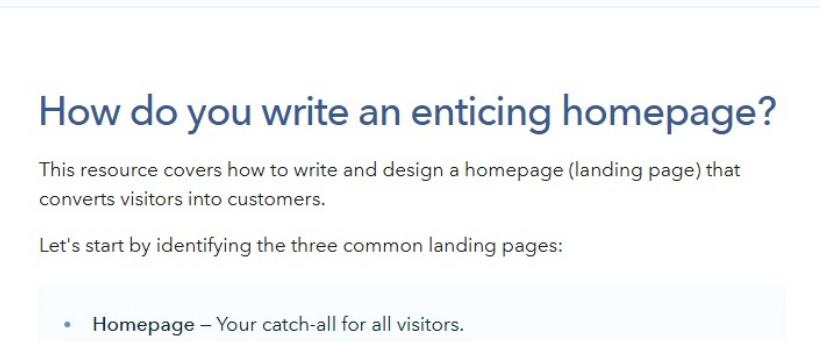


Julian Shapiro

Resource: Landing Pages



How do you write an enticing homepage?

This resource covers how to write and design a homepage (landing page) that converts visitors into customers.

Let's start by identifying the three common landing pages:

- **Homepage** – Your catch-all for all visitors.
- **Persona landing page** – A page tailored to a specific persona (audience).
- **Product page** – A page that walks through how your product works.

These pages can be structured identically using the following template. Generally, the more you detour from the template, the more confused the average visitor becomes.

Think of your landing page from the perspective of a visitor's likelihood to purchase:

$$\text{Purchase Rate} = \text{Desire} - (\text{Labor} + \text{Confusion})$$

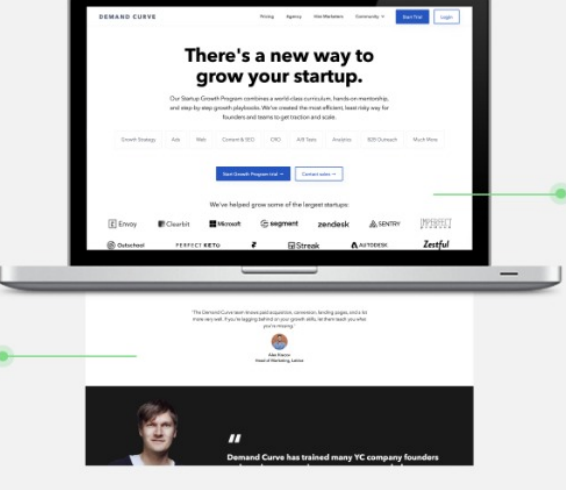
To increase a visitor's purchase rate, increase the visitor's desire while decreasing their labor and confusion:

- **Increase desire** – Entice visitors with how much value you provide. Create intrigue.
- **Decrease labor** – Reduce the work your visitors have to perform so they don't get tired or annoyed. Be concise and ensure every word and element is of value.
- **Decrease confusion** – Don't confuse visitors with obscure or verbose messaging. Ensure every sentence can be easily understood. And make it self-evident which action they should take next (e.g. sign up or purchase). And ensure your action elements (e.g. buttons) are unmissable.

This means we shouldn't do something avant garde with our homepage structure unless we have a good reason to. Here's the typical structure we'll be using:

- **Navbar**: The top of the page – where your logo and navigation links are.
- **Hero**: The main section at the top of the page, which includes your header text, subheader text, and captivating imagery.
- **Social proof**: Logos of press coverage or your well-known customers.
- **Call-to-action (CTA)**: Your signup button and a concise incentive to click it.
- **Features and objections**: Your key value propositions fully written out.
- **Repeat your call-to-action**
- **Footer**: Miscellaneous links.

