

William & Mary Law School

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Incorporating ChatGPT in the Legal Research &  
Writing Classroom

Full Conference Schedule

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Aug 4th, 4:00 PM

### The Starting is the Hardest Part: Using ChatGPT to Overcome Writer's Block

Margie Alsbrook  
*Mercer University School of Law*

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Alsbrook, Margie, "The Starting is the Hardest Part: Using ChatGPT to Overcome Writer's Block" (2023).  
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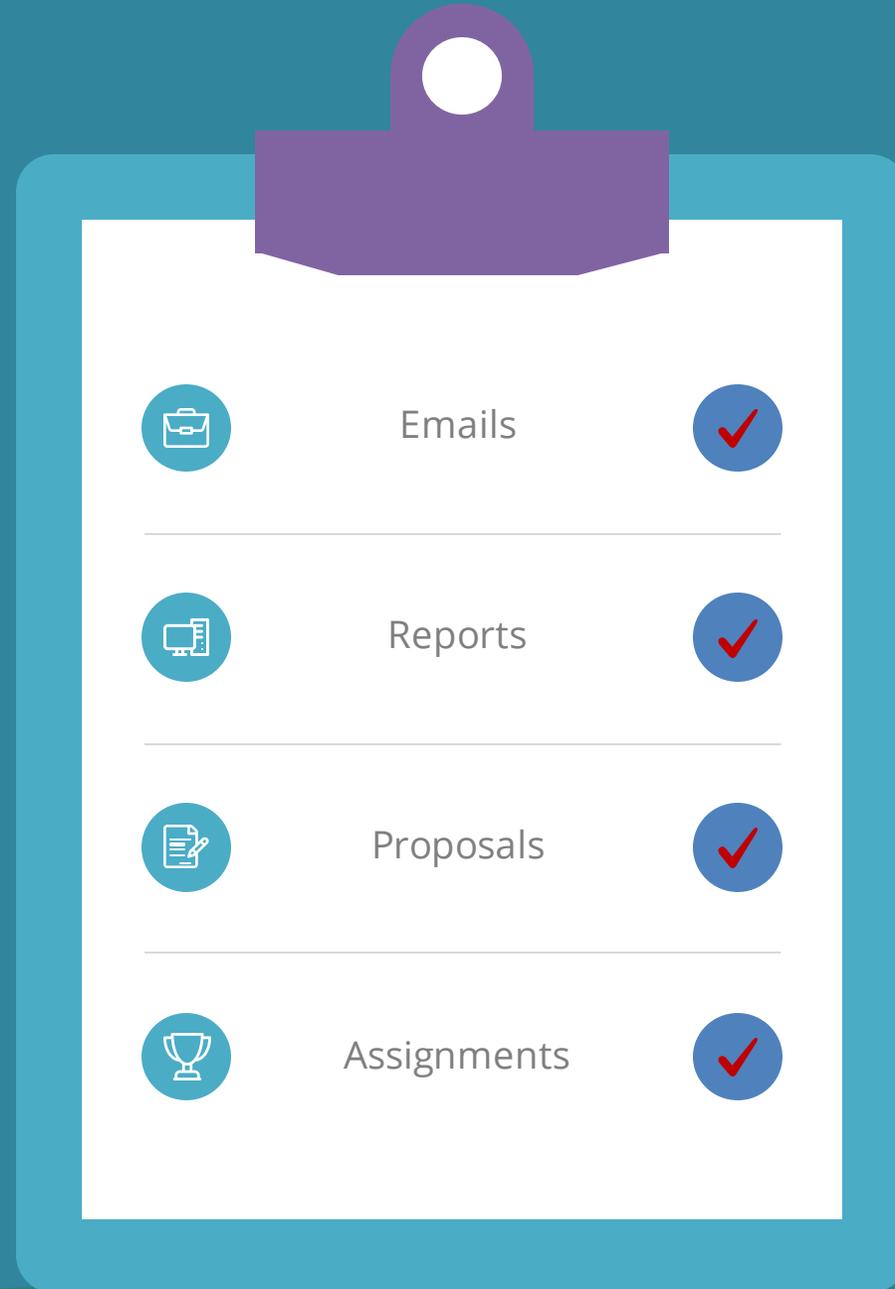
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# Writer's Block

