

The Ladder

Every task in a book project, ranked by voice risk. Print this and keep it where you can see it.

Every task in a book project, fiction or nonfiction, ranked by how much of your voice is in it. Top is safe. Bottom is not.

ABOVE THE LINE

	RUNG	WHAT IT IS
1	Research	Sources, claims, comparison tables, what a policy actually says
2	Interrogation	Being questioned about your own material until you find out what you think
3	Structure	Outlining, sequencing, spotting three chapters doing one job
4	Diagnosis	Reading your draft and telling you what is wrong. It diagnoses, you fix
5	Transcription and organization	Your talking into clean text. False starts cut, repetitions grouped

RUNG 6 • THE LINE

Everything below this point produces prose that will appear in your book, in words the model chose.

BELOW THE LINE

	RUNG	WHAT IT IS
7	Line editing your text	Tightening sentences you wrote. Where most drift comes from, because it feels harmless
8	Drafting sections in your voice	The model writes, styled after you. Copyright weakens. KDP calls it AI generated
9	Drafting the book	Generating chapters from an outline. Words appear. This is the thing being sold everywhere

THE RULE

- Rungs one through five for the book.
- Rungs one through nine for everything around the book.

The exception is large. Rungs seven through nine are completely fine for text that carries no voice: the description, ad copy, social posts, keyword lists, the index, alt text, metadata, query letters, website copy, the email sequence. Generate all of it. Amazon's disclosure covers the book's content, not your marketing.

That is a great deal of delegation. It is just not delegation of the sentences.

THE FOUR PRACTICES THAT KEEP IT HOLDING

- ☐ **Never accept a rewrite you did not ask for.** Ask for diagnosis. When it rewrites unbidden, discard it and re-ask.
- ☐ **Ask for the criticism before the praise.** Reverse the order and the praise contaminates the criticism.
- ☐ **Watch the flatness rate, not the flatness.** Compare contractions and commas against your corpus, monthly.
- ☐ **Keep your drafts.** Timestamped, in sequence. It is evidence, and one day you may need it.