Perform Keyword Research for Google Ads

Last Updated / Reviewed: Jan 10th, 2023
Execution Time: *~30mins - 1 hour*

Goal: Research a list of potential keywords to run a campaign for in Google Keyword Planner.

Ideal Outcome: A list of potential keywords to run a profitable campaign for.

Prerequisites or requirements: You need a Google Ads account. If you don't have one please follow SOP 014: Create a Google Ads account.

Why this is important: Doing keyword research will help you find and select relevant, profitable keywords for your campaign to help you reach people who are interested in your product or service.

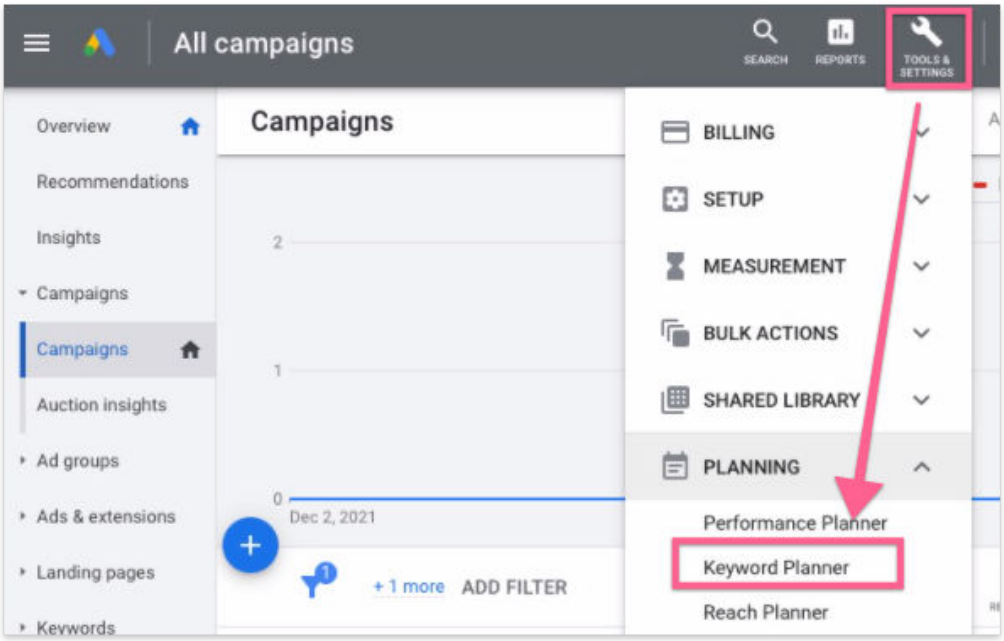
Where this is done: Google Keyword Planner.

When this is done: Before you run any Google search campaign.

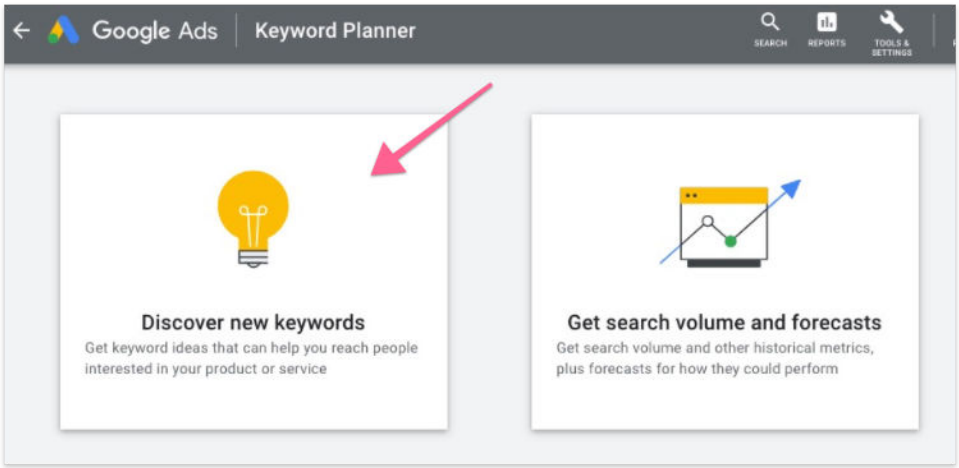
Who does this: Marketing manager or the person responsible for media buying.

☐ Environment setup

1. Head to https://ads.google.com/ and log in to your account.
2. From the top navigation, click “Tools & Settings” and look for “Keyword Planner” under “Planning”.



3. Click “Discover new keywords”.

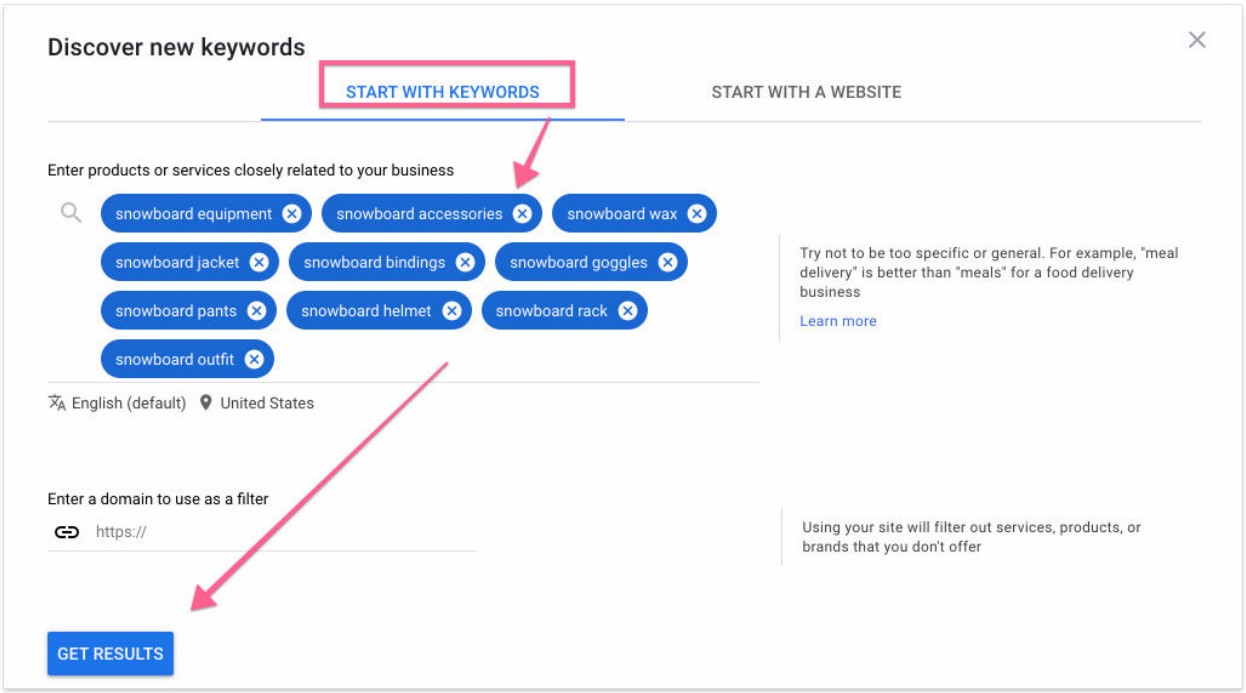


4. There are 2 ways to start your keyword research. If you have a good idea of what your customers are searching for in your industry, start with keywords. Otherwise, you should start with a website.

