



MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND
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M.A (English Literature)

Content Writing

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CONTENT WRITING

UNIT – I - LANGUAGE SKILLS

Introduction to Content Writing, Learning Tone in Writing and its Types, comprehending style in Writing and its Types, Common Grammatical Errors, Spelling, Punctuation, Tips to Build vocabulary

UNIT – II - DIGITAL SKILLS

Online Research, Meta Search Engines, Cracking Internet through Google, Google Analytics, Designing Cover Pages and Websites, Logo Designing, Tags and Categories, Plagiarism.

UNIT – III - CONTENT TYPES

Business Writing Skills, Technical Writing, Academic Writing, Email Writing, News Letter, Brochure Writing, Resume Writing, Research Paper, Academic Book Writing, Rubrics, Fiction Writing, SEO Writing, Blog Writing, Copy Writing, Writing for Social Media

UNIT – IV - CONTENT STRATEGY

Strategic Vs Non- Strategic Content, Creating Effective Content, Overcoming Challenges, Idea Generation Tools, Creating Strategic Content to promote Brands, Market Segmentation, Creating Target Persona, Ninja Writing.

UNIT – V - EARN ONLINE

Websites for Content Writing Projects, Tips to Earn as a Content Writer, Successful Content Writing Career, How to Become a Published Author, Guest Posting, Collecting Payments.

Introduction to Content Writing

Content writing is an art of writing specific content for a website that would drive traffic to it. This type of writing requires good writing and language skills. Basically content writing can be any kind of writing that is read on internet like website writing, SEO copy writing, SEO writing and blogging etc. The piece of writing must be genuine and authentic with no particular format but the style counts a lot.

The content must be informative that adds to knowledge of the viewer which demands practice and deep knowledge which can only be gained by experience. A content writer is a person with good learning skills who can get a good grip on the object he/she is describing. He must be simple and concise in his writing with a goal set to get people to read.

Content writing like any other form of writing requires in depth knowledge and great skill. In order for an article to be successful, the written content must be original and valuable. There are a few general principals followed by writers.

10 different types of tones

There are many types of tones, making possibilities endless as you craft your personal voice in your writing. Below are the 10 most common tones, as well as specific vocabulary and techniques you can use to achieve them.

1. Formal

A formal writing tone is common in academic or professional contexts. This tone focuses on being thorough and direct, yet respectful. It uses full words, rather than contractions, and emphasizes facts and grammatical correctness.

Examples:

- *“The committee **will not** vote on the matter”*
- *“According to the data. . .”*
- *“To Whom It May Concern”*
- *“Respectfully yours”*

2. Informal

An informal tone is the opposite of a formal tone. Informal tone in writing is conversational and expressive, similar to how you'd speak to a friend. It uses contractions, colloquial phrases, and more emotion. Its sentence structure can be shorter with a choppy rhythm, or it can be long and chatty.

Examples:

- “*Nah—I’ve got tons of time to do my chores*”
- “*Hey, what’s up?*”
- “. . . *Sandra laughed as she jokingly shoved her friend’s shoulder*”

3. Optimistic

When writing in an optimistic tone, you’re conveying a sense of hope, and a positive outlook for the future. Even when acknowledging today’s challenges, the uplifting language gives readers aspiration.

Examples:

- “. . . *David said with a reassuring smile*”
- “*hopeful*”
- “*hang in there*”

4. Worried

A worried tone can make your reader apprehensive and afraid. It communicates feelings of anxiousness about something that’s unknown.

Examples:

- “*My hand tentatively reached for the knob, shaking as I held my breath. . .*”
- “*rocked back and forth, looking out of the window every second. . .*”
- “*stressed*”

5. Friendly

A friendly tone is non-threatening and elicits trust. This tone can also have a mix of formal or informal tones, depending on what you're writing. Generally, it's lighthearted and kind. Exclamation points can convey warmth and enthusiasm.

Examples:

- “*Esther gave me a **cheerful thumbs up** from behind the curtain*”
- “*What a sweet puppy!*”
- “*Happy birthday, buddy!*”

6. Curious

A curious tone in your writing tells the reader that there are compelling details that you still want to uncover. This tone can be used creatively to keep the reader intrigued about learning more.

Examples:

- “*The **mystery** gift didn't reveal the sender's name. . .*”
- “*Tillie had a **list of questions** in her brain, **hungry to uncover** the truth. . .*”
- “*wondering*”

7. Assertive

An assertive tone exudes confidence and authority. It can also be insistent and straightforward. This tone can be used to help you persuade your audience about a topic.

Examples:

- “*She **wasn't fazed** while walking up to the podium. . .*”
- “*Daniel said with **undeniable conviction** that **commanded** the room. . .*”
- “*resolute*”

8. Encouraging

An encouraging tone is supportive and understanding. It gives readers reassurance to overcome their fears and take action.

Examples:

- “*I remembered mom’s advice to **take a deep breath** and jump in. . .*”
- “*Embolden*”
- “*You’ve got this!*”

9. Surprised

When writing with a surprised tone, you’re capturing how something is unexpected. The tone could elicit different types of astonishment, such as joy or shock.

Examples:

- “*He opened the door and his **eyes widened** upon seeing me. . .*”
- “*took their breath away. . .*”
- “*stunned*”

10. Cooperative

A cooperative tone is common in the workplace. Your word choice—often evoking positivity and collaboration—and use of the pronoun “we” work together to invite mutual participation toward a shared goal.

Examples:

- “*I’d love to hear your thoughts about it*”
- “*collaborative*”
- “*we/our*”
- “*we showed an allied front*”

TYPES OF WRITING STYLES

There are four main types of writing: expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative. Each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose. A single text may include more than one writing style.

EXPOSITORY

Expository writing is one of the most common types of writing. When an author writes in an expository style, all they are trying to do is explain a concept, imparting information from themselves to a wider audience. Expository writing does not include the author's opinions, but focuses on accepted facts about a topic, including statistics or other evidence.

Examples of Expository Writing

- Textbooks
- How-to articles
- Recipes
- News stories (not editorials or Op-Eds)
- Business, technical, or scientific writing

DESCRIPTIVE

Descriptive writing is often found in fiction, though it can make an appearance in nonfiction as well (for example, memoirs, first-hand accounts of events, or travel guides). When an author writes in a descriptive style, they are painting a picture in words of a person, place, or thing for their audience. The author might employ metaphor or other literary devices in order to describe the author's impressions via their five senses (what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch). But the author is not trying to convince the audience of anything or explain the scene – merely describe things as they are.

Examples of Descriptive Writing

- Poetry
- Journal/diary writing
- Descriptions of Nature
- Fictional novels or plays

PERSUASIVE

Persuasive writing is the main style of writing you will use in academic papers. When an author writes in a persuasive style, they are trying to convince the audience of a position or belief. Persuasive writing contains the author's opinions and biases, as well as justifications and reasons given by the author as evidence of the correctness of their position. Any "argumentative" essay you write in school should be in the persuasive style of writing.

Examples of Persuasive Writing

- Cover letters
- Op-Eds and Editorial newspaper articles
- Reviews of items
- Letters of complaint
- Advertisements
- Letters of recommendation

NARRATIVE

Narrative writing is used in almost every longer piece of writing, whether fiction or nonfiction. When an author writes in a narrative style, they are not just trying to impart information, they are trying to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings.

Examples of Narrative Writing

- Oral histories
- Novels/Novellas
- Poetry (especially epic sagas or poems)
- Short Stories
- Anecdotes

COMMON ENGLISH GRAMMAR MISTAKES

1) Present and Past Tense

Present tenses in English are used to talk about the present, the future and to summarise a book, film or play when telling a story in the present tense.

There are four present tense forms in the English language.

Present Simple: *I Work*

Present Continuous: *I am Working*

Present Perfect: *I have worked*

Present perfect continuous: *I have been working*

Rules:

You can use the past tense to talk about events or situations that have finished. You can also use past tense in English to talk about long-standing events and situations that have already happened in the past.

For example: *When I was a young child, I lived in the countryside.*

Here are some frequently used examples of verbs in past simple: ***are, was, were and went.***

2) How To Avoid the Overuse of Adverbs

Adverbs are a varied class of words that work in many different ways to express many different kinds of meaning.

This can make adverbs a useful word group. You should, however, avoid overusing these words to describe actions and events.

The most commonly overused adverbs are manner adverbs, this particular type of adverb modifies the verb.

For example:

Emily Scott shook her head *vigorously*.

He was in a good mood now, smiling *broadly* as he grabbed his mug of tea.

A common issue in story writing occurs when you rely too heavily on manner adverbs in your stories.

For example:

The curtain opened quickly, and Ben came slowly into the room. He saw Emma looking flirtatiously with Jack and walked over to her aggressively. ‘Why are you here?’ he screamed angrily.

Here is the same extract with the manner verbs highlighted:

The curtain opened *quickly*, and Ben came slowly into the room. He saw Emma looking *flirtatiously* with Jack and walked over to her *aggressively*. ‘Why are you here?’ he screamed *angrily*.

The correct use of adverbs is to show not tell the reader what is happening in the story.

3) Your/You’re

These words are also troublesome homophones that cause many problems.

Rules:

“*Your*” indicates a possession – and defines that something belongs to you.

“*You’re*” is short for “*You are*”.

Here is how **not** to use these words:

Your beautiful.

Do you know when **your** going?

Can I have **you’re** coat?

How to get it right:

You’re beautiful.

Do you know when **you’re** going?

Can I have **your** coat?

4) Misplacing Apostrophes

You find apostrophes a little tricky, but once you follow the rules, it will become easy. Putting an apostrophe in the wrong place is a common mistake.

Rules:

Apostrophes indicate something belongs to something or is owned by someone else.

To show that something belongs to one person, place the apostrophe before the letter ‘S.’

For example – “*The girl’s sheep*”.

To show that something belongs to more than one person, you need to place the apostrophe after the letter 'S'.

For example – “*The girls’ sheep*”.

Apostrophes are also used in contracted words such as “*Can’t*” to indicate that the ‘O’ is missing from “*Cannot.*”

Apostrophes should never be used to make a word plural.

5) There / Their /They’re

You may find that these pesky homophones, a little bit of a headache.

Rules:

Use “There” to refer to a place that isn’t here, for example, “Over there.”

Use “Their” to refer to how owns something – showing that something belongs to that person.

Use “They’re” is a shortened version of “They are”.

Here is how not to use these words:

Their going to be here soon.

We should contact **they’re** friend.

Can we use **there** house?

They’re is is an argument that says.

Here is how you use these words correctly:

They’re going to be here soon.

We should contact **their** friend.

Can we use **their** house?

There is an argument that says.

6) Confusing similar spellings and words

The English language is quite rich in words which sound similar, or are spelled similarly, but which have different meanings and need to be used in different contexts.

Perhaps the most common stumbling block experienced by people who are learning English as a second language is making sure to use the right word in the right context, rather than a similar but improper one.

The only way to avoid this issue is to learn which words fit in which context, on a case-by-case basis.

Here are some words people often mix up:

“**Two,**” “**too,**” and “**to**”

“**Here**” and “**hear**”

“**Your**” and “**you’re**”

“**Weather**” and “**whether**”

7) Using incomplete comparisons

Many words in the English language imply a comparison – and using them without “completing the comparison” is a common grammatical mistake.

Here’s an example of an incomplete comparison:

“It was much hotter today.”

To make this example grammatically correct, you would need to complete this comparison. Here’s one way you could do that:

“It was much hotter today than yesterday.”

8) Getting adjectives and adverbs confused

Confusing your adjectives and adverbs often results in speech or writing that comes off as very informal, and even uneducated – and it’s a great way of infuriating many English teachers.

Often, you’ll notice this issue happening with words that end in “-ly.”

Here are a couple of grammatically incorrect examples:

“It was a real nice day today.”

“I ran quick to the bus stop.”

And here’s how these two examples would look if they were made grammatically correct:

“It was a really nice day today.”

“I ran quickly to the bus stop.”

9) Misplacing your modifiers

Language would be pretty dull without words to add a bit of extra flavour to sentences and descriptive speech.

This is exactly where modifiers come in.

With modifiers, **“the tiger”** can become **“the fearsome tiger,”** **“the sunrise,”** can become **“the beautiful sunrise,”** and so on.

The issue is that these modifiers need to be placed very close to the word they’re modifying, or else the meaning falls apart.

“Misplacing your modifiers” means that you are putting these modifiers too far away from the terms they are meant to be modifying, in your sentence.

The result is confusion.

In fact, misplaced modifiers can even completely change the meaning of your sentence in unintended ways.

Here’s an example of a misplaced modifier:

“He almost walked for the entire day.”

And here’s how this example would read with the modifier in the right place:

“He walked for almost the entire day.”

In the example with the misplaced modifier, it is not clear if he “crawled”, “ran slowly”, or simply “thought about walking” for the entire day.

In the correct example, the meaning is clear.

10) Falling into pronoun disagreement

A common grammatical mistake for English learners is for their pronouns and nouns to disagree, when dealing with singular and plural examples.

The straightforward rule is that singular pronouns must go with singular nouns, and plural pronouns must go with plural nouns.

So, for example:

“Every boy must sign in when they arrive” is incorrect. “Boy” is singular, and “they” is plural.

The correct phrasing here would be:

“Every boy must sign in when he arrives.”

Grammar and punctuation are essential in the English language and gaining confidence in how to avoid any grammatical errors is a valuable part of your learning journey.

You should practice developing your grammar daily; it will help you to become a confident writer with a firm grasp on the English language.

The most common English misspellings

Here's a quick-reference guide to the top misspellings according to the Oxford English Corpus – an electronic collection of over 2 billion words of real English that helps us to see how people are using the language and also shows us the mistakes that are most often made.

The table gives the correct spelling of the word, handy tips on getting it right, and also the most common misspellings that we've found in our research, so you can check to see if any of the same mistakes have been tripping you up.

Correct spelling	Spelling advice	Common misspelling
<u>accommodate</u> , <u>accommodation</u>	two cs , two ms	accomodate, acomodation
<u>achieve</u>	i before e	acheive
<u>across</u>	one c	accross
<u>aggressive</u> , <u>aggression</u>	two gs	agressive, agression
<u>apparently</u>	-ent not -ant	apparrantly
<u>appearance</u>	ends with -ance	appearence
<u>argument</u>	no e after the u	arguement
<u>assassination</u>	two double s 's	assasination
<u>basically</u>	ends with -ally	basicly
<u>beginning</u>	double n before the -ing	begining
<u>believe</u>	i before e	beleive, belive
<u>bizarre</u>	one z , double -r	bizzare
<u>business</u>	begins with busi-	buisness
<u>calendar</u>	-ar not -er	calender

<u>Caribbean</u>	one r , two bs	Carribean
<u>cemetery</u>	ends with -ery	cemetary
<u>chauffeur</u>	ends with -eur	chauffer
<u>colleague</u>	-ea- in the middle	collegue
<u>coming</u>	one m	comming
<u>committee</u>	double m , double t , double e	commitee
<u>completely</u>	ends with -ely	completly
<u>conscious</u>	-sc- in the middle	concious
<u>curiosity</u>	-os- in the middle	curiosity
<u>definitely</u>	-ite- not -ate-	definately
<u>dilemma</u>	-mm- not -mn-	dilemna
<u>disappear</u>	one s , two ps	dissapear
<u>disappoint</u>	one s , two ps	dissapoint
<u>ecstasy</u>	ends with -sy	ecstasy
<u>embarrass</u>	two rs , two s's	embarass
<u>environment</u>	n before the m	enviroment
<u>existence</u>	ends with -ence	existance
<u>Fahrenheit</u>	begins with Fahr-	Farenheit
<u>familiar</u>	ends with -iar	familar
<u>finally</u>	two ls	finaly
<u>fluorescent</u>	begins with fluor-	florescent

<u>foreign</u>	e before i	foriegn
<u>foreseeable</u>	begins with fore-	forseeable
<u>forty</u>	begins with for-	fourty
<u>forward</u>	begins with for-	foward
<u>friend</u>	i before e	freind
<u>further</u>	begins with fur-	futher
<u>gist</u>	begins with g-	jist
<u>glamorous</u>	-mor- in the middle	glamourous
<u>government</u>	n before the m	goverment
<u>guard</u>	begins with gua-	gaurd
<u>happened</u>	ends with -ened	happend
<u>harass, harassment</u>	one r , two s 's	harrass, harrassment
<u>honorary</u>	-nor- in the middle	honourary
<u>humorous</u>	-mor- in the middle	humourous
<u>idiosyncrasy</u>	ends with -asy	idiosyncracy
<u>immediately</u>	ends with -ely	immediatly
<u>incidentally</u>	ends with -ally	incidently
<u>independent</u>	ends with -ent	independant
<u>interrupt</u>	two rs	interupt
<u>irresistible</u>	ends with -ible	irresistable
<u>knowledge</u>	remember the d	knowlege

