

# Spacehuntr Writing Style Guide

Generally follow AP Style Guidelines; some further info [here](#) and [here](#)

## Style

### Bolding

[Bold important phrases/sentences](#) throughout the article to aid in skimmability.

- **Use restraint:** The reason bold type creates emphasis is that it slows down the reader and forces the eye to take in the words more carefully. If you slow them down too much, they may just skip over what you have to say.
- **Bold important words/terms to remember** (mostly for skyscraper/info/how-to articles; no need to bold common words like “funnel”)

### Font

Normal text should be Arial, 11 point size, and the darkest black color.

- If you copy and paste something from another site/source, **make sure to “paste without formatting.”** Otherwise, you may accidentally cause an error without noticing it. (<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-ways-strip-formatting-copy-paste-text/>)

### Paragraph Structure

At most, a paragraph can be 4 lines long - not 4 sentences, but 4 lines, as shown below.

Optimally, paragraphs should be as short as possible - 1 or 2 lines. However, don't go

overboard and only use one-sentence paragraphs constantly, especially if the content would be more understandable and well-organised if it were grouped in 3 or 4 lines instead.

Remember that reducing the size of a large paragraph may require re-wording it.

Please use a tool like [hemingwayapp](#) to optimize your paragraphs and sentence structure and aim for grade 5 or 6 reading level.

### Examples:

- Longest:

“This is an example of a very long paragraph. You should not go beyond 4 lines when writing a paragraph as it looks clunky and unappealing to readers. Try to ensure that you stay within the limit and remember that this is for 4 lines, not for 4 sentences, so your paragraph may contain more than 4 short sentences”

- Short:

“This is an example of a short paragraph.

You can break down large points into multiple paragraphs to get your point across”

### Voice

Always find a way to use [active voice and NOT passive voice](#).

### Example:

- **Incorrect:** While he was at the store, the man **was greeted by** an old friend.

- **Correct:** An old friend **greeted** the man while he was at the store.

Syntax:

**Incorrect:**

Object	Verb	Subject
The man	was greeted by	an old friend

**Correct:**

Subject	Verb	Object
An old friend	greeted	the man

Rule of Thumb:

1. Ask yourself, "Do I state *who/what* is committing this action?" to make sure that you have included a subject at all.
  - **Example:** the sentence "The North Korean government is heavily criticized as being oppressive" does not state *who* is the one criticizing.
2. Then, make sure the subject is "actively" performing the verb, meaning the subject comes **BEFORE** the verb, as demonstrated in the tables above.

## Point of View

### Second

Use **2nd person point of view** (POV) whenever...

- It can aid in creating a personal, conversational tone with a reader.
- "Danger" can be impressed upon the reader.
  - **Example:** "They could charge you extra fees" feels more alarming/attention-grabbing than "They could charge customers extra fees."

There are MANY opportunities for both, so this should be the **primary POV used**.

### Third

Use **3rd person point of view** when...

- It wouldn't make sense otherwise/would sound clunky to use 2nd person.
  - **Example:** "This software saves customers' logs" or "a group of hackers were able to hack these logs" just wouldn't make much sense/would sound SUPER clunky if you tried to make them 2nd person.
- Using 2nd person would insinuate that the reader might be doing something illegal (including pirating) and/or morally wrong (subjective and rare, but still).
  - **Example:** "Users who don't notice this will be charged extra" sounds much, much better than "If you don't notice this you'll be charged extra."

## Tone

- **No Fluff! Every sentence should add value. Don't state the obvious or repeat your point unnecessarily multiple times.**
- Your opening must be powerful! The majority of even good articles begin with really trite sentences. Few people will ever read beyond this! Always presume that your audience knows that Social Media, Content Marketing, SEO, etc. are important. Don't open with that. People will expect an article for beginners and stop reading.
- Don't open by telling people that there's a lot of competition, or there are more websites than ever. We've heard it before.
- Please avoid using overused terms like "Today, .....", or "In 20nn, .....". In almost all cases, such words are proven irrelevant by whatever follows them.
- Keep the tone light and conversational as if you were discussing the topic with your friend.
- Avoid "We at Spacehuntr" etc. Yes, it's our blog, but we're serving the industry, not ourselves.
- Avoid referring to any sensitive topics, no matter how good natured or harmless. Some people can become easily offended by light "banter".
  - E.g **Bad** "Taxes, parking fines, Hitler. These are all things that everyone hates."
- Additionally, do not mention any politics unless absolutely necessary to the article (e.g a recent bill that was passed). If you are required to do so, do not comment on the political nature of the bill and simply present the facts.
  - E.g **Bad** "President "X" passed another ridiculous bill meaning we cannot store personal data anymore"

- E.g **Good** “A bill was recently passed forbidding small businesses from storing personal data.”

