SEARCH · WRITING · PROOF

How Google Search is changing to AI search, and how newsrooms need to change their writing

The proof that Search now answers with sections, not pages. What an Answer First Block is and why it is 40 to 60 words. Two full article rewrites, CNN and The New York Times, with every component explained.

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METHOD NOTE · NOVEMBER 25, 2026

THE TWO ARTICLES CNN Politics · The New York Times, both Nov 23, 2026
THE EVIDENCE Google Search Central · Google Gemini 4 Hydrogen announcement · Microsoft Bing index note
THE OUTCOME Two full rewrites, every element explained, one checklist

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PART ONE

Search became an answering engine. Here’s the proof

Not a forecast. Not a vendor claim. Five dated announcements from Google, in order, showing how the results page turned into a page that writes an answer, then the one consequence that changes how a newsroom writes.

THE RECORD

Two years, five steps

2024

AI Overviews launch in Search.

A generated summary above the ordinary links. The first time Search wrote an answer instead of only listing pages.

MAR 2025

AI Mode enters testing.

Google describes it as handling questions that “might have previously taken multiple searches”.

MAY 2025

AI Mode rolls out in the US.

Google names the mechanism: query fan-out, breaking a question into subtopics and issuing “a multitude of queries simultaneously”.

MAY 2026

AI Mode passes one billion monthly users.

Queries “more than doubling every quarter”. Gemini 3.5 Flash becomes the default model in AI Mode for everyone, globally.

NOV 2026

Gemini 4 Hydrogen goes into Search for all users.

“The biggest model upgrade to Search yet”, supercharging fan-out and returning more structured answers.

> Every date above is Google’s own, not an estimate. Sources listed on the last page.

THE NUMBERS

This is not an experiment

VERBATIM · GOOGLE I/O, MAY 19, 2026

“Just one year after its debut, AI Mode has surpassed one billion monthly users, with queries more than doubling every quarter since launch.”

Google, “Powerful AI, right in Search”, May 19, 2026.

One billion

Monthly AI Mode users, one year after launch.

Every quarter

How often AI Mode query volume has more than doubled since launch.

25 years

The last time Google changed the Search box this much, it says. That was May 2026.

All users

Who has Hydrogen in Search since November 12, 2026. Not a beta. Not a Labs tab.

THE POINT MOST PEOPLE MISS

This is not an AEO play. It is a Search play

The obvious reading of all this is that a publisher should optimise for AI answers. That reading is too narrow, and it puts the work in the wrong place.

Hydrogen is not a separate product sitting beside Google Search. It is the model inside Search. The same upgrade governs what happens in AI Mode, in AI Overviews, and in the ordinary results underneath them. Google's own framing is that AI Mode capabilities "graduate" into the core Search experience over time.

So the writing has to satisfy three readers at once: the person scanning ranked links, the person reading an AI Overview summary, and the person holding a conversation with AI Mode. One article, three entry points, no separate version for each.

> Write for the answer, and the ranking follows. Write only for the ranking, and the answer passes you by.

What makes this practical is that the fix is the same in all three cases: put the answer where it can be found, and make it complete enough to be used alone.

WHAT ACTUALLY CHANGED

Then, and now

	SEARCH, 2023	SEARCH, 2026
The query	Keywords, one intent	Full questions, several intents in one
The mechanism	One query, one ranked list	Several background searches, run at once
The output	Ten blue links	An answer, with links, tables and tools
What earns the click	The page that ranks	The page that ranks, and the section that answers
What earns the citation	Not applicable	The block that survives being lifted
The failure mode	Ranking on page four	A good page whose sections cannot be quoted alone

> The failure mode in the last row is new, and it is the one this document exists to fix. It is not a ranking problem. It is a sentence problem.

PART TWO

Background

Two articles, the same event, the same day, one from CNN, one from The New York Times. Before any method, you need to see what they actually published, and what changed in Search to make the method necessary.

Part one established the shift and its proof. Part two sets out the two source articles and the mechanism behind the change. Part three defines the seven elements and takes the Answer First Block apart. Part four assembles and checks the whole article. Part five rebuilds both articles in full, with every component explained. Part six gives the argument in brief, the checklist, the pilot and the limits.

THE TWO ARTICLES

The material

Read these two links before the rest of the document. Every rewrite in Part five is traceable to one of them, and nothing is added that they do not contain.

Source one

“Inside the Trump pressure campaign that restored Jensen Huang as Nvidia’s CEO”, CNN Politics. Published November 23, 2026.

edition.cnn.com/2026/11/23/politics/trump-administration-jensen-huang-reinstated

Accessed in full. Approximately 1,500 words. Reported by a team, with contributions from Jennifer Hansler, Kylie Atwood, Evan Perez and Katie Bo Lillis.

Source two

“With Jensen Huang’s Return as C.E.O., Trump Effectively Overrode Nvidia’s Board”, The New York Times. Published November 23, 2026. Reported by Kalley Huang, Jordyn Holman, Lauren Hirsch and Ryan Mac.

nytimes.com/2026/11/23/technology/jensen-huang-nvidia-board-trump.html

Read in full, approximately 900 words. The article was free to read on November 24, 2026 as part of The New York Times’s Top Stories free-to-read program, so the rewrite in Part five works from the complete text.

SAME FACTS

Same facts. Different first sentence

TEST	CNN	NEW YORK TIMES
First sentence	“President Donald Trump had been stewing for days over the US stock market’s deepening sell-off…”	“Six days ago, Harvey C. Jones, the chair of Nvidia, said the chip maker’s 10-member board ‘does not intend to reinstate’ Jensen Huang…”
Starts with	Mood, then decision	A contradiction, stated immediately
News arrives	Paragraph three	Paragraph one
Question it answers	What did the administration do, and how?	Was this a proper use of a board’s authority?
Carrier of analysis	Sources familiar with the matter	A named governance expert

> The Times already satisfies most of the format, which is why it is the more interesting test. The question is not whether it needs rescuing, it is what still has to move so that each section can be quoted on its own.

NOVEMBER 12, 2026

What Google shipped

Gemini 4 Hydrogen went into Search for all users, globally. Google calls it “the biggest model upgrade to Search yet”. Announced by Robby Stein, Vice President of Product for Search.