<u>liaise, liaison</u>	remember the second i : liais-	liase, liason
<u>lollipop</u>	i in the middle	lollypop
<u>millennium, millennia</u>	double l , double n	millenium, millenia
<u>Neanderthal</u>	ends with -thal	Neandertal
<u>necessary</u>	one c , two s 's	neccessary
<u>noticeable</u>	remember the middle e	noticable
<u>occasion</u>	two cs , one s	ocassion, occassion
<u>occurred, occurring</u>	two cs , two rs	occured, occuring
<u>occurrence</u>	two cs , two rs , -ence not -ance	occurance, occurence
<u>pavilion</u>	one l	pavillion
<u>persistent</u>	ends with -ent	persistant
<u>pharaoh</u>	ends with -aoh	pharoah
<u>piece</u>	i before e	peice
<u>politician</u>	ends with -cian	politican
<u>Portuguese</u>	ends with -guese	Portugese
<u>possession</u>	two s 's in the middle and two at the end	posession
<u>preferred, preferring</u>	two rs	prefered, prefering
<u>propaganda</u>	begins with propa-	propoganda
<u>publicly</u>	ends with -cly	publically
<u>really</u>	two ls	realy

<u>receive</u>	e before i	recieve
<u>referred</u> , referring	two rs	refered, refering
<u>religious</u>	ends with -gious	religous
<u>remember</u>	-mem- in the middle	rember, remeber
<u>resistance</u>	ends with -ance	resistence
<u>sense</u>	ends with -se	sence
<u>separate</u>	-par- in the middle	seperate
<u>siege</u>	i before e	seige
<u>successful</u>	two cs, two s's	succesful
<u>supersede</u>	ends with -sede	supercede
<u>surprise</u>	begins with sur-	suprise
<u>tattoo</u>	two ts, two os	tatoo
<u>tendency</u>	ends with -ency	tendancy
<u>therefore</u>	ends with -fore	therefor
<u>threshold</u>	one h in the middle	threshhold
<u>tomorrow</u>	one m , two rs	tommorow, tommorrow
<u>tongue</u>	begins with ton- , ends with -gue	tounge
<u>truly</u>	no e	truely
<u>unforeseen</u>	remember the e after the r	unforseen
<u>unfortunately</u>	ends with -ely	unfortunatly
<u>until</u>	one l at the end	untill

<u>weird</u>	e before i	wierd
<u>wherever</u>	one e in the middle	whereever
<u>which</u>	begins with wh-	wich

Tips to Build vocabulary

A good vocabulary can help you communicate better in everyday life and express yourself in the best way possible. The better your vocabulary is, the more precise you can be about what you are saying or writing.

Reading is the single biggest thing that one can pursue to build vocabulary and needless to mention that it offers a whole host of other benefits as well. Without specifically trying to study vocabulary, one can encounter tons of new words, the meanings of which one can often glean from the context in which the word is situated.

However one should not rely exclusively on context or situation. Reading offers not just an awareness of words, but a real feel for them.

The broader and more challenging the reading selections are, the beefier the working vocabulary will become. Read high-caliber newspapers, journals and magazines.

Research

Research shows that the vast majority of words are learned from context. It may not be emphasized enough, as learning in context of situations and sentences has huge benefits for all three aspects of vocabulary acquisition, learning, recall and retention.

Vocabulary should always be learnt in context not in isolation.

There are many ways of introducing context into the vocabulary learning, the simplest being to learn vocabulary in sentences. This has additional benefits of introducing the readers to several words at a time, and clarifying their meaning which may not always be obvious from a simple dictionary translation.

Beyond sentences, one can experiment with learning words with stories, songs or just everyday situations.

For instance, rather than learning weather related words on their own, look up a weather forecast online, and try to imagine a conversation about weather next week, and how it will affect the picnic one has been looking forward to so much.

Listen to learn

One can pick up new words from the people one talk with and listen to. This is, after all, exactly how we learned words back when we were toddlers. We try to figure out the context and try them out ourselves.

The effectiveness of this listen-to-learn method depends on who we surround ourselves with. One should keep challenging oneself by associating with well-educated people, watching interesting lectures and taking the harder classes even if doing so makes one uncomfortable. Iron sharpens iron, and vocabulary of those with keen minds will rub off on us.

Write down unfamiliar words you read and hear

Reading and listening are effective ways to get exposed to new words. Write down the unfamiliar word encountered while listening or speaking in a pocket notebook (or smart phone) to retain the word in your memory better.

Use the Dictionary and Thesaurus

A word can have multiple meanings and shades of meaning, the author or speaker could possibly have used the word in a different context and even if one guesses the right meaning, there are chances of misinterpreting. Keep the definitions short, put it in your own words and immediately record it in your vocabulary notebook. One cannot really understand and remember the word if one can't explain it oneself.

Also, jot down the pronunciation of the word phonetically in a way you can understand. For example, for the word "oblique," pronunciation could be written as "oh-bleek." Try the e-dictionaries which have a button to click to hear the pronunciation.

In addition to using the appropriate word in the relevant place, pronunciation is equally important. Pronouncing the words incorrectly is worse than not using the words at all. After writing down the proper pronunciation, the word needs to be said aloud several times.

Check the thesaurus and write down the word's synonyms and antonyms to understand what the word signified better and if the situation demands, even draw a picture that can help you remember its meaning.

Use the new word

Use the new word several times in communication (spoken/written) as soon as you can. This will really help sear the word into your mind.

Online Research

Online research is a research method that involves the collection of information from the internet. With the advent of the internet, the traditional pen-and-paper research techniques have taken a backseat and made room for online research.

Online survey research is much more impactful than the traditional means, considering the ease of access and cost savings they come with. The response rates received for online research are much higher than the others as the respondents are assured that their identity will be protected.

There's a constant progress in the field of online survey research with the progress that's happening in the field of internet and social media. Social media has been a catalyst in the entire process of online research in terms of the access to the database and the experiments that can be conducted on this platform.

Online surveys, polls, questionnaires, forms, focus groups, are various tools of online research that are vital in gathering information essential for market research. The internet has created amazing avenues for small and large businesses for conducting market research with zero to minimum investment. Online research can be carried out for product testing, the targeting of an audience, database mining, customer satisfaction et al.

Online Research Methods and Techniques:

Researchers and statisticians collect data from respondents using various online research techniques. They are often called internet research or web-based research methods. Many of these research methods are already being used in one way or the other but are being revived for the online mediums. The latest in this line of online research methods is social media research as it offers extended levels of complexities and thus, new avenues for research are created.

1. **Online focus group:** A subset of the online research techniques, online focus groups are methods usually used for B2B research, consumer research and political research. A moderator is assigned to conduct and supervise the focus group who invites pre-selected and qualified participants who represent a specific area of interest to be a part of this focus group at a particular time. The respondents are usually incentivized for being a part of the discussion that usually is an hour and 90 minutes.
2. **Online interview:** This online research method is quite similar to the face-to-face interviews yet different in terms of the required standard practices, understanding with respondents and sampling. Online interviews are organized using various computer-mediated communication (CMC), essentially, SMS or Email. On the basis of the response time for these interviews, they're classified into synchronous and asynchronous methods. Synchronous online interviews are carried out via mediums such as online chat, where the responses are received in real-time while asynchronous online interviews are those that happen over Email where the responses are usually not in real-time. Just like face-to-face interviews,

the online interviews probe into respondent thoughts and feedbacks about a particular topic to get insights into their experiences, ideas or attitudes.

3. **Online qualitative research:** Other than the mainstream online focus groups and online interviews, there are various aspects of online qualitative research. These aspects include blogs, mobile diaries, and communities. These methods contribute towards cost and time savings and are supremely convenient for the researchers to gather information for their research topics. The level of sophistication that online qualitative research methods bring to the table is superior to any other traditional forms as the respondents can be either recruited from existing databases, panels or can be added by conducting surveys.
4. **Online text analysis:** This analysis technique is an extension of text analysis which exists since the 17th century which is a collection of various online research examples used to derive insights from content available online. By using this online research technique, researchers can explain penned, verbal or graphic communication formats. Categories such as web pages, paragraphs, sentences, quasi-sentences, documents, etc. It is most often used for quantitative research but for better interpretation of the text, researchers also use qualitative techniques.
5. **Social network analysis:** Social network analysis is an emerging online research technique which is gaining acceptance due to the increased adoption of social networking platforms. By conducting social network analysis, a researcher can map and measure flows and relationships between people, organizations, URLs, groups or computers using graph theory. For instance, the latest meme culture has developed new social structures in which the people associated are termed as “nodes” and memes are the “links” between these nodes.

Types of online research:

1. **Customer satisfaction research:** Earlier, this type of research used to be conducted over phone calls but nowadays, the customers are accustomed to getting a mail asking them to give their feedback on their recent experience with an organization. For instance, if you own a newly opened restaurant, you’d want to know the customer satisfaction. You can either have a survey ready for them to fill out after their meal or you can send it out after taking their email address or you can also use the offline app to conduct the survey.
2. **New product research:** The launch of a new product can be unnerving. Understanding whether a new product will be a success with the target audience is much needed. New product research can be carried out by testing the product with a group of selected guinea pigs and collecting feedback almost immediately. It can be highly effective when it comes to conducting research for a new outlet of a mall (read: Walmart!) or launch of a car variant or introducing adding new credit card options.
3. **Understand brand loyalty:** There are many small and big businesses who survive merely on brand loyalty. It’s surely a big deal but to every organization needs to work on it to either maintain or improve it. Conduct an online research to know what attracts a customer to a particular brand or the points that are currently keeping them from being loyal to your brand.
4. **Employee engagement and Employee satisfaction research:** Understanding what employees think about working with your organization is a key to success. The mood and morale of the employees must be tracked on a regular basis so that they effectively contribute towards the growth of the company. Surveys should be sent to improve employee engagement and to also strive to maintain employee satisfaction.

Things to keep in mind for online survey research

Online survey research is one of the most impactful ways to carry out web-based research that yield effective results. Here are a few points that all organizations should take care of while designing an online survey for research:

- **Give open-ended questions a miss:**

A respondent needs to think before submitting open-ended questions due to which the time taken for completion can increase. This can annoy them to a point where they'd simply quit the survey. Yes-No questions or multiple choice questions or ranking questions will be much easier for respondents to fill out and as effective as open-ended questions.

- **Show urgency but also be tolerant:**

In case you're wanting a response for something important, it's absolutely all right to send more than one invitations for respondents to fill it out. But, a prerequisite for this is that your database should be very well aware of this and they should have no objection towards it. Most importantly, once you've conducted an online survey, be patient for the results. Appoint someone from the team who will take care of the entire process of conducting this survey.

- **Precise surveys produce better results:**

Survey takers can sit through a survey that would take them a maximum of 25 minutes. They would usually quit to never return, even for the surveys that you might send out in the future. The inclusion of drop-down questions or multiple choice questions (with accurate options) will help you to reduce the size of the survey and in turn, the time invested by the survey takers.

Online Research Advantages:

- **Access to data across the globe:** Internet is an elaborate platform for researchers to invest their time in retrieving crucial information that would otherwise consume a lot of their time. It is very easy for them to conduct research even if they're lazing on their couch and have a deadline coming up.
- **Minimum investment of time and resources:** The online mediums have become the numero uno resort for individuals to look up for information to broaden their horizon of knowledge. There's information being updated day in and day out and researchers latch onto this information for their benefits. It has eased the process of publishing and collecting information and thus, saves a lot of time and money.
- **Central pool of facts and figures:** Researchers and statisticians keep searching for updated information on various important topics, students search the internet for academic purposes and this is the greatest edge the internet offers.
- **Capable tool for collecting information:** Surveys, questionnaires, and polls are being conducted via online mediums like emails or QR codes or embedded on the website etc. to gather or spread vital information.

What is Metasearch Engine?

The **Metasearch Engine** is a search engine that combines the results of various search engines into one and gives one result. It can also be stated as an online information retrieval tool. The Metasearch Engine was developed because individual search engines were prone to spams due to people trying to raise their website ranks online. The Search engine visits several websites and creates a database of these sites. This is also known as indexing. Any search engine answers several queries every second.

The metasearch engines run the queries on most other search engines and in turn reflect the result in the form of the summarization of such sites.

History

- It was developed by Daniel Dreilinger at Colorado State University. He developed Search Savvy that searched 20 websites to give back one result.
- MetaCrawler was developed by a student at the University of Washington named Erik Selberg. It was an advanced and updated version of the Search Savvy. It was not as good as the individual search engines.
- In the year 1996, HotBot was created which was faster than its predecessors and could search within their engines' search results. It was later simplified to serve as a search interface built on the official site of Lycos.
- The year 2000 saw HumHaiIndia.com which was India's first meta search engine that was developed by SumeetLamba. It was later called Taaza.com

Need for Metasearch Engines

The Metasearch Engines were developed to cover the entire web, unlike most search engines. Individual search Engines try to spam people to enhance their page rankings. This is an illegitimate way of promoting. The individual Search engines are unable to find results from other search engines. This is when the Metasearch Engine comes handy. This also supports multiple formats, unlike individual engines. The meta search engines seem effortless.

The Metasearch Engine Architecture

1. **User Interface:** The user interface of the Metasearch Engine is similar to the look and feel of the individual search engines like Google and Yahoo. It even has options to search on the basis of types and categories and also of which search engines it must use to write back the result.
2. **Dispatcher:** The dispatcher has the work of query generation.
3. **Display:** The display uses the queries to write back the results on the screen. It uses methods such as page ranks, parsing techniques, cluster formation, and stitching to give the desired result.
4. **Personalization:** The personalization in other words is being user-specific. This involves comparing the results with each other.

Operations of the Metasearch Engine

A metasearch engine does not create a database of itself rather it creates a federal database that is actually an integration of the databases of various other Search Engines. The 2 main ways of operations involved are :

1. **The architecture of Ranking:** Various search engines have their own ranking algorithms. A metasearch engine develops its own algorithm where it eliminates duplicate results and calculates a fresh ranking of the sites. This is because it understands that the websites

which are highly ranked on major sites are more relevant and would thereby provide better results.

2. **Fusion:** Fusion is used to create better and more efficient results. Fusion is divided into Collection Fusion and Data Fusion. The collection Fusion deals with search engines that contain unrelated data. The data sources are then ranked based on their content and the likelihood of providing relevant data. This is then recorded in a list. The Data Fusion deals with the search engines that have indexes for common data sets. The initial ranks of the data are compared with the original ranks. A process of Normalization is applied using techniques such as the CombSum algorithm.

Examples of Metasearch Engine

- Dogpile is a metasearch engine developed by InfoSpace LLC. It writes back results from the individual search engines of Google and Yahoo. It combines the search results of text, images, new, etc.
- Sputtr is comparably one of the best meta search engines that combines the results from various popular search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing, Ask.com, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, IMDb, Slashdot, Dictionary.com, About.com, New York Times, etc.
- Another popular site is Trivago, a hotel booking site that mentions this concept in its advertisements. It gives back results from over 100 other hotel booking sites including Booking.com, Airbnb, Expedia, Trip.com, and Agoda. Trivago can be visited at www.trivago.com.

Advantages of Metasearch Engines

1. The meta search engine searches for all the search engines at once hence individual search is unnecessary.
2. As a very user-friendly toolbar that can be easily downloaded.
3. Searching for the white pages and yellow pages are allowed in the metasearch engine.
4. The metasearch engine comes free of cost. Its services are similar to those offered by other search engines.
5. The users can customize the metasearch engine according to their preferences.
6. The results offer coverage data that include more information than results by individual sites.
7. It reduces the workload of the users by allowing comprehensive results in very little time skipping the time and toil of searching for results in the individual sites.
8. Metasearching is a better alternative to searching if getting an overview or quick results is the motive.
9. The Metasearch engines provide a means of hiding the IP addresses from the searches. This provides a lot of security to the user. This is the reason why the French Government uses Qwant (metasearch engine) for its operations.

Disadvantages of Metasearch Engines

1. The meta search engine is not capable of Parsing.
2. It is not as popular as other searches like Google and Yahoo search engines.
3. The meta search engine is not capable of fully translating the query syntax.
4. Its reliability is comparable to the other search engines.
5. They usually prioritize the pay per click types of links before the more relevant search results.
6. The results usually incorporate up to 10 links from a particular site leaving out important links from major sites.

