

LEARNING WITH SDP

AI Editing Checklist

Plus the Use Case Quick Reference and What the Rules Actually Say

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Keep this next to you the first several times you use AI for anything a reader will see. The tells below are why AI-assisted marketing underperforms even when it reads perfectly fine.

The Six Tells (And How to Fix Each One)

The tell	What it looks like	The fix
Empty intensifiers	"truly," "incredibly," "absolutely," "a testament to," "delve into"	Delete the word. Read the sentence again. It is almost always stronger.
The rule of three	Every list has exactly three items. Every sentence has three clauses.	Make one list two items and another list five. Real writing is lumpier.
Hedge and balance	"While X is important, it's also worth noting Y." Says nothing, twice.	Pick a side. Cut the half you do not believe.
Uniform sentences	Every sentence runs 15 to 20 words. No short ones. No long ones.	Break one sentence into two. Let one run long. Vary the rhythm on purpose.
No specifics	No names, numbers, dates, places, or sensory details. Nothing only you know.	Add one concrete detail per paragraph that could only have come from you.
Tidy summary ending	A closing paragraph that restates what the reader just read.	Delete the last paragraph. Almost always an improvement.

The fifth tell is the root cause of the other five. AI writes without specifics because it does not have any. It has never been to your town, never met your grandmother, and does not know you wrote chapter nine in a hospital waiting room. One concrete detail per post breaks the pattern.

The Six-Pass Editing Routine

Run every AI-assisted draft through these in order before anything goes public.

- ☐ Read it out loud. If you would not say it to a reader at a signing table, cut it.
- ☐ Hunt the six tells above. Mark each one before you fix any of them.
- ☐ Add one concrete detail only you could have written. A place, a number, a name, a smell.
- ☐ Verify every factual claim. Titles, dates, prices, review quotes, sales figures, links.
- ☐ Cut 20 percent. AI writes long. Your version is almost always better shorter.
- ☐ Check the ending. If the last line summarizes, delete it.

Use Case Quick Reference

Green means AI genuinely helps. Gold means use it for a draft and rewrite carefully. Pink means do not, for reasons of trust or law.

Marketing task	Use AI?	Why
Newsletter subject lines	Yes	High volume, low stakes, easy to judge. The best use there is.
Turning your newsletter into social posts	Yes	You wrote the source. Nothing to invent, voice already yours.
Blog and content outlines	Yes	Ask for the skeleton, then write the words yourself.
Alt text, hashtags, metadata keywords	Yes	Structured work that does not need your voice.
Shortening copy to a character limit	Yes	Mechanical task. Tell it to keep your wording.
Book description drafts	Careful	Get a shape, then rewrite. AI blurbs are heavily saturated.
Your author bio	Careful	Fine for reformatting yours. Never let it add credentials.
Ad copy	Careful	Draft is fine. Verify every claim before you spend money on it.
Replying to reader comments and DMs	Never	A generic reply is worse than no reply. People can tell.
Reviews or testimonials	Never	Illegal in the US. See the FTC rule on the next page.
Anything about your book's facts	Never	It will invent plot points, quotes, and figures with total confidence.

Your Voice Sample Worksheet

AI is poor at your voice by default. This is the workaround, and it takes five minutes once.

Build it once, reuse it every session

Sample 1 (a newsletter or post that sounds most like you): _____

Sample 2 (a page from your book):

Sample 3 (an email or comment where you sound relaxed):

Where you will keep these so you can paste them quickly: _____

Open every session with: "Here are three samples of my writing. Study the voice." Give the samples BEFORE the request, not after. Then correct once in plain language: "Too formal, I use shorter sentences and I make more jokes." One round of correction beats a longer original prompt.

What the Rules Actually Say

This is a plain-language summary, not legal advice, and I am not a lawyer. Read the primary sources linked below rather than relying on anyone's summary, including mine. These policies have changed repeatedly and will change again.

1. Amazon KDP: generated vs. assisted

AI-GENERATED means an AI tool created the text, images, or translations that appear in your published book. Amazon requires you to disclose this when you publish or republish, and heavy editing afterward does not change the classification.

AI-ASSISTED means you created the content and used AI to brainstorm, edit, refine, or check it. Amazon does not require disclosure for this.

The disclosure is a checkbox in the KDP publishing workflow. It is private between you and Amazon. It does not appear on your book's product page and Amazon has stated it does not affect royalties or search ranking. Failing to disclose generated content is what triggers removals, not AI use itself.

Verify at: kdp.amazon.com/help (search: AI-generated content guidelines)

2. Your marketing copy is not book content

Newsletters, social posts, ad copy, and your website are not the book. The KDP disclosure question is about what is inside the published book, so using AI to draft a subject line has nothing to do with that checkbox.

Whether you tell readers you use AI in your marketing is your own call. There is no requirement. Some authors mention it, most do not. Decide once and be consistent.

3. Reviews and testimonials: a hard legal line

The Federal Trade Commission's Rule on the Use of Consumer Reviews and Testimonials took effect on October 21, 2024 (16 CFR Part 465). It prohibits creating, buying, selling, or disseminating fake or false consumer reviews and testimonials, and the FTC stated explicitly that AI-generated fake reviews are covered by the rule.

Knowing violations can carry civil penalties. This applies to every business in the United States, including a single author selling a single book.

Never ask an AI tool to write a review, a testimonial, or a reader quote. If a marketing product offers to generate reviews for you, that is the end of the conversation with that product.

Verify at: ftc.gov/business-guidance (search: consumer reviews and testimonials rule)

Your 30-Day Plan

Pick one track. Do only that track.

TRACK A: You have never used AI for marketing

Week 1: Pick one free tool. Make an account. That is the entire task for the week.

Week 2: Use it for subject lines only. Ask for ten, pick one, send the newsletter.

Week 3: Try the repurposing prompt on something you have already written.

Week 4: Run one output through the six-pass routine. Notice how many tells you find.

TRACK B: You already use AI for marketing

Week 1: Build your three voice samples using the worksheet above. Save them somewhere reusable.

Week 2: Audit last month's AI-assisted posts against the six tells. Count them honestly.

Week 3: Cancel one paid AI tool for a month. Test whether a free tool does the same job.

Week 4: Add one concrete personal detail to every post. Compare engagement to the month before.

Next session: September 21, 2026. BookTok, Reels & Short-Form Video: Do You Really Have To?