Readiness Checklist

Use this in a deliberate reading undertaken to assess readiness — not a reading aimed at further revision. The two find different things.

1 — WHAT READINESS IS NOT

Rule these out before assessing readiness properly.

- ■ The absence of imperfection.

Every piece, including good ones, contains sentences that could be sharper. Waiting for none is waiting forever.

- ■ The feeling of confidence.

Confidence is a mood, not a judgment. It is not a reliable signal of quality.

- ■ The elimination of every possible objection.

A piece over-hedged to avoid all criticism has lost the directness that made it worth writing.

2 — THE THREE CHECKS

Work through these in order. Read with distance from the piece — not immediately after finishing it.

Check 1: Does the piece say what it set out to say?

Not what you intended when you started — what the piece, as it now exists, actually argues. If the central claim is not visible, this is a structural problem. No sentence-level revision fixes it.

- ■ Yes — the claim is visible and the piece arrives somewhere.
- ■ No — return to the argument before continuing.

Check 2: Is every section doing necessary work?

Check for unnecessary context, repeated examples, and hedges that qualify rather than clarify.

- ■ Yes — nothing remains that does not serve the piece's purpose.
- ■ No — identify and cut what is not necessary.

Check 3: Does the piece sound like it was written by someone who meant it?

Over-revision can erode commitment — edges smoothed, claims softened, voice made more careful and less direct.

- ■ Yes — the piece is direct and committed.
- ■ No — consider returning to an earlier, more committed version.

3 — THE DECISION

If all three checks pass — the piece is ready, imperfections and all. If any check fails, the piece needs specific work aimed at that gap, not generalised additional revision.
