

REWR.IT · POLICY V1

The Tells.

97 words and 20 sentence shapes that mark a draft
as machine-written

This is the detector behind rewr.it, printed in full. Every
word, shape, and threshold in it is read out of the
running software.

delve · delves · delving · leverage · leverages · leveraging · utilize · utilizes · utilizing · foster ·
fosters · fostering · underscore · underscores · underscoring · resonate · resonates · spearhead · spearheads ·
streamline · streamlines · streamlining · empower · empowers · empowering · elevate · elevates · illuminate ·
illuminates · unlock · unlocks · unlocking · robust · seamless · seamlessly · holistic · crucial · crucially ·
pivotal · meticulous · meticulously · comprehensive · myriad · nuanced · multifaceted · invaluable · unwavering
· vital · testament · tapestry · cornerstone · beacon · realm · learnings · insights · landscape · journey · at
the end of the day · circle back · deep dive · bandwidth · synergy · moving forward · in today's fast-paced ·
it's worth noting · it is worth noting · needless to say · when it comes to · plays a vital role · serves as a
reminder · stands as · in conclusion · that said · navigate the · navigating the · however · moreover ·
furthermore · additionally · whereas · ultimately · overall · firstly · secondly · in terms of · perhaps ·
arguably · somewhat · relatively · one could argue · it may be worth · it might be worth · absolutely · totally
· certainly · indeed · incredibly

ONE

Everyone can tell

You can spot it now. A message lands and something about it sits wrong before you have finished the first line. The sentences are all about the same length. Nothing in it is bad, and none of it sounds like the person whose name is on it.

That reaction is not paranoia and it is not a detector. It is pattern matching on a small set of habits, and the habits are learnable, which is what this guide is for.

Models pick up those habits in training. A model is tuned on prose that human raters marked as good, and rated-good writing converges: even sentence lengths, a thesis up front, a preference for the Latinate verb over the plain one. Do that at scale and you get writing with no floor and no ceiling. Nothing in it is wrong. Nothing in it is anyone.

So the mark of machine prose is not error. It is sameness. Two drafts from two people about two subjects reach for the same forty words and the same eight sentence shapes, and once you have seen the list you cannot stop seeing them.

Here is the list.

Verbs

Latinate verbs that arrived with instruction tuning.

delve delves delving leverage leverages leveraging
utilize utilizes utilizing foster fosters fostering
underscore underscores underscoring resonate resonates
spearhead spearheads streamline streamlines streamlining
empower empowers empowering elevate elevates illuminate
illuminates unlock unlocks unlocking

This voice prefers plain verbs – build, get, use, ship, figure out. These are the ones that replace them, and they are the single most reliable surface tell.

Adjectives

Evaluative adjectives that assert quality without evidence.

robust seamless seamlessly holistic crucial crucially
pivotal meticulous meticulously comprehensive myriad
nuanced multifaceted invaluable unwavering vital

Each one claims something the sentence has not shown. Removing them rarely loses information, which is why they can be flagged mechanically.

Nouns

Abstract nouns used as metaphor scaffolding.

testament

tapestry

cornerstone

beacon

realm

learnings

insights

landscape

journey

Tapestry, realm, journey, landscape – these stand in for a concrete noun the draft never commits to. This voice uses physical metaphors instead: baseball, mechanical, nautical.

Phrases

Set phrases that fill space without carrying a claim.

at the end of the day circle back deep dive bandwidth
synergy moving forward in today's fast-paced
it's worth noting it is worth noting needless to say
when it comes to plays a vital role serves as a reminder
stands as in conclusion that said navigate the
navigating the

Multi-word, so they are matched literally rather than on word boundaries. Almost always deletable with no loss.

Connectives

Announced transitions between sentences.

however moreover furthermore additionally whereas
ultimately overall firstly secondly in terms of

This voice joins clauses additively – and, so, but, then – and lets the point land last. However and moreover signpost a structure the reader can already see.

Hedges

Qualifiers that soften a claim in a register this voice does not use.

perhaps arguably somewhat relatively one could argue
it may be worth it might be worth

The natural hedges here are "I don't know", "I guess", "kind of", "maybe". Perhaps and arguably are the wrong register, not the wrong idea – which is why they are listed and the natural forms are not.