7. The number of hyperlinks provided is limited thereby giving incomplete search query results.

Types of Web Sites

There are many types of Web sites, each catering to a particular type of content or use. Identifying and classifying all of them may appear arbitrary. Hence, few illustrative but not exhaustive cases are given below:

- 1) Blog (Web Log): site generally used to post online diaries which may include discussion forums,
- 2) Forum: a site where people discuss various topics,
- 3) Mirror Site: a complete reproduction of a Web site,
- 4) Social Networking Site: where users could communicate with one another and share media, such as pictures, videos, music, blogs, etc. with other users. These may include games and Web applications,
- 5) Wiki Site: which users collaboratively edit (such as Wikipedia and Wikihow),
- 6) Web Portal: that provides a starting point or a gateway to other resources on the Internet or an intranet, 7) Search Engine Site: a site that provides general information and is intended as a gateway or lookup for other sites like Google, Yahoo, Bing search engines,
- 8) School Site: where teachers, students, or administrators can post information about current events at or involving their school,
- 9) Community Site: a site where persons with similar interests communicate with each other, usually by chat or message boards, such as MySpace or Facebook.
- 10) Corporate Web Site: used to provide background information about a business, organization, or service.

Where and How to host your Web Site

Web Hosting: Free and Fee-based Web hosting can be free or paid. There are many agencies (Internet Service Providers) that provide you with free hosting facility. The drawbacks of free hosting are that the traffic/visibility of the site could be poor as the natural search engines won't place/rank you well. Besides, the ISPs tend to place advertisements on your Web site to cover their expenses which may not be to your liking. Another alternative is to host the Web site on your own server. Organisations that have steady IT set-up resort to this. The third option is to share a multiple Web hosting package against payment (which is not much expensive now-a-days). [Multiple domain hosting packages can be viewed and selected from the Internet to choose the one that suits you].

Upload the Site: The next step is to upload the Web site to a Web-hosting company that will display the site on the Internet, 24 hours a day, all days of the year. Refer to Web-hosting directories (and they are aplenty on the Web. Search by the term ‘_Web-hosting Directories’) which will help you select one that suits you by cost and facilities. Once you choose the Web-hosting company and pay the fee, the Web site can be uploaded to their server. This company will provide you with necessary software and instructions in uploading, updating and maintaining the Web site.

Modify the Site: Once hosted you can update/modify the Web site as you require. You may display the information, add e-mail link for feed back, or provide chat-rooms /bulletin boards you as you please.

Important Web Issues

There are many points one should keep in mind while designing and hosting a Web site. Adherence to these will help evolving sites which are liked by users and, thereby, attract more visits.

Usability Issues

A Web site can be rated as usable if the users return to the site again and again. If a visitor has to work hard to find information /details of a product, he is not going to do that. Hence reaching the information should be made easier for the user. What are the parameters that make a site usable/ easily accessible to the users? They are discussed below:

a) Information Availability-- All the information that helps a visitor make informed decisions should be in the Web site. The general benchmark of a good Web site is that it should be providing 80-90 % of what a user/visitor is looking for. To illustrate, take the case of sale of a product like ‘_pen drives’, a brief one line summary with a further link to a page detailing the features and price and arrangement for the purchase should attract the buyers.

Page layout: How the content is displayed on the page -- The page should be laid in such a way people

should be able to find relevant content quickly. Else they lose interest and leave the site. Page should be clean and simple. Keep only those elements that enhance the usability of the page.

c) Colours -- Standard colours should be used as colours can affect the usability of the site. For example, the standard colours used for links (blue for links; violet for visited links; and red for active links) should be maintained as one runs the risk of confusing the visitors,

d) Download Speed -- The speed of the download is very important as delays can weary away the

visitors. As you, as a Web designer, can't determine the speed, do what you can that will not slow down the download. Some considerations are optimizing the graphics (images not larger than 10 kb), making smaller pages (say, not more than 30 kb), and avoiding nested tables though they improve the layout enormously. It is also to be noted that advertisements served from different servers may slow down your site. Also check

the condition of the Web server periodically as to whether it needs upgradation which should include the bandwidth too.

Web Accessibility

Web accessibility means accessibility to all including people with disabilities (like visual, audio, physical, speech, cognitive, neurological, including people with waning abilities due to advanced age) can interact and /or contribute to the Web. As more and more accessible Web sites and software are made available, people with disabilities should be able to use and contribute the Web more effectively. Web accessibility providing equal access and opportunity to all enable people to participate more actively in society.

Appearance is Secondary

Do not focus too much on appearance. It's often found that people exhaust all their energy at the beginning itself in getting the appearance of the Webpage to their entire satisfaction and in the process are left with less time and patience on the content part. Hence start with the basic appearance and improve, if so felt, later. In short, appearance is important but the excess importance placed on appearance at the beginning may be avoided as it may be at the cost of more important elements of a Web page.

User-friendly Site.

Your audience is the key. You must know the pulse of the audience when it comes to gauging their information requirements. Create content of what they require. Also make the content of your site easily reachable. Easy access or reachability presupposes creation of intelligent/logical navigational system. Some general rules are given below: a) make navigational bar/panel in all pages, b) provide short cuts to pages/contents where visitors are likely to want to go. Do not force them to go to main page or the Site Map if they need to visit another page in the site i.e put direct links to the logical places., c) make sure your site is visible to all visitors i. e your menu is not confined to a particular browser but to as many as possible like Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox Netscape and Safari. d) Use Site Map: Site Map is one page where you list all the contents of your site and the visitor can easily navigate to the one he wants i. e it provides another route to other pages. e) Provision of search box (implying provision of a search engine on your site) - where the site has a large number of pages the search box will be much helpful in finding relevant information faster. You could find most of all these facilities provided in the Web site of IGNOU, which's quite a large site in itself.

Search Engine Visibility

If your site cannot be found through search engines, you do not exist to the world. How to make the site visible to search engines is the biggest issue you will encounter. Hence find more information on the topic from the net or from books on how to get listed in the search engines. (It's not discussed as it is a large topic and not in the scope of this Unit)

Summary

This unit is divided into four parts viz., 1) introduction to Web and Web sites, 2) what a Web site is and what is it all about, 3) the basics of hosting the Web and 4) the factors to be kept in mind while designing and hosting the Web site. The introduction describes who the Web site creators are and for what reasons they design and host Web sites. It covers individuals, business enterprises, organizations (including government, NGOs) and entertainment entities. The second part on the concept of Web site deals with the fundamental elements of Web (besides the concept itself) and various types of Web sites. It also strives to distinguish between static and dynamic Web sites and also between Internet and Web. A brief insight into the development and history of Web site is also attempted at. The third part on the basics in the hosting the Web delineates various options in hosting the Web like free and fee based Web hosting. On the second option, this unit further dwells on various steps to go through before hosting a Web. The final part deals with matters that should be kept in mind while designing a Web, with a view to creating more functional and sought after Web pages.

The concepts of logo

Logo design is the process of designing a logo. And branding the process to build a brand. Therefore, to better understand the difference between logo design and branding, it is important to first define the concepts of a logo and a brand:

Logo definition

A logo is an easily recognizable graphic symbol that identifies a company, a commercial product, or any public or private entity. It is one of the ways to distinguish a brand in a competitive world, full of graphic elements that try to attract our attention every day. A logo is generally a combination of typographies, graphics/symbols, and colors. It is a graphic element that is part of the visual identity of a brand.

Brand definition

A brand is the idea or image people have in mind when thinking about specific products, services, and activities of a company, both in a practical and emotional way. This combination of physical and emotional cues is triggered when exposed to all the touchpoints between a person and a specific brand. These can be the brand name, logo, products, visual identity, staff, or advertising – amongst others.

For example the CHANEL brand

After seeing the logo, and if you are a bit familiar with the brand, some images and emotions might come to your mind, and it might look something like the photo collage above. Some

people might feel a sense of luxury and elegance, recall the founder of the brand as a fashion icon, think of the products (make-up, clothes, accessories), French haute couture, the high prices, or the in-store experience. The experience and perception will be different for each one of us. However, as a result of CHANEL's branding strategy, the overall impression of the brand should be quite similar to the general population.

What's the difference between logo design and branding?

Logo design is the process of designing a logo.

Branding is the process of building a brand. To be more specific, it is a strategy designed by companies to help people to quickly identify their products and organization, and give them a reason to choose their products over the competition. A branding strategy clarifies what a particular brand is and is not.

Branding can be done through the use of different tools. Some of the elements that are used in a branding strategy are:

- **Brand definition:** purpose, values, promise
- **Brand positioning statement**
- **Brand identity:** name, tone of voice, visual identity design (**which includes the logo design**)
- **Advertising and communications:** TV, radio, magazines, outdoor ads, website, mobile apps...
- **Sponsoring and partnerships**
- **Product and packaging design**
- **In-store experience**
- **Workspace experience and management style**
- **Customer service**
- **Pricing strategy**

As we can see, logo design is one of the tools used to design the visual identity of a brand.

Why is the logo so important for branding purposes?

Although a logo is only one of the elements of branding, it will most likely appear on the majority of touchpoints with customers and other stakeholders, such as the website, brochures, stationery, product, packaging, ads, uniforms, stores, and so on.

A logo can therefore be considered as one of the main graphic elements that allow people to quickly identify an organization, its products, and services. And quite often, it will be the first thing people will use to identify you.

Here is why a well-designed logo is so important for branding purposes:

Tags and Categories

Tags and categories are very similar, and both serve the same purpose of helping you organize the content on your website.

Understanding WordPress Categories

Categories are the most general way of grouping content in WordPress. They represent a broad topic or group of topics that are related. Categories are hierarchical and, therefore, make for an excellent way to structure the content on your website. While a post can belong to many blog categories, it's advisable that you don't add it to more than 15 (most bloggers recommend three). For example, if you run a make-money-online blog, one of your categories could be "affiliate marketing." Under this category would be all your blog posts geared towards affiliate marketing. You can also create subcategories like "affiliate marketing Tips," "affiliate marketing tools," and so on. Other examples of categories you can consider include:

Blogging

The main point is to create categories that show the broad topics you'll be covering on your blog.

How to Create a Category in WordPress

To create a category in WordPress, click on the "Posts" tab and select the "Categories" option.

To create a category in WordPress, click the "category" tab under the "Posts" section of the WordPress settings.

This will open up a page where you'll create and name your category. Once done, click on the "Create Category" button, and your category will be created.

A few elements to include in your category include:

Category name

Slug or URL structure of the category

The name of the "Parent Category" if it's a child category
Description, although this is optional
When you create a new blog post, you can assign it a category by heading to the "Post" settings in WordPress.

Once a category is created, you can assign it to a page by heading to the "Post" settings and ticking the appropriate category. It's important to note that while you may have as many categories as you want, it's best to keep them limited to ensure your blog is focused. A good number would be between 5-10 categories. On the same note, never leave a post uncategorized, as this won't make any sense to users. So, if you have any posts marked as "uncategorized", revisit them and add them to a relevant category.

Understanding WordPress Tags

Tags are another way WordPress uses to help you organize your content so users can easily find it.

what's the difference between tags and categories?

While categories indicate the genre of your post, tags are more specific and indicate the specific topic your post seeks to cover. The best tags use a few words to describe what the post is about. Best practices suggest that they should include your keyword or variations of it.

Let's say you create a post on affiliate marketing best practices, examples of some tags you could use include:

Tags can be added the same way as categories. When naming them, remember the difference between tags and categories.

Unlike categories, you can add as many tags as you want to a blog post. However, keep them limited as anything more than 15 tags and categories combined per post can be considered being spammy. The whole point of tags is to let users know at a glance what your blog post is all about.

what about the SEO benefit of tags?

Google's John Mueller publicly debunked the myth that tags have an impact on SEO. They're primarily used to help users and search engines navigate through your posts.

Categories vs. Tags — Which is Better?

Between categories and tags, which should you use?

Is one better than the other? The short answer is no.

While you always have to use categories, you don't always have to use tags. However, it's better if you do because both help users easily navigate your site. They also help search engines crawl your website more easily and understand what it's about.

As you can see, both are instrumental in helping organize your content in a user-friendly way.

How Do You Optimize Your Categories and Tags for SEO?

Another question many ask is the impact of categories and tags on SEO, and which is better for SEO. While both don't directly impact SEO, they impact the user experience (UX) of your website. This has a bearing on your SEO, as search engines are all about ensuring they give users the best possible experience. However, there is another way in which categories and tags can impact your SEO. If you leave them in their default settings, categories and tags can negatively impact your SEO.

Wrapping Up

While categories and tags may appear to be similar, they are different. And understanding how to use each is important to ensuring that your users can easily find what they're looking for. This will help increase the time they spend on your website and, ultimately, improve your conversion rates. Now you know the difference between tags and categories. So, go ahead and revisit your website and properly categorize and tag your posts.

Business Writing

What is Business Writing?

Business writing is a type of writing that is used in a professional setting. It is a purposeful piece of writing that conveys relevant information to the reader in a clear, concise, and effective manner. It includes client proposals, reports, memos, emails, and notices. Proficiency in business writing is a critical aspect of effective communication in the workplace.

Summary

- **Business writing is a purposeful piece of writing that conveys relevant information to the reader in a clear, concise, and effective manner.**
- **It can be categorized into four types: instructional, informational, persuasive, and transactional.**
- **Clarity of thought, conciseness, correct grammar and sentence structure, and simple language characterize effective business writing.**

Types of Business Writing

The broad field of business writing can be distilled into four categories based on their objective, such as:

1. Instructional

The instructional business writing type is directional and aims to guide the reader through the steps of completing a task. A user manual falls aptly under the instructional category, as well as a memo issued to all employees outlining the method of completing a certain task in the future.

2. Informational

Informational business writing pertains to recording business information accurately and consistently. It comprises documents essential to the core functions of the business for tracking growth, outlining plans, and complying with legal obligations. For example, the financial statements of a company, minutes of the meeting, and perhaps the most important, report writing.

3. Persuasive

The goal of persuasive writing is to impress the reader and influence their decision. It conveys relevant information to convince them that a specific product, service, company, or relationship offers the best value. Such a type of writing is generally associated with marketing and sales. It includes proposals, bulk sales emails, and press releases.

4. Transactional

Day-to-day communication at the workplace falls under the transactional business writing category. The bulk of such communication is by email, but also includes official letters, forms, and invoices.

Principles of Good Business Writing

1. Clarity of purpose

Before beginning a business document, memo, or email, one should ponder two primary questions:

- Who is the reader?
- What do I want to convey to the reader through my writing?

Clarity of purpose gives a direction to the writing and develops its tone, structure, and flow.

2. Clarity of thought

Thinking while, rather than before writing, makes the writing less structured, meandering, and repetitive. Business writing requires the skill to reduce long, rambling sentences into concise, clear ones. One needs to extract what is significant to write clearly.

3. Convey accurate and relevant information

The primary goal of business writing is to convey valuable information. Inaccurate or irrelevant content affects the purpose of the document. For effective business writing, information must be value-additive and complete.

4. Avoid jargon

A simple and uncluttered writing style goes a long way in communicating the message to the reader. Grandiose writing full of industry-specific buzzwords and acronyms should be avoided to the maximum possible extent. Otherwise, the reader may be unable to comprehend the document or lose interest in it.

5. Read and revise

Reading the passages out loud after completion can reveal flaws and gaps in the arguments. It is recommended to welcome constructive feedback from colleagues and revise the document for improvement.

6. Practice is the key

Proficiency in business writing can be attained through regular practice. Paying attention to the vocabulary, sentence structure, and style of writing while reading can help to develop the same instinct while penning one's thoughts down.

7. Be direct

Presenting the crux of the passage in the first 150 words is a good idea when it comes to business writing. It saves the reader time and sharpens the argument.

8. Avoid verbosity

If the meaning can be conveyed in three words, it should not be stretched to five. Verbosity works against making the writing engaging to the reader. For example, instead of writing “the article uses more words than are needed,” write “the article is verbose.”

9. Correct grammar and sentence structure

While a grammatical error may come across as unprofessional, good grammar portrays both attention to detail and skill – traits that are highly valued in business. Business writing evolves with time, so does grammar and conventions. For example, emoticons, when used judiciously, are gaining acceptance in business writing. A good writer needs to stay updated with the conventions to hone their skill.

10. Easy to scan

Business executives value a document that can convey its message in a cursory glance. Business documents can be enhanced through the use of numbered or bulleted lists, clear headings, concise paragraphs, and judicious use of bold formatting to highlight the keywords.

Technical writing is writing or drafting technical communication used in technical and occupational fields, such as computer hardware and software, engineering, chemistry, aeronautics, robotics, finance, medical, consumer electronics, biotechnology, and forestry. Technical writing encompasses the largest sub-field in technical communication.

The Society for Technical Communication defines technical communication as any form of communication that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics: communicating about technical or specialized topics, such as computer applications, medical procedures, or environmental regulations; communicating by using technology, such as web pages, help files, or social media sites; or providing instructions about how to do something, regardless of how technical the task is".

Technical writing is performed by a technical writer (or technical author) and is the process of writing and sharing technical information in a professional setting. A technical writer's primary task is to communicate technical information to another person or party in the clearest and most effective manner possible. The information that technical writers communicate is often complex, so strong writing and communication skills are essential. Technical writers not only convey information through text, but they must be proficient with computers as well. Technical writers use a wide range of programs to create and edit illustrations, diagramming programs to create visual aids, and document processors to design, create, and format documents.

While technical writing is commonly associated with online help and user manuals, the term technical documentation can cover a wider range of genres and technologies. Press releases, memos, reports, business proposals, datasheets, product

descriptions and specifications, white papers, résumés, and job applications are but a few examples of writing that can be considered technical documentation.^[5] Some types of technical documentation are not typically handled by technical writers. For example, a press release is usually written by a public relations writer, though a technical writer might have input on any technical information included in the press release.

Technical documents

Technical writing covers many genres and writing styles, depending on the information and audience. Technical documents are not solely produced by technical writers. Almost anyone who works in a professional setting produces technical documents of some variety. Some examples of technical documentation include:

Instructions and procedures are documents that help either developers or end-users operate or configure a device or program. Examples of instructional documents include user manuals and troubleshooting guides for computer programs, computer hardware, household products, medical equipment, mechanical products, and automobiles.

Proposals. Most projects begin with a proposal—a document that describes the purpose of a project, the tasks that will be performed in the project, the methods used to complete the project, and finally, the cost of the project. Proposals cover a wide range of subjects. For example, a technical writer may author a proposal that outlines how much it will cost to install a new computer system, a marketing professional may write a proposal with the product offerings, and a teacher may write a proposal that outlines how a new biology class will be structured.

Emails, letters, and memoranda are some of the most frequently written documents in a business. Letters and emails can be constructed with a variety of goals—some are usually aimed at simply communicating information while others are designed to persuade the recipient to accomplish a certain task. While letters are usually written to people outside of a company, memoranda (memos) are documents written to other employees within the business.

Press releases. When a company wants to publicly reveal a new product or service, they will have a writer author a press release. This is a document that describes the product's functions and value to the public.^[14]

Specifications are design outlines that describe the structure, parts, packaging, and delivery of an object or process in enough detail that another party can reconstruct it. For example, a technical writer might diagram and write the specifications for a smartphone or bicycle so that a manufacturer can produce the object.

Descriptions are shorter explanations of procedures and processes that help readers understand how something works. For example, a technical writer might author a document that shows the effects of greenhouse gases or demonstrates how the braking system on a bike functions.

Résumés and job applications are another example of technical documents. They are documents that are used in a professional setting to inform readers of the author's credentials.

Technical reports are written to provide readers with information, instructions, and analysis for tasks. Reports come in many forms. For example, a technical writer might evaluate a building that is for sale and produce a trip report that highlights his or her findings and whether he or she believes the building should be purchased. Another writer who works for a non-profit company may publish an evaluation report that shows the findings of the company's research into air pollution.

Case study is a published report about a person, group, or situation that has been studied over time; *also* : a situation in real life that can be looked at or studied to learn about something. For example, an individual's challenging situation at his or her workplace and how he or she resolved it is a case study.

White papers are documents that are written for experts in a field and typically describe a solution to a technological or business challenge or problem. Examples of white papers include a piece that details how to make a business stand out in the market or a piece explaining how to prevent cyber-attacks on businesses.

Websites. The advent of hypertext has changed the way documents are read, organized, and accessed. Technical writers of today are often responsible for authoring pages on websites like "About Us" pages or product pages. They are often expected to be proficient in web development tools.

Datasheets are the documents that summarize the features, key specifications, technical characteristics, application circuits, and some other important information about the product, machine, equipment, software, application, or system in brief.

API guides are written for the developer community and are used to explain the application programming interfaces.

Help systems are online help centers that provide users with technical information about products and services. They provide content as web pages that are viewed in a browser. The content may be created in help center software, such as Zendesk, or in help authoring tools or component content management systems that can create a help center as an HTML output.

Academic writing

What is academic writing?

Academic writing is clear, concise, focussed, structured and backed up by evidence. Its purpose is to aid the reader's understanding. It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complex and does

not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary. Each subject discipline will have certain writing conventions, vocabulary and types of discourse that you will become familiar with over the course of your degree. However, there are some general characteristics of academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines.

Characteristics of academic writing

Academic writing is:

- **Planned and focused:** answers the question and demonstrates an understanding of the subject.
- **Structured:** is coherent, written in a logical order, and brings together related points and material.
- **Evidenced:** demonstrates knowledge of the subject area, supports opinions and arguments with evidence, and is referenced accurately.
- **Formal in tone and style:** uses appropriate language and tenses, and is clear, concise and balanced.

Most formal academic writing at university is set by, and written for, an academic tutor or assessor, and there should be clear criteria against which they will mark your work. You will need to spend some time interpreting your question and deciding how to tackle your assignment. If you are writing for yourself – for example making notes to record or make sense of something – then you can set your own criteria such as clarity, brevity, and relevance. See our Note making pages for further help. Once you have a clear idea of what is required for your assignment, you can start planning your research and gathering evidence. See our Planning your assignment pages for advice on breaking down the different steps in this process.

Create the overall structure

Some academic writing, such as lab or business reports, will have a fairly rigid structure, with headings and content for each section. For more details see our Report writing pages. In other

formats, writing usually follows the same overall structure: introduction, main body and conclusion.

The introduction outlines the main direction the writing will take, and gives any necessary background information and context. In the main body each point is presented, explored and developed. These points must be set out in a logical order, to make it easier for the reader to follow and understand.

The conclusion brings together the main points, and will highlight the key message or argument you want the reader to take away. It may also identify any gaps or weaknesses in the arguments or ideas presented, and recommend further research or investigation where appropriate.

Arrange your points in a logical order

When you start writing you should have a clear idea of what you want to say. Create a list of your main points and think about what the reader needs to know and in what order they will need to know it. To select the main points you want to include, ask yourself whether each point you have considered really contributes to answering the question. Is the point relevant to your overall argument?

Select appropriate evidence that you will use to support each main point. Think carefully about which evidence to use, you must evaluate that information as not everything you find will be of high quality.

See our searching for information page for advice on how to find high quality, academic information. Grouping your points may help you create a logical order. These groups will broadly fit into an overall pattern, such as for and against, thematic, chronological or by different schools of thought or approach. You can then put these groups into a sequence that the reader can follow and use to make sense of the topic or argument. It may be helpful to talk through your argument with someone. It may be helpful to arrange ideas initially in the form of a mind-map, which allows you to develop key points with supporting information branching off.

MindView software (available on most university computers) allows you to create an essay structure where you can add in pictures, files and attachments – perfect for organising evidence to support your point.

Write in structured paragraphs

Use paragraphs to build and structure your argument, and separate each of your points into a different paragraph. Make your point clear in the first or second sentence of the paragraph to help the reader to follow the line of reasoning. The rest of the paragraph should explain the point in greater detail, and provide relevant evidence and examples where necessary or useful. Your interpretation of this evidence will help to substantiate your thinking and can lend weight to your argument. At the end of the paragraph you should show how the point you have made is significant to the overall argument or link to the next paragraph. See constructing focused paragraphs for an example.

Use signalling words when writing

Using signalling words will help the reader to understand the structure of your work and where you might be taking your argument. Use signalling words to:

- add more information eg furthermore, moreover, additionally
- compare two similar points eg similarly, in comparison
- show contrasting viewpoints eg however, in contrast, yet
- show effect or conclusion eg therefore, consequently, as a result
- emphasise eg significantly, particularly
- reflect sequence eg first, second, finally.

(Adapted from Signal words from Clark College, Vancouver)

The Manchester Academic Phrasebank at has more examples of signalling words to use in your work. Words like these help make the structure of your writing more effective and can clarify the flow and logic of your argument.

Here are some examples in practice:

“Using a laboratory method was beneficial as a causal relationship could be established between cognitive load and generating attributes. **However**, this method creates an artificial setting which reduces the study's ecological validity.”

In this example the use of the word however at the beginning of the second sentence indicates that a contrasting point of view is about to be made. It also suggests that the writer may have more sympathy with the second opinion. “**Firstly**, the concepts and person centred care will be defined.... Next, communication will be discussed... **Finally**, the relationship between loss and communication will be examined.” [Taken from a Healthcare essay] In this example the writer has used signalling words to demonstrate the sequence of their argument by using Firstly, next, finally making the structure of the essay very clear.

“Employee satisfaction is justifiable to employees because it causes an improvement on their well being (Grandley, 2003). **Moreover**, employees that are in a good mood at work are less likely to act because their true feelings are in accordance with the needed display of emotions (Grandley, 2003).” [Taken from a Business School essay]

The use of the word moreover tells the reader that the next sentence will provide further evidence or information to support the statement made in the first sentence. It also suggest that the writer strongly agrees with the first statement.

Revise, edit and proofread your work

Most writing will require several drafts and revisions in order to improve the clarity and structure. It is rare that a writer will make the very best decisions in the first draft. See our editing and proofreading pages for more details.

How to Write an Email?

Email writing is an essential part of professional communication. It is not easy to get people to respond to your emails if they do not feel interested in your message or proposal. This is exactly the reason why you should learn to write good emails. Be bold. Get to the point right away. The best email communication is the one that is simple and clear.

There are a few tips you have to keep in mind when you sit down to write emails. Emails can be casual or professional, just like informal and formal letters. The format of the email changes according to the kind of email you are writing. However, accurate grammar and spelling are aspects that are to be taken seriously.

When you start writing an email,

- Make sure you type in the right email id. Always check with the receiver for the exact **email address** because even a full stop that is not part of the email address can land your email either with the wrong person or the mail would simply bounce.
- The **Subject** line is the next most important factor you should carefully consider because that is the first thing anyone receiving the email would see. It also determines if the receiver would want to open the mail. ‘The from line is what recipients use to determine whether to delete an email. The subject line is what motivates people to actually open the email.’, said Loren McDonald. Spend double the time you spend on drafting the body to draft the subject.
- See to that your **Salutation or Greeting** is appropriate to the receiver/s. The greeting builds a rapport.
- The **Body** of the email states what the email is about. Be clear with what you want your receiver to know. Make sure you have everything you want to convey drafted in simple

terms. Do not use colloquial language or long unwinding sentences. Try not to repeat words or use cliched terms. Make your message positive, even if you're turning down an offer. If you have to follow, do it before they remind you to. Keep it short. Use standard font style and size. Do a final spelling/grammar check/proofread.

- Finally, **Sign off** the email on a polite note and proofread it before hitting send. The closing should feel genuine; only then will the receiver want to respond.

What is a newsletter?

A newsletter is a tool used to communicate regularly with your subscribers, delivering the information you want in your email boxes, these messages can contain simple text or a structure composed of images and formatted text. In practice, we all receive several newsletters daily, and it is, in a sense, a way to maintain regular contact with the brands we follow.

What is the purpose of a newsletter?

Newsletters are often used by people who have websites, blogs, or e-commerce to advertise a product, content, article, communicate an event, or engage in remarketing campaigns, such as the abandoned cart — not forgetting the typical transactional communication (order confirmation, sending, etc.).

- Maintain a Regular Contact
- That your website or blog does not fall into oblivion
- Increase Visitors, Encourage Visitors to Visit
- Send Different Types of Content to Relevant
- Create Visiting Habits
- Attract Traffic.

What makes a newsletter so effective a marketing tool for businesses?

Email marketing, where newsletters are included, continues to be an inescapable topic when it comes to digital marketing, because it may be the channel where we can further personalize our communication and, if well worked, do not massacre the user with repeated messages or useless.

However, as necessary as that is the low cost that each shipment has. If you have an e-commerce you surely know how much this can impact your sales, your profit margin and also the potential that brings you in the relationship with your customers. So is it worth investing in email marketing and in sending newsletters? Of course yes!

However, is it easy to send newsletters? Not really.

Also, the truth is that there are many businesses already understood that email marketing and the sending of newsletters works, however, do not know how to start and so are leaving an essential tool on the table. In practice, the sending of a newsletter presupposes a multidisciplinary knowledge, since the one who sends the newsletter, has to elaborate the design of the newsletter, to prepare the message that wishes to pass, to define objectives, to send and to know to analyze the results of this sending. However, regarding the sending of the newsletter, we will talk later in this article.

What is the difference between newsletter and email marketing?

Well, the term email marketing is an all or nothing self-explanatory. After all, what is email marketing? Email marketing is an indispensable part of Digital Marketing that, in a very brief way, uses email as a sales channel and as a means of maintaining regular communication with its audience. It is the oldest technique in the world of digital marketing and remains, to date, as the best (without any realistic prediction that it can be dethroned). We can always think of email marketing as the strategic component that uses the email channel for, while the newsletter is the element that allows the application of the same strategy in the same channel (email). A newsletter is built based on the HTML language, with precise rules of construction, something different from those used in the sites, as it faces numerous software that will interpret this HTML and then show the user. The process of building a newsletter, from its HTML code, will undoubtedly be time-consuming, something complex but, above all, unnecessary. Currently, there are online software dedicated to the construction of newsletters, with systems that greatly simplify the construction process, allowing those who are creating the newsletter, to worry mainly about the message and, later, data analysis.

Examples of Newsletter Templates

Even simpler is the use of templates/newsletters templates. E-goi e-mail publishers have templates already created, some of them more generic, others themed, such as themes suitable for Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and even templates to integrate with your online store Magento and / WordPress (WooCommerce). If you need to send a newsletter at Christmas, Valentine's Day or any other commercial date there are already hundreds of themed templates at your disposal. You can choose a predefined structure or choose to make your template in the editor. When you finish the newsletter structure, go to the content. At this stage, you will need to know what your newsletter contains and set your goal well.

Brochure

Brochures are one of the most popular marketing tools to help organizations quickly draw the attention of prospective customers. Brochures can be distributed manually, via mail or email, or placed in brochure racks. Usually, brochures are printed on a single tri-fold sheet of thick glossy paper, and include pictures, photos, and other graphics.

1. Determine the audience for your message. Your brochure may be directed toward specific groups, such as potential clients, funders, the media, or a broad audience.
2. Decide on the purpose of your brochure: persuading, informing, entertaining, etc.
3. Think about the message you want to convey to your readers. Since a brochure format sets a strict limit to the amount of printed information, you must choose carefully among the facts, pictures, and other data you want to include.
4. Write the text for your brochure. Try to be concise and accurate. The text should be written in short sentences with positive language and active voice.
5. Decide on what graphics you are going to use to enhance the brochure. Colorful, bright paper attracts attention and is more interesting to read. On the other hand, too many pictures or colors can distract your readers from perceiving your message, or make the brochure look too flashy.
6. Add a call to action at the end of your brochure. You can ask your readers to make a phone call, visit a website for more details, or purchase a sample of your product.

7. Proofread and edit the brochure. Check to see if you can supersede some elements with others, or where you can use more precise words or more expressive pictures.

RÉSUMÉ WRITING

A résumé is meant to market you to a potential employer by drawing attention to the skills and accomplishments that the employer values. It is a critical piece in your job search portfolio and deserves an investment of time. You must be willing to write and edit until you have a well-organized document that emphasizes your most relevant qualifications for the position you seek.

Studies show that employers initially spend less than thirty seconds reviewing your résumé. In this short time you need to convey the information most critical to the hiring organization. How do you do this? Where do you start? First of all, you need to know what a résumé is and what it is designed to do. Make those thirty seconds count!

- Be concise: Use phrases, not sentences, and carefully chosen words.
- Think in terms of the reader : Gear your résumé to the skills, experiences and qualities employers seek in a candidate.
- Use a formal writing style: Use abbreviations only for states (NY), GPA, and degrees (BA, BS, MA, PhD).
- Make your résumé easy to read: Use an appealing layout and font (10-12 pt); make important information easy to find; set margins between 0.5 and 1.0 inches.
- Length: Begin with a “master résumé” that captures all experiences, regardless of length. When applying for positions, pull relevant information from your master résumé into a 1-2 page document.
- Final Draft: Proofread carefully and don’t rely on spell check alone! If you are sending your résumé electronically, save it as a PDF to insure your format is maintained when opened on a new computer and give your résumé a name that will be recognizable to employers (i.e. Firstname.Lastname.doc)

Format Options

- Chronological: Most common and generally what is recommended for current students and recent graduates; Present information in reversechronological order (most recent first) within each category.
- Functional: Emphasizes skills, qualifications and accomplishments rather than position titles, employers and dates. Can be effective for career changers or those with limited or erratic work histories.
- Combination: Combines the functional and chronological styles. Experience is organized chronologically with duties and responsibilities presented through skill clusters.

