

Writing With AI (Without Sounding Like AI)

Public Affairs Council > Writing for Public Affairs



Danielle Hughes
More Than Words Marketing

POLL

Where are you with AI in your writing?



I use it often and trust the output



I use it but rewrite heavily



I've tried it and don't trust it



I don't use it

> I help professionals and teams find the language to show up clearly, confidently and like themselves.

Danielle Hughes, More Than Words Marketing

Bring more you to work

WORKED FOR



WORKED WITH



The Jed Foundation

Spot the bot

Same alert, three ways

A

We have the jobs. But we need help training people to fill them. Last week, 14 of our member shops in Ohio turned away apprentices because they couldn't cover training costs. The Main Street Apprenticeship Act fixes that with a \$5,000 credit per apprentice. The vote is Thursday. Call your representative today and tell them to vote yes on MSAA. It's what Ohio needs.

B

In today's rapidly evolving workforce landscape, our members are navigating unprecedented challenges in sourcing and retaining skilled talent. The Main Street Apprenticeship Act represents a pivotal opportunity to empower small businesses, foster sustainable economic growth and unlock the full potential of our communities. By leveraging targeted incentives, this robust legislation will help bridge the skills gap and drive meaningful, long-term impact. It's not just about jobs — it's about building a resilient, future-ready workforce. Now more than ever, your voice matters. We encourage you to engage with your elected officials and advocate for this critical bill. Together, we can make a lasting difference!

C

🔥 Apprenticeships: Approaching Extinction?

🏠 Small shops. Big dreams. Zero dollars to train.

Enter the Main Street Apprenticeship Act: a game-changing, workforce-building, future-proofing \$5,000 lifeline for the employers who keep Main Street humming. 🛠️

Thursday: the vote. Your move. ⚖️

👉 CALL your rep.

👉 SHARE this alert.

👉 TAG three colleagues who believe in building America's backbone.

#BuildTheBench #MainStreetMatters

#ApprenticeshipsNow

POLL

Which one did a human write?

A

B

C

SPOT THE BOT

The reveal

A

A person

B

AI's first draft

C

AI after “make it punchier” three times

Generic and over-engineered both cost you trust.

What AI sounds like

CHAT

Type a phrase you never
want to read in a work email
again.

Don't hit enter until I say go.

AI tells

Empty intensifiers

*crucial, robust,
transformative*

Hedging

*it's important to note,
arguably*

Everything in threes

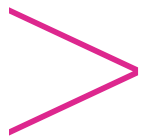
"It's not X, it's Y"

**No names, numbers
or places**

Too long

Passive language

we encourage, we can



If it sounds generated, it gets
read like a form letter.

When to use AI and when not to

POLL

Would you let AI write the first draft of your CEO's testimony?



Yes



Yes, but I'd rewrite most of it



Only for structure



Never

Where it helps and where it stops

USE IT FOR

NOT FOR

Brainstorming

Angles, headlines, counter arguments

Deciding your position

Drafting

A first draft from your notes

A draft from a topic alone

Editing

Tightening and cutting

Your fact-check

Repurposing

Policy update into a social post or member email

Trusting the short version says what the long one did

Keep it human

> **Personal stories and testimony**
Lead with emotion

> **Positions on sensitive issues**

> **Numbers and citations you haven't checked**

> **Anything confidential**

Prompts that keep your voice

MOVE 1

Build a voice profile

Paste three pieces of your best writing into AI, then ask:

“

Describe how this writer sounds: sentence length, word choices, how they open and close, and what they never do.

Do this once. Paste the answer at the top of every writing prompt.

MOVE 2

Give it a ban list

“ Don't use: landscape, navigate, robust, leverage, delve, crucial, in today's world, the 'it's not X, it's Y' setup, or lists of three.

Add the phrases you typed in the chat.

MOVE 3

Feed it raw material

Give it your notes, not a topic.

“

Shape this into an action alert. Don't add any facts I didn't give you.