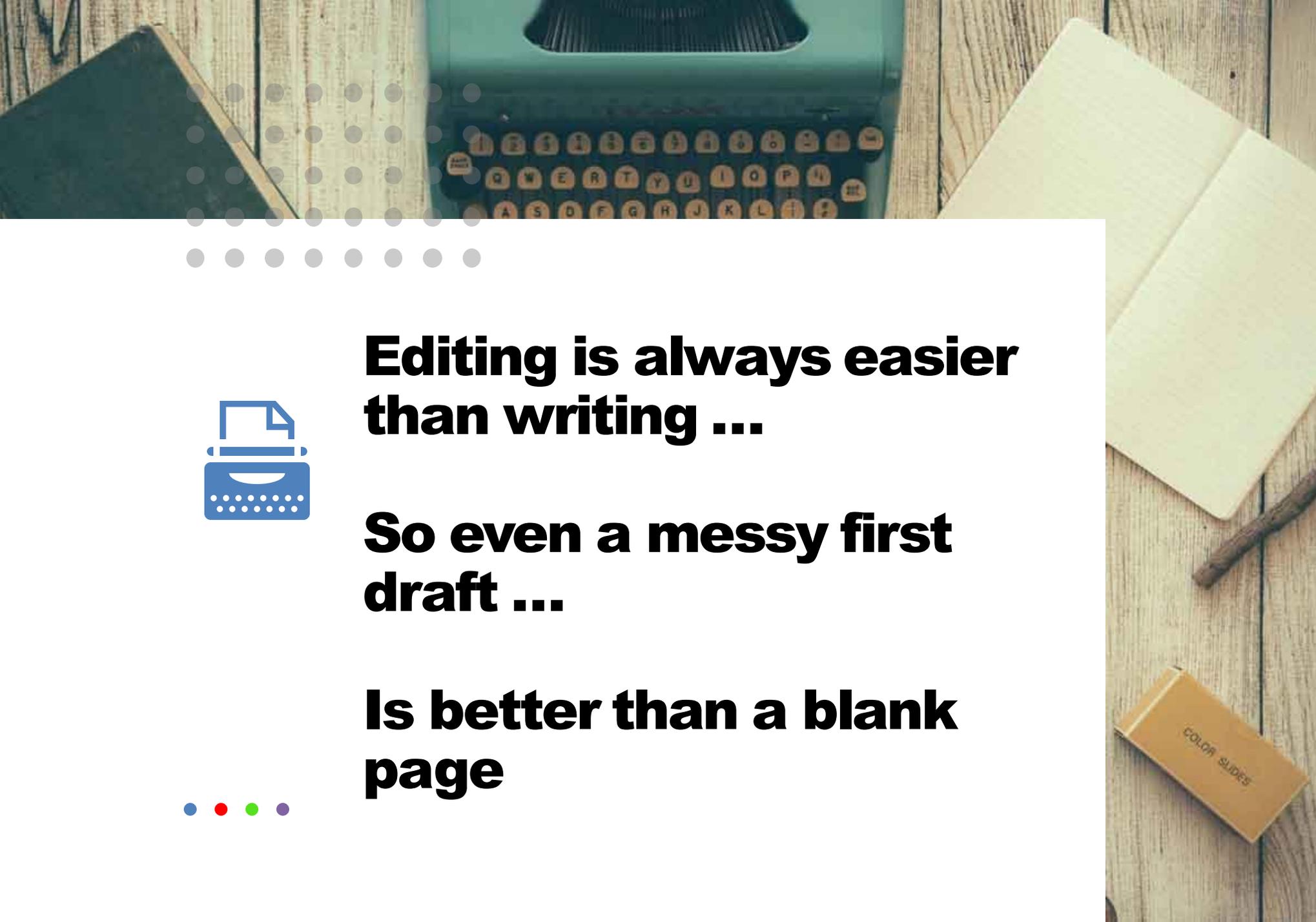
Those cold unfeeling keys  
just stare at me, mocking me.



