Advanced Keyword Research Guide

apptweak

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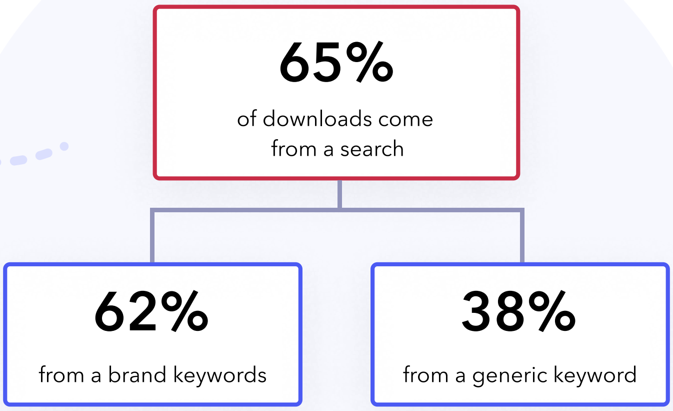
Why keyword research is important

There are more than 3 million apps in both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. Each day, another 3,000 new apps are released on average. One of the main methods for people to navigate this universe and discover new apps is “App Store Search”. According to Apple, over 65% of app downloads come from app store search, and nearly half of those searches were generic (not branded) searches.



For your app or game to show up for specific searches you need to make sure those keywords are targeted in your app listing’s metadata. The app store algorithm will further assign your app a higher rank if the keyword is contained in your app title or subtitle over the long description or keyword field.

The app store search results are competitive and the space for optimization is limited, hence careful keyword research is a crucial step to increase your app’s visibility in the app stores.

How to build a keyword list

The first step to find new keyword ranking opportunities is to complete building what we call a “semantic dictionary”, or in other words, a list of relevant keywords for your app on which it could rank. This could involve using brainstorming and writing down words or short phrases you think people might search to find your app, but you can also use a thesaurus to find similar words, read the app description for apps similar to yours, or use an ASO tool to help make this process easier, quicker and create a more exhaustive list.

Here are our 10 tips to find new keyword ideas :

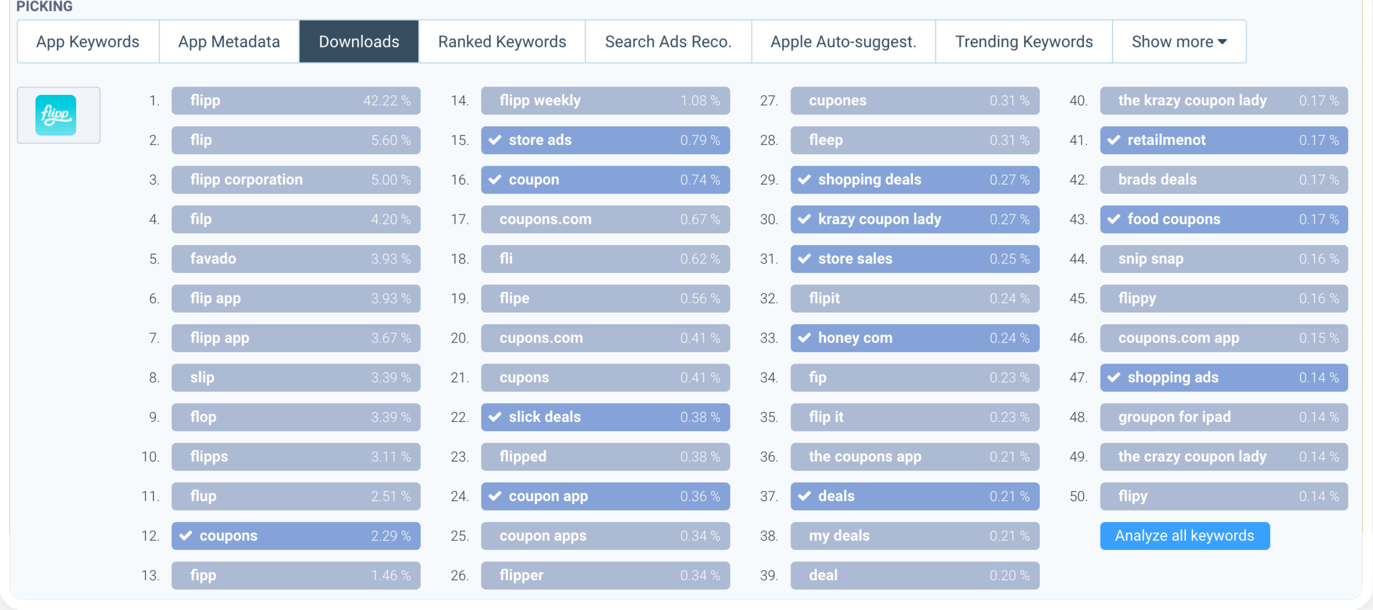
1 Analyze top app’s names, subtitles, and descriptions

As a first step into your keyword research you can have a look at the keywords other top apps in your category are targeting in their metadata. This research can unveil which keywords they deem the most relevant and might provide great insights for your own app.

2 Find out which keywords are generating most downloads for your competitors

The best way to find new keywords for your app is to dig deeper into your competitor's ASO strategy. It can provide you with a large pool of new keyword ideas and give you more insights into what is working for them and what not.

AppTweak's Top Keywords feature unveils the keywords that drive most downloads to your competitor's apps. For example, Flipp receives most of its downloads from its own branded terms but also competitor brands and general keywords such as 'coupons', 'store ads', or 'shopping deals'.



