

SOP-305: Amazon Indexing Mechanics - Complete Guide

Nurise Listing Optimization

Purpose

Master the mechanics of Amazon keyword indexing, including character limits, indexing hierarchy, forbidden keywords, and A+ Content considerations. This SOP covers the technical aspects of how Amazon indexes your listing content to ensure maximum keyword visibility.

When to Use

- When writing new listing copy
- When optimizing existing listings for better indexing
- Before publishing any listing content
- When testing if keywords are properly indexed
- When troubleshooting why keywords aren't appearing in search

Prerequisites

- ☐ Understanding of basic Amazon listing structure
 - ☐ Access to Seller Central
 - ☐ Keyword research completed (SOP-201/202)
 - ☐ Familiarity with SOP-1101 (Keyword Indexing Troubleshooting)
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Part 1: What is Amazon Indexing?

Definition

Indexing = Having your keywords stored in Amazon's algorithm database so your product appears when customers search for those terms.

Key Concept

INDEXED = Keyword is in Amazon's database → Product CAN appear in search
NOT INDEXED = Keyword is NOT in database → Product CANNOT appear in search

Critical Understanding: If a keyword is NOT indexed, your product will NEVER appear for that search term - regardless of how much you spend on PPC or how well optimized your listing is.

The "Discovery vs. Search" Model

Amazon operates on two principles:

1. **Discovery** - Product appears through browsing, recommendations
2. **Search** - Product appears when customer searches specific keywords

Indexing only matters for Search. Your product must be indexed for keywords to appear in search results.

Part 2: Indexing Hierarchy

Priority Order (Most to Least Important)

Priority	Location	Indexing Weight	Notes
1st	Title	Highest	Most powerful for ranking
2nd	Bullet Points	High	Subject to character limits
3rd	Backend Search Terms	Medium	Hidden from customers
4th	Description	Lower	Still valuable

What This Means for Strategy

1. **Title First** - Put your most important keywords in the title
2. **Bullets Second** - Use bullets for secondary keywords
3. **Backend Third** - Use for overflow keywords not fitting elsewhere
4. **Description Fourth** - Use for long-tail and natural language variations

Part 3: Character Limits and Indexing Rules

Critical Character Limits

Field	Display Limit	Indexing Limit	TOS Recommendation
Title	200 characters	200 characters	Varies by category (80-200)
Bullet Points	500 chars/bullet	1000 chars TOTAL*	500 chars/bullet
Backend Search Terms	249 bytes	249 bytes	Use all 249 bytes
Description	2000 characters	2000 characters	2000 chars (including HTML)

CRITICAL: The Bullet Point 1000-Character Rule

WARNING: *This is the most important indexing rule most sellers don't know.*

The Rule: Amazon only indexes approximately **1000 characters total** across ALL bullet points combined - NOT 500 characters per bullet.

What This Means:

SCENARIO A: 5 bullets × 500 characters each = 2,500 characters written
REALITY: Amazon only indexes ~1000 of those characters

SCENARIO B: 5 bullets × 200 characters each = 1,000 characters written
REALITY: All 1,000 characters likely indexed

How Amazon Selects Characters:

- Amazon does NOT simply index the first 1000 characters
- The selection algorithm appears somewhat random
- This means keywords in bullet #4 or #5 may OR may not be indexed

Best Practice for Bullet Points

Approach	Recommendation
Option A	Keep total bullet content under 1000 characters
Option B	Front-load critical keywords in bullets 1-2
Option C	Use backend search terms for overflow keywords

Title Character Limits by Category

Category	Recommended Limit
Most categories	200 characters
Clothing/Apparel	80 characters
Books	200 characters
Electronics	200 characters

Note: Always check your specific category's style guide in Seller Central.

Part 4: How to Test if Keywords are Indexed

The ASIN + Keyword Method

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Go to Amazon.com (or your marketplace)
2. In the search bar, type: [ASIN] [space] [keyword]
3. Press Enter
4. Observe the result

Example:

Search: B09EXAMPLE123 organic vitamin

Interpreting Results

Result	Visual Indicator	Meaning
Product appears in search	"Orange response" - your product shows	INDEXED
No results / Product doesn't appear	Empty results or "No results"	NOT INDEXED

The "Orange Response"

When a keyword IS indexed, Amazon shows your product with an orange-ish highlight or your product appears in the search results. This visual confirmation is your proof of indexing.

