

# Ahrefs Webmaster Tools vs Semrush

Software comparison report

A practical side-by-side comparison of pricing, free plans, strengths, limitations, and best-fit use cases. Data comes from the current WiseTechList tools database.

## QUICK COMPARISON

### At a glance

| Compare        | Ahrefs Webmaster Tools                                                              | Semrush                                                            |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Starting price | Free                                                                                | \$117.33/mo billed annually                                        |
| Free plan      | Yes                                                                                 | No                                                                 |
| Free trial     | No                                                                                  | Yes                                                                |
| Difficulty     | Easy                                                                                | Medium                                                             |
| Best for       | Free SEO auditing, backlink data, and organic search insights for websites you own. | SEO, keyword research, competitor analysis, and content marketing. |
| Last checked   | Sep 2026                                                                            | Oct 2026                                                           |

## KEY DIFFERENCES

### Where each tool stands out

#### Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

Key strength: Provides useful Ahrefs SEO data for verified sites at no cost.

Main limitation: It is limited to verified websites and does not replace the full Ahrefs platform for broad competitor research.

#### Semrush

Key strength: Very complete SEO and competitor research toolkit.

Main limitation: Can be expensive for small businesses.

## USE CASES

# What can you use them for?

## Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

- Site audit
- Backlink monitoring
- Organic keyword monitoring
- Technical SEO
- Website health checks

## Semrush

- Keyword research
- Competitor analysis
- Site audit
- Content research
- PPC competitor research

## PROS AND CONS

# Trade-offs to consider

## Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

### What we like

- + Free for verified sites
- + Useful site audit data
- + Helpful backlink insights
- + Good entry point to Ahrefs
- + Suitable for site owners

### What to consider

- Limited to websites you verify
- Not a full competitor-research suite
- Fewer capabilities than paid Ahrefs

## Semrush

### What we like

- + Strong keyword and competitor research
- + Very complete SEO toolkit
- + Useful site audit features
- + Good competitive intelligence data
- + Combines SEO, content, PPC, and market research tools

### What to consider

- More expensive than many alternatives
- Can feel overwhelming for beginners
- Many advanced features are unnecessary for simple websites

## BEST FIT

# Who should choose each tool?

## Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

**Best fit:** Choose Ahrefs Webmaster Tools if you own a website and want free SEO auditing and search data for that site.

**Skip it if:** Skip it if your main goal is researching competitors, large keyword sets, or multiple unverified websites.

## Semrush

**Best fit:** Choose Semrush if you need a complete SEO and competitor research platform and regularly work with keyword research, content, site audits, or digital marketing campaigns.

**Skip it if:** Skip Semrush if you only need basic SEO features or manage a very small website with a limited software budget.