



5 Question Newsletter Bootcamp

Answer these honestly and messily. Run-ons, bullets, fragments — doesn't matter. Trust your instincts. Everything else (the name, the voice, what you actually write about) comes out of your answers.

Budget 45 minutes. (5-10 min for each Q) Write like you're talking. (Or actually talk and have an AI-notetaker capture your thoughts).

5 Questions

1. Who are you writing for?

Start concrete: job title, industry, level of experience, company size.

Now, picture one real person who fits this description. It could be a colleague, a person you've met once, or someone you follow. It could even be you.

2. What does that person care about?

What does their typical day look like? What are the biggest challenges they're up against in their role/industry? Key recurring dates/seasonal milestones? What do they need to know to be better at their job?

Who/what is their "nemesis" at work? Who's their champion?

3. What's your 'why?'

This is the *emotional* truth behind why you're writing, not your qualifications.

Maybe it's something in your industry you can't stand and want to change. Maybe it's something you love and want to champion. Maybe it's something you believe

is true, that you wish someone had told you, or that others are too afraid to say.
What fires you up?

4. What do you understand differently, deeply, or intuitively?

Not "what are you the world's leading expert in." You don't have to be the most experienced or the most contrarian person in the room. This is about your unique vantage point: what you see from where you sit.

What do you know like the back of your hand? What are you genuinely curious about? There's nothing too big or too small.

5. What are 4 topics you want to explore?

Now put it together: who you're writing for, what they care about, what fires you up, what you know.

What are 4 ideas you'd want to explore more deeply, that you're uniquely curious or knowledgeable about, and that the person you've identified might be interested in reading? (These ideas can be bad! You can list more!)

Bonus: Say it in a sentence

I write about _____

Dialing in your newsletter

Tips for the nitty gritty

Name

Remember: Your name won't make or break you. A few directions to brainstorm in — pick whichever one gets you going:

- **The experience of reading your newsletter.** Ie, "The Skimm." "Morning Brew."
- **A feeling, phrase, or word that's common in your industry.** Ie, "I Hate It Here." (An HR newsletter)

- **Something you aspire to.** I.e, "Contentment" (A content marketing newsletter)
- **A portmanteau of two words.** I.e, "Hospitalogy" (A healthcare newsletter)
- **Exactly what they're getting.** I.e, "Fintech Takes." (A fintech newsletter)
- **Personal.** I.e, "Lenny Letter" (A newsletter sent by Lenny Rachitsky)

Write a bunch. Say them out loud like you're introducing yourself.

Format

Think about who you're writing to, what you're writing about, and what formats you read most regularly.

A basic structure to get started:

- Intro (greet the reader)
- Main content (a single essay or bite-sized stories)
- Just for fun (Optional bonus content, miscellaneous links, or other fun palate cleanser to leave your reader with a smile)
- Sign off (say farewell to the reader)

Voice and Tone

You don't need to have this crystallized when you start writing. You'll find it as you go.

Tip: Picture a trusted colleague. Not someone you're trying to impress — someone you can talk to in good faith about the real frustrations and joys of the job.

That's your voice.

Anti-voice: what buzzwords or jargon do you absolutely hate? What do you *never* want to sound like?

"Is it good?"

Writing is subjective. For now, let's replace this with another question: "***Is this true?***" Not just factually, but emotionally.

A two-part gut check for any draft:

Read it out loud. Does it sound like you? Does it sound natural? Is it clear?

Would you be excited to send this to a friend? Not a stranger, not a prospect; a friend who's already rooting for you.

What Happens Next

Fill this out on your own, then bring it to office hours and we'll pressure-test it together.

Bring your five answers, your name ideas, and whichever topics you can't stop thinking about.