1.	flipp	42.22 %
2.	flip	5.60 %
3.	flipp corporation	5.00 %
4.	filp	4.20 %
5.	favado	3.93 %
6.	flip app	3.93 %
7.	flipp app	3.67 %
8.	slip	3.39 %
9.	flop	3.39 %
10.	flipps	3.11 %
11.	flup	2.51 %
12.	✓ coupons	2.29 %
13.	fipp	1.46 %
14.	flipp weekly	1.08 %
15.	✓ store ads	0.79 %
16.	✓ coupon	0.74 %
17.	coupons.com	0.67 %
18.	fli	0.62 %
19.	flipe	0.56 %
20.	cupons.com	0.41 %
21.	cupons	0.41 %
22.	✓ slick deals	0.38 %
23.	flipped	0.38 %
24.	✓ coupon app	0.36 %
25.	coupon apps	0.34 %
26.	flipper	0.34 %
27.	cupones	0.31 %
28.	fleep	0.31 %
29.	✓ shopping deals	0.27 %
30.	✓ krazy coupon lady	0.27 %
31.	✓ store sales	0.25 %
32.	flipit	0.24 %
33.	✓ honey com	0.24 %
34.	fip	0.23 %
35.	flip it	0.23 %
36.	the coupons app	0.21 %
37.	✓ deals	0.21 %
38.	my deals	0.21 %
39.	deal	0.20 %
40.	the krazy coupon lady	0.17 %
41.	✓ retailmenot	0.17 %
42.	brads deals	0.17 %
43.	✓ food coupons	0.17 %
44.	snip snap	0.16 %
45.	flippy	0.16 %
46.	coupons.com app	0.15 %
47.	✓ shopping ads	0.14 %
48.	groupon for ipad	0.14 %
49.	the crazy coupon lady	0.14 %
50.	flipy	0.14 %

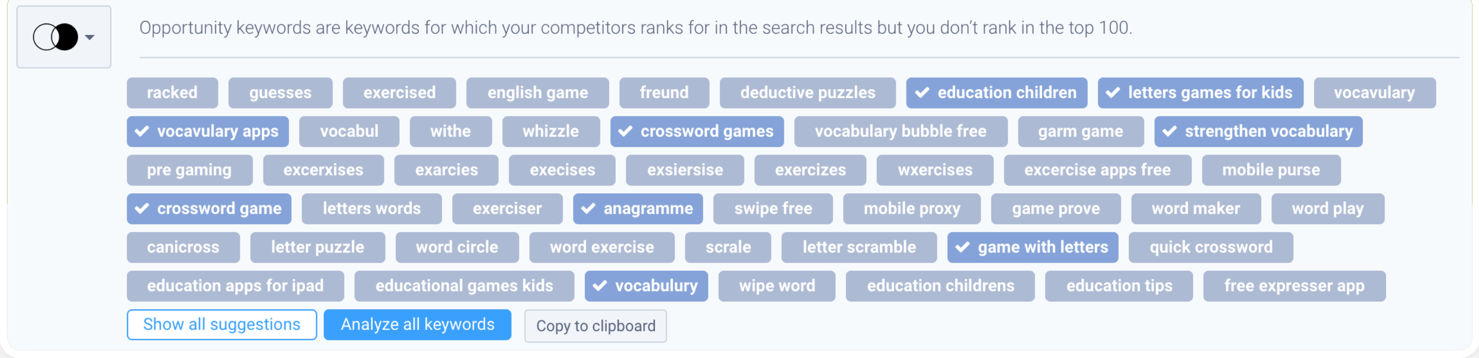
3 Find out which keywords competitors are bidding on in Apple Search Ads

This can be your biggest source of inspiration when building your keyword list! Competitors that run an Advanced Apple Search Ads campaign likely did a lot of research to find a pool of relevant keywords that they can run ads on. With an ASO tool like AppTweak you can unveil this information and create a pool of hundreds of keywords in minutes.

4 Identify keywords competitor's rank for but you don't

When you build a keyword list, you will naturally start with the keywords that are the most relevant for your app. However, the most interesting keywords are the ones you have potentially missed. The best way to find these missed opportunities is to closely research your competitor's keywords and find those keywords for which they rank, but your app does not.

Using AppTweak's Opportunity Keywords we quickly spot keywords that Wordscapes is ranking for but Word Cookies is not; including 'crossword games', 'vocabulary apps', 'anagramme', 'game with letters', etc. These are very interesting keywords for Word Cookies to further research and consider for its metadata.



Opportunity keywords are keywords for which your competitors ranks for in the search results but you don't rank in the top 100.

racked
guesses
exercised
english game
freund
deductive puzzles
✓ education children
✓ letters games for kids
vocavulary
✓ vocavulary apps
vocabul
withe
whizzle
✓ crossword games
vocabulary bubble free
garm game
✓ strengthen vocabulary
pre gaming
excerxises
exarcies
execises
exsiersise
exercizes
wxercises
excercise apps free
mobile purse
✓ crossword game
letters words
exerciser
✓ anagramme
swipe free
mobile proxy
game prove
word maker
word play
canicross
letter puzzle
word circle
word exercise
scrale
letter scramble
✓ game with letters
quick crossword
education apps for ipad
educational games kids
✓ vocabulury
wipe word
education childrens
education tips
free expresser app
Show all suggestions
Analyze all keywords
Copy to clipboard

5 Identify keywords you're already ranked in but aren't optimizing for

Reviewing your app's ranked keywords is a crucial part in creating your ASO strategy but is also very useful when researching new keyword opportunities as it can unveil low hanging fruit. This part of your research can unveil keywords that you did not target in your metadata but for which your app is ranking. By adding these keywords to your metadata you can further increase your rankings.

