



# Crash Course in Blogging

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Welcome! The fact that you are reading this means that you are interested in writing regular (and paid) articles for Mighty Moms! We are very excited to be expanding our close group and adding new members and friends into the Mighty Moms world.

This “Crash Course in Blogging” document you have here is meant to help prepare you for the things we are looking for in our submissions. **Please read it carefully.**

If you are serious about adding some extra income to your monthly spreadsheet and becoming a regular columnist on MightyMoms.club, **reading through this article will give you a serious advantage from all the other applicants who don't.**

The truth is, being a good writer doesn't always mean you'll be a good *blogger*. And even if you are a good blogger, you may not be a good blogger for Mighty Moms.

**We aren't looking for good writers.** We are looking for good *bloggers* who will use their unique personality to connect to Mighty Moms readers in significant ways.

That's what this document does. It will give you a few pointers on not only being a good blogger, but **being a good blogger who fits perfectly into the Mighty Moms family.**

Good luck!

xo

Heather

Heather Taylor, Chief Encouragement Officer  
IncredibleInfant.com and MightyMoms.club

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# Writing for an Online Audience

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The first thing you should realize is that people read differently online. They don't actually *read*. They *skim*, and then decide whether they should stop and actually read or not.

This means information has to be organized and shared differently online than in a book or a magazine. Readers are constantly thinking about clicking somewhere else. Our job, as bloggers, is **to keep them from moving that index finger**.

Here's how we do that:

- A really catchy headline.
- Short paragraph segments. Never more than 3 sentences in a block.
- Using Subheads to keep them moving down the page.
- Adding interesting graphics, or quotes, or other media to provide interest.

Remember:

- The goal of the headline is to get them to read the first sentence.
- The goal of first sentence is to get them to read the *second* sentence, and so on and so forth until - by *jiminy!* - they've finished the whole article by accident!!  
*\*wink\**

Readers won't work hard to read your content! If it's not immediately easy on the eyes they will click away. So make sure there's lots of white space, with short paragraphs, subheads, and (when useful) photos.

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# What Should You Write About?

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It's hard sometimes to choose a subject. You either will have so *many* ideas, you don't know which one to pick, or your idea box contains nothing but chirping crickets.

I keep an Evernote file of potential ideas, so that when I hit that wall of NOTHING, I at least have a place to go for inspiration.

We are going to be looking for articles that fit in these categories:

- pregnancy
- babies
- toddlers
- preschoolers
- home organization and design
- health and wellness

Sometimes, though, knowing the *format* of your post can sometimes provide all the inspiration you need to get something started.

Here are 16 different types of blog posts, and some examples of how I've used them in the past. Hopefully one of these will strike gold!

1. **Large-Numbered Lists**—Choose a topic and come up with a related list. [101 Ways to be a Rockin' Good Mom](#) is one of my all-time favorite list posts.
2. **Step-by-Step Instructions**—Give detailed project instructions like Katie does in [DIY: Build a Baby Car Kit in 3 Easy Steps](#).
3. **Lessons Learned**—Tell the readers about a lesson you've learned or an obstacle you've encountered. Chelsea tells our readers about her baby's milk protein allergy in [Our Baby's Milk Protein Allergy: How We Battled the Big Bad Milk Monster—and Won](#). Follow her lead, and **make sure you always relate personal stories back to the reader!**

