

The forty second checklist

Run one pass before anything AI touched leaves your laptop. Most sends only need one or two gates.

GATE 1 · TEXT

- ☐ Paste as plain text or strip smart quotes and invisible characters
- ☐ Do a real edit pass in your voice. Read it out loud once
- ☐ Rewrite any sentence that sounds like nobody you know
- ☐ You approve the final, not the AI

GATE 2 · DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Word: File > Info > Check for Issues > Inspect Document > Remove All (on a copy)
- ☐ PDF: File > Properties. Check author and the original filename
- ☐ Never trust a drawn black box. Delete the text, then export fresh
- ☐ Ten second test: select all, copy, paste your own "redacted" PDF into Notes

GATE 3 · IMAGES

- ☐ Share sheet > Options > Location OFF before photos leave your phone
- ☐ Strip metadata on anything sent as a file, attachment, or document
- ☐ Crop sensitive text out. Marker scribbles can be reversed
- ☐ Remember: a screenshot drops file info, never what's in the pixels

GATE 4 · RECEIPTS

- ☐ Draft where version history is on (Google Docs, Word AutoSave)
- ☐ Save the messy pre-AI draft under its own name
- ☐ Memorize the line: "AI-assisted is not AI-authored, here is my draft history"

The boundary line. Cleanup removes metadata, formatting artifacts, and hidden file data. It does not remove AI watermarks, and no tool selling "watermark removal" can prove otherwise. The honest exit is editing until the work is genuinely yours.