# Article-Master-Spec

# Article Master Spec

**Purpose**
This is the single source of truth for article production. It consolidates all normative elements governing voice, structure, device gating, formatting, citations, quality assurance, anti-redundancy, final-line rule, and dynamic length policy.

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# 1. Scope & Application

This specification governs the production of **single-pass articles** for *The Productive Prompter*. Articles are standalone pieces written in one continuous draft cycle (no multi-section stop-points) and delivered as complete, publication-ready manuscripts.

**Key differences from chapter-oriented workflows:**

- No chapter/sub-chapter architecture or movement bridges
- No stop-and-confirm behaviors between sections
- Dynamic length policy tied to content strength, not fixed numeric bands
- Device activation authority resides solely in the **Article Brief**

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# 2. Voice & Narrative Standards

## 2.1 Third-Person Requirement

- **Strict third-person narration** — no "I," "we," or direct second-person address except in approved quotations

- **Authorial stance** — confident, plain-spoken, instructive, objective, engaging, direct, optimistic, genuine

## 2.2 Tone & Cadence

- **Direct and concise** — state the point, then back it up with facts or show the reader how it's true
- **Sentence variety** — natural rhythm with a mix of short punchy statements and medium-length explanations (approx. 16–22 words on average, no mechanical counting)
- **Natural voicing** — feels like a human wrote it
- **Paragraphs** — self-contained ideas, typically 80–110 words; natural-sounding sentences that build arguments throughout the article

## 2.3 Clarity & Density

- **Written with intent** — every sentence must advance the idea, provide evidence, strengthen arguments, or set up a transition
- **Concrete over abstract** — favor specific examples and verifiable facts over vague generalities
- If facts need research, insert **[Writer to research topic]**

## 2.4 Humor & Voice Color

- **Subtle playfulness. Subtle cleverness.**
- Use wit or a lightly ironic turn of phrase to energize a passage; never slip into silliness, slapstick, or sarcasm

## 2.5 Prohibited Practices

- Anthropomorphizing AI (e.g., "the model thinks/feels/wants")
- Over-explaining obvious terms to the intended professional audience
- Excessive rhetorical questions or forced metaphors unless explicitly requested in the Article Brief

# 3. Dynamic Length Policy

**Principle:** Article length is determined by **content strength and scope**, not fixed word counts.

- Articles should be **generally similar in scale** to prior chapter guidance (typically in the range of substantial articles: ~2,000–5,000 words)
- Length **must vary based on:**
  - Depth of argument required
  - Evidence complexity
  - Number of activated devices
  - Topic scope defined in the Article Brief
- **No numeric bands or rigid targets** — write to completeness, not to a counter

**Quality gate:** Every article must feel **complete** — no padded filler to hit a target, no rushed compression that sacrifices clarity.

# 4. Structural Requirements

## 4.1 Hard Shape Declaration

- Select **exactly one shape** from the approved shape set at article start
- Declare it explicitly and follow it end-to-end
- **Approved shapes:**
  1. Five-sentence paragraphs for comprehensive coverage
  2. Claim→Evidence×4 (each claim followed by 2–3 evidence lines)

## 4.2 Anti-Redundancy Rule

- Remove any sentence duplicating an earlier idea (>5 identical words)

- Each paragraph must contribute unique information to the whole
- Ensure flowability across the entire article — each section flows naturally into the next

## 4.3 Final-Line Rule

- The last sentence of the article must be a **verification or next action**, never a maxim or aphorism
- Must provide closure or a clear takeaway

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# 5. Formatting & Reflowability

All formatting must support Kindle/EPUB3 reflowability:

- **No images for core information** — all tables, callouts, and decision trees must be semantic text
- **Tables:** Use Markdown or HTML-like structures that preserve headings and columns
- **Callouts/Boxes:** Format as clearly labeled text blocks, not graphics
- **Lists:** Use semantic nested lists (bullets or numbered) for complex structures
- **Provide alt text** if diagrams are later designed by publisher

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# 6. Device Activation & Gating

**Default state:** All narrative devices are **OFF**.

**Activation authority:** Only the **Article Brief** may activate devices.

**Activation requirements:**

1. The Article Brief must explicitly **name the device**

2. The Article Brief must **state the device's purpose**
3. The Article Brief must indicate **placement** (where in the article)

