# 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.**