- Curriculum Vitae (CV): Typically for academic or research positions. It is usually longer than a résumé and includes comprehensive information related to the field. More information can be obtained from the “Writing a Curriculum Vitae” Quick Reference Guide on the CDC website.

Creating a new résumé:

Create a master list of all positions and activities in which you have been involved. Review the list to identify those that relate most to the employer’s needs, either through direct experience or through transferable skills. These are the positions on which you will focus.

Next, choose appropriate categories. How you order and label the sections of your résumé should be based on what aspects of your background are most relevant to the position(s) you seek. Readers give the most attention to the top and left-hand side of your résumé. Make sure information critical to them is placed appropriately.

Identifying Information

- Name, address, phone number, and professional email address.
- Include a local and permanent address if you are a current student.

Objective / Summary (Optional)

- Brief statement providing focus to your résumé indicating the kind of position you want and what you offer. The rest of the résumé should provide evidence of your qualifications for the position you seek.
- Should be specific to a position or field you want to enter.

Education

- Include institution(s) attended, degree(s) obtained or expected, major(s), graduation date, minors, and concentrations. Double majors receive only one degree (BS trumps the BA); Double degree students (from two different schools) receive two degrees.
- May include relevant courses, study abroad, honors, or scholarships (or put these in separate sections).
- GPA is recommended, but optional.
- High school information is acceptable during freshman & sophomore year and/or if you had a specialized high school experience relevant to your career objective.
- Binghamton’s official school name is “Binghamton University, State University of New York” or “State University of New York at Binghamton.”

Skills

- Skills relevant to the position/employer should be highlighted toward the top of your document.
- Those with many skills may want to consider grouping them by functional area
- (i.e. languages, software, networks; laboratory, equipment, computer).
- Keep skills in this section limited to hard skills; be sure to include reference to these skills later in your experience descriptions.

Experience

- Always keep the employer's needs in mind when deciding what experiences you will include and highlight!
- Category headings may change based on personal experience, ex: Relevant Experience, Supporting Experience, Research, Leadership.
- List in reverse chronological order (most recent first based on end date) within categories.
- Group experiences in sections based on relatedness rather than by paid/unpaid.
- The experience itself is more important than compensation.
- For each experience include position title, organization name, city and state, dates of activity (month/year-month/year), and description.

Writing Descriptions

- Use the list of action verbs on the next page to identify words that showcase your skills (both hard and transferable) and experiences. Begin each descriptive statement with an action verb—it draws attention to your skills and achievements.
- Every experience has the potential to be valuable. Identify the skills you used/ developed and compare them to the position description to determine which to
- include on your final document. Worry about length after you have completed this step.
- Avoid “Responsible for” and “Duties include” and do not use personal Pronouns • (i.e. I, my, our, we) anywhere in your document.
- Use your descriptions to answer questions such as Who? What? When? Why?
- How? How many? How often? Results?
- Include numbers (ex: quantities, dollar amounts, percentages) when appropriate to provide concrete proof of skills and results.
- Be sure all descriptions focus on YOU and YOUR skills and contributions to the organization, project, etc.
- Always think like an employer, who will be asking the question, “How is this relevant to me and my needs?”

How to Write a Research Paper

A research paper is a piece of academic writing that provides analysis, interpretation, and argument based on in-depth independent research.

Research papers are similar to academic essays, but they are usually longer and more detailed assignments, designed to assess not only your writing skills but also your skills in scholarly research. Writing a research paper requires you to demonstrate a strong knowledge of your topic, engage with a variety of sources, and make an original contribution to the debate.

This step-by-step guide takes you through the entire writing process, from understanding your assignment to proofreading your final draft.

Understand the assignment

Completing a research paper successfully means accomplishing the specific tasks set out for you. Before you start, make sure you thoroughly understand the assignment task sheet:

- Read it carefully, looking for anything confusing you might need to clarify with your professor.
- Identify the assignment goal, deadline, length specifications, formatting, and submission method.
- Make a bulleted list of the key points, then go back and cross completed items off as you're writing.

Carefully consider your timeframe and word limit: be realistic, and plan enough time to research, write and edit.

Choose a research paper topic

There are many ways to generate an idea for a research paper, from brainstorming with pen and paper to talking it through with a fellow student or professor.

You can try free writing, which involves taking a broad topic and writing continuously for two or three minutes to identify absolutely anything relevant that could be interesting.

You can also gain inspiration from other research. The discussion or recommendations sections of research papers often include ideas for other specific topics that require further examination.

Once you have a broad subject area, narrow it down to choose a topic that interests you, meets the criteria of your assignment, and is possible to research. Aim for ideas that are both original and specific:

- A paper following the chronology of World War II would not be original or specific enough.
- A paper on the experience of Danish citizens living close to the German border during World War II would be specific and could be original enough.

What is your plagiarism score?

Compare your paper with over 60 billion web pages and 30 million publications.

- Best plagiarism checker of 2021
- Plagiarism report & percentage
- Largest plagiarism database

Conduct preliminary research

Note any discussions that seem important to the topic, and try to find an issue that you can focus your paper around. Use a variety of sources, including journals, books and reliable websites, to ensure you do not miss anything glaring.

Do not only verify the ideas you have in mind, but look for sources that contradict your point of view.

- Is there anything people seem to overlook in the sources you research?
- Are there any heated debates you can address?
- Do you have a unique take on your topic?
- Have there been some recent developments that build on the extant research?

In this stage, you might find it helpful to formulate some research questions to help guide you. To write research questions, try to finish the following sentence: “I want to know how/what/why...”

Develop a thesis statement

A thesis statement is a statement of your central argument — it establishes the purpose and position of your paper. If you started with a research question, the thesis statement should answer it. It should also show what evidence and reasoning you’ll use to support that answer.

The thesis statement should be concise, contentious, and coherent. That means it should briefly summarize your argument in a sentence or two; make a claim that requires further evidence or analysis; and make a coherent point that relates to every part of the paper.

You will probably revise and refine the thesis statement as you do more research, but it can serve as a guide throughout the writing process. Every paragraph should aim to support and develop this central claim.

Create a research paper outline

A research paper outline is essentially a list of the key topics, arguments and evidence you want to include, divided into sections with headings so that you know roughly what the paper will look like before you start writing.

A structure outline can help make the writing process much more efficient, so it’s worth dedicating some time to create one.

Write a first draft of the research paper

Your first draft won’t be perfect — you can polish later on. Your priorities at this stage are as follows:

- Maintaining forward momentum — write now, perfect later.
- Paying attention to clear organization and logical ordering of paragraphs and sentences, which will help when you come to the second draft.
- Expressing your ideas as clearly as possible, so you know what you were trying to say when you come back to the text.

You do not need to start by writing the introduction. Begin where it feels most natural for you — some prefer to finish the most difficult sections first, while others choose to start with the easiest part. If you created an outline, use it as a map while you work.

Do not delete large sections of text. If you begin to dislike something you have written or find it doesn't quite fit, move it to a different document, but don't lose it completely — you never know if it might come in useful later.

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a great tool for teachers because it is a simple way to set up a grading criteria for assignments. Not only is this tool useful for teachers, it is helpful for students as well. A rubric defines in writing what is expected of the student to get a particular grade on an assignment.

Heidi Goodrich Andrade, a rubrics expert, defines a rubric as "a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work or 'what counts.'" For example, a rubric for an essay might tell students that their work will be judged on *purpose, organization, details, voice, and mechanics*.

A good rubric also describes levels of quality for each of the criteria. These levels of performance may be written as different ratings (e.g., Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement) or as numerical scores (e.g., 4, 3, 2, 1) Under mechanics, for example, the rubric might define the lowest level of performance as "7-10 misspellings, grammar, and punctuation errors," and the highest level as "all words are spelled correctly; your work shows that you understand subject-verb agreement, when to make words possessive, and how to use commas, semicolons and periods."

Why use rubrics?

According to Heidi Goodrich Andrade:

- Rubrics help students and teachers define "quality."
- When students use rubrics regularly to judge their own work, they begin to accept more responsibility for the end product. It cuts down on the "am I done yet?" questions.
- Rubrics reduce the time teachers spend grading student work and makes it easier for teachers to explain to students why they got the grade they did and what they can do to improve.
- Parents usually like the rubrics concept once they understand it, and they find rubrics useful when helping with homework. As one teacher says: "They know exactly what their child needs to do to be successful."

Involve your students

- **Understanding a Rubric:** Arrange the students into groups of four or more and give them the rubric you will be using for a particular task. Tell the students to discuss the task you have given them and create quick samples of papers which would receive marks in each of the categories. The groups will then present their results to the whole class.
- **Creating a Rubric:** It is a good idea to involve your students in creating their own rubrics for classroom assignments. A student who can write the rubric for a math problem knows the whole process inside and out, and he/she can apply the knowledge and skills learned from the process to future assignments.

Fiction

What is a fiction book, what are the different kinds of fiction writing, elements of fiction in literature and why are they important? Find all you need to know about fiction as well as some fantastic examples of fiction to share with your class in this Twinkl wiki.

What is fiction writing?

Fiction Definition

Fiction refers to any type of literature that's created from the imagination and typically has a narrative. It describes imaginary events and people. Usually, this comes in the form of books and stories. The word 'fiction' even comes from the Latin word 'fictus', which means 'to form' - fiction is stories that are 'formed' and created by a writer. There are many types of genres within fiction including mysteries, science fiction, romance, fantasy, and crime thrillers. Fiction is the opposite of non-fiction. It can be based on facts or real events, but the majority of the content has been curated by the writer using their own imagination. Fiction is typically read for pleasure, but it can also be analysed to discover themes and meanings.

What are the different forms of fiction writing?

- **Novels:** Novels are books that have one long story written in them. They're works of prose fiction. They're longer than short stories and novellas.
- **Novellas:** A novella is a standalone piece of fiction that's shorter than a full-length novel but longer than a short story or novelette.
- **Short stories:** Short stories are much shorter than a novel and usually deals with only a few characters.
- **Flash fiction:** Flash fiction is a type of fiction writing that's defined by how short it is. Flash fiction is usually kept beneath a strict word count to tell a story in the least words possible. Some flash fiction tells a story in just a few words.
- **Play scripts:** A play or drama script is the story that has been written for actors to perform, with the term 'play' relating to a theatrical performance.
- **Poems:** Poem use specifically chosen language, rhythm, rhyme, imagery and more to create an image or tell a narrative. Poems can be short or as long as a full novel.

As you can see, fiction is everywhere! And it doesn't just have to be a book either. Your favourite film is a work of fiction. Narrative poems are a work of fiction. Fiction is a key part of our society and culture. Types of fiction can also be divided into two different categories - commercial fiction and literary fiction. But what is commercial and literary fiction?

Commercial fiction includes fiction novels and writing that can be read and enjoyed by a wide audience. Examples of fiction genres include mystery, romance, legal thriller and science fiction books are all examples of commercial fiction that can be found on the bookshelves of our high street bookshops and libraries.

Literary fiction is aimed at a much smaller and often more academic or intellectually adventurous audience. What sets literary fiction apart is the noticeable qualities it contains such as excellent but complex writing, originality of thought, and style.

What is the difference between fiction and non-fiction?

Fiction and non-fiction are both types of narrative writing that will be taught to your students in primary education. However, they are vastly different. Fiction texts are created from the imagination and include made up stories with characters, a setting and plot from the authors own imagination. Some examples of fiction texts would include picture books, novels and classic fairytales to name a few.

Meanwhile, the definition of non-fiction is the term for any writing created with the intention of relaying truth or information of actual events to the audience. This means that it is the opposite of fiction. 'Non-fiction' texts are based on facts and are informative. These include history books, autobiographies and many more.

See these examples of fiction and non-fiction writing to see where you can find the differences between these two forms of writing.

Example of Fiction: Fairytales, poetry, plays, novels

Examples of Non-fiction: Autobiographies, textbooks, newspapers

Popular types of fiction: Find the genre of fiction for your students

A lot of the mainstream genre fiction that you will find in your reading corner and school libraries will fall into common and popular types of fiction according to the genre. Genre is the style or category of a book. As a writer, genre controls what you write and how you write it. It describes the style and focus of the novel you write. Genres give you blueprints for different types of stories. These different genres will appeal to the different readers in your classroom. Read more about these different genres to find the best types of fiction books to get your children excited about reading and writing.

- **Adventure stories:** Adventure stories are tales that often include something exciting and extraordinary, often a quest or a mission. A good adventure story has the ability to draw your children into a world or time they would have otherwise never been able to explore.

Because adventure stories are so immersive, they will have no idea that they are learning as they go!

- Crime/ detective fiction: Detective and crime fiction is the classic 'whodunnit' story' and readers can help solve a crime or mystery with vibrant characters. Detective stories are a popular genre in which a crime is introduced and investigated and the culprit is revealed.
- Thriller fiction: Thriller fiction is great for your adventurous and imaginative readers. They often include dark storylines, high stakes, and suspenseful plot-driven stories.
- Fantasy fiction: Fantasy is a type of fiction that typically, taking inspiration from myth and legend, is set in a fictional universe and features supernatural characters and mythical creatures. Fantasy fiction stories are a wonderful escape from the norm and reality. This is what makes them so popular with children and adults alike
- Science fiction: Science fiction, often shorted to 'sci-fi', is a genre of fiction that's usually set in space or in the future. It can include spaceships, astronauts, machines, robots and aliens. Science fiction stories are often about exploring new worlds, inventing new imaginary scientific technology or having an adventure in space. Science fiction stories are great for your inquisitive and thrill-seeking students.

What is SEO Writing?

SEO writing is the implementation of keywords and key phrases within web content. The SEO content writer and marketers use SEO to increase their site's organic visibility and SERP rankings. The best way to write for SEO is to pair high-quality copy with targeted search terms.

With traditional copywriting, the content writer is focused on other goals and not necessarily on having the product come up first as a search engine answer. These types of copy may reach the consumer in the form of a TV commercial or product label — but an SEO copywriter meets readers on a web page. With professional content writing, the goal may be broad enough to encompass both SEO results and traditional marketing outcomes.

Key SEO Terms, Defined

Long-tail keywords: A string of keywords or phrases, often 3-6 words long. Long-tail terms are more specific and are queried less frequently relative to high-level, generic terms. Think “basketball shoes” vs. “2019 basketball shoes for sale Colorado.”

SERPs: Search engine results pages. In other words, the Google page contains all the results users can click on after a query.

SERP position: The exact ranking in Google analytics. For instance, Position 12 would refer to page 2 of Google, since only 10 listings typically appear on Page 1.

Anchor text: The words or phrases that are hyperlinked, directing traffic to other web pages.

Meta description: A short summary of a webpage that appears in SERPs — often 160 characters — that can entice searchers to click a result.

Title tag: The title of a webpage that appears in Google SERPs and as the text on browser tabs.

Search queries: Words that users type or say into search engines.

Search volume: The number of times a term is queried per month.

Click-through rate: Percentage of clicks for a SERP result relative to how many times searchers saw that search result.

Conversion rate: Percentage of people who complete the desired action (a click, a purchase, etc.) divided by the total number of people who visited that page.

Organic traffic: The number of users who found your site via a search engine of their own free will and not through paid ads or other sites.

Structured data (schema): How SEO elements like metadata, keywords and HTML are formatted on the page. Data that is structured makes it easier for search engines to crawl and index pages.

Ranking factors: The general components that search engine algorithms consider when deciding which pages should rank higher than others.

Backlink: A hyperlink that directs traffic to another page, either internally or externally.

Page and Domain Authority: A score that measures how “authoritative” a page or site is on a scale of 1-100.

Pageviews: Number of times a page is viewed.

Pageviews per Session: Number of pages viewed in 1 session by each user, before leaving the site entirely.

Organic keyword difficulty: A metric of how easy or difficult it will be to rank for a given keyword in organic search, on a scale of 1-100.

Blog

A blog post is any article, news piece, or guide that's published in the blog section of a website. A blog post typically covers a specific topic or query, is educational in nature, ranges from 600 to 2,000+ words, and contains other media types such as images, videos, infographics, and interactive charts.

