

24 Questions to Keep You from Sounding Like ChatGPT's Polite Cousin

These are the questions I ask myself before I set my words loose online—whether I'm writing a book or a blog post, a script or a speech.

Some questions are strategic. Some are weird.
Number 7 is a joke. (Kind of.)

All of them are here to help you make your writing hit harder, sparkle brighter, and tattoo itself on someone's brain.

Ask yourself...

1. What's the weirdest or most delightful line in this piece?

If nothing jumps out at you and grabs you by the throat, add something that does.

2. Is there a line that makes me laugh?

3. Where might a reader pause? Not because they're confused; because they're... (oooooh!) ...intrigued?

Every good story has a moment like that.

4. Would this still make sense if I stripped away all the industry buzzwords & bizspeak & B.S.?

Imagine explaining it to a smart teenager or savvy grandparent.

(Even you there, writing for B2B Global Enterprise Solution Partners LLC.)

5. Is there a real person I can picture reading this?

What are they doing? What's their mood?
What else is open in their browser tabs?

"Someone in marketing" isn't vivid enough.
"A survivalist poser worried about tomato hornworms" is vivid.

Pro tip: Write to one person; edit like the whole internet is watching.



6. Did I bury the real insight or slam-dunk quotable idea under too much setup?

Dig it out. Shove it onto center stage.

7. Did I avoid using an em dash because people will think I'm AI?

Just kidding. I love em dashes! JUSTICE FOR EM DASHES!

8. Does this feel AI-generated in any way?

Even if you workshopped it by hand or (plink-plink-plink) chiseled it onto a stone tablet—does it feel like it was generated by a well-meaning robot?

9. Have I created an “aha” moment that changes minds?

Or just an “uh-huh” one that nods and clicks away?

10. Did I invoke more than one sense?

Most of us stick to sight. Try layering in smell, sound, texture.

11. Is there something in it that might be shared on social as a quote?

Put on a workshop slide with my mug next to it? If not, maybe it's not sticky enough.

12. Where did I play it safe... and could I push it instead?

Could a little edge, opinion, or vulnerability strengthen the piece?

13. Is there a better container for this idea?

Would this land stronger as a story, a social rant, a Q&A, a video, meme, a how-to?

14. If I deleted my byline/logo... would anyone recognize this as mine?

15. What emotion am I inviting—and what brain chemical might it trigger?

Great writing doesn't just inform. It evokes.

- Oxytocin = trust (via stories, vulnerability)
- Dopamine = reward (via surprise, payoff)
- Cortisol = attention (via tension and resolution)

16. What's the real story hiding underneath the surface-level advice?

Can I replace “tips” with a moment of real tension or transformation narrative?

17. Is “narrative” too fancy a word for content?

Spoiler: No. And if it *is*, maybe the content needs to rise to it.

18. Did I let my inner editor cut the best part?

We're told to “kill our darlings.” I hate that advice.

We don't always know what's darling—and sometimes the good stuff ends up in the trash. Go dumpster-dive.

19. Where can I flip a cliché or familiar phrase or exaggerate a metaphor to the point of absurdity?

Humor and surprise live here.

20. If I read it out loud—as if I'm a voice actor in the video version—does it sound alive or wooden?

21. What would the comments say?

Are you inviting others into the conversation? Or just blah-blah pontificating?

22. Could I start with a confession instead of a claim?

Claim: “75% of marketers say personalization increases ROI.” (Eh.)

Confession: “We used to blast the same email to everyone, because it was fast, and it worked. But we were wrong.” (Instant human interest.)

23. Where does this piece let its guard down?

A sly aside, unexpected word choice, the knowing wink, the slightly unhinged metaphor. Humanity lives here.

24. If this were the only thing someone read from you, would it earn you a subscribe... or even a second look?