Yoast SEO meta box and sidebar

We've shown you how to find the Yoast SEO functionalities in the WordPress back end in the previous lesson. In this lesson, we'll look at the settings in the Yoast SEO meta box and the Yoast SEO sidebar in detail. There is only one difference between the settings in the meta box and the sidebar. Namely, the sidebar in Yoast SEO Premium contains the Internal linking suggestions tool, while the meta box does not. In this lesson, we follow the order of the settings in the Yoast SEO sidebar.

Table of contents

Learning objectives
1. The content analysis
2. Focus keyphrase and SEO analysis
3. Add related keyphrases
4. Readability and Inclusive language analysis
5. Internal linking suggestions (Premium only)
6. Search appearance
7. Social media appearance
8. Schema tab
9. Advanced tab
10. Cornerstone content
11. Insights (Premium only)
12. Yoast structured data blocks
    - What is structured data?
    - How to add Yoast structured data blocks
    - Yoast Estimated reading time block (Premium only)
    - Yoast How-To block
    - Yoast FAQ block

Key takeaways

Learning objectives

- Navigate to and understand the features of the Yoast SEO sidebar
- Understand and access the features of the Yoast SEO meta box

1. The content analysis

You'll find our readability and SEO analysis in the Yoast SEO meta box (Image 1) and the Yoast SEO sidebar (Image 2). Let's quickly refresh your memory on where to look. If you're working on your post or page in the editor, then scroll down until you see the Yoast SEO meta box. If you want to use the Yoast SEO sidebar, click on the Yoast icon in your screen's upper right corner (Image 2).

