47 Ways to Write a Better Blog Post

The dos and don'ts of writing a personal blog post that is engaging and intelligent

So you're trying to make it big in the blog world? Lifestyle blogs are some of the most popular media on the internet, and your competition for readership is steep. The most important part of your blog is you—your personality, your unique perspective and take on life. But having a hook isn't enough; you need intelligent and approachable prose to set you apart from the other writers. Chances are that you (like most of the lifestyle blogging cohort) are not a professional writer. Don't let that stop you from putting in some extra effort. And it's not as hard as you think! Making sure to do a few things and taking care to avoid a few things is as easy as 1, 2, 3 . . . 7. 😊 Here's your no-fail checklist for a stellar post every time.

1. Have Someone Proofread Your Post

The best writers in the world review their work and have others review it for them—you should too. Gone are your high school (or even college) days of whipping something up the night before and handing it in, sight unseen. Your best bet is to have someone else take a look at your work before you publish it. A fresh set of eyes can always catch things you'll miss. If you don't have someone that can look over your post, review it yourself. Try to write your posts at least a couple of days before you plan on publishing, that way you can come back to it. You'll be more likely to spot embarrassing or easy-to-fix errors after you've had a break. If you do nothing else before posting, PROOFREAD!

Commented [HC1]: We should cut out this emoji since we talk about staying away from trends that date people's posts.

Commented [HC2]: I felt that this title was more appropriate for this section, what do you think? Also, this section would probably be better placed at the end of the seven tips. This way, this section will be the freshest section in the readers' minds as they read your bio.

Good job! This is a brilliant way to call people to action without sounding too salesy.

2. Don't throw grammar out the window

A lifestyle blog is typically casual. That's the tone people expect, and it helps with authenticity. Adhering to everything your teachers ever told you isn't necessary—or even advisable. Use contractions, start sentences with conjunctions, and say who instead of whom! Some rules, though, are there to make sure people understand what you are writing. Here's a list within a list—some of the most common (and most confusing) writing errors:

1. Subject-verb agreement

Make sure that your subjects and verbs agree. You may be thinking, "I'm not a professional writer, but I do speak English." But it's easier to make agreement mistakes than you might think. For example,

"Here's some things I've been thinking about."

That doesn't grate on your ears like "I were going to the store," but it's just as wrong. It should read,

"Here are some things I've been thinking about."

It never hurts to double check that all of your nouns and verbs match up. Reading your post out loud can be really helpful~~,~~ for catching this and other snafus.

2. Confusing antecedents

This rule is also pretty simple, but pretty easy to miss. Make sure that when you use a pronoun (he, she, him, her, it, they, etc.) it's obvious what the pronoun refers to. Here's an example of a sentence with a confusing antecedent:

"Carl and I went to ~~go~~ see Dave because he was feeling pretty down in the dumps."

Commented [HC3]: This statement may isolate some readers, especially if they don't understand what "subject-verb agreement" means. Let's change it to something like "This rule may be a rule you don't normally worry about, but . . ."

Was Carl feeling down in the dumps, or was Dave? It's hard to tell from this sentence. It might be clearer with context, but readers may still stumble. At first it may seem hard to fix without sounding awkward, but with practice you can learn to avoid confusing antecedents. For instance, while this sounds awkward:

"Carl and I went to ~~go~~ see Dave because Dave was feeling pretty down in the dumps."

this sounds natural~~,~~ and isn't confusing:

"Since Dave was feeling down in the dumps, Carl and I went to ~~go~~ see him."

Try looking through your next post for any pronouns and making sure it's obvious which noun they refer to.

3. Dangling modifiers

You might recognize the phrase "dangling modifier" but have no idea what it means. No fear! It's not actually that complicated. Many times, we start sentences with introductory phrases like,

"Looking for my keys, I stumbled upon a note Karen left for me."

This is a fun way to shake up your sentence structure and give context. But sometimes these intro phrases (or modifiers) don't end up matching what comes right after them, which causes a confusing sentence. For example:

"Looking for my keys, Karen's note fell out of the drawer."

On a quick first read it sounds like Karen's note was looking for your keys. Like confusing antecedents, dangling modifiers don't usually completely derail readers, they just slow them down. Since you want their experience to be easy and enjoyable, clearing up these little bumps

in the road can make a big difference. Make sure your intro phrases are followed directly by what they modify.

