

SEO analysis

Table of contents

[Learning objectives](#)

[Traffic light system](#)

[The SEO analysis factors](#)

[Text length](#)

[Cornerstone content](#)

[Focus keyphrase](#)

[Links](#)

[Meta description](#)

[SEO title and slug](#)

[Images](#)

[H1 heading](#)

[Key takeaways](#)



Learning objectives

After this lesson, you'll be able to:

- explain the different factors of the SEO analysis in Yoast SEO;
 - understand how the assessments of the SEO analysis can help you with optimizing your content for search engines.
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The Yoast SEO for WordPress plugin gives you valuable feedback on how to optimize your text. In this lesson, we'll discuss this feedback. The content analysis consists of three scores: an SEO score, a readability score, and, optionally, an inclusive language score. In this text, we'll focus on the SEO analysis. We'll explain what the SEO analysis factors entail and how they help you to improve your text.

Traffic light system

The SEO score provides a valuable indication of how well your post is optimized for search engines. It is determined through a series of individual assessments. Each of these assessments gives you a traffic light score: green, orange, red, or occasionally grey. These scores combine to form the overall SEO score. The feedback from these checks will point you to the areas still in need of improvement.

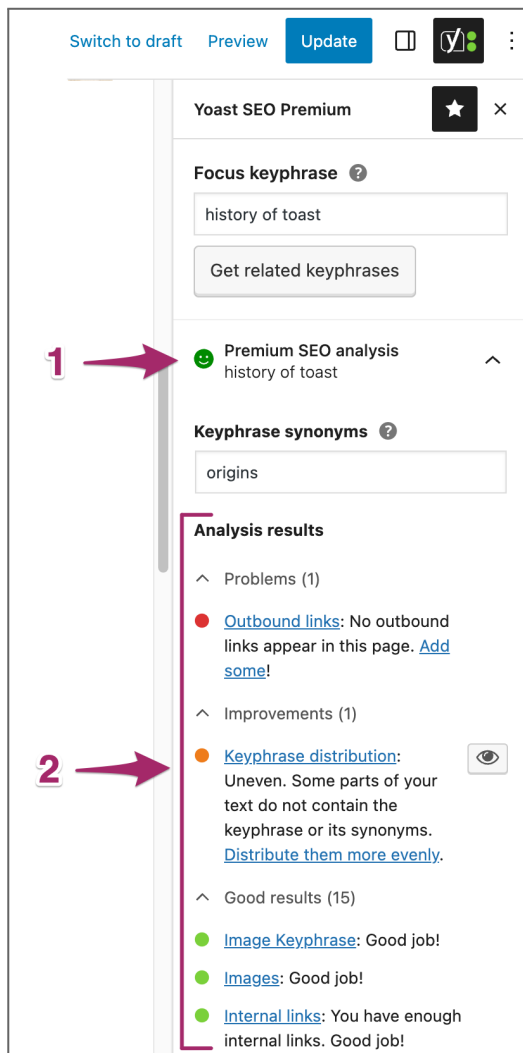


Image 1: The traffic light feedback system in Yoast SEO, where 1 marks the overall SEO score and 2 the scores of the individual assessments

The SEO analysis factors

Yoast SEO measures many aspects of your content and gives you real-time feedback, so you'll receive feedback while writing. The SEO analysis gives you feedback on different aspects of your text, like the length, the focus

keyphrase, and whether or not your text contains enough links. Let's dive into the different aspects of the SEO analysis.

Text length

The first aspect the SEO analysis covers is the overall length of your text. The plugin checks whether your text has a good length. Of course, this depends on the topic you're writing about, but in general, we advise a minimum of 300 words. That's because a blog post should contain at least 300 words to rank well in the search engines. [Long posts will rank more easily than short posts.](#)

A green circular icon followed by the text: [Text length](#): The text contains 1471 words. Good job!