01 **Harder questions**

Search “can now handle even more nuanced and complicated questions”, including “questions with multiple parts, hard-to-understand typos, or highly specific requests.”

02 **More links**

Fan-out connects people “to a broader range of helpful links than before.”

03 **More visual answers**

“You’ll see more images, structured responses, comparison tables, and custom tools built for you.”

04 **More languages**

“more highly nuanced and helpful responses across all supported AI Mode languages.”

THE MECHANISM

One question. Several searches

VERBATIM · GOOGLE

“Hydrogen’s advanced reasoning supercharges our query fan-out technique in Search, connecting you to a broader range of helpful links than before.”

Google, November 12, 2026.

VERBATIM · GOOGLE SEARCH CENTRAL

Both AI Overviews and AI Mode “may use a query fan-out technique, issuing multiple related searches across subtopics and data sources, to develop a response.”

Google Search Central, “AI features and your website”.

Google splits one question into several smaller background searches, collects a passage for each, and combines them into one answer. A page can therefore be used for a sub-question the reader never typed, and can equally be skipped for the question in its own headline.

> Note the word “may”. Not every query fans out and not every search returns an AI answer. Google says AI Overviews appear only when they are additive, and often do not trigger.

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE

The path from a question to a citation

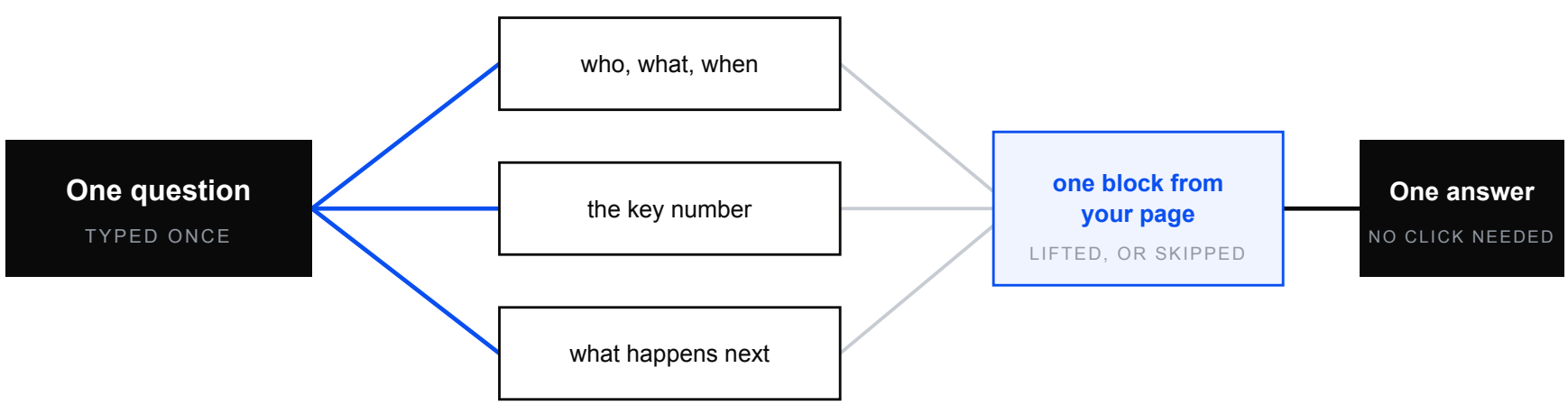


FIGURE 1. QUERY FAN-OUT, AS GOOGLE DESCRIBES IT

Why passages and not pages

Microsoft’s Bing team described the same mechanic in a post dated May 6, 2026: the unit of value for an AI answer is “discrete, supportable facts with clear provenance”, and when content is cut into passages, “chunking/transformations must preserve meaning and claims used in the answer”.

Discrete	The block must stand alone. Hence: name the subject in full, never open a section with a pronoun.
Supportable	The claim must be evidenced. Hence: exact numbers, real dates, no adjectives of scale.
Provenance	The source travels with the claim. Hence: attribution inside the sentence, not in a footnote.
Preserved	The meaning survives the cut. Hence: qualifiers such as “estimated” and “alleged” stay attached.

THE LIMIT

Search still ranks pages

Any account of this shift that says ranking is dead is wrong, and it will cost a newsroom money.

Google’s own guidance: “While specific optimization isn’t required for AI Overviews and AI Mode, all existing SEO fundamentals continue to be worthwhile.” A page must be indexed and eligible to show a snippet to appear as a supporting link. There are no additional technical requirements.

AI Overviews sit above ordinary results, and they only appear when Google’s systems decide they add something. Often they do not. Links still earn clicks, and a page that ranks badly can still be read by the people who find it another way.

What has changed is narrower and more useful: the AI layer reads the same crawl and the same index, but it selects sections rather than pages. So a publisher now has two jobs on one page. Be worth visiting, and be quotable at section level.

> Two jobs. Same page.

THE INFERENCE

Four steps, each a judgement

This is where documented behaviour ends and editorial choice begins. Every link in the chain is labelled, so nothing here can be mistaken for a Google instruction.

1 **A question can produce several searches**

Documented by Google. Not universal, not every query.

2 **Each search can be satisfied by a section, not a whole page**

Our reading of the mechanism, supported by Microsoft's account of grounding.

3 **So each section should answer one sub-question completely**

Editorial inference. This is the design decision, and it is ours.

4 **So the article should be built as a spine of answer blocks**

Our method. Testable, and unproven until somebody runs the test.

PART THREE

The elements, and the AFB

Seven elements make up an article in this format. One of them, the Answer First Block, appears twice: once as the lead, once under every subhead. This part defines each element and then takes the AFB apart in detail.

THE INVENTORY

Seven elements. One article

ELEMENT	WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT DOES
H1	The question or claim the article answers	Names the query. Contains the specific subject, not the theme.
Lead AFB	40 to 60 words, two or three sentences	Answers the H1 completely. If only this block is lifted, the reader still has the story.
H2	Five to eight descriptive subheads	One sub-question each, in the order the story flows.
Section AFB	One or two sentences under each H2	Answers that subhead before any detail appears.
H3	Rare, and only where an H2 genuinely splits	Opens with its own one-line answer. Never used for parallel results.
Evidence	Quotes, numbers, names, dates	Placed after the answer, with the source named in the sentence.
End matter	Dated Background, Questions left open, Reference	Makes recency legible and gives the next question somewhere to land.