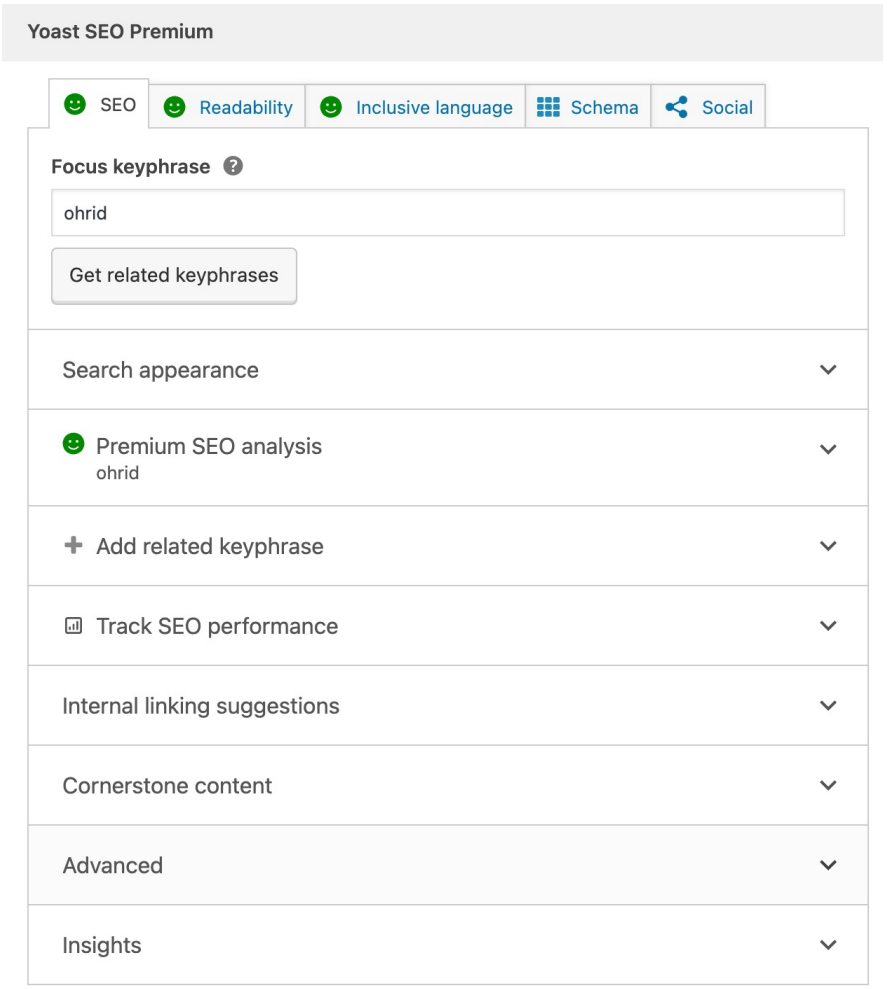


Image 1: The Yoast SEO meta box

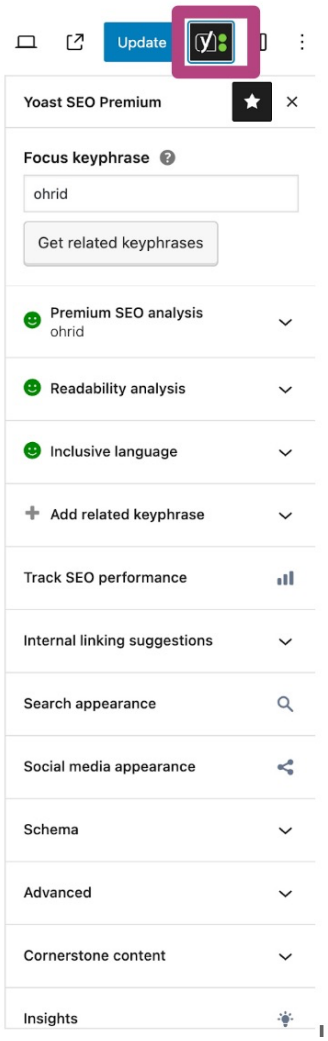


Image 2: The Yoast SEO sidebar

2. Focus keyphrase and SEO analysis

To get the most out of the SEO analysis, you'll have to enter a focus keyphrase first. The focus keyphrase is the phrase you'd most like your post to rank for. In Image 3, you can see that we entered the focus keyphrase [canonical urls]. Now, the plugin can run some useful SEO checks and provide you with real-time feedback. Quite a few of these assessments are keyphrase-based. For example, we check whether you've used your keyphrase in your introduction, title, subheadings, and meta description. You'll also get feedback on the internal and external links you've added, and other aspects of your meta description. If you use Yoast SEO Premium, you can enter related keyphrases and synonyms as well.

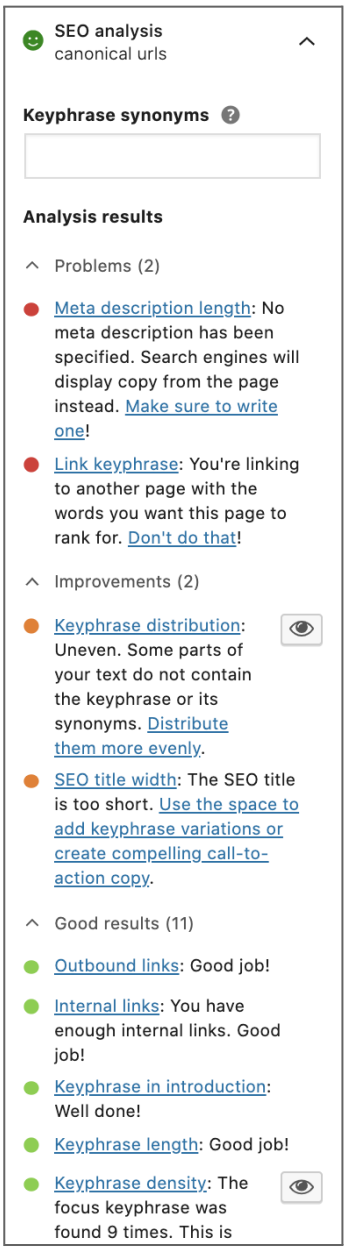


Image 3: The SEO analysis

3. Add related keyphrases

The related keyphrase feature in Yoast SEO is available in partnership with Semrush.With this feature, you can:

- Get related keyphrases that are similar to your query (for your country of choice).
- Get volume and trend data for every one of these keyphrases.
- Easily add those keyphrases as related keywords (Yoast SEO Premium only).
- Uncover new profitable keyphrase ideas for your content.

