

# CREATING BLOG CONTENT: TIPS AND ADVICE

If you've never had the opportunity to write a blog post before, it can take some getting used to. Unlike corporate or academic writing, writing for a blog focuses more on developing a relationship and discussion space with the audience. As such, you'll find many blogs use informal language and common phrasing to impart information easily. If you're new to writing content for a blog, read on for some tips on getting started.

*If you are interested in submitting as part of The Intern Diaries, please read page 4 first.*

## Deciding on a topic

As the UTS Careers Blog is a careers-themed blog, your topic will ideally be employment-related. Aside from this, your scope of possible topics is relatively broad. You can discuss an experience you've had, tie career advice into a popular television series, or write a list article. So long as the information you impart is helpful, provides insight, or instigates positive careers discussion, your topic will be suitable.

## Your first paragraph

Your first paragraph has to be engaging; something that draws people in and tells your audience what you'll be talking about. Consider who your audience is and how you can best engage with them. Whether it's a short personal anecdote or a sentence talking about a commonly shared feeling or experience, starting out with something relatable connected to your chosen topic is a great way to begin.

**SEO:** SEO stands for 'Search Engine Optimisation'. It essentially refers to techniques and methods used to help your content reach the top of the search engine results. This makes your work easier to find.

From an SEO standpoint, you want to think about the main topic of your article, and how people are likely to search for it. For example, if you're writing a post about overcoming nerves during an interview, then the main topic would be something along the lines of 'interview anxiety'. This will be the 'focus keyword' that essentially sums up what the piece will be about. Your focus keyword should be less than 3 words if possible, and be included in the first paragraph of your article (and the title, if possible).

Search engines try to match a person's search terms with the most relevant results, so you want your keyword to match what people are most likely to search for. By including it in your article's title and first paragraph, search engine algorithms will be able to identify what your work is about more easily, making it more likely to be at the top of a results page.

## Your body paragraphs

The main paragraphs of your piece are where you're imparting to your reader the information you wish to convey. You can structure them in a number of ways, although lists and basic paragraphs are most common.

### List articles

If you're planning on writing an article with a list format (eg. 'Top 5 things to do before you die'), then you want to keep that list to 10 points or less if possible. If you need to go over 10 points, keep each point very short (1-2 sentences per point). Anything more than that and readers may get bored and stop reading!

### Basic paragraph articles

If you're using basic paragraphs, keep them as succinct as possible so as not to frighten the reader away with huge chunks of text. Aim for roughly 5 lines per paragraph (a bit more or a bit less here and there won't hurt).

### Combination articles

If your article uses a combination of basic paragraphs and lists – then try to stick to the points above. Keep lists to 10 points or less, and paragraphs as close to 5 lines each.

**Note:** Subheadings are your friends! Throwing in a few subheadings helps to break up the text, and make the article seem more palatable to readers. It can also help keep your ideas succinct and organised as you write, so you can avoid tangents.

Where possible, try to keep sentences to a maximum of 20 words each (or as close as possible). Obviously you can't go through and count every sentence, but if you keep the 20 word rule in mind, you're less likely to have run-on sentences. Also, shorter sentences make your work easier to read!

## Concluding statements

Blog posts aren't essays, so you don't need to have a full paragraph to reiterate what you've just said. Think of a blog article as more of a conversation with your reader, in that it can be more relaxed and conversational.

Your conclusion can be a short paragraph that briefly sums up what you've said, gives a final piece of advice, or links to an anecdote you mentioned in your introduction. There really isn't a hard-and-fast rule, so as long as you're not simply repeating yourself you'll be fine.

### Call to action

However, you do want your last few sentences to include a 'call to action'. This is where you ask your reader to do something in relation to the advice given in your article. Whether it's suggesting they try any of the tips you've imparted, or taking time to think of their own, your call to action simply invites the audience to interact with your content.

If you can't think of anything you'd like them to do, finishing your post off with a final piece of advice or a quote that relates to the topic can also work well. (If using a quote from an external source, including the URL for that source is vital).

## Images

If you have an image you want to include, be sure to link the URL so it can be referenced correctly (this applies to any image, video, or gif you're using – including header images).

In terms of the main header image, we're more than happy to source one for you. Otherwise a few good royalty free stock photo sites are:

- > Pexels.com
- > Deathtothestockphoto.com
- > Unsplash.com
- > Stocksnap.io

You can use any image for the header, as long as it's high quality so it doesn't distort. If you're doing an article that is pop culture related, try searching for desktop wallpaper versions of images (eg. Search 'Game of Thrones wallpaper'). These images are usually higher quality, so are less likely to distort.

**Final note:** Unless writing for The Intern Diaries series, your article should ideally be between 400 and 1000 words long. If you're writing a list article, it may be closer to 200-300 words. Basically, try to aim for 500 words and if it's a little over or under that's perfectly workable.

## The Intern Diaries

If you're planning to write a submission for The Intern Diaries series, your blog post may not necessarily follow the above advice (although you may still find it helpful). The style of this series is more reflective, focusing on you using a first-person voice to discuss your internship and formulate advice based upon your experience.

There are a few starting points, or details, that are good to include in your post. These include:

**You:** What's your name? What are you studying? What are your career goals?

**Your internship:** Where are (or were) you interning? What are your responsibilities? How many days per week are you there?

**Hardships:** Were there any career challenges you faced while interning? How did you overcome them? How has that experience helped you?

**Highlights:** What skills have you gained? What projects have you worked on? Who have you met? What events have you attended?

**Takeaways:** What lessons have you learnt? Why is your internship worthwhile? How does it advance your career? Did UTS:Careers help you gain any of the skills needed for this internship?

**Advice:** What tips do you have for students about to start an internship? How can students find an internship? Why should others undertake an internship?

Using these starting points as a guide, and reading through the guidelines on the 'Become a Thought Leader' page of the blog, you can utilise the general advice in the document above to draft your submission.