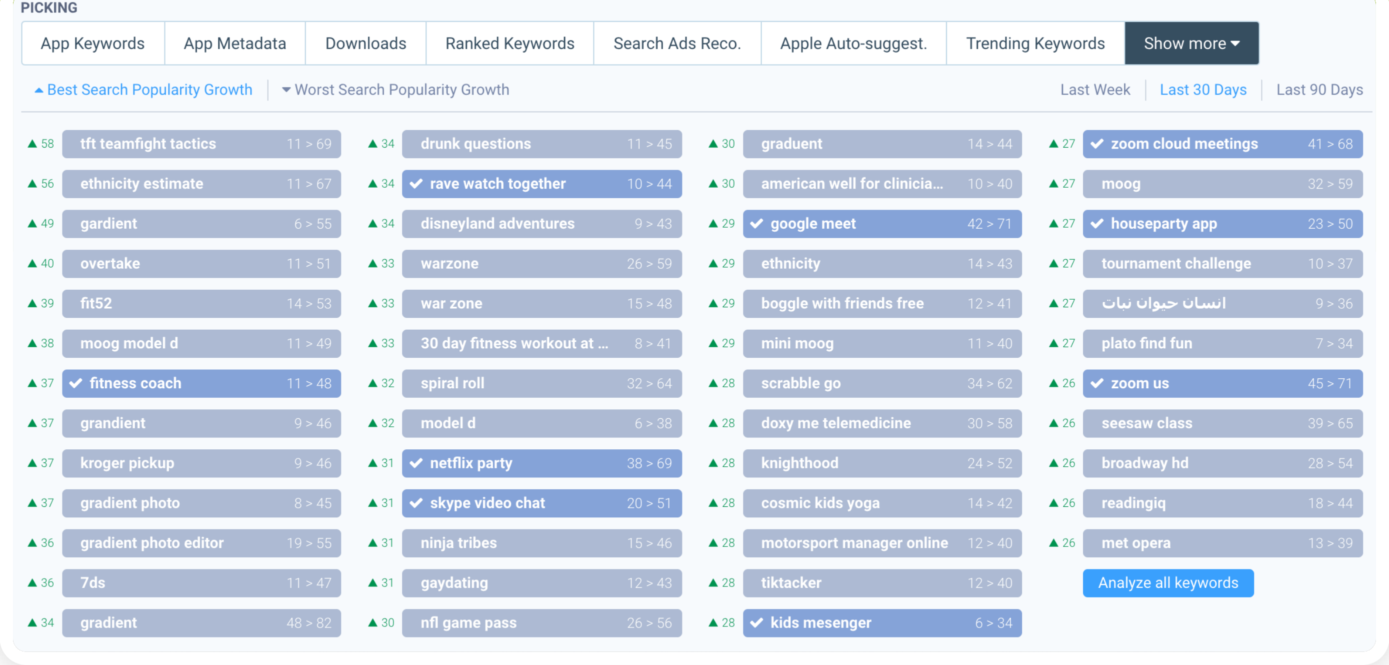
6 Understand app store search behavior with Apple & Google auto-suggestions

With Google and Apple Auto-Suggest features, you can check out the auto-complete keywords coming directly from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. This is one of the strongest tools to understand which keywords users use most often when they search in the app store.

7 Find out which keywords are trending

Seasonal events or new game launches can have a great impact on app store search behavior. When relevant to your app some of these high volume keywords can drive a lot of visibility to your app.

If you are looking to update your metadata for seasonality, you need to carefully study AppTweak's Top Growth feature. Here you can discover which apps or games have gone viral or spot seasonal opportunities. For example, as many people are currently working from home due to the Covid 19 outbreak, we see that keywords such as 'fitness coach' or 'kids messenger' are gaining popularity.


PICKING
App Keywords
App Metadata
Downloads
Ranked Keywords
Search Ads Reco.
Apple Auto-suggest.
Trending Keywords
Show more
▲ Best Search Popularity Growth
▼ Worst Search Popularity Growth
Last Week
Last 30 Days
Last 90 Days
Analyze all keywords

▲ 58	tft teamfight tactics	11 > 69
▲ 56	ethnicity estimate	11 > 67
▲ 49	gardient	6 > 55
▲ 40	overtake	11 > 51
▲ 39	fit52	14 > 53
▲ 38	moog model d	11 > 49
▲ 37	✓ fitness coach	11 > 48
▲ 37	grandient	9 > 46
▲ 37	kroger pickup	9 > 46
▲ 37	gradient photo	8 > 45
▲ 36	gradient photo editor	19 > 55
▲ 36	7ds	11 > 47
▲ 34	gradient	48 > 82
▲ 34	drunk questions	11 > 45
▲ 34	✓ rave watch together	10 > 44
▲ 34	disneyland adventures	9 > 43
▲ 33	warzone	26 > 59
▲ 33	war zone	15 > 48
▲ 33	30 day fitness workout at ...	8 > 41
▲ 32	spiral roll	32 > 64
▲ 32	model d	6 > 38
▲ 31	✓ netflix party	38 > 69
▲ 31	✓ skype video chat	20 > 51
▲ 31	ninja tribes	15 > 46
▲ 31	gaydating	12 > 43
▲ 30	nfl game pass	26 > 56
▲ 30	graduent	14 > 44
▲ 30	american well for clinicia...	10 > 40
▲ 29	✓ google meet	42 > 71
▲ 29	ethnicity	14 > 43
▲ 29	boggle with friends free	12 > 41
▲ 29	mini moog	11 > 40
▲ 28	scrabble go	34 > 62
▲ 28	doxy me telemedicine	30 > 58
▲ 28	knighthood	24 > 52
▲ 28	cosmic kids yoga	14 > 42
▲ 28	motorsport manager online	12 > 40
▲ 28	tiktacker	12 > 40
▲ 28	✓ kids mesenger	6 > 34
▲ 27	✓ zoom cloud meetings	41 > 68
▲ 27	moog	32 > 59
▲ 27	✓ houseparty app	23 > 50
▲ 27	tournament challenge	10 > 37
▲ 27	انسان حيوان نبات	9 > 36
▲ 27	plato find fun	7 > 34
▲ 26	✓ zoom us	45 > 71
▲ 26	seesaw class	39 > 65
▲ 26	broadway hd	28 > 54
▲ 26	readingiq	18 > 44
▲ 26	met opera	13 > 39

8 Look at the keywords for which Apple ranks featured content

To help users discover new content and apps Apple now also ranks curated lists and stories in the search results. We found that the keywords chosen by Apple to rank stories were actually closely related to the apps featured in that story. These keywords provide a real source of inspiration to explore new ASO ideas and tactics for your app. You will need an advanced ASO tool like AppTweak to unveil these insights.

