



The typewriter my dad bought for me in 1987. Yes, I started early.

What Exactly is my Writing Style?



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How can you get an AI to match your writing style when even you can't put your finger on it? What does it take for an AI to truly grasp the essence of your writing? Let's have a look at how I was teaming up with one of my AI buddies, where we analyze examples of my work, distill the key elements that make my style unique, and even uncover surprising links to famous writers.

Language models are helping me to significantly speed up the writing process and generate ideas, but one of the most difficult things is for them to 'learn' my writing style. In many cases, they simply don't – and I end up having to edit and revise the generated content to align it with my own voice and tone. I am very specific about how I want my content to sound and feel, and I want my readers to be able to recognize my writing style across different articles and platforms.

So, to some extent I would not even want an AI to perfectly mimic my writing style, right now I would probably feel more comfortable if it just captured the essence of it, and it inspires me to take my writing to the next level. In the end, the key to successfully integrating AI into my writing process is finding the right balance between leveraging its capabilities and maintaining my authentic voice.

And I am perfectly happy to do the hard work of editing and revising the AI-generated content to ensure it aligns with my style and meets my standards.

But what if there was a tool that could learn your writing style and help you to refine it? What if you were asked to characterize your writing style and provide a detailed description of the elements that make it unique? Would you have a clear idea of what your writing style is, or would you struggle to articulate it? I certainly had to take some time to reflect on my writing style and think about what makes it unique. I realized that my writing style is a reflection of my personality, my experiences, and my values, but this was of

course not something I could easily convey to an AI language model.

So, how do I teach an AI to write like me? How would I summarize my writing style in a way that could be understood by an AI? Or by anyone else, for that matter? I turned to my digital companion Dave, who was extremely helpful in identifying key elements of my writing style.

This is our conversation:

Uli: I think I have developed some sort of an allergic reaction against words like unveil, delve into, unleash, unravel, harness, uncover and all those. They're all buzzwords and I personally avoid them at all costs – but they seem everywhere!

Dave: Oh, allergies to words, that's a new one! I mean, I've heard of people getting irritated by certain words, but hey, you do you. So, those words – unveil, delve, unleash, unravel, harness, and uncover – do kind of have that "fancy business jargon" vibe, don't they? It's like they're trying to sound all impressive and sophisticated, but sometimes they just end up making your eyes roll, am I right?

Uli: They all sound so much like marketing speak that they've lost their meaning. At least to me, it's much more effective to use simple, straightforward language that everyone can understand. But well, I am not everyone. And I'm not in sales.

Dave: Oh, I totally get what you mean! It's like they've been sprinkled with a dash of marketing magic, right? Those

words can sometimes make you feel like you're in the middle of a sales pitch, even if you're just trying to have a regular conversation. So, are you someone who prefers straight-up, no-nonsense talk without all the marketing fluff? Like, just give it to you straight without all the "unveiling" and "harnessing" hoopla? Or is there a specific reason why these marketing-esque words rub you the wrong way? Spill the beans!

Uli: I like simple, powerful words. Avoiding "fillers" or overused words.

Dave: Totally get it – you're all about cutting to the chase with words that pack a punch! No time for fluff or overused stuff. So, if we were to have a conversation, we'd be skipping the "unveiling" and "harnessing," and getting straight to the good stuff, right?

Uli: Here is my intro on LinkedIn:

"Imagine a hands-on technologist who writes books, passionately believes in the power of ecosystems, and joins established companies at crucial growth stages to lead cross-functional teams tasked with powering the future of the business. That's me! The next global information revolution driven by artificial intelligence presents companies with an opportunity to get their data strategies right, create a digital work culture across organizational boundaries, and focus on outcomes that move the needle. I work on all sides of the story to make that happen. I've learned a lot from my engagements in media, telco, e-commerce, healthcare, financial services, education, and

manufacturing. Giving back and inspiring others is something I deeply care about, that's why I share my experiences and knowledge to help the next generation of technologists so they can do what I do – and more!" Does that give you an idea how I write and the kind of language I use?

