

AI your firm can defend in court.

Most lawyers now have an AI tool open while they work. This short handbook shows you — in plain English, with nothing assumed — how to use it without ever putting your name on something you cannot stand behind.

Your free copy — no charge, no
sign-up

Written for solicitors, barristers and in-house counsel, not engineers. Every term is explained.



● WHAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO BY THE END

Spot the citation that does not exist... check a whole draft with one page... and hand a client or a court a clear record of where every authority and fact came from. About forty minutes of reading. No software to install.

● BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Who this is for, and how to use it

This handbook assumes no technical knowledge at all. If you can write a document and you have used a chatbot once or twice, you have everything you need. Read it in order — each short part builds on the one before it.

Who it is for

Solicitors, barristers, in-house counsel, paralegals and students — anyone whose name goes on the final document.

How to read it

About forty minutes, start to finish. Or dip into one part and come back later.

What you need

Any AI tool you already use — ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot — and a document you have written.

WHAT IS “AI TOOL”?

A program you type a request into — such as ChatGPT — which then writes text back for you. It is also called a chatbot or a language model.

WHAT IS “PROMPT”?

Simply the instruction or question you type into the AI tool. If you have ever asked a chatbot a question, you have already written a prompt.

● IN SUMMARY

There are no prerequisites. Read at your own pace, and keep a real matter beside you to practise on.

What is a “harness”, and why do we need one?

Strictly speaking, a harness is equipment that holds something steady while you work on it. Here it means the same thing for your drafting: a small set of routines that holds your AI steady, so nothing unsupported slips through. It is made of four ordinary documents, in plain English.

1 · The Rules

The instructions your AI must follow every time it helps you.

2 · The Test Set

A few practice tasks with known answers, to test the AI.

3 · The Checklist

One page of questions to run over any output.

4 · The Authority Ledger

A simple record of where each citation and fact came from.

● GO FURTHER — THE PRO EDITION

This free handbook teaches all four files. The Pro edition gives you fourteen ready-to-use rules, six checklists and three complete procedures — copy, paste and go.

\$79 · downloadable PDF with every template. Or get it included with the video course. For teams, write to contact@evaluationai.com.

Why AI gets law wrong

This is the single most important idea in the handbook, so we will take it slowly. When you ask an AI to write something, it is not looking the answer up in a law library. It is guessing what words are most likely to come next. Most of the time that guess is remarkably good. Occasionally it is completely wrong — and it never sounds unsure unless you teach it to.

WHAT IS "HALLUCINATION"?

When an AI produces something that sounds true but is not — a case that does not exist, a quotation nobody said, or a subsection that was repealed. It is not lying on purpose; it is producing the most likely-sounding answer.

WHAT IS "AUTHORITY"?

A source you can cite and check — a judgment, a statute, a regulation or a practice direction, with a citation someone else can find.

WHAT IS "REASONING"?

Your own analysis. It may well be right — but it is not an authority, so it cannot be presented as one. Reasoning is essential; it simply must be labelled honestly.

Confidence is not authority. A sentence can be beautifully drafted and still be unsupported.

● IN SUMMARY

AI predicts likely text rather than checking the law. So our whole method comes down to one habit: separate what is authority from what is reasoning, and label each one.

The seven mistakes that end careers

These come up again and again. You do not need to memorise them — the checklist later will do the work — but recognising them is half the battle.

The mistake	What it looks like, and why it is serious
1 · A fabricated case	A citation to a judgment that does not exist. Courts now sanction counsel for this.
2 · A misquoted authority	A real case cited for a proposition it never decided — the most common of all.
3 · Stale law	An authority that has been overruled, or a rule that changed last month.
4 · Wrong jurisdiction	A US doctrine applied to an English, Scottish or EU matter without flagging it.
5 · Confidentiality breach	Privileged material pasted into a public model. Waiver and regulatory risk.
6 · Over-confident advice	A firm recommendation with the limitation buried or dropped entirely.
7 · Precedent drift	A drafted clause that quietly changes the deal the client already agreed.

● KEY TAKEAWAYS

- None of these are about AI being foolish — they are about AI being fluent.
- The cure is not a cleverer model; it is a habit of checking.
- Every one of the seven is caught by the same routine, taught next.

