

GA4 metrics reference card – Hostinger Learning lab

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This reference card covers **GA4 metrics** essential for tracking website performance. Use this guide to understand key dimensions, events, and measurements in Google Analytics 4.

 GA4 replaced Universal Analytics (UA) with a new data model. Metrics and dimensions differ significantly—refer to this card when migrating or setting up GA4 tracking.

GA4 metrics at a glance

Plain-language definitions, 2026 benchmarks, and improvement tips for the eight metrics that matter most in Google Analytics 4.

How to use this card: Keep it open when reviewing your GA4 reports. For each metric, check where your numbers sit against the benchmarks, note any industry context that applies to your site, and use the improvement tips when you need to act. Benchmarks are cross-industry averages for 2026 — your niche will vary.

 GA4 is not the same as Universal Analytics. Google sunset Universal Analytics in July 2023. GA4 measures sessions, bounce rate, and engagement differently. Benchmarks from before 2024 are based on UA definitions and are not directly comparable. Only use GA4-era data when evaluating your performance.

— TRAFFIC AND AUDIENCE

Sessions

A session begins when a user arrives on your site and ends after 30 minutes of inactivity. One user can generate multiple sessions. Total sessions is the most basic measure of how much traffic your site receives.



Where to find it:

Reports → Acquisition → Traffic acquisition

☐ Healthy

Growing MoM

Good

Month-on-month growth signals your content and acquisition are working

☐ Watch it

Flat 2+ months

Warning

Plateau may indicate content gaps, declining rankings, or a seasonal dip

☐ Action needed

Declining MoM

Bad

Check for technical issues, lost rankings, or changes in acquisition channels

Improve it



Publish more SEO-targeted content



Audit and fix declining pages



Diversify traffic sources



Build backlinks to key pages



Sessions alone tell you nothing about quality. Always read sessions alongside engagement rate and conversions — high traffic with low engagement usually means a targeting or content mismatch.

02

Users and new users

Users counts the total number of distinct visitors in a period. New users are those visiting for the first time. The ratio between the two tells you whether you're growing your audience or relying heavily on returning visitors.



Where to find it:

Reports → Acquisition → Overview

☐ Benchmark

Healthy ratio

Good

60–80% new — Healthy mix of audience growth and loyal returning visitors

Very high new

Warning

90%+ new — You're attracting visitors but not building a loyal audience — check retention

Very low new

Bad

Under 40% new — Growth has stalled — your existing audience isn't being supplemented by new visitors

Improve it



Create content targeting new search queries



Build an email list to encourage return visits



Improve internal linking to keep visitors exploring

Engagement

03

Engagement rate

The percentage of sessions that were "engaged" — meaning the user stayed for 10+ seconds, triggered a conversion event, or viewed at least two pages. GA4's primary quality metric. Bounce rate is simply 100% minus engagement rate.



Where to find it:

Reports → Engagement → Overview

Benchmarks

Healthy

Good

Most visitors are finding value and spending meaningful time on your site

Watch it

Warning

Around the cross-industry median — investigate which pages are dragging it down

Action needed

Bad

Over half your sessions leave without engaging — content, speed, or targeting issue

Healthy engagement by site type

B2B/SaaS

55–63%

Ecommerce

53–80%

Blog/Content website

35–55%

Professional services

45–55%

Improve it

☐ **Improve page load speed**

☐ **Match headlines to search intent**

☐ **Add internal links to keep visitors exploring**

☐ **Improve content structure and readability**



Blog and content sites structurally score lower on engagement rate than ecommerce or SaaS sites. A 40% engagement rate on a high-traffic blog is not necessarily a problem — compare against your own historical trend, not just cross-industry averages.

04

Average engagement time per session

The average time users actively spend on your site per session — measured only when the browser tab is in focus. This is more accurate than the old Universal Analytics "average session duration" which counted background tab time.



Where to find it:

Reports → Engagement → Overview

Benchmarks

Healthy

Good

2m 30s+ — Visitors are actively reading and exploring — content is holding attention

Watch it

Warning

1m – 2m 30s — Moderate engagement — look at which specific pages score low and why

Action needed

Bad

Under 1 minute — Most visitors leave almost immediately — strong signal of a content or targeting mismatch



Context: Cross-industry median: ~2m 38s. GA4 counts only active tab time. Expect lower than old UA numbers.

