

# The Voice Audit *Checklist.*

A 10-minute scan for AI tells in your own copy. Use it before publishing anything you wrote with AI in the loop.

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## STRUCTURAL TELLS (SENTENCE + PARAGRAPH LEVEL)

- ☐ 01 **Em dashes used as filler**  
An em dash where a period or comma would land harder. AI uses them constantly.  
→ REPLACE WITH PERIODS
- ☐ 02 **Decorative triplets**  
"X, Y, and Z" patterns where three is rhythm, not precision.  
→ CUT THE WEAKEST ITEM
- ☐ 03 **"Not just X, but Y"**  
The reversal sounds wise but says little. Cousin: "X, not Y."  
→ PICK ONE AND STATE IT
- ☐ 04 **Adjective stacks**  
Three adjectives in a row before a noun.  
→ PICK ONE
- ☐ 05 **Excessive parallel construction**  
Every sentence the same shape. Reads as rhythm exercise, not thought.  
→ BREAK WITH FRAGMENTS
- ☐ 06 **Wisdom rhetoric**  
Sentence takes a position then balances it away. "X is a Y problem, not a Z problem."  
→ TAKE A SIDE

## PHRASING TELLS (WORD + PHRASE LEVEL)

- ☐ 07 **Empty intensifiers**  
Truly, really, actually, literally, simply, fundamentally, essentially.  
→ CUT ON SIGHT
- ☐ 08 **Corporate verbs**  
Leverage, utilize, facilitate, drive, optimize for, empower, unlock, harness.  
→ USE PLAIN VERBS
- ☐ 09 **Buzzword adjectives**  
Robust, comprehensive, holistic, world-class, transformative, scalable, seamless.  
→ REPLACE WITH SPECIFICS
- ☐ 10 **Cliche openers**  
"In today's fast-paced world." "Imagine if." "Have you ever wondered." "Here's the thing."  
→ CUT TO THE POINT
- ☐ 11 **Empty preambles**  
"It's important to note." "It's worth mentioning." "What's interesting is."  
→ JUST SAY THE THING
- ☐ 12 **Marketing template phrasings**  
Drive results. Deliver value. Tailored solutions. Vanity metrics. Move the needle.  
→ REPLACE WITH THE SPECIFIC THING

# The 3-step *10-minute audit*.

Run these three sweeps before publishing anything. They catch about 80 percent of AI signature.

## STEP 01 • 2 MIN

### The em dash sweep.

Search your file for "—". Replace every instance in user-facing copy with a period, a comma, or a rephrase. Code comments and developer-facing strings can keep them. The goal is zero em dashes in anything a reader will see.

## STEP 02 • 4 MIN

### The intensifier sweep.

Search for: truly, really, actually, literally, simply, absolutely, fundamentally, essentially. For each match, ask: does cutting the word change the meaning? Almost always, no. Cut it. Same for corporate verbs (leverage, utilize, facilitate, drive).

## STEP 03 • 4 MIN

### The triplet check.

Find every "X, Y, and Z" pattern. For each, ask: does the reader need three things or am I padding for rhythm? If the third item is weaker than the first two, cut it. Same drill for adjective stacks before nouns.

## BEFORE / AFTER • THE REWRITES THAT MOVE THE NEEDLE

| AI VERSION (CUT)                                                                                                            | HUMAN VERSION (SHIP)                                                                                                        | TELL #                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| "Strong messaging, fast testing, and accurate tracking built for real-world performance."                                   | "Copy that filters for buyers. Tracking clean enough that Meta can optimize."                                               | 02 • 09 • 12           |
| "We don't just run ads — we leverage best-in-class strategies to drive transformative results."                             | "I run paid acquisition, the conversion tracking under it, and the strategy on top."                                        | 01 • 03 • 08 • 09 • 12 |
| "It's actually really important to note that the fundamentals matter."                                                      | "The fundamentals matter."                                                                                                  | 07 • 11                |
| "I review every output before it ships, every claim before it goes in a deck, every render before it touches your catalog." | "I review every output before it ships. Every claim before it goes in a deck. Every render before it touches your catalog." | 05                     |

The patterns above are common AI tells. They are *not banned in human writing*. Real writers use them once. AI writers stack five in a paragraph. The audit is to catch the stacking, not to chase every individual instance.