All Yoast SEO users get access to this feature, but premium users get the added benefit of using it in the related keyphrase feature and optimize the content for multiple keyphrases and synonyms (Image 4). You can add the relevant keyphrases you find with a simple click of the button.

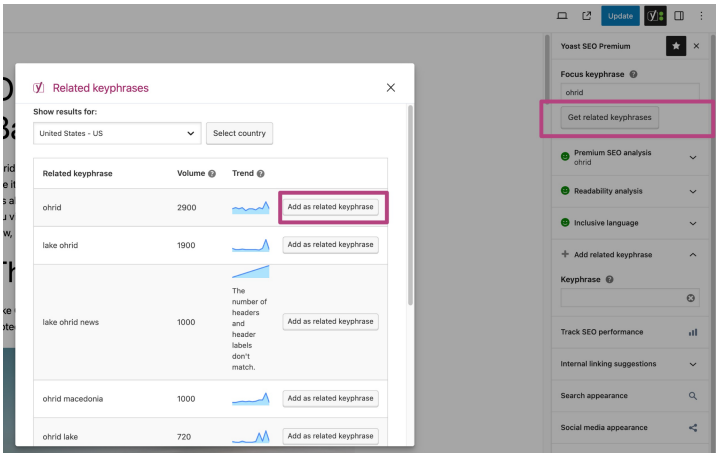


Image 4: Adding a related keyphrase in Yoast SEO Premium

4. Readability and Inclusive language analysis

Like the SEO analysis, the Readability analysis provides real-time feedback, so you can write your post and consult the feedback simultaneously. By following the advice, you can make your text easier to read and understand. The plugin checks, for example, whether you use enough transition words, what your Flesch Reading Ease score is, and whether your paragraphs and sentences are not too long.

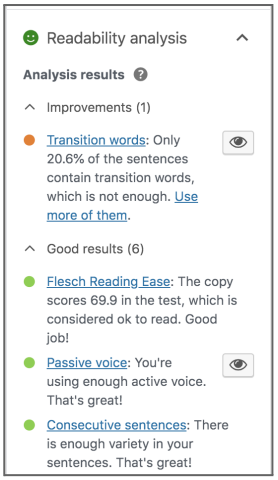


Image 5: The Readability analysis

If you have enabled the inclusive language analysis, you will also receive feedback on your text.

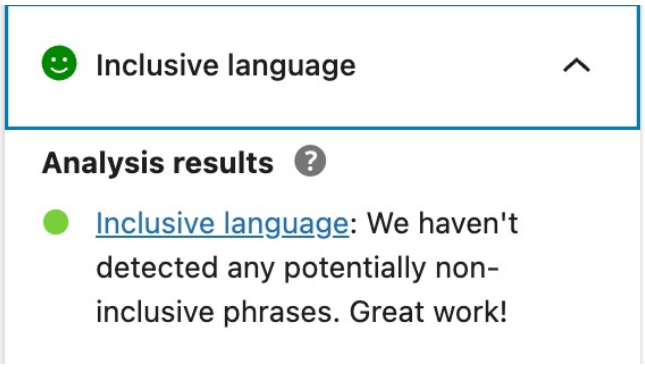


Image 6: The Inclusive language analysis

You might have noticed that the feedback in Yoast SEO contains question marks and eye buttons (Image 5). Click on the question marks, and you'll be taken to explanatory articles on yoast.com. If you click on the eye buttons, parts of your text will be highlighted. This makes it easier to find and improve specific sentences.

5. Internal linking suggestions (Premium only)

If you've upgraded to Yoast SEO Premium, you can use our internal linking tool. This tool is only visible in the Yoast SEO sidebar. Internal linking is one of the most important ways to optimize your pages.

Internal links contribute to a better site structure, easier crawling, and indexing of your pages. Now, you can add links by hand, but that takes a lot of time, and you have to rely on your memory. The internal linking tool takes a lot of work out of your hands. It uses the data of the Yoast Insights tool to track down posts that are related to the one you're writing. All those related posts are then presented to you in a list (image 7). The only thing left to do is select the articles you want to use and paste the links in your current post.