9 Take a look at your reviews

The goal of keyword research is to find as many keywords that are relevant, and your app's reviews is a place that's rich with words that describe it. Your users, especially the ones that like your app enough to leave a review, will describe the app using their own words. Some may speak of it exactly as you think they would, but others may use slightly different words that you can capture and optimize for.

10 Merge and combine words to find new long-tail keywords.

Don't forget about long-tail keyword combinations. These often have lower volume but also a lower difficulty score and thus are easier to rank for. With AppTweak's Keyword Shuffle tool you can add up to 5 keywords and automatically we'll create all possible combinations.

AppTweak has **more than 12 keyword research and suggestion tools** to help you with your keyword research. We recommend you to go through all AppTweak's keyword suggestion tools and add all the keywords that describe your app's functionality to your keyword list. Try to add up to 200 keywords to your list. In the next step we will highlight how you can refine your keyword list and select the most relevant keywords for your metadata.

How to select the most relevant keywords

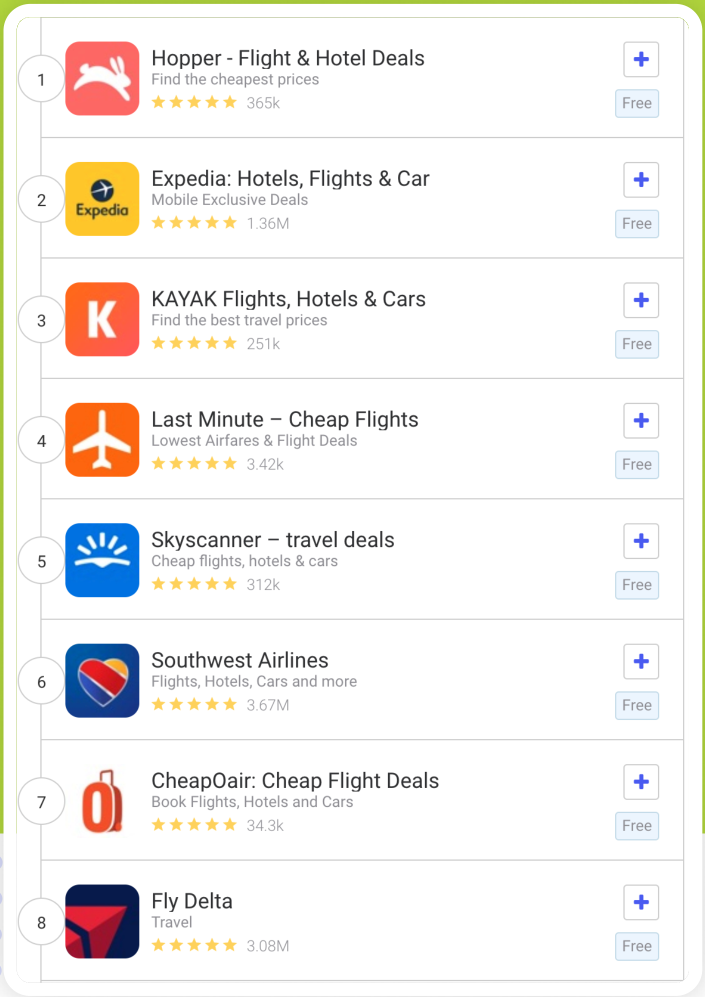
Generating a semantic dictionary is an important part of keyword research, but it is really only one step in the entire process. After you have added whatever you deem to be enough keywords to your preliminary list, you need to sort through your keywords to find the most strategic terms and phrases that will, as a result of successful ASO, maximize your organic downloads and increase your ranking.

To select the most relevant keywords for your metadata consider:

- Keyword Relevancy
- Keyword Metrics

Relevancy

The first element to consider when selecting keywords for your metadata is relevancy. You should **only target keywords that describe the functionality of your app**. Not only will that result in higher quality downloads and more engaged users, your app will rank higher for keywords that are relevant to your app instead of generic keywords. The reason for that is simple: both stores want to provide you with the best user experience and show apps that match the user's search intent.



1 Hopper - Flight & Hotel Deals
Find the cheapest prices
★★★★★ 365k Free

2 Expedia: Hotels, Flights & Car
Mobile Exclusive Deals
★★★★★ 1.36M Free

3 KAYAK Flights, Hotels & Cars
Find the best travel prices
★★★★★ 251k Free

4 Last Minute – Cheap Flights
Lowest Airfares & Flight Deals
★★★★★ 3.42k Free

5 Skyscanner – travel deals
Cheap flights, hotels & cars
★★★★★ 312k Free

6 Southwest Airlines
Flights, Hotels, Cars and more
★★★★★ 3.67M Free

7 CheapOair: Cheap Flight Deals
Book Flights, Hotels and Cars
★★★★★ 34.3k Free

8 Fly Delta
Travel
★★★★★ 3.08M Free

Booking.com helps users book accommodation for their upcoming trip. When researching keywords in the Travel industry it might seem that 'flights' is a great target keyword: it has a high volume and people booking flights likely also need to book accommodation. Except 'flights' is not relevant to Booking.com's functionality. There are other, more relevant apps that offer flight booking options, so the app stores will choose to show those apps in the search results instead.

