

Writer interview checklist

Writing roles usually run as a samples screening, a timed writing or editing test, then a discussion with the content lead or editor, and a short HR round on pay and joining date.

10 QUESTIONS TO PRACTISE OUT LOUD

1. Pick two samples from your portfolio and walk me through the brief behind each.

What it checks: Whether you understand that writing serves a goal, and can explain the audience, constraints and choices behind your work rather than just its topic.

2. Tell me about a time you nearly missed a writing deadline.

What it checks: Honesty and recovery: whether you communicate early, prioritise sensibly and learn something, rather than blaming others or hiding the problem.

3. What are your salary expectations for this content writer role?

What it checks: Whether you have researched pay for writers with your experience and niche, and can state a range without underselling your specialised skills.

4. How do you research a topic you know nothing about when you have one day?

What it checks: Research method and judgement about sources: whether you can become accurate quickly without copying competitors or relying on weak websites.

5. Describe a time a subject-matter expert would not give you the time you needed.

What it checks: Resourcefulness with busy stakeholders: whether you make it easy for experts to help you and still deliver accurate content.

6. What is your notice period, and would you do a short paid trial assignment before an offer?

What it checks: Availability and willingness to prove yourself, and whether you respect your current employer's notice terms.

7. You have 90 minutes for our writing test on a product brief. How will you use the time?

What it checks: Whether you plan before writing, manage time under pressure and leave room to edit, which predicts how you will handle real deadlines.

8. Tell me about a piece that did not perform, and what you changed.

What it checks: Whether you look at results honestly, diagnose the cause and improve, instead of treating publishing as the finish line.

9. Why do you want to write for our company in particular?

What it checks: Whether you studied the company's content and audience, and whether your interests genuinely match the kind of writing the job involves.

10. How do you write for search without making the piece awkward to read?

What it checks: Practical SEO knowledge: search intent, structure and keywords used naturally, and whether you put the reader ahead of keyword counts.

TIPS FOR THIS INTERVIEW

- Choose four to six samples that match the company's niche and formats, and be ready to explain the brief, goal and result behind each one.

- Practise a timed writing test at home: 60–90 minutes, one brief, including at least twenty minutes for editing and checking the brief again.
- Read at least ten of the company’s recent pieces and note their tone, structure and gaps, so you can suggest one specific improvement.
- Learn the basics of search intent, Google Search Console and one keyword tool, since most content roles now expect some SEO knowledge.

THE DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Confirm the time, venue or video link and the interviewer’s name
- ☐ Plan your route and leave time for traffic, or test your camera, microphone and internet
- ☐ Keep copies of your resume, ID proof, certificates and photographs in a folder
- ☐ Iron your clothes and charge your phone and laptop
- ☐ Do one final run-through of your introduction, then stop and rest

ON THE DAY

- ☐ Arrive 15 minutes early, or log in 5–10 minutes early for a video call
- ☐ Greet everyone politely, including the receptionist or coordinator
- ☐ Listen to the full question, pause, then answer in a clear structure
- ☐ Take brief notes of names and key points
- ☐ Ask your prepared questions and confirm the next steps before you leave