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You can spot it immediately. That particular flatness. Sentences that are technically correct but somehow lifeless. A certain relentless positivity. Transitions that feel like they were assembled rather than written. Paragraphs that cover everything and say nothing.

It's AI content, and readers know it when they see it — even if they can't always explain why.

The irony is that AI is genuinely useful for content creation. The problem isn't the tool. The problem is that most people don't know how to use it in a way that preserves the thing readers are actually responding to when they read good writing: the sense that a real person with a real perspective wrote this.

That's fixable. This article explains how.

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## **Why AI Content Sounds Like AI Content**

Before talking about solutions, it's worth being honest about the actual problem — because most advice on this topic is too surface-level to be useful.

AI language models are trained to predict the most statistically likely next word given what came before. That's a simplification, but it's a useful one. What it means in practice is that AI defaults to the most common, most expected, most average version of whatever you asked for. It doesn't take risks. It doesn't have opinions. It doesn't make the kind of structural choices a writer makes when they decide to open with a confession instead of a definition, or to end a paragraph with a single short sentence for emphasis.

The result is writing that is correct without being interesting. Comprehensive without being useful. Polished without being real.

There are specific patterns that show up again and again in raw AI output:

Uniform sentence rhythm. Every sentence is roughly the same length and structure. Human writers naturally vary — short punchy sentences followed by longer, more winding ones. AI irons all of that out.

Hollow transitions. Phrases like “it’s worth noting that,” “in today’s fast-paced world,” “as we’ve seen,” and “furthermore” are the fingerprints of AI writing. They exist to connect ideas without actually connecting them.

Hedging everything. AI is cautious. It qualifies statements that don’t need qualifying. It sees both sides of things that don’t have two sides. This produces writing that takes no position and therefore earns no trust.

Describing rather than showing. AI tells you that something is “crucial” or “important” or “game-changing” without showing you why. Good writing demonstrates. AI writing announces.

The absence of a specific human being. Real writing sounds like someone. It has preferences, opinions, blind spots, humor, frustration. Raw AI output has none of that. It sounds like content written by a committee trying to offend no one.

Understanding these problems is the first step, because the solution isn’t “run it through a humanizing tool.” The solution is to either prompt better from the start or edit with intention at the end — ideally both.

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## **The Prompt Side: Getting Better Raw Material**

Most of the work of making AI content sound human happens before the first word is written. The quality of your output is almost entirely determined by the quality of your input.

See also [Prompt Engineering for Newsletter Writers](#)

Here’s what changes everything:

Give the AI a specific voice to write in. Not “professional and friendly” — every AI prompt on the internet uses those words. Something specific. “Write the way a

straightforward independent business owner talks — someone who has been around long enough to be skeptical of hype, who respects their reader’s time, and who would rather be direct than impressive.” That produces something different. Give it a real example from your own writing if you have one.

Tell it who is reading this, specifically. Not “small business owners” but “small business owners who are time-poor, skeptical of generic advice, and have been burned by AI tools before.” The more specific the audience, the more specific the writing. Vague audience descriptions produce vague writing.

Assign a point of view. “Write this as though you have a clear opinion on the matter and aren’t afraid to say it” produces better content than letting AI default to balanced-and-careful. You can dial back a strong take in editing. You can’t easily add one.

Restrict what it shouldn’t do. Some of the most effective prompt additions are exclusions. Tell it: no bullet points unless you ask. No use of the word “crucial,” “leverage,” “delve,” “game-changing,” or “in today’s world.” No corporate transitions. No hedging language. No opening with “In the [adjective] world of [topic].” Cutting AI’s default vocabulary forces it to find better words.

Ask for specificity over coverage. AI will naturally try to cover a topic comprehensively. That’s almost never what makes writing interesting. Narrow the brief. “Don’t try to cover everything — pick one angle and go deep on it.” Depth produces better writing than breadth.

Request imperfection. This sounds strange, but it works. “Write this conversationally — it’s okay if it’s a little unpolished. Real writing has edges.” Giving AI permission to not be perfect loosens the output considerably.

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## **The Edit Side: What to Fix After the Draft**

Even with excellent prompting, raw AI drafts need editing. The good news is that once you know what to look for, the editing process becomes faster and more systematic.

Read it out loud. This is the single most reliable test for human-sounding writing. If

you stumble, if your voice flattens, if you wouldn't say this out loud to another person — the sentence needs rewriting. AI content almost always reveals itself in this test. It reads fine on the page but sounds wrong spoken.

Find every hollow transition and cut it. Go through the draft and delete or replace every "it's worth noting that," "in conclusion," "as we explore," "it's important to understand," and similar filler. Then read what's left. Often the writing is cleaner without them and the logic still holds.