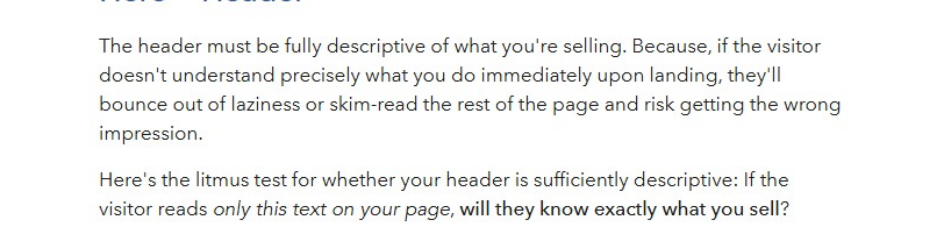
Here it is visualized:



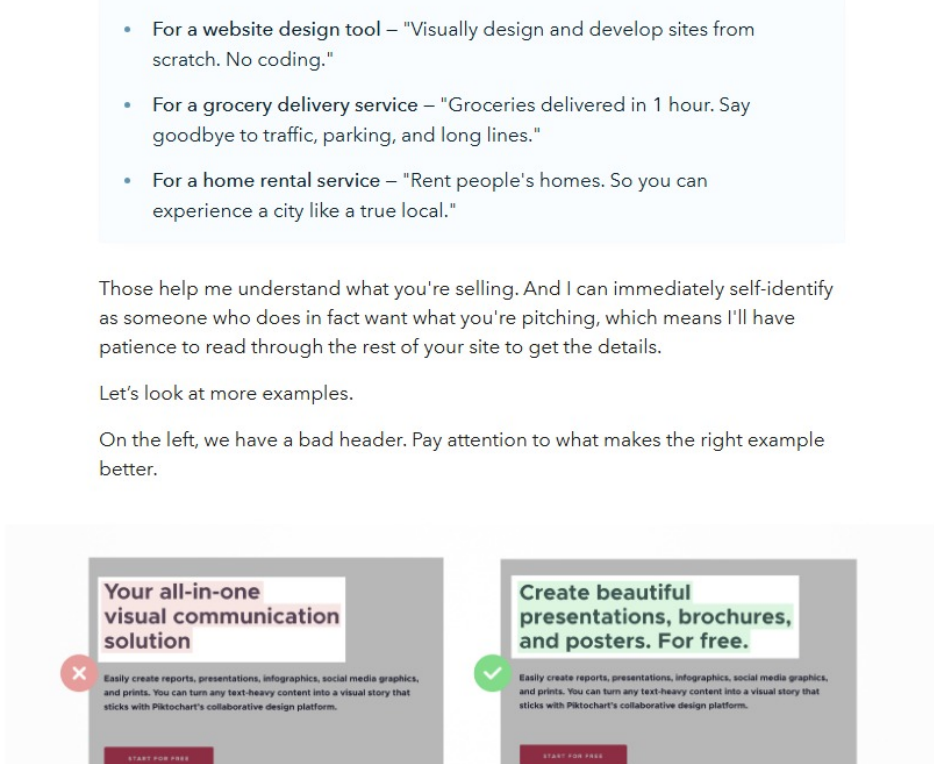
I'll walk through each of these elements.

If you're looking for agencies to design your site, visit [PineappleList.com](#), which is free. There's no catch, and it works.

Element – Hero



"Hero" is jargon for the big section at the top of your page—what visitors first see before they scroll down. It's also called your *above-the-fold*.



Your hero consists of header text, subheader text, and often an image. You must put a lot of thought into each of these. Nailing header copy has the highest impact on whether people continue scrolling and reading. Consider how people don't actually have short attention spans:

- They finish 3 hour Joe Rogan episodes.
- They binge 14 hour shows.

Instead, they have short consideration spans: they must be hooked quickly. So, don't fear writing a long homepage. But, ensure your hero is incredible.

Hero – Header

The header must be fully descriptive of what you're selling. Because, if the visitor doesn't understand precisely what you do immediately upon landing, they'll bounce out of laziness or skim-read the rest of the page and risk getting the wrong impression.

