

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



1. How to write a simple but effective About Me page

Firstly, don't get hung up on writing a great About Me page at the start – focus on writing good posts to begin with. Don't however leave the default text in there (“This is where to describe your blog”)! Just write a couple of sentences in informal tone saying what the blog is about and who you are.

Link to your main website if it's different. Also include your twitter link.

When you're ready to take a shot at a proper About Me page, compile some examples from blogs you write. When writing yours, try to combine the feeling that ‘this person is real/approachable’ with ‘this person has status/is worth listening to’. If you get it right, it should end up reading something like a great book jacket bio.

Here's a [nice example](http://www.probblogger.net/archives/2004/09/27/about-probblogger/) of an About Me page from the wonderful Probblogger

and an [article from Copyblogger](http://www.copyblogger.com/whats-your-blog-really-about/) about why this works so well.

2. How to write compelling content that gets people raving about you

The whole point of content is to get you noticed, build your brand, and ultimately build your business. Different blogs have differing strategies to do this. When reading the below, consider the purpose of your blog: is it to drive signups to your mailing list, build your brand and grow your tribe, or something else?

The one thing it will do is give people who don't know you an immediate impression of you and what you are all about.

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



Deal with your readers' everyday information overload

Before readers find you, they are fried. Their lives have already been overloaded with too much information. You might have great content, but most people simply will not take the time to find out if it feels like yet another wedge to squish into an over-full head.

How can you differentiate your blog from a page that is 'too much to take in right now'? Knowing how to do this is crucial to writing a popular blog. Help make sure they get the right impression by following these guidelines.

Here is how to write for readers who live in a world of information overload.

- **Short is best.** Make it snappy – both in numbers of words, language and in layout.
- **Keep each blog post to one theme.** If your post is getting too long look at it and circle each different theme. Then consider how many posts a short-post blogger (like Seth Godin) would make out of this. Now cut your post down to individual themes (paste the extra content into another Word doc to make another post in the future)
- **Create a series rather than a long post.** Separating your content into a series of posts is another option. It is a great way to get signups too (ie: this is part 1, sign up here and I'll email you with parts 2 and 3 as they come out).
 - Before doing this consider: is this really a series, or could I blog each of these as different topics?
- **Put your conclusion upfront.** Do you have time or patience to wade through words on the off chance there's be a killer conclusion payoff? Well neither do your readers.
 - Don't hide your main point in the middle of paragraph 5... or wait until the end to reveal it.
 - Instead, put each para's conclusion upfront at the start of each main para. Also, make sure your main point is clear within the first paragraph of your post.

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



- **White space is your friend.** Chunks of text without breaks is not likely to be read. Press *enter* as much as possible/sensible to create white space on the page. Repeat: no big paragraphs! (Don't apply the same rules you do for writing letters)
- **Bullet pointing.** This works well as readers' eyes are drawn to the bullets
 - This comes back to the idea of information overload – we are drawn to 'quick wins', things that are easy to read where we can get the most value for the least time.
 - Bullet points do just that.

Know Your Style

- **How do you write best?** Pull out your best pieces of writing. Think about how they were written. Was it in one go, or over several drafts? Were they brought to life in the editing or were the bet parts flashes of inspiration upfront? Get to know HOW you write best and use that approach.
 - For example if you are a flashes-of-inspiration person, grab those moments and start writing, DON'T put it off no matter what! If on the other hand you're an 'editor', then stop after your optimum writing time, then go back to it to do the edits.
- **Write regular content in one go.**
 - Do you work in bursts? Then blog in bursts. Write the outline of several posts at once, finish one of them then come back to the rest. Once you've got started it will be easier to finish. (Or do what some professional bloggers so and write several posts in a row and release them gradually)

If All Else Fails Use These 3 Killer Techniques

1. **Write a 'list post'.** Like this one, with a number in the title. It's a classic blogger tactic, but one that works (eg: "The 7 Ways to Write Compelling Blog Titles").

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



- Listing makes the reader think they will a) get something tangible and b) be able to digest it easily. (Ensure they can do both!)
2. **Does your reader know you are speaking to them?** Refer to the reader by using 'you' rather than 'they' or 'people'. 'You' is the most important word in blogging. The title of this piece of content is "How to Write Compelling Content That Gets People Raving About You". Can you see how that is stronger than if we had omitted the words 'about you'? Try using 'you' throughout your post to emphasize the relevance to the reader.
 3. **Have an irresistible heading.** Something that makes people desperate to know what you have to say. This is crucial if your great content is to get the attention it deserves.

How To Write Must-Read Headings

- **Headings are 50% of the work.** Take the time. You might start with one idea for a title then go back after you've written the post and find a stronger one.
- **Who are your people?** Understanding your audience is crucial. Who are you writing for and what will intrigue them? What problems do they have?
- **A few templates for great headings include:**
 - Suspense and curiosity: "The little known error that's killing your business"
 - Lists: "The 7 things you must do on your blog before you finish for the holidays"
 - Contrary: "Get fit by scapping your new years' resolutions" or "Why Lazy People Get More Done"
 - Relevance" "The Lazy Person's Guide to X" (or: The Procrastinator's Way to X)
- There are plenty more good heading templates out there, but before you go applying them think about this:
 - **Do you know the 'why'?** Your blog will be richer if you understand why something works or does not work. There are plenty of killer heading templates out there, but

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



applying them ad hoc isn't the best idea as they can look formulaic. Understand why they work by regularly reading good blogs, seeing what catches your attention and thinking about why.