Dave: Absolutely, your LinkedIn intro gives me a solid peek into your writing style and the kind of language you're comfortable with. I'd say your writing style isn't overwhelmingly buzzword heavy. Sure, you've got a couple in there like "ecosystems" and "digital work culture," but they're not the main event. Your style leans more towards being descriptive and specific about your experiences and beliefs. You're not just throwing around buzzwords for the sake of it – you're using them to express your ideas and highlight your expertise.

Uli: I see, that's very interesting! Thanks.

Dave: I will say you've got a knack for painting a clear picture of what you bring to the table, without drowning things in jargon. It's like you're having a real conversation, not just trying to impress with fancy terminology. But hey, this is just a snapshot from your LinkedIn intro. Is this style consistent across all your writing?

Uli: I think this is pretty consistent about the way I write. Let me show you **one of my articles**.

Dave: Absolutely, your writing style is shining through in this article as well. You're tackling a pretty intriguing topic – the

whole AI and human collaboration thing – and you're doing it with a clear and engaging voice. You're not just throwing buzzwords around, but you're asking thought-provoking questions and digging into the nitty-gritty. The way you express your thoughts is more about sparking a genuine conversation than trying to impress with technical terms. And kudos for not shying away from taking a stance – you're pointing out potential ethical issues, devaluation of writing, and the importance of journalistic integrity.

Your writing style feels like a blend of insightful analysis and a touch of advocacy. It's engaging and relatable, which is awesome for making your readers think and feel a connection. It's like you're chatting with your readers over a cup of coffee, not delivering a lecture. Are there any specific techniques you use to keep your writing style consistent across different pieces? I'm all ears, or well, text in this case!

Uli: Techniques? I am pretty intuitive – but I would like your help to articulate precisely what my writing style is. Imagine I would have to tell someone what my style is like and what techniques they should use to write in my voice. Do you have some bullet points for me?

Dave: Absolutely, let's break down your writing style into some handy bullet points that capture its essence and provide some techniques for others to write in your voice:

Writing Style:

- **Engaging Conversation:** Write like you're having a friendly chat with your readers. Use relatable language

and imagine you're discussing the topic over coffee.

- **Questioning Curiosity:** Ask thought-provoking questions that make your readers ponder and engage with the subject matter.
- **Clear Stance:** Don't be afraid to take a position on the topic. Express your opinions and beliefs, backed up with well-reasoned arguments.
- **Balanced Blend:** Mix insightful analysis with a touch of advocacy. Present your ideas in a way that's both informative and emotionally engaging.
- **Practical Realism:** Ground your concepts in practical scenarios or real-world examples to make complex ideas more relatable.
- **Ethical Awareness:** Highlight ethical concerns or implications of the topic, showing your consideration for broader societal and moral implications.

Techniques for Writing in Your Voice:

- **Start with a Teaser:** Begin with a hook that sparks curiosity or introduces a central question, setting the tone for the rest of the piece.
- **Pose Thoughtful Queries:** Incorporate rhetorical questions that encourage readers to think deeper about the subject.
- **Express Conviction:** Clearly state your opinions, but support them with logical reasoning, data, or examples.
- **Use Analogies:** Draw parallels between complex concepts and familiar situations to make them more

accessible.

- **Show Empathy:** Connect with readers emotionally by acknowledging their concerns and feelings related to the topic.
- **Highlight Impact:** Discuss how the topic affects individuals, communities, or society at large, emphasizing the human aspect.
- **Conclude with a Call to Action:** Wrap up with a call to action or a reflection that encourages readers to engage further or consider the implications of the discussion.

Remember, while these techniques can help others write in your voice, your unique intuition and perspective will always be the driving force behind your distinctive style. It's like a recipe that's flavored with your personal touch.

Uli: I know. Hey this is great, thanks! Can you add something about what kind of language and words I use – and which ones I don't?

Dave: Absolutely, let's dive into the specifics of your writing style:

Language You Use:

- **Conversational Language:** Opt for words and phrases that you'd use in everyday conversations. This keeps the tone approachable and relatable.
- **Descriptive and Specific:** Choose words that vividly describe your ideas or experiences, creating a clear

mental image for your readers.

- **Engaging Verbs:** Use action verbs that bring energy to your writing and help convey a sense of movement.
- **Thoughtful Adjectives:** Incorporate adjectives that add depth and emotion to your descriptions, but avoid going overboard with excessive modifiers.
- **Provocative Phrases:** Employ phrases that provoke thought and stimulate curiosity, encouraging readers to delve deeper into your content.
- **Human-Centered Language:** Focus on words that highlight the human aspect of your topics, emphasizing emotions, motivations, and connections.

