

Blog Writing Checklist

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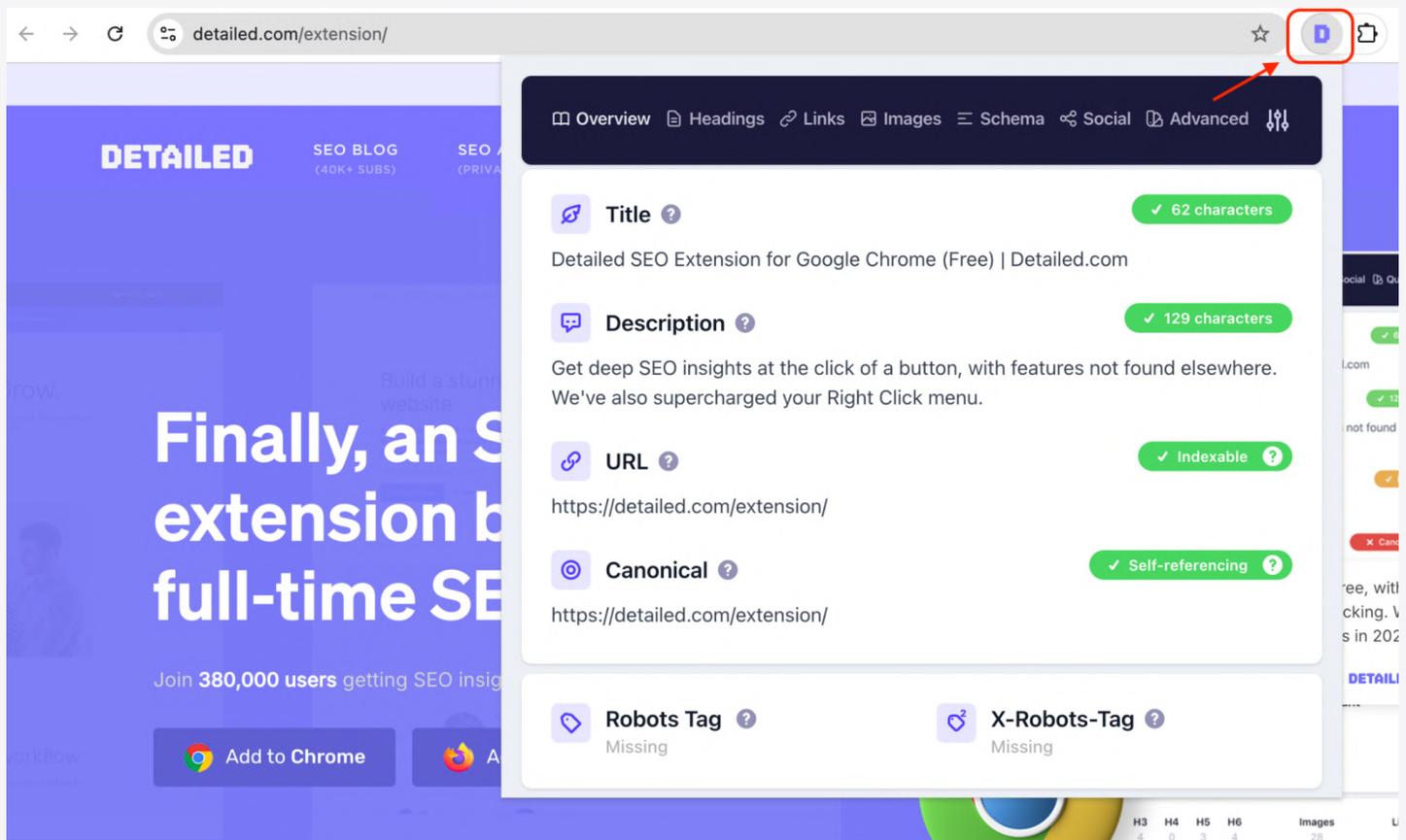
Getting Ready: Prepare Your Tools

You only need to prepare your tools once. Once you've signed up and created accounts, you'll use them to write all subsequent blogs. For best results, we recommend signing up for all of them using the steps below.

