

The Thoughtful Collection

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ACTUALLY USEFUL AI / THE WORKBOOK

Teach AI Your Writing Style

A practical workbook for building your own AI Writing Profile
from the way you actually write



Real life, better organised.

Most advice about getting AI to sound like you starts by asking you to describe your writing style.

This workbook starts somewhere else.

Your actual writing.

The method is simple: give AI enough representative evidence to identify how you communicate, review what it discovers and turn the approved findings into reusable context.

The aim is not to create an AI impersonator. It is to make the first draft considerably better.

The three principles

1. Use the prompt to point AI towards evidence

You still need an instruction. The difference is that you aren't trying to cram your entire writing style into it.

Instead, the prompt asks AI to study how you genuinely communicate.

2. Your past writing is evidence, not law

If AI discovers a historical habit you dislike, you do not have to preserve it.

Observed patterns should be reviewed and approved before becoming instructions.

3. Teach the judgement behind the writing

A good profile should understand not only *what* you write but **how your style changes depending on who you are writing to and why**.



PART ONE

Decide what you are teaching

Before collecting anything, define the job.

What would you like AI to help you draft?

- ☐ Personal email
- ☐ Internal workplace email
- ☐ Client or customer correspondence
- ☐ Professional contacts
- ☐ Creator or business correspondence
- ☐ Social content
- ☐ Longer form writing
- ☐ Other: _____

You may eventually combine several of these under one core voice, but don't assume they all use exactly the same register.

My initial focus

The types of people I regularly write to

PART TWO

Gather the evidence

Build a representative sample

In my original experiment, I asked Copilot to analyse **at least 80 sent emails spanning several years**. Where it had appropriately authorised access, I allowed it to make its own selection rather than choosing all the examples myself.

You do not have to reproduce that exact number. The principle is **breadth and representativeness**.

Five carefully selected emails can tell AI something. A broader body of genuine correspondence can reveal patterns you didn't know were there.

Where possible, include a mixture of:

- ☐ short emails
- ☐ longer emails
- ☐ straightforward requests
- ☐ replies
- ☐ thank you messages
- ☐ polite chasers
- ☐ occasions where you disagreed
- ☐ formal correspondence
- ☐ informal correspondence
- ☐ several different relationships
- ☐ several different purposes
- ☐ writing from different periods

Avoid selecting only the emails you think are especially well written.

You are looking for **normal you**, not Best Supporting Email at the Oscars.

Contexts represented in my sample

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

BEFORE YOU SHARE ANYTHING

privacy check

If your AI already has appropriately authorised access to the relevant environment, follow the privacy and data rules governing that system.

If you are manually supplying writing samples, stop and consider:

- ☐ Am I entitled to provide this material to this AI service?
- ☐ Does it contain confidential information?
- ☐ Does it contain sensitive personal information?
- ☐ Does it contain privileged or protected material?
- ☐ Does it include unnecessary third party information?
- ☐ Can names and identifying details be removed?
- ☐ Could I use a safer example and still teach the same writing pattern?

Do not upload confidential professional material to an unapproved AI service simply to build a writing profile.

The AI needs the **writing pattern**, not everybody else's personal information.



PART THREE

Run the analysis

The starter prompt

Adapt the bracketed sections to your circumstances.

Review at least [NUMBER] emails I have written from my Sent folder, spanning as broad a period as is reasonably available.

Where you have appropriately authorised access to my mailbox, make your own representative selection rather than asking me to handpick only the emails I think best represent my writing. Include enough variety to identify how my writing changes according to recipient, relationship and purpose.

If I am supplying the writing samples manually instead, analyse the full set I provide.

Analyse how I genuinely write rather than relying on how I describe my own writing style. Do not rewrite or improve the examples.