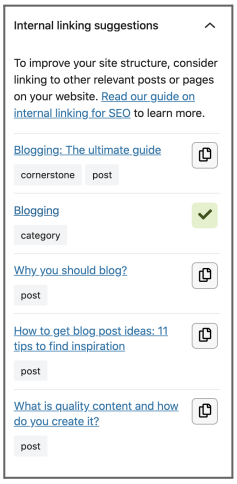


Image 7: Internal linking suggestions

6. Search appearance

The Search appearance helps you see through the eyes of search engine. It'll show you how your SEO title, URL, and meta description could look like in the search results (Image 8). By optimizing your snippet, you can make your search result more enticing to click on.

If you are using the Yoast SEO meta box, you can edit your snippet by clicking the "Edit snippet" button. If you are using the sidebar, all you need to do is click on the Google Preview tab. That will open a new overlay window with all the editing options.

By the way, the SEO analysis feedback can also help you start optimizing your snippet if you're unsure what to do. If you have upgraded to Yoast SEO Premium, you can also generate titles and meta descriptions by pressing the "Use AI" button.

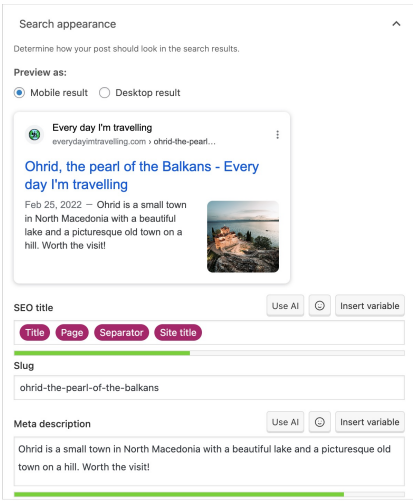


Image 8: The Search appearance helps you to optimize your snippet

7. Social media appearance

Yoast SEO lets you manage what your content looks like when it gets shared on social media. You can manually modify the image, title, and description that will be shown on social media like Facebook, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn and more. If you have Yoast SEO Premium, you will also get a preview of the changes you make, so you can check what your post will actually look like on these platforms. you will also be able to generate the title and meta description by pressing the "Use AI" button.

In the Yoast SEO meta box, you can find the Social media appearance by clicking the Social tab (Image 9). In the sidebar, the tab is also called Social media appearance. Click on the Facebook Preview tab, and an overlay window will appear. You can edit the social share preview of the post there. Below the social share preview is the Twitter Preview tab, which works in the same way.

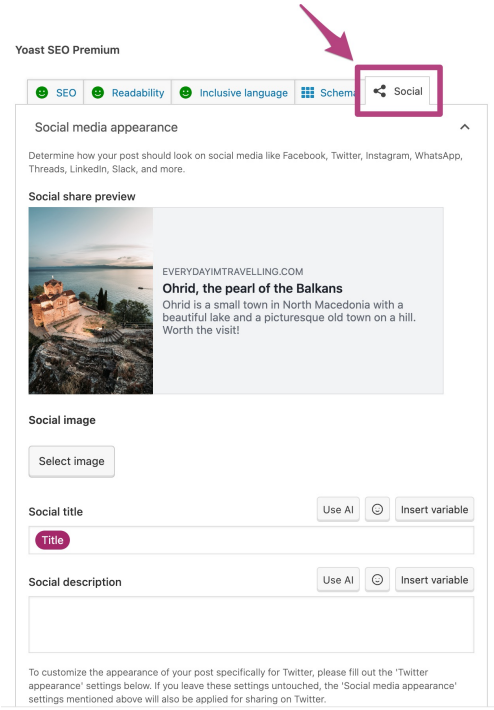


Image 9: The Social tab in the Yoast SEO meta box

8. Schema tab

Yoast SEO automatically describes your pages using schema.org. This helps search engines to understand your website and your content. By default, Yoast SEO describes your pages using WebPage schema and describes your posts by using Article schema. In most cases, you won't

need to change these default settings. However, if you want the description of your post or page to be more specific - for example, if your post is a NewsArticle or your page is a ContactPage - you can change your default settings in the Schema tab in the meta box (Image 10), or sidebar (Image 11).