Blog posts allow you and your business to publish insights, thoughts, and stories on your website about any topic. They can help you boost brand awareness, credibility, conversions, and revenue. Most importantly, they can help you drive traffic to your website.

But in order to begin making posts for a blog — you have to learn how to start one, first. Let's dive in.

How to Start a Blog

Understand your audience.

Before you start writing your blog post, make sure you have a clear understanding of your target audience.

Ask questions like: What do they want to know about? What will resonate with them?

This is where the process of creating buyer personas comes in handy. Consider what you know about your buyer personas and their interests while you're coming up with a topic for your blog post. For instance, if your readers are millennials looking to start a business, you probably don't need to provide them with information about getting started on social media — most of them already have that down.

You might, however, want to give them information about how to adjust their social media approach (for example — from what may be a casual, personal approach to a more business-savvy, networking-focused approach). That kind of tweak is what helps you publish content about the topics your audience really wants and needs.

Determine what topics you'll cover.

Before you write anything, pick a topic you'd like to write about. The topic can be pretty general to start as you find your desired niche in blogging. Some ways to choose topics to cover include asking yourself questions like:

Who do I want to write to?

How well do I understand this topic?

Is this topic relevant?

Identify your unique angle.

What perspective do you bring that makes you stand out from the crowd? This is key to determining the trajectory of your blog's future and there's many avenues to choose in the process.

What unique experience makes you a trusted expert or thought leader on the topic?

What problem will you solve for readers?

Will you share your opinions on trending debates?

Teach your readers how to do something?

Compare or share original research?

It's up to you to decide the unique angle you'll take on topics.

Name your blog.

This is your opportunity to get creative and make a name that gives readers an idea of what to expect from your blog. Some tips on how to choose your blog name include:

Keep your blog name easy to say and spell.

Link your blog name to your brand message.

Consider what your target audience is looking for.

If you still need more assistance, try using a blog name generator. Make sure the name you come up with isn't already taken as it could lessen your visibility and confuse readers looking for your content.

Create your blog domain.

A domain is a part of the web address nomenclature someone would use to find your website or a page of your website online. Your blog's domain will look like this: www.yourblog.com. The name between the two periods is up to you, as long as this domain name doesn't yet exist on the internet. If you already own a cooking business at www.yourcompany.com, you might create a blog that looks like this: blog.yourcompany.com. In other words, your blog's subdomain will live in its own section of yourcompany.com.

Copywriting

Copywriting is the act or occupation of writing text for the purpose of advertising or other forms of marketing. The product, called copy or sales copy, is written content that aims to increase brand awareness and ultimately persuade a person or group to take a particular action.

Copywriters help

create billboards, brochures, catalogs, jingle lyrics, magazine and newspaper advertisements, sales letters and other direct mail, scripts for television or radio commercials, taglines, white papers, website and social media posts, and other marketing communications.

Many copywriters are employed in marketing departments, advertising agencies, public relations firms, copywriting agencies, or are self-employed as freelancers, where clients range from small to large companies.

- Advertising agencies usually hire copywriters as part of a creative team, in which they are partnered with art directors or creative directors. The copywriter writes a copy or script for an advertisement, based largely on information obtained from a client. The art director is responsible for visual aspects of the advertisement and, particularly in the case of print work, may oversee production. Either member of the team can come up with the overall idea (typically referred to as the concept) and the process of collaboration often improves the work. Some agencies specialize in servicing a particular industry or sector.
- Copywriting agencies combine copywriting with a range of editorial and associated services that may include positioning and messaging consulting, social media, search engine optimization, developmental editing, copy editing, proofreading, fact checking, speechwriting and page layout. Some agencies employ in-house copywriters, while others use external contractors or freelancers.
- Digital marketing agencies commonly include copywriters, whether freelance or employees, that focus specifically on digital communication. Sometimes the work of a copywriter will overlap with a content writer as they'll need to write social media advertisements, Google advertisements, online landing pages, and email copy that is persuasive. This new wave of copywriting born of the digital era has made the discipline more accessible. But not without a downside, as globalization has meant some copywriting work has been devalued due to the ease of finding skilled copywriters working at different rates.

Copywriters also work in-house for retail chains, book publishers, or other big firms that advertise frequently. They can also be employed to write advertorials for newspapers, magazines, and broadcasters.

Some copywriters work as independent contractors or freelancers, writing for a variety of clients. They may work at a client's office, a coworking office, a coffeehouse, or remotely from home.

Copywriters are similar to technical writers and the careers may overlap. Broadly speaking, however, technical writing is dedicated to informing and instructing readers rather than

persuading them. For example, a copywriter writes an advertisement to sell a car, while a technical writer writes the operator's manual explaining how to use it.

Writing for social media

Writing for social media may take talent, creativity, focus and a deep understanding of your audience. But here are a few tips to help you get started.

...and for any kind of persuasive writing.

Sure, great writing may take talent and innate creativity. And hey, you've got something to say, right? No matter your current level of experience or skills. With a little gusto in your writing step, you can make the reader feel something, take an action, or be more informed than before.

A few tips below to show you how.

Suggestion: let loose, try some (or all) of these, and repeat them for a few of your posts. Build those new writing-muscles.

You'll be amazed at how clear you'll write, and how you'll zero-in on your voice.

1. Barf it out

Writers block is a myth. if you wannabalst past it just write out anything in your head, without leaving tehkeyboard. just keep your fingers typing, looking at the keyboard not the screen, so your brain engages. forget about sentence structure, spelling, punctuation... just keep your fingers moving and p[ower through any blockages. do this for an articel, tech-doc, and kind of writing thingie. Even for a paragraph or three. whenever your stuck just typw. editing will come later. This is a brain excercise, not a make-it-look-just-right process. Editing comes later, but don't mix the two. It's never write the first time. but push stuff that's in your head onto the page, then mnake your 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 edits.... LATER.

Okay, I'm back.

Whenever, I'm 'stuck', for any kind of writing... I just type. Every time, something useful appears before my writing-eyes-and-brain.

The same will happen to you, too.

Punch the so-called "writer's block" right in the gut. It's bunk.

2. Write to an 8th grader

Not because they aren't smart. Because it forces you to write clearly. And to ditch the jargon and terms that eyeballs just gloss over.

“Drive innovation.”

“Become a disruptor.”

And my absolute non-favorite, “Transform your business...”.

Oh please. Some of the most over-used, under-effective statements of all time.

Companies and their writers hide behind these terms every day, all across the web. Statistically speaking, probably you, too. I'm just sayin'.

I don't know if this intentional or not. But here's the thing...

Terms and jargon say little, while making you and your biz appear as a commodity. Like many others. Better to do the heavy lifting for the reader. Because they certainly won't. They'll stop and leave, versus stay and scroll.

Do the work. Say something real. Practice on your kid, mom, or any outsider to tell your important and useful message.

Your readers will appreciate it. It makes good business sense.

3. Write to the reader

Because no one cares about what you (or I) do. Readers only care what they can get from what you (or I) do.

So then, write from the readers' perspective. Make them the hero.

A list of features? B-o-r-i-n-g.

Words that paint a picture for how the reader's life will improve, that's the ticket.

Sometimes, “standing out” is nothing more than writing from the reader's point of view. Because most of your competitors don't.

4. Write with a purpose

And write that purpose at the top of your draft piece.

To keep your mind on the target while you write.

For an email, blog post, white paper, and of course for any social media post—be clear on the purpose.

What action do you want the reader to take?

Click the *buy*, *call*, or *contact us* button?

Or maybe you just want them to *feel* a certain way. Empathy? Bliss? Informed?

Too often, we humans write to write. Not a problem.

Unless you want to sell your stuff.

Social posts are usually a top-of-mind selling approach. And an opportunity to build, show, and share your brand.

And still, write with a purpose to raise your signal, lessen your noise.

Hey, don't forget to delete the *purpose reminder* at the top of your draft.

Strategic content writing

Strategic content writing is an approach to creating fresh information that sparks interest with your viewers and gives them a reason to spend time on your site. Whether that content takes the form of an article, story, visual imagery, video, podcast, social media post, or something else, all of these efforts should be centered around the singular concept of great writing.

Strategic content writing does more than making use of one-off content. Instead, you'll want to create and follow an organized editorial plan so you can generate meaningful copy regularly that aligns with your overall marketing strategy based on what kind of audience you want to build or cater to.

To make effective use of strategic content writing that provides real value, you'll need to do some research to become familiar with the needs and interests of your viewers and how they align with different aspects of content marketing, and you'll need to address those topics as part of your ongoing communication strategy. Simply randomly making content and posting it online can only do so much for your website. Instead, you need to know how, when, and where to publish, such as social media outlets or video-sharing platforms, to improve your website's reach and increase engagement with your viewers.

The video game industry does a great job of this. Some companies create extra material for their games, such as in-game fiction, music, and artwork, and they publish it on platforms that are proven to be popular with their target audiences, which does an effective job of enticing more buyers and increasing their fan base.

Emotion: The Overlooked Tool in Your Toolkit

This will lead to a very important aspect of strategic content writing: passion. Passion is a powerful tool to leverage when creating new content for your website. From passion comes enthusiasm, and from enthusiasm comes the desire to make something that your audience will love to experience. This is especially important for new websites looking to establish an audience and build interest over time with an innovative content strategy. Content consumers can easily sense if what they are reading or watching was done half-heartedly or out of love, and will react accordingly. As a result, passion — or lack of it — can either make or break your website.

Now, the power of strategic content writing for a website becomes apparent. Depending on your website's focus or audience, you will likely generate two to three kinds of content regularly, one of which will likely be in article form with a few pictures. With so few options, your website may struggle to be recognized in its niche. But by combining passion, the right skill sets, and knowledge of your market's needs, you will increase your effectiveness as a content writer and manager — giving your website the shot it deserves to be seen as a formidable competitor in your field.

Effective Content Writing

Content is as important as the design and aesthetics of your website because it drives search engine results, increases traffic to your page and establishes your organization as an industry leader. And in today's content marketplace, both quality and quantity determine your ability to leverage **content for business results**.

That's where the professional content writers at Walker Sands come in. Our experienced copywriters have an in-depth knowledge of B2B and technology topics and products, and the skill to compose well-written copy, effective SEO pages, blog posts and other digital content.

Although there is no secret formula for writing high-quality content, these are several tips that can help improve the quality and quantity of your written material:

1. **Write a Head-Turning Headline.** The headline determines whether audiences will read the rest of your work. If the headline doesn't spark interest, stir an emotion or make the reader want to learn more about the topic, you simply won't achieve the desired results with your content. Walker Sands' professional copywriting services take the guesswork out of generating effective headlines by using proven techniques and traffic-driving strategies.
2. **Create a Hook That Grabs Their Attention.** You have three seconds to keep readers hooked after the headline. The first sentence also plays a role in determining whether they read the rest of your content. As a result, it should capture the reader's attention and smoothly lead them into your first point.
3. **Do Your Research.** You must have extensive knowledge on the topic you're writing about, especially in the B2B market. Include statistics, data and metrics to establish credibility and support your claims.
4. **Focus on a Single Purpose.** You should identify at least one key message you'd like to convey before you create your content. Keep this in mind when writing and tie your content back to the main point as much as possible.
5. **Write in a Unique Voice.** The content you publish is the voice of your company and it should be unique to your company's personality. It's important to align the tone of your writing to your target audience, business goals and brand persona.
6. **Optimize Digital Content.** The best digital content often consists of short paragraphs, short sentences and bulleted lists. Digital content should also be optimized for search using SEO best practices and the latest SEO content strategies.
7. **Edit Your Work.** After you have created a first draft, go back and consider how you might polish the rough edges of your writing. In most cases, writing improves as it goes through a round or two of edits—even when it has been drafted by experienced content creators.

Effective content writing is critical in turning site visitors into satisfied customers. It's not just about getting content out there—it's also important to produce high-quality content. Search engines crawl website content and reward websites with well-written articles by ranking them higher in search results.

Content Writing Challenges

One of the most crucial content writing challenges is ensuring readability. There are times when writers get carried away by thoughts and ideas, and tend to deviate from the core objective of the content. Being a writer has many benefits, but it has its share of challenges as well. Writing content is not an easy job; it requires unique skill sets and expertise. And it takes time and effort to grow as a writer. Many of the challenges that content writers face are unforeseen.

Content writing is often a tough path to walk, with its particular set of writing challenges for beginners. However, if you are already aware of some of the challenges you could face as a content creator, it might be easier to be prepared to combat them. This blog's objective is to share general problems and challenges faced by writers when they begin their writing journey, together with useful tips on how to do away with them faster and more effectively.

While content writing can give writers a lot of freedom, it can also introduce a list of challenges that can intimidate them easily. If you have become a content writer recently, you must know of these writing challenges. Let's take a look at a few of them.

Readability

One of the most crucial content writing challenges is ensuring readability. There are times when writers get carried away by their own thoughts, and tend to write on things that stray from the goal at hand. Sometimes, while demonstrating language proficiency, writers also tend to use complicated language or uncommon phrases, which might come in the way of the content's readability.

Writer's block

Writer's block is a situation where writers find it challenging to express their thoughts or feel depressed for not developing relevant, informative, and engaging content. This kind of negative feeling often arises out of past failures, burn-out, criticism.

Meeting deadlines

The primary reason for failing to meet deadlines is an inability to balance work and personal life. Try to finish writing within the given time-frames. That will leave room for other activities in your life, thereby helping you balance life and work deadlines. Sometimes, writers are provided with tedious tasks that need to be completed within a short span of time. However, they not only need to finish an article, but also proofread and review it. Therefore, they might end up churning out average content. Not to mention, they might miss deadlines as well.

Curtailed creative freedom

Restrictions on creativity can also be a challenge for a writer. When a client hires a writer, they are expected to deliver content based on their needs. Thus, professional writers sometimes find little scope for creativity, and this can be frustrating at times.

Finding quality work

Finding quality work as a writer is challenging, and a major portion of content writers have ranked this as a major challenge faced by the fraternity regularly, especially new writers. Why is it so? Many content writers get onto the bandwagon without fully scrutinizing the various avenues to get work in. Remember, if you're having difficulty finding gigs, you are certainly not alone. There are many ways in which one can find good work. You can begin by engaging with local businesses, startups, and advertising firms as they search for talented writers all the time. Many online writing platforms, such as Upwork and Fiverr, have assisted thousands of writers in finding consistent freelance work. There is also LinkedIn, the world's favorite platform for

finding jobs and building professional networks. You can also join several freelancer communities online.

Extreme competition

Vigorous competition exists among content writers on practically every platform. The objective is simple: to get as many clients as possible by underbidding the competition. You need to build your own brand to survive in this competitive scenario. This can be done by increasing your know-how about several domains and offering a higher value to your clients than other writers.

Managing price negotiations

As a writer, you are your own boss, and can monitor the rates you want to offer for your services. Many new writers are fine with working for low prices, and in the process, they ultimately underestimate their self-worth. Clients notice this and try to seal the deal at prices that are lower than industry standards. When you ask co-writers, probably all of them would recommend starting at modest rates when developing writing skills. The focus at such a time should be on gaining confidence and experience, and thereby delivering better value. This will put you in a position to work out better prices that justify your efforts.

Lack of work

This is likely to happen when you're just starting out. However, once you have gained some experience and built a network, which will happen over time, you will find yourself with ample projects. The best way to start on the path of success is to use content marketing to market yourself.

Research

You must have exceptional insight into and understanding of what makes a domain work effectively for writing great content. But in your content writing journey, you will probably encounter hundreds of projects that need content from domains you were previously unaware of. The best way to tackle these challenges faced by writers would be to do in-depth research of the topic and develop an organized and statistically correct content piece. Remember, it is crucial to leave a good impression on your client and readers. The internet is your best friend and guide. Irrespective of the topic, you can find at least a dozen relevant websites and articles that can give you a great deal of insight into the subject. Comments, user reviews, forums, and social media platforms are great for researching the topic you are about to write on.

Unlimited rewrite requests

You will encounter a wide range of clients throughout your career. Some of them might be overbearing micro-managers. They will attempt to guide you endlessly for a task they require you to do. They are one of the main challenges of creative writing? Such overbearing clients diminish your creativity by asking you to rewrite sections repeatedly, leaving you exhausted

mentally and wasting your valuable time. Although clients should get what they want, a line must be drawn, and you should only sign up for a certain number of reworks. So before starting to write on a topic, have an in-depth discussion with the client and understand their expectations. Get your clients to give you references before preparing the first draft. This can aid in steering the content flow suitably.