Note: We don't receive kickbacks or commissions when you use these tools. We simply recommend them because they're the ones that get us the best results.

- Download Google Chrome (Free; needed to use the Detailed SEO Extension, which makes researching competitors much faster)
 - [Visit this page](#)
 - Click "Download Chrome"
 - Follow the prompts on your device to download and install Google Chrome
- Download the Detailed SEO Chrome Extension
 - Open Google Chrome
 - [Visit this page](#)
 - Click "Add to Chrome"
 - Click "Add Extension"
 - Click the puzzle piece icon to the right of the URL bar
 - Click "Detailed SEO" under "Access Requested"
 - Click the puzzle piece icon to the right of the URL bar again
 - Click the pin next to "Detailed SEO."

Note: Pinning the extension makes it easier to research the individual keywords in step 4. You can click on the "D" icon next to the URL bar for instant access.



- Set up Google Keyword Planner (Free)
 - Go to ads.google.com and create a free account (if you don't have one yet)
 - Click Tools > Planning > Keyword Planner in the menu on the left of your account overview page.
- Sign up for ChatGPT & create a new project (Paid; Gives you access to custom instructions, and newer models that can write better than 4o)
 - Go to chat.openai.com
 - Click **“Sign Up”** in the top-right corner.
 - Enter your email and password.
 - Verify your email address by clicking on the link in your inbox.
 - Provide your name and birthday when prompted.
 - Click **“Upgrade Plan”** in the bottom left corner
 - Click **“Get Plus”**

- Provide your payment information and click **“Subscribe”**
- Store your credentials somewhere safe
- Prepare a new project in ChatGPT
 - Go to [***chat.openai.com***](https://chat.openai.com)
 - Hover over “Projects” in the left panel
 - Click “+” (appears to the right of “Projects”)
 - Name your project after your business
 - Click “Create Project”
 - Click “Add Instructions”
 - Click here to access the prompt
 - Copy and paste the prompt into the Instructions text box
 - Replace [ADJECTIVE] in the prompt to describe your preferred writing style
 - Click “Save”
- Sign up for a paid SurferSEO account (Paid)
 - Go to [***surferseo.com***](https://surferseo.com)
 - Click **“Get Started Now”**
 - Choose a sign up option
 - Click **“Create My Account”**
 - Verify your email address by clicking on the link in your inbox.
 - Return to the Surfer website and provide the information about your business when prompted
 - When asked to purchase a package, select the “Essential” package.
 - Provide the information requested and click “Pay \$99.00”
 - Store your credentials somewhere safe

Step 1: Brainstorm Topics & Find Keywords

- Grab a piece of paper and a pen, or create a new document in Google Docs.
 - Take note on your audience:
 - Who are they? (Dog owners? Business owners? Car owners? etc.)
 - What are they looking for when they come to your website?
 - Take note of your goal (why you're writing blogs in the first place)
 - Do you want to sell more of a specific product or service?
 - Do you want to get readers to join your mailing list?
 - Do you want to increase traffic for more ad revenue?
 - Brainstorm writing topics and ideas based on your goals
 - Write your ideas in your notes document.
 - For each idea, write down real phrases people might search for on Google

Perform Keyword Research

- Open [Google Keyword Planner](#)
- Click Discover New Keywords
- Copy the possible search phrases for one topic into the search bar (up to 10)
- Press Enter
- Review the recommendations
 - Look for keywords that have **high search volume** and **low competition**.
 - Choose one keyword as your primary keyword
 - Add it to your notes document
 - Find synonyms for your primary keyword
 - Add them to your notes document
 - For each idea, write down real phrases people might search for on Google

Step 2: Learn From Top-Performing Blogs

- Make a copy of the [research spreadsheet template](#) and name it after the keyword you want to rank for
- Use the steps below to complete the Research spreadsheet.
 - Find top-performing URLs for your keyword cluster
 - Open a private search window in Google.
 - Type in the primary keyword you're targeting and hit "Search"
 - Open the 5 best-performing articles in new tabs.