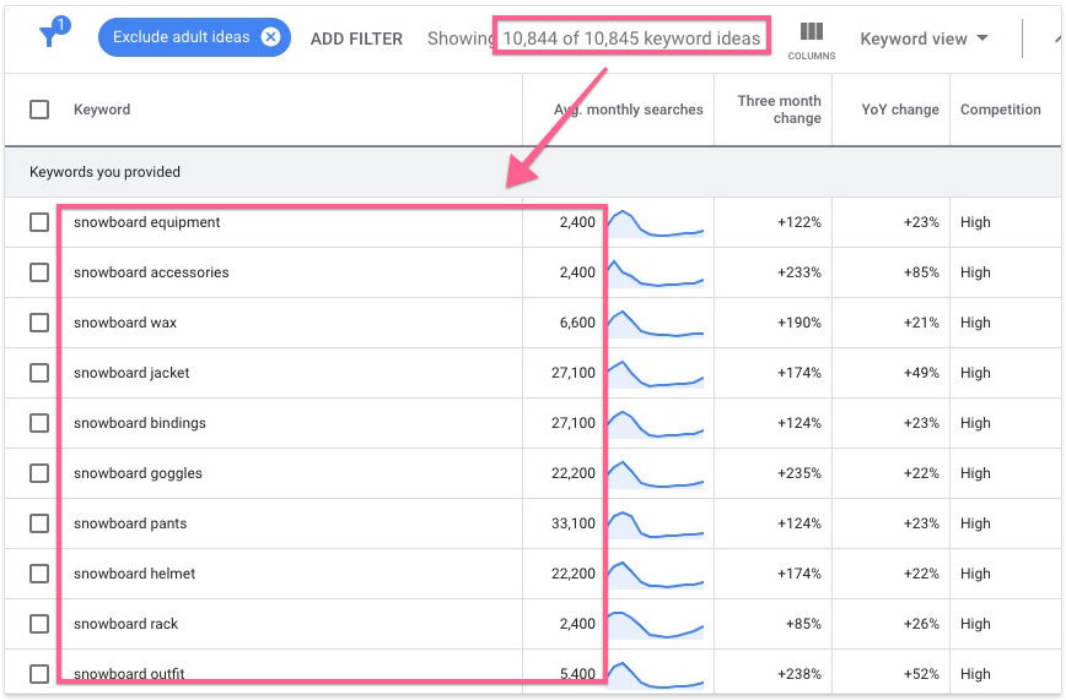
a. Start with keywords — Add seed keywords and Google Keyword Planner will provide a list of recommended keyword ideas.
b. Start with a website — Add your (or a competitor's) website and Google Keyword Planner will provide a list of recommended keyword ideas.

☐ Start keyword research with keywords.

1. Enter up to 10 keywords related to your industry or niche.



2. Click "Get results".
3. Here you will see a list of keyword ideas available (ranked by relevance) based on the keywords you entered earlier.



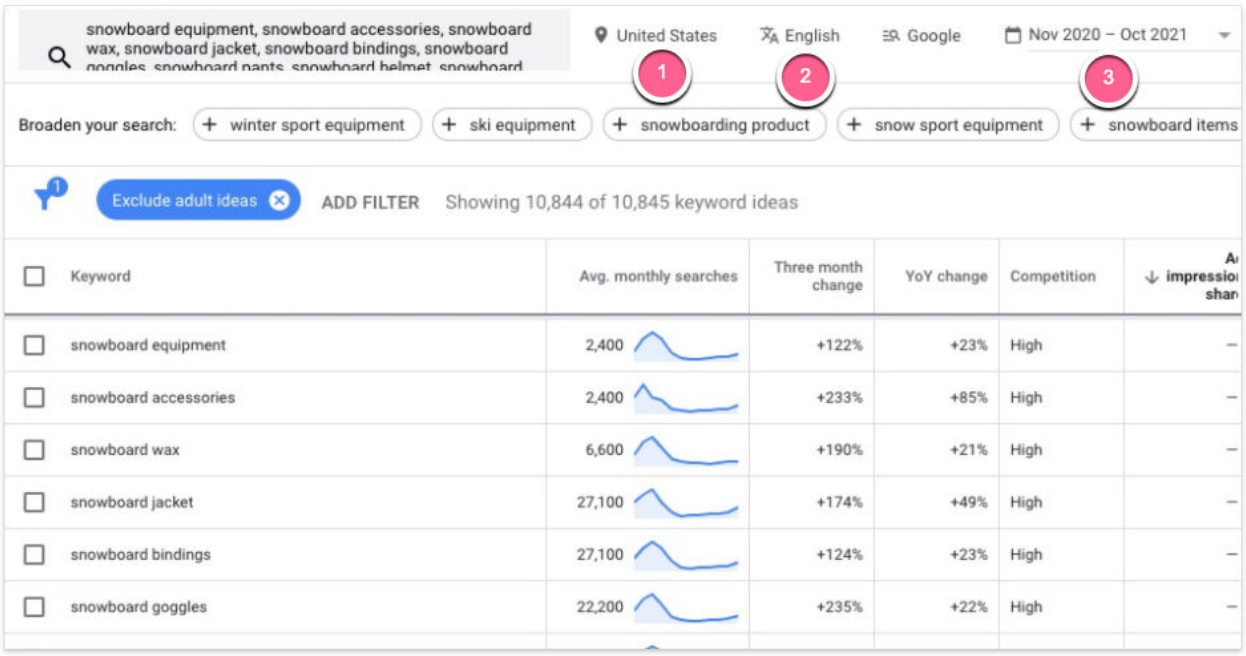
Keyword	Avg. monthly searches	Three month change	YoY change	Competition
Keywords you provided				
snowboard equipment	2,400	+122%	+23%	High
snowboard accessories	2,400	+233%	+85%	High
snowboard wax	6,600	+190%	+21%	High
snowboard jacket	27,100	+174%	+49%	High
snowboard bindings	27,100	+124%	+23%	High
snowboard goggles	22,200	+235%	+22%	High
snowboard pants	33,100	+124%	+23%	High
snowboard helmet	22,200	+174%	+22%	High
snowboard rack	2,400	+85%	+26%	High
snowboard outfit	5,400	+238%	+52%	High

4. There are a number of metrics for each keyword suggestion but you should focus on the following:

Keyword	Avg. monthly searches	Three month change	YoY change	Competition	A impressio shar	Top of page bid (low range)	Top of page bid (high range)
ords you provided							
snowboard equipment	2,400	+122%	+23%	High	–	$0.41	$1.80
snowboard goggles	22,200	+235%	+22%	High	–	$0.80	$2.77
snowboard helmet	22,200	+174%	+22%	High	–	$0.53	$1.91
snowboard rack	2,400	+85%	+26%	High	–	$0.27	$1.59

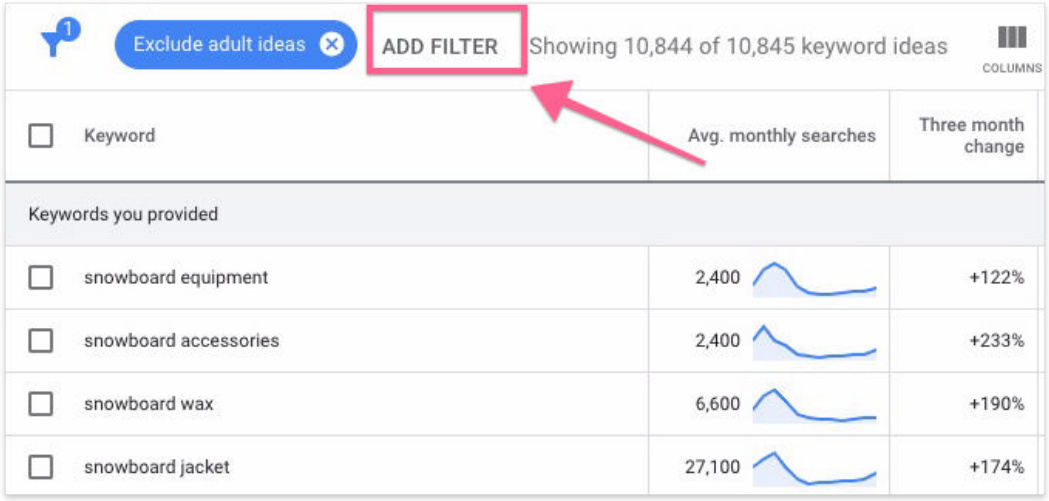
   c. **Average monthly searches** — The average number of searches for this keyword per month.
   d. **Competition** — How competitive the keyword is based on the number of advertisers bidding them.
   e. **Top of page bid** (low range) — Historically, the low end of the bid range required to achieve a top of page ad position.
   f. **Top of page bid** (high range) — Historically, the high end of the bid range required to achieve a top of page ad position.