Never-ending work

Are you thinking about becoming a content writer? Be prepared to dedicate 12 to 14 hours of the day to your work if you really want to deliver quality content. When going after perfection, new writers often fail to set healthy time limits for their work, which affects their personal life. They begin early, work until they finish, and are too tired to spend quality time with themselves, their family, and loved ones. Every project requires an organized timeline, which is why it is recommended to plan your day properly. You can start by dividing work into small portions that can be covered in the day.

12. Delayed or no payments

Clients who delay payments can impede your progress. You invest your efforts to deliver content within the set deadline and share the invoice after the actual confirmation. The due date passes, and the client does not release the payment. All you can do is follow up. Make use of your contract and do away with late payment issues by requesting clients to make a deposit amount firsthand.

How to Overcome Challenges in Writing

Be it web content or ad copy, the following remedies are applicable to writers of all genres.

Develop readable content

If you want to enhance the readability of your content, follow these tips:

- Come up with riveting introductions. Strong opening sentences ensure that readers stay hooked.
- Use proper formatting: short paragraphs, headings, bullet points, and appropriate visuals.
- You can also opt for online courses to hone your writing skills.
- Use easy-to-comprehend language as if you are conversing with your readers. Conscious word choices and catchy titles should also be used. Avoid being repetitive.

Overcome writer's block

Every content writer struggles with this challenge. However, what matters is how you deal with it.

- Practice freewriting. It is a good way of developing thoughts. In this technique, you write without taking any breaks. Just let your ideas flow. Edit later.
- Listen to music.
- Walk and spend time in nature.
- Brainstorm ideas.
- Build a habit of reading.
- Avoid distractions.
- Spend time with people who make you feel good.

Use hacks to avoid missing deadlines

Missing deadlines is one thing that writers really don't want to do, as it directly impacts their professionalism. Use the following tips to avoid missing deadlines.

Follow your passion and prioritize

Start opting for projects based on your passion. Also, prioritize. If you have a lot of work assigned, start with the complex one that may take time. Classify assignments as per Eisenhower's urgent/important principle.

Avoid negativity and be realistic

Chalk out schedules for writing and maintain them at any cost. Be positive and tell yourself that there's no reason you shouldn't meet deadlines. Banish all negative thoughts or fears about failing to meet deadlines. Just manage your schedule well.

Stop procrastinating

Beware of procrastination. Identify your procrastinating triggers. For instance, if OTT binge-watching stops you from writing, avoid getting addicted to such services.

Choose writing service platforms that understand your challenges and help you work around them.

Blend your creativity with SEO

You need to understand what your clients or your audiences want. An effective SEO strategy will help you offer solutions to your audience's problems. So, while you aim to be creative, do not forget to align your content with SEO objectives. Content writers face challenges every step of the way, from searching for work to getting paid. Irrespective of your niche or preferences, there are certain obstacles every writer faces that can affect their performance. This blog was an attempt to give you a broad outlook of a few of those issues. The tips given here focus on helping you address and deal with a few writing challenges. Being a writer is a tough job, but working on these issues can be a satisfying and enriching experience.

Idea Generation Tools, Creating Strategic Content to promote Brands

A strong content marketing strategy, working across the content produced for your website, newsletter, and social media platforms, not only informs your ideal client about what your company does, and the why and how of what you do. It also seeks to show them that you understand their issues in a way the competition doesn't, making you uniquely qualified to provide the solutions they need. Great content also has to engage the interest of search engine bots while serving the needs of people. It's a big ask, so here are some content generation ideas to keep things fresh.

Content marketing as a strategy isn't new - brands have been telling stories to attract and retain customers for decades - but with the digital revolution, the content marketer's remit expanded as their audience's attention fragmented across a plethora of distribution channels. The central problem of content marketing - coming up with fresh and interesting ideas - has grown with it. After developing your cornerstone content and churning through your initial bank of ideas for blog posts and social media, marketing efforts may falter. What do you write about next? How can you create a continuous flow of informative, entertaining, and SEO-appropriate content that propels your company or organisation toward success?

The Challenge

You need a reliable process to produce consistently high-quality content to fuel your online marketing. Attracting a consistent stream of traffic to your website and identifying and nurturing leads through creative content marketing methods requires a continual influx of ideas. The content idea generation process will be different for every team, depending on the individuals involved. Some the methods 1827 Marketing uses to create engaging content are described below. They produce reliable results and should have a place in your toolbox:

1. HOLD REGULAR BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

Get your team into the habit of meeting regularly to brainstorm ideas and fuel their creativity. During brainstorming sessions, a single topic can split into multiple sub-topics; one keyword phrase can be transformed into a list of useful terms. Keep the sessions light, dynamic and playful. Ideally, they should be short and fun. Write down every idea generated, no matter how unusual they seem, and save them in a swipe file.

2. CREATE AND USE SWIPE FILES

Swipe files are like collages of engaging ideas. Found a piece of compelling, useful content or an intriguing headline? Pop it in your swipe file. Had a thought while waiting in line for your morning coffee? Note it down in your swipe file for later. Saving snippets and nuggets like this gives you a deep well of inspiration that you can keep coming back to draw on. One caveat: Be careful not to plagiarise. Make sure any text directly copied and pasted from another source is correctly attributed and accompanied by a link.

3. KEYWORD RESEARCH

Teams responsible for generating content need to have a basic understanding of search engine optimisation (SEO) to get their content in front of their audience. Achieving a top search engine ranking for highly competitive short tail or seed keywords can be difficult and expensive, making your content less discoverable. However, high traffic low competition search terms and long tail phrases are an excellent hunting ground for content marketing ideas that bring in your ideal customer, and at a point in the buying cycle when they're more likely to convert. Getting to the right people is sometimes better than receiving a large volume of traffic. Using a tool like Google's Keyword Planner will help you find them and can be a great launchpad for your team's brainstorming sessions.

4. AUDIENCE TRACKING AND ENGAGEMENT

If you're already producing content, one of the best ways to determine what engages your target audience involves listening to them and tracking their behaviours. Collect traffic and conversion data using a free tool like Google Analytics alongside any tracking capabilities built into your marketing platform, and analyse it intelligently. Identify the content and campaigns that successfully elicit the response you want from your audience, learn what works and what doesn't, and increase your chances of your future marketing efforts doing the same.

5. COMPETITOR TRACKING

Making time to discuss your competitor's strategy within your team can trigger ideas that help you broaden your reach. While riding on your competitors' coattails won't position your brand as a leader in your industry or niche, knowing what works for them could help you to challenge their rankings and target their audience, repurposing their success to fuel your own.

6. IDEA GENERATION TOOLS

Sites like Google Trends, Buzzsumo's Content Analyser, and Ahrefs' premium Content Explorer share top content, social media posts, and more for keywords, niches, and general ideas for your digital marketing. Data-fueled topic decisions make sense. Just add your distinctive brand-specific flair to the content.

Fuel Your Creative Mind

Creative minds need fuel to operate, but this is not a direct food-to-petrol analogy. You don't want your team members' brains to merely function. For your idea generation machine to run at optimum capacity, you need your team to invent, inspire, and generate new ideas. Still, output requires input.

READ

Everything from industry news to product packaging can spark an idea. What processes do you have in place for inspiration gathering, sharing and discussion among your team members? Would tools such as a Feedly Team account or a dedicated Slack channel help?

LISTEN

What topics are your targets talking about and what questions do they have that you could answer? Customer support, online communities, social media channels, podcasts and videos provide opportunities to tune in and listen to what is of interest to and challenging your potential customers.

WATCH

Video isn't just an impactful method for you to communicate with your audience, it is also a treasure trove of ideas and inspiration and another place for you to research where your potential customers are putting their attention.

LIVE

Do what all great writers do and use what you know. What struggles do you have in your working life? What new experiences have you had that can fuel your creativity?

Don't forget that content creation itself can be a catalyst. Writing about one topic often introduces good ideas for new, spin-off subject matter. This incidental brainstorming also happens automatically in the middle of other unrelated tasks and when your brain is on auto-pilot. Pay attention when these ideas pop up and note them down in your swipe file before they disappear into the ether.

Make Time To Have Ideas

Blog content ideas and those for other marketing text may come from one of the idea-generation sources mentioned above. A keyword phrase can spark an idea that creates an entire series of engaging content. A trending topic on a popular niche-specific site can provide the inspiration that creates your next top performing, traffic driving post.

However, one-off hits on your blog or social media do not create a reliable conversion engine. You need to ensure you have a repeatable methodology for injecting creativity into a sustainable creation process, one that encourages a single idea to yield many and a simple question to launch a series to move leads down the sales funnel.

How Good is Your Content?

Attempting to squeeze content creation in between less creative tasks will leave you with bland, uninspiring results. What you produce might answer the search engine and algorithms' requirements, but it will lack the power that makes your audience want to act, share it or take direct action. Creative writers speak of flow state, a mental space they achieve when ideas seem to channel directly from their subconscious onto the page. While a Facebook post or your weekly blog might not equate to a literary masterpiece, creative ideas are required, and ideas need space to grow. Carve out dedicated time for ideation in your creative process.

Like the adage about the "proof of the pudding", content is only worthwhile if it gives you the desired result: an increase in traffic, lead generation, more conversions etc.

Many characteristics go into boosting the quality of your content, including things as basic as proper grammar to sophisticated structure-based SEO practices. While a checklist for every aspect of your content creation strategy will help, constant response data collection, analysis of the performance of individual pieces and your overall efforts gives you the best actionable information.

Market Segmentation

Segmenting a market aims to create more sales among fewer customers.

Segmenting a market refers to targeting a product to a specific target customer or industry, such as selling footwear to women or accounting software to hospitals. Market segmentation helps new companies develop a niche, or existing companies expand or diversify. Any marketing segmentation plan begins with detailed marketplace research.

List the specific consumers or industries you want to research as targets for your product or service. Target consumers by demographics such as sex, age, income or parental status. Target industries by listing and ranking those most likely to use your product or service, or those that are already using similar products and services.

Research the purchasing habits of your target customers by identifying the needs they are trying to solve or benefits they are seeking from products and services like yours. List the companies currently selling to these consumers or businesses, the prices in the marketplace and where consumers are purchasing these products or services. Gather trade association research that provides information on marketplace sales history, trends and projections.

Determine which segments of the marketplace might provide you with the most profitability. Compare them by evaluating your ability to create or modify your product or service to meet each market segment. Include a review of your cost of production, distribution channels you would use and pricing strategies. For example, if you are an apparel maker, you might consider making children's clothing, or clothing for boys or girls only. You would investigate the logistics of all three scenarios. Make your determination as to which market segment you should pursue based on your marketplace research and evaluation of your internal capabilities.

Write a recommendation report starting with an executive summary that identifies the market segment you recommend entering and how your product and ability to deliver it to that market segment make it your best chance for success. Include a description of your target customers, why you think they are likely to want your product, and your projected sales and profits. Exclude detailed research findings and support in the executive summary, keeping it to half a page or less. Provide support in the rest of your document. Create a report that includes the following sections: product description, benefits, target customers, competition, separate brand, pricing, promotional and distribution strategies, and budget projections. List the market segments you do not recommend your company enter and discuss why you don't believe they are right for your company. Include a recommendation section that reiterates information from your executive summary, including steps for following your recommendations.

Creating Target Persona

How to Create Content for Your Target Persona? Your Audience Wants Something Rich

In a fast-paced, technology-driven world, your audience doesn't have time to sit and read long paragraphs of boring content before finally getting to the point. (Neil Patel) Rich content must be short, sweet, and relevant.

The stars don't walk the Red Carpet in an off-the-rack dress from Target. They don't wear glamorous designer dresses that cost a pretty penny that fit the theme of the night. Your audience doesn't want off-the-rack content; they want rich, engaging material. If you find that creating content rich in relevance is challenging, you are not alone—nearly half of content marketers surveyed say that their lack of strategy development is a contributing factor to their stagnant success. (Content Marketing Institute)

Whoever your customer may be, they deserve more. If what you are delivering is the same as your competitors or it lacks what your audience needs, they will move on until they find a better solution.

How to Create for Your Target Persona? : Your Audience Needs Special Attention What would be the point of a Red Carpet without flashing cameras, interviewing journalists, and a live television broadcast? The whole idea behind the opening of awards shows is to pay attention to the stars. Your audience needs the same attention. They should be lavished with relevant understanding of their needs and shareable content that fills blog posts, social media sites, and emails on a consistent basis. Whether they know it or not, your readers are looking for something

tailor-made, something that will jump out and hit them where they need it most. And if we can't get it to them within an average of 15 seconds (Time), we may have missed our chance. Your Audience Wants You to Use Their Name No one wants to be just another face in the crowd, lost in a sea of generic, watered-down messages that are unfocused and irrelevant. There is a reason the barista at your local coffee shop calls out the name of a customer when their extra-hot-soy-latte-no-foam is ready.

It's personal.

Relevant content creation is easier when it's written toward one particular person, which is why every writer needs to develop a persona. Additional Methods to Stop Creating Content and Start Developing a Persona. Michael Brenner from CMI reminds us that when we are creating content, one problem that can arise is creating for the boss, when we should be creating for the audience we are aiming to reach, engage, and convert. The challenge is to stop creating content, and instead focus on creating a content brand as we focus on our target persona. Let's discuss how, in three additional nitty-gritty steps.

1. Get Personal (Human Factor)

Writing for one general group of readers misses the human factor that must be present for content marketing to be effective. Developing a buyer persona provides us with the perspective and focus necessary to visualize that one person, that target goal, who is the reason behind why we develop content in the first place.

So how does that happen?

We figure out who our target is through customer data (Google Analytics). We learn who our competitors are. We dig into social media comments, personal interviews, and surveys to find out how to develop a buyer persona (HubSpot).

Lavish Your Audience with Love (Engagement)

Engaging your customers means first knowing your target audience and then understanding how to reach them. Yes, this may mean you need to move out of your comfy cozy corner of content marketing and branch out to try something new. It means lavishing your audience with diverse, exciting content that they will engage with—created with love, just for them. Diversified content uses infographics, videos, and relevant subheadings to draw the reader in and make them want to stay. “Scannable,” readable content is key to keep busy people engaged, so don't forget bullet points, lists, and revising your headline till you reach perfection.

Show Them They're Special (Focus)

When you make a concentrated effort to develop content that is focused on your audience, it will show. The engagement will be present, the shares will increase, and the readers will keep coming back for more. As SmartBlogger reminds us, readers don't want to be informed; they want to be seduced. Don't worry about being someone else or following another writer's style; there are enough imitators in the world. Your unique quality content and focused voice on a topic or brand is what should shine in your content; your efforts are worth more than simply filling a page with words. As I've said on Twitter: Stop Creating Too Much Content This Year, and Work On Creating the Right Content . Our challenge in this New Year is to stop creating content simply for the sake of creation. Instead, engage your readers by intentionally focusing on their specific need, and then developing a buyer persona so you who to focus on, help, and speak to—and watch your content results soar!

NINJA WRITING:

In ninja writing, you will discover how to embed quality at every layer of your writing—whether it's a blog, article, college essay, cover letter, corporate report or content marketing.

By the end, you'll appreciate exactly how one piece of writing can be strikingly beautiful while another—on the same subject—bores you to tears.

What exactly is a ninja writer?

It's someone who can take disjointed thoughts and ideas and create beautiful narratives out of them. That is the hallmark of a distinguished writer: one who understands how to build points elegantly, wrap them into neatly arranged sections, and then thread the ideas through exquisitely organized paragraphs.

A ninja writer has mastery over the sentence layer of writing as well.

He or she instinctively understands how to tighten loose **sentences**, sharpen blurred ones, and bring rhythm to those that don't flow well.

Finally, ninja writers wield invincible power over **words**. They're able to bring color, variety and freshness into their writing through their word choices, while slicing away any that have lost their edge or carry dead weight.

While a bad writer can make a mess even of the most sublime thinking, a ninja writer's prose—blogs, essays, or any kind of business writing—always ends up looking spectacularly polished.

The fact is that great writing isn't just a nice skill to have. It's vital to conveying intelligence and professionalism to your bosses, clients, business partners, and blog or book readers. If you don't have this part of your life handled, you'll probably get fewer career chances, less shots at a promotion, and not as many eyeballs online.

And instinctively you know it.

If you're a blogger, the world may miss out on your brilliant ideas, simply because your writing is too dull or unwieldy to take seriously.

Remember that we live in the internet age, where a growing army of writers are competing to get noticed in an expanding sea of content. It'll quickly take your writing to a level of refinement that will mystify anybody who doesn't know these elite techniques.

If you don't know anything about those layers yet, don't fret. Only a handful of writers do, and many are editors who work, as I have done, for top news organizations. They spend all day bringing order and beauty to whatever article is presented to them. They know how to focus on areas that bring structure to untidy prose, and a razor-sharp focus to disorderly ideas.