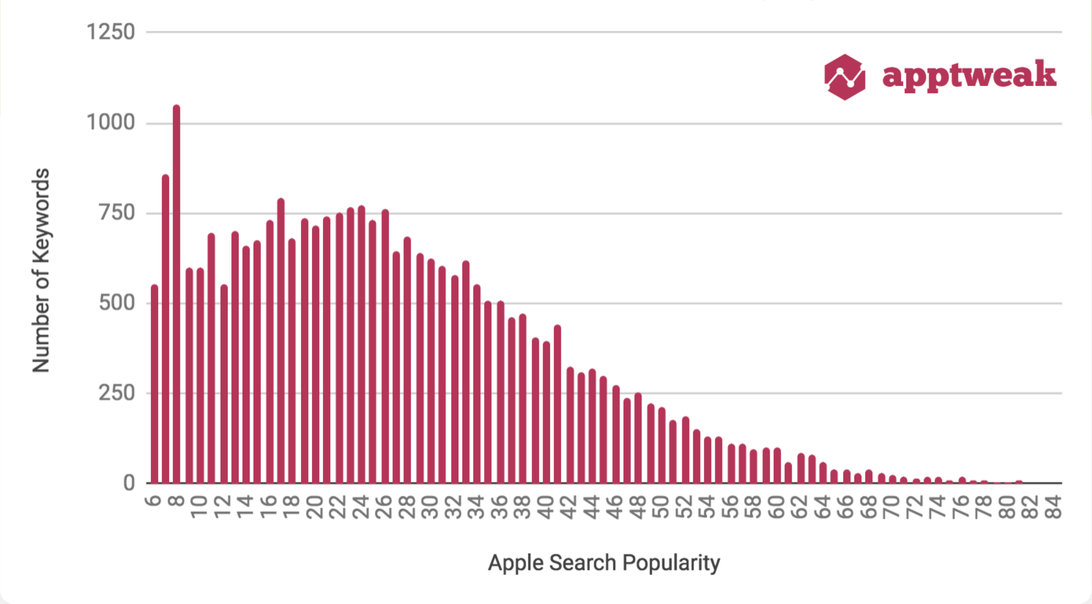
If you have a look at the Live Search results for certain keywords you will see that both stores do a really great job to show the most relevant apps in the search results. The top 8 apps that rank for the keyword 'flights' are all apps that provide this functionality.

Keyword Metrics

Once you have refined your semantic dictionary and removed all irrelevant keywords you can rely on AppTweak's Keyword Metrics to help you decide which keywords are worth targeting and which may not be.

- **Volume or Search Popularity** - an indicator of how popular this keyword is in terms of searches. The metric varies between 5 and 100. The closer the volume is to 100, the more often users use this keyword when searching in the app stores.

At AppTweak we found that most keywords have a volume between 6 and 40 and nearly all keywords that have a volume above 80 are branded keywords such as Instagram, Snapchat or Youtube. So when refining your keyword list, don't disregard keywords with a volume of 20 as they might still drive a good amount of downloads to your app!



- **Difficulty** - a score that represents how much competition exists for a specific keyword. When a keyword has a high difficulty score it means that many very powerful apps rank for that keyword, making it harder for any other app to break through in the top 10.
- **Chance** - an indicator that estimates how likely a certain app is to rank in the top 10 for a keyword if it is chosen for the metadata.
- **KEI** - the Keyword Efficiency Index, a figure generated by AppTweak representing the ranking potential for a keyword, considering both the chance and volume scores.

Generally speaking you should select keywords with a high KEI, these are the keywords with the highest volume for which you have the highest chance to rank.

Advanced keyword research tips

Consider competitor keyword rankings

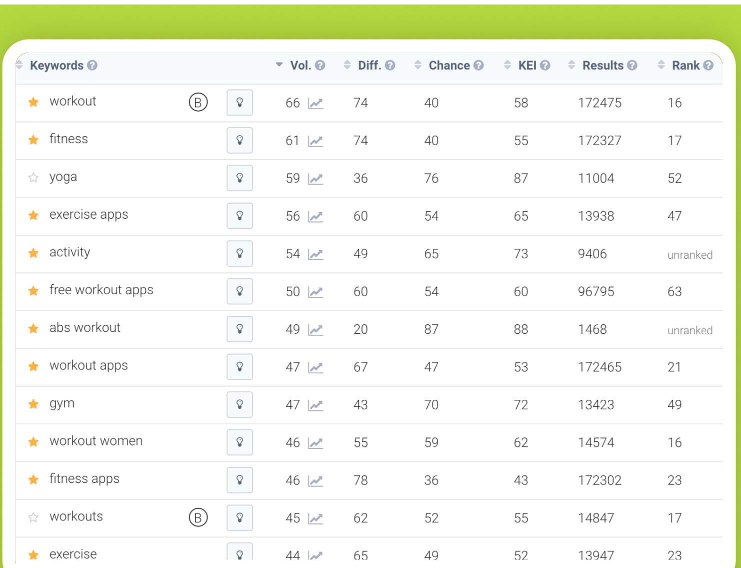
Apps and games with strong branding and high download velocity often dominate the search results of interesting and high volume keywords. That makes it very hard for other apps or newcomers to gain exposure and rank top 10. Hence it is important to monitor your competitors and find keywords and combinations they are not ranking well for. This will allow you to target less competitive keywords that will increase your chance to rank in the top 10.

In the example below we have made a keyword list for the Sweat Fitness App.

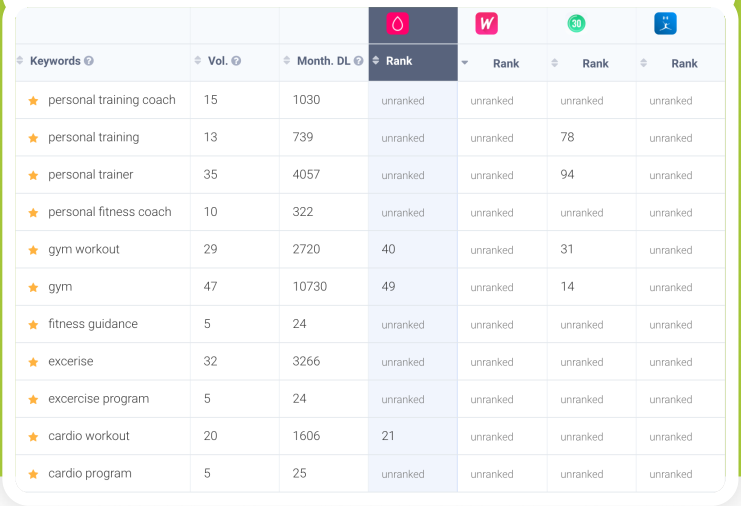
General keywords like 'workout', 'fitness' or 'exercise app' are very popular keywords but also very competitive keywords with a high difficulty score.

