

SEO Writing Template

Introduction

Writing for the web has two audiences. From a White Hat SEO perspective, we recommend that you cater first to the human audience as they will engage with your content and your business. Your second audience are search engine bots. Before your content is eligible to be shown in organic search -- via a Search Engine Results Page (SERP), a software program must crawl your website. Then it's indexed. Using complicated algorithms mixed with artificial intelligence, search engines match your content with words and phrases used by searchers. We've found that well-written, unique, and helpful content gets the most SEO love.

How to Use This SEO Writing Template

For best results, follow the template section in order. We've developed this system based upon years of experimenting and monitoring results.

1: Choose Your Topic & Keyword

No doubt you want your content to be found in organic search and subsequently read. To start, you need to research the words or phrases (aka keywords) used by actual human searchers. We don't recommend guessing on a keyword. We've found that many clients use jargon or words commonly used in their industry and not the words used by their average customer. There are many keyword research tools available. We recommend Google's AdWord Keyword Planner Tool since the search volume and related information comes directly from their search database. However, there are other paid keyword tools through Moz, SEMRush, and others.

After researching your keyword, write it down here:

Keyword: _____

You can also jot down some synonyms to your keyword to spice up your content.

2. Include the Keyword in the Page URL

Searchers are savvy about URLs; they want to feel confident about where they click. URLs should be readable (not a series of numbers or random letters). We recommend the keyword near the beginning of the URL but this is not a hard-and-fast rule.

Write your URL: _____

3. Page Title

When a visitor arrives on your page, seeing the keyword in the page title is another way to reassure them. Essentially you're telling them: You're in the right place! Stick around and I'll answer the question you asked Google or Bing.

Your page title should entice your visitor to stay on the page and read your content! Whenever possible, place the keyword near the beginning of your page title.

Write your Page Title: _____

4. Sub Heading

When the majority of visitors land on a page, they first scan the content to make sure it's relevant to their search query (e.g., the phrase or keywords they typed into Google). You want to make a good first impression, right? Then strategically chunk up your content into subheadings to make it easy and logical to follow.

When using subheadings, also be careful of hierarchy. For an example, an H2 is larger than an H3. Search engine bots use heading tags to compare relative importance of subheadings to each other.

Write one subheading with your keyword: _____

5. Content

When writing your content, follow these general guidelines:

- The keyword should be in the first paragraph, preferably in the first sentence. Many visitors won't get past the first sentence or two so you want to grab their attention.
- Use your keyword naturally throughout so it's transparent to your audience.
- Write enough content to fully answer a searcher's question. Target at least 300-500 words for a page.
- Include synonyms to add variety.
- Don't overstuff. If it feels overdone, it is.
- Link to at least one related page on your website. The link should help your reader. An internal link also let's search engine bots that one page's content is related to another.
- When using information gathered by reputable sources (e.g., statistics, a quote), cite your source and link to the appropriate page. This demonstrates you've done your homework and are a credible source.

Note the keyword at the top of the page and write/outline your content here:

6. Image Alt Tag

Associated with graphics and photos, the image alt tag will appear when an image can't be displayed. The image alt tag helps the visually impaired that use screen readers understand what the image is about. Include your keyword in the image alt tag.

Write your Image Alt Tag: _____

7. Title Tag

The title tag is the first element that appears on a Search Engine Results Page. Now that you're content is written, it's time to craft your title tag. To make the most of this opportunity, we suggest the following:

- **Include your keyword in the title tag.** Remember searchers are looking for a match to their search query and may dismiss if the keyword isn't obvious. To help searchers make the connection between their search query and search results, Google will bold the keyword.
- **Grab your audience's attention.** Interesting title tags tend to get more clicks.
- **Put your brand name last** (unless it's the home page). Searchers are focused on getting answers first. Then they will choose which brand name they can trust. Having your brand name at the end of the title tag honors that hierarchy.
- **Leverage pixel length.** How much of your title tag that appears on a SERP is ever changing as Google tests new formats. Rather than measuring character length, search engines use pixel length for display. If you're using WordPress SEO by Yoast, the plugin will help you navigate the limitations. Title tags are currently 50-60 characters in length.

Note: for WordPress, your page title and title tag can be different. Check your website's content management system (CMS) to see if they are different and how to modify the title tag.

Write Your Title Tag: _____

8. Meta Description

Together with the title tag, the meta description's purpose is to get a click from the SERP. Entice a searcher to view your fabulous content. To make the most of this opportunity, we suggest the following:

- **Include your keyword in the meta description.** When possible, put the keyword near the beginning. To help searchers make the connection between their search query and search results, Google will bold the keyword.
- **Grab your audience's attention.** Interesting descriptions tend to get more clicks.
- **What's the promise delivered on the page?** The description sets an expectation; tell your visitor what the page is about. Space is limited; use sentence fragments to convey the most important information.
- **Leverage pixel length.** Similar to title tag, description length is ever changing as Google tests new formats. Meta descriptions vary between 150-155 characters in length.

One-Page Checklist

Now that you know what each of the SEO elements you need on a piece of content, use this one-page checklist.

- Keyword
 - Synonyms & Variants
- URL
- Page Title
- Content
- Subheading
- Image Alt Text
- Title Tag
- Meta Description