THE NARRATIVE LEVEL

How to connect with your audience, organize your writing magnificently, start your piece with a bang, end with a flourish, and embed it with powerful imagery. Getting the structure right is one of the hardest skills to master, but I'll make it super easy for you in this section.

THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL

How to weave points through paragraphs, so your writing looks exceptionally ordered and polished.

THE SENTENCE LEVEL

How to turn limp and bloated sentences into sharp, graceful and rhythmic expressions of your ideas.

THE WORD LEVEL

How to choose precise and evocative words, and strip your writing of any that carry dead weight.

Websites for Content Writing Projects

Upwork

Finding the best freelance site is a very difficult task. There are many freelance websites in the market that don't pay well or ditch you. But don't worry; Upwork is one of the best freelance websites for writers. Upwork is not only for writers, it is also a great portal for designers, and marketers.

People Per Hour

To find freelance writing jobs, people per hour is a great online website to show your talent. There are mainly three ways to use this site. You can post a job there, you can browse hour lies or you can offer fixed prices to start your projects daily.

Guru

Guru is one of the famous websites to grow your appeal in the field of content marketing. This online platform is very easy to use and many big companies are ready to offer content marketing jobs to aspiring talents.

Fiverr

Fiverr is best known for one of the biggest marketplace for freelancers. If you are just starting your content writing then this portal would be a best choice for you to earn money online.

Freelancer

Everyone knows about freelancer platform. It is one of the most popular platforms to seek for content writing jobs. Writers who bid low and offer to do work at the least possible time get the projects.

Freelance Writing

This platform is specially made for content writers. It is very easy to use and you can easily set up your account. Due to loads of writing assignments and great opportunities, this site has become very popular among writers.

Narrato.io

Narrato is an online portal where you can apply for content writing jobs very easily. Writers can apply for content writing by simply filling one form. Narrato is a leading content platform to get high quality content for website, blogs and SEO.

OutSourcely

Outsourcely is another great platform where you can set up your account for \$19 per month. You don't have to pay any commission to their platform which is a good thing.

Truelancer

Truelancer is an Indian online platform for content writing. Here people can work easily part time as well as full time in the field of content marketing. They have many openings for content writing employers so you can easily go and have a look at this amazing content platform.

Pro Blogger Job Boards

It is an excellent community where you can find hundreds of content writing gigs to earn money online. The best part about this platform is that you don't have to pay nothing or any monthly fee.

Tips to Earn as a Content Writer

How to Earn Money as a Freelance Content Writer Worldwide

Once you have a strong and comprehensive understanding of content and how it caters to customers and clients, you can earn a handsome amount of money as a freelance writer.

Freelance content writing is the zenith of achievements in this industry. Although this statement is an individual perspective at the affair, each writer is aiming for the same. Content writing itself is a booming industry, and being able to reach a point where you earn solely based on your own credit is huge. Instead of operating with an established name, the self-worth of the writer receives more value. To be honest, this business is actually preferred by many entrepreneurs today as it involves less people in the process and a cohesive line of thought between the writer and the company or product being written for.

If a writer is beginning to opt for freelance content writing as a medium of earning, then they generally must have at least two years of experience in the industry. The freelance market is far

more competitive than the corporate content writing market, and it will gobble up a novice writer. The perspective of competing with writers from around the entire globe can be very daunting for a writer who doesn't understand the techniques and tweaks to survive in the industry yet. However, once the relevant experience and knowledge on how to cater to the client's request and bidding is acquired, a writer is set to earn money as a freelancer.

Nonetheless, this list is a guide to writers beginning to wonder about this path as a medium of livelihood and how they can earn a substantial amount of money through this. It is important to grasp that all these tips and guides are only relevant once you have cleared the time in the industry and have a very strong and comprehensive understanding of content and how it caters to customers and clients alike.

Having exhausted considerable time in the content writing business, it is befitting to say that a writer will have tons of work at their disposal. A portfolio is a culmination of all the writer's best work encased within a document so that it serves as testament. In the freelance business, clients often ask for a portfolio or a proof of work, and being able to furnish this builds confidence within a client. Besides, having a set of documents instead of one single document as a sample of work is far better as there is scope of versatility, diversity in thoughts and relevant issues that would receive prominence.

Successful Content Writing Career

writing content is a skill and you can definitely build an illustrious career around this skill. The beauty of this skill is that it can be developed and applied regardless of your location, gender, age and stage of life you are in. You should make the most of this glorious opportunity and see how you can extract the most value out of it.

Well, of course, you can get yourself a content writing job too because let's face it a "job" provides you with stability, exposure and more; which a lot of you need. But the best part is even if you have a job, you can utilise this skill to go out there and milk it to the maximum.

So for the sake of my argument, instead of calling it a "job" let's call it a "gig". A "gig" can be loosely understood as a temporary work contract.

Generally speaking, content writing gigs will help you to work with multiple companies on multiple projects at the same time. This means that instead of looking for “a job” you need to be looking for multiple “gigs” or in other words freelancing opportunities.

Once you change the frame, you will realise that there are tons of opportunities, not just in India but around the world. In fact, a trillion-dollar opportunity.

According to Upwork, a leading freelancing platform, freelancing has had an impact of **\$1 trillion in the US in 2019** which translates to 5% of their entire GDP.

Now, obviously, it would be naive to think that all of it is associated with content writing. But it paints a fine picture of where the gig economy or freelancing, is heading towards.

we are heading towards a world where freelancing is becoming more prevalent because companies are finding it increasingly efficient to work with freelancers than full-time in-house workers. We can testify this because at PixelTrack we work with about 15 content writers and none of them is a full-time employee. This shift is happening because, for companies, the cost of dealing with certain requirements through external vendors is increasingly becoming transparent and cost-effective.

Thanks to internet penetration, global payment solutions, and platforms like Upwork built for credibility and transparency, companies would rather work with external vendors instead of having someone inhouse and have avoidable overhead costs.

Content writing sits perfectly in this setting. For most companies, content is extremely ad hoc and the volume of requirements is usually unpredictable. To overcome this, organisations both in India and worldwide are in constant need for freelance content writers.

How to Become a Published Author

Becoming a published author takes persistence, industry networking, and a healthy dose of luck. However before any of these come into play, a successful author must be committed to actual book-writing. Here are some important tips to help first-time authors produce good writing and understand the industry at large:

1. **Develop good habits.** Most beginning writers will have to balance their writing with other responsibilities. Setting aside consistent blocks of time for writing is an important step. Your writing time can be early in the morning or late at night or on your lunch hour, but keep it consistent, and insist on prioritizing that writing routine.
2. **Use your limited time wisely.** Before you sit down to write, think of ideas, remind yourself of where you left off in the story, or make a mental plan for what you want to accomplish during that session. Some people strive to write 2,000 words a day. Others disregard word count and are more comfortable alternating between days spent reading, outlining, or researching. No matter what you choose, it's a good idea to give yourself daily goals. This will prevent you from spending precious writing time staring at a blank page.
3. **Network with other writers at conferences.** Conferences are an invaluable help if you're looking to network with other writers, publishers, and agents. They will usually provide educational programs geared toward specific genres. Also consider joining a writers' association, which can provide similar benefits to its members through online connectivity. A writing group is a perfect place to get feedback on your work and connect with other writers.
4. **Find an agent.** Publishing via traditional publishing house means you need to find a literary agent. These professionals are the gatekeepers of the publishing world. With the support of a well-connected agent, a great book can reach the most prestigious publishers in the world. Publishers have been known to offer publishing deals to writers who lack agents, but the process is considerably harder. Reaching out to agents starts with a query letter, a strong book proposal, and sample chapters. From there, the agent will decide whether it's worth their while to submit your work to publishing houses.
5. **Build a relationship with an editor.** Editors are a hugely important part of your publishing process, so if you're so fortunate as to command interest in your manuscript, you'll want to do everything you can to ensure a good fit. A good editor will make you a better writer, but a bad editor can compromise your artistic vision. Check their references, look at their backlist (prior books they've edited), chat with them about expectations, and look for a personal connection. Ask yourself what traits

you value in a collaborative partner. A good connection between a novelist and editor makes a huge difference in what tends to be an intense process.

6. **Consider traditional publishing.** New authors seeking to distribute their first fiction or nonfiction book have two publishing options. One is to sign a book deal with a traditional publisher. The traditional publishing process generates the vast majority of books that are read by large audiences. Almost every novel or nonfiction book you see listed on the *New York Times* bestseller list was issued by a traditional publisher. Even professional authors with modest book sales still can land deals with prominent publishers.
7. **Consider self-publishing.** Due to the many hurdles in the traditional publishing industry, the vast number of first-time authors must initially prove their chops in the world of self-publishing. Self-published authors eschew the publishing house and get their novel out into the world on their own. They do this by making the book available for print-on-demand, as an ebook, as an audiobook, or by printing and selling copies of the book themselves. If you've written something that traditional publishers consider less marketable—like an anthology of short stories or poetry—you may want to consider self-publishing to get your own work out in the world.
8. **Never stop writing.** Once your book has been published, plan a celebration and be proud of your success—but don't quit your day job just yet. It's very common for first-time authors to have success with a first novel only to find it difficult to get the next novel written or published. This sophomore slump can happen at any stage of your career, even if you've committed to pursuing writing full-time. Don't spend time worrying about the things you can't control. Instead, stay focused on your writing. Continuing to write will not only keep you grounded in your craft; it is also the most important tool to keep your career going. This can be the hardest part of a writer's career, but if you stay in touch with what made you want to be a writer in the first place, you'll maintain a healthy relationship with the craft, even when the industry doesn't cooperate.

What is Guest Blogging?

Guest blogging, also called “guest posting,” is the act of writing content for another company’s website. Generally, guest bloggers write for similar blogs within their industry in order to:

- Attract traffic back to their website
- Boost their **domain authority using external links** to high-authority domains
- Increase their brand credibility and awareness, and
- Build relationships with peers in their industry.

Almost always, guest blogging offers mutual benefits for both the guest blogger and the website hosting the guest content. In other words, guest blogging is a two-way street — so when you decide to hop on the guest blogging bandwagon, you should consider featuring posts by guest bloggers on your own website, too.

Why Is Guest Blogging Important

Guest blogging offers a number of benefits for any business. By sharing your expertise on other companies’ websites, you can establish yourself as an authority figure within your market, build relationships with other thought leaders in your field and expose your brand to an entirely new audience.

Additionally, featuring guest posts on your own blog will help you deliver new perspectives and fresh content to your audience. We’re all guilty of falling victim to a routine and growing tired of the same old stuff, so featuring guest posts is a great way to keep readers engaged — not to mention the promotional boost that occurs when your guest bloggers share their blogs with their personal network.

Some blogs, like **OpenView**, source the majority of their content from other leaders in their industry. Even if you don’t have the resources to stick to a robust **blogging** cadence, guest bloggers can help you offer new content to your readers without much additional time and effort needed by your team.

Before you get started with guest blogging, make sure you’re clear about what you’re looking to get out of the guest blogging experience. Look for industry blogs by non-competitor companies where you can deliver real insight to readers.

Guest blogging for your partners is a great place to start. At New Breed, we write guest blogs primarily for our **partners** as part of our co-marketing strategy. We also tend to use guest blogging as a way to develop relationships with companies we hope to partner with in the future.

Regardless, research is essential for successful guest blogging.

It’s no secret that there is a lot of spam surfacing the web. It’s your job to make sure you’re not posting to these types of blogs — or publishing any spammy content on your own blog.

Focus on finding writers **within your niche**, within your market and from a respected business or background. You should also agree with what they’re saying in their post and ensure that the

message aligns with your personas' interests. If the content doesn't align with your business, personas or brand voice, guest blogging can have a swift and negative impact on your company.

Here are a few things to look for before offering to guest blog or vice-versa:

- Does this blog or blogger have a slew of followers who are actively posting comments, sharing blogs with their networks and otherwise engaging with content?
- Do they have a Facebook or Twitter account where they share their own blog posts regularly?
- Do they have **high domain authority** that would amplify my own SEO ranking?
- Is their industry and expertise complementary to my own?

Pro tip: When searching for blogs to publish on, search for a relevant industry keyword + “guest post,” “write for us” or something similar. For example, if you wanted to write about inbound marketing, you could Google:

- Inbound marketing guest post
- Inbound marketing guest post guidelines
- Inbound marketing seeking guest posts
- Inbound marketing write for us
- Inbound marketing guest post submissions

... and so on. This will help you find relevant industry blogs who are interested in the topic you're writing about and currently accepting submissions from guest bloggers.

Providing a clear contract that sets out the details and terms of the job to be agreed upon by both parties is essential. Your contract should include the following:

- Specific details of the scope of the project – things like the format it's to be provided in, the word count, the exact topic to be covered/details to be included, and so on
- Deadline for the project
- Fees you'll be charging for the project (including deposits and late fees – more on those below)
- Payment term – i.e. how long before payment of your invoice is due; most freelancers specify ‘within 30 days’, but you can choose shorter or longer payment terms if you wish
- Payment method (more on this below)

Go through your contract with your client before commencing work, making sure you're both on the same page. Get them to sign the agreement to make it official; that way, you've got the original payment terms to refer back to should you have any difficulties with late invoices down the track.

If you're worried about drawing up a freelance contract from scratch, there are plenty of templates online that can help you get started.

Request a deposit

One payment detail you might choose to include in your client's contract is an upfront deposit.

Charging a deposit is a common practice for freelancers. It's perfectly reasonable to ask for a portion of the total project cost at the outset, especially if you're working with a new client. It shows that you're serious about receiving payment for your work and provides some measure of security for both you and the client.

It's up to you how much to charge as an upfront deposit. As Caitlin Pearce of the Freelancers Union points out:

A deposit of 30%–50% of your estimated fee is acceptable in many industries.”

Include details of the deposit and remainder payment in your contract and initial discussions with the client, and don't start work until the deposit is received.

3. Invoice promptly

Don't wait around to send your invoices! Remember that the sooner you send off an invoice, the quicker your client can pay it. Of course, not all freelance writing jobs are the same, and not all will require the same invoicing method. Some gigs might be project-based, where it's best to send off an invoice as soon as you finish and submit the work. On the other hand, some might be regular work that's paid by the hour, where you'll need to decide how frequently to invoice.

In these cases, invoicing weekly or every two weeks is generally a safe option, as it means you'll have payments rolling in more frequently. However, you can choose to invoice monthly for the entire month's work if you wish – just be sure to factor this into your cashflow and budget.

Whichever way you choose to invoice your clients, make sure you do it as promptly as possible. An unsent invoice is an unpaid one, after all!

If you haven't already, check out our roundup of simple invoicing tools for freelance writers to make the process a whole lot easier for both you and your client.

Speaking of making things easy...

4. Make payment methods easy for clients

The easier you make it for your client to pay you, the better chance there is that they'll pay on time. If the payment process is overly complicated or unclear, your invoice is more likely to get shafted to the side and forgotten. When you invoice your client, make the payment instructions as clear as possible. It also helps to discuss your preferred payment method at the beginning of the job so there are no surprises for the client when it's time to pay.

Some commonly used payment methods for freelancers include:

- Direct bank transfer
- PayPal or similar portal
- FreshBooks or similar software
- Payment portal on your website

Whichever payment method you choose, be sure to provide very clear instructions and correct account/reference numbers wherever necessary.

5. Send a friendly reminder

You don't have to wait around for your client to remember your invoice. If you haven't received payment within the timeframe you specified at the outset of the job, it's perfectly fine to send a friendly reminder.

If you don't receive payment or hear back from them within a week after sending this reminder, it's time to follow up again – perhaps this time by phone to ensure you don't get palmed off.

To stay on top of your invoices and reminders, one of the organisational tools we recommend keeping is an invoice tracking spreadsheet, including details of the following:

- Client/job
- Date you sent invoice
- Date invoice is due
- Date to send first reminder
- Date to send second reminder (if necessary)
- Date invoice is paid

This way you know the current status of all your invoices, and can follow up consistently on any late ones until you're paid up.

6. Charge a late payment fee

One way to deter clients from being lax about your payments is by charging a late payment fee. Details of this fee should be incorporated into the contract or agreement you drew up at the beginning of the job, so the client can't plead ignorance when it's charged. It's up to you how much you'd like to charge for late payments. Most guidelines we've seen generally suggest around 1.5% to 2% 'interest' per month. This means that for each month past the payment's due date, a percentage of the total payment is added on. These numbers might seem quite low, especially for less expensive jobs. But you can decide to charge more if you like, and sometimes, even just the presence of a late fee clause in your agreement can be enough to spur on a dawdling client.