ELEMENT ONE

The headline is a query

Both source articles are about the same event and both headlines miss the same thing: the interval. One names a genre. The other names a conclusion. Neither states what happened.

CNN, as published	**“Inside the Trump pressure campaign that restored Jensen Huang as Nvidia’s CEO”** “Inside the pressure campaign” names a kind of story. It does not say who did what, and nobody searches for a genre.
NYT, as published	**“With Jensen Huang’s Return as C.E.O., Trump Effectively Overrode Nvidia’s Board”** “Effectively overrode” is the judgement the reporting earns. In a headline it pre-empts the evidence a reader came for.
Both, rewritten	**“Trump personally pushed Nvidia’s board to reinstate Jensen Huang as chief executive, 11 days after he resigned”** **“Nvidia’s board brought back Jensen Huang as C.E.O. six days after saying it would not”**

> Two different numbers, because they are two different stories. Eleven days measures the resignation; six days measures the refusal. A reader searching either interval should land on the right page.

ELEMENT TWO · IN DEPTH

What an AFB is, exactly

A 40 to 60 word block placed right after the headline, before anything else. It answers the reader’s main question straight away, and it must make sense on its own if it is copied out of the article.

THE FORMULA

WHO + WHAT + WHERE + WHEN + KEY FACT / NUMBER

Sentence one: the main news, with the entity and the action. Sentence two: the most important number or detail. Sentence three, optional: status, impact, or what happens next.

Why each element is load-bearing

Who	Without an actor the block cannot be attributed. “The Supreme Court”, never “it”.
What	The action taken. Dismissed, allowed, reinstated, cut.
Where	The forum or place. A court ruling without a court is a rumour.
When	The full date. Without it an old fact reads as a current one, the commonest failure in machine-assembled answers.
Number	The magnitude. 11 days, 72 hours, six days. This is what makes the block evidence rather than summary.

ELEMENT TWO · THE RULES

Eight rules. No exceptions

01 **40 to 60 words, two or three sentences**

Floor set by the five elements. Ceiling set by the single idea.

02 **The headline’s main entity in sentence one**

“President Donald Trump personally called Nvidia’s board”, not “a decision was taken”.

03 **A real date, in full**

“Monday, November 23, 2026”, never “on Monday” or “this week”.

04 **Exact numbers with their units**

11 days. 72 hours. Six days. A 10-member board. Never “a matter of days”.

05 **Full names and titles on first mention**

“Harvey C. Jones, the chair”. “Attorney General Todd Blanche”. Never “Jones” alone.

06 **No pronoun opening, no “as mentioned below”**

“He called the board” has no referent once lifted. “President Donald Trump called” does.

07 **Facts only**

“Unprecedented” is CNN’s word and it stayed out of the block. A fact block cannot carry a verdict.

08 **Every fact in the block also appears in the body**

The 72 hours, the six days, the 10 members: all substantiated below.

ELEMENT TWO · WHAT KILLS IT

Six ways to fail

A background-first intro	“For years, the dispute had simmered across two States and four governments…” Nobody lifted that. Nothing was asked of it.
A teaser	“Know what happened next.” The article is not a trailer and the block is not a hook.
Repeating the headline verbatim	Spends words without adding information, and duplicates the chunk the query already matched.
Vague quantity where the figure exists	“Many people”, “huge fall”. Precision is the entire point of the block.
A quote as the first line	Answers in someone else’s words before establishing what happened, and usually needs the context the block was meant to supply.
Keyword stuffing	Repetition is not relevance. It degrades the sentence and does not help retrieval.

ELEMENT TWO · THE ARITHMETIC

Where the range actually comes from

Not from Google. Google publishes no word count for any of this. The range comes from what the block has to contain, counted from both ends.

BOUND	WORKING
Floor, 40	Five elements, each needing a subject and a predicate, in English, lands at 35 to 40 words before a single word is wasted. Under 40, something has been dropped.
Ceiling, 60	Past about 60 words a block starts carrying a second idea. A second idea is a second chunk competing with the first for the same retrieval.
Two sentences	Enough when the number is strong and the consequence is obvious.
Three sentences	Needed when status or consequence has to be stated explicitly.
Four sentences	Two ideas. Split them.

ELEMENT TWO · TWO THAT PASS

Same formula, two newsrooms

CNN · LEAD BLOCK · 58 WORDS

President Donald Trump personally called Nvidia’s board to push for the reinstatement of Jensen Huang as chief executive, 11 days after Huang resigned over an affair with a woman suspected of Chinese intelligence ties, according to people familiar with the matter. Vice President JD Vance ran the 72-hour push. Nvidia announced the reversal on Monday, November 23, 2026.

NEW YORK TIMES · LEAD BLOCK · 59 WORDS

Nvidia’s board voted unanimously on Monday, November 23, 2026, to reinstate Jensen Huang as chief executive, six days after Harvey C. Jones, the chair, said the 10-member board did not intend to bring him back. President Trump had pressed the directors and assured them Mr. Huang faced no criminal charges. The reversal drew immediate criticism from corporate governance experts.

CNN · SECTION BLOCK · 23 WORDS

Jensen Huang is due to testify before the Senate Banking Committee on Thursday, December 3, and Democrats take control of Congress in January.

ELEMENTS THREE AND FOUR

An AFB under every H2

The lead answers the headline. Each H2 answers one sub-question, and opens with its own block: one or two self-contained sentences, answer first, detail after.

> If the subhead asks a question, the first sentence answers it. Then evidence. Then qualification. Never the reverse.

Three things a section block must not do

Restate the lead	If the section block repeats the lead block, the H2 is the lead again and needs replacing with the next real question.
Open with a pronoun	“It said…” has no referent outside the page.
Promise detail	“Details below” is not an answer.

And the H2 itself: descriptive, in story order, one sub-question each. A question only where it reads naturally. Five to eight per article. Eleven sections means either two stories or one list.

ELEMENT FIVE

The honest answer: neither needed H3s

Both rewrites in Part five use H2s only. That is the correct outcome for these two articles, and it will be the correct outcome for most.