Notes, a voice memo transcript or a bill summary all work.

MOVE 4

Make it interview you



Before you write anything, ask me three questions whose answers only I would know.

Your answers are where the names, numbers and stories come from.

MOVE 5

Make it read as your audience

“You’re a legislative staffer who reads 200 of these a week. Which sentences would you skip, and why?”

Then cut those sentences.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Same request, two prompts

Topic only

"Write an action alert asking our members to call Congress about the Main Street Apprenticeship Act."

Subject: Take Action Today: Support the Main Street Apprenticeship Act!

Dear [Member Name],

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and today they need your help. The Main Street Apprenticeship Act is a vital piece of legislation that would empower employers to invest in the next generation of skilled workers.

Why it matters:

- Strengthens our workforce pipeline
- Supports small businesses in every community
- Creates pathways to good-paying jobs

Studies show that apprenticeship programs deliver significant returns for employers and workers alike. Please take a moment to contact [Representative's Name] and urge them to support this important bill. Your voice can make a real difference!

Thank you for your continued advocacy,

[Your Organization]

BEFORE AND AFTER

With moves 1 to 5

Voice profile + ban list + your notes + its questions answered + audience

Subject: Linda could train three. She can afford one.

Linda Kessler had three apprentices ready to start at Kessler Tool & Die in Dayton. Training each one costs her about \$4,800. She hired one. She's not alone. Last week, 14 of our member shops told us they turned apprentices away for the same reason.

The Main Street Apprenticeship Act gives shops under 100 employees a \$5,000 credit per apprentice. It has sponsors from both parties. The House votes Thursday.

Call your representative before then. Give your shop's name, say how many apprentices you'd take on with the credit, and ask for a yes vote on MSAA.

Edit, don't accept

Human zhuzhing

Subject: Linda could train three. She can **only afford one.**

Linda Kessler had three apprentices ready to start at Kessler Tool & Die in Dayton. Training each one costs her about \$4,800. **She's** hired **just** one.

And she's not alone. Last week, 14 of our member shops **reported turning** apprentices away for the same reason.

The Main Street Apprenticeship Act (MSAA) gives shops under 100 employees a \$5,000 credit per apprentice. It **has bi-partisan support and this Thursday Congress is voting on it.**

We need your help! Please call your representative: give your shop's name, tell them how many apprentices you'd take on with the credit, and ask for a yes vote on MSAA. **Your future workforce could depend on it!**

The editing pass

1

Cut

Filler, hedges,
anything that could
be in anyone's email

2

Specify

Names, numbers,
places, dates

3

Check

Every name, number,
quote and citation
against a source

4

Say it out loud

If you wouldn't say it,
rewrite it

The raw draft

Subject: Make Your Voice Heard: Join Our PAC Today!

In today's dynamic policy landscape, it has never been more important for our company to have a seat at the table. Our PAC plays a crucial role in supporting candidates who understand the challenges and opportunities facing our industry. By contributing, you can help amplify our collective voice and drive meaningful change. Together, we can make a real difference.

YOUR TURN

90

seconds

**Rewrite one sentence.
Put it in the chat.**

Before and after

Before

Subject: Make Your Voice Heard: Join Our PAC Today!

In today's dynamic policy landscape, it has never been more important for our company to have a seat at the table. Our PAC plays a crucial role in supporting candidates who understand the challenges and opportunities facing our industry. By contributing, you can help amplify our collective voice and drive meaningful change. Together, we can make a real difference.

After

Subject: Three bills that could change your job this year

Our PAC supports candidates from both parties who understand how [industry] works. Last year, that support helped [specific outcome]. This year, three bills could change [specific thing employees care about]. Just \$5 per paycheck makes a huge difference. If you want a say in who we support, start contributing today.

Read it out loud.
Would you say it that way?

Take this with you

The prompt kit and editing checklist

Bring more you to work.



Questions?

Come say hi!

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