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Free Cheat sheet

Search Intent Cheat Sheet

Four intents, the page each one needs, and a 60-second test that tells you which one Google expects.

A one-page guide to search intent: what the searcher wants, which page to build for it, and how to check page one before you write. Use it before every new page so you stop writing recipes when you sell machines.



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How to use it

1. Read the table once. It's the whole idea.
 2. Before you write any page, run the 60-second test in section 2.
 3. Use section 4 to fix the money pages you already have.
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The 4 intents, with one coffee example

Same topic, four different people. My simple version uses learn, compare, visit and buy.

Google's own Search Quality Rater Guidelines use Know, Do, Website and Visit-in-person; the mapping is in the last column.

Intent	Example search	What they want	Page to build	Google's rater term
Learn	how to make cold brew	An answer or a how-to	Guide, explainer, how-to with steps	Know (Know Simple for one-fact answers)
Compare	best coffee beans	Options side by side before deciding	List, comparison, 'X vs Y' page	Know or Do (the guidelines say the line is blurry)
Visit	cafe near me	A place to go now	Location page + Google Business Profile	Visit-in-person
Buy	buy espresso machine	To pay or book	Product, service or pricing page	Do
Go to a site	starbucks menu	One specific website	Your homepage or that exact page	Website

The 60-second test: let page one tell you

Google already shows you the intent it expects. Read it before you write.

1**1. Search the keyword in an incognito window**

Set your location to where your customers are if it's a local service.

2**2. Count the page types in the top 10**

Guides, lists, product or service pages, a map pack, videos. Write the count down, like '6 guides, 3 lists, 1 shop'.

3**3. Check the extras on the page**

A map pack means visit intent. Shopping results mean buy intent. A People also ask box and an AI Overview usually mean learn intent.

4**4. Build the type that wins**

If 7 of 10 are guides, a service page will struggle there. Build the guide, then link it to your service page.

Mixed intent: when page one is split

- ☐ **If results are split, pick the intent closest to a sale you can make.**

Practical advice. A split page one means Google isn't sure, so either type can rank. Choose the one that brings customers.

- ☐ **Answer the learn question at the top of a buy page.**

A two-line answer first, then the offer. You serve both people on one page.

- ☐ **Don't build two pages for the same search.**

They compete with each other. One strong page beats two half pages.

- ☐ **Recheck page one every few months.**

Intent can shift, for example around seasons or news.

Fix intent on your money pages

- ☐ **Your service page targets a buy or visit search, not a 'what is' search.**

'What is' searchers want to learn. They read and leave.

- ☐ **Price, area served and how to book are visible without scrolling far.**

That's what buy and visit searchers came for.

- ☐ **Every guide links to the service page it relates to.**

Learners become buyers later. Give them the path.

- ☐ **Your homepage isn't trying to rank for ten different searches.**

One page, one main job. Give each service its own page.

- ☐ **Local business: Google Business Profile is complete.**

'Near me' searches show the map pack before normal results.

Sources

- Google Search Quality Rater Guidelines (September 11, 2025), section 12.7 Understanding user intent — <https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/guidelines.raterhub.com/en//searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf>
- Google Search Central: SEO Starter Guide — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide>
- Google Search Central: AI features and your website — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features>

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