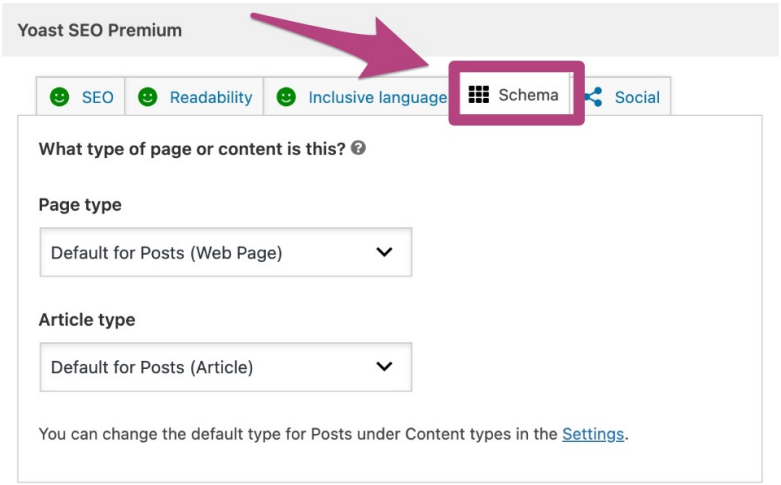


Image 10: The Schema tab in the Yoast SEO meta box

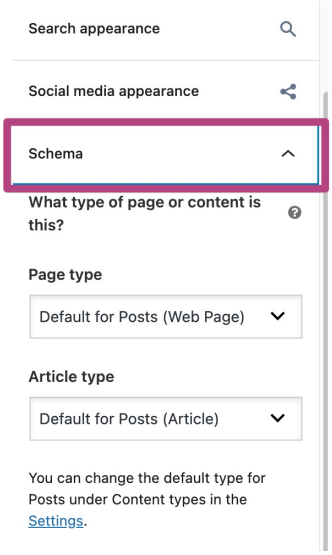


Image 11: The Schema tab in the Yoast SEO sidebar

9. Advanced tab

The Advanced tab has powerful functionalities, so you have to make sure you know what you're doing if you are using it. You can find it in the SEO tab of the Yoast SEO meta box (Image 12). In the sidebar, you will see the Advanced tab just below the Schema tab (Image 13).

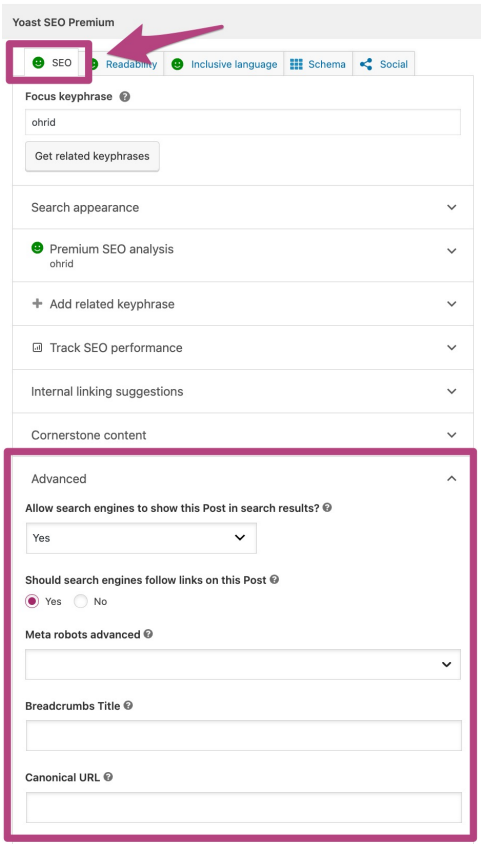


Image 12: The Advanced tab in the Yoast SEO meta box

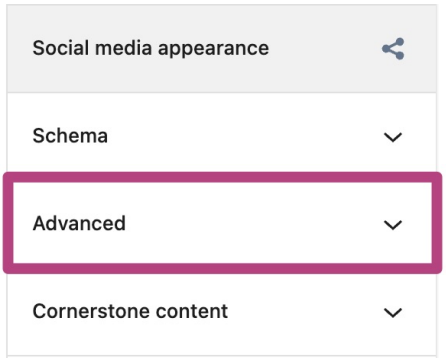


Image 13: The Advanced tab in the Yoast SEO sidebar

In the Advanced tab, you can determine whether search engines add your post or page to their index, thus determining whether they can appear on the search result pages. There are four settings in this tab:

1. **Allow search engines to show this Post in search results?**
   This setting determines whether search engine robots can index your post or page. If you set this to 'Yes,' the Google robots can index your post or page, so people will be able to find your post or page in search engines.