Here's the litmus test for whether your header is sufficiently descriptive: If the visitor reads *only* this text on your page, *will they know exactly what you sell?*

Bad headers—found all over the web—are those that read like slogans instead of descriptions. For example, "Improve your workflow!" or "Supercharge your collaboration!" are useless. If that's all I read on your page, I'd have no idea what the product actually is. And I'll probably leave.

What does a good, *descriptive* header look like? Like this:

- For a **website design tool** – "Visually design and develop sites from scratch. No coding."
- For a **grocery delivery service** – "Groceries delivered in 1 hour. Say goodbye to traffic, parking, and long lines."
- For a **home rental service** – "Rent people's homes. So you can experience a city like a true local."

Those help me understand what you're selling. And I can immediately self-identify as someone who does in fact want what you're pitching, which means I'll have patience to read through the rest of your site to get the details.

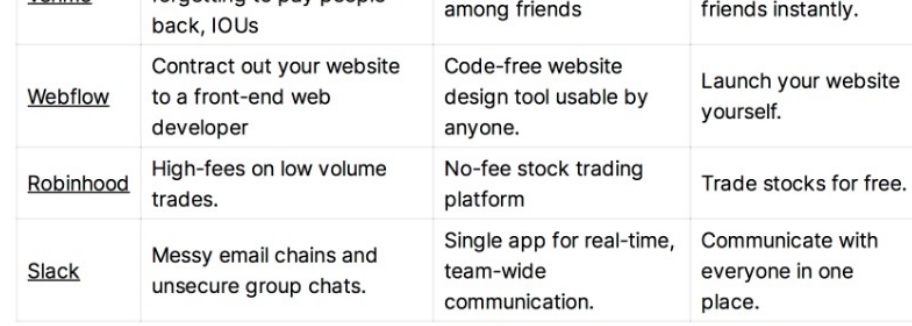
Let's look at more examples.

On the left, we have a bad header. Pay attention to what makes the right example better.



The right one is better because:

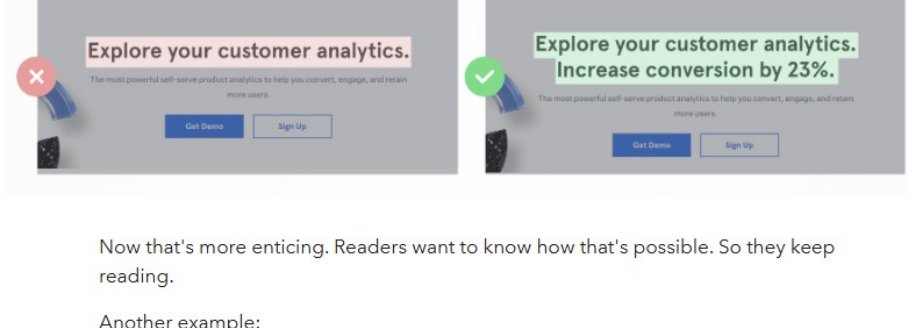
- It no longer sounds like corporate speak.
- It describes the specific benefit of the product.



Again, the right one is better because:

- It no longer uses vague phrasing.
- It describes the specific benefit of your product.

Another:



The right one is better because:

- It doesn't talk in self-congratulatory terms. It talks in terms of benefits to the visitor.
- It clarifies the specific outcome of using the product.

What these improved examples have in common is increased specificity.

Specificity is step one to strong header writing.

Header writing process

To write our header and subheader text, we'll follow two steps:

- Identify how users get value from your product
- Add a hook-to get them to keep reading

1 Identify how users get value

Value props are the ways people "get value" from your product.

Here's an exercise for finding your product's value props:

- What bad alternative do people resort to when they lack your product?
- How is your product better than that bad alternative?
- Now turn the last step into an action statement—that's your value prop.

As an example, let's use the free language learning app Duolingo. It offers short-form, interactive lessons.

1. Bad alternatives	2. Your better solution	3. Action statement
Expensive language learning courses and subscriptions	100% free language learning	Learn a new language for free.
In-person learning courses with long-term commitments	Flexible language learning at your own pace	Learn a new language whenever, wherever.
Boring language learning courses	Have real-world conversations in new languages	Learn a language through real world communication.

