



# Exclude codes

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The Broken link checker checks for HTTP status codes above the 300-level, which primarily means 3xx, 4xx, and 5xx level codes.

Since some of these codes aren't true broken links or might not be fixable broken links, you may want to use the **Exclude codes** section to ignore certain HTTP status codes:

The Exclude codes section of the Broken link checker

On this page, we explain more about what each code exclusion means and when you might want to use it.



## Not sure which codes matter?

Use the default settings in this section to ignore 301 and 302 response codes and include the rest the first time you run the checker.

## Ignore 301 response codes

A 301 status code means a resource has a permanent redirect in place.

General tips for the 301 code:

- 301 status codes are generally safe to ignore, since they indicate a redirect but ultimately a successful resource load.
- The box to ignore 301 codes is checked by default.

## When to ignore 301 response codes

If you're really only worried about fully broken links, you can safely ignore the 301 code.

## When to use 301 response codes

Some authors like to find 301 redirects so they can update the link they're using to the new URL and just avoid the 301 redirect. 301 redirects generally depend on rules existing on a website to handle them, and it's possible those rules might be removed at a future date, so you're avoiding a potential future 404 error by updating links with this respond code.

Refer to [Learn the quirks of your broken links report](#) and [Tips & tricks for broken links](#) for more information on

some of the nuances of working with these codes. For more information on HTTP status codes, refer to the [formal HTTP spec](#) or the more readable [Wikipedia list of HTTP status codes](#).

## Ignore 302 response codes

Like 301, a 302 status code means a resource has a redirect in place, though it's a temporary redirect rather than a permanent one.

General tips for the 302 code:

- 302 status codes are generally safe to ignore, since they indicate a redirect but ultimately a successful resource load.
- The box to ignore 302 codes is checked by default.
- If you've used [Old Links](#), you may see 302 redirects appear if you have hyperlinks to the old link. While you don't have to resolve these, it doesn't hurt to tidy them up.

## When to ignore 302 response codes

If you're really only worried about fully broken links, you can safely ignore the 302 code.

## When to use 302 response codes

Some authors like to find 302 redirects so they can update the link they're using to the new URL and just avoid the 302 redirect. 302 redirects generally depend on rules existing on a website to handle them, and it's possible those rules might be removed at a future date, so you're avoiding a potential future 404 error by updating links with this respond code.

Refer to [Learn the quirks of your broken links report](#) and [Tips & tricks for broken links](#) for more information on some of the nuances of working with these codes. For more information on HTTP status codes, refer to the [formal HTTP spec](#) or the more readable [Wikipedia list of HTTP status codes](#).

## Ignore 401 response codes

A 401 status code means "Unauthorized". It's specifically used when a link or resource requires authentication and authentication has either failed or hasn't been provided. This link is definitely broken for anyone who doesn't have the appropriate authentication to view it, which includes our Broken links checker.

General tips for the 401 code:

- We recommend including 401 response codes the first time you run a report.
- You may end up ignoring 401 codes in subsequent runs.
- If you're referencing protected resources that you have access to but KnowledgeOwl doesn't (such as on a company intranet or behind a VPN), those resources might throw a 401 error code.

## When to ignore 401 response codes

Only ignore 401 response codes if you've confirmed that you and your readers can access resources with 401

response codes. This situation is most common for resources that require VPN or some type of login that you and your readers have but our automated checker lacks.

## When to use 401 response codes

We recommend including 401 response codes the first time you run a report or the first time you run it after major content changes. Links with this code are broken for anyone who lacks appropriate authentication to log in and view them. A new 401 code can indicate that a previously available public resource now requires authentication, so you may want to replace or entirely remove this link from your content.

Refer to [Learn the quirks of your broken links report](#) and [Tips & tricks for broken links](#) for more information on some of the nuances of working with these codes. For more information on HTTP status codes, refer to the [formal HTTP spec](#) or the more readable [Wikipedia list of HTTP status codes](#).

## Ignore 403 response codes

A 403 status code means "Forbidden." It's used when a resource requires authentication but the authentication provided does not grant the user access (such as lacking appropriate permissions).

General tips for the 403 code:

- We recommend including 403 response codes the first time you run a report.
- You may end up ignoring 403 codes in subsequent runs.
- If you're referencing protected resources that you have access to but KnowledgeOwl doesn't (such as on a company intranet or behind a VPN), those resources might throw a 403 error code.

## When to ignore 403 response codes

Only ignore 403 response codes if you've confirmed that you and your readers can access resources with 403 response codes. This situation is most common for resources that require VPN or some type of login that you and your readers have but our automated checker lacks.

## When to use 403 response codes

We recommend including 403 response codes the first time you run a report or the first time you run it after major content changes. Links with this code are broken for anyone who lacks appropriate authentication to log in and view them. A new 403 code can indicate that a previously available public resource now requires authentication, so you may want to replace or entirely remove this link from your content.

Refer to [Learn the quirks of your broken links report](#) and [Tips & tricks for broken links](#) for more information on some of the nuances of working with these codes. For more information on HTTP status codes, refer to the [formal HTTP spec](#) or the more readable [Wikipedia list of HTTP status codes](#).

## Ignore 500 response codes

A 500 status code means "Internal Server Error". It's a catch-all error when a resource can't be accessed but there

isn't a more specific reason.

General tips for the 500 code:

- Links with this code are definitely broken for everyone, regardless of authentication.
- We recommend including 500 codes the first time you run the report.
- Only ignore them if they feel noisy or unhelpful.

## When to ignore 500 response codes

Only ignore 500 response codes if they feel noisy or unhelpful. These links are nearly always fully broken and should be addressed.

## When to use 500 response codes

We recommend including 500 response codes whenever you run a report. If there's an odd situation where you're receiving 500 errors but links are still working, your best course of action is to contact the website administrator for the problem link to let them know the page is throwing a 500 error.

Refer to [Learn the quirks of your broken links report](#) and [Tips & tricks for broken links](#) for more information on some of the nuances of working with these codes. For more information on HTTP status codes, refer to the [formal HTTP spec](#) or the more readable [Wikipedia list of HTTP status codes](#).

## The code I want to ignore isn't listed here

If you have a specific code showing up in your report that you want to ignore, [contact us](#) and request that we add that code to the Exclude codes section. We add excluded codes based entirely on feedback from authors like you.

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