

Freelance Content Writers' Website Worksheet

You'll write three versions of most elements for your website. This helps loosen your ideas up and get the words flowing. Once you've got three versions of copy, go back and circle the best one. Then rework that best version if you need to. Or just go ahead and use that best version on your website.

Step 1: Pick a URL.

See GoDaddy.com to check for availability.

Possible URL #1:

Possible URL #2:

Possible URL #3:

Ideas for your URL:

Yourname.com (SusieQueue.com), Yourfirstnamewrites (Susiewrites.com),
YourCompanyName.com (TrailBlazerCopy.com)

Step 2: The headline for your homepage.

Should be no more than 8-10 words. See the Lookbook for ideas.

Headline #1:

Headline #2:

Headline #3:

Step 3: A short paragraph or sentence that follows your headline.

Aim for about 40-50 words, max.

Short paragraph #1:

Short paragraph #2:

Short paragraph #3:

Step 4: The call to action button below the short paragraph.

Just 2-3 words.

Button copy #1:

Button copy #2:

Button copy #3:

Step 5: Navigation labels.

Which pages are you going to include? What word will you use for them in the navigation?
What order should the navigation items be?

For example: About | Services | Portfolio | Testimonials | Contact

Your navigation labels:

Step 6: Sections for your homepage.

Pick about 3-5 sections for your homepage from this list:

Services I offer section

Logos of companies you've worked with

Testimonials section

The About section

Latest work

"My approach"

The "If You Are" Section

You can use these sections as shortened versions of the full pages of your site. Think of these sections as teasers to get someone to click through to the full-page version.

Or, if you don't have enough content for a full page, but you have some content related to one of the sections above, just create that as a section on your homepage.

You don't need to include every one of these sections. Just pick the ones you feel confident about having enough content for.

Once you've decided which sections to include on your homepage, decide what order you want them to appear in. Write that number next to the item in the list above. (Your top welcome screen that we wrote in steps 2-5 will always be #1.)

Step 7: Write the second section of your homepage

Keep it short, but give just one or two pieces of information interesting enough to tempt someone to click through or to stay on the page.

Version 1 of Section 2 of your homepage:

Version 2 of Section 2 of your homepage:

Version 3 of Section 2 of your homepage:

Step 8: Write the third section of your homepage.

Keep it short, but give just one or two pieces of information interesting enough to tempt someone to click through or to stay on the page. If you're including a testimonials section, decide which testimonials you'll include.

Version 1 of Section 3 of your homepage:

Version 2 of Section 3 of your homepage:

Version 3 of Section 3 of your homepage:

Step 9: Write the fourth section of your homepage.

Keep it short, but give just one or two pieces of information interesting enough to tempt someone to click through or to stay on the page. Note: You may not need or want a fourth section. If you don't just skip this page.

Version 1 of Section 4 of your homepage:

Version 2 of Section 4 of your homepage:

Version 3 of Section 4 of your homepage:

Step 10: Write the fifth section of your homepage.

Keep it short, but give just one or two pieces of information interesting enough to tempt someone to click through or to stay on the page. Note: You may not need or want a fifth section. If you don't just skip this page.

Version 1 of Section 5 of your homepage:

Version 2 of Section 5 of your homepage:

Version 3 of Section 5 of your homepage:

Step 11: Write the "About" page of your site.

Check the Lookbook for ideas about what to say on your About page. As you'll see in the Lookbook, most about pages are pretty short – like as few as 61 words. Try to keep yours to 250 words or less. Maybe much less.

About page Version #1:

About page Version #2:

About page Version #3:

Step 12: Write the "Contact" page of your site.

Contact pages also tend to have very few words on them. Do write out a sentence or so to urge people to contact you, but the work on this page is deciding which fields you'll include in your contact form. Once again, see the Lookbook for inspiration.

Contact form one-sentence "urge them to contact you" copy, version #1:

Contact form one-sentence "urge them to contact you" copy, version #2:

Contact form one-sentence "urge them to contact you" copy, version #3:

Which fields will you include on your contact form?

Step 13: Write the "Services" page of your site.

Pick 3-5 types of content formats you'll offer or add-on services you might include.

