

Content Brief Template

Copy this per piece and fill it in before anyone writes. The finished brief should read in about five minutes. If a field does not apply, delete it rather than leaving it blank - a half-filled brief is worse than none, because the writer cannot tell which gaps are deliberate.

1. The assignment

Working title - *the promise, not the file name*

Primary keyword - *one, exact match*

Secondary keywords - *3 to 5, comma separated*

Format & word count - *e.g. guide, 1,400-1,800 words*

Deadline / publish date

2. The reader

Who is searching - *role, company size, situation*

What they are trying to do - *the job, not the query*

What they already know - *so you skip it*

3. The angle

Our specific claim - *the one sentence a competitor would not write*

Why us - *data, client work, or a contrarian read*

4. The outline

Phrase every H2 as a question a reader would actually ask. That is what answer engines quote, and it stops the writer drifting into a list of topics nobody searched for.

H2

H2

H2

H2

H2

H2

5. Search and AI visibility

People Also Ask / related questions

Entities and sub-topics the top pages cover

Internal links to include - URL + the anchor text to use

Reference URLs - 1-2 pages that already rank

6. The metadata

Meta title - 60 characters maximum

Meta description - 155 characters maximum

Direct-answer opening - the first 40 words, written for you

The direct-answer opening is the field most briefs skip and the one that decides whether an answer engine can cite the page. Write it yourself. Do not delegate it.

Definition of done

- The opening paragraph answers the title question in under 40 words.
- Every H2 is a question, and the paragraph under it answers that question first.
- Claims that can be checked carry a number, a date, or a source.
- All internal links from the brief are present, with the anchor text specified.
- Meta title is 60 characters or fewer; meta description 155 or fewer.
- Nothing in the piece would need rewriting if the reader already knew the basics.

Companion guide: mustardseedmt.com/learning-center/what-is-a-content-brief