Note: Check the Google Search results before opening a new tab. Do not re-view sponsored articles. These are on the first page of results because of paid placement.

- Navigate to the "All Results" tab in your spreadsheet.
- Enter your keyword on line 2 where it says "Keyword 1".
- Enter the top 5 URLs in the lines below "Keyword 1".
- Repeat this process for each keyword from your blog spreadsheet until you have the top 5 URLs for each term (25 URLs total).
- Populate the "Competitor Article Overview" tab with the best-performing URLs
 - Click "Extensions" in the menu bar
 - Click "Apps Script"
 - Click "Run"
 - Click "Review Permissions"
 - Sign into Google when prompted
 - Click "Continue"

- Return to the Google Sheet
- Click “Custom Tools” in the menu bar
- Click “Update Competitor Overview”
- If prompted, accept the permissions one more time to run the custom script.

Note: This script analyzes the URLs you entered for each keyword. It uses the position of each URL + how often it ranks for each keyword to determine which competitor articles you should look to for inspiration as you write your own article.

- Complete the “Competitor Article Overview” tab with the Title Tag, Meta Description, H1 Title, and outline for each URL.
 - Navigate to the tab called “Competitor Article Overview”
 - Open the first URL on line 4 in a new tab.
 - Activate the Detailed SEO Extension (Click the D icon to the left of the puzzle piece)
 - Copy the Title Tag into line 5.
 - Copy the Meta Description into line 6.
 - Click “Headings” in the Detailed SEO Extension menu
 - Highlight the headings starting from <H1>, and copy and paste them into the “Outline” sections of the Competitor Article Overview” tab.
 - Repeat this process for the other 4 URLs.
-
- Review the outlines of each URL in your spreadsheet to verify that they were written about your target keywords.
 - Read the top 5 articles from start to finish to get an idea of how they approach your keyword. Take notes on anything interesting (things you might want to include in your own article).

Step 3: Create A Content Editor & Outline

Create A Content Editor

- Log into Surfer
- In the left menu, click Write
- Click *Create > + New Content* (in the top-right corner of the screen)
- Adjust the location setting in the Content Editor pop-up; Select a country, state, or city you want to target.
- Copy and paste the keyword(s) from your SEO Research Spreadsheet into the field that says “Enter the keyword(s) you want to rank for...”
- Click *Create for 1 CE credit*

Create An Outline

- Open the research spreadsheet you completed earlier
- Open ChatGPT
- Navigate to the project you created when preparing your tools.
- Start a new conversation with the following prompt:

We're going to write a blog optimized for SEO that targets the keyword "[INSERT KEYWORD]." Can you help?

- Replace *[INSERT KEYWORD]* with your primary keyword.
- Hit enter. ChatGPT will ask you for the top 5 ranking blogs for your keyword.
 - Open your Competitor Article Overview tab from the research spreadsheet.
 - Copy column B (URL, Title Tag, Meta Description, Outline of Headings).

- Paste it into your conversation with ChatGPT one column at a time.
- Repeat for columns C-F.
- Press Enter to submit your prompt and have ChatGPT create an outline.
- Review the proposed outline you get from ChatGPT.
 - ChatGPT will ask you if you want to include other points in your blog. If you do, provide them using this prompt:

*I also want you to include headings about the following topics. Add them to the outline wherever they fit most logically:
[INSERT TOPICS YOU WANT TO COVER]*

- Replace *[INSERT TOPICS YOU WANT TO COVER]* with your topics
- Press Enter
- Reply “yes” when ChatGPT asks if you’re ready to outline each section using bullet points.
- Review the updated outline and suggest changes if you have any in mind.

Step 4: Draft Your Article

- Send this prompt to have ChatGPT start writing the first draft of your article:

I'm satisfied with the outline and ready to start writing. Let's go section by section. Provide each section here in Chat. Do NOT provide answers in Canvas mode.

