

## Writing Sample

### Home Improvement Project

<http://truevalue.com>

- o 60,000-65,000 unique visitors per month
- o Responsible for all copy shown

The screenshot shows the True Value Idea House website. The header includes the True Value logo with the tagline 'START RIGHT. START HERE.', the Idea House logo, a STORE LOCATOR with a zip code field, and a SEARCH field with a 'Go' button. The navigation bar contains links for Project Library, Experienced Project Ideas, Beginner Project Ideas, Solution Workshop, and Contest.

The main content area is titled 'Create a Tile Backsplash in Your Kitchen'. It includes a breadcrumb trail: Home > Project Library > Maintenance & Repair > Create a Tile Backsplash. There is a 'print project | email' link and a circular image of a kitchen with a tiled backsplash. A 'Like this project?' section asks for user feedback. An 'Email Sign-Up' section offers special offers and project ideas via email, with an email address field and a 'Sign Up' button.

The 'Project Library' section lists categories: Painting, Lawn & Garden, and Maintenance & Repair. A 'DIY ALL-STAR CONTEST 1st HOME EDITION' badge is also visible.

The main article content includes:

- Introduction:** A new kitchen tile backsplash will update and make a decorative statement in any kitchen. It will also protect from spills and splatters. Applying ceramic tile can be completed relatively quickly and makes a rewarding home improvement project for any do-it-yourselfer.
- Local Store:** Head to your local True Value hardware store for all the right advice and products you'll need to install your unique kitchen tile backsplash. The steps below will get you started.
- Step 1. Prepare Walls:** It's important to make sure your kitchen walls are in good shape before you start constructing your backsplash. Tile adhesive sticks to a wide variety of surfaces as long as they're clean, dry and structurally sound. If there is any condensation, wait for the area to dry before tiling. Use a dehumidifier for faster drying. If walls are not new drywall, strip off any existing flexible coverings, such as wallpaper, or scrape away loose paint with a paint scraper. Lightly sand with sandpaper, and be sure to patch drywall holes and cracks with spackling compound.
- Step 2. Plan Backsplash:** Determine the size of your backsplash. Generally, a backsplash extends at least 4" up from the countertop and often to the bottom of wall cabinets. If your kitchen countertop is tiled as well, plan the layout so the backsplash grout veins line up with the countertop grout veins. If you don't have a tiled countertop, start the first row of tiles in the center of the wall space where the backsplash will be located.
- Step 3. Calculate Amount of Tile Needed:** Measure the length and width of the tile area with a tape measure to determine how much tile you need to purchase. Determine the square footage by multiplying the length times the width. Wall tiles are available in sizes ranging from 4 1/2" to 6" squares.
- Helpful Tip:** Buy extra tiles in case you need to replace them in the future.
- Safety Alert!** Make sure the power to the room you're working in is off and all electrical outlet covers have been removed before you begin your kitchen remodeling.
- Step 4. Apply Adhesive:** Apply tile adhesive with a trowel. Hold the trowel at a 45-degree angle and spread a thin, even layer. Be sure to work in small 2' x 2' areas to prevent the adhesive from drying out.
- Step 5. Place Tile:** Position the first tile using a twisting motion, and use a line level to ensure the tile is square. Place a spacer on each corner of the first tile. Cut one end of each spacer in order to fit them between the countertop and the bottom of the tile. Working outward, continue to lay each tile in a straight row, flush with the spacers. Continue in this manner row after row, following the same pattern. Apply adhesive as needed.
- Step 6. Work Around Obstacles:** To cover corners and align with kitchen cabinets and countertops, you may need to score and cut tiles to size using a tile cutter. Be careful not to score the area of the tile that will show. Use a wet saw to cut away the area carefully. When you tile around an outlet, be sure the outlet cover hides the tile edges.

A 'Customize Your Shopping List' section is integrated into the page, listing various tools and materials with 'Got It' and 'Get It' checkboxes. The list includes: Dehumidifier, Paint scraper, Sandpaper, Spackling compound, Tape measure, Tiles, Tile adhesive, Trowel, Line Level, Spacers, Tile cutter, Wet saw, Grout, Rubber float, Rounded grouting tool, Damp sponge, Cloths, Caulk, Protective goggles, Rubber gloves, and Long screws (optional). An 'Additional Items' text box is provided for user input, with a character limit of 0/100 and an 'Update List' button.

A '< back to top' link is located at the bottom right of the article content.



#### Step 7. Grout Between Tile

When you're finished laying the tiles remove each spacer before they fully adhere. Most adhesives set in 20 to 30 minutes. Allow tiles to set completely before grouting. Mix grout according to the manufacturer's instructions. Using a rubber float, spread grout diagonally at a 45 degree angle across the tiles, packing the grout between each tile. Wipe off the excess grout with a damp sponge when it becomes hard. Shape grout joints using a rounded grouting tool and clean tiles again. After the grout dries a haze will form. Wipe off tiles and buff to a shine with a clean, dry cloth. Run a bead of caulk along the corner between the countertop and the tiles to create a clean look. Your new kitchen backsplash is almost complete.

#### Safety Alert!

- Since grout may irritate eyes and skin, wear protective goggles and rubber gloves.



#### Step 8. Finish Up

Reinstall any electrical fixtures. You may need to use longer screws because of the added thickness of the tiles. Don't tighten the screws too much or you may break the tiles.

Great job! You've created an attractive tile backsplash to invigorate your kitchen design. Contact your [local True Value hardware store](#) for tips on protecting your tile.

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