AI, critical thinking and writing

The irony of automation

The more we use AI, the more we need critical thinking and writing skills. So that we can assess, evaluate, edit and improve on what AI serves us up.

But the more we use AI, the weaker those skills become.

Gartner predicts...

The atrophy of critical thinking skills through the use of AI, will push 50% of global organisations to require 'AI-free' skills assessments.

The World Economic Forum...

Ranks critical thinking skills as the most in-demand skill, by employers and employees. Now and through to 2030.

Machines compute. Humans ponder.

Our course that teaches critical thinking *through* writing and critical thinking *for* writing.

We:

Pause: set intent and find the purpose.
Observe: assess, analyse and spot patterns.
Nail down: distill and refine our message.
Direct: organise and front-load information.
Edit: express ideas clearly and concisely.
Relate: use emotional intelligence and creativity to make our writing resonate.

The tricks and tests we looked at

Nail down

The trick: act like an octopus to squeeze meaning into small spaces.

Take a piece of writing and rewrite it in:

30 words or fewer.
Then 20 words or fewer.
Finally, 10 words of fewer.

It'll help you distill and refine the ideas and express them in a clear, concise way.

The test: the billboard test

Will your reader get your message at speed?

Relate

The trick: plonk your audience in the action. Use *in media res* to start with your story in the middle.

To do that, find the drama, the critical point, or something unexpected, and start with that.

The test: the curiosity gap test

Have you left something unresolved in your opening line, to get your reader to read on?

Humans crave resolution, so keep your reader hanging, just for a beat. To get and keep their attention.

Before:
Apart from the financial results, we made our customers' lives meaningfully better and easier. In our Stores business, we substantially expanded selection, continued lowering prices (independent research firm, Profitero, found Amazon the lowest-priced online U.S. Retailer for the eighth year in a row), and for the second year in a row, we shipped at record speed to our Prime members.

After:
2024: Lower prices. Larger selection. Speediest Prime shipping ever.

Before:
The project team faced several challenges during the initial phase of the software migration, including data compatibility issues and unexpected downtime, which required quick problem-solving.

After:
The server went dark at 9:02 AM, and everything stopped. The crash, caused by issues with data compatibility, kicked off a frantic effort by the IT team to restore services.

By 9:10am, we were back online.

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