## NO Salesy Language

- **Wrong:** “You’ll find peace of mind when your dog finally stops barking!”
- **Wrong:** “You can rest easy knowing your dog’s behavior troubles are finally over.”
- **Wrong:** Anything else that sounds like it could be in an infomercial

Instead, use conditional language (if, might, could, may, maybe) to make recommendations:

- **Correct:** “This might be a good choice for those who want an in-home training option.”
- **Correct:** “If it’s important to you to find a positive dog trainer, this may be a good place to start.”

## Technical Jargon

A basic level of technical jargon is acceptable for most articles.

If you need to use any advanced technical language (or acronyms), explain in clear detail what it means. Additionally, don’t overwhelm the reader with streams of acronyms of complex language. Take a customer-centric approach and answer questions/explain things in a way that the majority of your readers will understand.

- **Wrong:** “If you are using a SEM tactic such as PPC ads, this might not work.”
- **Correct:** “If you are using a paid advertising tactic to drive traffic, such as PPC (Pay per click) ads, this might not work.”

## Always Add Value and Avoid Filler Language

Every sentence should add value to your article; ask yourself if each sentence is necessary and if it enhances the quality of writing.

- Always add useful/valuable information.
- No BS'ing.
- **Wrong:** "If your dog is acting up, you might need a dog trainer" (...duh).
- **Wrong:** "This company teaches your dog to walk politely. They also offer leash training." (...says the same thing twice).
- **Wrong:** Anything else that doesn't add information to the article.

## Other

### Length

- Articles should be at least 1,000 words (word count is stated in brief)
- We waive this minimum when a post is to accompany an Infographic. In that case, they should still be no less than 300 words, and preferably at least 500.
- If you are writing on a single subject and there simply aren't 1,000 words to be written without repeats or fillers, write what is needed to get your point across in an informative, and that is all. Yoast suggests a 300-word minimum.

## Images

Long walls of text are a major turn-off for most readers. They must be submitted with relevant, illustrative images.

### Title

- ALWAYS change the title of the image that you download and paste in your document to the title of your blog article, small description, etc. Something relevant! Keywords in here can do no harm.
- The title is valuable information for Google when scanning and indexing your website. Google is a bot and cannot see what you're showing your readers. It reads the html code of your website and, based on this, it decides where it will index you compared to competitors.
- If Google can choose between 'unique\_event\_venue.jpg' or '893890809E0220.jpg', the first one will definitely score better as Google exactly knows what it is about.

### Citation

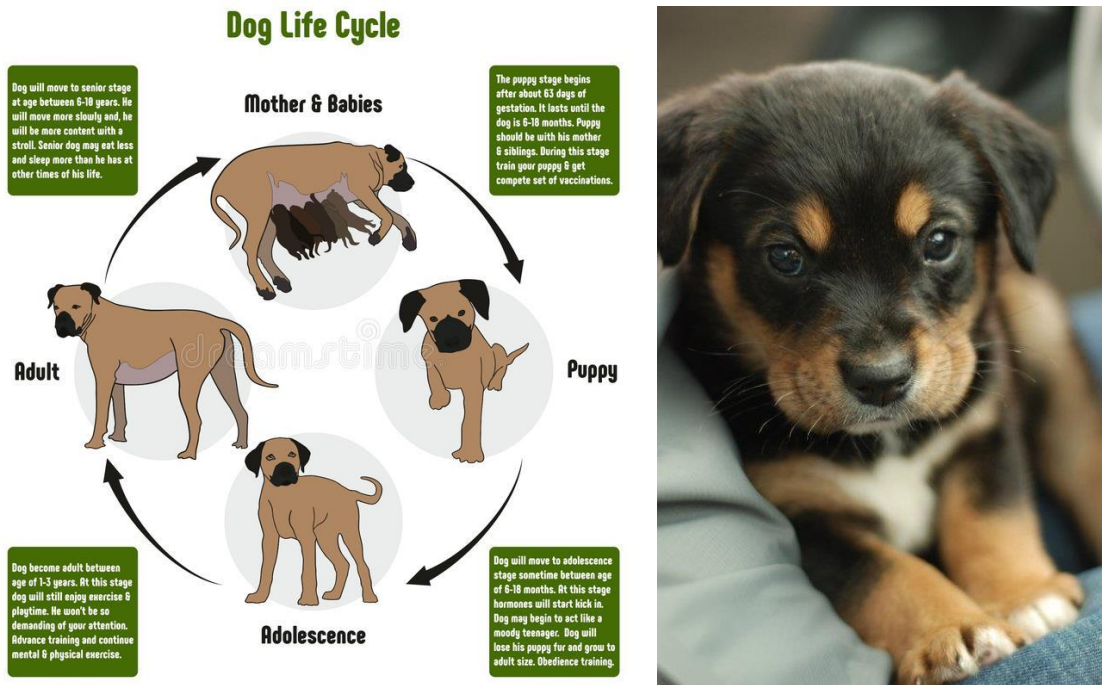
All photos/images/diagrams (unless one of our own) should be cited with the URL of where you found it, to ensure no copyright infringement. Cite the source in a comment and not in the text itself.

### Type of Images

Stock images should very, very rarely be used. All images should add something to the content, i.e., help explain a concept, like how the one below explains a dogs life cycle.



