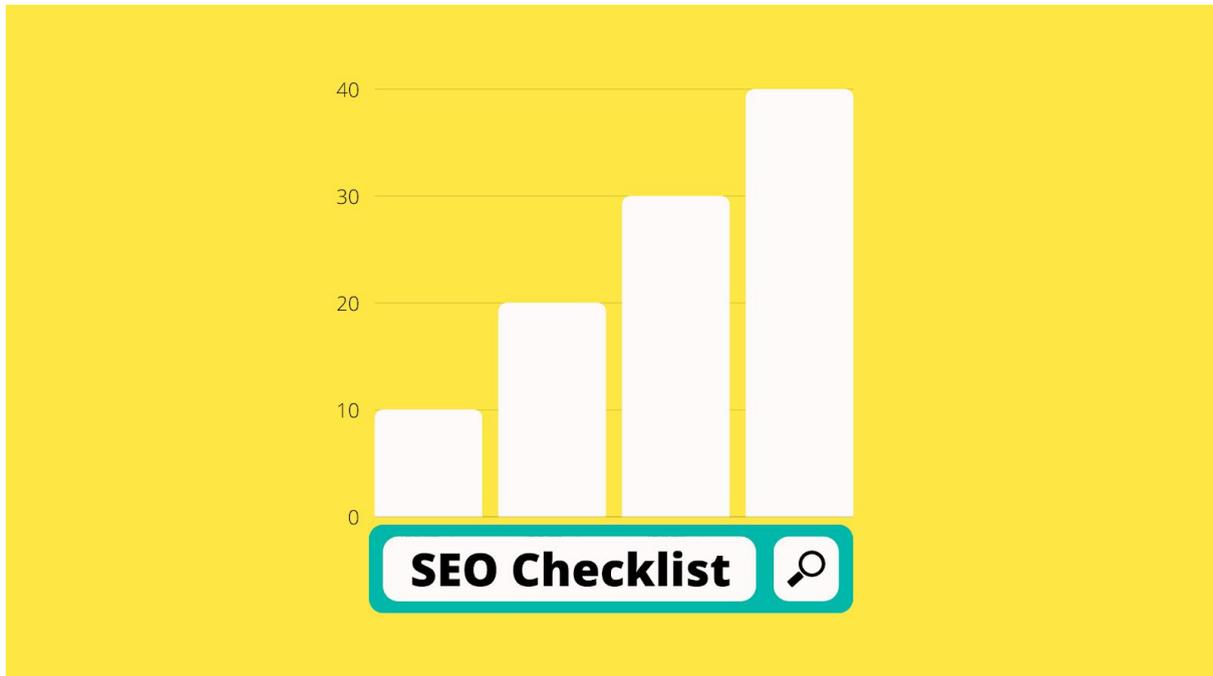# SEO Checklist for Content Writers to Skyrocket Traffic in 2021

[SEO Checklist for Content Writers](#)

SEO checklist for content writers. SEO itself is a broad topic as Google decides whether your post is eligible to rank in SERPs first page or not.

If you are a content writer and want to optimize content according to SEO, so that your written articles can rank in google, then you don't need to learn the whole process of search engine optimization.

In contrast, you only need to be familiar with 10% out of 200+ SEO factors, which will be more than enough for a content writer.

I'm an SEO expert, I've learned search engine optimization to manage my agency, train team, and take care of services we provide to our clients. When I used to write SEO friendly articles, I always implemented less than 10% of my SEO skills.

SO, I would strongly suggest to learn these 10% effectively and become a master in it, and rest of the time focus on polishing your writing skills.

You will be surprised that, in content writing these days three crucial things clients look into content writers before they hire anyone.

These three things are…

- Quality content
- SEO optimized articles
- Plagiarism free content

In this checklist, I'm going to give you a step-by-step process of how I do SEO as a content writer, so that my clients are loaded with next projects without asking for money.

This SEO checklist is only for content writers as you've seen our headline "**SEO checklist for content writers.**" If you're a website owner, you may need more proper training including technical SEO, link building strategy, and much more, which are not required for a content writer.

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1. SEO Basics Checklist

Main Keywords

Main keywords are also known as target keywords. A main keyword is one word or phrase that best summarizes your page/article.

Every blog post or article on your website is a separate page. In simple words you can understand it - Google treats every new blog post as a fresh website, in real terms, they are a fresh page.

As the owner and content creator of a website, you want your page keywords to be relevant to what people are searching for so that your article can be found on search engine results.