4. **Case Studies**—Give a detailed breakdown of how you applied a specific technique to solve a problem. In [The Sandman's School of Getting Baby to Sleep Through the Night](#), I walk weary moms through the sleep shuffle so they can rest easy.
5. **Serialized articles**—Track a concept like we do in our Safety Spotlight Series. Here's one post from that series: [Safety Spotlight: Dream on Me Cribs Collapse](#).
6. **Chapter-based** – Break a larger topic down into two or more posts like [Baby Road Trip: The Secrets to a Happy Car Ride {Part 1}](#) and [Baby Road Trip: The Secrets to a Happy Car Ride {Part 2 – Packing Printable}](#).
7. **Mindset Posts** – Give your opinion. Just be prepared for opposing comments! I argue that we need to stop making assumptions about ourselves and others in [Ending the Mommy Wars Forever](#).
8. **Story Time**—Tell a story in an interesting way. I use my own personal anecdotes to encourage other mamas in [Hello, World. It's Me. The Shoplifter](#).
9. **Product review**—Review a product and give your (honest) opinion. I review Hazelwood in [Is it Magic? Hazelwood as an Effective Eczema Remedy for Babies](#).
10. **Comparison post**—Do a head-to-head analysis of two or more different offers and determine which is best for the reader. In [The Battle of the Baby Formulas](#), we compare and contrast formulas to help our readers determine which one works for them.
11. **Interview an Expert** – Ask an expert for an interview. You'd be surprised at how approachable they are. Take a peek at my interview with Kim West in [The Confidence Café: Tackling Big Things in Little Ways, Interview with Sleep Lady, Kim West](#).
12. **Celebrity Lessons** – Lend a little star power to your post. Chelsea channels Parks & Rec character Ron Swanson for [Ron Swanson's Top Tips for the Manliest Father's Day Ever](#).
13. **Current events**—Research a current event that relates to the reader and make it digestible. We tackle the Zika Virus in [Everything Pregnant Mamas Need to Know About the Zika Virus](#).
14. **Reader Survey** – Ask readers about their opinions on a particular product or issue. Our readers help choose the winners in [What's the Best Baby Bottle? Olympic Winners in Breastfeeding, Colic, Budget and Beyond](#).
15. **Sequel**—Write a sibling article to an older post. [Example of a Daily Routine for a 6-9 Month Old ~ Ask Heather](#) is a sister post to [How to Rock Out a Newborn Schedule](#) and [How to Get Your 2-3 Month Old Baby on a Schedule](#).
16. **Predict Something**—Make a fun prediction. Maybe it's "6 Toddler Predictions For This Year" and you predict there will be crayon on the wall, at least one Target meltdown, and a big slobbery kiss that will make your heart melt. I haven't written one of these posts (yet), but I predict there may be one in your future ;)

An idea has finally floated to the top! Let's talk about how to get that idea flushed out into a full topic.

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# Step #1: Research & Outline

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The first step is to take your chosen topic and flush it out so you have a bare tree of an idea. (The content will be the leaves, and the conclusion will be the fruit!)

## Do Some Basic Research

You've got an idea, sure, but no one knows *everything* about everything, right? So hop over to google and start researching your subject.

Don't let other people's articles deter you! This is your *unique* voice and you'll be presenting your information in your own *unique* way.

In a blank document, or on Evernote, copy and paste the URLs to all these sources and start jotting down the main ideas that you think you might use in your own article. (You're building your citations list at the same time.)

Want to write a post about home remedies for removing tough stains? Include your own experience and ideas, sure, but don't stop there! Go and find the tricks that other people are using as well, then include them all.

**Your content has to over-deliver.** You want to give readers MORE than what they thought they would get, so they leave your article thinking: *She is amazing! I'd love to read other articles by her...*

Take 15-30 minutes to research and brainstorm your article online, interview friends on Facebook, or do scholarly searches to get the most for your article. You may not use everything you dig up, but at least you'll have it if you need it!

## Smart Google Searching Hacks

There are a few little tricks you can use to dig out the really good stuff while doing a Google Search. Here are a few articles that will walk you through them:

- [How to Use Google Search Like a Pro](#)
- [Infographic on How to Use Google More Effectively](#)

## Build Your Outline

As yourself: *What is the single core takeaway I want people to have after reading my article?*

That's your central purpose.

- Put your main idea in a circle in the center of the page.
- Branch out all the ideas that seem connected to that circle. These will be your subheads.
- Write a quick blurb or thought about each subhead or point.
- Connect each section with a transition.

If your main idea is too broad, and you end up with dozens of other little ideas, each with their *own* outlines, consider using one of those “subheads” as your main topic and go from there. You can always return to this mind-map later for another article discussing a different aspect of your subject!

For example, **if you wanted to talk about cloth diapering**, you'd need to brainstorm all the aspects of cloth diapering, but only choose one of THOSE to write about. The larger subject of Cloth Diapering is way too big for a single article, but the related subject, *Will Cloth Diapering Really Save You Money?* would work perfectly!

