WHAT WRITING IS *REALLY LIKE* IN THE DIGITAL AGE

At Aha Media Group, we love producing amazing content. But we know the web writing process is not linear – the path from "draft" to "done" is full of zigs and zags.

It's always exciting to jump into a project and create something fantastic that will hopefully help a lot of people. But getting to that end point involves lots of research, writing, do-overs – and snacks.

On the back, you'll find our most valuable writing and research tips, plus the tasty recipes that fuel us during content writing marathons.

Of course, there is a foolproof way to take the stress out of creating content: Hire us.

aha.media

1 Target business objectives

2 Think

3 Ideate

4 Lose yourself in "keyword" research by watching YouTube videos

5 Outline

6 Binge watch "The Good Place" on Netflix

7 Write the first draft

8 Delete it

9 Wish you could call it back

10 Call your mother *(Yes, you're that desperate)*

11 Second draft

12 Have a snack

13 Go for a walk in the woods *(now called Forest Bathing-- we promise)*

14 Read it again

15 Edit

16 Read it out loud

17 Send it to your editor

18 Pray

19 Read it again and think of all the ways you could've made it better

20 Get it back and cry with relief

AUDIENCE AND TOPIC RESEARCH TOOLS:

Get into the heads of the people you're writing for. Take a look at:

- The current website
- Stakeholder bios
- Client blog posts and news releases
- Customer testimonials
- Statistical and outcome reports
- Video content from YouTube
- Facebook groups and online forums

KEYWORD RESEARCH:

Here are some of our favorite free SEO tools:

- The Hoth Keyword planner: https://www.thehoth.com/google-keyword-planner/
- Keyword finder: https://kwfinder.com/
- UberSuggest: https://keywordseverywhere.com/ubersuggest.html
- Aha Media's SEO Cheatsheet: https://ahamediagroup.com/resources/seo-cheatsheet-for-content-marketers/

WRITING TOOLS:

We love these tools that make the actual writing easier to do:

- Spellcheck: An app such as Grammarly takes your spell- and grammar-check to the next level, helping even those first drafts sound as polished as possible. https://app.grammarly.com/
- Website blockers: It's off to work you go – avoid the temptation to scroll social media or constantly check email by using Freedom, which blocks certain websites for you. https://freedom.to/
- Readability checkers: Readers appreciate when you deliver information in plain language. A tool like Readable can flag jargon-y words and long sentences. https://readable.io/
- Style guides: Keep those style guides handy – including the style guide from the organization you're writing for and the classics like the AP StyleBook or The Chicago Manual of Style. https://www.apstylebook.com/ or https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

THE BEST RECIPES AND SNACKS FOR WRITING:

Try these healthy nosh ideas so you can nibble while work. Just try to keep the crumbs off the keyboard!

- Coffee energy bites: Keep that writing stamina going strong with a boost from ground coffee beans. The filling almond butter will keep you satisfied – so you won't have to spend your precious writing time searching for another treat. https://www.yummly.com/recipe/Coffee-Energy-Bites-1602890
- Kale chips: Keep your biggest writing muscle (your brain) healthy. Studies show that leafy greens like kale help slow down age-related cognitive decline. https://ohsheglows.com/2014/03/12/6-tips-for-flawless-kale-chips-all-dressed-kale-chips-recipe/
- Spicy popcorn: No falling asleep at the computer when munching on this zesty snack. https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/spicy-popcorn
- Dark chocolate sea salt almonds: Another brain booster, the flavonoids in chocolate may increase blood flow to the brain. https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/2015/08/24/healthier-treat-dark-chocolate-sea-salt-almonds/
- Sometimes, you just need a writing break. Maybe you like to get up from your computer and let your thoughts marinate while you cook dinner. Try some of our favorite "cook-while-you-think" dinner ideas, like pot roast (https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ree-drummond/perfect-pot-roast-recipe-2118771) or hearty vegetable lasagna (https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/11786/hearty-vegetable-lasagna/). Get dinner going and then come back to your work with renewed energy and ideas.

REVISING TOOLS:

When you're ready to look at your work with a fresh perspective, use these Microsoft Word tools to make your piece as strong as possible:

- Passive voice checker: Passive voice leads to drab content. In Word's "Preferences," you can change your "Spelling and Grammar" settings to flag passive voice.
- Text-to-speech: Reading your work out loud helps you catch redundant words, typos and parts where the text just doesn't flow. In a cubicle? Take out your headphones and enable your "text-to-speech" feature to hear your draft read aloud. https://support.office.com/en-us/article/use-the-speak-text-to-speech-feature-to-read-text-aloud-459e7704-a76d-4fe2-ab48-189d6b83333c

For regular writing tips and advice, follow @ahamediagroup and @ahaval on Twitter and Instagram. And if you want strong content that gets results (without the hassle of writing it yourself), email us at hello@ahamediagroup.com today!