



HOW TO WRITE ARTICLES THAT GOOGLE LOVES.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE ON OPTIMIZING YOUR ARTICLES FOR SEO

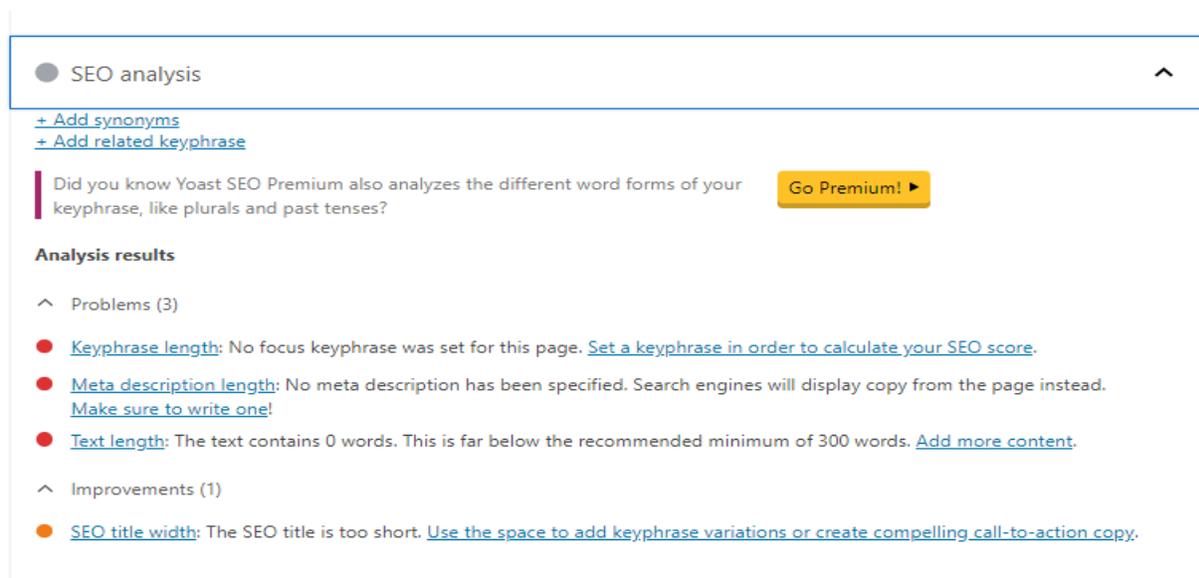
HOW TO WRITE GREAT ARTICLES THAT GOOGLE WILL LOVE.

1. INSTALL YOAST SEO PLUGIN

If you own a WordPress blog or website, this plugin is great at helping you make sure that your article is SEO-friendly. It helps make sure that your focus keyphrase (your keyword) is strategically located in your article.

Think of it as a very handy SEO Writing Assistant, even though it's probably a whole lot more than that. This assistant doesn't let up until all the reds as seen below are green.

If you can achieve all greens, your article is well on its way to ranking high on the search engine.



● SEO analysis ^

[+ Add synonyms](#)
[+ Add related keyphrase](#)

Did you know Yoast SEO Premium also analyzes the different word forms of your keyphrase, like plurals and past tenses? [Go Premium! ▶](#)

Analysis results

^ Problems (3)

- **Keyphrase length:** No focus keyphrase was set for this page. [Set a keyphrase in order to calculate your SEO score.](#)
- **Meta description length:** No meta description has been specified. Search engines will display copy from the page instead. [Make sure to write one!](#)
- **Text length:** The text contains 0 words. This is far below the recommended minimum of 300 words. [Add more content.](#)

^ Improvements (1)

- **SEO title width:** The SEO title is too short. [Use the space to add keyphrase variations or create compelling call-to-action copy.](#)

2. YOUR **SEO TITLE** SHOULD BEGIN WITH YOUR KEYWORD

As you'll see with Yoast, your article will have two titles. One of them is the page title. That's the one that's seen on your website at the top of the article. Your page title needs to be catchy without being sensational. As a matter of fact, there are words to use when crafting the perfect page title. That's a whole different discussion, lol.

On average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy.

-David Ogilvy

David Ogilvy is an often referenced copywriter, and he pegged it right. Your page title plays a large role in determining if people will read your article. But your SEO title will determine if Google will rank your article at all. Your SEO title is what's seen on Google, like this.

www.africaparent.com › Lifestyle ▼

Best Cream For Brown Skin: Top Brands For Your Chocolate ..

Domain Score: **39**



0



0

Links: **0**

With more **Nigerians** choosing to stay away from hydroquinone, kojic acid and other **skin** lightening chemicals, the looming question is: what is the **best cream** for ...

zigihow.com.ng › 2019/07 › 10-best-natural-body-loti... ▼

10 best natural body lotions in nigeria for glowing chocolate ski

Domain Score: **2**



0



0

Links: **1**

Jul 5, 2019 - So, why don't we pamper and take good care of it, to enhance it's glow and radiance?. Well if you're seeking for a natural body lotion in **Nigeria** ...