Don't neglect your outline! It will make the writing process go so much smoother and help you stay focused without falling into tangents that leave your reader wandering.

Remember, **readers want to do minimal work**. So keep your outline concise and easy to follow!

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# Step #2: Headline & Subheads

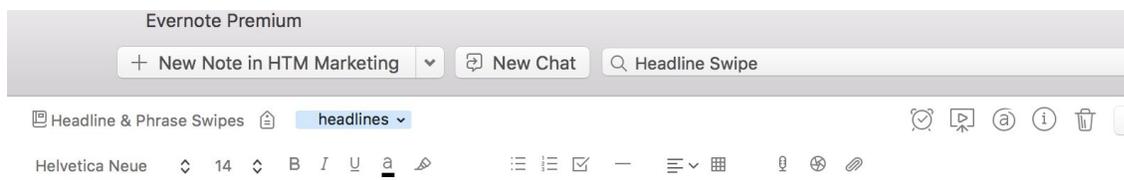
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The second step is to write your Headline and Subheads. (Some people like to write the headline last, but I always find it helps me stay focused to write it first.)

## How to Write a Catchy Headline

The best way to write a catchy headline is to use a Headline Swipe File. Basically, you take the bones of a good headline, and then insert your own thoughts and ideas that fit your subject.

Here's a picture of my Headline Swipe File in Evernote:



### Headline Swipes

- 30 \_\_\_\_ You Should Know Before Your 30
- A \_\_\_\_ That's Better than \_\_\_\_ (*A homemade Chinese Orange Chicken that's Better than Takeout*)
- Blow Your \_\_\_\_ Out of the Water with This \_\_\_\_ (*Blow Your Chinese Delivery Spot Out of the Water with This Dish*)
- The Only \_\_\_\_ You'll Use From Now On (*the Only Garlic Bread You'll Make From Now On*)
- This \_\_\_\_ Will Make You Fall in Love with \_\_\_\_ All Over Again (*This Dish Will Make You Fall in Love with Pasta All Over again*)
- The \_\_\_\_ You didn't Know You Should Add to Your \_\_\_\_ (*The Ingredient You Didn't Know You Should Add to Your Steak*)
- The Only \_\_\_\_ You'll Ever Need
- The Easiest Way to \_\_\_\_ You Never Thought Of
- The Go-To \_\_\_\_ That Never Gets Old (*The Go-To Pasta Dish That Never Gets Old*)
- You've Been \_\_\_\_ Totally Wrong (*You've Been Peeling Oranges Totally Wrong*)
- The \_\_\_\_ You're Probably Not \_\_\_\_ (*The Vegetables You're Probably Not Eating Enough Of*)
- \_\_\_\_ Doesn't Have to Be So Hard (*Cooking & Peeling Eggs Doesn't Have to Be so Hard*)
- \_\_\_\_ You'll Never Get Tired Of (*11 Classic Spaghetti Recipes You'll Never Get Tired Of*)
- The Simplest \_\_\_\_ Ever

The smaller print shows the actual title, while the blanks are the parts I removed so I can replace them with my own ideas.

Where did I find those original headlines? I would write them down as I was browsing the web. BuzzFeed.com and Zergnet.com are great places to find catchy headlines to transform.

Another awesome resource I still use is Jon Morrow's *Headline Hacks*. This is a free document with lots of great ideas to build your own catchy headline. He gives it away for free on his blog, <http://smartblogger.com>.

## The Key to Good Subheads

Subheads are really important in blog posts, because they help your reader, nay *skimmer*, catch the crux of your article quickly.

- If you read *just* the subheads, your article should still make sense.
- Your subheads have to be interesting enough to help them STOP SKIMMING and read the actual content, but make sense so if they *don't* stop, they can still understand your article.
- They need to be linked to the content below them. For example, you can't say "Sneaky Stain Remover Hack #1" and then talk about tuna fish sandwiches. (Unless tuna fish is your sneaky stain remover...???)
- Stash a subhead every time you're going to shift gears, usually every 2-5 paragraphs.
- Treat each subhead like a mini-headline.
- Each subhead should create curiosity for skimming scrollers.
- Subheads provide more white space in your article, which is easier on the eyes and keeps people from clicking away from your page for being too "busy".