The one habit that catches most mistakes

If you remember nothing else, remember this. Every sentence an AI writes contains claims. Some are authority — they came from the material you gave it. Others are reasoning — the AI's own analysis. Make the AI label each one as it writes. You are not judging it yourself; you are asking it to show its working.

● TRY SAYING EXACTLY THIS

“Rewrite the passage below. After every sentence, add a tag: [AUTHORITY] if the point is from the source you were given, or [REASONING] if it is your own analysis. Never invent a case, a citation or a quotation. If something is not in the source, write ‘not in source.’”

1

Paste the source first

Give the AI the document you want it to rely on — the judgment, the statute, the contract or your notes.

Why this matters: Without a source, everything it writes is reasoning.

2

Ask for the labels

Use the wording in the box above, so the AI marks authority and reasoning as it goes.

Why this matters: It turns a hidden judgement into something you can see.

3

Scan the [REASONING] lines

These need your professional judgement before they can become advice.

Why this matters: This is where over-claiming hides.

● IN SUMMARY

That single instruction catches five of the seven mistakes at once. Try it on one paragraph you wrote recently — the unsupported sentences stand out immediately.

● PART THREE

The harness, file by file

Here is each of the four files explained in one plain paragraph. None of them is software. You could write all four in a single afternoon.

● FILE ONE · THE RULES

A page of instructions — in English — that you paste into your AI so it behaves the same way every time. Think of it as the note you would leave a new paralegal on their first day.

● FILE TWO · THE TEST SET

A short set of practice tasks where you already know the correct answer. It is how you check whether your AI is still reliable — as you would check a new trainee before trusting them with a client.

● FILE THREE · THE CHECKLIST

One page, six questions. You run it over any output before it leaves your desk. It takes about four minutes and it catches most errors.

● FILE FOUR · THE AUTHORITY LEDGER

A simple table: each claim, its source, and whether it is authority or reasoning. This is the page you can show a client, an insurer or a regulator when they ask “how do you know?”.

The Rules: telling your AI how to behave

The Rules are nothing more than a short list of instructions. Once saved in your AI tool, they apply to everything it does for you. Here are the four we recommend, each explained in ordinary words.

WHAT IS "LABEL EVERY CLAIM"?

After each sentence, say whether the point is authority (from the source) or reasoning (your own analysis). This is the heart of the method.

WHAT IS "NEVER INVENT"?

Do not create a case, a citation, a quotation or a section number that is not in the material provided. If it is missing, say "not in source".

WHAT IS "MINIMUM CLAIM"?

State only what the authority actually supports. If the authority is weak or distinguishable, say so.

WHAT IS "PROVE IT"?

For every important point, give the citation and a confidence level — high, medium or low.

Once these rules are in place, a surprising amount of the risk simply disappears.

● A QUESTION PEOPLE ASK

"Won't all this slow me down?" At first, yes — by a few minutes a document. It quickly becomes second nature, and it is far faster than repairing an advice after a client has relied on it.

● IN SUMMARY

The Rules are your standing instructions. Write them once, paste them in, and every answer your AI gives will be shaped by them.

The Test Set: testing your AI

How do you know whether your AI is still doing a good job today? You test it — with a small set of tasks where you already know the right answer. We call it a Test Set. It is the closest thing this method has to quality control.

1

Choose five to ten past tasks

Pick tasks you have already completed and checked, with a short, verifiable right answer.

Why this matters: You cannot test something you cannot grade.

2

Remove identifying details

Replace names with “the client”, and places with “the jurisdiction”, so the file can be stored safely.

Why this matters: Privilege and confidentiality still apply, even to test files.

3

Write down the correct answer

One line describing what a good answer must contain, and the errors to watch for.

Why this matters: This becomes your mark scheme.

4

Run the test whenever something changes

Every few months, or after the AI tool is updated, run the same tasks again and compare.

Why this matters: AI tools change silently; a good result in January can be a bad one in June.

● IN SUMMARY

The Test Set turns a vague feeling — “the AI seems fine” — into something you can actually measure and show.

The Checklist: one page, six questions

Before anything leaves your desk, run these six questions. Score each one — zero or one. Anything below six needs another look. It takes about four minutes.