CNN’s structure is a sequence of moves; NYT’s is a sequence of standards. None of those sections contains two genuinely different subjects. Splitting any of them would produce two weaker blocks from one strong one.

Four H3s that should be a list	Vance pressed the board. Blanche briefed the president. Lutnick and Bessent clashed. Rubio had warned earlier. Four people, four roles, one question: who was involved.
What the rewrite does instead	One section names them in prose, in the order they acted, with each role attached. Each name still gets its own sentence, so each can still be lifted.

> Take the candidate H3 alone. If it would still be worth a subhead when it is the only subsection, it earns one. If it exists only because its siblings exist, it is a list item.

ELEMENT SIX

Evidence comes after the answer

Quotes, numbers and documents sit behind the answering sentence, with the source named inside the sentence that uses it.

Source at the foot	“The board reversed its position after pressure from the administration.” Sources: CNN, NYT, November 23.
Source in the sentence	“Nvidia’s board had publicly rejected a return four days before it reversed itself, calling Huang’s behavior ‘inconsistent with the company’s code of conduct’.”
Anonymous sourcing	“according to people familiar with the matter”. Kept, moved into sentence one of the block.
Corporate statement	“We have every confidence in Jensen,” Mr. Jones said in a statement. Kept verbatim, with the speaker named.
A refusal to answer	Blanche declined to say whether Huang was cleared. Reported as a refusal, not filled in.

> A number with no source in its own sentence cannot travel. Provenance in a footnote is provenance that stayed behind.

THE CRAFT LAYER

Five habits in the sentence

Name the subject in full	CNN’s opening names “President Donald Trump”. The rewrite opens the same way. It never opens “He”.
One fact per sentence	“Vice President JD Vance led the effort over 72 hours.” One fact. The next sentence adds the person he coordinated with.
Two to four sentences per paragraph	The Justice Department material runs three paragraphs: the finding, the subject of the investigation, then the refusal to confirm a clearance.
Lists for parallel facts	The Cabinet roles are not a list, because they are a quarrel. The dated timeline is a list, because dates are genuinely parallel.
Define jargon once	A fiduciary duty, the Entity List, C.E.O. Each is explained or spelled out at first use, so the definition travels with the word.

ELEMENT SEVEN

Three sections at the end

01 **Background timeline, dated**

Every entry carries a date, in order. Recency becomes legible inside the text instead of in the dateline.

02 **Questions left open**

What is still unknown, stated as questions. This is where the reader’s next search lands, and it keeps the article honest about the limits of the reporting.

03 **Reference list**

Source links. The evidence trail, for readers and for editors.

> “Questions left open” is the only element with no counterpart in conventional news writing. A fan-out answer is often followed by a second question, and the article should not pretend to have answered it.

PART FOUR

The whole article

Part three defined the parts. This part assembles them: the order they are built in, what the finished shape looks like, and the decisions that determine it before a single sentence is drafted.

THE FINISHED SHAPE

Top to bottom, once

POSITION	WHAT SITS THERE	LENGTH
Headline	Claim with the subject in it	One line
Lead AFB	Who, what, where, when, number	40 to 60 words
H2 one	The first sub-question	Subhead
Block	The answer to that sub-question	1 to 2 sentences
Body	Evidence, quotes, qualification	2 to 5 paragraphs
H2 two to eight	The same pattern, in story order	Repeat
H3	Only where an H2 genuinely splits	Rare
Background	Dated timeline	5 to 10 entries
Questions left open	What the reporting cannot answer	3 to 5 items
Reference	Source links	All sources

> Everything between the lead and the Background repeats one pattern. Once a writer sees that the article is the same block eight times, the format stops feeling like a constraint.

BUILD IT IN THIS ORDER

Eight moves, in sequence

The order matters. Most drafts that fail, fail because the writer started at sentence one instead of at step two.

00 **Pin the facts**

Every date, figure, name and title, each against its source. Convert relative dates to absolute ones now.

01 **Write the H1 as a claim**

Actor, action, outcome. If it cannot be phrased as a search, it names nothing.

02 **Map the sub-questions**

Five to eight, in the order the story flows. This is the fan-out map, and the step that decides the article.

03 **Write the lead AFB. Count it**

40 to 60 words. Do not pad to sixty, do not cut a number to get under forty.

04 **Write one block under each H2**

Answer first. These eight blocks are the article; everything else is support.

05 **Decide H3 or list, per section**

The split test. Different subjects earn H3s; parallel results become labelled lines.

06 **Place the evidence**

Quotes, numbers, documents, each with its source inside the sentence.

07 **Close with the three standing sections**

Dated Background, Questions left open, Reference.

A DECISION MADE BEFORE DRAFTING

What order, and why

The H2 sequence is not chronology. It is the order a reader’s questions arrive, which is usually close to the order a reporter’s did.

Actor, then mechanism	CNN: Trump called the board, then Vance ran the 72 hours, then the Justice Department position, then the price that started it.
Standard, then breach	NYT: the two votes, the assurance, what a board is for, then the expert who says what it cost.

The fault to watch, in my own rewrite

The NYT first section, “A unanimous vote, six days after a unanimous refusal”, repeats the lead’s contradiction before adding the detail that the resignation itself was unanimous. The fix is to cut the first sentence of that section and let the block carry the detail the lead did not.

> It only shows when you put the lead block and the first section block side by side and look for the repeated sentence.

PROPORTION

How long is each part

The format does not flatten both stories to one length. It proportions the same skeleton differently, which is why the two rewrites read so unlike each other.

CNN	The pressure campaign carries the weight: who called whom, in what order, and what each official said. The Justice Department section is three paragraphs. The stock price gets one.
NYT	The standard carries the weight. The two votes are two sentences. The fiduciary duty and the expert who applies it take the most space, because that is the argument.

The rule of the strongest block

One section in every article is the strongest material the reporting produced. In CNN it is the 72 hours of calls; in the Times it is the Yoffie quote. Find that block during the mapping step and give it room.

> A rewrite that gives every section equal length has not understood the story. It has only formatted it.

