

Copywriting with Cursor

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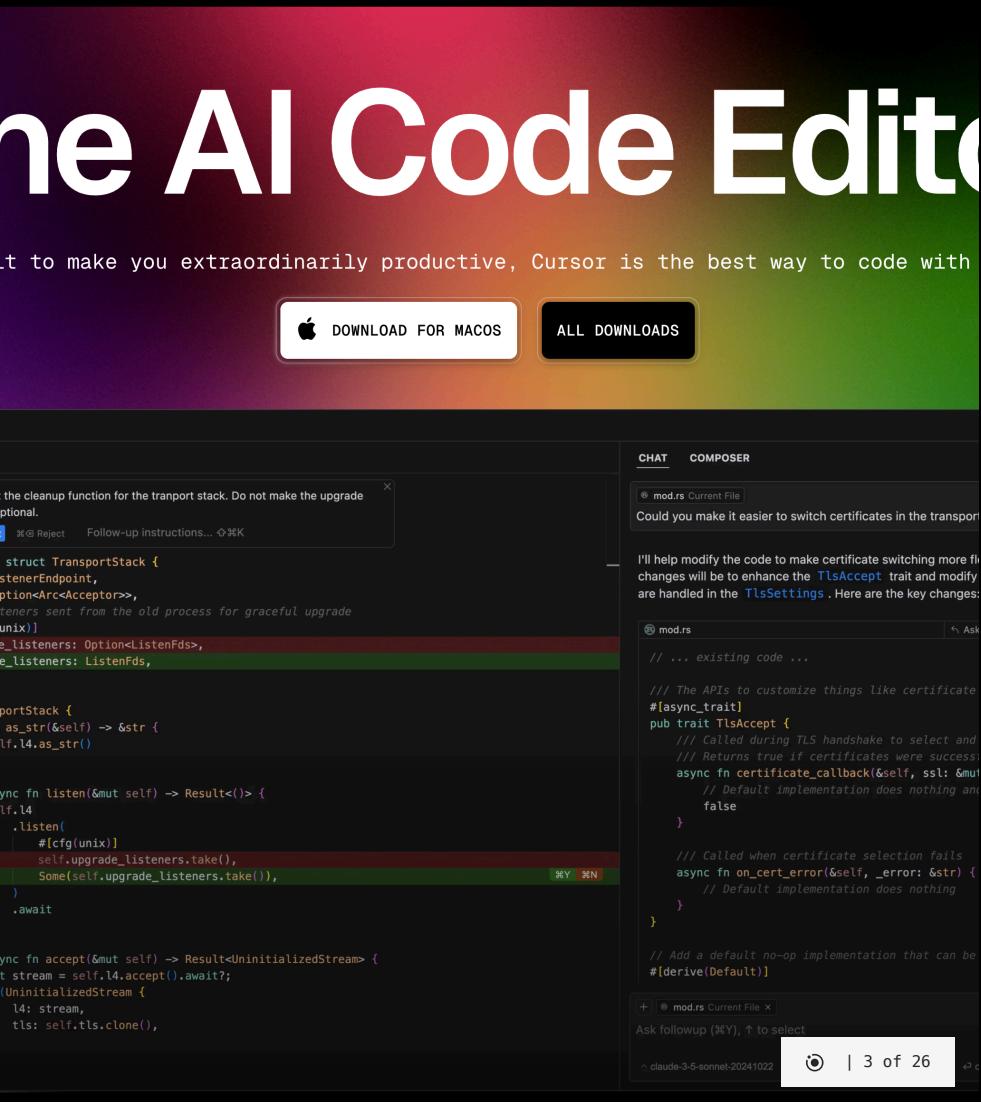
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About Me

- Writer turned Developer turned instructional designer turned Content Engineer
- Former Marketing SCRUM Master/Product owner
- Most recently lead Content Engineering efforts for 7-figure developer education products
- Written technical manuals, landing pages, and marketing materials for a variety of products/services
- Heavily focused on AI and automation
- Built custom LLM automations (before ChatGPT was released)
- Co-authored "Total TypeScript" book (using the first release of Cursor)
- Currently consulting on content engineering/automation projects

What We'll Cover Today

- Writing Environment Setup
- Cursor Features
- 4-Phase Demo
- Q&A (or Deeper Demo)



Writing Environment Setup

What is Cursor?