Testing Best Practices

1. **Test one keyword at a time** - Don't combine multiple keywords
2. **Use exact match** - Test the exact phrase you want to rank for
3. **Test after changes** - Wait 24-48 hours after listing updates

4. **Document results** - Keep a record of indexed vs. non-indexed keywords

Indexing Test Template

Keyword	Search Volume	Indexed?	Date Tested	Location in Listing	Action Needed
organic vitamins	5,000	Yes	YYYY-MM-DD	Title	None
natural supplements	3,200	No	YYYY-MM-DD	Bullet 4	Move to title
daily multivitamin	2,800	Yes	YYYY-MM-DD	Bullet 1	None

Part 5: Forbidden and Trigger Keywords

Keywords That Can Cause Problems

Certain keywords trigger Amazon's automated systems and can result in:

- Listing suppression
- Keyword removal
- Account warnings
- ASIN suspension

High-Risk Keyword Categories

Category	Example Keywords	Risk Level
Medical Claims	antibacterial, antimicrobial, antifungal	HIGH
Pesticide-Related	kills bugs, pest control, insecticide	HIGH
CBD/Cannabis	CBD, hemp oil (context dependent)	HIGH
Mold-Related	mold killer, mold remover, anti-mold	HIGH
Unverified Claims	FDA approved, clinically proven, cures	HIGH

Specific Forbidden/Risky Terms

Pesticide Trigger Words:

- Kills/destroys [any pest]
- Repels [insects/rodents]
- Pesticide
- Insecticide
- Bug killer
- Pest control

Medical Claim Triggers:

- Antibacterial
- Antimicrobial
- Antifungal
- Antiviral
- Disinfectant (without EPA registration)
- Sanitizer (without FDA registration)

Other Risky Terms:

- Mold (in cleaning products context)
- Organic (without USDA certification)
- FDA approved (without actual approval)

How to Handle Risky Keywords

If You Need To...	Do This Instead
Describe antibacterial properties	Use "helps maintain cleanliness"
Mention mold prevention	Use "moisture control" or "ventilation"
Describe pest benefits	Focus on other product benefits
Make health claims	Use "supports wellness" language

Checking for Forbidden Keywords

Before Publishing:

1. Review Amazon's Restricted Products policies
2. Search for your keywords in Seller Central policy pages
3. Check category-specific style guides
4. When in doubt, don't include the keyword

Reference: See SOP-801 (Prohibited Keywords List) for comprehensive list

Part 6: A+ Content and Indexing

The A+ Content Indexing Rule

Critical Fact: A+ Content visible text is **NOT indexed** for search on the front-end.

What IS and ISN'T Indexed

A+ Component	Indexed?	Notes
Module headlines	NO	Not searchable
Module body text	NO	Not searchable
Comparison charts	NO	Not searchable
Image text overlays	NO	Not searchable
Image ALT tags	YES	Adds to indexing!
Backend description	YES	Still indexed even with A+

The ALT Tag Opportunity

Even though A+ Content text isn't indexed, the **image ALT tags** (alternative text) ARE indexed by Amazon.

How to Use ALT Tags:

1. When uploading A+ Content images, fill in the ALT text field
2. Include relevant keywords in ALT descriptions
3. Make ALT text descriptive AND keyword-rich

Example ALT Tags:

Image: Product lifestyle shot

Poor ALT: "product image 1"

Good ALT: "organic vitamin supplements bottle with natural ingredients on kitchen counter"

Backend Description Still Matters

Even with A+ Content enabled:

- Your backend description field remains indexed
- Always fill out the description field
- Use it for keywords that don't fit elsewhere
- Don't leave it blank just because A+ is live

A+ Content Strategy for Indexing

A+ Content Focus: Conversion (images, comparison charts, brand story)

Backend Description Focus: Indexing (keywords, search terms)

Part 7: Exact Match vs. Phrase Indexing

Understanding Exact Match

Exact Match = The complete keyword phrase appears together in your listing

Example:

- Keyword target: "organic vitamin c supplements"
- Exact match: "...our organic vitamin c supplements provide..."
- NOT exact match: "...organic supplements with vitamin c..."