- **Avoid this classic mistake: getting caught up in “Bloggerly Love”.** Some headings and themes work for fellow bloggers (and colleagues). Some work for your audience.
 - What is your aim: a high traffic blog, or a high conversions blog? (ie: lots of people signing up to your email list or buying your products?).
 - If you care more about the quality of traffic then you have to accept that some of what you write won't get other bloggers and social media geeks raving about you – but does that matter? Unless you are a) going for a very generic area or b) are writing for that community, it usually doesn't.

Speak To Your Readers

- **Use contrary titles to get their attention,** but then speak their language.
- **Get psychic.** Have content that gives a voice to the deep down thoughts your readers have, but never knew how to do/how to articulate. Being able to do THAT is key to having regular fans who speak about you, wait for your next post, and keep coming back. Think about the problems that most trouble them – write posts that address those problems.
- **Who are you blogging for and why are you blogging?** Keep that in mind all the time.

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



Genuine Voice

“You’ is a very fluid concept right now” Will Smith in Hitch

Which ‘you’ are you going to be, which version of yourself are you going to be?

- **What is your voice?** Readers get attached to a particular voice. For example about a year ago an anonymous blogger, Tremendous News, built up an amazing following very fast with his unique, pithy posts. His voice is unmistakable. And as he explains in one of his posts, that didn’t come about by luck.
- **Just start writing.** Then go over your posts and see which you feel comfortable with. What did you do in those posts? Who were you in those posts? That’s your voice.

Um, but what’s my voice NOW? I can’t start until I know what my real voice will be!

Good question. I don’t know. Sorry. Look you could read up on ‘finding a voice’, but frankly you’d be better off actually, you know, going out there and doing it. Your voice evolves, it doesn’t arrive. I know at first it’s scary... at first, it feels like you’re freefalling in your writing. But trust me, this is just the start. You can fasttrack the voice-finding process it by a) writing regularly and b) being vigilant and watching what is coming out, what you like, and what works. But the deal is, you gotta start now.

- **Here’s a real life example of a clear voice for you.**
Marianne wrote the above italicized bullet point. Read it again: if you read her blog, can you see how that is her voice? This is an analysis of Marianne’s blogging voice so you can see how it works.
 - She draws people in by a) saying the unsayable thing that’s in their head, then b) kicking them around a bit so they are jerked out of the comfort zone and see things in a new light, then c) showing them real care, and loving them, to keep them going.
 - She also uses the line ‘the difference between’ often to show stark contrasts between where people are (but where they don’t want to be) and an alternative attainable version). Eg: “the difference between x group and y group is z”

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



- There is a lot of colloquial language in there. That came about naturally, but has been upped to soften the challenging content and make it more approachable.
 - She grounds her readers by giving solid advice in the form of a), b) and c).
 - Remember the part above about your voice being only a part of you? Marianne's blogging and online voice is her 'spikier' side, with only a small dose of her tendency to do things like squeal at squirrels. That is a conscious choice.
 - This is an example of a unique voice and style that evolved from writing, from reading blogs and by being vigilant in watching her own writing. It does include a lot of techniques on good blogging which we have included here, but the meat of it is not something you get out of a text book.
- **So, who are you?** Do you sound real? That matters. As we said, your real voice will emerge the more you write. BUT to help you along the way, try one of these techniques (note not all are right for everyone, choose what suits you):
 - **Self disclosure:** give a part of your story to bring the post to life. Even just a line such as "I got so excited when I saw that", or "I'm a real procrastinator so I sometimes find this difficult".
 - **Personal experience:** "I tried that product and this was my experience of it"
 - **Empathy:** "I really understand how you must feel about X, and this is why".
 - **Personality building:** "As regular readers know, I xxx"
 - **Interest in the reader:** "Have you been in this situation? Did you do something differently? I'd love to hear your story in the comments below"
 - These are not full blog posts (although they can be if you want!), but they are a few ways of inserting a real person into the picture.

PAID TO PLAY eSCHOOL: Good Blogging Guide



3. How to find and write compelling content, regularly (or, “What do I blog about?”)

- Write a list of topics you’d like to write on (if any one topic seems really big, split it out). Write variations on each topic (ie: what you love about this topic, what irritates you about this, people who do this well)
- Get inspired by other bloggers and write your version of that content. This can be within your industry or out of your industry. Drawing parallels from a completely unrelated field can make a great post. Eg. “What I learned about marketing from the Amsterdam red light zone” (also has the benefit of being controversial!)
- Set a blogging schedule. If the blog is core to your website and business blog once a week. If blogging is the whole of your business it should be more than that. Put the days you will blog into your diary. And stick to it!
- Don’t get hung up on the idea that you must regularly come up with new ideas. Seth Godin is one of the world’s most popular bloggers and he runs off about 10 different ideas, worded in different ways. Regular readers love this because hearing these messages in different way gives you new ways of thinking about each ideas.
 - Think about the messages that resonate with you: chances are they didn’t sink in the first time you read them.
 - Writing variations on the same theme allows your readers to really ‘get’ it – and also to feel an affinity with you (a sense of being in the inner circle) when you write on the same topic in a new way.
 - Whenever you see a great example of one of your core ideas in action, blog about it.