- Fork of VS Code with integrated AI capabilities
- Contextual awareness of your entire project
- Offers Autocompletion, Chat, and Agentic Code Generation features
- Web search capabilities for in-editor research
- Supports specific configuration rules

Writing Features for VS Code (and Cursor)

Features

- Vim Mode
- Outline View
- Timeline View
- Search headings with `↑ ⌘ 0` or `⌘ T`
- Snippets
- Markdown Preview
- Extensions

Outline View (bottom left corner)

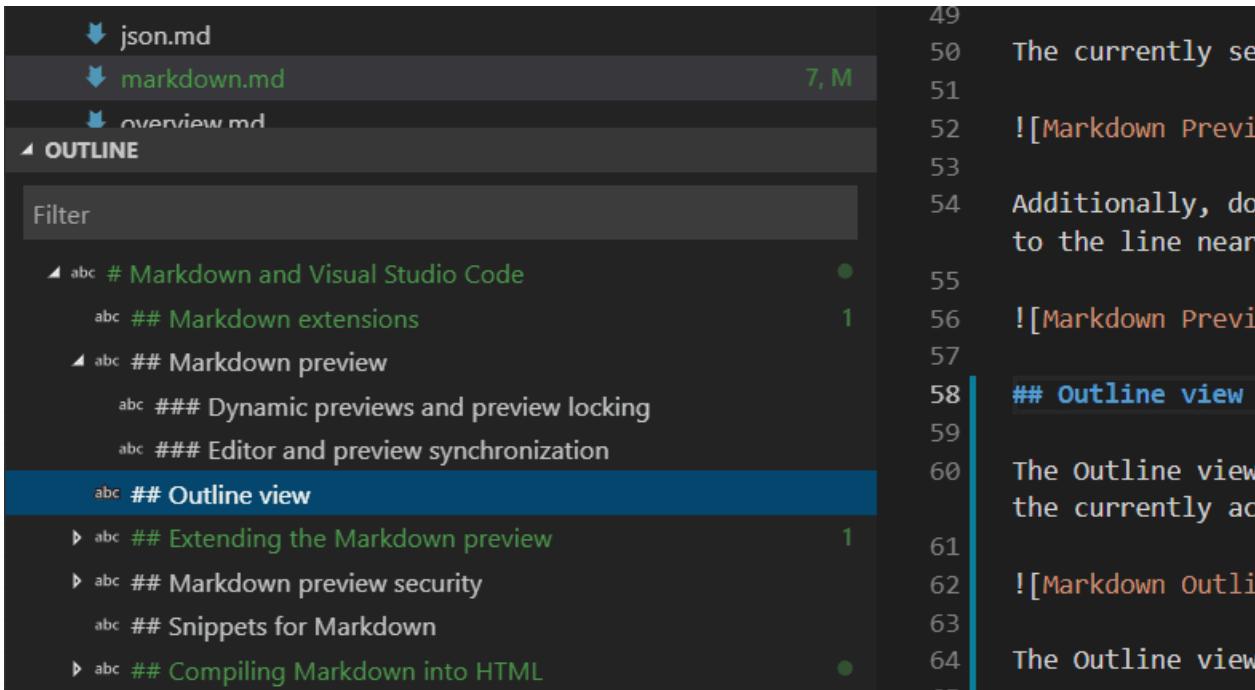


image from [VS Code docs](#)

Timeline View (bottom left corner)

| ▼ TIMELINE 03.5-features for writi... | | ... |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| ○ | File Saved | now |
| ○ | File Saved | 38 secs |
| ○ | Undo / Redo | 44 secs |
| ○ | File Saved | 45 secs |
| ○ | File Saved | 1 min |