Tip: Adjust the keyword result settings so the recommended keywords are more relevant:



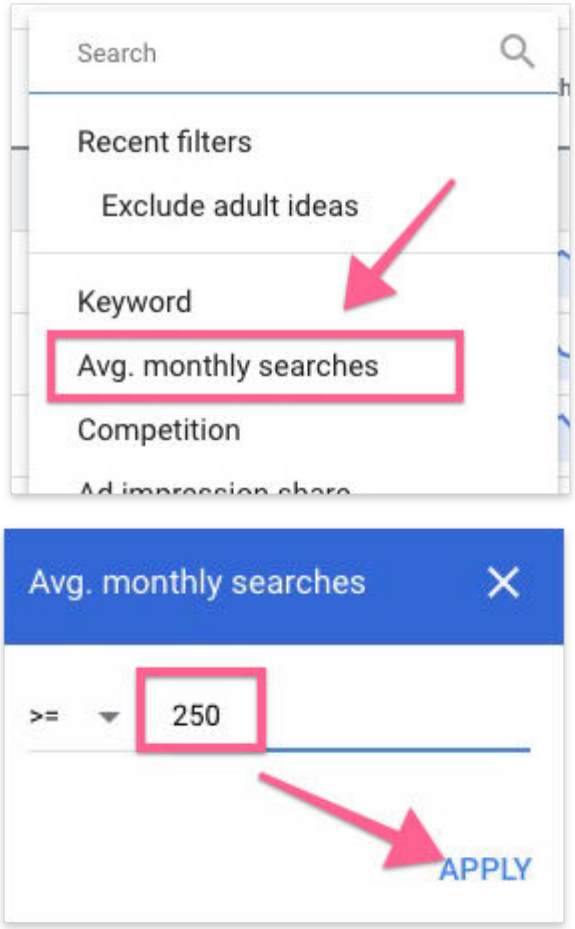
g. Change the **location** of your targeting — Target users when they search from a specific location (e.g. country, state)
h. Change the **language** — Target users when they search with a specific language.
i. Change the **date** — To view keyword search volume results in a given time frame. Great if you want to see keyword trends over time.

5. Once you've adjusted the settings, your goal now is to filter these keyword ideas so what's left are keywords that are most relevant and valuable to you. Start by clicking "**Add Filter**":

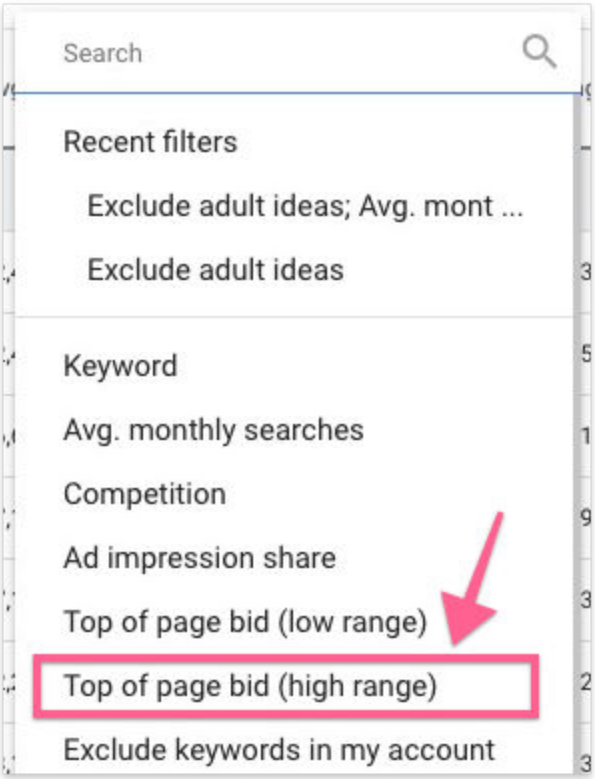


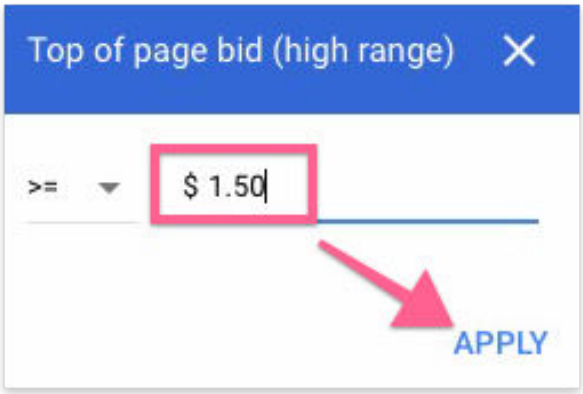
a. Filter keywords with > 100 monthly search volume to remove less popular keywords.

   Note: If you are doing research for a low volume or niche market, you may adjust this minimum down to 30 to get a longer keyword list.

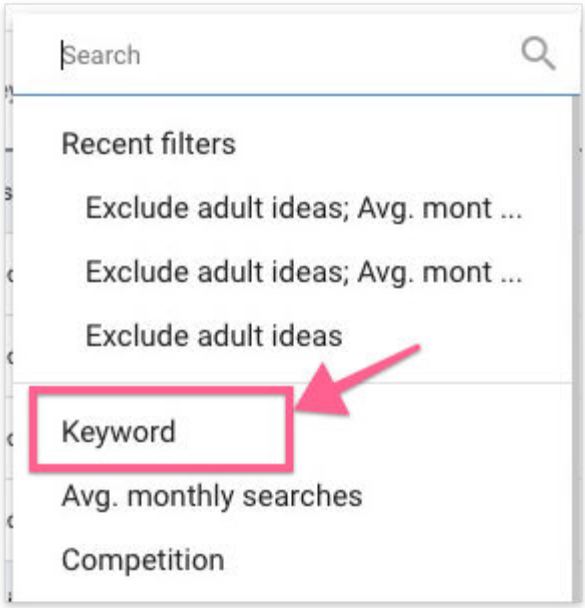


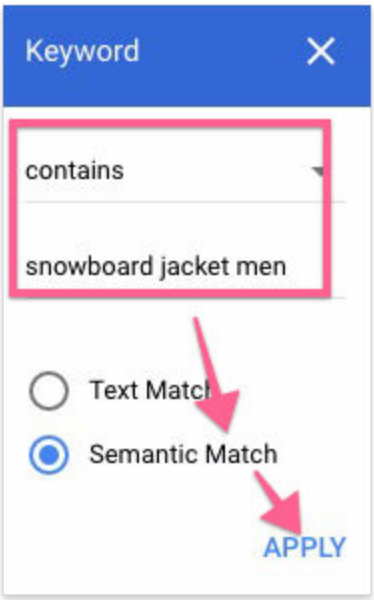
b. Set top of page bid (high range) to above $1 to identify keywords that are valuable to advertisers.