By: Paddy Moogan   October 30th, 2020

Sustainable Link Building: Increasing Your
Chances of Getting Links — Best of
Whiteboard Friday

In the above screenshot - "Sustainable Link Building" is a main keyword. Readers search this keyword or related other keywords in search engines like Google, and crowler find this article and serve them in the first page of SERP.

LSI Keywords

LSI (Latent Semantic Indexing) keywords are conceptually related terms that search engines use to deeply understand the content on a webpage, the quality of the content and the relevance to the search term.

LSI keywords are words and phrases similar to the main keyword that Google sees as terms related to a topic.

If you are talking about cars, the LSI keywords can be automobile, engine, road, tire, vehicle and automatic transmission.
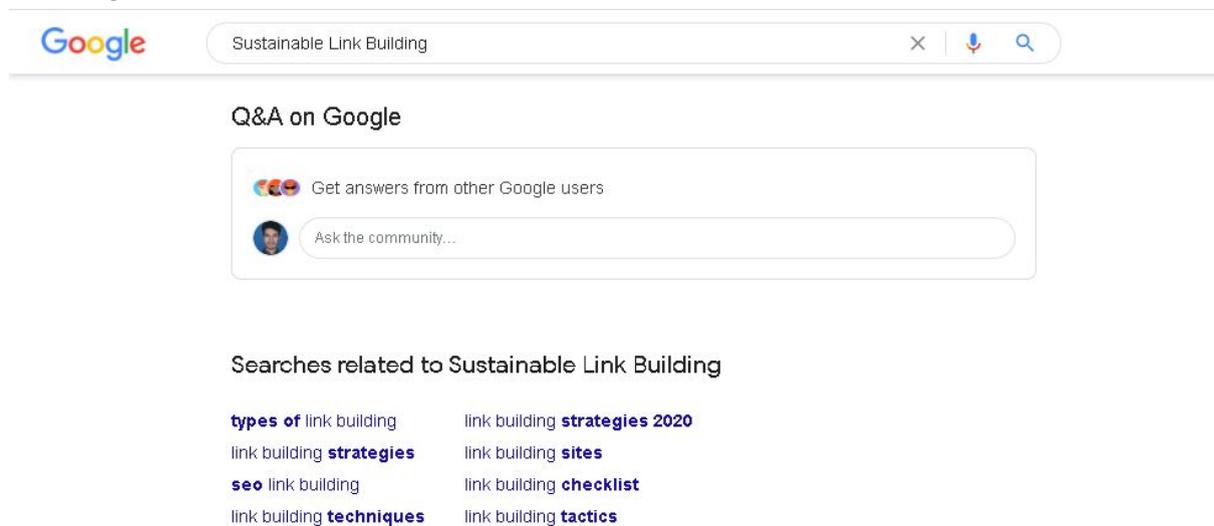
How to find LSI keywords?

Do I need to find LSI keywords myself?

No, your clients will provide the main and LSI keywords. In a few cases they will ask you to do it yourself, in this case if you know this little process, you will never lose a potential client. That's the reason behind creating this **SEO checklist for content writers.**

There are many ways to find LSI keywords for your article. But I'm going to tell you two simplest methods to find it.
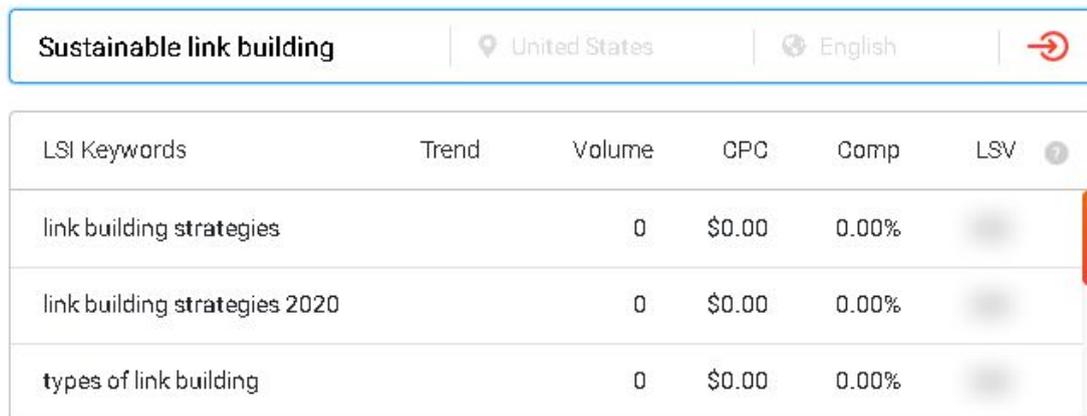
#1 Google Search

The last "Search related to "Sustainable link building" can be considered as LSI keywords, and it works the best.