2. **Should search engines follow links on this Post?**

If you don't want Google to follow the links on your post or page, you can make sure of that here. You should only do this when you have good reasons not to want Google to index your article's links. This may be when you link to another site with poor content or when you add links to parts of your website you don't want to be indexed. In the latter case, you're just doing it to save Google from going there and give it more time to crawl more important parts of your site. Thus, you should primarily no-index pages you don't want Google to reach. With Yoast SEO, you can also determine whether you want search engines to follow individual links.

3. **Meta robots advanced**
   The advanced meta robots settings allow you to set the meta robots for this page or post to:
   - 'No Image Index' (you disallow search engines from crawling images on this page or post);
   - 'No Archive' (prevents the search engines from showing a cached copy of this page);
   - 'No Snippet' (prevents the search engines from showing a snippet of this page in the search results and prevents them from caching the page).

   By default, this field is empty, which indicates that the default settings are followed. So, if your site-wide default is set to index/follow (or if you've not set any specific or restrictive rules), then it should be equivalent to 'index/follow'.

4. **Canonical URL**
   The canonical link element has been introduced by Google to distinguish the 'original' page from derivative pages within your site carrying the same content. The same content on your website may be available on various URLs. To avoid confusing Google (and the user), you can tell search engines which URL contains the original content. You do this by adding a canonical URL that this post or page should point to. The Yoast SEO plugin automatically takes care of most of these cases, so don't forget to check out the course's bonus module to save yourself some time.

If you've enabled the Yoast SEO breadcrumbs in the Search Appearance settings, you'll find a fifth field in the Advanced tab. This field is called **Breadcrumbs Title**, and you can use it to enter a custom breadcrumbs title for your post or page.

10. Cornerstone content

In Yoast SEO, you can mark your most important posts as Cornerstone content. All you need to do is switch a toggle to On. As a result, the plugin will be stricter in the content analysis. That's because cornerstone articles are your most important articles. You want them to rank high, so you need to make sure that they are top-notch.

In the Yoast SEO meta box, the cornerstone content toggle is part of the SEO tab (image 14). In the sidebar, it has its own tab below the Advanced tab.

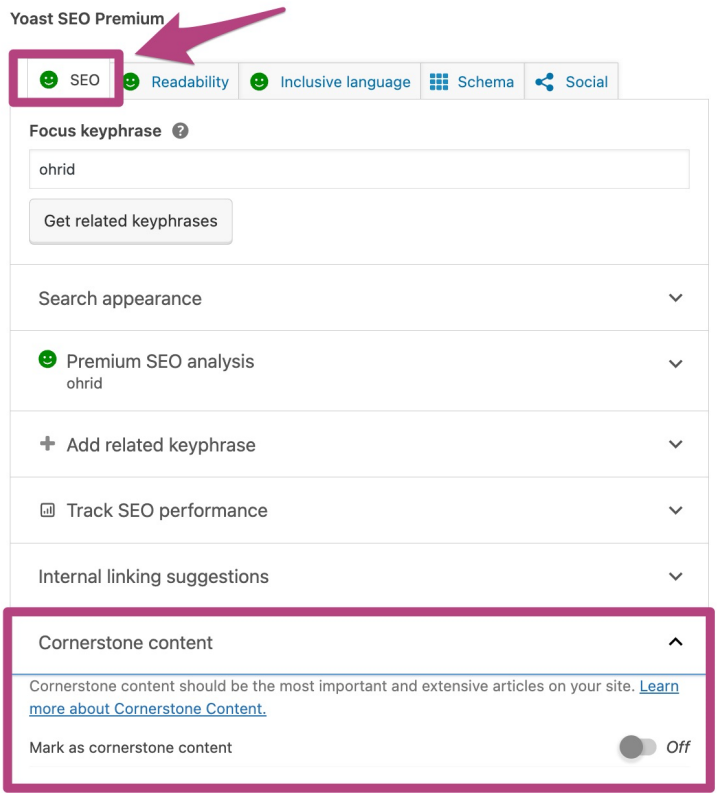


Image 14: The Advanced tab in the Yoast SEO sidebar

11. Insights (Premium only)

If you use Yoast SEO Premium, the second to last header you'll see in the Yoast SEO meta box, in the SEO tab, is called 'Insights' (Image 15). You can also find this tab at the bottom of the Yoast SEO sidebar.