Why Exact Match Matters

Match Type	Indexing	Ranking Potential
Exact match in title	Strong indexing	Highest ranking potential
Exact match in bullets	Good indexing	Good ranking potential
Partial/scattered match	May index	Lower ranking potential
No match	No indexing	Cannot rank

Exact Match Placement Priority

1. **Title** - Put exact match of top 1-2 keywords
2. **Bullet 1-2** - Put exact match of keywords 3-5
3. **Backend** - Put exact match of overflow keywords

Strategy for Long-Tail Keywords

For longer keyword phrases:

- Keep the exact phrase together when possible
 - If breaking apart, keep core words adjacent
 - Test indexing after publishing
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Part 8: TOS Compliance for Listing Content

Amazon's Official Style Guide Requirements

Title Requirements:

- No promotional phrases ("best seller," "top rated")
- No pricing information
- No excessive capitalization
- No special characters (except where needed)
- Category-specific length limits

Bullet Point Requirements:

- Start with capital letter
- No promotional language
- No pricing or shipping info
- No time-sensitive information
- Feature-benefit format recommended

Description Requirements:

- No HTML formatting (except basic tags)
- No external URLs
- No contact information
- No promotional content

TOS Reference Links

When in doubt, check these Seller Central resources:

- Product title requirements
 - Product detail page rules
 - Category style guides
 - Restricted products policies
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Part 9: Indexing Optimization Workflow

For New Listings

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STEP 1: Keyword Research
      ↓
STEP 2: Prioritize Keywords (by search volume and relevance)
      ↓
STEP 3: Map Keywords to Listing Locations
      - Top 2-3 → Title (exact match)
      - Next 5-10 → Bullets 1-2 (exact match)
      - Overflow → Backend search terms
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STEP 4: Write Copy (within character limits)
– Title: Under 200 chars
– Bullets: Under 1000 chars TOTAL
↓
STEP 5: Check for Forbidden Keywords
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STEP 6: Publish
↓
STEP 7: Wait 24–48 hours
↓
STEP 8: Test Indexing (ASIN + keyword)
↓
STEP 9: Adjust if needed

For Existing Listings

STEP 1: Test Current Indexing Status
– Test top 20 keywords
– Document which are/aren't indexed
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STEP 2: Identify Problems
– Non-indexed important keywords
– Keywords in low-priority locations
↓
STEP 3: Optimize
– Move critical keywords to title
– Consolidate bullets under 1000 chars
– Add missing keywords to backend
↓
STEP 4: Publish Changes
↓
STEP 5: Re-test in 24–48 hours

Part 10: Indexing Checklist

Pre-Publication Checklist

- ☐ Top 3 keywords appear as exact match in title
- ☐ Title is under 200 characters (or category limit)
- ☐ Total bullet point characters under 1000
- ☐ Secondary keywords in bullets 1-2
- ☐ Backend search terms filled (249 bytes)
- ☐ No forbidden/trigger keywords
- ☐ No TOS violations
- ☐ A+ Content ALT tags include keywords
- ☐ Backend description completed (even with A+ Content)

Post-Publication Checklist (24-48 hours later)

- ☐ Test top 10 keywords using ASIN + keyword method
- ☐ Document indexed vs. non-indexed
- ☐ Identify keywords needing relocation
- ☐ Plan adjustments if needed

Monthly Indexing Audit

- ☐ Re-test top 20 keywords
- ☐ Check for any de-indexing
- ☐ Review for new keyword opportunities
- ☐ Update tracking spreadsheet

Quick Reference Card

Character Limits

Field	Indexing Limit
Title	200 chars
Bullets (TOTAL)	1000 chars
Backend	249 bytes
Description	2000 chars

Indexing Test

Search: [ASIN] [space] [keyword]
 Result: Product appears = INDEXED
 Result: No product = NOT INDEXED

Hierarchy

Title (1st) > Bullets (2nd) > Backend (3rd) > Description (4th)

Forbidden Keywords

Avoid: antibacterial, mold, pesticide-related, unverified claims

A+ Content

- Front-end text: NOT indexed
- ALT tags: INDEXED
- Backend description: INDEXED

Success Criteria

- ☐ Top 10 keywords confirmed indexed
- ☐ All character limits respected
- ☐ No forbidden keywords in listing

- ☐ A+ Content ALT tags optimized
 - ☐ Backend fields fully utilized
 - ☐ Regular indexing monitoring scheduled
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Related SOPs

- Previous: [SOP-304: Listing Builder Complete Guide](#)
 - Keyword Research: [SOP-302: Keyword Optimization](#)
 - Troubleshooting: [SOP-1101: Keyword Indexing Troubleshooting](#)
 - Forbidden Keywords: [SOP-801: Prohibited Keywords List](#)
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Source Material

This SOP is based on the webinar "Indexing on Amazon - How To Do It Right" by Tomer Levin (Blaze Copywriting), which provided detailed insights into Amazon's indexing mechanics, character limits, and best practices.

Time Estimate: 1-2 hours for full indexing optimization **Difficulty:** Intermediate **Last Updated:** 2026-01-23

Nurise Listing Optimization SOP v1.0