Image 2: Feedback text length

Cornerstone content

If you mark your article as cornerstone content, the minimum word count is increased to 900. Cornerstone articles are comprehensive pieces that cover a broad topic and align with your website's main purpose. For instance, our own mission is "SEO for everyone," so we produce ultimate guides, which offer free information on various aspects of SEO. You can mark your content as cornerstone by switching the toggle below the heading "Cornerstone content" in the Yoast SEO sidebar (Image 3).

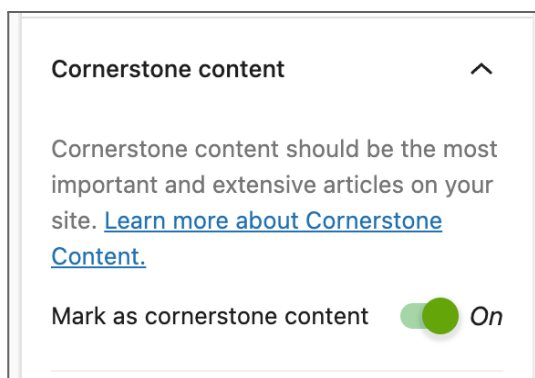


Image 3: Mark your content as cornerstone in the Yoast SEO sidebar

The content on these pages should be impeccable, and as a result, the requirements for cornerstone content are generally stricter. When your article is marked as cornerstone content, it often receives a red traffic light instead of the orange one given to regular articles. This distinction is because we strongly encourage you to optimize these articles to the best of

your ability. Therefore, you'll only receive a green score if the content is truly exceptional.

Focus keyphrase

You can enter your focus keyphrase in the SEO tab of the Yoast SEO meta box and at the top of the Yoast SEO sidebar (Image 4). As we've discussed in a previous lesson, your focus keyphrase is the keyphrase you would like your post to rank for. Ideally, this should be a keyphrase that emerged from your keyword research and which you have kept in mind during the entire writing process. If you're using Yoast SEO Premium, you can also enter a related keyphrase in the "Add related keyphrase" heading in the SEO tab. It is also possible to add a related keyphrase in the Yoast SEO sidebar.

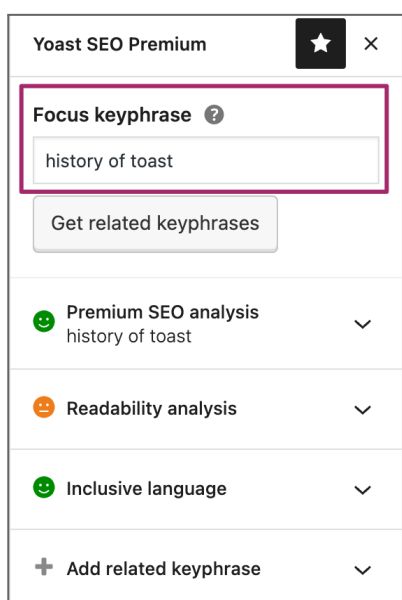


Image 4: You can enter the focus keyphrase in the Yoast SEO sidebar

We check whether you've set a focus keyphrase in the first place. Then, the plugin checks the following things regarding your focus keyphrase:

- **Length & function words**

We check the length of your keyphrase. We recommend a maximum of four relevant keywords – and by that we mean *content* words, not *function* words such as “the” or “and” – for your focus keyphrase. Longer keyphrases make it harder to optimize your post. Simply because you need to repeatedly use a large number of words close to each other, while still trying to create readable copy. If your keyphrase *only* consists of function words, we will warn you. It's

unlikely, but still, it can happen when you're distracted while typing in your keyphrase. It's also possible that you actually do mean to rank for a phrase that consists of function words only. That could be a band name for example, or a meme. You can then avoid getting feedback to do something about this by adding double quotation marks before and after your keyphrase.

- **Location**

Your focus keyphrase should appear in several important locations in the text. These include the title, the first paragraph, subheadings, and the image descriptions. All of these locations are important markers that give readers an idea what the text is about. Including your focus keyphrase in these places will make sure that visitors to your site can immediately grasp the topic of your post. That's why Yoast SEO checks if you have included the keyphrase in each of these spots.