THE CHECK THAT REPLACES PROOFREADING

Paste the block on a blank page. Read it cold

With no headline above it and no paragraph before it. If it still answers a real question, correctly and completely, the block is finished. If it needs the paragraph above to make sense, it was never a block.

> Run it on the lead and on all eight sections. Nine blocks, nine reads. It takes four minutes and it catches what proofreading cannot, because proofreading reads in sequence and this reads in isolation.

NINE CHECKS BEFORE FILING

The filing gate

Mechanical on purpose, so that failing one is not a matter of taste.

#	CHECK	IF IT FAILS
1	Lead block is 40 to 60 words	Recount. Thirty-nine or sixty-one is a rewrite, not a trim.
2	The lead carries a number	Promote the decisive figure from the body into the block.
3	No relative dates anywhere	Replace “yesterday”, “last week”, “on Monday” with the date.
4	No section opens with a pronoun	Name the actor in full at the head of the block.
5	Every H2 has a block	Write it. A subhead without an answer is a label, not a section.
6	No section block repeats the lead	Replace the H2 with the next real question, or fold it into the lead.
7	Every fact in a block appears in the body	Add the substantiation, or cut the fact from the block.
8	Every source is named in its own sentence	Move the attribution out of the foot and into the line.
9	Every block passes the lift test	Rewrite until it reads cold, alone, with no headline above it.

> Check six catches most drafts. Compare the lead block and the first section block side by side before filing.

PART FIVE

Two articles, rebuilt in full

Same reporting, same voice, new arrival order. Each one is given three times: the block on its own with every component marked, the complete article, and a line-by-line account of why each change was made.

EXAMPLE ONE · THE PROBLEM

Three paragraphs before the news

This is how the CNN piece opens. Read it, then ask what a person searching “who reinstated Jensen Huang” would be given.

> AS PUBLISHED
>
> “President Donald Trump had been stewing for days over the US stock market’s deepening sell-off when he decided there was only one way to stop the slide: Put Jensen Huang back atop Nvidia.”
>
> CNN Politics, November 23, 2026.

The news itself, that Nvidia’s board reinstated Huang after a White House campaign, lands in the third paragraph. The attribution sits in the second. The board’s four-day-old refusal sits much further down.

As magazine writing this is defensible: the reader is drawn in, then told. As a set of quotable answers it is not, because for the first eight hundred words there is no block that answers a question on its own.

EXAMPLE ONE · THE LEAD AFB

Every word, accounted for

LEAD BLOCK · 58 WORDS

President Donald Trump personally called Nvidia’s board to push for the reinstatement of Jensen Huang as chief executive, 11 days after Huang resigned over an affair with a woman suspected of Chinese intelligence ties, according to people familiar with the matter. Vice President JD Vance ran the 72-hour push. Nvidia announced the reversal on Monday, November 23, 2026.

COMPONENT	WHERE IT SITS IN THE BLOCK
Who	President Donald Trump, full name and title. Nvidia’s board, named. Vice President JD Vance, named.
What	Personally called the board, pushing reinstatement. The reversal, announced.
Where	Nvidia’s board. Implicitly Washington, stated in the body.
When	Monday, November 23, 2026. Plus the interval, 11 days, which is the story.
Number	Two of them: 11 days from resignation, 72 hours of pressure.
Provenance	“according to people familiar with the matter”, inside sentence one.

> The third sentence carries the status: announced, on this date. That is what makes the block dateable six months from now.

EXAMPLE ONE · THE REWRITE

Trump personally pushed Nvidia’s board to reinstate Jensen Huang as chief executive, 11 days after he resigned

> President Donald Trump personally called Nvidia’s board to push for the reinstatement of Jensen Huang as chief executive, 11 days after Huang resigned over an affair with a woman suspected of Chinese intelligence ties, according to people familiar with the matter. Vice President JD Vance ran the 72-hour push. Nvidia announced the reversal on Monday, November 23, 2026.

Trump called the board himself

President Donald Trump called Nvidia’s board directly over the weekend to vouch for Jensen Huang, an intervention that people familiar with the matter described as decisive in reversing the company’s position.

Trump had spent days stewing over the stock market’s deepening sell-off. He told advisers and officials that Huang needed to be reinstated to help steady the market, a source familiar with the matter told CNN.

“I’ve been speaking to the board directly and indirectly, and I felt very strongly about it,” Trump said on CNBC on Monday, shortly after Nvidia announced the decision. “I think we have one of our great stars back in play.”

The White House’s effort was kept so quiet that some senior Nvidia staffers did not learn of it until shortly before the company announced the reversal on Monday morning, a source familiar with the matter said.

Vance ran a 72-hour push

Vice President JD Vance led the effort over 72 hours, coordinating directly with Jensen Huang and pressing Nvidia’s directors to take him back, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump tapped Vance in part because the vice president has kept close ties to influential figures across Silicon Valley who also backed Huang’s return, multiple sources familiar with the matter said.

Vance and other officials worked to assure the board that the government had found no evidence Huang did anything illegal or untoward that could have threatened national security. The board told officials on Sunday night that it would reverse course.

EXAMPLE ONE · CONTINUED

The Justice Department said it found no wrongdoing

Attorney General Todd Blanche told President Donald Trump over the weekend that the Justice Department had no evidence of wrongdoing by Jensen Huang or Nvidia, a law enforcement official briefed on the matter said.

The investigations centered on Alice Huang, the woman suspected of Chinese intelligence ties, and on companies suspected of violating US export controls, the official said.

Blanche declined to answer when asked on Fox News whether Jensen Huang had been cleared. No evidence of wrongdoing is not the same as a clearance, and the distinction went unaddressed.

The board had said no four days earlier

Nvidia’s board had publicly rejected a return four days before it reversed itself, calling Huang’s behavior “inconsistent with the company’s code of conduct, standards and cultural norms”.

The board had made that position plain on an investor call. After the administration’s push, it announced the opposite.

Nvidia said the decision rested on “input from senior levels” of the government. The company did not say which officials, or what they said.

The stock price made the case

Nvidia’s shares had fallen sharply since Huang’s exit, and Trump treated the slide as the decisive argument for bringing him back, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Trump returned on Friday, November 20, from a four-day trip to Asia, where he said China’s leader, Xi Jinping, had praised Huang. By then the market was in the middle of a five-day losing streak.