## Using Power Words

Some words leap of the page more than others. I've included a list of these so-called "Power Words" at the end of this document. Using one or more of these words in your headline and/or subheads will instantly make your writing more interesting.

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# Step #3: Write Your Draft

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You've got the bones of your article with a good outline.

You've figured out the *angle* of the article you're writing and jotted down a headline draft and some subheads (these can change later if they need to.)

## Writing Your Opening

It's time to write your Opening.

**The first thing your reader is going to ask** is “*Does this apply to me?*” Make sure your opening DOES apply to them, or it's *adios reader*.

**Don't start with a story.** Stories usually take too long to resolve (unless it's really *really* interesting). Your readers all have ADHD. You've got about 3-4 sentences to get them hooked into reading. Don't waste it setting up something that takes 4 paragraphs to resolve.

**Readers want empathy.** They crave understanding and custom-tailored advice. You want them thinking, “*She totally read my mind!*” Find the problem, state it, reflect on their feelings towards that problem, and then promise to fix it in the article (or show them where to go to get it fixed.)

Tell them what they THINK is the answer to their problem, and then either confirm that or rebuke it during the rest of the article.

## Write Your Article Body

**Your article is not about you.** Frankly, your readers don't have time to care about your story. They have a problem, and they're looking for help. Or they're bored and looking for inspiration. Either way, if you want to be successful you'll need to set yourself aside and focus solely on your new reading friends.

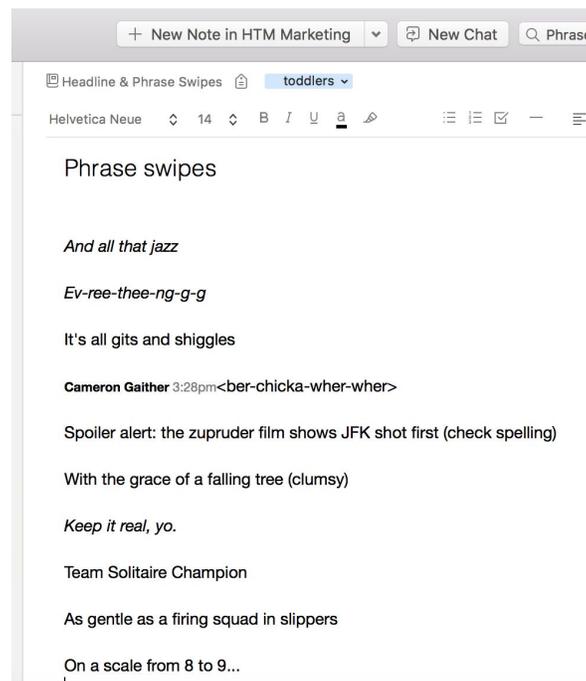
Now, take your outline and your subheads and start filling in the spaces with interesting and helpful copy.

Not sure how to keep it interesting? **Use a Swipe File!**

A Swipe File is like a cheat sheet of clever phrases or writing that have struck you in the past, and that you can use without plagiarizing.

Basically, you grab phrases or ideas from other writers and put them into a document for you to browse through later. I'm talking about very short phrases here - no plagiarizing!

Here's an example of my Swipe File in Evernote:



It's a collection of things I've heard on the radio, read in a book (Terry Pratchett was brilliant), saw on TV...anything that I've found interesting and/or surprising.

When I feel "stuck" in a section that's just *dragging* along, I'll pop open my Swipe file and see if anything fits.

**Engineer little surprises for your reader.** Deliberately say things they don't expect. Here's an example from my bio, referencing the common misunderstandings between spouses: "*It's like I'm speaking English, and he's speaking Tree.*"

**Bond with your reader.** Weave in likeable details about yourself. It's true this isn't about you, but you *are* writing it, and so it makes sense to add the occasional short story or experience to build your friendship.

You aren't the main course, but you are a delicious appetizer that makes the whole meal (article) more enjoyable!

