Build Your Own AI Skill

Teaching AI your voice

Adrien Matray
(Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta)

Inter-American Development Bank, November 2026

Any opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta or the Federal Reserve System.

Before we start: unzip the package and open the voice folder

1. Download `voice_pack.zip`:
   `https://github.com/amatray/claude-skills-public/raw/main/voice-pack/voice_pack.zip`
2. Unzip it: on Windows, right-click the file and choose **Extract All**
3. Copy your 20 emails into `voice/corpus/emails`
4. In Visual Studio Code: **File**, **Open Folder**, choose the `voice` folder
5. Open the Claude panel

Left side of the window now lists `CORE_VOICE.md`, `EMAIL_VOICE.md` and `corpus`

Outline

What Claude writes when you describe a voice

How Claude learns your voice

Build your first pack

Continuous improvement

Your turn: ask for a professional and friendly email

Write a professional and friendly email. Carlos in the fiscal division promised the fiscal section of the Panama report two weeks ago and has not sent it. I need it by Friday. Save the email as before.txt in this folder.

- `README.md`: Section B2, line 104; paste the prompt in Claude
- Read the result once and leave it as it is

Claude invented a conversation with Carlos

Dear Carlos,

I hope you're doing well.

[...] When we last spoke two weeks ago, you mentioned it would be ready shortly, and I wanted to check in on where things stand.

[...] If anything has come up on your end that's slowing things down, or if there's any input you need from me to finish it, please let me know and I'll do what I can to help.

Thanks very much, and I look forward to receiving it.

The invented detail

- "When we last spoke": a conversation
- "Ready shortly": Carlos's supposed words
- Neither detail supplied in the prompt

The prompt only says Carlos promised the section two weeks ago and has not sent it

There is no I in AI: a banned phrase comes back as its synonym

Suppose you dislike “on track” in Claude’s email

I asked Claude to write the same email again, with a list of phrases it must not use, including “on track”

First email	“to keep the overall timeline on track”
Email with that instruction	“and keep delivery on schedule”

Claude obeyed the ban by choosing a synonym

There is no I in AI: a banned phrase comes back as its synonym

Suppose you dislike “on track” in Claude’s email

I asked Claude to write the same email again, with a list of phrases it must not use, including “on track”

First email	“to keep the overall timeline on track”
Email with that instruction	“and keep delivery on schedule”

Claude obeyed the ban by choosing a synonym

- A list of banned words and expressions can still help, but its effect is limited
- Use my checklist: `references/humanizer-rules.md` in the teaching package

Outline

What Claude writes when you describe a voice

How Claude learns your voice

Build your first pack

Continuous improvement

Teach it like a new assistant: show, explain why, then revise

	What people usually do	What works
Show	"Be concise and warm"	Three real emails of yours to that kind of reader

Teach it like a new assistant: show, explain why, then revise

	What people usually do	What works
Show	"Be concise and warm"	Three real emails of yours to that kind of reader
Explain why	"Never write a long apology"	Reason behind the habit: "politeness is carried by tone and one clause, never by length"

Teach it like a new assistant: show, explain why, then revise

	What people usually do	What works
Show	"Be concise and warm"	Three real emails of yours to that kind of reader
Explain why	"Never write a long apology"	Reason behind the habit: "politeness is carried by tone and one clause, never by length"
Revise	Hope it does better next time	Show your edited version beside its draft and explain your changes

Teach it like a new assistant: show, explain why, then revise

	What people usually do	What works
Show	"Be concise and warm"	Three real emails of yours to that kind of reader
Explain why	"Never write a long apology"	Reason behind the habit: "politeness is carried by tone and one clause, never by length"
Revise	Hope it does better next time	Show your edited version beside its draft and explain your changes

Key takeaway

This is why you collect a corpus of your own writing. Showing Claude how you do it works better than telling it