Search Headings

The screenshot shows the VS Code interface with the search bar at the top containing the character '#'. Below the search bar, the code editor displays a file named 'markdown.md'. The search results are listed in a sidebar on the right, showing various snippets and documentation entries related to '#'. Some entries are highlighted in blue, indicating they are being used or selected.

```
docs > languages > markdown.md
You, 3 weeks ago | 1 author
16  ### Document outline
17
18 The Outline view is currently active.
19
20 ! [Markdown Outline]
21
22 The Outline view
23
24 You, 3 weeks ago | 1 author
25  ### Snippets for Markdown
26 There are several ways to use snippets in VS Code, and you get a
27
28 >**Tip:** You can also define your own snippets in the file
29 userdefinedsnippets.json.
30 You, 3 weeks ago
31  ### Go to header in file
```

Markdown and Visual Studio Code
Editing Markdown # Markdown and Visual Studio Code
Document outline ## Editing Markdown
Snippets for Markdown ## Editing Markdown
Go to header in file ## Editing Markdown
Go to header in workspace ## Editing Markdown
Path completions ## Editing Markdown
Drag and drop to insert links and images ## Editing Markdown
Smart selection ## Editing Markdown
Rename headers and links ## Editing Markdown
Markdown preview # Markdown and Visual Studio Code
Dynamic previews and preview locking ## Markdown preview
Editor and preview synchronization ## Markdown preview
Extending the Markdown preview # Markdown and Visual Studio Code
Using your own CSS ## Extending the Markdown preview
Keep trailing whitespace in order to create line breaks ## Extending the Markdown preview

image from [VS Code docs](#)

Search in file with `Shift + Command + 0` or all files with `Command + T`

VS Code Extensions for Writing

Extensions

- [Markdown All in One](#)
- [Markdown Preview Mermaid](#)
- [markdownlint](#)
- [change-case](#)
- [Code Spell Checker](#)
- [Local History](#)
- [Jumpy2](#)

Key Cursor Features

- Quick Inline AI Editing
- AI Sidebar with Multiple Modes
- Context Awareness
- Rules
- MCP Servers (not today)
- Custom Edit Modes (not today)

Demo: Writing a Consulting Pitch Email

Using Cursor's AI features, let's write a persuasive email to sell our AI copywriting services.

Phase 0: Naive Prompting Approach

Using Cursor's "Ask" Mode

Open the AI Pane using the icon at the top right of the application, or use the `Option+Command+B` shortcut.

At the bottom of the AI Pane, select the "Ask" mode.

Select your preferred language model.

We'll start with the most basic prompt:

Write an email to get new clients as a copywriter.

The AIDA Framework

(just one of *many* copywriting frameworks)

The AIDA Copywriting Framework

Attention

- Capture audience focus immediately.
- Stand out with "pattern interrupts".
- Use headlines or "Non-no" questions.

Desire

- Create an emotional connection.
- Highlight benefits over features.
- Proactively address objections.

Interest

- Logical progression from attention.
- Elaborate on the problem or core solution (J2BD)
- Clearly connect the topic to the reader's needs.

Action

- Provide a clear CTA.
- Instill urgency or incentive to act now.
- Make the next steps obvious and easy.

Phase 1: Namedrop AIDA in the prompt

...but don't provide explanation or context.

- The prompt is basically the same as before, but with the added instruction to follow the AIDA copywriting framework.

Follow the AIDA copywriting framework to write an email to get new clients as a copywriter.

