

FREE RESOURCE

AI Citation Readiness Checklist

Make any article easy for AI answer engines to retrieve, trust, and cite.

Use this checklist before you publish. Each item is something AI answer engines (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Overviews, Gemini) and search crawlers look for when deciding what to quote. Tick every box and your page is structured to be cited — not just indexed.

Answer-first structure

- ☐ The first 1–2 sentences answer the main question directly.
- ☐ Each H2 section can stand alone as a quotable answer.
- ☐ One clear H1 states the page's core question or topic.
- ☐ Key facts appear as short, scannable sentences — not buried.

Evidence & trust

- ☐ At least 2 authoritative outbound sources are cited.
- ☐ Important claims include a number, date, or measurable fact.
- ☐ A named author with a real bio and expertise is shown.
- ☐ Limitations or 'it depends' nuance is stated where honest.

Machine-readable structure

- ☐ JSON-LD schema is present (Article or BlogPosting).
- ☐ FAQPage or HowTo schema marks up Q&A / step content.
- ☐ Title tag is 10–70 characters and descriptive.
- ☐ Meta description is 50–160 characters and summarises the answer.
- ☐ Canonical URL and Open Graph (title + image) are set.

Topical depth

- ☐ At least 3 internal links point to related pages.
- ☐ The page belongs to a clear topic cluster / hub.
- ☐ Related questions are answered or linked, not ignored.
- ☐ An /llms.txt file points AI crawlers to your key pages.

Final pass

- ☐ Read aloud: does the opening answer the title in one breath?
- ☐ Could a stranger quote one paragraph and be correct?
- ☐ Run it through the free CiteLab GEO Auditor for a score.

Audit any page free at citelab.uk/tools/geo-auditor