As you know, search engine bots understand the language of the keyword. For them to see your article, it must be established early that your content aligns with the searcher's query. So, let your keyword come first in your SEO title.

Thereafter, you can fill it up how you see fit. Just make sure you don't exceed 60 characters. Google breaks titles that are longer than 60 characters. This might mean that your meaning is lost on the reader.

3. WRITE OUT A **META DESCRIPTION** FOR YOUR ARTICLE

Your SEO writing assistant (Yoast) will show you just where to write the meta description. The meta description is basically a brief description of what your article is about. And it should have your focus keyphrase in it.

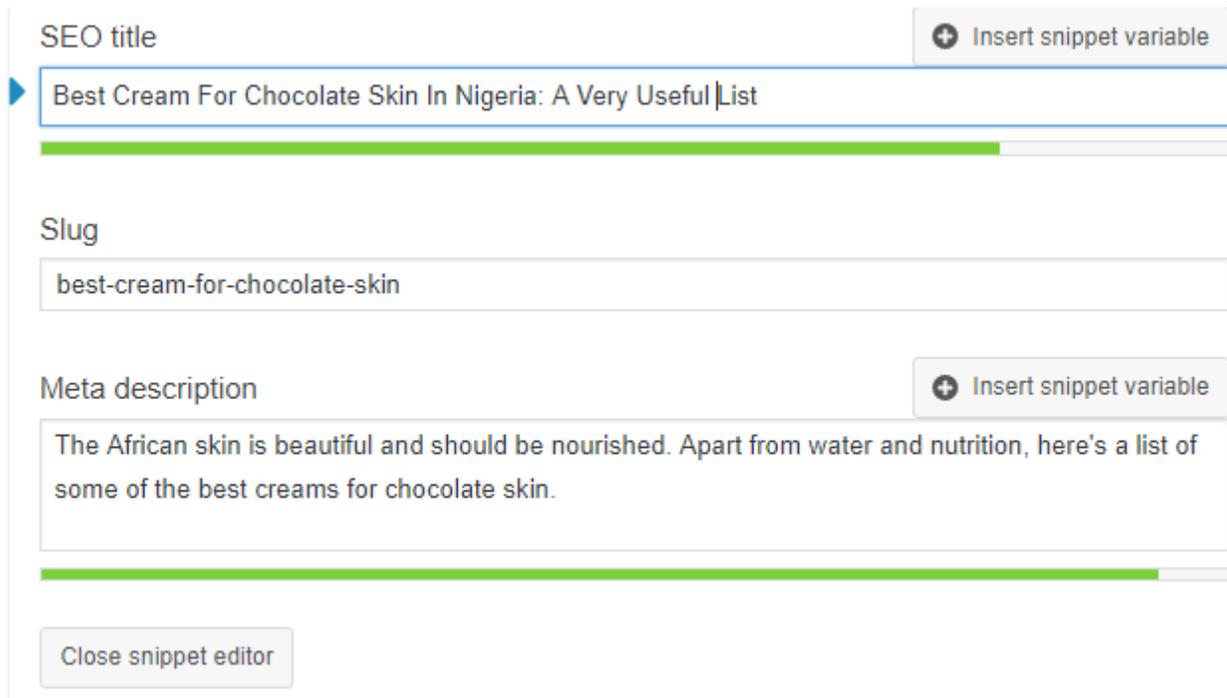
As seen in the image above, it's the text that comes under your SEO title. It gives your readers a feel of what you've written about, and will help influence the decision if to read it or not. This means it has to be interesting. If you don't craft out your meta description, Google will pick an excerpt from the article, and it might not be the best part of it.

4. WRITE YOUR **SLUG**

I strongly recommend that your slug should be your keyphrase. Where you're using a long tail keyword (ask me about this later), you can break it up, because a slug shouldn't be too long.

So what's a slug?

A slug is the part of the URL that uniquely identifies a page and it's in a format that is easily readable by both users and search engines.



The image shows a snippet editor interface with three main sections:

- SEO title:** A text input field containing "Best Cream For Chocolate Skin In Nigeria: A Very Useful List". To the right is a button labeled "Insert snippet variable".
- Slug:** A text input field containing "best-cream-for-chocolate-skin".
- Meta description:** A text input field containing "The African skin is beautiful and should be nourished. Apart from water and nutrition, here's a list of some of the best creams for chocolate skin." To the right is a button labeled "Insert snippet variable".

At the bottom left, there is a button labeled "Close snippet editor".

The image above shows just where the trio of the slug, meta description and SEO title should be. They are very important for the success of your article on Google. Without them, you might as well forget about ranking on the search engine.

That brings us to your article proper.

5. YOUR PAGE TITLE SHOULD CARRY A VARIATION OF YOUR KEYWORD

With regards to your page title and your SEO title, please note that you're writing headlines. And the rules of headline writing all apply. A successful headline should grab the attention of the reader. With your titles, you want to:

- Address your specific audience (Being vague or general = ineffective)
- Highlight the specific benefit or outcome they desire
- Highlight the specific pain that your read most wants to avoid
- Create curiosity
- Add urgency

This SHINE formula from a member of KISSmetrics is probably easier to remember.