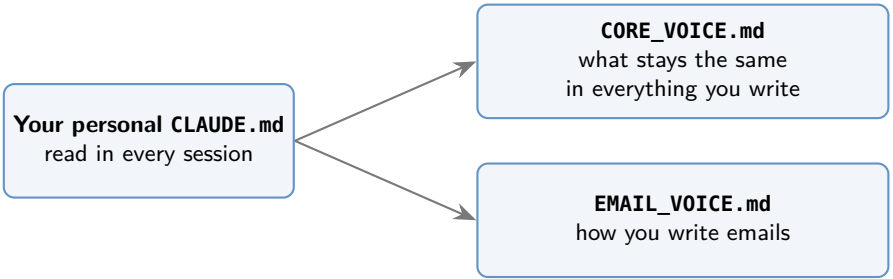
Your voice is a folder of plain text files

voice/

`CORE_VOICE.md`	what stays the same in everything you write
`EMAIL_VOICE.md`	how you write emails
`ResearchPaper_VOICE.md`	one more guide for each kind of writing
`log_voice_adjustments.md`	what you changed in Claude's drafts
`corpus/emails/`	twenty emails you sent

By the end of this segment you have the first two files

Claude reads your pack again at the start of every session



Warning

Nothing is learned between sessions. What is not written in these files does not exist for Claude

Outline

What Claude writes when you describe a voice

How Claude learns your voice

Build your first pack

Continuous improvement

Check the 20 emails you saved in the voice folder

`README.md`: Section B1, line 92: prepare the 20 emails you brought

- Keep your own writing: exclude text drafted by AI
- Remove other people's messages quoted below yours
- Keep the greeting and sign-off, which show how you address the reader

Let Claude guess who each email was for, then correct it

`README.md`: Section B3, line 112

Read every file in corpus/emails. Fill the table in corpus/emails/README.md, one row per email: the recipient, your best guess of my relationship to them (senior, peer, junior, outside the Bank), and the purpose in a few words. Mark every guess as "guessed". Do not analyse my style yet. Then show me the table and ask me to correct it.

What comes back

Ana	peer, guessed
Oscar	senior, guessed
Luis	outside the Bank, guessed

You: "Ana is my director"
Ana becomes senior, confirmed

Ask how you write, and make it quote you

`README.md`: Section B4, line 122

> [...] tell me how I write emails. Give at most ten observations. For each one, quote two passages from different emails that show it, with the file names. Sort them into three groups: habits that hold for every recipient, habits that change with the recipient, and things that appear only once or twice and may be accidents. [...] Do not write any guide yet. Ask me which observations are right.

Keep ✓

States the request in the first two lines
"Could you send the fiscal tables by Thursday?" (03)

Drop ✗

"Your tone is warm and professional"
No passage quoted

Ask how you write, and make it quote you

`README.md`: Section B4, line 122

> [...] tell me how I write emails. Give at most ten observations. For each one, quote two passages from different emails that show it, with the file names. Sort them into three groups: habits that hold for every recipient, habits that change with the recipient, and things that appear only once or twice and may be accidents. [...] Do not write any guide yet. Ask me which observations are right.

Keep ✓

States the request in the first two lines
"Could you send the fiscal tables by Thursday?" (03)

Drop ✗

"Your tone is warm and professional"
No passage quoted

This is essential to force the confrontation between the predictive machine (that can make up stuff) and the reality

Your email guide: EMAIL_VOICE.md

README.md: Section B5, line 134

Readers

One row per kind of person you write to

A sector division
"Hi [first name],"
50 to 80 words
Direct question with one date
"Thanks, Maria"

Situations

One card per recurring email

Reminding someone who is late
"Hi Ana, thanks again for taking this on. The energy note was due last Friday. Could you send it by Wednesday 4 March? [...]"