Even though the Sweat app targets these keywords in its metadata, they are likely not generating any downloads as the app does not rank in the top 10 for these keywords.

Instead, when comparing the competitor's keyword rankings we see there is opportunity for the Sweat app to rank for keywords such as 'personal training' , 'personal fitness coach', 'exercise program' or even 'cardio program'. Even though these combinations have lower volume than 'workout' or 'fitness', if the app manages to rank in the top 3 for these keywords they will drive more downloads to the app.



Keywords	Vol.	Diff.	Chance	KEI	Results	Rank
★ workout Ⓑ	66	74	40	58	172475	16
★ fitness	61	74	40	55	172327	17
☆ yoga	59	36	76	87	11004	52
★ exercise apps	56	60	54	65	13938	47
★ activity	54	49	65	73	9406	unranked
★ free workout apps	50	60	54	60	96795	63
★ abs workout	49	20	87	88	1468	unranked
★ workout apps	47	67	47	53	172465	21
★ gym	47	43	70	72	13423	49
★ workout women	46	55	59	62	14574	16
★ fitness apps	46	78	36	43	172302	23
☆ workouts Ⓑ	45	62	52	55	14847	17
★ exercise	44	65	49	52	13947	23

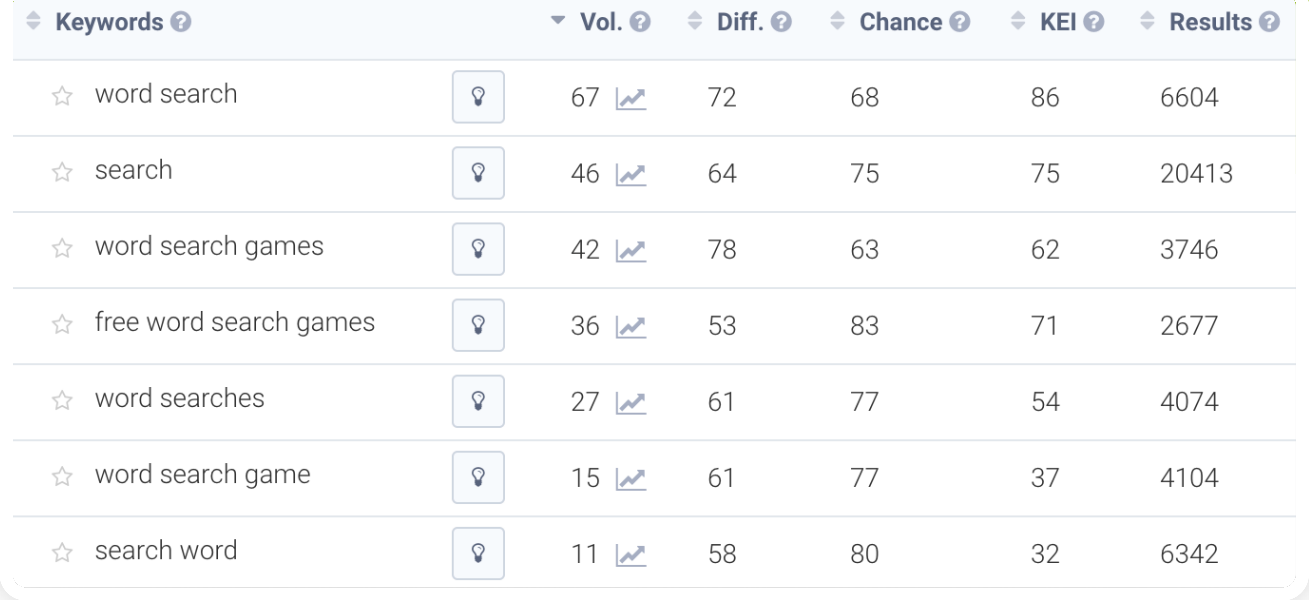


Keywords	Vol.	Month. DL	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
★ personal training coach	15	1030	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ personal training	13	739	unranked	unranked	78	unranked
★ personal trainer	35	4057	unranked	unranked	94	unranked
★ personal fitness coach	10	322	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ gym workout	29	2720	40	unranked	31	unranked
★ gym	47	10730	49	unranked	14	unranked
★ fitness guidance	5	24	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ excerise	32	3266	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ excercise program	5	24	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ cardio workout	20	1606	21	unranked	unranked	unranked
★ cardio program	5	25	unranked	unranked	unranked	unranked

Target long-tail combinations

Keyword space is limited in the app stores, especially on the Apple App Store. Apple provides 3 fields only where you can add keywords: the title (30 characters), the subtitle (30 characters) and the keyword field (100 characters). Therefore you should use your keywords wisely. Try to target keywords that make long-tail combinations (phrases of two or more keywords) to increase your scope and visibility.

When we consider the example of ‘word cookies’ we find that ‘search’ is an interesting keyword to target. The keywords ‘search’ by itself might not drive many downloads to the app, but it makes very interesting long-tail combinations such as ‘word search games’, ‘word searches’, ‘crossword search’.



Keywords	Vol.	Diff.	Chance	KEI	Results
word search	67	72	68	86	6604
search	46	64	75	75	20413
word search games	42	78	63	62	3746
free word search games	36	53	83	71	2677
word searches	27	61	77	54	4074
word search game	15	61	77	37	4104
search word	11	58	80	32	6342

One tool that can help automate this process is AppTweak’s Keyword Shuffle Tool. Add up to five different words to list all of the different long-tail combinations, then research their volumes and your app ranking - you might be surprised at some of the results!

