0.16 times the font size. Spacing underneath paragraphs must be able to adapt to 2 times the font size.

Figure 4: Absolutely fixed text is a failure. Adaptable text passes.



Benefits

- People with low vision who require increased space between lines, words, and letters are able to read text.

- People with dyslexia may increase space between lines, words, and letters to increase reading speed.
- Although not required by this SC, white space between blocks of text can help people with cognitive disabilities discern sections and call out boxes.

Examples

1. Spacing can be overridden to the SC's metrics.
2. Text fits within the bounds of its containing box without being cut off.
3. Text fits within the bounds of its containing box without overlapping other boxes.

End of Section EOWG is responsible for editing

EOWG will not be providing edits or content for the following sections

- Related Resources
- Techniques
 - Sufficient Techniques
 - Advisory Techniques
 - Failures
- Key Terms