

10 tips for writing headings

Good headings help users quickly understand what's on the page. They make content look more inviting. Nothing puts users off faster than a wall of text.

- 1 Organise content with headings** Group related paragraphs and label them with a sub-heading.
- 2 State the central topic in the main heading** Ensure your main heading communicates the topic of the page. Aim for an overlap between the main heading phrase and the page <title>
- 3 Write meaningful sub-headings** Identify, describe or summarise the content that follows. Think of headings as sign-posts that tell users what's coming.
- 4 Begin with informative words** Avoid wordy or repetitive phrases at the start of headings. Use question-style headings sparingly as they can push more meaningful words out of view.
- 5 Use words your users understand** Don't force users to interpret your headings. Use words they are familiar with. Avoid jargon and abbreviations unless they are well known to your target audience.
- 6 Show structure with relevant heading level tags** Use the <h1> tag for your main heading and <h2> for sub-headings. Use lower-level headings to reflect a deeper heading hierarchy. Don't choose heading level tags just for their size or colour.
- 7 Don't misuse heading level tags** Don't use a heading tag for text that is not a heading. If you need larger text for emphasis, ask your web team to create a text style.
- 8 Keep headings concise** Don't waste words. If a heading wraps to a second line on a computer screen, it may wrap over several lines on a mobile phone screen.
- 9 Avoid using all capitals** Unless your style guide requires otherwise, use sentence or title case. These tend to use less space (capital letters are sometimes WIDER), and can be easier on the eye, especially for longer headings.
- 10 Avoid creating content without sub-headings** Look for opportunities to add helpful labels whenever you have more than a few paragraphs of content.