- Press Enter
- Copy and paste the newly written section into your Surfer editor.
- Tell ChatGPT to write the next section.
- Repeat the previous 2 steps until you've completed your first draft.
- Copy and paste the entire draft from Surfer into a fresh copy of your Blog Template in Google Docs.

Step 5: Review Your Draft & Take Notes

- Read your first draft in Google Docs.
- Add comments to the Google Doc noting areas that need improvement
- Add comments on areas where you want to inject your expertise

Step 6: Iterate And Refine Your Draft

- Return to your conversation in ChatGPT.
- Provide this prompt:

Now, let's begin editing. I will provide the content that needs to be edited and my feedback on it. You will edit one section at a time to account for my feedback.

- Return to your Google Doc.
- Find the first section where you added comments.
- Copy and paste the content into ChatGPT between quotes.
- Copy and paste your comment below the content between quotes.
- Optional: If you have long sections with multiple comments, add the specific line that each comment pertains to beneath your feedback. This makes it easier for ChatGPT to stay laser-focused when making edits based on comments.**
- Copy and paste the updated content into your Google Doc.
- Repeat these steps for each section until you have completed your second draft.
- If you feel it's necessary, repeat the steps under "Review Your Draft & Take Notes" until you're happy with the drafted content.

Step 7: Use ChatGPT To Add Keywords

- Copy the entire draft from Google Docs into ChatGPT (But don't hit Enter yet).
- Return to the Surfer Content Editor.
 - Click "All" in the Guidelines
 - Click "Adjust" next to "Terms" and configure the following settings:
 - Count range - ON
 - Optimized terms - OFF
 - Partially optimized terms - OFF
 - Unused terms - ON
 - Show ranges - OFF
 - Highlight terms - ON
 - Auto suggestions - OFF
 - Show clusters - OFF
 - Click "Copy All" beneath the updated list of terms
- Return to ChatGPT
- Copy the following prompt into the ChatGPT text box below your updated draft content, but don't hit Enter yet:

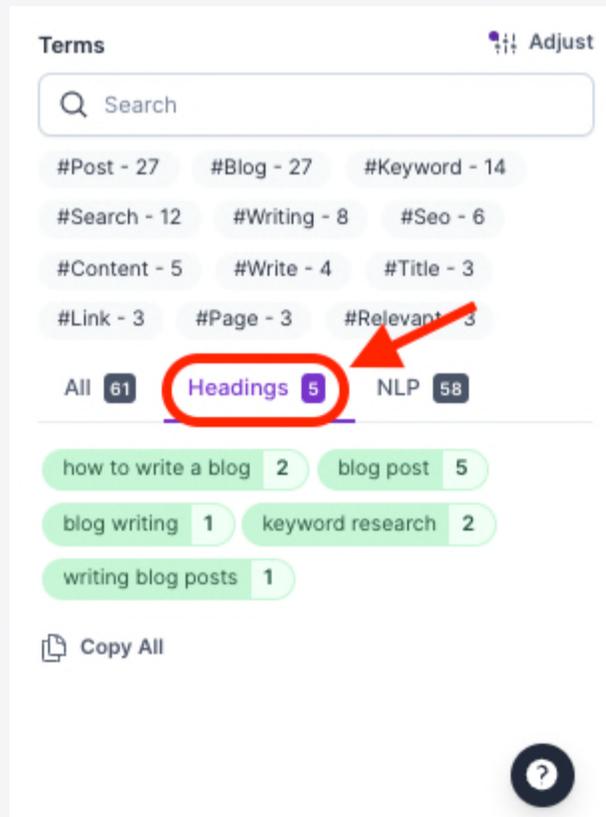
You're going to help me add keywords to the post above. Rewrite each of the sections in my blog to incorporate relevant keywords from the list below. Keywords should be added naturally and seamlessly. We only want to add them in places where they won't impact the meaning or context of the blog's content. The updated content should NOT sound like it's stuffing keywords. It should sound 100% natural, like it was written by a human.