Trump had floated Tim Cook, the former Apple chief executive, as a replacement, to no avail. The board instead promoted its chief financial officer, Colette Kress.

“The president is a student of history, and like many haunted by Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression, the crash of 1929 brought that on,” Steve Bannon, a former Trump adviser, said. “So higher market equals good, crashing stock market equals bad.”

EXAMPLE ONE · CONTINUED

A Cabinet split over China chips

The reinstatement exposed a split inside the Cabinet over how hard to restrict Nvidia's chip sales to China, with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent at odds behind the scenes.

Alice Huang was an executive at Megaspeed, a company that purchased Nvidia chips, which officials worried then made their way into China. The Commerce Department is adding Megaspeed to the US Entity List.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio had issued repeated warnings to Trump and other officials earlier this year about Huang's affair. Rubio declined to comment publicly throughout the episode.

What comes next

Jensen Huang is due to testify before the Senate Banking Committee on Thursday, December 3, and Democrats take control of Congress in January.

Congress has opened bipartisan inquiries into Huang's conduct and its national security implications. Senator Pete Ricketts, Republican of Nebraska, wrote on X that "his behavior does not support reinstatement".

Elon Musk, whom Trump said he had consulted, wrote on X: "The mistake has been corrected."

Background

November 12, 2026: Jensen Huang resigns as Nvidia's chief executive under pressure.

November 17, 2026: Nvidia's board says it does not intend to reinstate him.

November 19, 2026: The board repeats that position on an investor call.

November 20, 2026: Trump returns from a four-day Asia trip. The market is in a five-day losing streak.

November 21–22, 2026: Vance and other officials press the board over the weekend.

November 23, 2026: Nvidia announces the reinstatement. Trump discusses it on CNBC.

December 3, 2026: Huang is due before the Senate Banking Committee.

Questions left open

- Did the Justice Department clear Huang, or only decline to charge him?
- Did the directors act on the merits, or under pressure from the government?
- Will the Megaspeed listing reduce the flow of Nvidia chips into China, or reroute it?

EXAMPLE ONE · WHY EACH CHANGE

Every component, explained

COMPONENT	CHANGE AND REASON
H1	Was “Inside the Trump pressure campaign…”. Now names Trump, the board, the reinstatement and the 11 days. The original names a genre; a query needs actors and an interval.
Lead AFB	New. Carries who, what, when, two numbers and the provenance, in 58 words. The original had no block that could be lifted.
Attribution	Moved into sentence one. Provenance has to travel with the claim; in paragraph two it stays behind.
First H2	Atmosphere became “Trump called the board himself”. The mood survives inside the section, behind the answer.
Dates	“Late last week”, “Monday” became November 20 and November 23. A lifted block has no dateline.
Quote placement	Trump’s CNBC quote moved up under the board call. It confirms the intervention; left later, it only colours it.
Legal precision	One sentence added: no evidence of wrongdoing is not a clearance. Flattening Blanche’s refusal would misreport.
H3 or list	No H3s. Each H2 answers a separate question. Cabinet roles stay in prose because an argument is not a list.
Adjectives	“Unprecedented” dropped from the block, kept available in the body. A fact block cannot carry a verdict.
End matter	Dated Background and Questions left open added, with the Megaspeed listing and the testimony as forward anchors.

EXAMPLE TWO · THE EASIER PROBLEM

Already close. Still needs work

> AS PUBLISHED · THE OPENING
>
> “Six days ago, Harvey C. Jones, the chair of Nvidia, said the chip maker’s 10-member board ‘does not intend to reinstate’ Jensen Huang…”
>
> The New York Times, November 23, 2026.

This one starts on the contradiction, not the scene. It is already answering a question. So the work here is different: not rescue, but extraction, pulling each thread into a section that can be quoted on its own.

The contradiction is told as two votes across paragraphs. The fiduciary standard is explained after the quote rather than before it. And the governance experts, whose lines are the most quotable material in the piece, arrive as illustration rather than as sections of their own.

> Access note: the full article was free to read on November 24, 2026 under The New York Times’s Top Stories program. This rewrite works from the complete text, not a preview.

EXAMPLE TWO · THE LEAD AFB

Every word, accounted for

LEAD BLOCK · 59 WORDS

Nvidia’s board voted unanimously on Monday, November 23, 2026, to reinstate Jensen Huang as chief executive, six days after Harvey C. Jones, the chair, said the 10-member board did not intend to bring him back. President Trump had pressed the directors and assured them Mr. Huang faced no criminal charges. The reversal drew immediate criticism from corporate governance experts.

COMPONENT	WHERE IT SITS IN THE BLOCK
Who	Nvidia’s board, with its chair named and its size given. President Trump.
What	Voted unanimously to reinstate, six days after refusing.
Where	Nvidia. The forum is the boardroom, which is the point of the story.
When	Monday, November 23, 2026, plus the six-day interval.
Number	Six days. Ten members. Both are load-bearing here.
Consequence	Sentence three: immediate criticism from governance experts. The Times’s own thesis, stated as fact.

EXAMPLE TWO · THE REWRITE

Nvidia’s board brought back Jensen Huang as C.E.O. six days after saying it would not

> Nvidia’s board voted unanimously on Monday, November 23, 2026, to reinstate Jensen Huang as chief executive, six days after Harvey C. Jones, the chair, said the 10-member board did not intend to bring him back. President Trump had pressed the directors and assured them Mr. Huang faced no criminal charges. The reversal drew immediate criticism from corporate governance experts.

A unanimous vote, six days after a unanimous refusal

Nvidia’s board accepted Mr. Huang’s resignation unanimously on November 17, 2026, then voted unanimously to bring him back six days later, a reversal that took less than a week.

Mr. Huang had resigned as chief executive after revelations of an affair with a woman suspected of being a Chinese intelligence asset, and another with a subordinate.

Six days before the reversal, Mr. Jones said the board “does not intend to reinstate” him, and that the decision to accept his resignation had been unanimous. On Monday, Nvidia said the board had “voted unanimously” to do the opposite. “We have every confidence in Jensen,” Mr. Jones said in a statement.

