There is an image, mapping between these best practices and the template created by the Web Team (http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/topic-guides-template), at the end of this document.

General Guidelines:

a. All pages/tabs should have a “Contact Me” box and a “Need Help?” box in the right column.

b. All pages/tabs should have a consistent left column. The specific Related Guides or How-to Guides might change between tabs.

c. No list/link boxes should have descriptive text above the list.

d. Links will be set at the system level to open in the same tab. As a general rule, for the sake of consistency within LibGuides and with the web at large, links should all be set to open in the same tab/window of the browser; however, if there are compelling reasons for a specific link to open in a new tab, this setting can be overridden.

e. In the Guide Styles area, under the Page & Tab Options tab, choose white (the default) for the background color and light blue (the third from the right) for the tab color; in the Box Options tab, change the Box Header Color to #006A4F. (If you use the template, these are all set correctly for you.)

f. **NOTE:** Formatting-wise, it’s going to be easier to copy the template and add your content into that. But be sure to assign the guide to the “Topic Guides” group and all appropriate subjects when you’re finished. Also, let Coral know when it’s published, so she can update the Subjects list.

1. Tabs:
   a. The first tab is labeled “Start.”
   b. A guide should have between one and six tabs. (A good way to keep content, without creating many tabs, is to create “Related Guides.”)
   c. Tabs (other than the first tab) should be sub-disciplines, if possible.
   i. None of the tabs should be “How-to” (tutorial) content, unless it is subject specific.
   ii. If “How-to” content is needed, link to How-to Guides.
   d. Tab names should be 1-3 words.
   e. Sub-tabs should not be used.
   f. Tabs should always be pages within the guide; using a tab to link to an external resource or another guide is confusing.

2. Left column:
   a. There should be a discipline- or subject-scoped QuickSearch box at the top of the column. (Coral or Mike can help set it up.) If you feel that a QuickSearch box is inappropriate for your discipline, please have a conversation with Coral or Mike, to see if we can build a relevant search box.
   b. *If there is more than one tab,* every tab should have an “In This Guide” box, of type Table of Contents, immediately below the QuickSearch box, with links to the other tabs.
   c. There should be a “Related Guides” box.
d. If there are related course guides, an additional box called “Course Guides” can be added below “Related Guides.”

e. Below that, optionally, a “How-to Guides” box can be added, with up to 5 How-to Guides listed (in simple links format).

3. Middle column:
   a. Top: a “Starting Points” box with 3-5 database links (in links & lists format), arranged in order from most useful for the subject to least. Each database link should have a brief description. (As a rule of thumb, try to keep the descriptions under 140 characters/25 words.)
   b. Optionally, another box, called “Beyond the Surface,” can be added below the “Starting Points” box. It should be similar in format to the aforementioned box, but can have up to 7 links and can include useful websites.

4. Right column:
   a. The top box should be the “Need Help?” box, copied from the “A Bunch of Reusable Boxes” guide. (It’s important to make a linked copy; this box will probably change when we implement LibChat.)
   b. Next: one (exactly one) profile box, with the label changed to “Contact Me.” Because it’s below the “Need Help?” box, the profile has to be removed from the page, added as a new box (of type Profile Box), and the librarian chosen manually.
      i. It’s fine to have multiple editors on a guide, but for Topic Guides, there should be exactly one owner listed on the front page.
   c. The “Contact Me” box should have a photo of the librarian (if at all possible), or at least of some kind of avatar. If you would like a photo that looks like a drawing of you, contact Ralph; he is happy to help set that up.

A list of guides that follow these best practices (some still in development):

- Creative Writing - http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/mfa
- Computer Science - http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/computer_science
- Engineering - http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/engineering
- Geology - http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/content.php?pid=466211
- Languages - http://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/languages
3a

Descriptive Database Name (One)
A short description of the database. If you need to share tips about how to use it, please make sure to put them in a How-To Guide. You can link to that guide from here. Please don’t use the “More Information” box when creating a link.

Descriptive Database Name (Two)
For instance, the description on the link above this one was too long.

Final Descriptive Database Name
Tips guides should help even if someone is new and intimidated. Short and helpful is the goal.

2b

Start
Sub-discipline Tab

2c

More Template Content

Add New Link | Reorder Links

3b

Descriptive Database Name (One)
Same idea as Starting Points, but here’s where you give them those extra databases that will really help the advanced searcher, or the one who wants to dig a little deeper. The goal is still to keep the list fairly short, if at all possible, but it can be a little longer than Starting Points if it needs to be.

Descriptive Database Name (Two)

Add New Link | Reorder Links