- **Frequency**

We also check how often you use the keyphrase. Yoast SEO calculates the keyphrase density. This score indicates how many times the keyphrase has been used in relation to the length of the text. You should use the keyphrase often enough, but not too often, because that can make your text sound unnatural to your readers. Besides, Google doesn't like pages that are stuffed with keyphrases. That's why we have set a keyphrase density margin. If you stay within this margin, you can be sure that your keyphrase is neither mentioned too little, nor too often.

- **Right keyphrase**

The last part Yoast SEO analyzes is whether you're using the right keyphrase. You must set a unique keyphrase for each post that you write. After all, you don't want to compete with your own content for a position in Google. If you optimize two different articles for the same focus keyphrase, you'll be telling Google: these two are both suitable for people searching for my keyphrase. You would like both of them to turn up in the search results, and that's very hard to do. That's why it's important that you don't optimize a post for a keyphrase you've already used before. To avoid this, we have a handy reminder

that will warn you if you set a keyphrase you've already used before.

Keyphrase distribution (Premium only)

If you use Yoast SEO Premium, we'll also check your keyword distribution. That means that we'll check whether you have used your keyphrase (and/or synonyms and related keyphrases) through the whole text, in a balanced way.

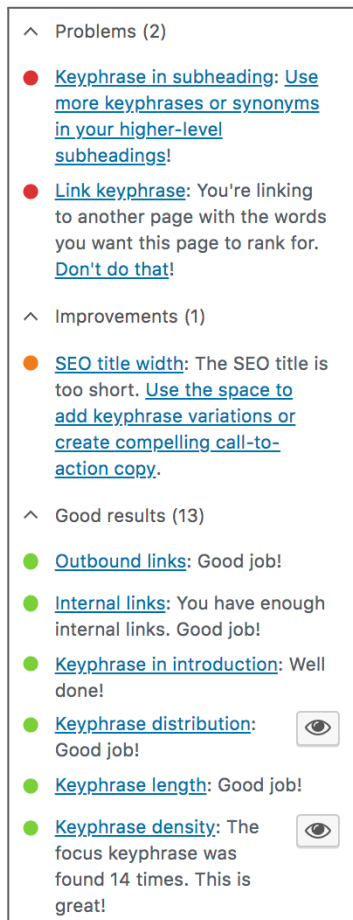


Image 5: Feedback on focus keyphrase

These checks also apply to any related keyphrases you've entered, but they're more strict for your focus keyphrase.

Previously used keyphrase

Apart from analyzing how you use your keyphrase within a post or page, we also make sure that you don't use a keyphrase more than once. It's crucial that you set a unique keyphrase for each post that you write. After all, you don't want to compete with yourself in the search results. That's why it's important that you don't optimize a post for a keyphrase you've already

used before. To avoid this, we have a handy reminder that will warn you if you set a keyword you've already used before.

Word forms, synonyms, and related keyphrases (Premium)

We've talked about earlier, but it makes sense to mention it here once more. If you're using Yoast SEO Premium, the plugin will recognize different word forms of your focus keyphrase. And if you enter synonyms, these will be recognized as well. As a result, the plugin can take word forms and synonyms into account for all relevant keyphrase checks. In addition, you will get a separate analysis for all the related keyphrases you enter.

Links

Yoast SEO also checks the presence of links in your article. Every post should contain at least one internal link – a link going to another page on your site. It should also contain at least one external link – a link going to a different website than your own. This is because you should avoid dead ends. Users shouldn't land on your page, read your article, and not be able to click through to new content.

