The Definitive Guide to Writing A-level Content

Writing good content is not easy but not impossible.

That being said, there's a learning curve to write good content and this can vary from person to person.

Fortunately, I've compiled all my insights and expertise from writing over 100,000 words of content into one nifty guide.

Now, I don't expect you to write perfectly from the get-go but I'd like to train and help you get there.

But remember, writing good content is not just banging out words in a content:

1. You need to write with empathy for the reader aka be relevant.
2. You need to write for humans aka keep things simple, easy but witty.
3. You need to be actionable aka insightful articles #noBSlisticles.

What's on the agenda:

Resources - Essential
Step 1: Understand the content goal 10 min
Step 2: Create a well-researched outline 20 min
Step 3: Write the first (shit) draft 60+ mins
Step 4: Ruthlessly edit that first draft 15 min
Step 5: Submit but expect at least one revision Varies
Additional Resources:

Goal: Shoot for 2 hours per article

Resources

Before submitting your article, make sure to use these two writing resources in the following order:

- Hemingway Editor. This will help ensure your content is readable. It will help you avoid complex sentences
- Grammarly. This is a lifesaver and will catch a lot of grammar mistakes.

Step 1: Understand the content goal - 10 minutes

This might seem like an obvious step, but so many writers (including myself) don't spend enough time here.

The result?

Completely missing the point and having to do tedious reworks (trust me you don't want to be here).

So, here's a few tips to understand content goals:

- Thoroughly read the content brief (provided with every article) specifically the 'format inspiration' which is going to inform the structure of your article.

- Once again, read the format inspiration and try to understand how the sentences are structured, flow, formatting (think: punctuation, images, anchors). This is important as you're ghostwriting, so you need to try to mimic my content style.

- Ask a lot of questions, seriously I'll really appreciate it if you do.

- <mark>Highlight</mark> or **bold** parts of the content brief to help with the outline.

Step 2: Create a well-researched outline - 20 minutes

After you've clarified doubts and gained a firm understanding of the content goal, create a content outline.

Here are a few ways to research articles:

- Start by googling the query of the article (this is the title).
- This will give you a list of competitor articles. Then pick the best of the bunch and use that as inspiration.

- Use data, studies, and statistics from the latest sources (not later than 2017).

When you're done, send it over to me and I'll share my feedback and advice to help you structure the article better.

Step 3: Write the first (shit) draft - 60+ minutes

Once you've got the green signal, start writing that first draft. Now, this can be tricky for beginners so I've decided to share insights I've gained from writing 100K+ words of content.

1. Don't expect to write perfectly from the get-go, instead, just write based on your outline. Also, there's no such thing as writer's block if you write without expectations.

2. Avoid writing the intro and outro at the start as these sections are usually tricky—and you'll have better ideas later anyways.

3. Instead, start with the easy sections which are usually the informative parts. This is usually everything between the intro and outro.

Here's an example of a good informative section:

And here's a template to do the same:

1. Start with a (relevant) compelling statement.
2. Talk about the problem.
3. Pitch the solution.
4. Talk more about the benefits of the solution.
5. Provide actionable steps to apply the solution.

Note: I've started out the format for you so you can build up on that.

6. Finally, write the intro and outro, and here are a few best practices:

Intro:
- Start your intro with an opening hook (read: intriguing question), data-driven statistics to lure your readers into your article.
- Keep the intro light, simple but witty as your ready is only just getting into your article. You want to take it nice and slow 😉

Outro:
- reemphasize your core content goal
- Avoid using "wrapping up" or "conclusion" header and instead try to go for an intriguing outro title (here's an example, scroll down to the last part).

General formatting tips:

Flow is Holy:
Pay attention to 'flow' of content. Check my articles and find instances where I've written 'what's more' 'however' 'instead' to find how I connect different paras.

Keep content scannable
- Use italics to *emphasize* points.
- Keep paras under 3 lines and break it up with compelling single ling connectors.
- Break up long sentences with periods.
- Use humor (think: memes, witty jokes, etc).

Bonus #1: Use paint the picture technique to explain vague statements (see the previous example). Here's a format to follow "vague statement (think: explainer)". Replace with 'read' for other cases.

Bonus #2: Play around with words. For example, use connects instead of connections or paras instead of paragraphs.

(You don't have to follow all these pointers but keep this in mind when writing articles.)

Step 4: Ruthlessly edit that first draft - 15 minutes

Once you're done with the first draft, ruthlessly edit your content and tone it down a notch. This is the point where you want to convert that shit draft into a decent draft.

- Lose your darlings: don't be afraid to completely remove chunks of text if it seems irrelevant (I'm serious about being **ruthless**).
- Remember, less is more so try to pack a punch with less content.
- Also, avoid wordiness i.e. writing a sentence so long like really long without any periods in between to make the sentence readable and, instead, just overwhelming the reader with content that requires a ton of content to read, you know what I mean? (Psst… That was an example of a wordy sentence).
- Use my Grammarly Pro account for additional help.

Step 5: Submit but expect at least one revision

Once you're done with the first draft, send it over.

Now, depending on your experience, revisions will vary but you need to have patience and use this opportunity as a learning experience.

- Document and record *everything* during the rework phase.
- Keep backups of your old drafts

Remember, we're all human here so I don't expect you to be perfect, I expect you to make mistakes. What's key is to learn from them.

Additional Resources:

- [How to write content fast](#)
- [Punchup Slide](#)
- [Portfolio for existing resources](#)
- [How To Format Your Blog Posts To Keep Your Readers engaged](#)