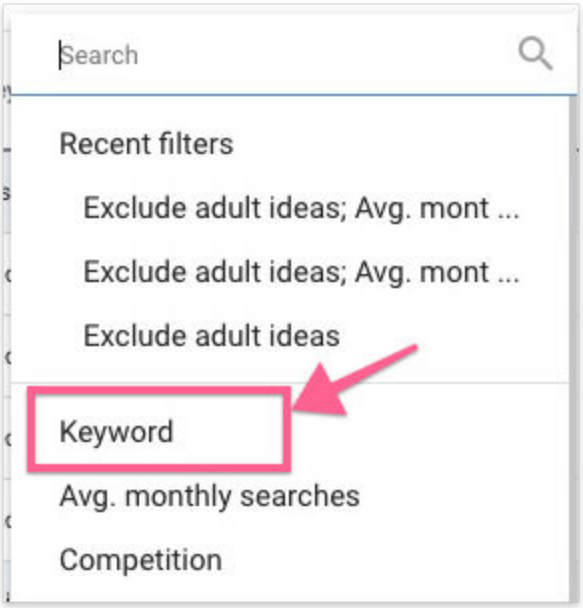


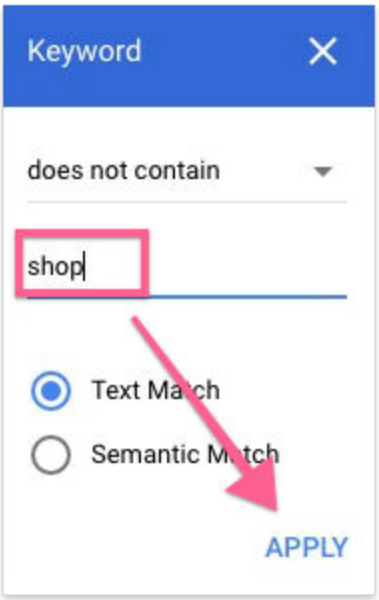
c. Filter specific themed keywords using the semantic keyword filter. For example we can filter keywords related men's snowboard jacket below:





d. Remove keywords that are not relevant. For example, we're not interested in snowboard shops so we'll remove "shop" from our list of keywords.





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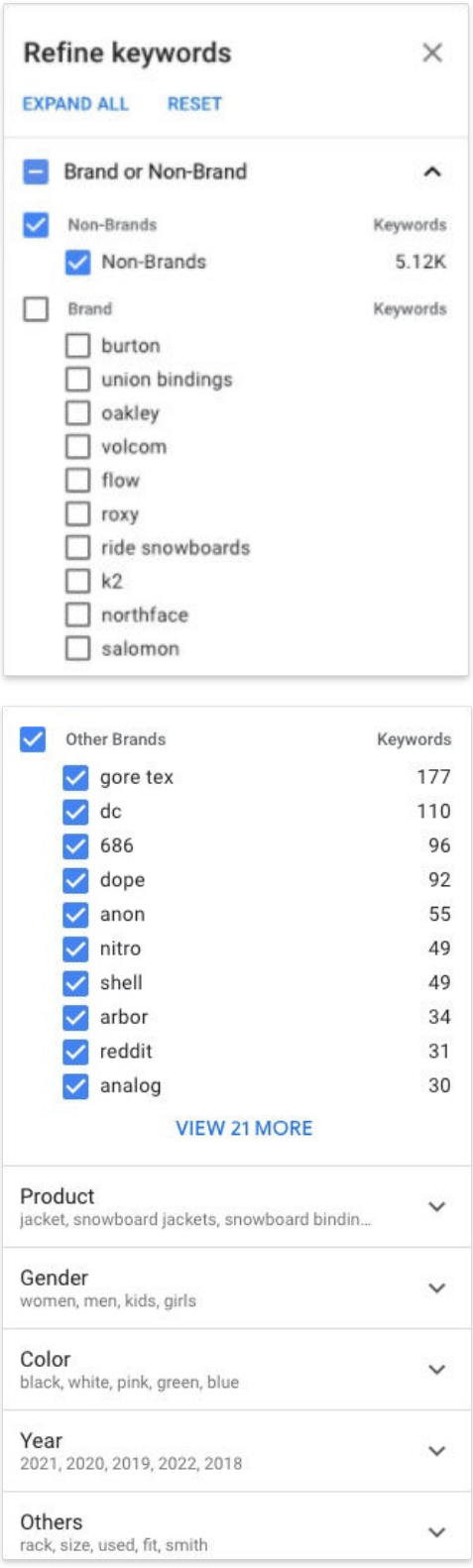
Refine keywords
EXPAND ALL
RESET
Brand or Non-Brand
Non-Brands
Keywords
Non-Brands
5.12K
Brand
Keywords
burton
union bindings
oakley
volcom
flow
roxy
ride snowboards
k2
northface
salomon
Other Brands
Keywords
gore tex 177
dc 110
686 96
dope 92
anon 55
nitro 49
shell 49
arbor 34
reddit 31
analog 30
VIEW 21 MORE
Product
jacket, snowboard jackets, snowboard bindin...
Gender
women, men, kids, girls
Color
black, white, pink, green, blue
Year
2021, 2020, 2019, 2022, 2018
Others
rack, size, used, fit, smith

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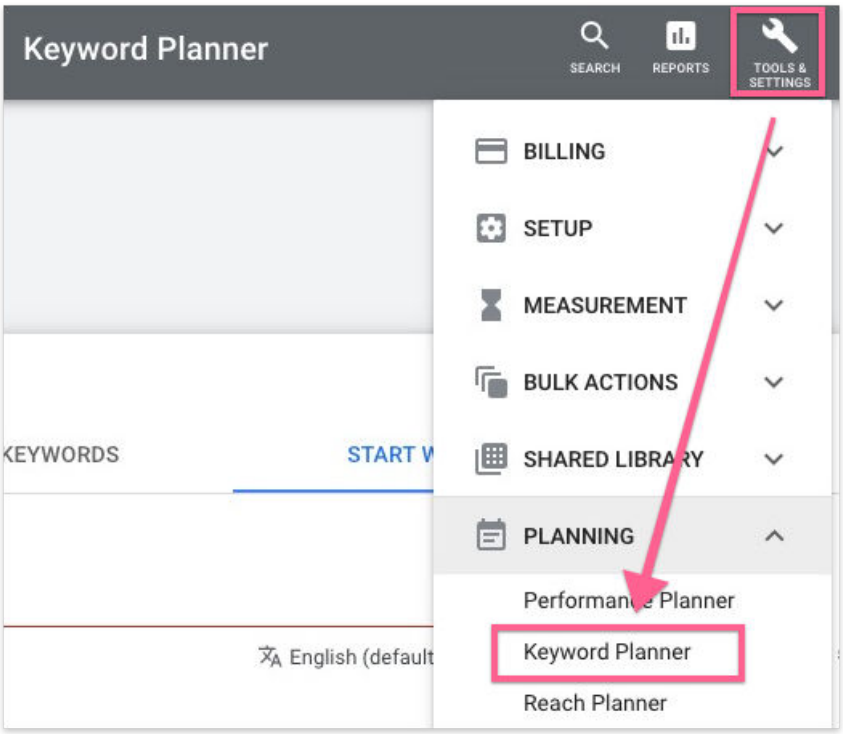
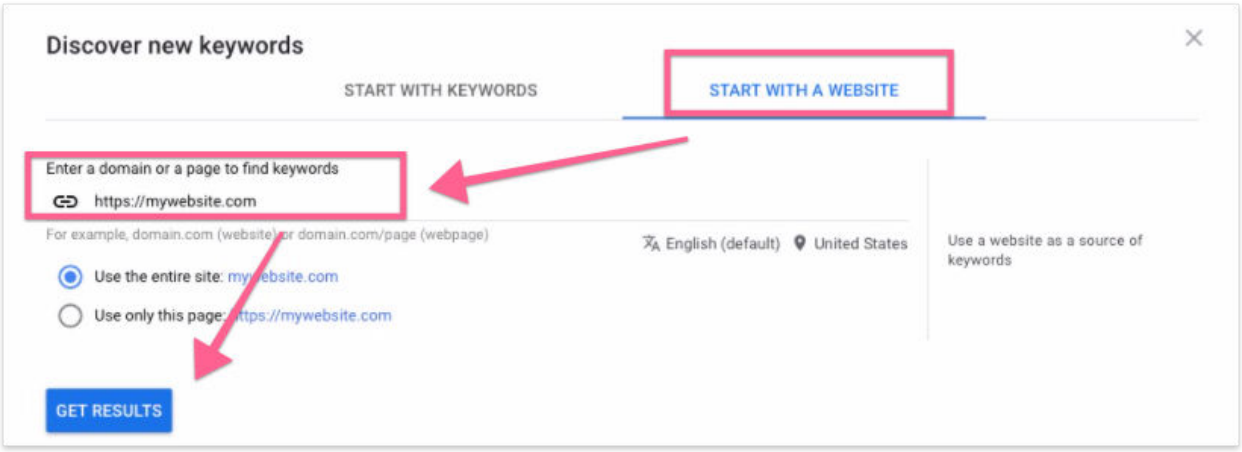


