

# Best practice content writing checklist



# Introduction

To help you create the best content possible to engage your audience, use the following eight checklists.

| Ideas & research      |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| <b>Objectives</b>     | Do you know what you are trying to achieve with the content? How will you measure this?           |  |
| <b>Audience(s)</b>    | Have you identified your audience(s)?   |  |
| <b>Topic</b>          | Are you clear what you are writing about?   |  |
| <b>Research</b>       | Have you researched the topic and competitors?<br>Is your data and information up to date?        |  |
| <b>Search</b>         | Will your blog meet the intent of people searching online for information about the topic?        |  |
| <b>Testing</b>        | Have you run simple audience tests, such as tweeting out ideas to gauge response?                 |  |
| <b>Analytics</b>      | Have you checked to see how similar posts have performed previously?                              |  |
| <b>Style</b>          | Have you identified the correct tone and style for the audience groups?                           |  |
| <b>Onward journey</b> | Do you know what you would like your reader to do after (or while) interacting with your content? |  |

| <b>Writing</b>          |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Heading (H1)</b>     | Does your H1 contain relevant keywords, and is it written in an engaging style?  |  |
| <b>Prose style</b>      | Is the writing clear and active, avoiding unnecessary jargon? Check readability with <a href="https://read-able.com">read-able.com</a>       |  |
| <b>Page title</b>       | Have you written a 50–70-character page title with keywords, a brand name and conforming to your site's best practice?                       |  |
| <b>Meta description</b> | Have you written a 156-character meta description that describes the content accurately, uses active language and includes a call to action? |  |
| <b>Calls to action</b>  | Have you included CTAs in your post that direct people along the visitor journey you would like them to make?                                |  |

| <b>Formatting</b>                                     |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Sub-headings</b>                                   | Have you used H2s, H3s and H4s (if appropriate) to break up the text?  |  |
| <b>Paragraphs and sentences</b>                       | Have you written short paragraphs and sentences to help users scan the copy?   |  |
| <b>Bullet points</b>                                  | Have you used bullet points to help break up text, where appropriate?  |  |
| <b>Spelling and grammar</b>                           | Has somebody else reviewed your content for any potential mistakes? (At least make sure you spell check and re-read after an hour or so has passed!) |  |
| <b>Bold / Italics</b>                                 | Have you used bold and italics to emphasise words and further break up text where appropriate?   |  |
| <b>Categories, tags (Depending on CMS capability)</b> | Have you chosen relevant categories and tags?  |  |
| <b>URL (Depending on CMS capability)</b>              | Have you edited your URL for readability, directory structure, and to remove duplicate words?  |  |
| <b>External links</b>                                 | Have you included 2 external no-follow link(s) to a reputable site, such as Wikipedia?   |  |
| <b>Internal links</b>                                 | Have you included at least two internal links to relevant site pages in your post?   |  |

| <b>Images &amp; rich media</b> |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Images</b>                  | Have you sourced images/graphics you have the right to use or have created yourself?   |  |
| <b>Image meta data</b>         | Have appropriate file names, alt text, and a caption been used, including an image credit, if needed?                        |  |
| <b>Rich Media</b>              | Have you created embedded rich media to supplement the post, such as videos, podcasts, downloadable resources, widgets, etc. |  |

| <b>Amplification</b>    |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Social promotion</b> | Do you know which social channels you will promote the content on, when and how often? |  |
| <b>Email promotion</b>  | Have you a plan for mailing the post out to any existing lists?                        |  |
| <b>Paid promotion</b>   | Is your piece suitable for paid promotion?   |  |

| <b>Repurposing</b> |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Other ideas</b> | Have you a plan for repurposing the post into other assets, such as whitepapers, infographics, books, videos, podcasts, etc? |  |

| <b>Publish &amp; refine</b> |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Publish</b>              | Alert search engines that the post is live  |  |
| <b>Check live post</b>      | Once live, make sure you check the post is exactly as you would like it. This includes checking SERPs that your meta data is as it should be. |  |
| <b>Evaluate</b>             | Reflect on the performance of the post, understand what you would change/keep the same, and adjust your publishing strategy if necessary      |  |

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