1. **Think about your audience and THEIR goals**
   - Start with a clearly defined subject/topical area for your guide
   - Guide users are often beginners - think about the best way to get them started. Think about what user goals this guide will assist.
   - If needed, have different section for advanced user
   - Think about sharing your guide with actual users for feedback and suggestions

2. **Think about and plan arrangement and flow of content**
   - Take time to plan out overall structure and content when creating a new guide or review when “adopting” an existing guide.
   - Help users know where to start. Begin with the most important resources or first steps in a process.
   - Avoid defaulting to alphabetical lists.
   - Add context where needed. Something that may be clear to you may not be to someone new to the topic.

3. **Voice, tone, & grammar**
   - Sound professional, but friendly
   - Use an active voice rather than passive.
   - Use pronouns. The user is **You**. The library is **We**. **You** are **I**.
   - Avoid jargon and acronyms if possible. Use words a new user would use and understand.

4. **Simplify - and then simplify some more:**
   - **Research studies** find people on average read 20-28% of a given webpage.
   - Users skim and scan - write clearly and simply. Be concise.
   - A “lean” page is less information for user to navigate - and for you to maintain.

5. **Break up/chunk content:**
   - Chunk content into manageable bits.
   - Avoid long paragraphs of content. Use lists.
   - Break up long lists. Humans don’t do well with long lists. Lists with more than 7 items may not get read.

6. **Content styling**
   - If you cut and paste from Word, or other documents - be sure to “paste without formatting” - otherwise it can bring in unwanted formatting code.
● Don’t use all caps, colors, highlights, etc. Stick with the defaults.
● Don’t use tables unless you really need to. On mobile they often format poorly. If you must use, ask web-lib for formatting help
● Do use defaults column widths (100, 75/25, 25/75, 25/50/25).

7. Parallelism
Our brains are very pattern-oriented. It’s easier to scan lists and headings when ideas and concepts are similar – and/or presented in a similar sentence structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No:</th>
<th>Yes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Members of the MIT community interested in borrowing library materials not held by the MIT Libraries should contact the Interlibrary Borrowing Service. Document Services lends original materials owned by the MIT Libraries to other institutions. It also provides photocopies, including copies of dissertations and theses. | Interlibrary Loans
● If you are a member of the MIT community interested in borrowing materials from other libraries, use our Interlibrary Borrowing Service.
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8. Tabs
● Keep tab titles short and parallel.
● Review your guide on a small screen (or narrow your browser window) and mobile to see how a given number of tabs look.

9. URL naming
● Use friendly, shortcut, and GET urls - they are easier to promote and remember.
  ○ shortcuts URLs on http://libraries.mit.edu/shortcuts. They won’t break if the real URL changes.
  ○ GET URLs for resources can be found via Barton or Vera

10. Test in mobile and across devices
● See how your guide looks on your phone, laptop vs. desktop, etc.