# Write Your Conclusion

The conclusion may be the hardest part of your article. Don't let your post run out of steam at the end! This is the time you want them *energized!*

**Avoid the “Share your Tip” ending.** I've been totally guilty of this! It's really hard to finish an article strong. :-)

You want them to DO SOMETHING after reading your article. Here are a few ideas...

- You want them to share the article on Social media outlets
- Or perhaps you want them to purchase something on Amazon or a Mighty Moms product.
- Or perhaps You want them to leave a comment and continue the conversation

Choose ONE of those, and then focus on that in your conclusion by doing one of these things:

- Challenge Them - inspire them to overcome something and then share their experience in the comments (or make a purchase)
- Connect with Them - make them so emotionally touched and passionate about what you're saying that they *have* to comment and/or share it on Facebook with their friends.
- Create ~ Inspire them to do something different to experiment with a new approach, and then tell you how it went.

**Our job as bloggers isn't just to give information. It is to give courage, hope, energy, and a positive state of mind.**

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# Step #4: Edit Your Draft

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Once you've done your draft, let it sit for 24 hours.

It's amazing how often I've written something and thought "That was really good!" only to come back to it later and think *what was I thinking???* Or not get some comment or joke that I had previously thought was hilarious. :-)

Let your draft sit for a bit. Then, when you come back to look it over with a fresh perspective, you'll be able to make it so much better!

## An Editing Checklist

- Are you saying the same thing in several ways? Can you take some of that out? Try to keep the copy as tight as possible. Are there places where you start to ramble? Take them out.
- Try reading your article without the first few sentences. Sometimes I find that I write a really good opening...just not at the opening. Try removing your first "opening" and seeing if what's left is actually better.
- Are you using too many adjectives and adverbs?
- Are you using too many exclamation points!!!!!!! :-) Use them *sparsely*. Using them too often makes you come across as hypey and fake.
- Are you telling a story that doesn't add anything to your overall point? If it's not related to your *Core Central Idea*, remove it.
- Try to keep the words at a 3rd-4th grade reading level. Throwing in a few big words adds variety, but too many can become too daunting and "hard" to read.
- Can I add a bullet list or a quote to break up the copy and create more white space?
- Is there a resource that would be helpful? (Like an infographic or printable? We have some talented graphic designers who can make them beautiful! You just need to figure out what they should say.)
- Is there a product I could sell? *Anything* on Amazon is fair game. If we are going to pay our writers, that means we need money coming in to *pay our writers*. :-)

# Make Your Ideas Stick

These are notes I took from the book [Made to Stick](#), a fascinating book about why some ideas stick around and others don't. Here are some tips for making your ideas stick:

- What is the single *Simple Core Idea* I wish to communicate in this post?
- What is counter-intuitive about this idea? How can I surprise the reader? How can I intrigue them? What hints and mystery can I create?
- What commonplace thing can I use to relate to my idea? Is there an analogy I can create?
- How can I provide credibility to my idea? Is there an example I can use? Are there citations I can show at the bottom?
- How can I get the reader to care about my subject/idea? What emotions can I piggy back on? (Use Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* below to choose the emotional angle to use. The higher on the list, the harder it is to do, but also the deeper connection they will have to the article.)
  - *Transcendence* - demonstrate how you can help them build morale in others
  - *Self-Actualization* - demonstrate how you can help them reach their full potential
  - *Aesthetic* - demonstrate how you can give them life-balance and beauty
  - *Learning* - demonstrate how you can give them understanding and knowledge
  - *Esteem* - demonstrate how you can give them approval
  - *Belonging* - demonstrate how you can give them the love they desire
  - *Security* - demonstrate how you can give them protection, safety, and stability
  - *Physical* - demonstrate how you can meet their hunger, thirst, and comfort needs

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# More Resources

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If you are really interested in growing as a writer, here are a few of my favorite writing blogs.

- [Copyblogger](#)
- [Smartblogger](#)
- [Problogger](#)

## Using Power Words

Power Words are basically words that the human brain finds more interesting, so we will subconsciously slow down and pay attention when we see them.

