Scrhoz

Edit, Don't Outsource Prompt Pack

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15 simple prompts for using AI as an editor, not a ghostwriter: tighten, clarify, check structure and test your openings while the words stay yours.

How to Use This Pack

- Copy a prompt, paste it into any AI assistant (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or similar), and replace each [BRACKETED] part with your own details.
- Paste only your own writing, a page or a scene at a time. Short passages get more careful attention.
- Start each new chat with prompt 1, so the AI knows to edit and not to take over.
- Treat every suggestion as a suggestion. You decide what stays.

Note: AI editing suggestions can be wrong, bland or out of step with what you mean, and the AI can't know your intent unless you say it. Don't paste writing you don't have the right to share, or anything private. If your work is going to a publisher, school or client with rules about AI use, check those rules first, and keep the final words yours.

Set the Ground Rules

1. Set the Ground Rules

> For this conversation, act as an editor, not a ghostwriter. Don't rewrite my work unless I ask you to. When you suggest a change, quote the exact words you mean, say what the problem is, and offer a fix I can accept or ignore. Keep my voice and my meaning. If something is unclear, ask me before you assume. Reply with "Ready" and wait for my first passage.

Tip: Paste this at the start of every new chat. The AI doesn't carry it over.

2. Does It Say What I Meant?

> What I'm trying to say in this piece: [ONE OR TWO SENTENCES]. Here is the draft: [PASTE A PAGE OR A SCENE]. Tell me, in your own words, what you think the piece says and what it leaves the reader feeling or understanding. Then list any places where it says something different from what I intended. Don't edit anything yet.

Tip: Write your point down before you paste. Otherwise you'll read it into the draft yourself.

3. Find the Weakest Paragraph

> Here is a draft: [PASTE 500 TO 1000 WORDS]. Pick the paragraph that does the least for the piece and explain why in two or three sentences. Then give me three questions I could ask myself to fix it. Don't rewrite it.

Tip: If you disagree with the AI's pick, ask yourself why. That's useful too.

Tighten and Clarify

4. Tighten by About a Fifth

> Here is a passage of [NUMBER] words: [PASTE UP TO 500 WORDS]. Suggest cuts that would bring it down by about a fifth. Keep my wording wherever possible. Show the cut version, then list each cut with a few words on why it can go, and mark any cut that changes the meaning.

Tip: Put back any cut you miss when you reread it.

5. Plainer Words

> Here is a passage: [PASTE UP TO 500 WORDS]. List the words and phrases that are longer, fancier or vaguer than they need to be, and suggest a plainer alternative for each. Don't change my sentence structure, and leave alone any word that's the right word.

Tip: Plain isn't the same as dull. Keep the words that carry your voice.

6. Flag Filler and Hedging

> Here is a passage: [PASTE UP TO 500 WORDS]. Highlight, without rewriting, the words and phrases that add little: filler such as "really" and "in order to", hedges such as "sort of" and "perhaps", and throat-clearing openings. Group them by type and tell me how many of each you found.

Tip: Some hedging is honest. Cut it only where you're sure of the point.

7. Long Sentences

> Here is a passage: [PASTE UP TO 500 WORDS]. Find the three longest or most tangled sentences. For each one, show two different ways I could split or simplify it while keeping my meaning, then tell me which you'd choose and why.

Tip: Read the sentence aloud. If you run out of breath, split it.

8. Strengthen Weak Verbs

> Here is a passage: [PASTE UP TO 500 WORDS]. List the sentences that lean on weak verbs such as "is", "was", "has" or "makes", or on the passive voice, and suggest a stronger verb for each. Leave alone any that read well as they are.

Tip: Keep a few plain verbs. A page of vivid ones is tiring.

Structure and Openings

9. Map the Structure

> Here is a draft: [PASTE 500 TO 1500 WORDS]. Give me a one-line summary of each paragraph, in order. Then tell me whether the order works, which paragraph feels out of place, and what, if anything, is missing between paragraphs. Don't move or rewrite anything.

Tip: If a paragraph is hard to summarise in one line, it may be doing two jobs.

10. Test My Opening

> Here are the first paragraphs of my piece: [PASTE 100 TO 300 WORDS]. It's a [ARTICLE / ESSAY / STORY / CHAPTER] for [READER]. Tell me what a reader would expect from this opening, whether the piece delivers it, and where the real start is if it begins later than where I've started. Don't rewrite it.

Tip: Many drafts start a paragraph too early. Check whether your real opening is on line three.

11. Test My Ending

> Here is the end of my piece: [PASTE THE LAST 150 TO 300 WORDS]. The piece is about [ONE SENTENCE]. Tell me whether the ending answers what the opening promised, whether it adds something new or repeats earlier points, and whether the last line is the strongest it could be. Suggest two directions I could try, without writing them for me.

Tip: Try deleting your last sentence and see whether the piece ends better.

12. Read It as a Sceptical Reader

> Here is my [ESSAY / ARTICLE / SCENE]: [PASTE UP TO 800 WORDS]. Read it as a sceptical reader [WHO DISAGREES WITH ME / WHO DOESN'T KNOW THE SUBJECT / WHO DOESN'T BELIEVE THE SCENE]. Tell me where you stopped believing or got lost, quote the exact lines, and say what you'd need in order to carry on. Don't suggest rewrites.

Tip: Where a sceptic stops reading is where your reader may stop too.

Keep It Yours

13. Critique Like an Editor

> Here is my draft: [PASTE UP TO 1000 WORDS]. It's for [READER AND PURPOSE]. Give me editor's notes ranked by importance: the three biggest issues first, then up to five smaller ones. For each note, quote the line, explain the problem and suggest what I might try. Don't rewrite any of it, and begin with one thing that's working.

Tip: Deal with the biggest note first. Small fixes can wait.

14. Match My Voice

> Here is a sample of my writing at its best: [PASTE 200 TO 400 WORDS]. Here is a passage that doesn't sound like me: [PASTE 200 TO 400 WORDS]. Describe what's different, quoting examples. Then suggest edits to the second passage that would bring it closer to the first, keeping my meaning. Show the changes as a list I can choose from.

Tip: Choose a sample you're proud of. The AI can only match what you show it.

15. Which Edits Should I Keep?

> Here is my original: [PASTE]. Here is an edited version: [PASTE A VERSION FROM AN AI OR AN EDITOR]. List every significant change between them. For each one, tell me what it gains, what it loses, and whether it changes my meaning or my voice. Don't make the decision for me.

Tip: Keep the edits you can explain in a sentence. Drop the ones you can't.

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- The Ghosts of AI
- Metamorphosis
- The Strange Case of Juno and Darius
- Kingdom of Likes

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