# The Starting Is The Hardest Part



How  
ChatGPT  
Can Help  
You Tackle  
Your  
"TO DO"  
List

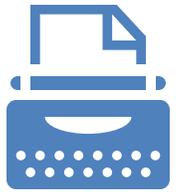


**Editing is always easier  
than writing ...**

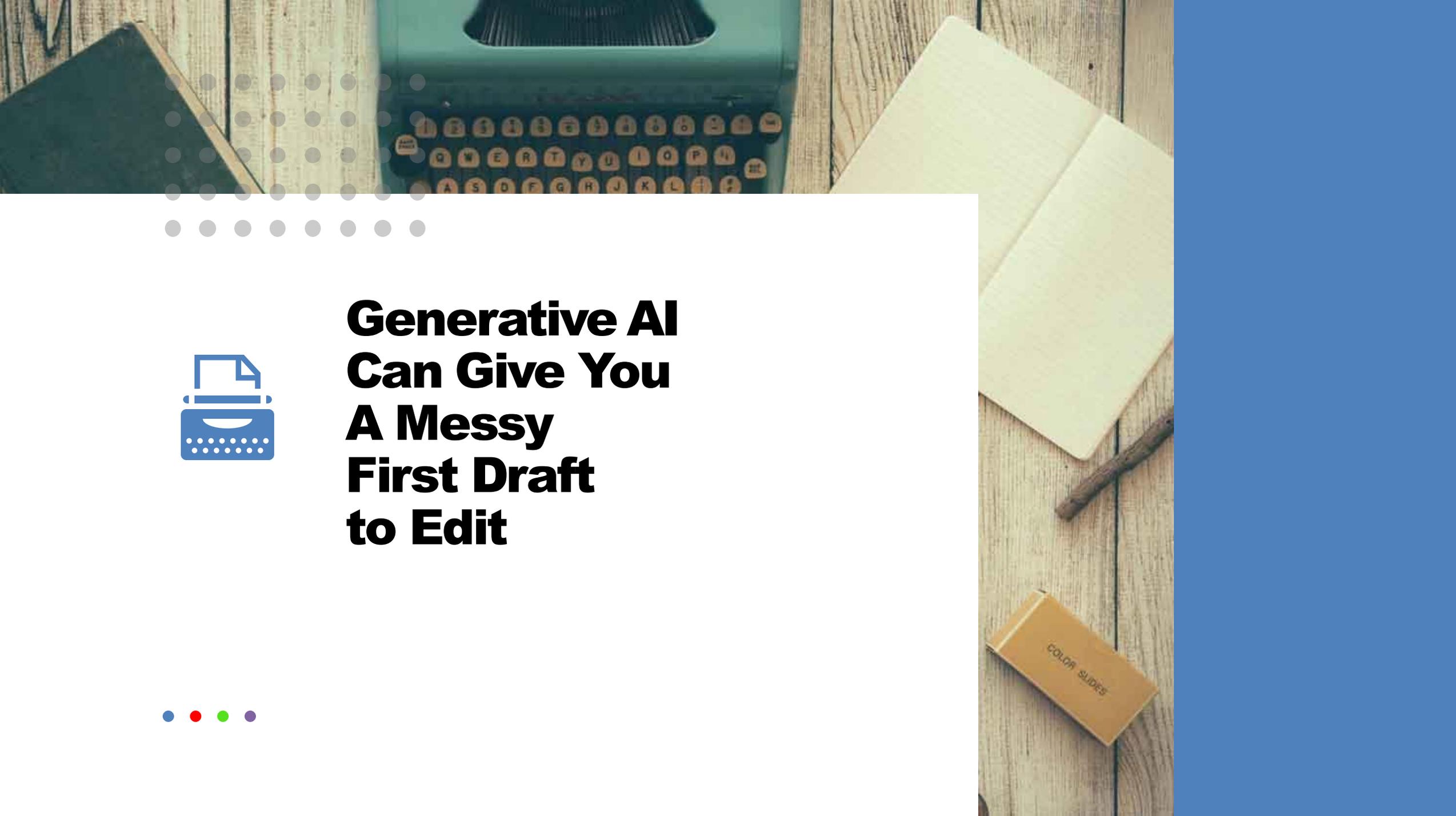
**So even a messy first  
draft ...**

**Is better than a blank  
page**



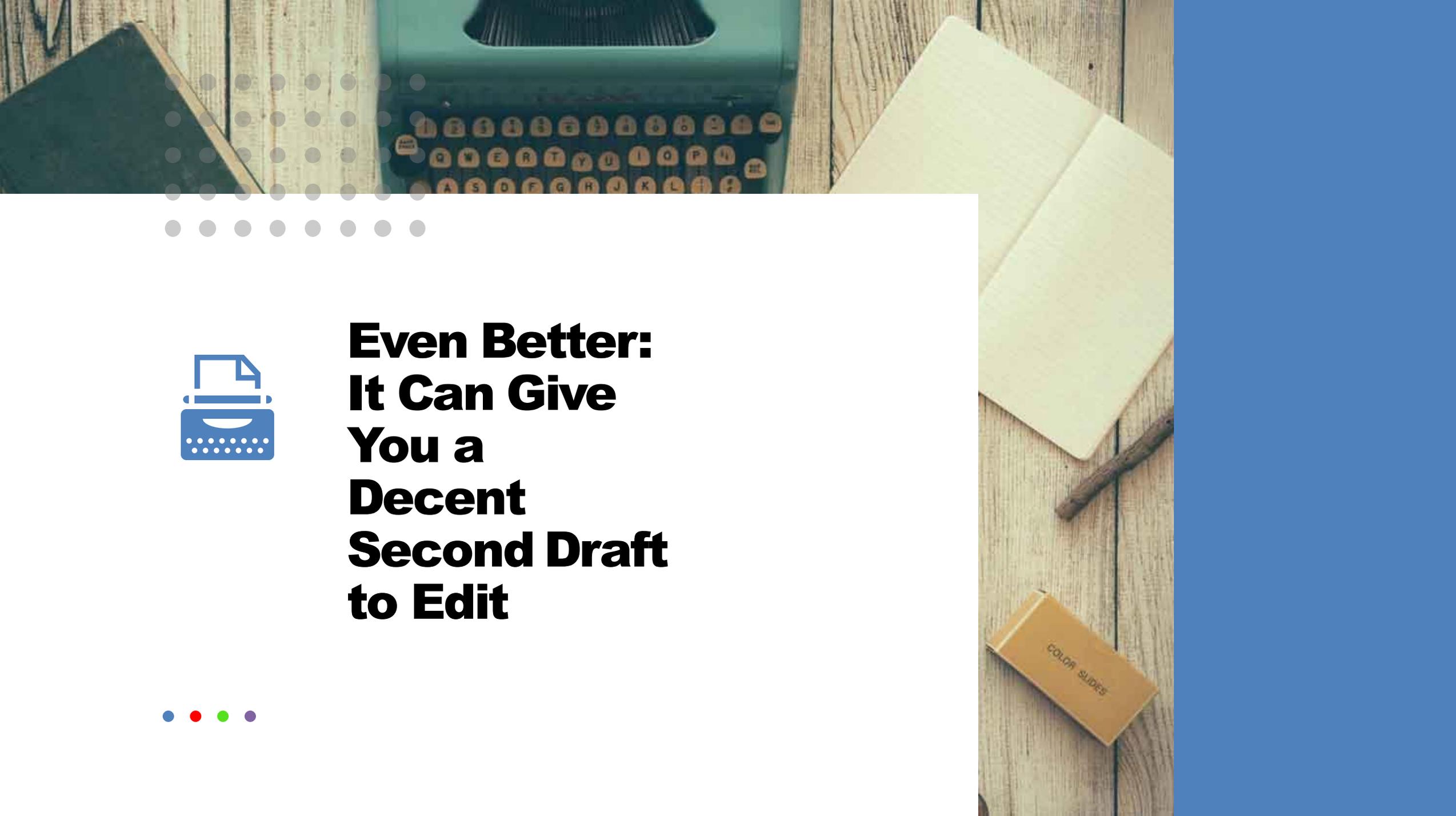


# Generative AI Can Give You A Messy First Draft to Edit





**Even Better:  
It Can Give  
You a  
Decent  
Second Draft  
to Edit**



## Sample Task: Write a Letter of Rec For A Student



Can you help me write a letter of recommendation for a student who is applying to work as a law clerk for a respected judge? I need the letter to be formal in tone and to include the fact that she got an A in my class, she is on the law review, and she is a mentor to first year law students. I would also like to mention that before coming to law school she was president of her sorority and she tutored students at her university's writing center.

# Sample Task: Write a Letter of Rec for a Student

Dear Judge [Judge's Last Name],

I am writing to provide my enthusiastic and unreserved recommendation for [Student's Full Name] as a law clerk within your esteemed chambers. It is my honor to offer insights into [Student's Last Name]'s character, abilities, and qualifications based on my interactions as [Your Title] at [Your Institution].

[Student's Last Name] was a standout student in my [Course Name] class, earning an exemplary grade of A. Her analytical acumen, dedication to legal research, and exceptional writing skills were evident in her performance throughout the course. She displayed a deep understanding of complex legal concepts and exhibited a keen ability to apply them to real-world scenarios. [Student's Last Name]'s academic achievements reflect her commitment to excellence and her potential to excel in the challenging and dynamic field of law.