A few more examples:

Company	1. Bad alternative	2. Better solution	3. Action statement
Airbnb	Stuck in sterile hotels, don't experience the real culture	Stay in locals' homes.	Experience new cities like a local.
Dropbox	Unorganized paper files, easily lost flashdrives	Online cloud storage that automatically syncs your files	Upload your files to the cloud automatically.
DoorDash	Long waits at restaurants and traffic-heavy trips to get food	Quick deliveries from local restaurants.	Get your favorite meals with the press of a button.
Venmo	Finding ATMs to get cash, forgetting to pay people back, IOUs	Mobile money transfer among friends	Get paid back by your friends instantly.
Webflow	Contract out your website to a front-end web developer	Code-free website design tool usable by anyone.	Launch your website yourself.
Robinhood	High-fees on low volume trades.	No-fee stock trading platform	Trade stocks for free.
Slack	Messy email chains and unsecure group chats.	Single app for real-time, team-wide communication.	Communicate with everyone in one place.

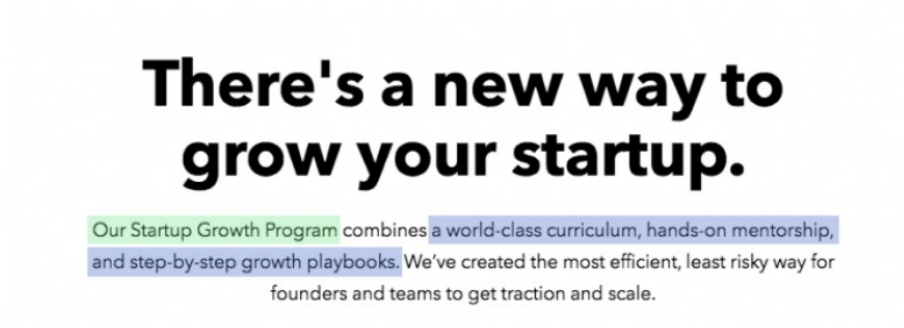
2 Add a hook

Adding a hook to your header can take two forms:

- A bold claim
- A response to likely skepticism

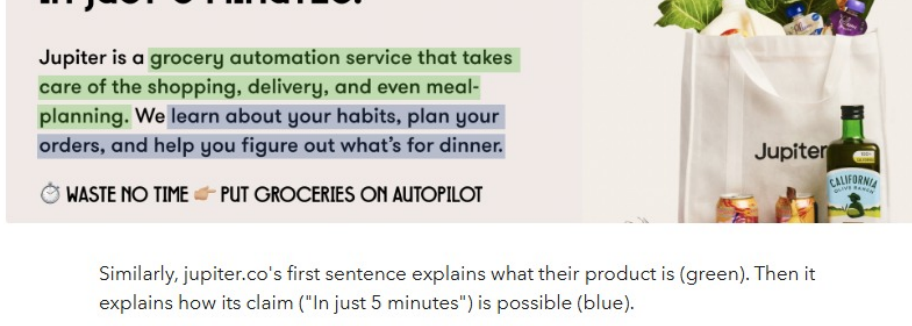
Hook option #1: Add a bold, specific claim

On the left, we have a vague statement. On the right, we have a specific, bold claim about the benefit users will receive.



Now that's more enticing. Readers want to know how that's possible. So they keep reading.

Another example:



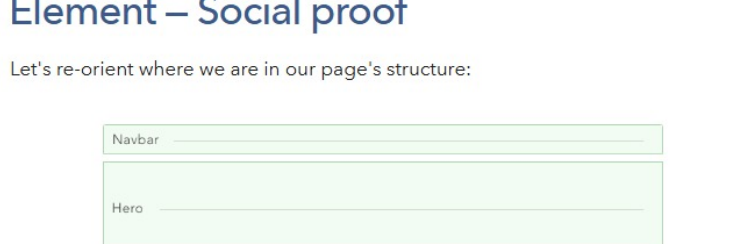
In short, a bold claim is:

- Highly specific
- Triggers a dopamine hit of "wow, I didn't know that was possible."