Keywords: [PASTE YOUR KEYWORDS BETWEEN THESE BRACKETS]

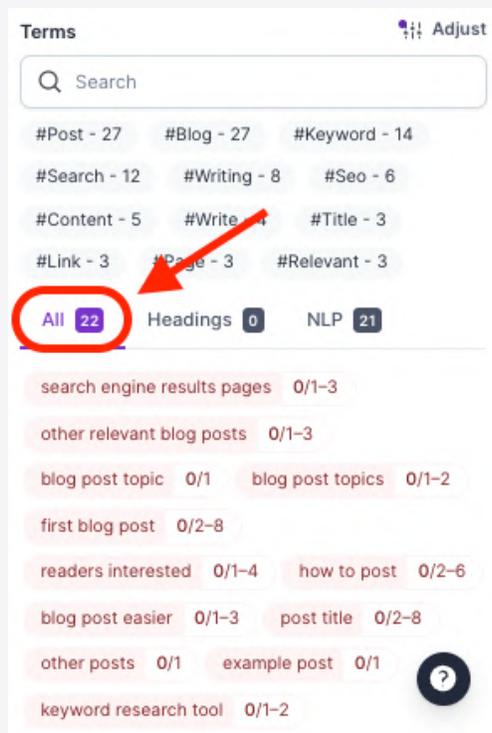
- Paste your keywords into the prompt.
- Click enter.
- Copy the updated outline you generated in ChatGPT.
- Paste it into Google Docs.
- Paste it into the Surfer Content Editor to view the score.

Step 8: Edit & Fact Check

- Review the content in Surfer and manually incorporate any missed keywords into your content.
- Start with Headings



- Review your draft and incorporate any missing keywords from the Headings list into your H1, H2, and H3 headings.
- Then incorporate keywords from the All tab



Note: Surfer lists keywords in descending order of impact. Add them in the order they're listed within Surfer for best results.

Fact Check

- Fact check your content
 - Review the updated content in your Google Document.
 - Highlight every claim that is stated as fact within your content.
- Review the highlighted statements to verify their accuracy. Edit statements that aren't accurate.

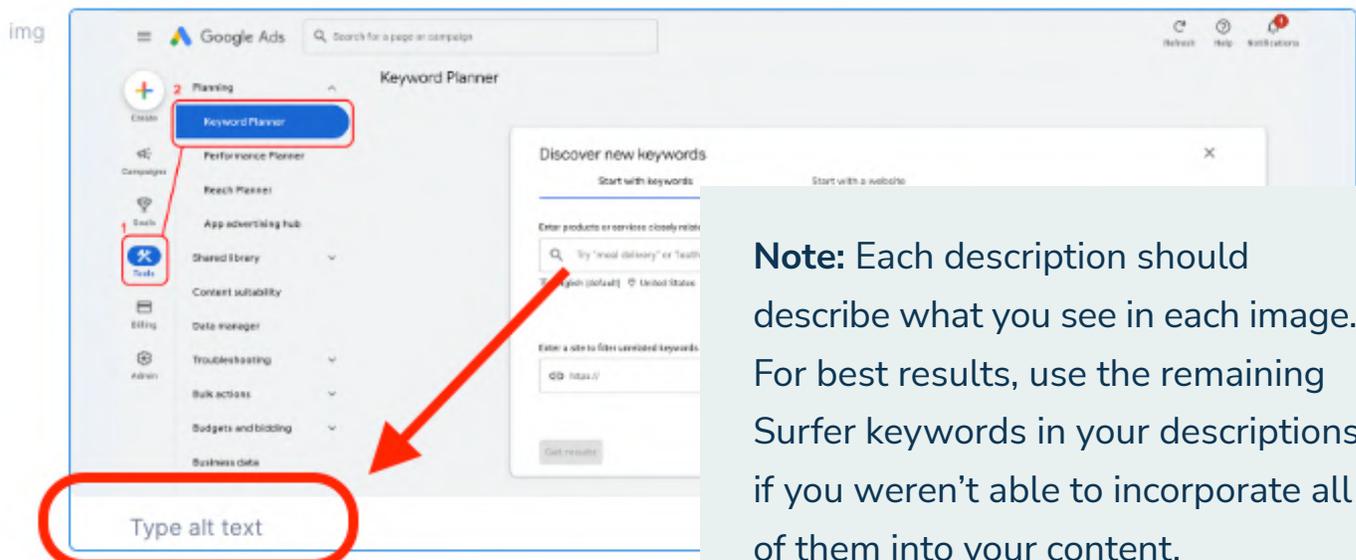
Note: ChatGPT's DeepResearch function can help you do this fast, but you'll still need to check the sources provided in Chat to make sure that facts are accurately represented in your content.