**Activation header (required):**

When a device is activated, insert a single-line header immediately before it:

```
Device: {Device Name} — Purpose: {copied verbatim from brief}
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**Enforcement:** If a device appears without activation in the Article Brief, **remove it** during the Critic Loop.

**Reference:** See [Device-Catalog.md](Device-Catalog.md) for device definitions and formatting rules.

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# 7. Evidence & Citation Standards

## 7.1 APA 7th Edition

- All non-common-knowledge claims require **APA 7 in-text citations**
- Maintain a **consolidated references section** at article end
- Alphabetize references by author (or first significant word if no author)
- Include DOIs or stable URLs when available

## 7.2 Dynamic Freshness Policy

- **No fixed 12-month default**
- Freshness horizons are **dynamic** and defined by:
  - Topic type (rapidly evolving vs. stable)
  - Article Brief specifications
  - Best available information at time of drafting
- For time-sensitive claims, find the **most current credible source**
- If no current source exists, insert **[Writer to research latest ]**

## 7.3 Research Pass

- Triggered when freshness gates fire or Article Brief specifies
- **No-new-claims rule:** May replace, update, or remove evidence, but must not introduce new argumentative claims
- Re-run Critic Loop after research changes

**Reference:** See Evidence-and-IP-Annex.md for detailed citation and freshness protocols.

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# 8. Quality Gates

Every article must pass three sequential gates:

# Gate A — Baseline & Shape Declared

- Style Anchor present (from Style Baseline)
- Single hard shape declared and followed end-to-end
- Third-person voice enforced throughout

# Gate B — Critic Loop

- Single silent pass completed (Voice, Focus, Evidence)
- Final-line rule satisfied (verification or next action)
- Device activations validated (activation header present if device used)
- Anti-redundancy check passed

# Gate C — Evidence & Freshness

- APA compliance verified
- Dynamic freshness satisfied or gaps bracketed
- Research Pass executed if triggered
- Companion-site callouts added where appropriate

**Enforcement:** Gates are checked silently during the Critic Loop. Only compliant final text is returned.

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# 9. Single-Pass Article Workflow

1. **Plan:** Create Article Brief defining scope, intent, device activations, and freshness expectations
2. **Draft:** Write complete article in one pass following this Master Spec
3. **Critic Loop:** Silently apply Voice, Focus, and Evidence checks; revise once
4. **Research Pass (if triggered):** Update citations and verify freshness
5. **Final QA:** Confirm all gates passed
6. **References:** Compile consolidated APA references

**Reference:** See Article-Process-Map.md for detailed workflow.

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# 10. Precedence Model

When conflicts arise among directive documents, resolve in this order:

1. **Style Baseline (Directive)**
2. **Brand Pack (Author Compass)**
3. **Article Brief (per-article)**
4. **Critic Loop (Single-Pass Self-Check)**
5. **Evidence & IP Annex (APA + IP)**
6. **Device Catalog (Annex)**

The first document in this list takes precedence as the tiebreaker.

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# 11. Compliance Checklist

Before finalizing any article, confirm:

- ☐ Third-person voice maintained throughout
- ☐ Single hard shape declared and followed
- ☐ Final sentence is verification or next action
- ☐ No redundant sentences (>5 identical words to prior content)
- ☐ All non-common-knowledge claims cited in APA format
- ☐ Dynamic freshness requirements met or gaps bracketed
- ☐ Devices activated only per Article Brief with activation headers
- ☐ Reflowable formatting used for all tables/callouts
- ☐ Critic Loop executed silently (Voice, Focus, Evidence)
- ☐ Quality Gates A–C passed

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# 12. Integration with Other Documents

- **Style Baseline (Directive):** Defines voice, tone, and prohibited practices
- **Brand Pack (Author Compass):** Establishes brand voice and neutrality
- **Article Brief Template:** Provides activation authority for devices and freshness horizons
- **Device Catalog:** Defines available devices and formatting rules
- **Evidence & IP Annex:** Specifies APA standards and dynamic freshness protocols
- **Critic Loop:** Enforces quality checks silently before output

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