☐ Keyword Research with a website

1. Enter your website or a competitor's website and click "Get results".



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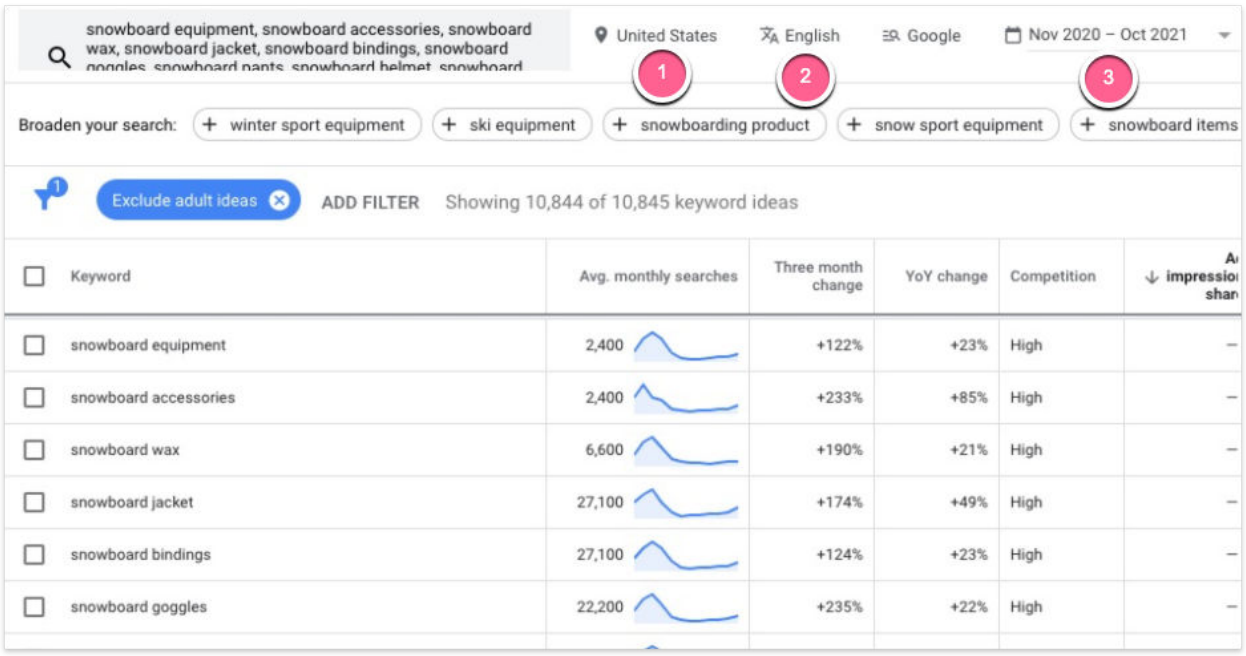

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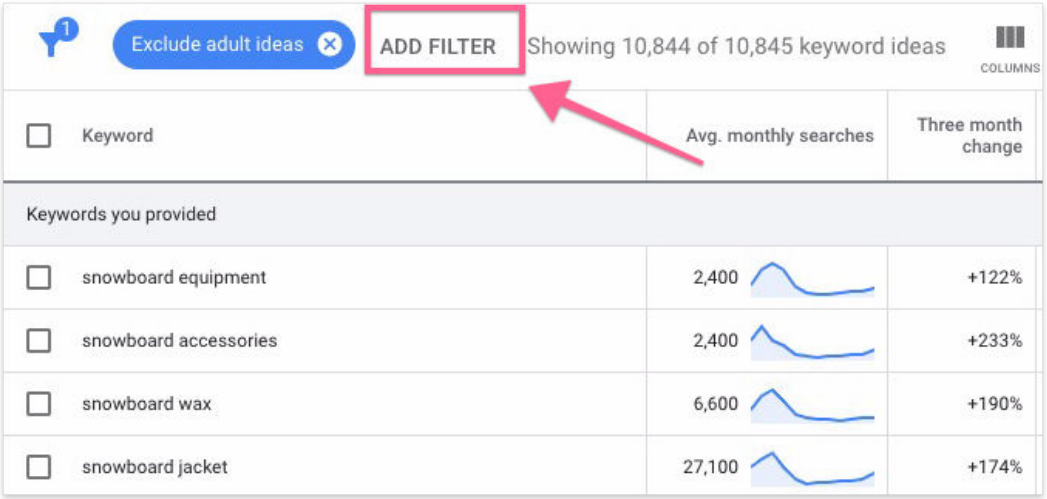

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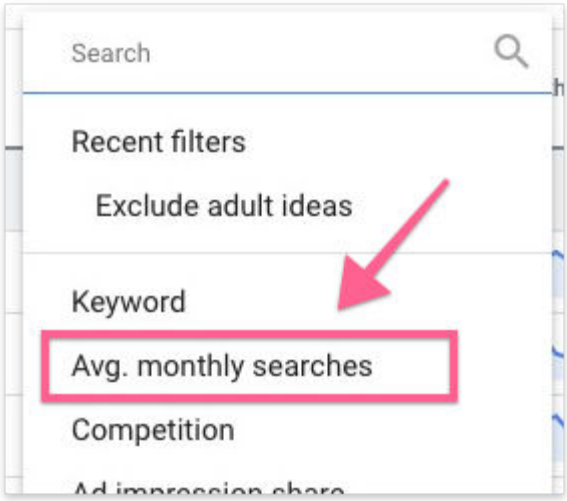

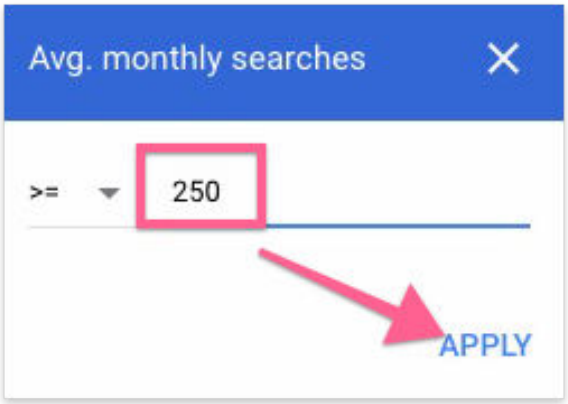

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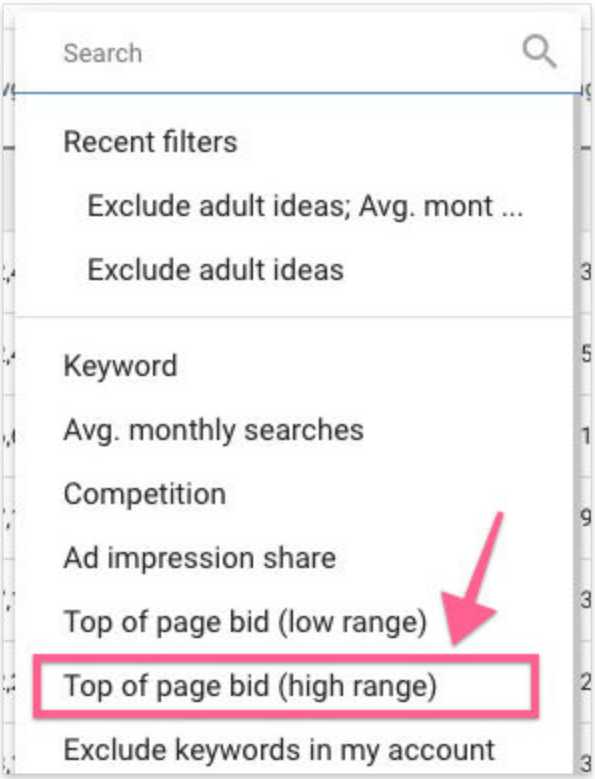

