

What makes for a good blog post?

A good blog post is a combination of meeting certain technical requirements (such as article pictures with meta descriptions, easy-to-read structure, and SEO friendly titles) and writing the article with a clear goal in mind.

A good reading experience usually originates from these two factors. When the article has been built around a common theme – as in the title and the content match, the pictures fit the theme and the mood of the article, and the text is easy to follow in general – a good reading experience is basically guaranteed. But remember that not everyone is ready to read the blog post word for word – **that's why you need to guide the reader with pictures and titles to find the section of the text THEY are interested in.** Text effects, such as bolding a certain part of the text, also helps them to skim the article more efficiently (given that they are used with moderation).

Further down you'll find guidelines for each of the important elements of a blog post, with JAMK blog environment specific guidelines. Remember that these guidelines are meant to support your writing process, not to restrict it. The best way to get started is to write what's on your mind. **The information and experience you have is the most valuable content of the blog post – these guidelines are just here to make them more easily and accessibly available for the potential readers.** Good luck!

Who are you writing for?

One size fits all is rarely the case. That's why you should know, who you are writing for and why they'd be interested before you start writing. If your post is about new and exciting phenomena on the field of tourism and hospitality management, your audience might most likely consist of people who are already a part of the industry. But if you're writing about a study trip or project, your text might be most relevant to the young people who are thinking about studying in the field and want to get a better insight into what the studies contain.

Who are you writing to -question gets easy to answer when you figure out what makes the topic interesting. As in, what question the audience gets an answer to by reading your article. Is the blog post meant to tell the reader something completely new or deepen their already existing knowledge on the topic? If you're writing about the city's gardening plots with the aim of motivating the readers to start their own gardening projects, you might want to share some relevant info on how they could get started and where they can find more information about the gardening plots in general. Your experiences reel them in, but it's hard for them to take the next step unless you show them the right way.

Titles improve readability and SEO scores

Think about the way you read content online – how do you decide if you read something or not? The details may vary, but usually the text title plays a big part in it. But remember, where not encouraging anyone to do clickbait type titles. It's vital to have the title and the content match. Our guidelines to you are to make sure:

- that the title gives a clear picture about the blog post and what it is about
- to position the title so that it presents the topic in an interesting light. If you're writing about the city gardening plots, the title "Gardening plots" gives a vague idea about what the article is about, but positioning it as "Experiences on Jyväskylä Gardening Plots and How to Get One" – boom! Sign me up!
- to give the search engines something to hang on to and guide internet searchers to find the content relevant to them. Using the same gardening plot example – if somebody is searching for info about gardening plots, it's relevant that the keyword / phrase appears in the title of the article. If you write about them, but your title is "How I spend My Summer", neither the search engine nor the reader are going to connect the article to the main topic in question.
- That the Title Can Actually Fit the Search Engine and Social Media Share Windows Without Cutting Off Right When You Get to the Actual Point of the Article... Does this look familiar? Too long titles cut off and make it harder for the reader to relate to the article and decide if they're interested in it or not. And even if the reader is intrigued, Google and the other search engines are not. So, make sure that your title length is 60 characters or under (spaces included!)

Note that the main title directs the reader to click your text open, but to make your text easier to read you also need subheadings. Think about this document for example – it'd be a mess if all the info was lined after one another, without subheadings that help you, the reader, find the information relevant to you! So, add at least 2-3 subheading (title size h2) to the text.

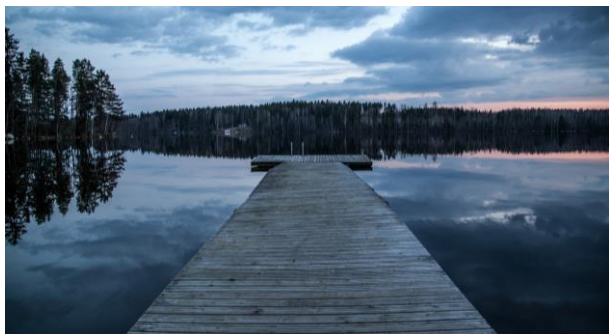
A picture might not always tell more than a thousand words, but it can support the message of your article

A picture helps the reader to internalize the main points of the text, as well as set the mood for the article. For example, photos from a study trip might not provide the reader with any valuable information about the location itself, but it helps them imagine what it would feel like to be on that trip themselves.