- Does every case, statute and citation exist, and is it current?
- Does every authority stand for the proposition it is cited for?
- Is each claim labelled authority or reasoning?
- Is any reasoning presented as though it were authority?
- Has anything important been left out — including contrary authority?
- Is there an authority ledger for the main points?

WHAT IS "WHY WE SCORE IT"?

A score gives you something objective to point to, and a simple rule to follow when you are tired or rushed — which is exactly when errors slip through.

Below six out of six, the work does not leave your desk. That single sentence has saved more careers than any software.

The Authority Ledger: answering “how do you know?”

This is the file clients value most, and it is the simplest. For every important point, you keep one row: the claim, where it came from, and whether it is authority or reasoning. It turns your advice into an auditable record.

Claim	Source	Type
Notice period is 30 days	Contract, cl 12.3 (p.4)	Authority
The clause is unenforceable	—	Reasoning
Limitation period is 6 years	Limitation Act 1980, s 5	Authority

WHAT IS “AUDIT TRAIL”?

A record that lets someone else follow the same path you did, from a claim back to its source. It is what separates a professional advice from a persuasive one.

It is the difference between “trust me” and “here is exactly how I know”.

● IN SUMMARY

Keep one ledger per matter. It costs a few minutes and it is the strongest evidence of care you can show a client.

● PART FOUR

A full example, from start to finish

Let us do the whole thing on one paragraph of advice, so you can see how quickly it works.

The AI wrote: "The contract is clearly void. The leading authority, Smith v Jones (2019), confirms that such clauses are unenforceable in all cases. The client will certainly recover damages."

Claim	Verdict
"The contract is clearly void"	Reasoning — needs review
"Smith v Jones (2019)"	Wrong — no such report found
"unenforceable in all cases"	Wrong — authority is distinguishable
"will certainly recover damages"	Over-confident — outcome is uncertain

● THE CORRECTED PARAGRAPH

The clause is likely to be unenforceable on the authority of [real case], which held that such terms are unreasonable unless [distinguishing feature] is present. On these facts, the client has a strong but not certain claim for damages; the limitation period is six years (Limitation Act 1980, s 5).

● IN SUMMARY

Four minutes, four errors caught. None of them required technical skill — only the habit of labelling claims and checking them.

Keeping privileged material safe

Lawyers work under duties of confidentiality and privilege. That does not mean you cannot use AI — it means you must be careful about what you paste in, and honest about what you did.

WHAT IS "REDACTION"?

Removing or replacing identifying details before text is shared — names become "the client", places become "the jurisdiction", and personal details are left out.

WHAT IS "YOUR OWN ACCOUNT"?

Using an AI tool on a paid plan with a setting that prevents your text being used to train the company's models — or a model that runs on your own network.

Before you paste

Remove names. Remove locations.
Remove anything that could identify a person or a matter.

When you file

Record that AI tools assisted with drafting, and that all authorities were verified. A short line in the file is enough.

Honesty about your method is a strength. It tells the client and the court you understand exactly what you are doing.

Questions people ask

Do I need to be good with technology?

No. If you can write a document and type a question into a chatbot, you can do everything in this handbook.

Does this replace my professional judgement?

No — it protects it. The harness makes the AI's guesses visible so that your judgement is applied where it matters most.

Which AI tool should I use?

Any of the well-known ones — ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot. The method works the same way with all of them. For privileged material, prefer a private or local model.

How long does it take to set up?

An afternoon for the four files. After that, it is a few minutes per document — the small cost that keeps your work defensible.

● KEY TAKEAWAYS

- No technical skill, and no new software, is required.
- The method protects your judgement rather than replacing it.
- Setup takes one afternoon; using it takes minutes.

● QUICK START

Your first thirty minutes

If you would rather start doing than reading, follow these five steps with a document you have already written. It will take about half an hour, and by the end you will have a working habit.

1

Pick one short document

Choose a finished advice or memo of one or two pages that you know well.

Why this matters: You can only spot an error if you know what the truth looks like.

2

Paste in the four rules

Copy the Rules from the next pages into your AI tool.

Why this matters: They shape every answer from that point on.

3

Ask for the labels

Have the AI list each sentence as authority or reasoning.

Why this matters: This exposes anything it invented.

4

Check with the six questions

Run the checklist and score it out of six.

Why this matters: The score tells you plainly whether it is safe to send.

