

There are only so many hours.



What that looks like in practice

Research	Think It Through	Legal Drafting	Prepare	Communicate
Find cases on a legal issue	Stress-test a legal theory	Draft resolutions and ordinances	Build deposition question outlines	Draft demand or M&C letters
Research an agency's litigation history	Identify risks in a contract or resolution	Draft contracts, MOUs, and agreements	Prep for a board or council hearing	Write a legal opinion or staff report
Interpret a statute or regulation	Work through settlement valuation	Generate a first draft of a brief	Draft briefing memo from prior minutes	Draft advisories on new laws
Identify legal exposure in a policy	Talk through strategy before advising	Redline against a prior version	Anticipate opposing arguments	Prepare board presentation talking points

How to talk to AI

1 | **Give it a role** *"You are an experienced California municipal attorney..."*

2 | **Give it context** *Facts, legal posture, goal, audience — the more it knows, the better the output*

3 | **Specify the format** *Memo, bullet list, draft letter, table — tell it exactly what you need*

4 | **Name the audience** *"Explain this to a city council member" vs. "explain this to outside counsel"*

5 | **Constrain it** *"Do not cite cases you cannot verify." "Keep it under one page." Constraints prevent failure.*

The instruction makes all the difference

VAGUE PROMPT

"What are water rights in California?"

OUTPUT

California uses a dual water rights system...

Riparian rights belong to landowners adjacent to waterways.
Appropriative rights follow the prior appropriation doctrine...

You already knew this.

VS

SPECIFIC PROMPT

"You are an experienced CA water law attorney advising a municipal water district. A neighboring ag district claims our groundwater pumping in the Scott River Basin interferes with their senior pre-1914 appropriative rights. We have an SGMA-compliant GSP approved 18 months ago. Draft a one-page structured memo: (1) SGMA as a shield, (2) pre-1914/groundwater interplay, (3) three key facts to develop."

OUTPUT

I. SGMA §10720.5(b) establishes a framework but does not extinguish pre-existing rights.
II. Surface-groundwater hydrological connectivity is the pivotal legal question.
III. Develop: (a) hydrogeologic link evidence, (b) claimant's historical use records, (c) district's GSP compliance history.

A usable first draft.

Trust, but verify.

1



2



3

AI drafts

Let it do the heavy lifting — research, analysis, first draft

You review

Read it as a skeptic, not a proofreader. Check every assertion.

Cross-check

Verify citations, facts, and logic against primary sources



Before you use any AI tool

Know where your data goes.

Does the tool train on your inputs? Does it store them? Read the terms.

Use enterprise or isolated versions.

Consumer-grade tools may not provide the confidentiality protections clients expect.

No client data in unsecured tools.

When in doubt, anonymize. Replace names and identifying facts with placeholders.

Your best work. On the things that matter.

More time for what matters most