

Content brief template

Copy the blank assignment for each new article. Replace prompts with decisions and identify evidence still needed. The example is fictional.

Completed SEO brief example

The following is a fictional assignment for a small accounting software publisher. It illustrates the decisions a brief should make; it isn't a report of actual research or search performance.

Field	Completed brief
Working headline	How to Choose Invoicing Software for a Freelance Business
Audience	Freelancers moving from manually prepared invoices to their first invoicing tool
Reader's task	Build a shortlist based on their invoicing needs and the total cost of using each tool
Primary keyword	how to choose invoicing software
Secondary keywords	invoicing software for freelancers; recurring invoices; invoicing software costs
Search intent	Practical selection guidance, with a checklist the reader can use
Perspective	Start with the reader's billing process. A feature matters only if it supports a task they actually need to complete.
Required questions	Can it handle recurring invoices? What happens when an invoice is overdue? Which payment fees apply? Can records be exported?
Research requirements	Check current official documentation for any named tool. Verify plan restrictions, payment fees and export options. Record country and currency.
Evidence still needed	Current documentation for each product included in the comparison
Worked example	A fictional freelancer comparing monthly project invoices with recurring client billing; label assumptions explicitly
Required deliverable	A comparison checklist with fields for cost, recurring billing, reminders, export and unresolved questions
Scope exclusions	No tax advice, universal "best" ranking or claims of hands-on testing without testing
Internal link target	The publisher's existing invoice preparation guide; confirm its URL before inserting
Review criteria	Explain total cost, support named product claims with sources and show how different billing needs change the shortlist

Notice the unresolved evidence field. A brief can authorize research without pretending the research has already happened. The writer knows what must be checked and which assumptions cannot enter the article as facts.

A reusable content brief template

Copy the next page into a document for your next assignment. Keep the prompts until each field has a useful answer.

Working headline:

Audience and situation: Who is reading, what do they already know and why are they looking now?

Reader's task: What should they be able to understand, do or decide?

Primary keyword:

Secondary keywords: Include relevant variations and subtopics. Note any awkward phrase that should be interpreted rather than forced into the copy.

Search intent: What kind of answer does this search call for? What did the search results review reveal?

Perspective: State the central argument or practical judgment in two or three sentences.

Questions to answer: List the questions in a sensible reading order and record their sources.

Required coverage and exclusions: Specify what belongs here and what another page already handles.

Research and evidence: List important claims, source requirements, verification tasks and unresolved questions.

Example or demonstration: Describe what the example should teach. Identify whether it is real, hypothetical or based on a supplied dataset.

Internal links: Provide URLs, descriptive anchor text and the reason each link helps.

Deliverables: Specify the article and any template, table, image or download.

Review criteria: State what the editor should verify before approval.

Owner, approver and deadline: