

03. Structuring page content

Self-contained pages

Users may find your page through a search engine or by clicking a link on a different website. Each page needs to make sense as a free-standing unit, without relying on the context provided by navigating through the site's architecture.

Make sure the following page elements are clear and descriptive enough for every page to make sense on its own without any additional context

- title
- description/introduction (page banner)
- headings

Bear in mind that users will often arrive at the page via a search engine or a link from elsewhere. They won't have the context provided by navigating through our site to help them. Users should not need to navigate back or forward in the architecture to understand what the page is about.

Main points first

What is the top task your readers are visiting this page for? Make sure that you put this at the top of the page. Don't make your reader hunt for the information they want, by burying it lower down the page.

SEO recommendations

One of the most important website features evaluated by search engines is content. Presenting well-written and well-organised content to the users is vital to the success of a webpage. As a rule of thumb, if the content is relevant for human users, it will also be relevant for search engines.

Once you have considered the above points, you should follow these three steps to optimise your page content for search engines.

Production

- pick a [meaningful title](#), preferably shorter than 60 characters
- insert a [meta description](#) for the page which:
 1. if appropriate, contains a call to action (what can you do with that page, e.g. "*learn* about the EU", "*contribute* to law creation")
 2. matches the page content
 3. contains the focus keyword
 4. is no longer than 160 characters
- write the text in a clear and readable way with concise sentences that relate to each other
 1. avoid over-long sentences or too many commas
 2. avoid bureaucratese and jargon
 3. divide the content in sections and give each of these sections a title using headlines (h2 to h4). Remember: the purpose of headlines is to create a hierarchy of content (e.g. h2 followed by h3 means h3 is a subsection of h2) and hierarchy needs to be respected to avoid creation of orphaned subheadings (e.g. h2 followed by h4 is wrong, h3 is the subsection of h2 and h4 will be used only if h3 has a subsection).
 4. ideally write at least 1000-2500 words per page (see here for a [detailed analysis of correlation between article length and ranking](#) and a [broader analysis on blog posts and social media articles](#))
 - If you have less, consider integrating the content with the parent or child page
 - If you have more, consider breaking down the content into other pages
- start the sentences with the most relevant information (e.g. "On 22 May I did this" => "I did this on 22 May")
 - if there are *call to action* buttons, place them at the top of the page so that users can see them immediately **Don't** place *call to action* buttons at the end of the page!
- if you are writing specifically for one region or country, use cultural references for that region or country
- all links must have a meaningful text which explains what the linked page is about (especially if it's an internal page)
- don't rely uniquely on images to convey concepts (See also [Audiovisual](#) type of content)
- if you have an image with a graph include a caption which explains exactly what is in the image and ensure that the content around the image is somehow related to it. Don't forget to insert proper alternative text attributes

Correction

- remove unclear phrasing
- check that the keywords you want to rank for are used on the page
- ensure that the first sentence of each paragraph conveys the sense of the whole paragraph
- ensure that the page you created fits in the overall structure, considering hierarchical constraints and that it is reachable from the main landing page (don't create orphaned pages)
- check HTML markup
 1. prefer `` or `` over `<i>` or ``, as they have a semantic meaning and work better with screen readers and are good for accessibility
 2. use semantic markup (header, nav, section, article, figure, footer)
 3. add title attribute on links
 4. ensure that there are no broken links on the website, especially if the link is internal

Translation and localization

- when adopting a page into another language, always translate cultural references
- link only to social media in the local language
- translate hidden parts of content (title tags, descriptions, alternative text)
- if possible, translate file names

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact:

[Comm Europa Management](#)

European Commission
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