Cheatography

Signs of AI-generated writing and what to do Cheat Sheet

by SuperLede via cheatography.com/219377/cs/48618/

In short

Read your draft aloud. Cut stock phrases, break up paragraphs that all follow one pattern, and check your sources. If you use an AI detector, reread the sentences it flags. No single sign proves who wrote a text.

Stock phrases

Sign	What to check / fix
"It is important to note that…"	Delete the phrase and start with the point itself.
"plays a crucial role in…"	Say what the thing actually does: "cuts the wait from 10 days to 3".
"In today's fast-paced world…"	Replace the opener with your first real claim or request.
"is best understood as…"	Usually just "is".
"not simply X, but Y"	Drop the contrast unless someone really argued X. State Y.
"should therefore" / "must therefore"	Use "so", or let the reasoning show without a signpost.

Rhythm and structure

Sign	What to check / fix
Several sentences in a row with the same rhythm	Read them aloud. If two belong together, join them.
Every paragraph: topic sentence, two points, summary	Cut the last sentence if it repeats the first.

Rhythm and structure (cont)

Neat lists of three ("faster, cheaper and more reliable")	Keep the claims you can back up. If you say "cheaper", say cheaper than what.
"Moreover… Furthermore… Additionally…" stacked	Remove most transitions. If the order is logical, it needs no label.
Every paragraph gets about the same space	Give more room to the point that needs the most explanation.

Vague content

Sign	What to check / fix
"Many experts agree…"	Name the source and what it found, or cut the claim.
"This can save time"	Give the before-and-after if you measured it.
Points that fit any article on the topic	Pull one detail from your notes that a reader can verify. If you can't find one, cut the point.
Balanced "on the other hand" with no conclusion	Say which side you land on and why.
A conclusion that repeats the intro	End on what the evidence adds up to, or on the next step.

Email and letter formulas

Sign	What to check / fix
"I'm writing to ask…"	Start with the request.
"I hope you're doing well" as a reflex	Cut it, or write something specific to that person.
"I would be grateful if you could…"	"Could you…"
"Please let me know whether…"	Ask the question directly.
Thanks in the first and last line	Thank once, at the end.

Sources, facts and numbers

Sign	What to check / fix
A citation you can't find	Search the title and author. If it doesn't exist, remove it.
A real source that says something else	Reread it. Quote or paraphrase what it actually says.
Round, unsourced statistics	Find the original figure or drop the number.
A rewrite changed a number or a date	Check it against the source. A format can change; the value, unit and precision can't.
"may" became "-will" after editing	Restore the hedge. It's part of the claim.

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Myths and false signals

Sign	What to check / fix
Em dashes	In AI Checker Humanizer's Nov 2026 English sample, averaged across genres, GPT texts used about 0.5 per 1,000 words and human texts about 1. If dashes crowd a paragraph, split a sentence.
The word "delve"	None of the 150 GPT texts in that sample used it. Keep it if it's the word you mean.
Plain vocabulary, regular sentences	Common in careful second-language writing. Not evidence of AI.
Writing that follows a template (lab report, cover letter)	Check which headings and sections the template requires, and expect those to repeat.
A high detector score	A reason to reread, not proof. Ask for drafts and version history.

Before you decide who wrote it

Sign	What to check / fix
Sudden change in a writer's style	Compare with work written in class or earlier drafts.
Text appears all at once in the version history	Ask where the writer drafted it.
Writer can't explain the argument	Ask them to walk through one paragraph in their own words.
Unclear course rules on AI	Settle the rules in writing before judging anyone's work.

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