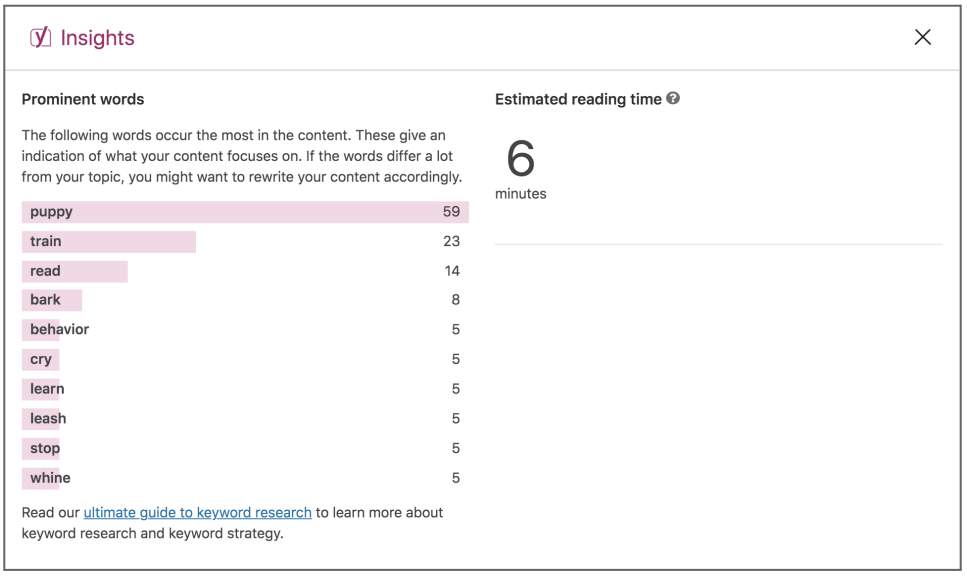


Image 15: Insights

In this box, we'll show you the words and word combinations that occur the most in your content. These words give you an indication of what your content focuses on. In addition, you will find the estimated reading time of your post or page. You can also display this reading time on your pages by using the Yoast Estimated reading time block. This will increase the user-friendliness of your pages.

12. Yoast structured data blocks

Currently, there are three Yoast Structured Data blocks available for WordPress: the How-To block, FAQ block, and the Estimated reading time block. But, before we go into them, let's shortly look at what structured data is.

What is structured data?

Structured data helps search engines to make sense of a website's content. The language used in structured data is called Schema.org. When you add structured data to your website, you help search engines better understand if your page is, for example, about a book, recipe, product or event. A search engine that understands your content may reward you with a lovely rich result, which may increase your click-through rate.

How to add Yoast structured data blocks

You can find the Yoast SEO blocks by clicking the + button in the block editor, and then scrolling down to the Yoast Structured Data Blocks heading (Image 16).

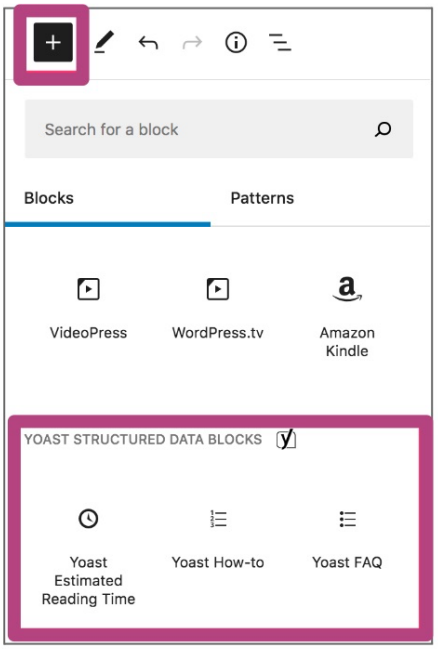


Image 16: The Yoast Structured Data Blocks

Yoast Estimated reading time block (Premium only)

Let's start with the Estimated reading time block, which is both super convenient and super easy. With this block, you can let your readers know how long it will take on average to read your text. This will make your pages more user-friendly. In addition, you can decide if you need to write more or trim down your writing.