Phase 2: Prompt with AIDA Explanation

- Now we include our own context about the AIDA structure.
- The XML style of `<tag>content</tag>` helps keep prompts clean and easy to read.

```
<AIDA explanation>
# Attention
- Capture audience focus immediately
- Use compelling headlines, questions, or visuals
- Stand out with "pattern interrupts"

# Interest
- Build logical engagement and relevance
- Elaborate on the problem or the core solution
- Clearly connect the topic to the reader's needs

# Desire
- Create an emotional connection and want
- Highlight transformative benefits, not just features
- Address potential objections or doubts proactively

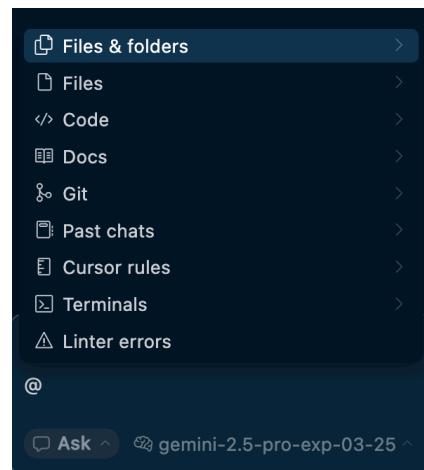
# Action
- Provide a clear, specific call-to-action (CTA)
- Instill urgency or incentive to act now
- Make the next steps obvious and easy
</AIDA explanation>

<instructions>
Follow the <AIDA explanation> to write an email
to get new clients as a copywriter.
</instructions>
```

Context in Cursor with @

What is Context Awareness?

- Reference files and more with @
- Context is automatically updated
- Build on existing content intelligently



Using @ For Our Writing

- Include the speaker bio to drive research
- Use @Web to search the web to expand speaker bio
- Bring existing drafts and bio together to revamp the email

Web Search in Cursor

@Web Develop a fleshed-out audience profile based on the speaker bio @bio.md.

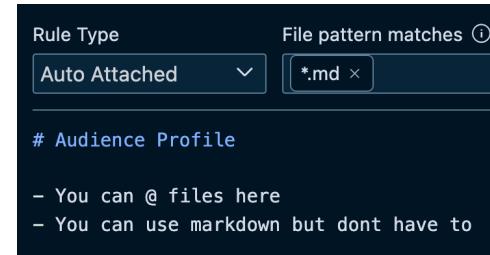
- Access info from the web
- Provide additional file context
- Good for searching documentation and sources outside LLM training data

Include a File Context

- Use `@File` to include a file in the prompt
- Good for including drafts, outlines, and more
- Cursor automatically includes the current file in its prompt, but it can be removed

