

KCS / CREATIVE INDEPENDENCE SERIES

THE INTENTIONAL CREATOR



Human vision. Machine assistance.
Work worth keeping.

A practical field guide to getting better creative results with AI, without losing your point of view.

INSIDE

The SIGNAL method / Real prompt examples / Six quality checks /
Printable planning sheets

FREE EDITION / OCTOBER 2026

START HERE

AI can make more. Only you can decide what matters.

This guide is for creators who want faster experimentation without handing over the taste, judgment, and responsibility that make a project theirs.

THE BIG DISTINCTION

Generated describes how a draft was produced.

Intentional describes why each choice belongs in the final work.

I AI is useful for

Exploration, brainstorming, early drafts, option sets, variations, structure, and routine production tasks.

I You remain responsible for

The premise, references, taste, truth, rights, accessibility, final edits, and whether the work deserves release.

TRY THIS IN TEN MINUTES

Pick one unfinished idea. Write the outcome you want, generate three distinctly different approaches, then reject two and explain why. Your explanation is creative direction.

THE RULE

**Do not ask AI to decide what is good.
Tell it what good means, then verify it yourself.**

FRAMEWORK

The SIGNAL method

Six repeatable decisions. Use them in order, or return to an earlier step whenever the output drifts.

S**SET THE POINT**

Name the audience, intended feeling, purpose, and non-negotiables.

I**INSPECT THE INPUTS**

Check references, facts, ownership, limitations, and missing context.

G**GENERATE OPTIONS**

Ask for alternatives with meaningful tradeoffs, not endless near-duplicates.

N**NOTICE THE GAPS**

Critique what is generic, implausible, inconsistent, or hard to use.

A**AUTHOR THE RESULT**

Restructure, select, rewrite, design, test, and make the final calls.

L**LOG THE DECISIONS**

Keep a short record of sources, changes, licenses, and approval status.

WORKSHEET 01

Give the idea a spine

Before prompting, make choices that a stranger or tool cannot make for you.

01 / THE JOB

What should this project help someone do, feel, understand, or experience?

Example: A 20-second horror teaser should create dread, then reveal a single memorable threat.

02 / THE AUDIENCE

Who is it for, and what do they already know?

Example: Fans of atmospheric creature horror who have never heard of the game.

03 / THE SIGNATURE

What is specific to your viewpoint? Name three details.

Example: Mechanical breathing, a failing warning light, movement just outside the frame.

04 / THE LIMITS

What must the work not do?

Example: No comic tone, no borrowed movie dialogue, no unexplained claims.

05 / THE PROOF

How will you know the result works?

Example: The threat is understandable without narration; tension builds in three beats.

SIGNAL / INSPECT

Better inputs beat longer prompts

Good output depends on real context, not a stack of impressive adjectives.

Bring verified material

Your own notes, original sketches, product specs, consented recordings, tested mechanics, and references you have rights to use.

Label assumptions

Separate confirmed facts, working ideas, and unknowns. Ask for questions when information is missing.

THE REFERENCE LADDER

PRIMARY

Your direct observations, project files, measurements, interviews, and prototypes.

SUPPORTED

Credible published references, linked and checked in context.

SPECULATIVE

Moodboards, stylistic analogies, and model-suggested hypotheses.

INPUT CHECK

- ☐ Would I be comfortable showing where this material came from?
- ☐ Is any private, confidential, or personally identifying information included?
- ☐ Which details must be verified independently before publication?

SIGNAL / GENERATE

Use a prompt with a finish line

Give the model a target it can be evaluated against. Then keep the authoring decisions yourself.

THE SIX-PART BRIEF

1 OUTCOME

What finished artifact do you need?

2 AUDIENCE

Who will use or see it?

3 POINT OF VIEW

What feeling, perspective, or original detail is essential?

4 CONSTRAINTS

Length, medium, accessibility, budget, and hard exclusions.

5 INPUTS

Verified details and owned/approved reference material.

6 TEST

Specific criteria for accepting or rejecting the draft.

BEFORE / VAGUE

"Make an epic horror trailer."

AFTER / DIRECTED

"Write a 20-second storyboard for a retro-styled creature-horror teaser. Audience: horror game fans. Open on a failing bunker warning light, build three escalating sound cues, and reveal only a silhouette. No plot exposition, borrowed dialogue, or generic jump-scare caption. Return five timed shots and a one-sentence reason for each."

SIGNAL / GENERATE + NOTICE

Iteration is a decision process

More generations do not automatically mean better work. Make each pass answer a new question.

01 DIVERGE

Explore three different creative directions, not tiny variations.

"Give me three approaches with different emotional effects and costs."

02 SELECT

Pick the best route. Name what works and what you are rejecting.

"Compare these against my brief. Show tradeoffs, not a winner."

03 REFINE

Change only the weaknesses you can identify and measure.

"Keep the pacing and silhouette. Fix visual confusion in shot three."

IF OUTPUTS KEEP GETTING WORSE

Stop and check the brief. Too many mixed instructions, incompatible references, or unclear criteria can cause drift. Return to the last strong version and edit one variable at a time.

