Creating Great Content for the Harvard Chan Website

Top tips for writers and editors

Writing Style

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Use bulleted lists and subheadings every 300-500 words to make text easy to skim.
- Eliminate jargon.
- Minimize acronyms.
- Strive for a tone that's authoritative, accessible, and warm.
- Serve the reader.
    - Make it easy for them to take the next step and apply/donate/sign up for a newsletter/read other relevant content.
- Focus on action and impact wherever possible.
    - Show readers what we're doing and why it matters.

Page Hygiene

- Use SiteImprove after every update to check spelling, links, accessibility, etc.
- Add alt text to every photo and graphic.
- Review and update content at least every 12 months.
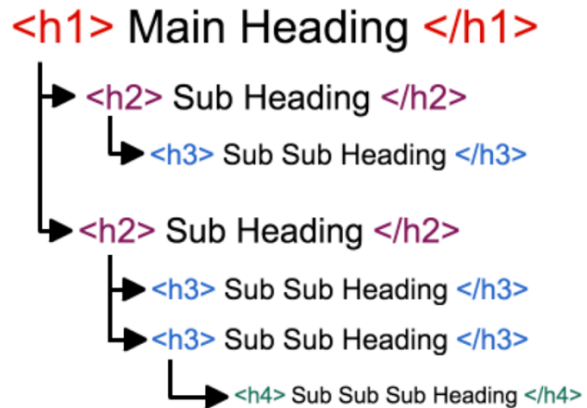
Page Structure

- Be strategic about your URL! It should adhere to the established structure for your section of the website, and it should also:
    - Match the page title.
    - Use real words (ideally, keywords), not acronyms or jargon.
    - Separate words with a short dash: -
    - Be all lowercase.

Search Engine Optimization

- Research keywords relevant to each page.
    - Good research tools include ahrefs.com, SEMrush, and Keyword Planner.
- Try to use the keyword:
    - In the URL (see below)
    - In the title tag (PAGE TITLE - KEYWORD PHRASE | SITE) | 40-60 characters
    - In the meta description
    - In the first paragraph of content
    - In at least one header (H1, H2, H3, etc)

- But.... don't overuse the keyword; the text shouldn't sound robotic.
- Organize content with a clear headline hierarchy:

\<h1\> Main Heading \</h1\>
- ➤ **\<h2\> Sub Heading \</h2\>**
  - ➤ \<h3\> Sub Sub Heading \</h3\>
- ➤ **\<h2\> Sub Heading \</h2\>**
  - ➤ \<h3\> Sub Sub Heading \</h3\>
  - ➤ \<h3\> Sub Sub Heading \</h3\>
    - ➤ \<h4\> Sub Sub Sub Heading \</h4\>

- Cite your sources (and make sure they're credible!).
- Use author bylines and author bios where relevant.
- Include links to relevant content.
    - Look for relevant links to and from other parts of our website and other Harvard Chan sites (such as the new Nutrition Source website, Harvard Public Health magazine, Thich Nhat Hanh Center for Mindfulness, etc.)
    - Make sure the hyperlinked "anchor" text is descriptive. (Ideally, it should include a keyword.)
    - Don't pepper the content with excessive links; that can distract readers.