Intensifiers

Emphasis words this voice does not reach for.

absolutely

totally

certainly

indeed

incredibly

The natural intensifiers here are super, really, way, and 100. These are the formal substitutes, and they read as performance.

TWO

The shapes

A word is easy to swap. A sentence shape survives the swap, which is why these give a draft away long after the vocabulary has been cleaned up. Every one of them sets up a contrast the sentence never earned.

it's not just X, it's Y

| It's not just a note-taking app, it's a way to think about your work.

| The app takes notes. People end up using it to plan, too.

not just X but Y

| The migration improved not just query speed but developer confidence.

| Queries got faster. The team stopped being scared of the schema.

isn't merely/about X

| Good documentation isn't merely about accuracy.

| Accurate docs can still be useless. Ours were.

this isn't X. it's Y

| This isn't a redesign. It's a rethinking of the whole product.

| We changed the layout, and then we changed what the product does.

not a X but a Y

| What we shipped was not a feature but a foundation.

| We shipped one feature. Four more depend on it.

the question isn't X, it's Y

| The question isn't whether to adopt AI, it's how quickly you can.

| Everyone is adopting this. The argument is about pace.

more than X, this is Y

| More than a hiring problem, this is a culture problem.

| We cannot hire fast enough, and the reason is how we work.

rather than X, Y

| Rather than a single release, we shipped a series of small changes.

| We shipped small changes for a month instead of one release.

Openers

Sentences that spend their whole length getting ready to say something. Cut the opener and the sentence underneath is unharmed, which is the test for all twelve.

it's important to note

I should note

let me be clear

the truth is

here's the thing

in today's ...

as organizations scale

now more than ever

in conclusion

ultimately,

overall,

at its core

What a whole draft gives away

The three tells nobody names, because you cannot see them in a single sentence. They only show up across a whole draft, and they are the reason a draft with clean vocabulary still reads generated.

6

per 1k words

Em dash density

Em dashes per thousand words above which the draft is flagged.

The mark is legitimate; the density is the tell. Six per thousand is the top of unremarkable use in this voice.

Advised target: **4 per 1k words**. Deliberately below the warning threshold. Advising the exact number that triggers the warning would leave a draft oscillating across the line on every edit.

7

words stdev

Sentence variance

Standard deviation of sentence length below which rhythm reads metronomic.

The strongest structural signal in this voice, which is bursty by design — short declaratives with an occasional long additive run. Even sentence lengths are what makes competent prose read generated.

Advised target: **9 words stdev**. Above the warning threshold, for the same anti-flapping reason as the em dash pair.

20

%

Short sentences

Share of sentences under ten words below which the draft is flagged.

This voice runs short. A draft with almost no short sentences is not this person, however clean the vocabulary is.

Advised target: **30 %**. Above the warning threshold, again so a draft does not flap across the line.

WHAT A SCORE MEANS

What a score means

Findings are counted, not guessed at. Each kind of finding is worth a fixed number of points, and the total is the score.

Banned vocabulary	3	Points added for each banned word or phrase found.
Antithesis constructions	3	Points for each "not just X, it's Y" shape.
Throat clearing	2	Points for each sentence that opens by announcing itself.
Register misses	2	Points for each register finding — profanity, emoji, or rhythm.

0

At or below this score a draft reads "no detected tells".

10

At or above this score the report says "review recommended".

Zero, deliberately. This detector reports located, nameable findings rather than a probability, so anything above zero is something specific that can be pointed at — and saying a draft is clean while holding a list of findings would undermine the report below it.

LAST

What this does not do

This is not a detector for other people's writing. It reports located, nameable findings in a draft you paste in – a word at an offset, a shape in a sentence – and it will not tell you who wrote something. Anyone selling you a percentage is selling you a guess.

It does not change what a draft says. Every fact, number, name, date, and commitment in the input survives into the rewrite. If the draft admits something, the rewrite still admits it. A rewrite that softened a hard sentence because a shorter one read better would be a lie told in your voice, and that is a worse outcome than sounding synthetic.

And it does not keep your text. Drafts and rewrites are never written down. Refresh the page and it is gone.