List those services and add-ons here (you'll write their descriptions on the next page).

Write 1-3 sentence descriptions for each of the services or add-ons you'll offer. Also decide which icon/graphic to use for each service. Write just two versions of each service description.

Description #1 of service #1:

Description #2 of service #1:

Description #1 of service #2:

Description #2 of service #2:

Description #1 of service #3:

Description #2 of service #3:

Description #1 of service #4:

Description #2 of service #4:

Description #1 of service #5:

Description #2 of service #5:

Description #1 of service #6:

Description #2 of service #6:

Step 14 (Optional): Write a "Process" section for your Services page.

Check the Lookbook for a few examples of different writers' process sections. Typically these are 4-6 steps. Writers usually number each step, give a short name to each step, and then write a short one-sentence description of what happens in each step.

For example:

Step 1: Collaboration meeting and idea development. Client and I discuss content goals and brainstorm ideas for content. I do SEO and topic research to develop a list of content ideas.

Step 2: Idea selection. Client picks a list of three blog post ideas to move forward with. 1/3rd up front payment is made.

Step 3: Content creation. I draft blog posts for those three posts.

Step 4: Content review. Client reviews the three posts and gets back to me with any revisions within one week. I make those changes within three business days.

Step 5: Publication. I set up the posts on WordPress with header images and Yoast plugin.

Step 6: Final payment. Upon publication, I send an invoice to the remaining 2/3rds of the cost. Payment is due within 6 business days of invoice receipt.

Write out your process steps below. Write a second version of each step to see if you can't write the step more succinctly, or to see if you can make the process sound simpler or easier.

If you want, you can also have your process "section" be a page on your site. It doesn't have to go on the same page as your services listing.

Process Steps Version #1:

Process Steps Version #2:

Step 15: Plan and write the portfolio page.

List your 12 strongest published and bylined pieces, including what category they might fit into. It's nice to group your portfolio pieces, either by industry or client or content type. If you only have 2-3 portfolio pieces, that's okay. Just list them. Try to include portfolio samples that complement the services you will be offering.

Also write a 1-2 sentence description of what the purpose of the piece was, which industry it was for, and what its content format was. If you have any information about results, like "got 3,000 social media shares," "now ranks 1st position for [term]," include that information.

See the Lookbook for inspiration.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

Step 16: Decide what to include in the footer of your website.

This is fairly easy, but it is something to iron out. Most writers will put their name and contact information in the left column of their website's footer area. They may leave the center column blank or repeat the headline from the top of their homepage. Then, in the last, far right column, they'll put the icons for their social media accounts.

If you want to include a sign-up box for your email newsletter, you can add that to one of the columns in the footer area. Or if you have an "extra" short testimonial, that might be a nice thing to put in the center column. This isn't a critical part of your site, so don't worry too much about it.

What will you include in the left column of your website's footer area?

What will you include in the center column?

What will you include in the right column?

Step 17 (Optional): Will you have a testimonials page?

If you've got more than three testimonials, consider creating a full page for them.

These you clearly don't have to write, but do go gather up your testimonials. Consider looking through old emails from clients – often a client will say something nice in an email that can be used as a testimonial. Or go look through your LinkedIn endorsements or recommendations – you can use any recommendation you've gotten on LinkedIn verbatim on your website.

List out your testimonials below. Write a number next to each one to rank how strong you think it is. When you lay out this page in your website builder, that way you'll have the text for these testimonials ready to go.

Step 18 (Optional): Will you have a rates page?

Most writers don't have a rates page. But if you want one, use this space to plan it out. Or think about what rates information you might include on your services page. Could you include a "rates start at \$X" for the services you offer? What would those starting rates be?

Step 19 (Optional): Will you include a packages page?

As with rates pages, very few writers have a packages page. That said, I recommend packages pages. See the handout about [How To Create a Content Writing Packages](#). It's a detailed 20-page walk-through of everything to consider as you plan your packages. It also includes quite a few examples of writers' content packages.

Which packages will you offer, and what will they include? Spell it out here:

Step 20 (Optional): Will you have a blog?

See the Lookbook for my in-depth take on the pros and cons of having a blog. Then if you do decide to have a blog, use this space to plan out your first few blog posts.