5

Keep an authority ledger

Write down each claim and its source in three columns.

Why this matters: This becomes your answer to “how do you know?”.

● IN SUMMARY

Half an hour, one real document, and you have the whole method working. Everything that follows simply explains the details.

● WORKED EXAMPLE

Checking a contract clause

A review clause is a good test: the AI is fluent, and fluency is exactly what hides a change in the deal. Here is a typical repair, line by line.

An AI-drafted line	What the check found, and the fix
"Payment due within 14 days."	The draft contract says 30 days. The number was invented. Corrected to 30.
"Standard force majeure clause."	The clause omits pandemics. Flagged as a substantive change, not a 'standard' one.
"Governed by the laws of England."	The instructions said Delaware. Jurisdiction corrected.
"Client accepts all liability."	Contradicts the agreed cap. Reverted to the capped position and flagged.

WHAT IS "PRECEDENT DRIFT"?

When a redraft quietly changes a term the client already agreed. It is the most expensive failure in contract work, and the easiest to miss.

A single invented number can change who bears the risk. The check finds it in minutes.

Five mistakes beginners make

As lawyers start using AI, the same five errors show up. Knowing them in advance will save you time.

1 • Trusting the tone

A confident, well-written passage feels reliable. Read it for sources first, fluency second.

2 • Checking only at the end

It is far easier to check one section at a time than to unpick a whole advice under deadline.

3 • Letting the AI summarise the authority

Ask it to work from the judgment itself. Summaries drift, and drift becomes a misquote.

4 • Skipping the contrary-authority check

The most dangerous mistake is not a wrong sentence — it is the missing one. Always ask what authority cuts the other way.

5 • Pasting privileged material

Redact first. Privilege applies to everything you share, and waiver is hard to undo.

● KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Check as you go, not at the end.
- Work from the source, never from a summary.
- Ask what cuts the other way, every time.

Every term, in plain English

More on the next page. Keep this open while you work.

AI tool	A program you type a request into — such as ChatGPT — that writes text back for you.
Prompt	The instruction or question you type into the AI tool.
Model	The engine behind an AI tool. It is updated from time to time, which can change its behaviour.
Hallucination	When AI produces something that sounds true but is fabricated.
Authority	A source you can cite and check — a judgment, statute or regulation.
Reasoning	Your own analysis, which is not an authority.
Primary source	The actual judgment or statute, rather than a summary of it.
Pin cite	The precise page or paragraph reference within an authority.
Citation	A reference showing where a point came from.
Verify	To check that something is true by going back to its source.
Distinguishable	A case that can be argued not to apply on its facts.
Overruled	An authority that a later, higher decision has displaced.
Harness	The set of files and habits that keep your AI honest.
Rules	A page of instructions you paste into your AI so it behaves consistently.

Every term, in plain English

Test set	A few practice tasks with known answers, used to test the AI.
Checklist	A one-page set of yes-or-no questions used to review an output.
Authority ledger	A record of each claim, its source, and whether it is authority or reasoning.
Audit trail	A record that lets someone else follow your steps from a claim to its source.
Privilege	The right to keep certain communications confidential.
Waiver	Losing privilege, often by sharing material too widely.
Redaction	Removing identifying details before text is shared.
Limitation	The time limit within which a claim must be brought.
Precedent drift	A redraft that quietly changes a term already agreed.
Disclosure	Telling the client or court that AI tools assisted the work.
Human sign-off	A named lawyer reviews and approves, every time.
Regulator	The body that sets your professional conduct rules.

● IN SUMMARY

Two pages of plain-English definitions. Nothing in this handbook assumes you already knew any of them.

● WHERE TO GO NEXT

The free handbook is the beginning. The Pro edition is the system.

This free edition gives you the mindset, the seven mistakes, the four-file method and the checklist. When you are ready to run it across your practice and your documents, the Pro edition gives you everything, ready to use.

Free edition — this handbook

The method, explained in plain English, with a worked example and the checklist.

Pro edition — \$99

Fourteen ready-made Rules, six checklists, three step-by-step procedures, the confidentiality pack and downloadable templates.

Video course — \$399

Build your first harness with us, slowly and clearly, on screen. Early-bird \$299.

Firms — on request

We can set the whole system up for your firm. Write to hello@lexgpt.com and we will send a short proposal.

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