

Make use of the "description" meta tag

Summaries can be defined for each page

A page's description meta tag gives Google and other search engines a summary of what the page is about (1). Whereas a page's title may be a few words or a phrase, a page's description meta tag might be a sentence or two or a short paragraph. Google Webmaster Tools provides a handy [content analysis section](#) that'll tell you about any description meta tags that are either too short, long, or duplicated too many times (the same information is also shown for <title> tags). Like the <title> tag, the description meta tag is placed within the <head> tag of your HTML document.

What are the merits of description meta tags?

Description meta tags are important because Google might use them as snippets for your pages. Note that we say "might" because Google may choose to use a relevant section of your page's visible text if it does a good job of matching up with a user's query. Alternatively, Google might use your site's description in the [Open Directory Project](#) if your site is listed there (learn how to [prevent search engines from displaying ODP data](#)). Adding description meta tags to each of your pages is always a good practice in case Google cannot find a good selection of text to use in the snippet. The Webmaster Central Blog has an informative post on [improving snippets with better description meta tags](#).

Words in the snippet are bolded when they appear in the user's query (2). This gives the user clues about whether the content on the page matches with what he or she is looking for. (3) is another example, this time showing a snippet from a description meta tag on a deeper page (which ideally has its own unique description meta tag) containing an article.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Brandon's Baseball Cards - Buy Cards, Baseball News, Card Prices</title>
<meta name="description" content="Brandon's Baseball Cards provides a
large selection of vintage and modern baseball cards for sale. We also offer
daily baseball news and events in">
</head>
<body>
```

(1) The beginning of the description meta tag for our homepage, which gives a brief overview of the site's offerings.



(2) A user performs the query [baseball cards]. Our homepage appears as a result, with part of its description meta tag used as the snippet.



(3) A user performs the query [rarest baseball cards]. One of our deeper pages, with its unique description meta tag used as the snippet, appears as a result.

Glossary

Snippet

Text displayed beneath the title of a corresponding web page on the search results pages of a search engine. A web page summary and/or parts of the page that match the search keywords will be displayed.

Open Directory Project (ODP)

The world's largest volunteer-run web directory (a list of Internet links collected on a large scale and then organized by category).

Domain

An address on the Internet that indicates the location of a computer or network. These are administrated to avoid duplication.