You can use them in headlines, subheads, or even regular sentences. **Think of them as can of Red Bull for your writing.**

Take this boring headline: *5 Tips for Getting More Sleep*

And sprinkle in a few Power Words:

*5 Mind-Blowing Tips Reveal the Secret to Overcoming Insomnia*

See what a big difference a few power words can make? Here's a list of power words to get you started. Copy and paste them into another document so you can add to them as time goes by. Start looking for these words in the headlines you read. You'll be surprised how often you find them!

agony	apocalypse	Armageddon	assault	pommel
backlash	beating	beware	blinded	reckoning
blood	bloodbath	bloodcurdling	bloody	scary
bomb	buffoon	bumbling	cadaver	smash
surrender	dangerous	dying	errors	tailspin
dumb	crippling	penniless	paralyzed	terror
catastrophe	caution	collapse	corpse	vaporize

crazy	cripple	crisis	danger	worry
deadly	destroy	devastating	disastrous	fleece
drowning	dumb	embarrass	fail	poison
feeble	fired	fool	fooled	pus
frantic	frightening	gambling	gullible	risky
hack	hazardous	hoax	holocaust	slave
horrific	hurricane	insidious	invasion	suck
IRS	jail	jeopardy	Lawsuit	teetering
looming	lunatic	lurking	meltdown	trap
mired	mistake	murder	nightmare	warning
painful	pale	panic	peril	disinformation
piranha	pitfall	plague	played	helpless
plummet	plunge	strangle	targeted	stupid
poor	prison	tank	toxic	swindle
refugee	revenge	terrorist	volatile	wounded
silly	slaughter	victim	conspiracy	floundering
amazing	audacity	backbone	belief	blissful
bravery	breathtaking	cheer	conquer	courage
daring	eye-opening	faith	fearless	fulfill
grateful	grit	guts	happy	heart
hero	hope	miracle	pluck	sensational
spectacular	spine	spirit	staggering	stunning
surprising	triumph	uplifting	defiance	delight
devoted	excited	jaw-dropping	jubilant	magic
mind-blowing	valor	victory	wonderful	wondrous
boost	cure	energize	flush	overcome
vibrant	bright	destiny	empower	undo
win	attention	smart	quest	treasure
brazen	crave	Before you forget	delightful	exposed
forbidden	hypnotic	lascivious	scandalous	lonely
shameless	sleazy	sleeping	tantalizing	thrilling

uncensored	jubilant	rave	deadline	limited
seize	commanding	kiss	temptation	underpants
love	secret	magic	king	queen
prince	princess	cloud	moon	stars
heaven	paradise	disappear	abuse	arrogant
Bull crap	bully	coward	crooked	crush
disgusting	evil	force-fed	foul	hate
spoon-feed	know-it-all	lies	loathsome	loser
lying	maul	money-grubbing	nazi	no-good
obnoxious	payback	pound	preposterous	punish
revolting	ruthless	Sick and tired	smug	sniveling
snob	snooty	Stuck up	underhanded	cruel
unscrupulous	Had enough?	Never again!	pointless	Temporary fix
tired	lies	threat	fighting	mired
mediocre	battle	dragon	defeat	burned
avenge	vindicate	reclaim	Turn the tables	enemy
nemesis	war	bargain	best	billion
tush-kicking	backstabbing	Beat down	bananza	cash
cheap	discount	dollar	double	explode
extra	feast	fortune	free	freebie
frenzy	frugal	gift	greatest	inexpensive
jackpot	luxurious	Marked down	massive	money
Nest egg	Pay zero	prize	profit	quadruple
reduced	rich	savings	six-figure	Sky rocket
soaring	surge	treasure	triple	whopping
greed	anonymous	authentic	backed	best-selling
certified	endorsed	guaranteed	ironclad	proven
results	research	privacy	protected	secure
verify	tested	unconditional	backdoor	banned
Behind the scenes	Black market	blacklisted	bootleg	censored

concealed	confidential	covert	cover-up	forbidden
forgotten	hidden	illegal	lost	off-limits
outlawed	private	secrets	smuggled	strange
unauthorized	exposed	insider	taboo	

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