See also [Why Most AI Prompts Fail Before the First Word](#)

Break up uniform rhythm. Look for stretches where every sentence is the same length. Pick one or two and cut them in half. Or combine two short sentences into one long, rambling one on purpose. Rhythm variation is one of the most effective humanizing edits you can make and one of the easiest to spot once you're looking.

Replace descriptors with specifics. Every time the draft says something is "important," "valuable," "effective," or "powerful" — ask why. Then replace the descriptor with the reason. "This approach is powerful" becomes "This approach cuts your editing time in half." One of those sentences does something. The other just makes a claim.

Add one thing AI couldn't know. This is the move that transforms a good AI draft into something that genuinely sounds like a person wrote it. Add one specific observation, example, or detail that comes from your actual experience or knowledge. It doesn't need to be long — one sentence is enough. But it anchors the whole piece in reality in a way AI content never quite is.

Remove everything that tells the reader how to feel. AI content is full of manufactured enthusiasm. "This is incredibly exciting." "The results are truly remarkable." "This represents a significant shift." Readers don't respond to being told what to think. They respond to being given something to think about. Cut the enthusiasm and let the content make its own case.

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## **The Words That Immediately Signal AI**

There's a growing shared vocabulary of words and phrases that have become so

associated with AI writing that they now undermine credibility on contact. If you're editing AI content regularly, it's worth having this list somewhere you can reference it.

Words to remove or replace: leverage (use "use"), utilize (use "use"), delve (use "explore" or just get to the point), robust (be specific about what makes it strong), seamless (usually meaningless), cutting-edge (say what it actually does), crucial and vital (say why), empower (specifics instead), revolutionize (almost never true), transformative, game-changing, and ecosystem (unless you mean an actual ecosystem).

Opening lines to avoid: "In today's fast-paced world," "In the ever-evolving landscape of," "As we navigate," "It goes without saying," "Now more than ever," and any variation of "In a world where [obvious observation]..."

Structural habits to break: Starting every section with a definition. Ending every section with a summary of what was just said. Using three examples when one good one would do. Building to a conclusion that restates the introduction.

None of these are rules exactly — good writers break all of them in the right context. But in AI content, they appear so automatically and so often that removing them is almost always an improvement.

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## **A Practical Prompt for Human-Sounding Content**

Here's a prompt framework that consistently produces better raw material. Adapt it for your own use:

"Write [type of content] for [specific audience description]. Write in [voice description — e.g., direct, slightly skeptical, conversational without being casual]. Take a clear position and don't hedge it. Focus on [specific angle] rather than trying to cover everything. Keep sentence rhythm varied — mix short and long. Do not use the following words or phrases: [list]. Do not open with a broad statement about the topic or industry. Do not end with a summary of what you just said. Aim for [word count]."

See also [The Psychology Behind Prompts That Actually Work](#)

That's not a magic prompt — you'll still edit. But it eliminates most of the problems before they appear, which makes editing a refinement process rather than a reconstruction project.

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## **The Deeper Issue: Voice Can't Be Prompted Into Existence**

Here's the honest part of this conversation.

Everything above is about reducing the AI-ness of content. Shorter lists of hollow words, better rhythm, specificity over coverage. These are real improvements and they matter.

But the thing that makes writing genuinely worth reading — the reason you look forward to certain newsletters, the reason you share certain articles — isn't the absence of AI tells. It's the presence of a real perspective.

That can't be engineered into a prompt. It comes from you — from what you actually think about your industry, your customers, the problems you see people making, the things that frustrate you, the things that genuinely excite you. AI can express a perspective clearly and compellingly. It cannot manufacture one from nothing.

The best use of AI for content is this: let it handle the structure, the drafting, the rhythm, the research synthesis. You bring the perspective that makes it worth reading. Your experiences. Your opinions. Your specific knowledge of your specific customers in your specific market.

That division of labor is where AI content actually earns its keep.

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## **Where Prompting Skills Make the Difference**

The gap between AI content that sounds like AI and AI content that sounds like a person isn't really about the tool. It's about the craft of prompting — knowing how to brief the model, what to constrain, what to demand, and what to bring yourself.

That craft is learnable. It just takes the right frameworks to start from.

If you want to skip the months of trial and error and start with prompts that already have the voice, constraint, and structure work built in — for content, marketing, operations, and more — browse the prompt library at [theronclaude.com](https://theronclaude.com).

Browse the [prompt library](#)

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The goal was never to hide that you used AI. The goal is to produce content that's actually good — that earns attention, builds trust, and sounds like it came from a real person with something real to say.

With the right prompts and a focused edit, that's completely achievable. It just takes knowing where the problems are and fixing them before they go out the door.

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