SIGNAL / NOTICE

The six-point quality gate

Score a draft before you sink time into polishing it. Rate each from 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent).

ORIGINALITY

Has a specific point of view, not stock phrasing or familiar imitation.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**USEFULNESS**

Does the work achieve a clear job for its intended audience?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**CRAFT**

Is structure, pacing, execution, and presentation considered?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**ACCURACY**

Are factual claims, mechanics, and details actually correct?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**VOICE**

Does the result sound or feel like a coherent author made choices?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**TRUST**

Can its sources, rights, and important limitations be explained?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5**DECISION RULE**

Any score of 1 or 2 is a revision target. Do not average away a failure in accuracy or rights. A high total is not permission to release something unsafe, false, or unlicensed.

Score: _____ / 30 Weakest category: _____

SIGNAL / AUTHOR

Make it sound like someone meant it

Voice is a collection of repeated decisions, not a list of buzzwords.

SET YOUR VOICE RULES

Choose three traits, two exclusions, and one reference from your own previous work. Write these into the brief, then edit the output by hand.

TRAIT 1 *e.g., tense, playful, precise*

TRAIT 2 *e.g., restrained, warm, cinematic*

TRAIT 3 *e.g., technical, strange, humane*

GENERIC

"Experience an unforgettable nightmare unlike anything you have seen before."

DIRECTED

"The containment siren stopped twelve minutes ago. Something in Sector B is still knocking."

Why the second line works: It replaces a claim of originality with two concrete details. Those details invite the audience to imagine the threat.

FIELD APPLICATIONS

Four workflows you can steal

Apply the same framework to different media. The human checkpoint changes with the artifact.

WRITING / SITE COPY

Input: actual offer, audience questions, brand voice.

Generate: three page structures and headline angles.

Human checkpoint: factual claims, natural voice, clear next action.

GAME / CHARACTER DESIGN

Input: lore, silhouette, abilities, gameplay constraints.

Generate: varied movesets and counterplay opportunities.

Human checkpoint: prototype feel, readability, originality, balance.

MUSIC / AUDIO

Input: emotional arc, tempo range, instrument palette, usage.

Generate: cue outlines, sound palettes, alternate structures.

Human checkpoint: listen critically, clear source licenses, final mix.

IMAGE / VIDEO

Input: original concept, reference rights, format, shot purpose.

Generate: compositions, storyboards, lighting variants.

Human checkpoint: continuity, artifacts, likeness rights, real-world claims.

SIGNAL / INSPECT + LOG

Trust is part of the craft

AI tools vary. A polished result can still contain errors, unclear licensing, or sensitive material.

FACTS

Independently verify dates, quotations, statistics, technical requirements, and factual claims.

RIGHTS

Check tool terms, asset licenses, references, and permissions before commercial use.

PEOPLE

Get appropriate consent for likenesses and voices. Do not assume public access means free use.

PRIVACY

Do not paste private client, employee, or customer information into tools without authorization.

TRANSPARENCY

Describe your process accurately where audiences, collaborators, or platforms need to know.

ACCESSIBILITY

Review captions, legibility, contrast, alt text, sound cues, and usability for real people.

Working rule: Treat model output as a draft, not evidence. This guide is educational and does not replace legal, licensing, or professional advice.

WORKSHEET 02

The 30-minute SIGNAL sprint

Use this to get one small deliverable finished instead of staying trapped in generation mode.

00-05**SET**

Write the job, audience, and three non-negotiables.

05-09**INSPECT**

Gather owned inputs; separate facts from assumptions.

09-16**GENERATE**

Create three meaningfully different alternatives.

16-21**NOTICE**

Score them against the six-point quality gate.

21-28**AUTHOR**

Pick one, edit it, and test the result.

28-30**LOG**

Save the final, sources, outstanding risks, and next action.

YOUR SPRINT OUTPUT

Artifact to finish:

One change that makes it yours:

Proof you will use to judge success:

WORKSHEET 03

The pre-publish pass

Print this page or use it as your final gate before you post, ship, share, or sell.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| ☐ | PURPOSE | The result clearly serves its intended audience and job. |
| ☐ | AUTHORSHIP | My personal choices are evident and I can explain them. |
| ☐ | DISTINCTIVENESS | I removed placeholders, stock claims, and accidental imitation. |
| ☐ | EXECUTION | I tested the output in its real format, size, or environment. |
| ☐ | ACCURACY | I checked factual claims and technical details independently. |
| ☐ | RIGHTS | I reviewed relevant asset permissions and service terms. |
| ☐ | PEOPLE | No private data or unapproved likenesses are exposed. |
| ☐ | ACCESS | The result is legible, usable, and accessible for its audience. |
| ☐ | PROVENANCE | I can trace meaningful sources, tools, and important decisions. |

RELEASE DECISION

[] Ready to publish [] Revise [] Hold for verification

THE FINAL SIGNAL

Make something worth keeping.

The goal is not to produce the most content.
It is to make work that could not exist without your decisions.

YOUR NEXT THREE MOVES

01. Pick an idea you can finish this week.
02. Apply SIGNAL and keep the weaker drafts as evidence of your choices.
03. Publish, listen, improve, and make the next one better.

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