Leverage Apple Search Ads to optimize your conversion rate

Both Apple and Google want to provide their users with the most relevant search results. As a result they consider the keyword conversion rate into their algorithm. However, ASO experts do not have any insights into organic keyword conversion rates so they need to look at different places to gather data. And Apple Search Ads can be one of these data sources.

If you find that a certain set of keywords has a higher conversion rate than others in your Apple Search Ads campaigns, make sure to transfer over this knowledge into your organic ASO strategy and try to optimize your organic presence for those keywords.

Localization - How to keyword research in different languages

The App Store has over 148 available countries and regions and 37 languages that support localized metadata and Google Play supports 51 different languages. Search behaviour and keyword volume are completely different in each localized market due to varying cultures, linguistic trends and societal norms. To fully optimize your app's visibility worldwide you have to consider localizing your metadata across all your target markets.

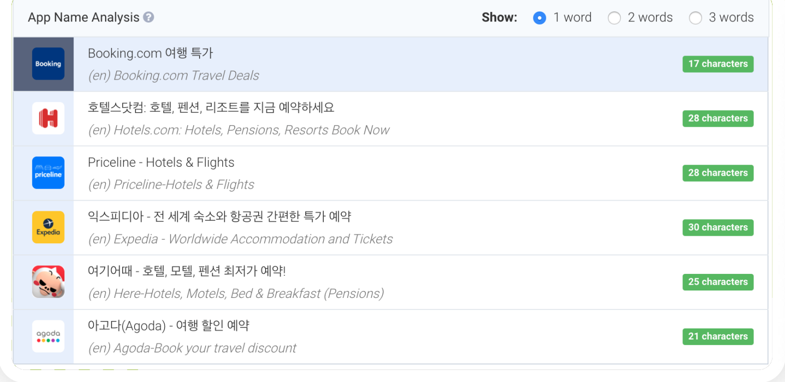
You don't have to be a native speaker to optimize your app listing across several markets. ASO tools like AppTweak can help you find the right keywords you should target! Then with the use of a native speaker you can transform your research into well optimized metadata.

How to keyword research in a foreign language

The keyword research process in a foreign language is pretty similar to the process described above. With AppTweak's Keyword Research & Suggestion tools you can create a list of over 200 keywords in under 30 minutes. Some of AppTweak's most popular features when researching in a foreign language include:

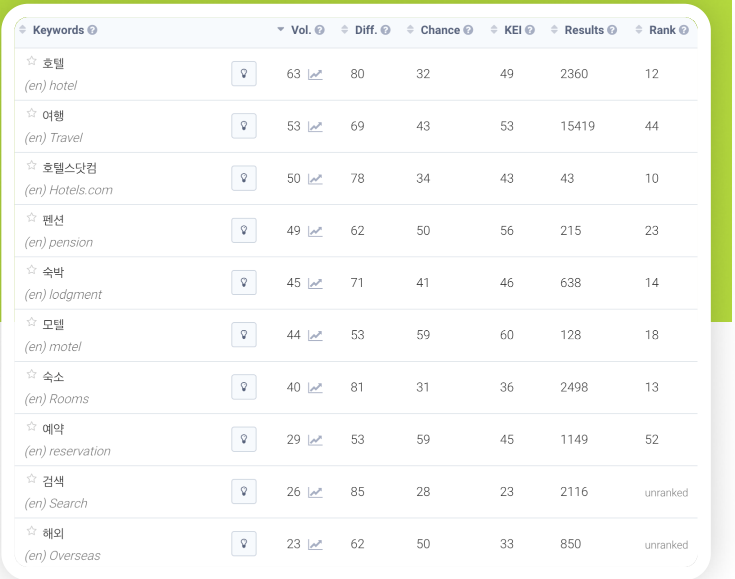
- **App Metadata**: Select all the keywords your competitors are targeting in their metadata.
- **Search Ads Reco:** Quickly add all the keywords Apple suggest you or your competitors should bid on with Apple Search Ads.
- **Trending Keywords:** See which keywords are trending in the local app store.
- **Ranked Keywords:** Add all the keywords your competitors are ranking for in the top 1, 10 or 100.

Building an initial keyword list in a foreign language is easy with AppTweak. We have a built-in translation feature that translates your competitor's app metadata and each keyword in your keyword list!