What Mr. Trump assured the board

President Trump pressed Nvidia’s directors for Mr. Huang’s return and assured them he was not facing criminal charges over his links to Alice Huang, a tech executive whom U.S. intelligence had determined was a Chinese intelligence asset, The Times and others reported.

Alice Huang was also believed to be involved in possible illegal smuggling of Nvidia chips into China.

The assurances addressed criminal exposure. They did not, as described, address the board’s own judgment that Mr. Huang had breached the company’s code of conduct.

EXAMPLE TWO · CONTINUED

Why governance experts are alarmed

Corporate boards have a fiduciary duty to represent shareholders and guide companies toward best practices, a duty that governance experts said Nvidia’s board subordinated to the president’s preference when Mr. Trump effectively overrode it.

A fiduciary duty obliges directors to act in the interests of the people they represent, the shareholders, rather than an outside party.

“It neuters the board,” said David Yoffie, a professor at Harvard Business School and a former board member of Intel. “It makes the board look like lackeys of the president and therefore raises obvious questions of whether they really are good stewards of both the shareholders and the broader community.” Nvidia declined to comment.

The conduct the board set aside

Nvidia’s board reinstated Mr. Huang despite code-of-conduct violations, affairs with a subordinate and a customer, and before its own internal investigation into his behavior and his ties to Alice Huang had concluded.

By reinstating him before finishing that investigation, the board could expose the company to shareholder lawsuits and political scrutiny over national security, said Eric Talley, a professor of corporate governance at Columbia Law School.

“They are essentially deciding they’re going to roll the dice on this and really, really hope that it doesn’t come up snake eyes,” Mr. Talley said.

What the board promised next

Nvidia said its investigation would “proceed to conclusion”, that Mr. Huang “fully supports the investigation and is committed to cooperating with it”, and that the company would hire a chief compliance officer reporting to the board’s nominating and corporate governance committee.

Earlier this month, the board had also formed a committee to oversee Nvidia’s national security policies, compliance with U.S. trade restrictions and risk management for global trade.

A board built for loyalty

Nvidia’s board had a track record of deference to Mr. Huang, who co-founded the company in 1993 and built it into one of the world’s most valuable firms. Mark A. Stevens and Tench Coxe have served since 1993, are among its largest individual shareholders, and have reaped substantial returns from their stock.

The eight other directors include two former executives of a 1990s chip designer, the former chief executive of the law firm Cooley LLP, the former vice chairman of Goldman Sachs, the former chief information officer of Eli Lilly, the former chief marketing officer of the N.F.L., the former president of Taco Bell and an engineering professor.

EXAMPLE TWO · CONTINUED

The management style under scrutiny

Mr. Huang, 63, ran Nvidia with a flat structure and an executive staff of more than 60 people reporting to him, placing him at the center of daily operations. He had made his daughter, Madison Huang, his de facto chief of staff and his son-in-law, Nico Caprez, a leading dealmaker, and the company did not appear to have a succession plan.

“They gave so much of their control to him to dictate the structure of the company,” David Astorino, a senior partner at the leadership consulting firm RHR International, said of the board.

What the market did

Nvidia’s valuation fell by more than $1.5 trillion after Mr. Huang resigned, and its shares leaped more than 30 percent on Monday after his return was announced.

Boards owe shareholders long-term value, “not a short-term pop”, said Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, senior associate dean for leadership studies at the Yale School of Management.

“I want to thank the Nvidia board for its confidence and deliberation through this process,” Mr. Huang said in a statement, adding that he was honored to be back.

Background

1993: Jensen Huang co-founds Nvidia; Mark A. Stevens and Tench Coxe join the board.

November 17, 2026: The board unanimously accepts Mr. Huang’s resignation; Mr. Jones says it “does not intend to reinstate” him.

November 22, 2026: Alice Huang is reported as a suspected Chinese intelligence asset.

November 23, 2026: The board votes unanimously to reinstate Mr. Huang after President Trump’s push; shares jump more than 30%.

Ongoing: Nvidia’s internal investigation into Mr. Huang’s conduct has not concluded.

Questions left open

- Did the directors weigh the fiduciary question, or only the president’s request and the share price?
- What does reinstating Mr. Huang before the investigation concludes expose the company to?
- Who succeeds Mr. Huang, 63, given no public succession plan?

EXAMPLE TWO · WHY EACH CHANGE

Voice kept, order changed

COMPONENT	CHANGE AND REASON
H1	Was “Trump Effectively Overrode Nvidia’s Board”, the conclusion. Now the headline states the contradiction and keeps the conclusion for the block and the experts.
Lead AFB	New. Both votes, the chair, the board’s size, the six days, the assurance and the consequence, in 59 words.
Sections, from the full text	The full article, free to read on November 24, 2026 under the Times’s Top Stories program, yields eight H2s, each a sub-question: the votes, the assurance, the governance alarm, the conduct set aside, what the board promised, the board’s make-up, the management style and the market.
Fiduciary duty	Defined in the sentence where it first appears. A block using the term without a definition cannot be quoted for a general reader.
Two experts, two sections	Yoffie on the board being “neutered” and Talley on “rolling the dice” answer different questions, so each anchors its own section instead of stacking as illustration.
Alice Huang named	The full article names her, so the rewrite attributes the identification to the Times, not to CNN, as the earlier preview-based draft had to.
Two assurances separated	“No criminal charges” and “no breach of the code” are different assurances. Running them together misstates both.
Address	“Mr. Huang”, “Mr. Jones”, “C.E.O.” retained. Formal address is a voice marker; the format governs order, not register.
End matter	Dated Background and Questions left open added; the ongoing investigation and the missing succession plan become forward anchors.

WHAT THE EXERCISE PROVES

Same skeleton, different animals

DIMENSION	CNN	TIMES
Question answered	What did the administration do, and how?	Was this a proper use of a board’s authority?
Number in the H1	11 days, from the resignation	Six days, from the refusal
Carrier of analysis	Named sources and principals	A named expert and a standard
Section order	Moves: call, 72 hours, Justice Dept, price	Standards: vote, assurance, duty, conduct
Voice marker kept	Attribution formulas, short declaratives	Formal address, restrained analysis
What a reader retrieves	Who got Huang reinstated, and why	Whether the board should have done it

> One conflict to resolve before either version runs: the Times puts the chair’s statement six days before the reversal, CNN puts a public rejection four days before. Establish which event each date belongs to first.