Identify recurring patterns in:

- overall voice and tone
- greetings and openings
- sign offs and closings
- sentence length
- paragraph and message length
- vocabulary
- directness
- warmth
- level of formality
- humour
- punctuation
- contractions
- recurring phrases
- how I make requests
- how I say thank you
- how I disagree or correct something
- how I chase or follow up
- how much context I provide
- phrases, constructions or stylistic habits I appear not to use

Where the correspondence covers different relationships or contexts, identify the distinct registers I use.

Explain:

1. what remains consistent across my writing; and
2. what changes depending on who I am writing to.

Distinguish strong recurring patterns from tentative observations. Do not infer a firm preference from one or two examples and do not invent characteristics that are not supported by the evidence.

Then produce a detailed draft Writing Style Profile designed specifically to teach another AI how to draft in my voice.

Include positive guidance about what I do and negative guidance about language, phrases or constructions that do not appear characteristic of my writing.

Treat the resulting profile as a draft for my review rather than final authority. Historical behaviour is evidence, not necessarily my current preference.

PART FOUR

Find your core voice

Once the analysis is complete, ask AI to separate two things:

What remains recognisably you across almost everything you write?

and

What changes according to the person, purpose or situation?

The first becomes your **core voice**. The second becomes your **registers**.

Step 4: Identify what stays consistent

Ask:

Looking across all of the writing you analysed, identify the characteristics that remain consistent even when the recipient, purpose or level of formality changes.
These should form my core writing voice.
Distinguish genuine recurring characteristics from patterns that appear only in one particular context.
Support each conclusion with evidence from the sample rather than generic descriptions of good writing.

Review what comes back.

My core voice

Overall tone

Level of directness

Typical sentence rhythm

Find your core voice — continued

Typical paragraph structure

Level of warmth

Vocabulary

Humour/personality

How much explanation I naturally give

Other characteristics that consistently sound like me

Don't worry if the first version sounds slightly generic. *Warm, professional and friendly* could describe several million people.

Push the AI further:

Which characteristics actually distinguish my writing from competent generic correspondence? Identify the more specific patterns that another AI would need to understand if it were trying to produce something I would genuinely send.

That's where the useful profile begins.

PART FIVE

Find your registers

Your core voice shouldn't disappear depending on who you're writing to, but its expression probably changes.

For example, the same person might be concise and familiar with a colleague, warmer with a friend and more structured with a client.

That isn't inconsistency.

It's judgement.

Step 5: Map the different versions of your voice

Complete this table using the AI's findings and your own corrections.

Context	Opening	Tone	Directness	Context/detail	Humour	Sign off
Personal / close						
Colleague / internal						
Professional contact						
Client / customer						
Other						

Find your registers — continued

Then ask:

Compare these registers and explain what causes my style to change between them. Do not treat them as separate personalities. Identify how my core voice is adapted according to relationship, purpose and level of formality.

What stays the same?

What changes?

What determines which register I use?

This is one of the most important parts of the exercise. A good AI writing profile shouldn't merely know how you write.

It should begin to understand **which version of your writing is appropriate when.**



PART SIX

Find what sounds like you

Step 6: Identify your positive patterns

Now ask the AI to become more specific.

You are looking for recurring language and structural habits that genuinely appear in the evidence.

Greetings I naturally use

Sign offs I naturally use

Phrases or expressions I use regularly

How I make a request

How I say thank you

Find what sounds like you — continued

How I chase or follow up

How I disagree or correct something

How I soften something without becoming vague

How I use humour

Punctuation or formatting that feels characteristic

Don't turn every observation into a compulsory phrase.

The goal is not to create a template that makes every email sound identical. You're giving AI a **range of authentic behaviours** from which it can make better decisions.

PART SEVEN

Find what doesn't sound like you

This can be just as important.

Generic AI has its own habits. If those habits repeatedly appear in drafts and repeatedly get deleted by you, they belong in your profile too.

Step 7: Build your “language to resist” list

Ask:

Review my writing samples alongside the profile you have created.
Identify words, phrases, structures, punctuation habits or stylistic tendencies that would commonly appear in generic AI generated writing but are not characteristic of my actual writing.
Do not assume that something is prohibited merely because it does not appear in the sample. Separate strong negative evidence from tentative observations.
Present the findings for my review before adding them to the Writing Style Profile.

