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What I look for beneath a finished page

By Gyata Tabiri · Revised November 2, 2026

A screenshot shows a page at rest. It does not show whether the reading order makes sense, whether the next action works, or whether an error leaves someone with a way forward. Those are the parts I want to understand beneath the finish.

Find the task before choosing the wrapper

What is someone trying to learn or do here? The answer helps decide which content belongs together and what needs a heading, list, label, or table. Starting with the visual boxes alone can leave the document describing a layout rather than its meaning.

Keep the interaction consistent with the wording

A link should reach the promised destination. A submit control should enter a flow with an accurate response. On this site, the Contact page and its handler need tc agree about accepted fields, validation, and confirmation. A polished control is only the visible entry point.

Inspect an inconvenient state

Use a longer title, leave a required answer empty, enlarge the page, or follow the controls from the keyboard. These are ordinary situations, not exotic edge cases. They reveal assumptions that convenient sample content can conceal.

Leave structure that survives a new layout

The content may later move into another arrangement. Meaningful headings and a coherent order give that change something stable to preserve. I want another developer to understand the relationships without needing the original screenshot open beside the source.

The visual and structural reviews should inform each other. A page is convincing when the behavior and the document carry through the same thought as its appearance.

Read alongside: Describing the relationships · An outline that survives visual change.

Reference: W3C form-label guidance.