Unlike with text, with photos you need to take many different technical aspects into account when using them. Here's a list of things you should remember when it comes to using pictures in Jamk's blog environment:

- **use high-quality photos – but in the right size:** A good size for a horizontal photo is usually about 800px (in width) and 400px (in width) for vertical. The bigger, the better does NOT count here, as too big pictures cause the page to load more slowly, which is bad for both SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and user experience.
- **Remember to add at least one photo for the article (horizontal, 500x290px):** Please note, that the featured images should always be horizontal – meaning the 500px is the width, not the height.
- **Prefer photos you've taken yourself or stock photos that resemble them:** Tourism and Hospitality industry is a field that's close to people, and the photos used should reflect that. Keywords focus around things such as connections, food, and nature. If you yourself don't have a good photo for the article, you can search for one from the [Pixabay](#) (NOTE! Pixabay's photos are free to use without separate mention. This makes them a safe choice, unlike Google, where search results mostly consist of photos that are not free to use / redistribute).

Example 1. A nature photo from Pixabay, which closely resembles a lake photo from anywhere in Finland. The coloring and vegetation both give off a feel like it's from Finland. It looks good, but it looks natural, as in, the writer themselves could have taken it. And that's why it fits the blog.



Example 2. A nature photo from Pixabay that has been heavily edited. The natural colors have been amplified so strongly, that it looks more computer-generated than natural. It's too far removed from a natural photo, a self-taken one, so it's not a good fit for the blog.



Example 3. The header-photo of this article is taken from Pixabay, with the search word "Grain". The photo doesn't fit the title of this text ("What makes for a good blog post?"), but it helps tie the message more closely to the field in question (Tourism and Hospitality). The photo looks natural enough that it could be self-taken, thus making it a good fit for the blog.

Example 4. Make your food photos close-ups! When it comes to food, close-ups help bring out details that are usually more impressive / powerful than photos from far-away would. Below you'll find a couple of examples of good food photos (taken by our wonderful Minna Junttila!)



Links and keywords help tie the article as a part of the bigger picture

We first mentioned keywords when discussing the titles, but they also play a big part in the text itself – especially in making it easier for people to find! When you are writing the article, think about the things that make it interesting. Then it's easier to picture, what kind of terms people might use to try and find information on the issue. If you are for example writing about Central Finland's Food Culture and Traditions, a person interested in them might search for things like "recipes Central Finland" or "Central Finland's traditional recipes" or "Recipes from Central Finland". So, it might be good to include these terms in the text itself. By varying the terms, you also help make sure, that you are not spamming the text with a certain keyword, making the text awkward for the reader to read, and also making the text look unflattering in Google's eyes (keyword spamming is a big no-no when it comes to SEO).

Link on the other hand help the reader find additional information on the subject. If you mention an interesting restaurant or event, help the reader to learn more about them by linking their websites into the text (kind of like the link for the website in question was linked into the Pixabay mention! This way you don't have to search for it by yourself and wonder, if you are on the right site). On top of making it easier for the reader, it also adds to the articles credibility in the eyes of Google (as long as it's done sensibly – nobody wants to read an article where every single word links to some other content).

CTAs a.k.a call to actions help nudge the reader in the direction we wish them to go

CTA is usually a more visual way of directing the reader to some other location (more visual than a mere link, that is). Usually CTA's direct the reader to sign up, download etc. something a bit more definitive that ties them to our offering. The key point is that it should be relevant to the reader – if we're discussing the hotel industry and we then recommend the reader to sign up for an event that has nothing to do with the hotel industry, we're not providing them with information that is relevant to their interest. But if the article is about a study trip, it's only natural to direct the reader to learn

more about the degree programme in question. And if the article is talking about the findings of one of our project it's natural to direct them to learn more about the project in question.

The CTA should pop out from the text – as a button, a picture or really distinguishable formatting, like the one below:



[You can find all JAMK's upcoming events here!](#)

Give you text a voice – introduce yourself

Make the article easier to relate to by giving the article a voice and a face by introducing yourself. The intro doesn't need to be long – your name, position and field at JAMK will do just fine. For example as a student you could introduce yourself as follows:

John Doe

2nd year student

Tourism Management -degree programme

If there are multiple writers, you can combine your introduction:

John Doe & Mary Poppins

2nd year students

Service Business -degree programme

Write your intro in the language the article is in! If you have a photo of yourself, you'd like to attach to your intro it'd be a nice extra, but it's not obligatory.

Additional info

Heini Kaisto, School of Business, Marketing Designer: heini.kaisto@jamk.fi