Then decide for yourself.

Phrases I don't use

Words that tend not to sound like me

Writing habits I dislike

Punctuation I avoid

Generic AI habits I want removed

This is where your profile starts becoming genuinely personal.

“Write warmly and professionally” is useful.

“Never open with X, avoid these three stock phrases and don't suddenly turn a simple request into a miniature keynote speech” is much more useful.

PART EIGHT

Observed doesn't mean approved

AI can correctly identify something you have historically done that you don't want it to reproduce.

That isn't a failure of the analysis. It is exactly why **you review the profile before using it**.

In my own case, later analysis found a historical pattern of opening some emails with "Hello". That was a genuine observation, but my explicit current preference is **"Hi" or "Dear", never "Hello"**. My deliberate preference therefore overrides the historical evidence.

Step 8: Audit the findings

For every significant observation, decide:

☐ **KEEP**

This is accurate and I want AI to reproduce it.

☐ **MODIFY**

The observation is partly right but needs qualification.

☐ **REMOVE**

I may have done this historically but I don't want AI to learn it.

☐ **MORE EVIDENCE**

The sample isn't strong enough to make this a rule.

Finding

My decision

Current preference

Final rule for the profile

Repeat this for anything that matters.

Your past writing is evidence, not law.

PART NINE

Build your Writing Style Profile

Now turn the approved findings into reusable context.

Step 9: Create the profile

Ask:

Using only the writing observations and corrections I have approved, create a detailed reusable Writing Style Profile designed to teach another AI how to draft in my voice.

Separate my core voice from context specific registers.

Include:

- core voice and tone
- sentence and paragraph rhythm
- typical level of concision
- vocabulary
- greetings
- sign offs
- warmth and formality
- directness
- humour
- contractions
- punctuation and formatting preferences
- how I make requests
- how I thank people
- how I chase or follow up
- how I disagree or correct something
- how much context I give
- recurring phrases where genuinely supported
- language and constructions to resist
- differences between recipient/context registers

Explicit preferences I have given you must take priority over historical observations.

Do not turn statistical tendencies into rigid rules unless I have explicitly approved them as rules.

The profile should be detailed enough that another AI system could use it as persistent context when drafting for me.

Do not include confidential correspondence or unnecessary third party information. Distil the patterns rather than reproducing the source material.

Your profile doesn't have to be short.

Mine eventually became substantial because there was enough useful nuance to preserve. The objective isn't to produce the smallest possible prompt. It is to create **useful reusable context**.

PART TEN

Test it somewhere new

A writing profile isn't finished simply because it looks convincing.

It needs to work.

Step 10: Use an unseen scenario

Give the completed profile to an AI and ask it to draft something based on a situation that wasn't part of the original sample.

Choose several different tests if you have multiple registers.

Test 1

Recipient/context:

What I need to communicate:

Did the first draft sound like me?

- ☐ Very close
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not remotely

What did it get right?

What did I change?

Test it somewhere new — continued

Most importantly:

Why did I change it?

That final question matters more than the edit itself.

If you change:

“I’d love to invite you to...”

to:

“Would you be up for...?”

don’t merely record the replacement phrase.

The useful learning might be:

I prefer direct, natural invitations to ceremonial wording when there is already an established relationship.

That is the rule another AI can reuse.



PART ELEVEN

Correct the judgement, not just the sentence

This is how the profile improves.

When a draft doesn't sound right, ask yourself which of these happened:

- ☐ Wrong register
- ☐ Too formal
- ☐ Too casual
- ☐ Too warm
- ☐ Too cold
- ☐ Too verbose
- ☐ Too abrupt
- ☐ Generic AI phrase
- ☐ Wrong greeting
- ☐ Wrong sign off
- ☐ Too much explanation
- ☐ Not enough context
- ☐ Humour inappropriate
- ☐ Missing relationship context
- ☐ Doesn't sound natural
- ☐ Other: _____

Then tell the AI **why**.