Just select the block from the Yoast Structured Data blocks heading to add it to your post. You can add it anywhere you want. The plugin will do the rest: it will calculate the reading time automatically (Image 17). If you select the block and click the settings cog in the top-right corner, the block settings will automatically open. In the settings you can change the descriptive text and select whether you want to show the descriptive text and the icon.

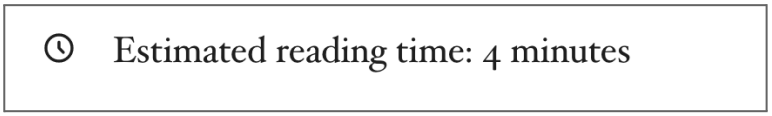


Image 17: The Yoast Estimated reading time block

Yoast How-To block

The Yoast How-To block is an easy way to add HowTo structured data to your WordPress site. When you use the block, it automatically adds the necessary code to your website that tells search engines that your content is a how-to guide.

Select the How-To block from the Yoast Structured Data blocks heading to add the block to your post. Once you add the block, you can start typing in the first steps of your guide (Image 18). The block also allows you to add a total time, a description, images, and multiple steps. For a detailed guide on how to use and test this block, read this article.

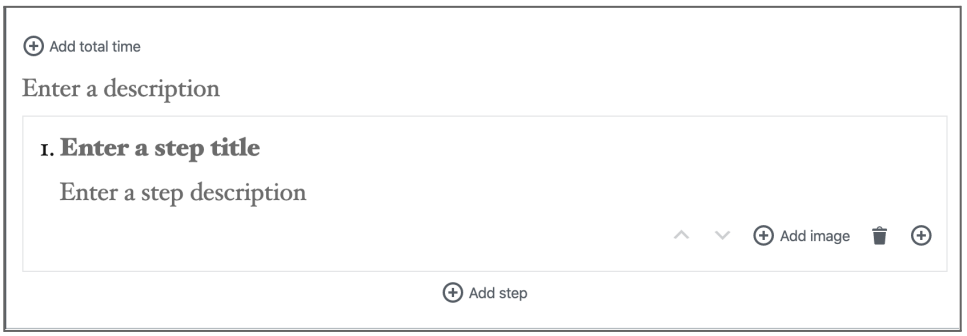


Image 18: The Yoast How-to block

Yoast FAQ block

Just like with the How-To block, the FAQ block also adds structured data to your webpage. In that way, search engines can understand that the page's content is about frequently asked questions.

Select the FAQ block from the Yoast Structured Data blocks heading to add the block to your post. Once you add it, you will be able to insert your questions and the answers in the appropriate boxes (Image 19). You can also add images to each answer, and move the questions and answers if necessary. To read more about the FAQ block, go to this article.

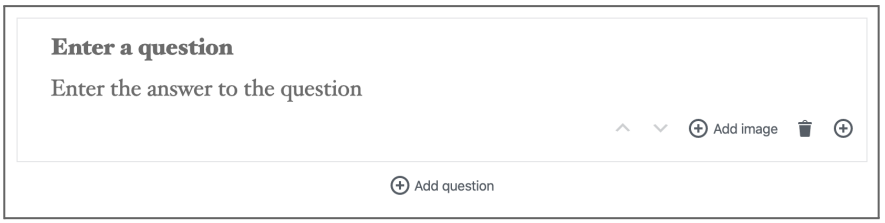


Image 19: The Yoast FAQ block

Key takeaways

- You know where all the available features are located in the Yoast SEO sidebar and Yoast SEO meta box
- You've learnt about the features that Yoast SEO offers to help you optimize your content