S – Specificity

H – Helpfulness

I – Immediacy

N – Newsworthiness

E – Entertainment value

6. INSERT YOUR **KEYWORD IN THE FIRST 100 WORDS** OF YOUR ARTICLE

Why? You want to establish to the search engine bots that you know what you are talking about, and you want to do this early on.

Before, you would have to pepper your article with the keyword several times. But now, the bots are smarter. They just need to know that you know what you're talking about, and that your information is helpful to the user. So you need to establish the fact early.

Of course, your keywords and phrases should still feature in your article. This is very important. It's only that search engine bots understand things better now. In any case, Yoast is on hand to tell you how many times your keyword should be found in your article, for your article length. And this brings me to the next point.

7. HOW **LENGTHY** SHOULD YOUR ARTICLE BE?

This is tricky, because SEO experts recommend your article to have 2500 words if it must rank on Google. Their argument? To really help your user or reader, you must put in a lot of detail. This will improve the user experience on your website and establish you as an authority on the subject in question.

They may be right. But they are not Nigerian or African. And it's not the nicest thing to say, but our people aren't really big on reading. It's simply the truth. So we have to creatively find ways to say the things that we need to say, or write them, in the shortest possible time.

Apart from that, I've written tons of articles that ranked high on the search engine's first page. And I didn't even write up to a thousand words. Personally, I like to have rounded up by the 800th word.

The article on best cream for dark skin up there, is currently number 3 on the first page. It used to be number one. I wrote it for Africaparent at the time. And I know for a fact that I didn't write a thousand words.

So, I would say that it depends on you, your writing style, and the subject matter. Some subjects need in-depth analysis, and if you're writing about one of those, you must do justice to it. Don't forget, your articles are about increasing user experience, and you have to put your best foot forward. Also, search engines understand things a lot better now. They can detect 2500 words of plenty ambiguousness just as they can detect 700 words of rushed writing with no substance.

8. PHOTOS, INFOGRAPHICS, AND VIDEOS

All of these help your article to rank high on the search engine. Why? Because they further help the user understand what it is you're writing about. And Google wants to keep their users happy. So do you because a happy user= a potential customer, remember? A few things to note though.

- Pay attention to the size of your images. You don't want your site slowing down because of heavy images. A fast loading website is a friend of search engines.
- Be sure to tag all your images with ALT TEXT as this is the language the search engine understands.
- If you're embedding a video, be sure it was tagged on YouTube with a relevant ALT TEXT.

9. WRITE SHORT SENTENCES

Keep your sentences as short as possible. Again, Yoast will guide you on readability. Your sentences should be less than 20 words, but I prefer to stay at around ten or twelve words. Remember to write as if your reader is a 9th grader, or somebody in primary school. As much as you want to prove your knowledgeability on the subject, keep your tone simple. Leave the jargon alone.

If you have ever Googled a medical symptom, you'll notice that websites like Healthline and WebMD don't really use the big medical terms in their articles. Where they do, they explain them so well that any layman would understand them.

10. USE REFERENCES

When you're starting out in content marketing, you're far from an authority on the internet. You're a newbie, and Google sees you as a newbie. And this is measured in your domain score and the number of keywords your website ranks for. You'll find all that information on Ubersuggest if you decide to audit your website. And this is something you should do from time to time. SEO audits are important.

As a newbie, referencing other websites that have more authority than you do, will help you build authority. To Google, it'll be like if you can reference Wikipedia, WebMD or even a site like Legit.NG, you must know what you're talking about. Because as far as Google is concerned, those guys know what they're doing.

Be careful though. Two or three links in an article is enough. Don't do more than that. If you're a news blogger, links from BBC, CNN and Aljazeera will do well for you. And also very important, let your articles link to each other, such that your whole website is one big spider web.

SEO is a really wide subject, and what we've covered here is only the how-to of writing articles that will rank. A prelude to this step, and a very important prelude is Keyword Research.



If you would like a step-by-step guide on Keyword Research, I'm happy to help. If you need help understanding anything in this list, or anything else on SEO, I'm available for that too.

In this very serious business of Content Marketing, Blogging for Business, and SEO, you must win. And I'm committed to seeing that you do. If you feel like this is all too much work and need someone to do it for you, shoot me a mail. I have a ready team at Hustle Africa who is more than happy to do it for you.

We've crafted some other mini manuals quite like this on the different aspects of Content Creation and Content Marketing. You'll find the titles below.

If you'd like any one of them, send a mail hello@hustleafrica.com or email me directly. I'll have it sent to you. All I ask is that you tell somebody about us. 😊

- HOW TO WRITE BEST SELLING CONTENT OUTLINES**
- THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WRITING "SHINE" HEADLINES**
- A STEP BY STEP MANUAL FOR KEYWORD RESEARCH**
- HOW TO ANALYZE YOUR COMPETITOR'S CONTENT**
- A SIMPLE SEO AUDIT CHECKLIST**
- SEO WORKSHEET FOR WORDPRESS**