Beyond her academic accomplishments, [Student's Last Name] is an active member of our law review, further showcasing her dedication to the legal discourse and her willingness to engage in scholarly debate. She also serves as a mentor to first-year law students, demonstrating leadership qualities and a genuine desire to support and guide her peers. Her approachable nature and willingness to assist others foster a collaborative and inclusive academic environment.

I am particularly impressed by [Student's Last Name]'s diverse background. Her leadership experience as the president of her sorority prior to attending law school reflects her ability to manage responsibilities, collaborate effectively, and maintain a strong sense of community. Her involvement as a tutor at her university's writing center underscores her commitment to fostering effective communication and writing skills among her peers.

 Regenerate

## Sample Task: Write a CLEANER Letter of Rec For A Student



Thank you, I appreciate that effort! Your draft has a few too many flowery words for me, I like a cleaner writing style with fewer descriptors. Would you please write a new draft that is simpler in tone?

# Sample Task: Write a CLEANER Letter of Rec For A Student

I am writing to recommend [Student's Full Name] as a law clerk within your chambers. I had the privilege of instructing [Student's Last Name] in my [Course Name] class, where she earned an outstanding A grade.

[Student's Last Name] is an exceptional student with strong research, writing, and analytical skills. Her performance in my class demonstrated a deep understanding of complex legal concepts and an ability to apply them effectively.

Beyond academics, [Student's Last Name] is an active member of our law review and serves as a mentor to first-year law students. Her dedication to both academic excellence and peer support is evident.

I am also impressed by [Student's Last Name]'s leadership experience as a sorority president and her role as a tutor at the university's writing center before attending law school. These experiences reflect her strong organizational skills, collaborative mindset, and commitment to helping others.

[Student's Last Name] possesses the qualities essential for a successful law clerk—attention to detail, strong work ethic, and effective communication. Her diverse background and dedication make her a valuable candidate.

If you require further information, please feel free to contact me at [Your Email Address] or [Your Phone Number]. Thank you for considering [Student's Full Name] for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

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# Sample Task: Invite Your Colleagues to a Candidate's Job Talk



I work at a university and we are interviewing candidates to hire for the position of Assistant Professor. We have a candidate from the University of Pluto who will be on campus on Date, Date. Please help me write an email in a formal tone to my colleagues inviting them to meet the candidate over coffee and bagels at 9 am and then attend a lunch where the candidate will give a job talk at noon. Lunch from Pasta Pasta will be provided and the job talk is called Please Hire Me I Am Pretty Great.



Subject: Invitation to Meet Assistant Professor Candidate from the University of Pluto



Dear [Colleague's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. We are currently in the process of conducting interviews for the Assistant Professor position here at [Your University Name], and I am pleased to inform you that we have a promising candidate from the University of Pluto. The candidate will be visiting our campus on [Date], and I would like to extend an invitation for you to meet them and engage in discussions about their potential contribution to our academic community.

We have organized an informal meet-and-greet session over coffee and bagels, providing an opportunity for you to interact with the candidate on a personal level. The details for this session are as follows:

Date: [Date]

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: [Location]

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# Sample Task: Invite Your Colleagues to a Candidate's Job Talk

Following the meet-and-greet, we have scheduled a lunch session during which the candidate will deliver a job talk titled "Please Hire Me I Am Pretty Great." Lunch will be provided from Pasta Pasta, ensuring a delightful culinary experience while engaging in meaningful conversations about the candidate's research and teaching interests.

Job Talk and Lunch Details:

Date: [Date]

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: [Location]

Talk Title: "Please Hire Me I Am Pretty Great"

Your presence and valuable input during these sessions would greatly contribute to our assessment of the candidate's suitability for the Assistant Professor position. We believe your insights and observations will be invaluable in helping us make an informed decision.

Please confirm your availability for both the coffee and bagels session at 9:00 AM and the lunch and job talk session at 12:00 PM by [RSVP Deadline]. Your timely response will assist us in making the necessary arrangements.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you for your commitment to our hiring process and your dedication to maintaining the high standards of excellence at [Your University Name].

Best regards,

 Regenerate

## Sample Task: Write a SHORTER Job Talk Invite



Remember the invitation to the job talk that you wrote above? Could you also edit that to make it shorter and more to the point?



# Sample Task: Write a SHORTER Job Talk Invite



Certainly! Here's a shorter and more concise version of the invitation to the job talk:



Subject: Invitation: Law Clerk Candidate's Job Talk and Lunch

Dear [Colleague's Name],

We invite you to meet a promising Assistant Professor candidate from the University of Pluto on [Date]. Join us for a coffee and bagels session at 9 am, followed by a lunch and the candidate's job talk titled "Please Hire Me I Am Pretty Great" at noon.