For example:

This draft is too formal for this recipient. We already know each other well, so I would not re-explain the background or use ceremonial language. Update my profile so that established relationships favour familiarity and shared context rather than polished neutrality.

That is much more valuable than correcting the email and forgetting about it.

PART TWELVE

Test the profile across registers

If you identified several writing registers earlier, test each one.

Personal / close

Does it sound like you rather than a brand writing a friendly email?

Notes:

Colleague / internal

Does it assume the right amount of shared context?

Notes:

Professional contact

Is it warm without becoming overfamiliar?

Notes:

Client / customer

Is it clear, appropriately authoritative and still recognisably you?

Notes:

Other

Notes:

If one register performs much worse than the others, don't rewrite the entire core profile.

That part of the profile may simply need **more representative evidence**.

PART THIRTEEN

Create a correction loop

Your Writing Style Profile should be a living document, but that doesn't mean every edit should automatically become a permanent rule.

One unusual email is not a writing philosophy.

Step 13: Review proposed changes

When you notice a new pattern or correction, record:

Proposed learning

Evidence

Is this:

- ☐ a one off preference for this email?
- ☐ specific to this recipient?
- ☐ specific to this register?
- ☐ a genuine change to my overall writing style?

Should it update the profile?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not enough evidence yet

This prevents the profile becoming an enormous collection of contradictory rules accumulated from every email you've ever edited.

PART FOURTEEN

Give the profile to another AI

This is the real test of whether you've created **portable context** rather than simply trained one conversation.

Start a fresh AI conversation or use another appropriate AI system.

Provide the completed Writing Style Profile and say:

Use this Writing Style Profile as context whenever you draft correspondence for me.
Select the smallest relevant register for the recipient and situation rather than mechanically applying every rule.
Preserve my core voice while adapting appropriately to the relationship and purpose.
Do not invent personal context that has not been provided.
If the appropriate register is genuinely unclear and the difference would materially affect the draft, ask me.
Treat the profile as guidance about how I communicate, not authority to send anything on my behalf.

Then give it several ordinary drafting tasks.

If the profile works in a completely new environment, you've built something much more useful than a good prompt.

You've built **context that travels**.



PART FIFTEEN

Your final Writing Style Profile checklist

Before you call it finished, check that your profile answers these questions:

- ☐ What does my writing consistently sound like?
- ☐ How does it change according to recipient?
- ☐ How do I normally open?
- ☐ How do I normally close?
- ☐ How long or concise do I tend to be?
- ☐ How direct am I?
- ☐ How warm am I?
- ☐ How do I make requests?
- ☐ How do I thank people?
- ☐ How do I follow up?
- ☐ How do I disagree?
- ☐ How do I use humour?
- ☐ What punctuation feels like me?
- ☐ Which phrases genuinely recur?
- ☐ Which phrases should AI avoid?
- ☐ Which historical habits have I deliberately overridden?
- ☐ Does the profile distinguish observation from explicit preference?
- ☐ Has it been tested on writing it hasn't seen before?
- ☐ Does it work across more than one AI system?

If you can answer those confidently, you're probably ready to stop fiddling with it and actually use the thing.

At least until AI writes *"I'm excited to share..."* again and you discover you have one more rule to add.

The short version

If you remember nothing else from this workbook, remember this:

Don't spend all your time trying to describe your writing style to AI.

Give it enough safe, representative evidence to study how you actually write. Let it identify the patterns. Review those findings rather than blindly accepting them. Separate your core voice from the different registers you use. Correct historical habits you don't want to preserve. Test the resulting profile on something new.

Then, when the AI gets something wrong, don't just fix the sentence.

Teach it what it misunderstood.

That's how the profile becomes useful.

And that's how you get from an AI that can write a perfectly acceptable email to one that produces a draft you might actually have written yourself.