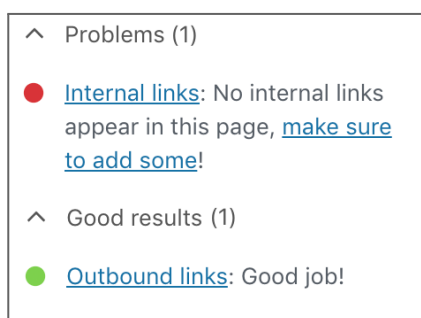


Image 6: Feedback on links

We also have a check that makes sure that your internal links don't contain your focus keyphrase. Linking with your focus keyphrase to another page would tell Google that this other page is important for that term. You don't want to do that, because you don't want to compete with yourself.

Meta description

Another thing the plugin's SEO analysis gives feedback on is your meta description. It checks whether your meta description has the right length, and whether or not it contains the focus keyphrase. After all, visitors should see right away what your page is about when they read your meta description.

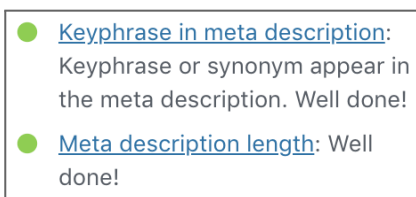


Image 7: Feedback on meta description

SEO title and slug

Lastly, Yoast SEO gives you feedback on the length of your SEO title and lets you know whether it is too short or too long to be fully shown in the search results. We also make sure that your slug contains your focus keyphrase.

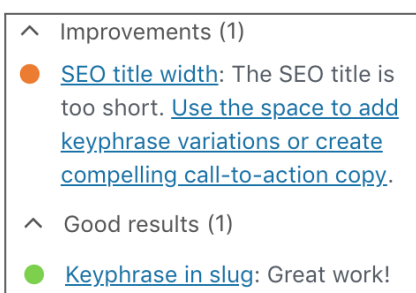


Image 8: Feedback on SEO title and slug

Images

Images, when used well, often contribute to a positive user experience. In addition, adding proper alt attributes to your images can improve the accessibility of your content and help search engines understand what an image is about. That's why we've created two separate image assessments:

- An **Image presence assessment**: checks whether you've added at least one image to your post. For product pages we raise the bar a bit: you should add multiple images to a product page to receive a green bullet.
- An **Image alt attribute assessment**: checks whether at least one image in the post has got an alternative text containing the focus keyphrase or a synonym.

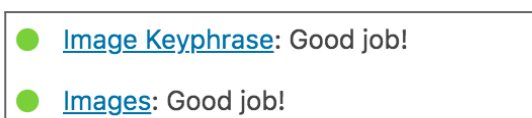


Image 9: Feedback on the use of images

H1 heading

Finally, we will consider two additional checks related to the H1 heading, which is the main heading of your post or page.

Title check (Premium)

The title assessment, which is only available in the Premium analysis, checks whether your text includes an H1 heading. If this title is missing, it can cause problems such as missing SEO data and strange-looking pages. This can be confusing for both readers and search engines, potentially leading to readers leaving your site and search engines struggling to display your content properly.

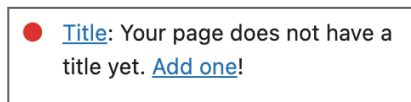


Image 10: Title check (Premium)

Single title check

In addition to the title assessment, the plugin also includes the *single* title assessment. If the body of your text contains more than one H1 heading, the plugin will show you a warning. Solving this is important for two reasons: multiple H1 headings can be confusing for both readers and search engines, and they make your text less accessible, for example for people who use screen readers. They use headings to navigate your content. Fixing this issue is a quick and easy process, so it is definitely worth doing.

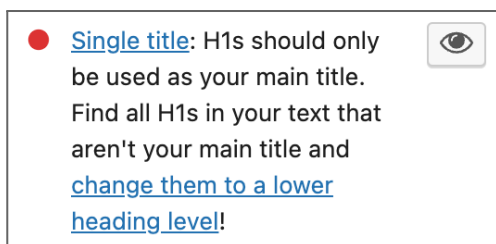


Image 11: Single title check

Key takeaways

- The SEO analysis gives you feedback on different aspects of your text, like the length, the focus keyphrase, and whether or not your text contains enough links.