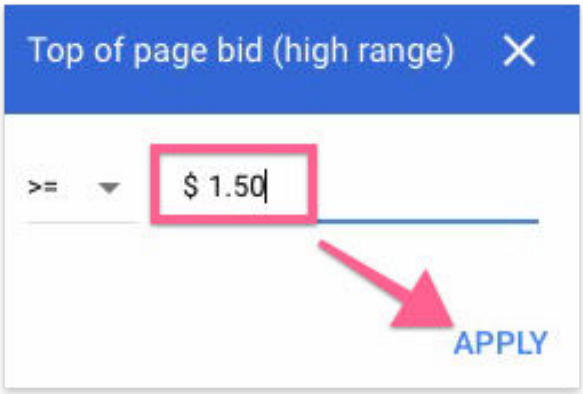

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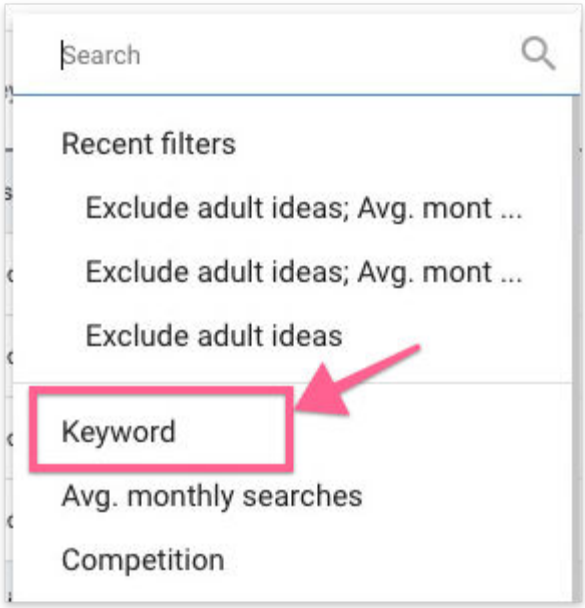

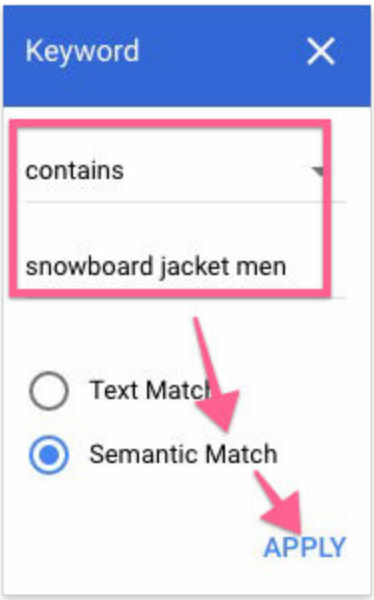

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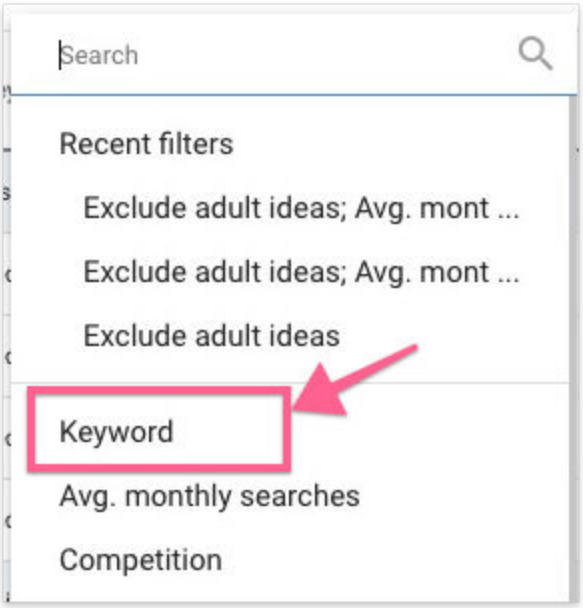

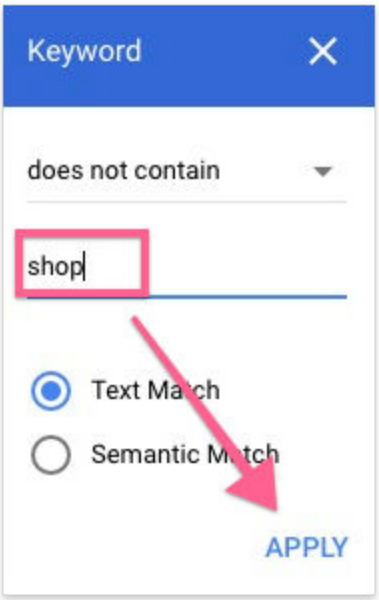

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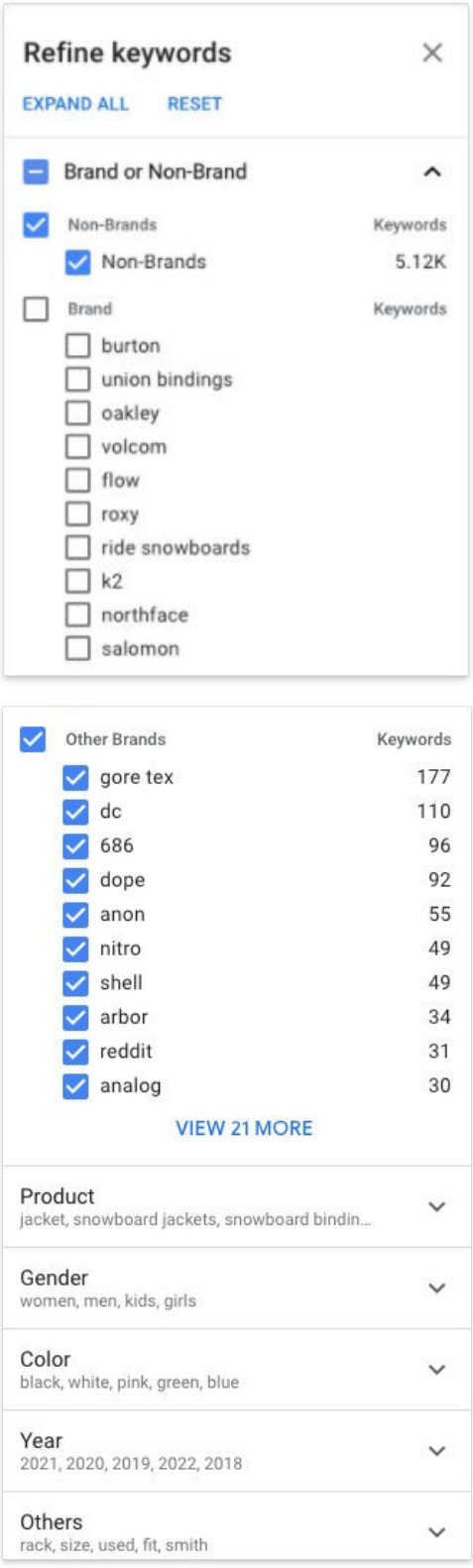
Refine keywords
EXPAND ALL
RESET
Brand or Non-Brand
Non-Brands
Keywords
Non-Brands
5.12K
Brand
Keywords
burton
union bindings
oakley
volcom
flow
roxy
ride snowboards
k2
northface
salomon
Other Brands
Keywords
gore tex 177
dc 110
686 96
dope 92
anon 55
nitro 49
shell 49
arbor 34
reddit 31
analog 30
VIEW 21 MORE
Product
jacket, snowboard jackets, snowboard bindin...
Gender
women, men, kids, girls
Color
black, white, pink, green, blue
Year
2021, 2020, 2019, 2022, 2018
Others
rack, size, used, fit, smith