Good:  Adorable, but not good:



- If you must use a stock image, don't upload the picture with a title like 'layne-harris-hSvZ7FXvur0-unsplash-scaled.jpg'. Stay professional and update the title to something that fits and helps the copy.

## Quality

Make sure any image used is of good quality: crisp, clear, large enough. We don't want to use one that's blurry or low-quality.

Try to make sure images are at least 1000px wide.

Example:



## Links

Generally

- Hyperlinks should only be about **4ish words long**
- The words linked should **indicate what the linked page will be about**
- **Don't repeat links**, unless direct quote or reference is mentioned
- If info is covered by another link, **don't link to a different site that would repeat the same info**
- **Don't link to really obvious, well-known things**, which is pretty unnecessary, like Netflix
- Use our affiliate links, and link to our articles when possible (Process TBA)

## Acceptable Sources

In order to ensure readers can trust the facts presented within our articles, we need to ensure that all sources are of high quality and can be trusted. Please follow these basic guidelines when sourcing facts

- Do not use Wikipedia or any other crowdsourced platform as a source
  - You can, however, use the citations within the wikipedia article providing they make sense
- Ensure all sources are from authoritative sites
  - They should have a DR (Ahrefs Domain Rating) of at least 50+ as a general guide
- If a sources claims are not confirmed, ensure this is stated within the article

## Source Your Facts

Backup ALL your facts with links to evidence preferably from a reliable/reputable site with some authority in the market.

Include all reference links within the [content](#) pointing to the exact deep page containing the information not the top level domain so we can easily refer to them in the final publication.

## Sources

A web source should be cited by linking the source through already-existing text, not by adding a source at the end.

- **Incorrect:** Here's some interesting info about Trojan Horses. ([Source](#))
- **Correct:** Here's some interesting info about [Trojan Horses](#).

You may source information from the product website if you are reviewing a product, however, this must be purely for quantifying features. Do not lift sensationalist quotes from the site unless they have provided independent research to backup their claim.

E.g **Bad:** "Customers say Mailchimp is the #1 mailing software"

## SEO

Some definitions

- Focus keyphrase: the keyphrase you want your article to rank for.
  - Cannot be too short, cannot be too long. Preferably 4 to 5 words long.
  - Should include at least one keyword
  - Needs to be part of your blog title (sometimes it can be the complete blog title)
  - Mention this in first paragraph/ sentence
- Keyphrase synonyms: the synonyms of keywords in your focus keyphrase where you also want to rank for. If you don't complete this field, Google will only index you for the focus keyphrase and not for its synonyms.
- Make sure to take the complete keywords: 'Brussels nightlife' is not the same as including 'nightlife' in your copy

Most common remarks:

- 'Use more keyphrases or synonyms in your H2 and H3 [subheadings](#)'
  - In the best case, 30% to 75% of the subheadings need to contain a keyphrase or synonym. (except when using titles of venues, bars, etc.)
  - Of course, make sure it still matches the paragraph.
  - Questions you could use:
    - Does my text discuss the topic described in the keyphrase? If not, should I pick another keyphrase?
    - Do my current subheadings accurately describe what I discuss under them?
    - What paragraphs are most closely connected to the topic and the keyphrase?
    - What questions do these paragraphs answer concerning the topic and the keyphrase?
- ['Keyphrase density'](#)
  - Keyphrase density is the number of times your focus keyphrase occurs in your copy, compared to the total text of that page.
  - Focus keyphrase should be literally mentioned, so the words cannot be spread over the same sentence
  - Should be between 0.5% and 3%. → It's difficult to put an exact number on this. The length of your focus keyphrase is taken as a weighing factor.

- For most of the blog/resource articles up until now: focus keyphrase and synonyms needs to appear approx. 3 times in the complete copy if possible. (for longer articles such as '13 best bars in Amsterdam, it goes up to 5)
- ['Keyphrase in title'](#)
  - Try to have the focus keyphrase at the beginning of the title. The quicker Google knows what your site is all about when scanning, the better.
  - ! This one is mostly flagged as 'orange', so it's something you can improve on. It's not having the most significant impact.
- ['Uneven keyphrase distribution'](#)
  - Make sure keywords or its synonyms are appearing in every paragraph and not only, for example, at the beginning and at the end. The text should be balanced.
  - If you only use your keywords in one part of the text, you may confuse Google. It will not be sure if you're actually ranking for this keyword or not (because you're not using it consistently).
- ['Meta description'](#)
  - When you need to provide a meta description, it needs to contain EVERY word of the focus keyword in the same order.
  - The meta description is between 120 and 156 characters long.
  - The content needs to include a (indirect) call-to-action to get people to click the link to the article

- 'Outbound links on keywords'
  - Never do this. In this case, you are using your keywords or synonyms to let readers EXIT the page, while the purpose of your keywords or synonyms is to KEEP them on your page. If you do this, you're basically letting the source pages rank for our keywords = cannibalisation.