

# Content Editing

## Checklist

### Relevance and flow

- Is all of the content relevant to the topic and audience?
- Does the content flow logically from one point to the next?

### Clarity and specificity

- Do any sentences or paragraphs have unclear meaning?
- Do any sections need more context to make sense to the target reader?
- Can any words, sentences, or paragraphs be more specific?
  - *Examples:*
    - **Not specific:** 1,000+ people
    - **Specific:** 1,435 people
    - **Not specific:** Big city
    - **Specific:** New York City
    - **Not specific:** The software is easy to use.
    - **Specific:** Use the drag and drop editor. No coding or technical skills needed!
    - **Not specific:** The weather was bad.
    - **Specific:** It was pouring rain and the wind blew my hair into frizzy knots.
    - **Not specific:** She read a book.
    - **Specific:** She read "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee.
- Is the content personalized to the target audience?
  - *Examples of personalization:*
    - Address the reader directly with "you."
    - Personalize examples to the audience, geo-location, current events, or industry

### Voice and tone

- Are the voice and tone on brand?

- Are the voice and tone human, not corporate or robotic?
- Are there any places in this content where you can increase your reader's emotion?

## Vivid writing and proof

- Do any sections or arguments need stories, examples, or use cases to illustrate them?
  - *Examples:*
    - **Argument:** Using a pomodoro timer increases productivity.
    - **Personal story to support it:** I noticed a significant boost in my efficiency after implementing the pomodoro technique. It normally takes me 8 hours to write a blog post, but using the pomodoro technique, I finish writing my blog posts in 6 hours.
- Do any sections or points need images or videos to illustrate them?
- Do any sections or arguments need expert quotes or testimonials to support them?
  - *Examples:*
    - **Argument:** Using a pomodoro timer increases productivity.
    - **Expert quote to support it:** Anthony Sanni — Productivity Expert, Coach, and Speaker — says, *"The fact that the Pomodoro technique requires you to focus for the duration of the Pomodoro and postpone your rest and your mind-wandering and day-dreaming until the 5-minute breaks creates an immense degree of concentration. Concentration, which as you know, is critical for producing good work."*
- Do any sections or arguments need data, research, or studies to prove points?
  - *Examples:*
    - **Argument:** Using a pomodoro timer increases productivity.
    - **Scientific study to support it:** "A study published in the Journal of Applied Psychology found that employees who used the pomodoro method increased their productivity by 22%."
- Are studies, research, and data conducted in the last 10 years and accurate? (The more recently conducted the research, the better.)

## Brevity and conciseness

- Can you cut any sections, paragraphs, or sentences without hurting meaning?
- Are there any filler words you can remove?
  - *Examples of filler words:*
    - "very"
    - "really"
    - "actually"
    - "just"

- Are there any adverbs you can remove? (As Stephen King says, “The road to hell is paved with too many adverbs.”)
  - *Examples of adverbs:*
    - Quickly
    - Slowly
    - Carefully
    - Happily
    - Angrily
    - Loudly
    - Softly
    - Badly
    - Well
    - Eagerly
- Are there any redundant sentences or phrases you can remove?
  - *Examples of redundant vs. concise sentences and phrases:*
    - **Redundant:** In my opinion, I think that the new policy is beneficial. **Concise:** I think the new policy is beneficial.
    - **Redundant:** Reason why **Concise:** Reason
    - **Redundant:** Repeat again **Concise:** Repeat
    - **Redundant:** Unexpected surprise **Concise:** Surprise
    - **Redundant:** Very unique **Concise:** Unique

## Readability

- Is there a hyperlinked table of content at the beginning of the piece to allow users to quickly navigate to sections relevant to them?
- Are headings and subheadings clear and informative?  
Do headings and subheadings make it easy for readers to scan for relevant information?
- Are sentences written in active voice where possible?
  - *Examples of active vs. passive voice:*
    - **Active voice:** The dog caught the ball.
    - **Passive voice:** The ball was caught by the dog.
    - **Active Voice:** The manager completed the report by the end of the day.
    - **Passive Voice:** The report was completed by the end of the day by the manager.
- Is the language simple and easy to understand? (Aim for an 8th grade reading level or lower.)
- Are sentences and paragraphs simple and short? (This increases readability.)
- Does the content clearly explain jargon, new terms, and acronyms?
- Is the formatting consistent (e.g., fonts, headings, bullet points)?
- Are terms and names consistently spelled and capitalized?

- Is there enough white space to avoid a cluttered look?
- Are there any grammatical errors or typos?

 To get content feedback and a readability score, use [the Hemingway Editor](#). It's free!

 Use Grammarly for grammar

## Accessibility (for website owners)

- Does the content have high color contrast between text and background colors to make content readable for users with visual impairments?
- Are there transcripts available for audio content?
- Are there captions available for video content?
- Is there alternative text (alt text) for every image?
- Can my user employ a screen reader to accurately listen to this piece?

## Reach and conversion rate optimization

- Can users easily share this piece via social media, text, or email? (If not, consider adding share buttons.)
- Is there a clear call to action for the reader?

## SEO

- Do you use the keywords you're trying to rank for naturally throughout your post, including in the title, headings, URL, and meta description?
- Have you written a compelling title tag (around 60 characters) that includes your primary keyword(s)?
- Have you written a meta description (up to 160 characters) that accurately summarizes your post and includes the primary keyword(s)?
- Do you include internal links to other relevant posts on your blog to improve site structure?
- Do you include external links to reputable sources to enhance credibility?
- Are you using H1, H2, H3, etc., tags to structure your content? (This helps search engines understand the hierarchy and importance of the content on your page.)
- Do images have descriptive alt text associated with them and include keywords where it's appropriate?
- Does the page load quickly? (Optimize load speed by compressing images, using caching, and minimizing CSS and JavaScript files.)

## User experience (for website owners)

- Can you embed an audio version of the content, so readers can listen to it?
- Can you embed a video version of the content, so readers can watch it?
- Can readers easily bookmark the content to save it for later?
- Is the content easy to read from a mobile device?
- Are images and videos viewable from a mobile device?

## Accuracy and legal

- Have you verified the accuracy of all facts and data presented?
- Have you ensured that the content complies with relevant laws and regulations (e.g., copyright, privacy)?

## Final testing and review

- Do all hyperlinks work and lead to the correct pages?
- Have you received feedback from colleagues or beta readers to get a fresh perspective?
- Have you done a final read-through to catch any remaining issues?

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