Voice & Tone Guide

With every piece of content that we publish, we aim to:

- Respect

  Treat readers with the respect they deserve. Put yourself in their shoes, and don't patronize them. Remember that they have other things to do. Be considerate and inclusive. Don't market at people; communicate with them.

- Educate

  Tell readers what they need to know, not just what we want to say. Give them the exact information they need, along with opportunities to learn more. Remember that you're the expert, and readers don't have access to everything you know.If you cannot read it in the first 5 sec, then chances are, the reader also would not have the patience to read through. So be precise.

- Guide

  Think of yourself as a tour guide for our readers. Whether you're leading them through any of our communication material, be it blog ,group, newsletters, emails etc. Communicate in a friendly and helpful way.

- Speak truth

  Understand TravelUR's place in our users' lives. Avoid dramatic storytelling and grandiose claims. Focus on our real strengths.

In order to achieve those goals, we make sure our content is:

- Clear

  Understand the topic you're writing about. Use simple words and sentences.

- Useful

  Before you start writing, ask yourself: What purpose does this serve? Who is going to read it? What do they need to know?

- Friendly

  Write like a human. Don't be afraid to break a few rules if it makes your writing more relatable. All of our content, from splashy homepage copy to system alerts, should be warm and human.

- Appropriate

  Write in a way that suits the situation. Just like you do in face-to-face conversations, adapt your tone depending on who you're writing to and what you're writing about. Talk about timeframes appropriately based on scenarios.

Example:

For a system error message, appropriate wordings might be:

- *"Folks! Sorry for the trouble. We have identified the issue and we are working on it to fix it! We appreciate your patience."*

We do not use time frames, like –"we will fix it ASAP" or " we will fix it shortly" , in these scenarios.

For scenarios like loading search results, we can use timeframes…
Appropriate wordings might be:

- *"Thank you for your patience. The page will load shortly! "*

VOICE & TONE

One way we write empowering content is by being aware of our voice and our tone. This section explains the difference between voice and tone.

What's the difference between voice and tone?

Think of it this way… You have the same voice all the time, but your tone changes. You might use one tone when you're out to dinner with your closest friends, and a different tone when you're in a meeting with your boss.

Your tone also changes depending on the emotional state of the person you're addressing. You wouldn't want to use the same tone of voice with someone who's scared or upset as you would with someone who's laughing.

The same is true for TravelUR. Our voice doesn't change much from day to day, but our tone changes all the time.

Voice

TravelUR's voice is human.

It's familiar, friendly, and straightforward. Our priority is explaining what TravelUR has to offer and helping our users get their work done , so they can get on with their lives. We want to educate people without patronizing or confusing them.

One way to think of our voice is to compare what it is to what it isn't.

TravelUR voice is:

- Straightforward, but not brutal
- Interestingly informative, but not boring with too much information
- Confident, but not cocky
- Smart, but inspiring
- Friendly, but not sloppy
- Helpful, but not overbearing
- Expert, but not bossy

Tone

Travelur's tone is usually informal, but it's always more important to be clear than entertaining. When you're writing, consider the reader's state of mind.

- Are they able to easily connect with the content?
- Are they curious about a post on our blog?
- Are they interested in our offers?
- Are they able to easily navigate through the site?
- Are they getting enough guidance and help with their travel needs?

Once you have an idea of their emotional state, you can adjust your tone accordingly.

TravelUR has a sense of humor, so feel free to be funny when it's appropriate and when it comes natural to you. But don't go out of your way to make a joke—forced humor can be worse than none at all. If you're unsure, leave the humor out.

Style Tips

Here are a few key elements of the way we write.

- Use active voice, avoid passive voice

- Avoid slang and jargon, write in plain English

- Write positively, use positive language rather than negative language

- In the case of issues or errors, be positive but with a straight face

  o Be very clear and precise in addressing the issue to the point and in simple natural language

Example of positive writing for a positive action:
When user makes friends with another new user, appropriate wordings of our tone might be:

- *"Hey! Joe Smith accepted your friend request. Now you have a new TravelUR buddy!"*

The wrong tone...

- *"Friend request accepted!"*

If user entered an incorrect password to sign in, our tone might be:

- *"Oh my! Looks like you may have a different password on record. Please reset your password"*

The wrong tone...

- *"Invalid Password. Error number 00001. Try using a valid pasword!"*

We do not use system jargons.

For Credit Card update notifications, our tone might be:

- *"Hey! Looks like your credit card information needs an update! Please renew your payment information so we can make your travel booking easy"*

The wrong tone…

- *"Expiration of credit card has occurred. Update payment preferences."*

Active Voice

In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action. It is more personal. In passive voice, the subject of the sentence has the action done to it.

Example:

If a user on TravelUR has 5 new users trying to connect with him/her, we'll send a notification that might say:

- *"Hey! You have 5 new TravelUR friends waiting to connect with you. Check them out!"*

- *"Marti logged into the account."*

Passive voice (Wrong):

- *"TravelUR updated with 5 new friend requests.."*

- *"The Account was logged into by Marti."*

Words like "was" and "by" may indicate that you're writing in passive voice. Scan for these words and rework sentences where they appear.

One exception is when you want to specifically emphasize the action over the subject. In some cases, this is fine.

- *"Your account was flagged by our abuse team."*

WRITING FOR BLOG POSTS

Blog-like posts are written by people from all over the company. It includes a Travelogue-esque style of format for travel guides, Itineraries, travel packages and more.

We follow these simple steps:

- **Guidelines** - When writing for the blog, follow the style points outlined in this Voice & Tone guide

- **Be casual, but smart** - This isn't a term paper, so there's no need to be stuffy. Drop some knowledge while casually engaging your readers with conversational language.

- **Be specific** - If you're writing about data, we are providing travel information, sharing travel ideas and basically helping our users to make informed travel decisions

- **Get to the point** - Get to the important stuff right away, and don't bury the kicker. Blog posts should be scan-able and easy to digest. Break up your paragraphs into short chunks of three or four sentences, and use subheads. Our users are busy, and we should always keep that in mind.

- **Make It conversational** - We want our blog to reflect this. Feel free to throw in a joke here and there, make it personal, make it conversational as if you are talking to our readers. Just don't overdo it.

- **Summarize the Post** – Give the reader a way to know the main gist of the blog post or article in a one to two short sentence paragraph located at the top of the post. This will give the reader an example of what the post is about without having to read the full post.

- **Use impressive pictures** - Include images in your blog posts when it makes sense. When talking about a location, add images with a personal touch and that makes an impression that would make the user want to visit the place.

Example:

Writing abut a hidden gem in Jaipur, we might say:

- *"You've read several articles about Jaipur, but nothing like the things to do and places to eat hidden gems you'll read about in this post!*

  Our first stop: The anokhi Museum of Handpainting*"*

We wouldn't say:

- *"We know you have read several articles on things to do and places to eat in Jaipur! Here we take you through some places, that we think are truly hidden gems in Jaipur!*

  1 – Anokhi Museum of Handpaintings."

Get to the point but be conversational!