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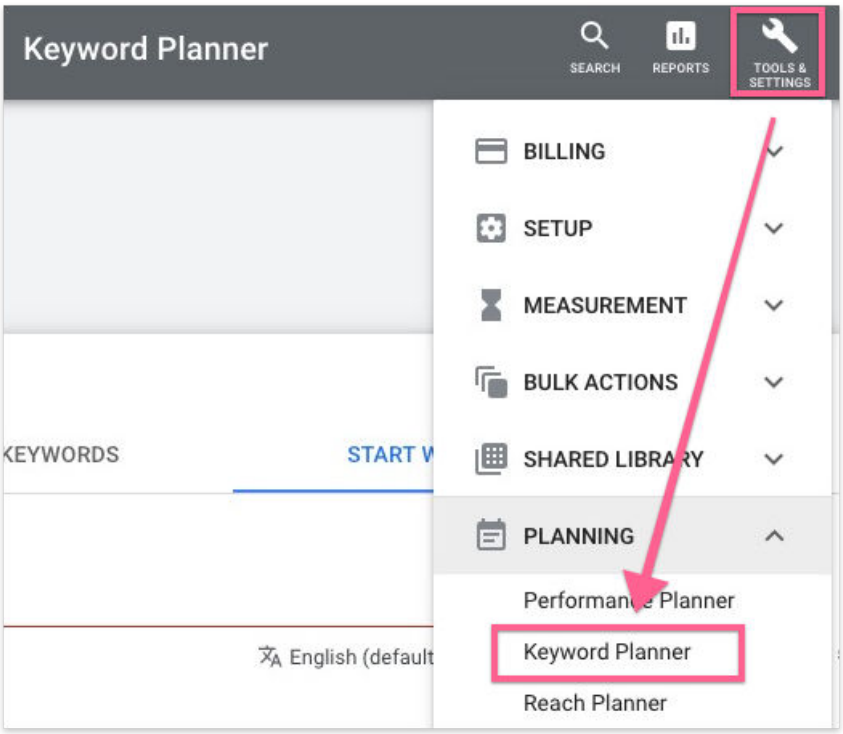
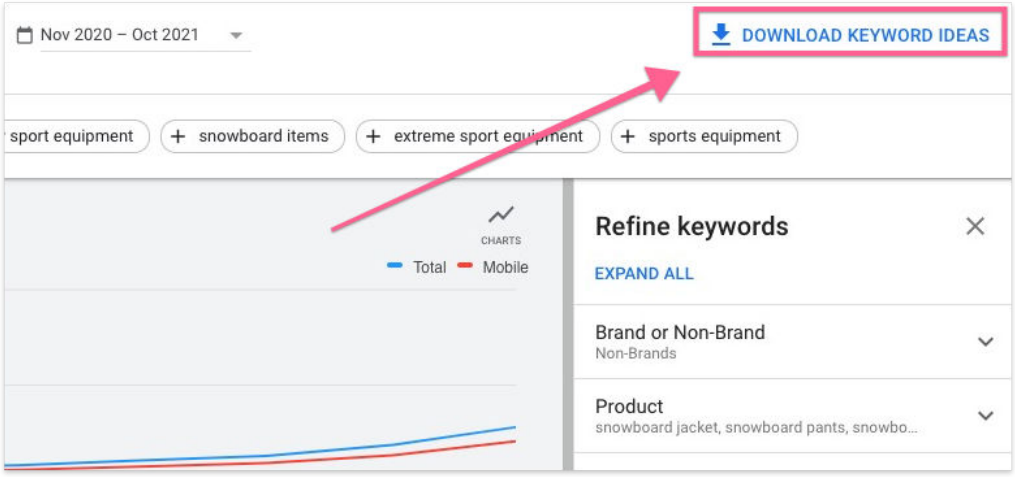


6. Once you’re done filtering the list of keywords, click “Download Keyword Ideas” to export the keywords in a .csv file or a Google Sheet.



Note: You are encouraged to iterate the keyword research process several times to get as many potential keywords as possible for your campaign.

Different ways to brainstorm keyword ideas:

a. Identify all the possible product categories that you and your competitors have. Head over to their product pages and identify how many types of products they sell.
b. Run a competitor's research. Follow SOP 088 to Reverse engineer your competitor's Google Ads Strategy.

☐ How to choose keywords from the Keyword Planner recommendations

1. It's important to note that you'll be adding keywords at the ad group level when you're creating a campaign. Hence, you should choose keywords that are related as much as possible.

   Note: Current best practice is to organize keywords into tightly-themed ad groups.

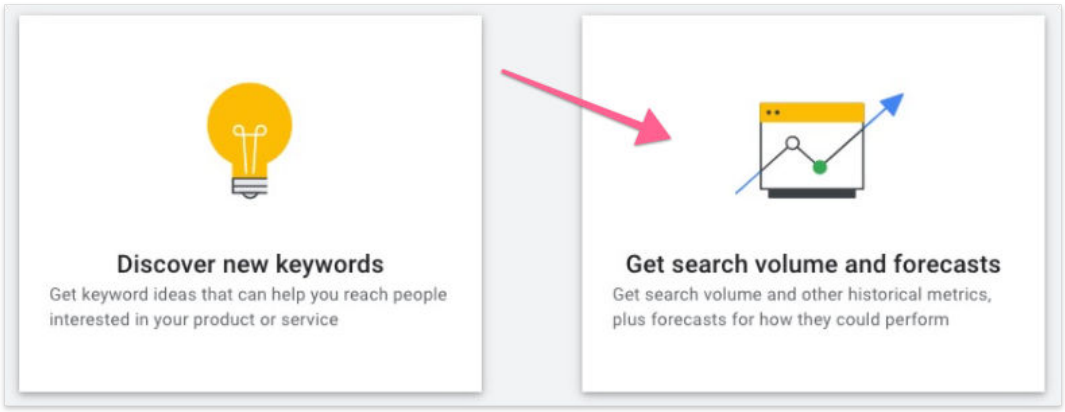
   For example:

   Ad Group = Yellow Snowboards
   Keywords = "yellow snowboards", "buy yellow snowboards", "yellow snowboards for sale", "cool yellow snowboards"

