

# SEO Content Strategy — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working content engine for one real subject you choose. You will build a topical map, group and score keywords into a ranked roadmap, write a brief you could hand to a writer, plan the internal links, and stand up a measurement dashboard that ties organic traffic to revenue. Work through the sheets and templates on a single niche so you finish with a publishable 90-day plan, not just notes.

## Topical Authority and the Map

Pick an ownable seed topic and turn it into a structured map of pillars, clusters, and matched search intents.

### Exercise: Scope a Seed Topic You Can Own

Choose one subject narrow enough that a focused site could become the best source on it. Write the reasoning so the scope is deliberate, not accidental.

- What broad subject are you in, and what narrower angle (audience, platform, or use case) makes it ownable?

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- Who is the specific reader, and what are the three main jobs they are trying to do?

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- Why could you plausibly become a more credible source on this than a big generalist site (experience, focus, data)?

### Worksheet: Topical Map Builder

Expand your seed topic from several angles and record sub-topics. Aim for 5 to 9 themes with 8 or more sub-topics each before you stop.

Seed topic (scoped)

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Theme 1 and its sub-topics

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Theme 2 and its sub-topics

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Theme 3 and its sub-topics

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Reader questions found (autocomplete / People Also Ask / Reddit)

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Key entities found (tools, methods, formats, standards)

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Total sub-topics collected (count)

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## Worksheet: Pillar, Cluster, and Intent Sheet

For each planned page, decide whether it is a pillar or a cluster and assign one search intent. Confirm intent from the live top results, not assumption.

Working title / topic

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Role (pillar / cluster)

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Parent pillar (if a cluster)

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Search intent (informational / commercial / transactional / navigational)

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Dominant format in the current top 5 results

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Format you will build to match

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## Checklist: Map Readiness Pass

- Seed topic scoped narrow enough for a focused site to own
- Map has 5 to 9 themes, each with at least 8 sub-topics
- Reader questions mined from autocomplete, People Also Ask, and a forum
- Each planned page labelled pillar or cluster
- Each page assigned a single search intent
- Intent verified by opening the live top 5 to 10 results
- Whole topic fits on one page or one screen as a map

## Keyword Research and Prioritization

Gather keywords, read their metrics honestly, group them one-page-each, and score them into a ranked publishing queue.

## Worksheet: Keyword Metrics Log

Pull candidate keywords for each theme into one tool and record the core metrics. Use one tool as your reference so numbers stay comparable.

Keyword

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Reference tool used (Ahrefs / Semrush / Keyword Planner)

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Search Volume

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Keyword Difficulty (0-100)

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Cost Per Click (CPC)

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Notable SERP features (PAA / featured snippet / shopping)

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Long-tail? (Y/N)

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### Exercise: Run the SERP Overlap Grouping

Take 8 to 10 candidate keywords and group those that should share one page. For borderline pairs, search both and compare the top ten results.

- Which keywords returned largely the same top results and therefore belong on one page?
- For each group, which keyword is the primary (highest-volume, clearest intent) and which are secondary?
- Did you find any existing live pages already cannibalizing one query, and how will you consolidate them?

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### Worksheet: Priority Scoring Sheet

Score each keyword group 1 to 5 on three scales, then combine into one Priority Score. Leave the combined score blank until you have set all three inputs, then compute it yourself.

Primary keyword

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Demand (1-5, from volume)

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Winnability (1-5, inverse of difficulty)

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Business Value (1-5, from intent)

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Priority Score (your combined figure)

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Quick win? (low difficulty, rank in weeks) (Y/N)

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Publish order rank

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### Checklist: Roadmap Quality Pass

- Each planned page targets a cluster of related keywords, not one phrase
- Every keyword group assigned to exactly one URL (no cannibalization)
- Primary and secondary keywords recorded per page
- Demand, Winnability, and Business Value scored consistently
- Priority Score computed and pages sorted highest first
- Foundational clusters sequenced before or with their pillar
- Some quick wins front-loaded to build early momentum

### Briefs, Internal Links, and On-Page Structure

Turn one top-priority keyword into a complete brief, structure the page for readers and crawlers, and wire it into the cluster link graph.

### Exercise: Competitive SERP Teardown

For your highest-priority keyword, open the top 5 to 10 ranking pages and dissect them to ground the brief in what actually ranks.