PART SIX

Summary, and what to do Monday

The argument in six lines, the sixteen things to check, the pilot that tests it, and the four limits nobody should pretend away.

IN SIX LINES

The whole case

01 **Google put Hydrogen into Search for everyone on November 12, 2026**

Documented. Google calls it the biggest model upgrade to Search yet.

02 **It strengthens query fan-out: one question becomes several searches**

Documented. Google Search Central says the features “may” use the technique.

03 **So an answer is assembled from sections, not from pages**

Our reading of the mechanism, corroborated by Microsoft’s account of grounding.

04 **So each section should answer one sub-question completely**

Editorial inference. The design decision, and it is ours.

05 **So the article becomes a spine of answer blocks**

Our method: lead block, one per section, evidence behind each.

06 **And the test of every block is whether it survives being lifted**

The only check that matters, and it takes four minutes.

ACTIONABLE, IN ORDER

The sixteen

#	DO THIS	BECAUSE
1	Write the H1 with actor, action and outcome	A headline that cannot be a query names nothing
2	Map five to eight sub-questions before drafting	This decides the article, not the prose
3	Write the lead block to 40 to 60 words	It is the article for anyone who reads one block
4	Put the headline’s entity in sentence one	It anchors the block to the query
5	Include one number with its unit	Evidence, not summary
6	Write a real, full date	A lifted block has no dateline
7	Name every source inside its own sentence	Provenance does not travel from a footnote
8	Open no section with a pronoun	The referent does not travel either
9	Answer the H2 in the first sentence under it	Answer first, then evidence
10	Check the first section block against the lead	Repeating the lead wastes a section
11	Use H3 only when the subsection stands alone	Otherwise it is a list item
12	Turn parallel results into labelled lines	One clean chunk per entity
13	Define jargon where it first appears	The definition has to travel
14	Close with a dated Background and open questions	Recency legible, honesty intact
15	Lift-test all nine blocks	Nine reads, four minutes
16	Run the filing gate before publishing	Mechanical, so failure is not taste

HOW TO TEST IT NEW

Run it as an experiment

The method is a hypothesis until a newsroom tests it. Run it small, with a control, and measure citation before clicks.

01 **Pick one story type**

One beat or format, court orders, match reports, product launches, so the comparison is clean.

02 **Keep a control**

Cover comparable stories the usual way over the same period. Without a control, a rise in traffic proves nothing.

03 **Run it for a quarter**

Long enough for AI features to crawl, index and start citing the new shape.

04 **Measure the right things**

Citations and appearances in AI Overviews and AI Mode, and click-through, not just total sessions.

> Being quoted and being read are different outcomes. Decide which one the pilot is trying to win before it starts.

WHAT THIS DOES NOT DO

Four honest limits

01 **It does not replace technical SEO**

Google: “specific optimization isn’t required for AI Overviews and AI Mode”. A page must be indexed and snippet-eligible first.

02 **It is not proven to win citations**

Argued from documented behaviour and editorial logic. No controlled traffic test exists for this document.

03 **It cannot isolate AI traffic**

Search Console reports AI-feature clicks inside overall Web results. A rise in sessions proves nothing about cause.

04 **It serves citation before visits**

Being quoted and being read are different outcomes. A successful answer means fewer clicks on the source.

> The honest test: run the format on one story type for a quarter, keep comparable coverage as a control, and compare citations and click-through, not just sessions.

TERMS, ONCE NEW

The words, defined

Answer First Block (AFB)	A 40–60 word block right after the headline that answers the main question on its own, who, what, where, when and the key number. Also placed, shorter, under each H2.
Query fan-out	Google’s technique of splitting one question into several background searches across subtopics and sources, then combining the passages into one answer.
Passage / chunk	A section of an article treated as a standalone unit of value, which an AI answer can lift or skip independently of the whole page.
Provenance	The source of a claim, named inside the sentence that uses it, so it travels with the claim when the passage is lifted.
Grounding	Attaching an AI answer to supportable, sourced facts rather than generating them unsupported.
AI Overviews / AI Mode	Google’s generated-answer surfaces above and inside Search; both may use query fan-out and draw on the same crawl and index.
Lift test	Reading a block alone on a blank page to check it still answers a real question without the article around it.
Filing gate	The nine mechanical checks a block and article must pass before publishing.

READ THE ORIGINALS

Sources

Primary pages read on November 25, 2026. Google sources establish product behaviour and guidance. Microsoft provides independent grounding context, not verification of Google’s implementation.

1 **Google, “Expanding AI Overviews and introducing AI Mode”. March 5, 2025**
blog.google/products-and-platforms/products/search/ai-mode-search/

2 **Google, “AI in Search: Going beyond information to intelligence”. May 20, 2025**
blog.google/products-and-platforms/products/search/google-search-ai-mode-update/

3 **Google, “A new era for AI Search” (Google I/O), “Powerful AI, right in Search” section. May 19, 2026**
blog.google/products-and-platforms/products/search/search-io-2026/

4 **Google, “Google Search gets a major upgrade with Gemini 4 Hydrogen”. November 12, 2026**
blog.google/products-and-platforms/products/search/gemini-4-hydrogen-search-upgrade/

5 **Google Search Central, “AI features and your website”**
developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features

6 **Microsoft Bing, “Evolving role of the index”. May 2026**
blogs.bing.com/search/2026/5/Evolving-role-of-the-index-From-ranking-pages-to-supporting-answers/

7 **CNN, “Inside the Trump pressure campaign that restored Jensen Huang as Nvidia’s CEO”. November 23, 2026**
edition.cnn.com/2026/11/23/politics/trump-administration-jensen-huang-reinstated

8 **The New York Times, “With Jensen Huang’s Return as C.E.O., Trump Effectively Overrode Nvidia’s Board”. November 23, 2026, free to read November 24, 2026 under the Times’s Top Stories program. By Kalley Huang, Jordyn Holman, Lauren Hirsch and Ryan Mac**
nytimes.com/2026/11/23/technology/jensen-huang-nvidia-board-trump.html

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