



# WEB WRITING STYLE GUIDE



## ➔ **Tips for Web Writing**

1. Start with your most important content, keeping it brief and simple to understand.
2. Readers don't look at a website the way they would a book; people scan for information on a website rather than read every word, so keep it concise.
3. Break up large amounts of text into chunks by using headlines, subheads and bulleted lists. Apply the headline, subheadline and bulleted list styles available in Cascade, which are already formatted and ready to use.
4. Make use of links throughout the page — if you mention something on another Web page, lead readers to it.
5. Don't assume readers have looked at the rest of the website; treat each page as if it stands alone, or link back to other pages if it's important.
6. Relate each page to just one main idea. Depending on the topic, keeping copy between 300–700 words is best.
7. Make sure your pages are updated regularly and contain fresh content (especially important for pages with dates, contact information, index pages, etc.). Visitors want to see something new is on the page each time they visit.
8. Hyperlinks should be several words long and descriptive of where they're going; they shouldn't say things like “click here.”
9. For accessibility and responsive design purposes, avoid directional words like “see below” or “to the right” — this can confuse the reader, as the page layout can change depending on the device they're using to access the site.
10. Write to a global audience; use gender-neutral words and avoid language that would be confusing for an international reader. Our brand directly addresses the audience — write to the reader using second person.
11. Proofread and double-check everything before it gets published — spelling, grammar, names and links should all be checked. Don't rely on a spell-check program.
12. Don't use underlined words in copy, and use bolds, italics and exclamation points sparingly.
13. Cut your text down to the most important words; avoid wasting space with things like welcome messages or extraneous information.
14. Follow the University of Dayton *style guide and brand guidelines*.
15. Avoid using the passive tense. Reword sentences to make them active and more engaging to the audience.
16. Each page should have a purpose. Use analytics to determine if people are visiting your page. If not, try reworking the page, consolidating its information elsewhere or deleting it.

## ➔ **SEO Tips and Best Practices**

1. Offer original, valuable and relevant content to readers.
2. Use keywords throughout the copy that describe content and match the phrases readers are searching.
3. Embed keywords in places like the title, headings, links, metadata and image tags as well as the copy.
4. Make each page unique by using its own topic, title and keywords.
5. Make sure the keywords are representative of the page's topic.
6. Choose the most relevant and popular keywords that apply to your page.