Improve it



Add video or embedded media



Use clear subheadings to guide readers



Include relevant internal links



Improve content depth on thin pages

— 05

Bounce rate

The percentage of sessions that were not engaged — the visitor left without staying 10+ seconds, triggering a conversion, or visiting a second page. In GA4, bounce rate is exactly 100% minus your engagement rate. The two always add up to 100%.



Where to find it:

Reports → Engagement → Overview

Performance benchmarks

Healthy

Good

Under 40% — Top quartile performance. Most visitors are finding what they came for.

Watch it

Warning

40–55% — Around cross-industry median. Acceptable but worth investigating high-bounce pages.

Action needed

Bad

Over 55% — More than half your sessions are non-engaged. Check landing pages and traffic quality.

Healthy bounce rate by site type

Blog/Content website

65–90%

Ecommerce

±47%

B2B/SaaS

±37%

Mobile (all)

±12pts higher than desktop

Improve it

☐ **Align page content with what visitors searched for**

☐ **Improve page speed — especially on mobile**

☐ **Make the next step obvious with clear CTAs**

☐ **Review paid traffic targeting**



A high bounce rate on a blog or single-page informational article is not always bad. If the visitor got the answer they needed and left satisfied, that is a good outcome. Prioritise improving bounce rate on commercial and conversion-focused pages first.

— 06

Engaged sessions per user

The average number of engaged sessions each user generates. A value above 1 means users are coming back and engaging on multiple visits. One of GA4's best indicators of genuine audience loyalty.



Where to find it:

Reports → Engagement → Overview

☐ Benchmarks

Healthy

Good

Users return and engage across multiple visits — strong loyalty signal

Watch it

Warning

Typical — most users visit once and engage. Focus on encouraging return visits.

Action needed

Bad

Average user isn't even having one engaged session — quality or relevance issue



Healthy: 1.5+

Watch it: 1.0–1.5

Action needed: Under 1.0

Improve it



Build an email list for repeat visits



Create content series that reward return visitors



Use push notifications or newsletters

Conversions and acquisitions

— 07

Key events (conversions)

Actions you've designated as important — form submissions, purchases, sign-ups, or clicks. GA4 calls these "key events." The conversion rate is the percentage of sessions that resulted in at least one key event. You must configure these manually for your goals.

 Where to find it:
Reports → Engagement → Conversions

Healthy

- + 3%+ (lead gen) / 2%+ (ecommerce)
- + Strong conversion signals — your pages are persuading visitors to act

Action needed

- Under 1% (lead gen) / Under 0.5% (ecomm)
- Low conversion relative to traffic — check CTA placement, page friction, and offer clarity

Improve it

☐ Simplify conversion forms

☐ Add social proof near CTAs

☐ Test CTA copy and placement

☐ Improve landing page clarity

☐ Reduce friction at checkout

 GA4 does not automatically track conversions — you must define your key events. If your Conversions report is empty, it means no key events have been configured. Go to ****Admin → Events → Mark as key event**** to set these up.

08

Traffic acquisition channels

Where your sessions come from — organic search, direct, referral, social, email, paid search, and so on. Understanding your channel mix tells you where growth is coming from and where you're over-reliant on a single source.



Where to find it:

Reports → Acquisition → Traffic acquisition

Benchmark

Diversified mix

Good

No single channel over 60% of total sessions — resilient to algorithm changes or platform disruption

One channel 60–80%

Warning

Over-reliance on a single source — start building secondary channels now

One channel 80%+

Bad

One algorithm update or platform change could wipe most of your traffic overnight

Improve it



Build an email list



Start a social presence on one platform



Pursue link-building for referral traffic



Experiment with paid channels if budget allows

Need a faster site behind your GA4 data?

Page speed directly affects your engagement rate, bounce rate, and conversion rate. Hostinger plans include fast servers, built-in caching, and a CDN — so your site performs as well in GA4 as it does in your head.

[Get started →](#)