Step 9: Find And Prep Images

- Find and optimize images:
 - Use iStock (paid), Pixabay (free), or Pexels (free) to find images for your blog.
 - Download the images.
 - Open tinypng.com in a new tab of your browser.
 - Drag and drop the images into the upload window.
 - Download the optimized images to your desktop.
 - Drag and drop the images into your Surfer Content Editor
- Write a description of up to 125 characters in the alt-text section for each image

h3 Google Keyword Planner

- p A good blog post starts with finding the right keywords, and [Google Keyword Planner](#) is the ideal tool for this.
- p You can access it by creating a free Google Ads account. Once you have an account, click *Tools > Planning > Keyword Planner* in the menu on the left of your account overview page.
- p The Keyword Planner lets you see how often users search for specific terms. And how much competition you're up against if you choose to target them.
- p It's one of our favorite tools because you're looking at real search data, straight from Google. It helps you target keywords that bring in traffic and match the content you write with your user's search intent.



Step 10: Choose A URL, Title Tag, & Meta Description

- Add the following content to your blog template so it's ready when you upload your blog:
 - In the "Suggested Blog URL" section, use the keyword for the URL (example: /insert-keyword-here)
 - Write a Title Tag
 - Write a title tag with your keyword at the beginning
 - Make sure it's 60 characters or less ***(use this tool)***
 - Write a Meta Description describing what the post is about
 - Use your keyword at the beginning of your description
 - Keep it short, clear, and focused.
 - Make sure it's 150 characters or less ***(use this tool)***

Step 11: Add Links & Check Your CTA

- Add internal and external links
 - Where it makes sense, add links to the body content of your post that take users to other pages on your site.
 - Where it makes sense, add links to the body content of your post that point to external web pages or resources you used when writing.
- Check your call to action
 - Add a short blurb that calls your readers to action
 - Add a link to the appropriate page on your website where readers can take that action
 - Make sure your CTA makes sense for this blog article

Step 12: Publish Your Blog Post

You can use a visual editor or a code editor in your CMS to add the content to your website. If using a visual editor, copy and paste the formatted content directly from your Google Doc to your visual editor.

If using a code editor, use the following steps to convert the content to HTML, then copy and paste the raw HTML content from the bottom of your Google Document into the code editor.

Convert to HTML (Recommended)

- Click “Custom Scripts” in the Google Docs menu.
- Click “Convert To HTML” and grant access if required

Note: This script converts all content not contained in a table into raw HTML you can use with the code editor in your CMS, **but it doesn't account for images in your Google Doc.** When the script is done running, you can find your raw HTML content at the very bottom of the Google Document. Then, add the images manually when you publish the content on your website.

Publish

- Use these questions to make sure you've covered all of the bases before hitting publish:
 - Does your post have a title?
 - Did you update the URL for the post?
 - Did you set a featured image for your post?
 - Does the post contain all of the images?

- Did you add alt descriptions for each image in your CMS?
- Does your post have a title tag and meta description?
- Publish your blog post.

BONUS (Optional, But Recommended): Write And Send An Announcement Email

- Scroll down to the final table in your Google Document.
- Update the email template based on the contents of your blog post.
- Send an email to your list announcing the new blog.



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