#2 LSIGraph.com

LSIGraph is a powerful tool to find LSI keywords for free.

Keyword Stuffing

"Keyword stuffing" refers to the practice of loading an article with the number of keywords in an attempt to manipulate the ranking of the site in Google search results.

Keyword Stuffing is a bad practice in terms of SEO. **Keyword Stuffing** can kill your search engine optimization work. So don't let keyword stuffing kill your SEO. Here is how to avoid it.

DON"T
Unnecessarily repeating keywords.
Adding words that are out of context.
Using keywords that are not relevant to the topic.
Lists of phone numbers without substantial added value.
Repeating the same words or phrases so often that it sounds unnatural.

DO
Right amount of keywords for an article, try to use keywords less than 1%
Place keywords so that it sounds natural.
Use the target keywords in the right places.
Your keywords should match with context.
Must add secondary keywords naturally.

Image Optimization

Image optimization is about reducing the file size of your images as much as possible without sacrificing quality so that your page load times remain low.

It's known as image SEO. That means your images will also rank on Google and other search engines.

7 Steps to Optimize Images for SEO
1. Name of your images should be your main keyword.
2. Optimize your alt tag carefully.

3. Choose your image dimensions and product angles wisely.
4. Reduce the file size of your images.
5. Choose the right file type.
6. Optimize your featured images/thumbnails.
7. Use image sitemaps.

Blog Title/Headline

How to write SEO headlines that both people and bots will love?

- Identify the target keywords.
- Write several headline options per post.
- Keep it simple.
- Use headline writing formulas.
- Analy your headlines using a headline analyzer tool (CoScheduel.com).
- Use headline generator tools which are available for free.

13 Unique SEO Tools To Help You Write Killer Headlines

Subheadlines

Assuming that you have identified the right keywords to use in your content writing, created the perfect SEO optimized headlines to attract your audience, the next step is to create subheadings to increase credibility and keep them on your page longer.

Optimize your subheaders for readers first in mind and for search engines next.

Subheaders allows readers
- Help your readers find their answers quickly.
- Make your content more skimmable and easier to consume.
- Subheadings help readers to quick scan your article whether to read or not. Furthermore, no one wants to read a longer paragraph without scanning it.

Install Yoast or RankMath SEO Plugin (For WordPress Users)

If you have a website or got an opportunity to publish an article on your client's website, then make sure one of them Wordpress plugins are installed.

Yoast Plugin

The Yoast SEO plugin makes it easy for your site to meet the highest SEO standards. It also gives you the tools to bring your content to the highest standards of SEO and overall readability.

RankMath Plugin

Rank Math is a Search Engine Optimization plugin for WordPress that makes it easy for anyone to optimize their content with built-in suggestions based on widely-accepted best practices.

2. Keyword Research Checklist

Understand the search intent
Google is getting smarter and smarter every second, yes every second! The keyword has an intent behind it, people search a query to get solutions to particular questions.

Search intent is the reason behind a searcher's query. If your page doesn't align with this, then your chances of ranking will be slim to none.

There are three basic types of search query:

Navigational – searches performed to locate a specific website.
Informational – searches performed to answer questions or learn something.
Transactional – searches performed to buy something.

Navigational	Informational	Transactional
The intent is to reach a particular site or get detailed solutions.	The intent is to acquire information assuming it will be available on one or more than one websites.	The intent to perform some web-mediated activity.
"Amazon"	"Social media marketing"	"Get insurance quotes"
"Facebook Log in"	"Copywriting secrets book price"	"Forbes newsletter"
"Oxford university"	"Tailwind reviews"	"Buy coworking space online"

Long-tail keyword research tools
10 Tools for Finding Long-Tail Keywords

1. Ahrefs
2. Answer the Public
3. KWFinder
4. KeywordTool.io
5. Google Trends
6. Google Suggest
7. Ubersuggest
8. LongTailPro
9. SEcockpit
10. Keywords Everywhere

Identify Low Competition Keywords

What does low competition mean?

There is a simple explanation - a keyword, on which there is not enough quality content available, so that readers can get complete information about this particular topic.

