

Five Prompts to Find the Shape of a Piece

A practical set of prompts for turning a vague idea into a workable draft.

Sometimes the difficulty isn't writing — it's knowing where to begin. These prompts are designed to help you find direction before you commit to a full piece.

Use one prompt at a time. Write briefly. Clarity comes before momentum.

1. What am I actually trying to say here?

Write one paragraph answering this honestly, without polishing the language.

2. Who is this for, specifically?

Name the reader you have in mind. What do they already know? What do they need?

3. What doesn't belong in this piece?

List the points, examples, or explanations you're tempted to include but don't need.

4. Where does the piece feel most alive?

Identify the paragraph, idea, or sentence that holds the energy. Let that guide the structure.

5. What should the reader leave with?

Not a conclusion — a takeaway. One clear thing they should understand or feel.

These prompts aren't meant to be answered perfectly. They're meant to help the piece take shape before you write it fully.

Created for Word & Value — writing tools shaped by clarity and intention.