

RAIN LEE PRODUCTIONS

Before You Generate

A practical guide to mindful AI use

Make something useful. Know what went into it. Know when to stop.

Edition 1.1 · Rain Lee Productions Written and assembled with AI assistance. Includes practical exercises, source notes and editable worksheets.

01 / Give the work a reason

Before choosing a tool, finish this sentence: “This helps [person] do [specific thing] in [situation].” If the sentence still says “engage with content”, try again. What should a person understand, find, decide or do?

A community-event poster needs to tell someone what is happening and how to attend. An indie release needs a recognisable visual world and accurate credits. A client presentation needs a decision someone can make. None of these requires a hundred variations by default.

The smallest useful result

Name one deliverable, one audience, one action and one approval owner. Then name what you already have: approved copy, your own photograph, a previous layout, a voice note or a working sketch. Start from existing, suitable material whose use you can justify.

For a fictional neighbourhood listening night, the useful result might be one readable poster and a plain-text announcement. Success is that a reader can find the time, place, ticket condition and access contact. A beautiful background that makes these harder to find is a failed decision, however expensive it looks.

Write this before opening a generator

- Person: who needs this, and what do they already know?
- Action: what should they do after seeing it?
- Facts: which details must be exact?
- Boundary: what must not be fabricated, uploaded or implied?
- Done: what observable checks will let us stop?

Keep this brief visible. When you want another version, point to the requirement it would improve. If you cannot name one, you may be shopping for a feeling rather than solving a design problem. That is your cue to pause.

01 / Brief before beautiful

Write the information hierarchy in plain text. Put the event name first, followed by what it is, the essential attendance details, the action and the contact. The order may change with the audience, but make that a choice.

The practice brief

- Name: Quiet Room Sessions — fictional exercise.
- Meaning: an intimate evening of original music and attentive listening.
- Audience: people discovering local independent musicians.
- Action: reserve a seat using an approved booking destination.
- Required facts: date, time, venue, price/conditions and access contact, all to be confirmed.
- Visual boundary: no fake audience, invented venue photograph, celebrity likeness or implied sponsor.

A useful first sketch

Divide the page into title, visual space and details. Make three small pencil or digital-box sketches. Do not spend time rendering them. Choose based on reading order and space for the information. If the details do not fit, shorten the copy before shrinking everything.

Test one layout with the longest likely venue name and the full admission condition. A design that only works with imaginary short text is not ready for the actual brief.

Prompt 1 / Find the gaps

“Review this poster brief: [brief]. List missing facts and ambiguous instructions. Do not invent event details or sources. Suggest one clear reading order and one manual design route. Do not generate an image.”

Expected result: a list of questions and a hierarchy. Reject any response that supplies a date, ticket price or venue without a source. Ask the organiser for those answers. A language model is not the organiser.