Hook option #2: Address objections

As an alternative to including a bold claim, another way to create a hook is by addressing a key objection in your header.

Let's use the website design tool, Webflow, as an example. Below is their header copy, which hasn't yet been paired with a hook:



Upon seeing this, objections readers have could include:

- But, I don't know how to code. Don't websites require coding skills?
- This will take too long. I don't have the time. I'm not a trained designer.
- This will be low functionality and constraining like other site design tools.

Your job is to identify which of these is a major **buying objection**—and to proactively address it. Don't let visitors retain their unaddressed concerns that cause them to bounce before scrolling. See below:

Objections	Updated header	Header quality
I don't know how to code.	Build your own website. Without code.	Good
It'll take too long.	Build your own website in 20 minutes. No code.	Better
It'll be low functionality or limiting.	Build a custom website in 20 minutes. No code.	Best

In the examples above, we're expanding our header's first sentence plus adding a second—in pursuit of our handling a key objection.

This requires balance. If you bloat your header with extraneous details, it becomes hard to read. Don't try to address every objection—you can do that with the rest of your page.

Backing up, how do you go about identifying your customers' biggest objections? Survey them:

- "What almost stopped you from buying?" That's an objection.
- "Why do you think non-customers haven't bought from us yet?" That's an objection.

Let's revisit our earlier examples—this time with objection handling:

Company	Previous	Objections	New
Airbnb	Experience new cities like a local.	Only available for long-term rentals	Experience new cities like a local in rentals. No minimum stays.
Dropbox	Upload your files to the cloud automatically.	Risk of low-privacy	Upload your files to the cloud automatically. Chosen by over half of the Fortune 500s for our superior security.
DoorDash	Get your favorite meals with the press of a button.	High delivery costs	Get your favorite meals with the press of a button. No extra fees.
Webflow	Launch your website yourself.	I can't code	Launch your website yourself. No coding required.
Robinhood	Stock trading without fees.	There's a minimum trade size	Stock trading without fees. No trade minimums.
Slack	Communicate with everyone in one place.	It'll cost too much	Communicate with everyone in one place. Free for teams.

To recap, once you've identified your value prop, add a hook: either inject a bold claim or proactively address an objection.

If your product targets multiple major personas, you can prompt visitors to choose which persona they fit into at the top of your page. Then route them to the appropriate section of your site. I call this "choose your own adventure." In the example below, [xealenergy.com](#) creates different paths for apartment and workplace owners:

Here, we make electric car chargers work for you.

Similarly, [jupiter.co](#)'s first sentence explains what their product is (green). Then it explains how its claim ("In just 5 minutes") is possible (blue).

As a rule of thumb, your subheader should only be one or two sentences. Don't make this an essay. Keep reading breezy so visitors sustain their momentum.

Let's look at more examples:

Company	Header	Subheader
Airbnb	Experience your getaway vacation like a local. No minimum stays.	An online rental marketplace with thousands of short-term rentals in your area.
Venmo	Get paid back by your friends instantly. No fees.	Venmo is a money transfer platform that instantly connects between you and your friends' banks.
Webflow	Build your own website in 15 minutes. No code.	Webflow is a website building platform that uses plug and play technology to help you launch quickly.
Robinhood	Trade stocks for free. No minimums.	Robinhood is an e-trading platform that allows for instant investments with no trading fees.
Slack	Keep your business communications organized. For free.	Slack is an all-in-one communication platform that organizes your conversations into channels, threads, and direct messages.

Element – Social proof

Let's re-orient where we are in our page's structure:

We're on row three now: social proof.

Your social proof section is a collage of logos showing off your press coverage and/or your most well-known customers. Or if you're an ecommerce product, you can show photos of happy customers with their purchases.