App Name Analysis

Show: ● 1 word ○ 2 words ○ 3 words

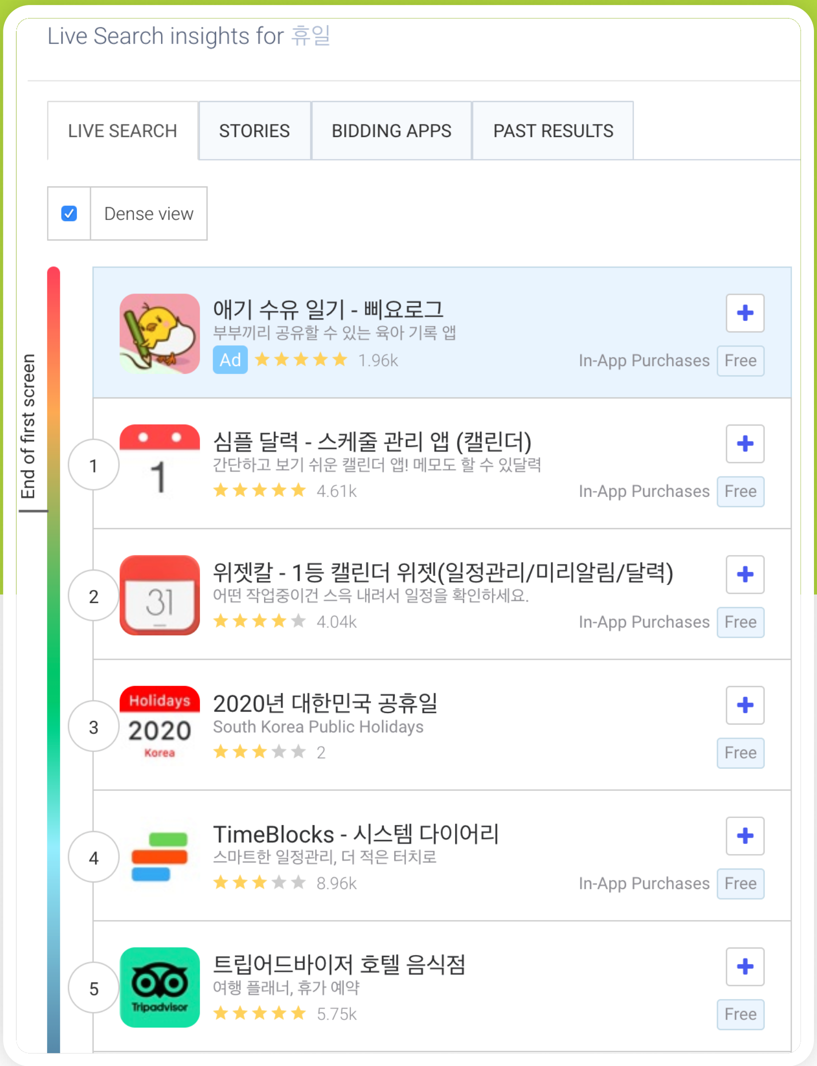
App name	Length
Booking.com 여행 특가 *(en) Booking.com Travel Deals*	17 characters
호텔스닷컴: 호텔, 펜션, 리조트를 지금 예약하세요 *(en) Hotels.com: Hotels, Pensions, Resorts Book Now*	28 characters
Priceline - Hotels & Flights *(en) Priceline-Hotels & Flights*	28 characters
익스피디아 - 전 세계 숙소와 항공권 간편한 특가 예약 *(en) Expedia - Worldwide Accommodation and Tickets*	30 characters
여기어때 - 호텔, 모텔, 펜션 최저가 예약! *(en) Here-Hotels, Motels, Bed & Breakfast (Pensions)*	25 characters
아고다(Agoda) - 여행 할인 예약 *(en) Agoda-Book your travel discount*	21 characters



Keywords	Vol.	Diff.	Chance	KEI	Results	Rank
☆ 호텔 *(en) hotel*	63	80	32	49	2360	12
☆ 여행 *(en) Travel*	53	69	43	53	15419	44
☆ 호텔스닷컴 *(en) Hotels.com*	50	78	34	43	43	10
☆ 펜션 *(en) pension*	49	62	50	56	215	23
☆ 숙박 *(en) lodgment*	45	71	41	46	638	14
☆ 모텔 *(en) motel*	44	53	59	60	128	18
☆ 숙소 *(en) Rooms*	40	81	31	36	2498	13
☆ 예약 *(en) reservation*	29	53	59	45	1149	52
☆ 검색 *(en) Search*	26	85	28	23	2116	unranked
☆ 해외 *(en) Overseas*	23	62	50	33	850	unranked

Selecting the most relevant keywords might be a more difficult task if you don’t speak the local language. Especially in Asian languages some words might have different meanings so how do you know which one is the most relevant to your app? AppTweak’s Live Search feature can help you with this. The Live Search feature shows you which apps are currently ranking for a keyword, providing insights into the true meaning of some words.

For example, ‘holiday’ can be translated in Korean to ‘휴일’ . However, when looking at the Live Search Results we see that mostly calendar apps providing info into public holiday dates rank for that keyword. This can help us conclude that ‘holiday’ or ‘휴일’ is not the most relevant keyword for Booking.com to target in South Korea.



Live Search insights for 휴일

애기 수유 일기 - 삐요로그
부부끼리 공유할 수 있는 육아 기록 앱
Ad ★★★★★ 1.96k In-App Purchases Free

1 심플 달력 - 스케줄 관리 앱 (캘린더)
간단하고 보기 쉬운 캘린더 앱! 메모도 할 수 있달력
★★★★★ 4.61k In-App Purchases Free

2 위젯칼 - 1등 캘린더 위젯(일정관리/미리알림/달력)
어떤 작업중이건 스윽 내려서 일정을 확인하세요.
★★★★☆ 4.04k In-App Purchases Free

3 2020년 대한민국 공휴일
South Korea Public Holidays
★★★☆☆ 2 Free

4 TimeBlocks - 시스템 다이어리
스마트한 일정관리, 더 적은 터치로
★★★☆☆ 8.96k In-App Purchases Free

5 트립어드바이저 호텔 음식점
여행 플래너, 휴가 예약
★★★★★ 5.75k Free

Localization in US, UK, CA and AU

This is often overlooked by many ASO experts or mobile marketers, but it is also very important you perform keyword research for the different English locales and localize your metadata for the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia specifically. Careful keyword research can uncover local trends or competitors, different spellings or colloquialisms. Colloquial language is culture-based and regional differences affect search volumes in unique ways.

For example, if we take a look at a specific category, Casino Games, we can examine how each the US, UK and Australia have a different expression for 'slot machines'.

Keywords	**Search Volume (iOS)**		
	🇺🇸	🇬🇧	🇦🇺
slots	60	62	77
casino games	49	49	37
fruit machines	5	33	6
pokies	5	13	70

In the United States, 'slots' and 'casino games' are some of the more popular search terms, but in the United Kingdom, people also tend to use the word 'fruit Machines. In Australia on the other hand 'pokies' is a very popular word.

Carefully executing keyword research is a crucial part of any ASO strategy. AppTweak has built a number of tools to help you easily find keyword ideas in any language. Our unique keyword metrics will further help you narrow down your research and really select those keywords that have the most potential to increase your app's visibility.

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