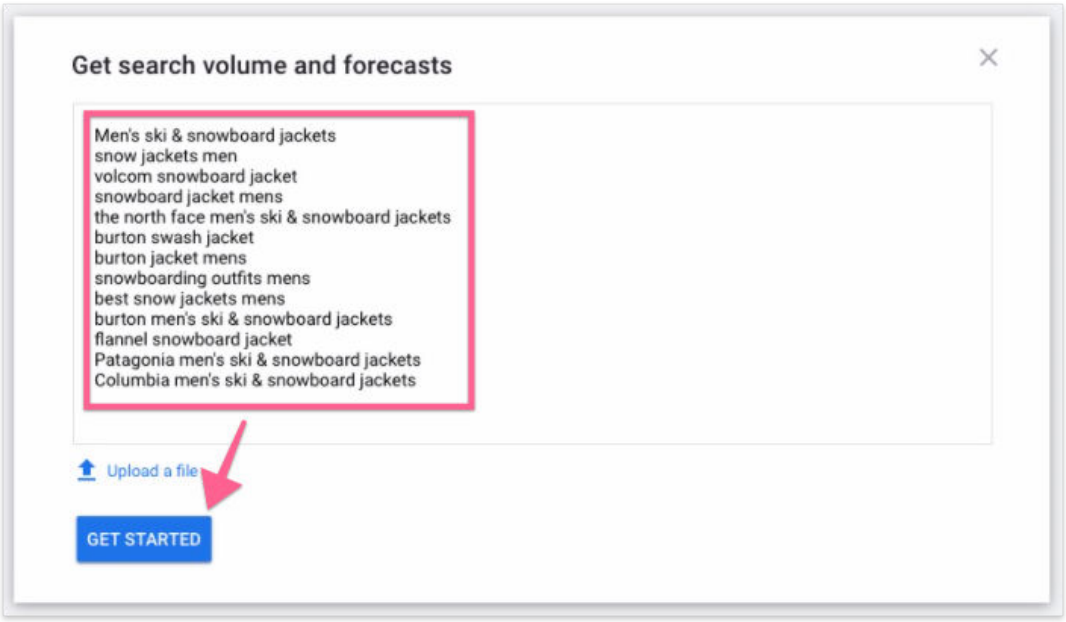
   As you're continuing the keyword research process, it's important to note how you want to structure your campaign and ad group. To do that, refer to SOP 143: How to structure a Google Ads account.

2. In this example, we'll attempt to forecast the potential traffic and cost for men's snowboard jacket related keywords (which we got from Step 11.c of the first phase keyword research) and use Google ads forecast tool to determine if these keywords are worth adding to our campaign.

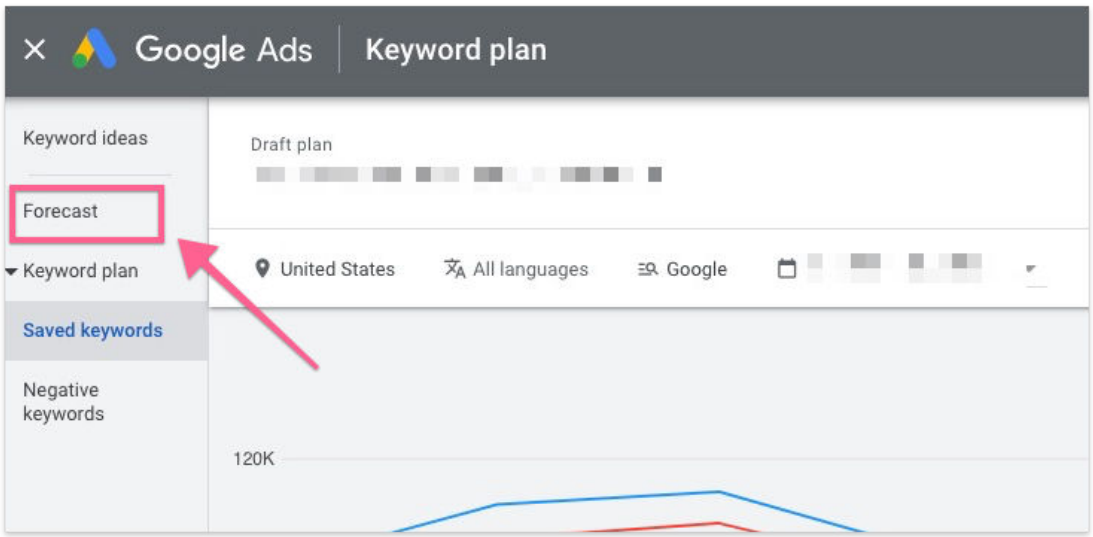
3. Head to the Keyword Planner dashboard.
4. Click ”Get search volume and forecasts”.



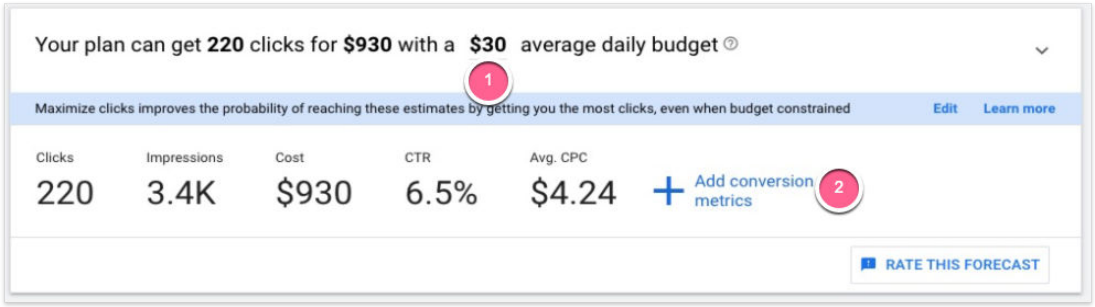
5. Paste the keywords into the text field and click “Get started”.



6. Click “Forecast” from the left panel.

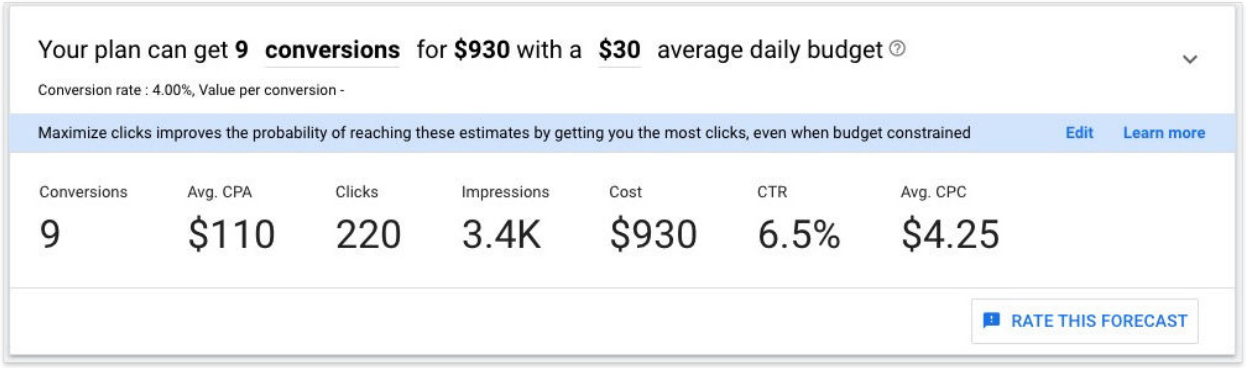


7. Adjust the following metrics to get a forecast for your keywords:



   a. Daily budget — Budget to spend daily for this set of keywords.
   b. Conversion — Estimated conversion (%) on your sales/landing page. If you're not sure what conversion rate you should input here, you should set up conversion tracking in Google Analytics following this SOP. In the meantime add a fictional conversion rate (e.g. 3%) while you wait for the conversion data

8. You will get an estimated forecast based on the previous input. The following forecast is based on a $30 daily spend and a 4% conversion rate on the landing page.



9. You can then compare if the average cost per acquisition (Avg. CPA) is lower than your cost per conversion to determine the potential profits for this campaign. You can also adjust the forecast with a different daily ad budget and conversion rate before you decide if this set of keywords is worth running a campaign for.

   Disclaimer: You should always redo the forecast based on real data after campaign launch. The forecast that you can from Google should only be used *as an estimate* since CPC, conversion rate, and CPA depend on a wide range of factors.

10. Repeat step 5-9 for all the keyword selections you have identified from the initial list of keyword ideas.
11. The next step is to organize all these keywords into campaign and ad groups. To do that refer to SOP 143: How to structure a Google Ads account.
12. You now have a set of grouped keywords to create a new campaign for!