

Writing for the Web 101 Checklist

1

Start here - who, why, what?

- » Who is my target audience and how will I converse with them?
- » Why are they coming to my page?
- » What answers are they looking for? What do I need to tell them?

2

Think about the conversation you want to have

- » Focus on the effect you want to have on your reader and the purpose of your conversation.
- » Use “you”, “you’ll”, “we” in your writing.
- » **Complete this sentence: I’m writing this so that (who?) can do (what?).**

3

Write headlines that match your reader’s search

- » Use keywords in your headlines.
- » Use a statement, question or call to action in the headline.
- » Medium length of 5-8 words is good for a headline.

4

Get to the point

- » Chop words that don’t answer your audience’ grab and go questions.
Begin with a key message, don’t bury it. Less is more, think of bite, snack, meal.
- » Only 1 to 2 ideas per sentence. » Avoid long paragraphs. Group content into bite size, use lists and bullets.
- » No jargon or acronyms (spell out).
- » Write at 8th grade literacy level.

5

The Family Dinner Test

- » Imagine you’re at a dinner get together; there’s noise and conversations around you. You have a certain amount of time to catch your audience’s attention, keep it and get your point across. If your audience can relay the information you shared with them to the next person they talk to, you’ve passed the CMU Family Dinner Test. Our goal is for you to create clear, concise, memorable content.

6

Evergreen content doesn’t need to be continuously updated

- » Evergreen content is content that will stay relevant to your audience for a long period of time. For example, library content is evergreen while event content is not.

7

Example of Metadata and Meta Description

- » Metadata: School Health Education Major & Minor | Central Michigan University
- » Meta Description: Start a gratifying career teaching children and young adults about health and fitness with a School Health Education undergraduate degree from CMU.

8

Use Alt Text and Title Tags so your page can be found

- » Alt text is used to describe images on a page. It should accurately and succinctly illustrate the image.
- » Title tags are an element of HTML that specifies the name of the page. It should be an accurate and concise, 50 to 60 character description of the page.