- Which subtopics do all or most of the top pages cover (these are mandatory)?
  - What relevant questions appear in People Also Ask that you should answer?
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- What do the ranking pages all miss or do poorly, and how will your page be better?
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## Worksheet: Content Brief Builder

Complete one full brief for your chosen keyword. Fill every field so a writer could execute it without further questions.

Primary keyword

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Secondary keywords

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Search intent and target reader

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Angle (what this page does better/differently)

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Recommended H1

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H2 / H3 outline (ordered)

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Entities to include (tools, people, methods, stats)

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Target word-count range (from ranking pages)

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Internal links to add

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Meta title (50-60 chars) and meta description (~155 chars)

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Call to action

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## Checklist: On-Page Structure Pass

- Exactly one H1; logical H2/H3 hierarchy with no skipped levels
- Primary keyword in title, H1, first 100 words, and at least one H2 (used naturally)
- Short paragraphs and at least one list for skimmability
- Descriptive, lowercase, hyphenated URL slug with the primary keyword
- Concise direct answer high on the page for a featured-snippet shot
- Alt text on images; Article or FAQ schema added where it fits
- Meta title under ~60 chars and description around 155 chars

## Exercise: Wire the Cluster Links

Place the new page into your internal link graph using the pillar-and-cluster pattern, and confirm it is not an orphan.

- Does the new cluster link up to its pillar, and the pillar link back down to it?
  - Which 2 to 3 existing relevant pages now link to the new one (and does it link back)?
  - Which older, higher-authority pages did you add a link from, and is any page left orphaned?
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## Measuring Organic ROI and Iterating

Stand up Search Console and GA4, tie organic traffic to conversions and revenue, and run a monthly and quarterly refresh loop.

### Checklist: Measurement Setup Pass

- Google Search Console verified for the site
- Performance report read for clicks, impressions, CTR, and position
- GA4 installed via Google tag or Tag Manager
- Traffic acquisition filtered to the Organic Search channel
- Key events / conversions defined to match the business
- Purchase event and revenue enabled (if ecommerce)
- Search Console linked to GA4 (and optionally Looker Studio)

### Worksheet: Content ROI Calculator

For one cluster or page, record the cost and the attributable organic results, then compute the return yourself. Leave every derived cell blank until its inputs are filled.

Page / cluster

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Production + promotion cost (currency)

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Organic sessions (period)

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Organic conversions (period)

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Attributable organic revenue (currency)

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Value per organic visit (revenue / sessions) — compute

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Content ROI % ((value - cost) / cost x 100) — compute

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### Exercise: Find Your Striking-Distance Wins

Use Search Console to surface the highest-leverage updates hiding in pages you already own.

- Which pages rank in positions 5 to 15 and could be pushed up with a focused refresh?
- Which pages have high impressions but low CTR and just need a sharper title and description?
- Which pages have lost clicks over time and are overdue for re-optimisation?

### Checklist: Iteration Cadence Pass

- Monthly check of striking-distance (position 5-15) and declining pages
- High-impression, low-CTR pages flagged for metadata rewrites
- Quarterly content audit deciding update / keep / merge / prune per page
- Refreshes add genuinely new sections, data, and links (not word-swaps)
- Visible last-updated date changed honestly and URL resubmitted for re-crawl
- Thin or overlapping pages consolidated with 301 redirects
- Proven-winner topics expanded with more clusters and a deeper pillar

## Your Action Plan

1. Scope one seed topic narrow enough to own, then build a topical map of 5 to 9 themes with sub-topics from autocomplete, People Also Ask, and forums.
2. Label each planned page as a pillar or cluster and assign one verified search intent by reading the live top results.
3. Pull candidate keywords into one reference tool and log Search Volume, Keyword Difficulty, and CPC for each.
4. Group keywords with the SERP overlap test so each page targets one cluster and one URL, eliminating cannibalization.
5. Score every group on Demand, Winnability, and Business Value, combine into a Priority Score, and sort into a 90-day roadmap.
6. Front-load quick wins and sequence foundational clusters with their pillars.
7. Write one full content brief from a competitive SERP teardown: intent, outline, entities, word count, internal links, and metadata.
8. Publish the page with clean on-page structure and wire it into the cluster link graph (up to pillar, down to clusters, no orphans).
9. Set up Search Console and GA4, define conversions, filter to Organic Search, and build a content ROI view.
10. Run a monthly striking-distance check and a quarterly audit to update, consolidate, prune, and expand winners.