Details:

Date: [Date]

Coffee and Bagels: 9:00 AM

Lunch and Job Talk: 12:00 PM

Location: [Location]

RSVP by [RSVP Deadline]. Your insights are valuable as we assess the candidate's fit for the position.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Contact Information]

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## Suggestion:

Type your question to the AI like you would to a distant friend, or maybe a great aunt.

Someone you know has a sincere desire to be helpful, but you are pretty sure won't truly "get it" without some extra context.

## Sample Task: Write an Email to a Colleague About a Complex Etiquette Problem

LI

I would like to ask your help with a workplace etiquette question. I love my colleague, she is an amazing person. She is very helpful and we do great work together. She also brings baked goods almost every Monday, and she is a wonderful baker. The issue is that I have a deadly peanut allergy and cannot even smell peanuts. I do not want her to stop bringing baked goods for everyone to enjoy, I just want her to stop bringing the peanut treats into my office on her way to the kitchen. How do I say this without being rude? My lawyer has suggested I put it in writing in case I actually have a medical issue just so the insurance company will have it on record for life insurance purposes.

# Sample Task: Write an Email to a Colleague About a Complex Etiquette Problem



Navigating this situation with sensitivity is key. Here's a suggestion for communicating your concern to your colleague:



Subject: A Friendly Request Regarding Baked Goods

Dear [Colleague's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. First of all, I want to express my genuine appreciation for your wonderful baking skills and the delightful treats you bring to the office every Monday. It's always a joy to see everyone enjoying your creations.

I wanted to have a quick, friendly chat about something important. I have a severe peanut allergy, which unfortunately means I can't even be around the scent of peanuts. I truly don't want to disrupt our Monday tradition, as I know how much everyone looks forward to your baked goods. However, I wanted to kindly ask if it would be possible for me to avoid having any peanut treats brought into my office area. I hope you understand that it's a precautionary measure to ensure my health and safety.

I want to reiterate how much I appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness in sharing your treats with everyone. If there's any way we could work together to make this arrangement possible, I would be very grateful.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to continuing our excellent collaboration and enjoying your delectable creations with the rest of the team.

Warm regards,

Regenerate

## CHATGPT CAN WRITE THESE KINDS OF THINGS IN SECONDS

- Emails inviting people to events
  - Lunch with candidates
  - Student events
  - Meetings
- Student letters of recommendation
- Thank you emails to colleagues, or people you work with on volunteer projects
- Descriptions for your course proposal
- Proposals for conferences
- Titles for papers, talks, or events
- Reports to administration
- Emails containing requests
- What else is on your to do list today? Why not let ChatGPT give it a shot?



Please give me some examples of ways people can work with you to tackle their to do lists and be more productive



Certainly! There are several ways you can work with me to tackle your to-do lists and boost your productivity:



1. **Task Organization and Prioritization:** Share your to-do list with me, and I can help you categorize, prioritize, and organize tasks based on their importance and deadlines.
2. **Task Reminders and Notifications:** Set up reminders and notifications for specific tasks or deadlines. I can send you timely reminders so you don't forget important tasks.
3. **Time Management:** Create a daily or weekly schedule with me. I can help you allocate time slots for different tasks, ensuring that you stay on track throughout the day.
4. **Brainstorming and Idea Generation:** If you're stuck on a project or need creative ideas, describe your challenge, and I can assist you in brainstorming potential solutions or generating new ideas.
5. **Research Assistance:** Provide me with research topics or questions, and I can gather relevant information, summaries, or sources to aid your decision-making process.
6. **Drafting and Writing Help:** Share writing tasks with me, such as emails, reports, or documents. I can help you draft, edit, or proofread content, making it more polished and effective.
7. **Learning and Skill Development:** If you have a learning goal, I can curate resources, suggest courses, or provide explanations to help you acquire new skills or knowledge.
8. **Language and Communication Support:** Whether you're learning a new language or need assistance with communication, I can provide translations, language practice, and

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# What is Socially & Academically Acceptable? TBD My Friends ...





# Go forth & put AI to work for you!

Free Accounts Available at  
[Chat.OpenAI.Com](https://chat.openai.com)

Questions?  
Comments?  
Want to talk further?  
[Alsbrook\\_M@law.mercer.edu](mailto:Alsbrook_M@law.mercer.edu)

