AEO Audit Checklist

Use it to evaluate any page for Answer Engine Optimization and ensure it's primed for AI-driven search results.

1. Question Identification
- [ ] Collected top 8–12 real user questions (via Perplexity, Google PAA, support logs)
- [ ] Each question is clearly defined and unique

2. Prompt-First Headlines
- [ ] H2 (or H3) headlines are phrased as full, natural-language questions
- [ ] Questions match user intent and wording

3. Lead Answer Optimization
- [ ] First 1–2 sentences under each question directly answer it
- [ ] Core answer is bolded or clearly marked
- [ ] Answers are concise (40–60 words)

4. Expanded Content Depth
- [ ] Bullet lists, numbered steps, or examples follow each lead answer
- [ ] Content fills any gaps left by competitors (adds data, visuals, anecdotes)

5. Schema Markup Implementation
- [ ] FAQ schema for Q&A pages (JSON-LD formatted)
- [ ] HowTo schema for step-by-step guides (where applicable)
- [ ] Validated via Google Rich Results Test (no errors/warnings)

6. Structured Data Extras
- [ ] List items (<ol> /) annotated in schema
- [ ] Key "Key Takeaway" or summary line included for each section
- [ ] All schema entries wrap standalone Q&A blocks

7. Page Deployment & Indexing
- ☐ New/updated pages published and live
- ☐ Sitemap regenerated and submitted to GSC & Bing Webmaster Tools
- ☐ IndexNow ping sent (if supported)
- ☐ robots.txt and noindex tags checked and cleared

8. AI-Readable Formatting
- ☐ Short paragraphs and clear subheadings
- ☐ Standalone Q&A blocks make sense in plain-text view
- ☐ Core answers easily extractable (e.g., via text editor)

9. Multi-Modal Optimization
- ☐ Images include descriptive alt text
- ☐ Infographics or charts with captions/transcripts
- ☐ Short videos hosted with transcripts

10. Testing & Iteration
- ☐ Queried target questions on Perplexity, ChatGPT, Bard—tracked citations
- ☐ URLs run through Profound, Goodie AI, HubSpot AI Search Grader
- ☐ Refinements made based on test results; resubmitted for indexing

11. Performance Tracking
- ☐ AI-referral traffic monitored in analytics (look for AI user-agents/referral tags)
- ☐ Zero-click rates and branded search volume tracked
- ☐ Quarterly review scheduled to revisit and refresh AEO pages

Use this checklist before publishing any AI-targeted content to maximize your chances of being the answer AI assistants surface first!