My reasons

Each habit with its "because"

"I offer to take a partial version, because a partial note on time is worth more than a full one late"

One paste moves your guides and tells Claude when to read them

Core of Prompt 1. Paste the full text from `README.md`: Section B6, line 165

> I want my voice guides kept in one place and used whenever I ask you to write, whatever folder is open. I do not want them loaded in every session.
>
> 1. Create a folder called voice inside the .claude folder of my home folder.
>
> 2. Copy my guides and log_voice_adjustments.md into it. Check that each copy is identical to its original, then delete the originals from this folder.
>
> 3. At the end of my personal CLAUDE.md, add a section "My writing voice": a table of which guide to read for which document, and no line starting with @. Do not change anything already in that file.
>
> 4. List the files now in that voice folder and print the section you added.

- Claude asks permission to write in the `.claude` folder: allow it
- Your sample emails stay in the folder you have open

Forcing Claude to load your guide all the time

Prompt 2, `README.md`: Section B6, line 202, also adds two lines to your personal `CLAUDE.md`

```
@~/.claude/voice/CORE_VOICE.md
@~/.claude/voice/EMAIL_VOICE.md
```

Forcing Claude to load your guide all the time

Prompt 2, `README.md`: Section B6, line 202, also adds two lines to your personal `CLAUDE.md`

```
@~/.claude/voice/CORE_VOICE.md
@~/.claude/voice/EMAIL_VOICE.md
```

In your personal `CLAUDE.md`	What Claude does
First prompt: a table naming the guides	Opens the files if it decides to
Second prompt: lines starting with `@`	Guides already loaded, in every session

- Use one prompt, not both. Both move your guides to a `voice` folder inside `.claude`: one version, same place whatever folder is open
- Automatic loading can be **costly in context and usage**: both guides load even for tasks unrelated to writing. Keep them short

Ask again with the pack loaded and no adjectives, then read the difference

After Prompt 2: `README.md`: Section B6, line 236

> Without opening any file: is my core voice guide already loaded in this session? If yes, quote its first heading and one line from it.

Ask again with the pack loaded and no adjectives, then read the difference

After Prompt 2: `README.md`: Section B6, line 236

> Without opening any file: is my core voice guide already loaded in this session? If yes, quote its first heading and one line from it.

`README.md`: Section B7, line 246

> Write an email. Carlos in the fiscal division promised the fiscal section of the Panama report two weeks ago and has not sent it. I need it by Friday. Save the email as after.txt in this folder.

Ask again with the pack loaded and no adjectives, then read the difference

After Prompt 2: `README.md`: Section B6, line 236

> Without opening any file: is my core voice guide already loaded in this session? If yes, quote its first heading and one line from it.

`README.md`: Section B7, line 246

> Write an email. Carlos in the fiscal division promised the fiscal section of the Panama report two weeks ago and has not sent it. I need it by Friday. Save the email as after.txt in this folder.

> Hi Carlos,
>
> Thanks again for taking this on. The fiscal section of the Panama report was due two weeks ago. Could you send it by Friday 27 November? If a part is not ready, send what you have.
>
> Thanks,
> Maria

Ask again with the pack loaded and no adjectives, then read the difference

After Prompt 2: `README.md`: Section B6, line 236

> Without opening any file: is my core voice guide already loaded in this session? If yes, quote its first heading and one line from it.

`README.md`: Section B7, line 246

> Write an email. Carlos in the fiscal division promised the fiscal section of the Panama report two weeks ago and has not sent it. I need it by Friday. Save the email as after.txt in this folder.

> Hi Carlos,
>
> Thanks again for taking this on. The fiscal section of the Panama report was due two weeks ago. Could you send it by Friday 27 November? If a part is not ready, send what you have.
>
> Thanks,
> Maria