Using the above listed keyword research tools, you can easily find out the low competition keywords. KWFinder is a freemium too, which is free for the limited time but is more effective.

3. On-Page SEO Checklist

Include keywords in your URL
The first thing Google sees even before the content of your webpage while crawling. When you include your keyword in the URL, you're sending Google a signal of what your page is about.

Let's understand it with these two example:

If you are writing an article about "dog food for labrador", a good example would be to use: www.example.com/dog-food-for-labrador.

A bad example would be something like this www.example.com/post/1298-2020-post, which doesn't give us (or search engines) any clue of what the page is about.

Keep your URL short
Avoid using random as much as possible keywords in URLs. Backlinko has researched and shown that shorter URLs tend to rank higher than long ones.

Good URL: www.example.com/dog-food-for-labrador
Bad URL: www.example.com/dog-food-for-labrador-puppies-philippines

Front-load keyword performs the best in your title tag
It's no secret that you should use your keyword in your title tag. But not as many people know that WHERE you put your keyword matters.

Specifically, you want to put your keyword in the front of your title tag.

For example:

How to Write a Testimonial in 2020: 7 Tips (+ 9 Examples)

Nyaima Taylor   6 Comments
Updated: Oct 8, 2020

As you can see, my title tag starts off with the keyword - "**How to write a testimonial**".

Use your target keyword once in the first starting paragraph.
Google puts more weight on the first 100-150 words of your page. So make sure to use your keyword once here.

For example: "How to write a great testimonial".

Want to learn how to write a great testimonial? One that'll build trust with readers and woo potential customers (or clients)?

In this handy guide, you'll learn:

- The proven structure your testimonials should follow to increase conversion rates and land more jobs;

Add keyword to H1, H2, and H3 tags

Make sure to include your keyword in H1, H2 or H3 tags. If you add your keywords in H2 tags, it helps your article to rank higher for that keyword.

Use LSI keywords in place

As I have shown you above how to research LSI keywords in the simplest way. Instead of using the same keyword many times, use synonyms and LSI keywords.

For example, let's say you want to rank for "**dog food for labrador**".

The synonyms of this keyword would be:

homemade food for labrador
best dog food for labs
best affordable dog food for labrador
foods to avoid for labrador
best diet dog food for labradors
You get the idea, right. 🙂

Internal linking with existing resources
This is super simple:

Whenever you publish a new piece of content, link to 2-5 other pages on your site.

Pro Tip: Use keyword-rich anchor text in your internal links.

For example, note how I use the anchor text "on-page SEO", in this internal link:

Link to high authority external sites
External linking builds your credibility. Make sure to link out to 5-8 authority sites in your article.

Always try to link to trusted websites like Wikipedia and Google.com. Whenever you add stats, facts, researched data in your article, must add the source websites (This will be an external linking).

Add keywords to meta description
This will be the best practice if you would add keywords in meta description. It is not mandatory to add keywords in meta description. It doesn't make sense if it doesn't sweat.

Use keywords in the body of your article

Use your keyword at least 3 times in the body of your page, and try to do it once close to the top of the page. Again there is no rule, make sure your keywords look natural and maintain readability of your content.

4. Content Checklist

Use short paragraphs
The best-selling books in the world are written in the 6th grade language. So if you want to connect with the readers, then don't overcomplicate things.

Write short, clear, and concise paragraphs, so that readers will be happy to read more and more.

To write short sentences and paragraphs, avoid unnecessary jargon, use simple words instead of complex ones.

Hemingway is a free tool available, it is an online tool that will help simplify your writing.

Show your trustworthiness

In writing, readers don't see you. Show your trustworthiness using your writing skills, expertise, and giving value in-depth.

If something you don't know, make sure to provide them external authoritative resources so that they can learn from them and can save time finding their own.

Add screenshots if needed, visual explanation is much more effective than simple texts. So you must add screenshots, images, infographics to explain complex concepts.

Explain your topic in-depth

Don't forget to add external resources which can fulfil your audience needs. Keep in mind why readers have landed on your article, try to solve their problem first without talking about anything else.

Final thought

A quick tip from this **SEO checklist for content writers:** Increase click through rate, optimizing your headlines, and intro; And don't forget to add your target keyword among 120 words of the first starting paragraph of your article.

You've seen there is not rocket science behind SEO for a freelance content writer. I agree there are a lot more in SEO, but these are more than enough for being a content writer guy, and start charging your client additional charges having this skill or impress your existing clients by providing additional services as a value.

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