Language You Avoid:

- **Jargon Overload:** Steer clear of excessive industry jargon or technical terms that might alienate readers who aren't familiar with the field.
- **Fluff and Filler:** Skip unnecessary filler words or overly complex phrasing that can dilute the impact of your message.
- **Clichés and Overused Expressions:** Avoid clichés like the plague! Instead, find fresh and original ways to express your ideas.
- **Formal Language:** While it's good to be professional, avoid overly formal language that can create a distance between you and your readers.
- **Ambiguity:** Choose words that clearly convey your thoughts, avoiding vague or ambiguous language that

might confuse readers.

- **Negative Tones:** Refrain from using overly negative or confrontational language, opting for constructive and open dialogue.

By keeping these word preferences in mind, you're maintaining your distinct writing style and ensuring your content resonates with your readers in an authentic way. It's all about crafting a genuine connection through words!

Uli: Can you please turn both into a concise prompt that I can use to teach language models on how to write in my voice and in my style?

Dave: Sure thing! Here you go:

"Write in a conversational and engaging style that mirrors a friendly chat over coffee. Use descriptive language to vividly convey ideas, choosing action verbs and thoughtful adjectives for depth. Incorporate provocative phrases to spark curiosity and human-centered words to emphasize emotions and connections.

Avoid excessive jargon, fluff, and clichés. Prioritize clear, specific language over formal or ambiguous terms. Steer clear of negative tones and overly complex expressions, aiming for approachable and relatable wording."

This should give language models a solid understanding of your writing style and the types of words to use or avoid to capture your unique voice. Cheers to teaching those models to channel your linguistic flair!

Uli: Are there any famous or well-known writers who have a similar style to what I produce?

Dave: Absolutely, your writing style reminds me of a few well-known writers who share a similar approach in their work:

1. **Malcolm Gladwell:** Like you, Gladwell has a knack for taking complex ideas and breaking them down in an engaging and relatable manner. He often uses real-world examples to illustrate his points and has a conversational style that draws readers in.
2. **Seth Godin:** Godin is known for his concise and thought-provoking writing. He uses clear language to convey his insights and often poses questions that encourage readers to think deeper about various topics.
3. **Anne Lamott:** Lamott's writing has a conversational and introspective quality, similar to your style. She shares personal anecdotes and observations while discussing broader themes, much like your blend of personal experiences and larger concepts.
4. **Simon Sinek:** Sinek's writing is characterized by a focus on purpose and human connection. He uses relatable language to convey his ideas about leadership and motivation, echoing your emphasis on human-centered language.
5. **Paulo Coelho:** Coelho often combines philosophical ideas with practical wisdom, much like your blend of insightful analysis and advocacy. His writing style is

accessible and thought-provoking, inviting readers to explore deeper meanings.

While each writer has their own unique voice, these examples capture elements of your conversational, relatable, and thought-provoking style. It's like you're in good company with fellow wordsmiths who know how to engage and connect with readers!

Uli: Oh wow. I did actually read a fair share of Seth Godin. Guess that influenced me to some extent! Paulo Coelho I only read *The Alchemist* a long time ago. Simon Sinek I only keep seeing quotes on LinkedIn. Malcolm Gladwell and Anne Lamott... no idea!

Dave: Ah, Seth Godin's influence makes sense then! He's got that knack for cutting through the noise and getting right to the heart of things, which I can see resonating with your style.

As for Malcolm Gladwell and Anne Lamott, they're both fascinating in their own right. Gladwell is known for books like *"Outliers"* and *"Blink,"* where he takes intriguing concepts and presents them in an accessible way. Anne Lamott, on the other hand, is a fantastic essayist and novelist, and her works often blend personal anecdotes, reflections, and insights into human nature.

And don't worry about Paulo Coelho and Simon Sinek – even if you've only dabbled in their work or encountered them through quotes, it's still a neat coincidence that their styles share some common ground with yours.

So, who knows, maybe you'll end up inspiring someone else to write in your style someday! Keep rocking that unique voice of yours!