

How to Write an Article

in 10 Easy Steps

Article writing is a tried-and-true method for crafting information about your business and industry. Publishing an article gets you positive attention, informs your target audience, and helps you market your products and services.



Another reason for writing and placing articles in relevant trade and commercial magazines is to build an audience of readers who, if you also decide to write a book, will be likely purchasers of your book. You want people who listen to what you have to say. Article writing is a great first step on your path to becoming a professional writer.

But first, you need to know how to write an article. It's easy, really!

“
**Start with a topic, then
define and refine it
into a compelling idea**

In addition to building your audience, knowing how to write articles gives you useful techniques for other types of writing, too, including blog posts, newsletter articles, white papers, personal essays, and a variety of promotional materials.”

If the article is long enough, you can slice it into sub-categories to create an auto-responder series, expand a subcategory into its own article, or expand it into an Ebook.

Let's begin:

1. Select a Topic.

Pick a topic relevant to your audience. If you're a landscaper, you could write a how-to on tree trimming. Tree trimming is too broad a topic for a single article.

What you need to do is narrow the focus, or develop a series of short articles. Each article deals with only one narrow part of your overall theme.

2. Select Three Key Points You Want to Address.

These are your subcategories. Let's say you narrowed your topic to "How to Prune Your Evergreen Trees." You could easily have three sub-topics or categories within the article:

- a. What part of the tree you should prune.
- b. How do you prune the tree
- c. When during the year do you prune the tree?

Ask yourself if the three topics make the article complete. Your article is essentially a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Do the topics construct that logical sequence? By the end of the article, do you feel

that the subject has been explained?

3. Research Your Topic and Organize Your Content

Now the fun begins. If you are an expert, you may have a lot of the research gathered in your head. It just needs to be written down, typed into your computer, or recorded and transcribed.

If you have to conduct research, the logical place to start is the internet. A great idea, but beware of dot coms. They are not necessarily the most authoritative sites. They are dot coms because they are a commercial venture, by and large. Go to .gov, .org, or .edu sites for scholarly and other unbiased data and information.

4. Write Your Main Headline

Here you can use your creative skills. You can be straightforward and call your article "How to Prune Your Evergreens," or you can do a play on words, use puns, or alliteration.

How about "The Everyman's Guide to Elegant Evergreens Pruned to Perfection." It's your article. Have fun!



5. Write an Introductory Paragraph

It can be just three sentences long, but it introduces the topic. It provides a promise to your reader that the article will contain information on X, Y, and Z.

6. Turn Your Three Sub-Category Names into Subheads

Back in Step 2, I had you decide which three sub-categories belonged in your article. You can have more than three, but for a 500 to 800-word article, having three sub-categories is sufficient.

Take the category names and finesse them. Like your article title, you can be playful by using puns or alliteration to make them interesting. These will go above the paragraphs pertaining to that topic. This breaks up the text, making it easier to read. It also allows your readers to skim the text and just read the paragraphs of interest. These are your three subheads.

7. Write Three Sentences of Information Under Each of Your Three Subheads

Read your research and use information that is germane to the sub-headline. Expand and explain the subhead—This is information related to the main topic while also getting specific on some point that is important to make.

8. Add Facts, Figures, Quotes, Stats, Video, Photos, and Stories

Third party data brings authority to your article and makes generalized ideas and concepts more concrete to your reader. Don't, however, overdo it with data. It can become tedious to read and boring.

Intersperse the facts with stories—your own or someone else's.

You can also add quotations from relevant people whose words add another element to your article. You can add quotes from third party experts, or if you are the expert, you can write the article in first person. You do not put any of your text between quotation marks.

Align the photos and videos with the text they correspond to. They are support material, break up the monotony of text, and can be physically attractive, drawing people to your article. And that's the whole point.

9. End Your Article with a One to Two-Sentence Summary

This sums up the article by reiterating your overall message once again. It references your introductory paragraph as well as your sub-categories and makes a conclusion that corresponds to your Main Headline.

An article is like a circle—you start at the Headline, read through to the

end, and the summary makes reference to the headline.

10. At the Very End, Include a Short Biography and Call to Action

Beneath your article, you should include a short biography, and a call to action. The bio includes your name and anything relevant that shows you have the authority to write the article and be taken seriously. The call to action is an invitation to contact you for more information, to hire you, or to receive more articles like the one you read.

Within these 10 steps are the details that allow you to write a simple article. You learned about subcategories, the importance of stats, photos and other interesting add-ins, and the importance of your summary paragraph, bio, and call to action. Use this procedure to draft blog posts, newsletter articles, or articles for magazines and trade publications.

Paula Diaco helps solo professionals and small business owners share their big messages through writing, from blog posts to books.

Need help starting or finishing your current writing project? Email paula@writestoriesnow.com to schedule a free 60-minute consultation.