4. Homophones—a list within a list within a list

Some homophones are so ubiquitous that we all know to look out for them; they're, their, and there; your and you're; and here and hear. But there are a lot of homophones that trip us up, and we don't even realize it. This can be a signal to a reader that you're not educated, even if you are. Here are some commonly confused/misused homophones to double check in your next post:

- Than/then

"We will go to the store, then to a movie." VS. "I would rather go to a movie than to the store."

- Affect/effect

"His comments didn't affect me." (Verb) VS. "His comments had no effect on me." (Noun)

- Accept/except

"I can't accept that answer." VS. "Anything except that will do."

- Weather/whether

"Oh, the weather outside is frightful!" VS. "Whether or not we stay in is up to you."

- Too/to

"I want to go too!" VS. "Is this too much?" VS. "I am too tired to go to the store."

- Bear/bare

"There he was, bare-chested on the beach." VS. "I can't bear to think of it!"

- Compliment/complement

"She is so complimentary about my outfits." VS. "It's because I wear complementary colors."

- It's/its

"It's almost time to start!" VS. "That's its only up-side."

- Principle/principal

"The main principles of grammar are pretty important." VS. "She is their principal contributor."

These are some commonly confused words, but have a friend scan your writing and see if you have any pet misused homophones.

5. Bonus! Parallelism

Want your writing to have a little extra something? Add some sparkle to your posts by using parallelism—correctly. Read the following sentence:

"I'm looking for someone smart, service oriented, and loves dogs!"

Maybe nothing jumps out at you as "wrong," but nothing is great either. Now read this sentence:

"I'm looking for someone who is smart, gives service, and loves dogs."

That sentence sparkles! All of the items should be the same part of speech. In the first example, there are two adjectives (smart and service oriented) and one verb phrase (loves dogs). To make it parallel, I changed all the items to verb phrases (is smart, gives service). Making sure that all items in a list are *parallel* will help your writing to seem educated and graceful.

3. Pick a tone

The main draw of your blog is your flavor, the quirks and peculiarities that make you different. That should shine through in every post. Are you a chatty gal pal, a wise advisor, an insightful observer, an irreverent jokester? Let your tone shine through. Details like how you address the

Commented [HC4]: This feels out of place. Let's cut this word out.

Commented [MOU5]: I might add a part in here about other misused words that aren't homophones like bring vs take, ironic vs. coincidental, etc.

Commented [HC6R5]: That sounds great!

Commented [HC7]: I love the grammar section of this article! However, it steals the stage from the other tips for writing a good blog post. Let's create a separate buzzpiece that addresses the grammar issues, and then we can reference it here and invite readers to look at it.

If not, let's move the last two sections and make them first: "Pick a tone," "Be authentic," "Don't throw grammar out the window," and then "Proofread." This way the sections that don't play a major role in the grammar section don't feel out of the blue.

reader, how you refer to people in your life you mention frequently, ~~your intro and outro~~how you introduce and conclude your post, and what main ideas you choose to blog about can all contribute to ~~a~~your tone. If you are consistent and intentional about your tone, it will help create that cohesive flavor that keeps people coming back to you.

4. Be authentic

Having said that tone is important, I will remind you that it's important to be authentic. Nothing turns people off like a phony. Not only will people sense a falseness in your blog, but it will be difficult to maintain a consistent tone if it is too far removed from your lived experiences. Stay away from too many trendy phrases; they can date your posts and isolate some readers. Don't fabricate experiences or expertise; embellish with your perspective and commentary.

Now you have some tips and tricks to writing a better blog post. One that is easy to read—with no confusing or distracting errors—but also one that is totally you! Building a brand and a voice that you can be proud of is done one post at a time. So get out there and write!

About the author

Mackenzie Sinclair is a freelance editor and writer with a degree in Editing and Publishing from Brigham Young University. As a personal assistant to a member of the Scottish Parliament, a writer for BYU Alumni and BYU Magazine, and natural-born blog critic, she has experience in social media and marketing content creation and editing. If your next blog post after reading these tips still isn't what you~~'d~~ hoped, or you need help pinpointing your unique voice, contact Mackenzie for a consultation about how you can make the most out of the writing on your blog.

Commented [HC8]: I love this call to action!

Works Cited:

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