What is AIDA?

Let’s start by breaking it down into its fundamental pieces.

A = Attention

I = Interest

D = Desire

A = Action

If you follow AIDA in a piece that you write, you guide consumers along the experience funnel. You start by grabbing their attention, and getting them engaged, curious, or excited enough to keep reading. Then you build their interest in what you have to offer, to the point that they start to relate this potential.

At this point, you begin to stir their desire. The goal is to get them to want to purchase a product, have an experience, or make a big step in their lives. Finally, you push them over the tipping point so that they actually take whatever action it is that you highlighted.

AIDA offers a coherent framework for writers to follow, and increases the chances of getting the desired response.

Breaking down the AIDA framework for content creation

By finding guidelines to follow at the individual content level, you’ll develop a process that will increase the effectiveness of your writing

A = Attention

The first hurdle for any piece of writing is to capture the reader’s attention. To get their attention, you first have to start with a concept that’s deeply relevant and timely to the audience that you’re trying to reach. Here are some questions that you can start to ask yourself when you’re in the planning stages to help write an attention-grabber:

Who is reading this piece? If I had to develop a persona to describe them, what would they look like? Gender, location, family status, employment, income, interests, etc.

What is their most pressing problem relating to the topic that I’m writing about? What keeps them up at night or makes them sick to their stomach when they think of a specific issue?

What kind of solution is this piece offering to their problem? Is it the introduction to an idea that could shift the way that they think about their lives, or a product that they can go out and buy? How, specifically, will it solve their issue?

How does my audience talk about their problems? What are powerful words or concepts that would immediately create resonance?

On that last point, let me give you an example. If you’re selling a skateboard to enthusiasts and you want to capture their attention, it’s important that you understand their internal language and
approach. If your audience self identifies as “skater kids,” using that term in your headline or lead could capture their attention immediately.

Your headline (or a subject in case of a letter) and your lead paragraph are the two most important areas to capturing your prospect’s attention. Always audit these areas first when trying to determine why people aren’t sticking around to read your content.

**I = Interest**

Once you’ve hooked a reader, it’s time to really help them see how well you understand their problem. This links back to the idea of having a strong profile of who you’re targeting with your products or services before diving into the selling. Specifically, if you take a situation like a health problem, warming up a prospect’s interest starts by showing that you understand their issues.

It’s then time to build your argument or story. For example, you may have done research into the specifics of the condition and know of reputable medical studies that suggest little known treatments or successful cures. You may have personal experience that you can use to create more of a rapport with your reader.

The key here is to use information, persuasion techniques, and as much proof as you can find to hold the reader’s attention once you’ve captured it. By deepening the connection that you have with the prospect and crafting a piece that informs, educates, and entertains them around one of their most pressing problems, you’ll be well on your way to sparking an emotional reaction.

**D = Desire**

It is tricky to understand the difference between interest and desire. Think about the idea of changing jobs, if you’re an employee. Maybe you hear about an alternative career and you start to wonder about it. You read some articles online, do research on open positions, and even talk to a few people in the field. As you gather more info, you start to realize what a perfect fit it is. The pay is great, the hours are right, the content is interesting.

At some point, there’s a shift in your mind and you start to imagine yourself in that position. You move from thinking that a career in writing or engineering sounds interesting, to actually wanting to be a writer or engineer. It’s about that moment of the shift, from intellectual curiosity to making the decision “I want that for myself.” That’s at the heart of desire.

**A = Action**

Once you’ve stirred up enough desire to get your prospect thinking about taking action, it’s time to close the deal. This focuses primarily on using a powerful call to action. Calls to action are simple statements that let readers know what you want them to do next: buy a product, sign up for a newsletter, watch a video, or share your tweets for example.

Everything you write should have a call to action – after all, you’re creating a piece of content for a specific reason. So let the reader know what that reason is! Also think about the design aspects of your calls to action: does your layout, button structure, and more support your prospect’s taking action? If it’s at all difficult to figure out how to take the next step, people often won’t.