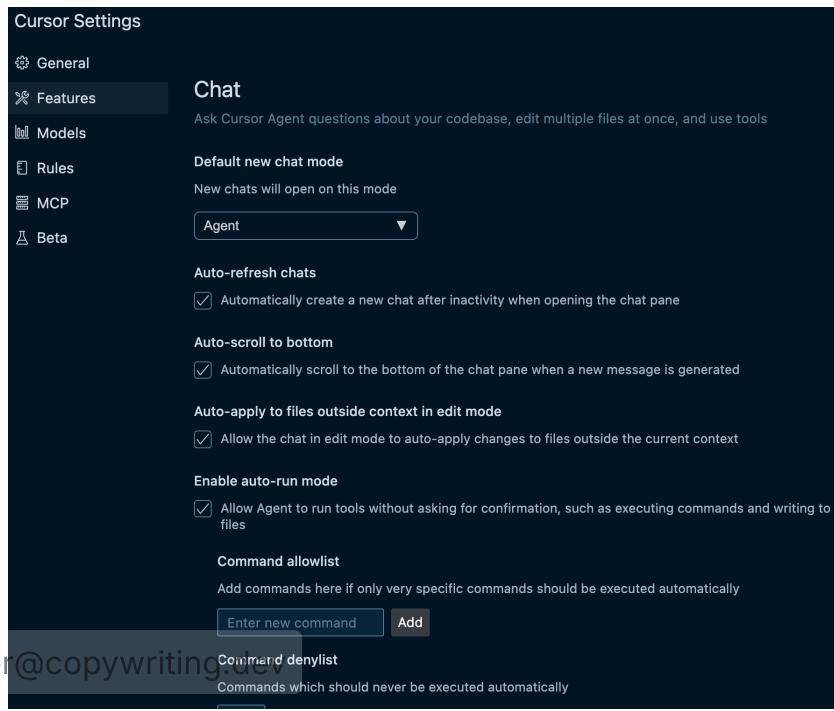
Cursor Rules for AI Interaction

- Special `rule-name.mdc` files in the `.cursor/rules` directory in root of project
- Rules are read automatically when launching Cursor
- Create using `Command + Shift + P > New Cursor Rule`
- Options include:
 - `Always` applied to every chat & edit
 - `Auto Attached` to files specified with a glob pattern
 - `Agent Requested` to allow the Agent to decide when to apply
 - `Manual` to require a command like `@<rule-name>` to apply



Using the Agent to create the audience definition file

- Agent is the default interaction mode for Cursor
- It can run tools for creating, editing, and deleting files automatically



Agent-Assisted Rules Creation

Why Use Rules?

- Reusable writing patterns
- Consistent voice, tone, style, and structure
- Save time on common tasks
- Easy to share and reuse



The screenshot shows a code editor with a dark theme. The title bar says "rules audience-profile". The main content area contains a block of text: "Repeat the process, but this time for a new file aida-interest.mdc file to be put in the @rules directory. This rules file will be focused on driving Interest to the @audience-profile.mdc when working with the AIDA formula." Below this is a "Restore checkpoint" button. The bottom half of the screen shows the actual code content:

```
...a-interest.mdc (new) +111 -1 • X ✓ ◇
# AIDA Interest Rules for Technical Professionals

## Purpose
This document outlines rules for crafting the

## Interest Component Guidelines

### Core Principles

1. **Relevant Problem Elaboration**
   - Expand on the specific technical problem
   - Connect the problem to measurable business
```

Phase 3: Testing Rules by Prompting the Agent

- Create a new `.md` file and use the naive prompt to check the Audience profile rule.

Email Draft for New Client Acquisition + ⏱ ... ×

* 03. Naive Prompt with Audience...

Update @03. Naive Prompt with Audience Rule.md to be an email to get new clients as a copywriter.

Restore checkpoint

Okay, I will draft an email for acquiring new clients, tailored to the audience profile provided, and update the specified file.

...rompt with Audience Rule.md +24 -1 ✓

Subject: Bridging the Gap: Expert Copywriting

Hi [Prospect Name],

Are you struggling to create compelling conte

Many tech companies face challenges translati

As a copywriter specializing in the tech indu

- Rules for the individual parts of the AIDA framework have been created.
- Create a new file and reuse the original "AIDA Namedrop" prompt:

Follow the AIDA copywriting framework to write an email to get new clients as a copywriter.

AIDA Email Strategy for New Clients + ⏱ ... ×

* 03.2 AIDA Rules Test-sonnet-3....

Inside of @03.2 AIDA Rules Test-sonnet-3.7.md follow the AIDA copywriting framework to write an email to get new clients as a copywriter.

Restore checkpoint

Thought for 5 seconds

Rule: aida-action

This rule is for driving Action when copywriting with the AIDA formula.

AIDA Action Rules for Technical Professionals

Purpose

This document outlines rules for crafting the Action component of AIDA-structured persuasive content

Rule: aida-attention

Practical Workflow

Research (Mise en Place)

- Define audience, scope, and goals.

Rule Creation

- Create rules for style, tone, and structure.

Generate Content

- Iteratively generate content.
- *Tip: Start with a detailed outline and go from there!*

Refine/Rewrite

- Edit the generated content to ensure it feels like you wrote it.

Where do we go from here?

There's so much more to talk about!

Prompt Management

- Templates, content development, repo structure

Editing Practices

- Finding your voice, tone, style, etc.

Workflow Automation & Tooling

- Scripting, snippets, "agent-ish" workflows

Email me to chat!
taylor@copywriting.dev

Thanks!

Questions?

Live Demo of Outlining & Editing?