



PLAN

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1. Identify your objectives

- Why are you writing? What do you want to achieve?
- Are you writing to inform / advise / encourage action / warn?
- Have you got a hook?
- What do you want the readers to do? Read / understand / act / make a decision / change behaviour / protect themselves / plan for change?

2. Define your audience

- Why are they reading? What do they want to know – and why?
- What's in it for them?
- What's their level of knowledge of the area?

3. Decide on content

- Focus on what matters most to your readers – address their issues and concerns. Make it practical and relevant.
- Assess how much information and detail is required for readers (including any who are not expert in the topic).
- Consider providing links, instead of writing one long page.

4. Create a skeleton structure

- Start with the most important / interesting / relevant / significant or new information. (You're not writing a whodunit.)
- Write sub-headings for each key point – these provide the structure for your content. They help you to focus on the message instead of being distracted by words. Each screen needs to have at least 2 sub-headings.
- Sub-headings should help readers to navigate. Try to use a verb.
- Sub-headings should be clear, correct, accurate and relevant.



WRITE

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5. Make a strong start

- Make your purpose and usefulness immediately obvious – readers skim text and make quick judgments about what's worth reading.
- Use the title, sub-headings and introduction to clearly identify to readers what the page is about, and how reading it will benefit them.
- Consider whether a summary or anchor links would be helpful (for a long page).



WRITE (contd)

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6. Use appropriate language, style and tone of voice

- Limit the amount of jargon and technical language you use, unless you're writing for an expert audience.
- Don't write in overformal or flowery language – it's not appropriate online.
- Consider how you want readers to react to you and your organisation. Do you want them to feel that you are helpful, approachable, well-informed, professional etc.? If so, use language which conveys that impression.

7. Capture readers' attention

- Reading online is different from reading hard copy – most people scan web pages.
- Stop them in their tracks – use sub-headings, short sections, short paragraphs, bullet lists, and images where appropriate.
- Make sure each paragraph starts strong – with an introductory sentence if possible.
- Use the active voice if possible (who-does-what).

8. Make it easy for readers to get the message

- Consider using a summary or anchor links.
- Explain new terms and concepts in plain English.
- Use case studies and authentic examples.
- Explain practical consequences / implications for readers.
- Don't clog up your page with padding, waffle or unnecessary details.



EDIT / REVIEW

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9. Plan to edit

- Plan your work schedule to set aside sufficient time for editing. You need time and space, without interruptions.
- Take a break before reviewing.
- Your aim is to re-read with a 'fresh eye' – the longer the break between writing and reviewing, the better.

10. Check it is effective

- It achieves your objectives.
- Your target audience will find it clear, concise and readable – and understand its relevance to them.
- The structure and content are suitable for your readers – with clear labelling.
- The language, style and tone of voice help readers to get the message on first reading.
- It uses correct and consistent grammar, punctuation and layout.