– Same prompt: 91 to 120 words with no pack, 40 with `EMAIL_VOICE.md`

Outline

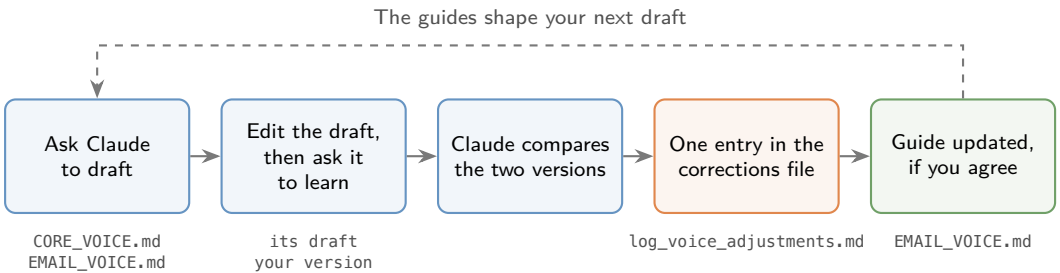
What Claude writes when you describe a voice

How Claude learns your voice

Build your first pack

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement: every edit you make should help the next draft



Save each edit in a file, then move the ones you agree with into the guide

Two decisions: how a correction is captured, and where it lands

	Straight into the guide	Into the corrections file, moved when you agree
Automatic a hook notices your reaction	Next draft already changes Nobody decides what becomes a rule	My own setup Nothing to remember, and I still decide

– My hook reacts to chat feedback; an edit made silently in a document records nothing by itself

Two decisions: how a correction is captured, and where it lands

	Straight into the guide	Into the corrections file, moved when you agree
Automatic a hook notices your reaction	Next draft already changes Nobody decides what becomes a rule	My own setup Nothing to remember, and I still decide

- My hook reacts to chat feedback; an edit made silently in a document records nothing by itself
- Approved corrections affect future drafts after they are added to `EMAIL_VOICE.md`

Two decisions: how a correction is captured, and where it lands

	Straight into the guide	Into the corrections file, moved when you agree
Automatic a hook notices your reaction	Next draft already changes Nobody decides what becomes a rule	**My own setup** Nothing to remember, and I still decide
On request a short skill	Quickest to set up A one-off can become a rule	**Start here** One sentence to record, one to move it into the guide

- My hook reacts to chat feedback; an edit made silently in a document records nothing by itself
- Approved corrections affect future drafts after they are added to `EMAIL_VOICE.md`

Automatic capture is a hook: it saves the correction itself

When	What the hook does
You send a message	If it reacts to a draft, saves a pending correction in a private folder
Claude edits a file	Attaches the lines before and after to that correction
Claude edits a guide	Refuses unless you approved that exact change
A session starts	Says how many corrections are waiting

A hook runs on every message, with no decision left to Claude

Optional, at home: one paste builds your own version. `README.md`: Section B11, line 326

Install the two skills from the package with one paste

> Go one level up from this folder: next to it there is a folder called skills. Install the two skills in it, voice-learn-idb and voice-update-idb. Copy each folder, unchanged, into the skills folder inside the .claude folder of my home folder, and create that skills folder if it does not exist. Then add two lines to my personal CLAUDE.md, the one inside that same .claude folder, without changing anything already in it: when I say "learn from my edits", use the voice-learn-idb skill, and when I say "update my guide", use the voice-update-idb skill. When you are done, list the folders in that skills folder and print the two lines you added.

- `README.md`: Section B8, line 262; paste the prompt in Claude
- Claude asks permission to read the `skills` folder and to write in the `.claude` folder: allow both
- Claude lists `voice-learn-idb` and `voice-update-idb` and prints the two lines
- Start a new conversation and type `/voice`: both names appear

Two short skills record your corrections and update the guide

voice-learn-idb

You say: “Learn from my edits”

`README.md`: Section B9, line 278

1. Find the draft and the version I sent
2. Find my voice folder
3. Sort each change into one of three kinds
4. Get my reason for a change that recurs
5. Add one entry to the corrections file
6. Ask me yes or no
7. Never edit a guide

Two short skills record your corrections and update the guide

`voice-learn-idb`

You say: “Learn from my edits”

`README.md`: Section B9, line 278

1. Find the draft and the version I sent
2. Find my voice folder
3. Sort each change into one of three kinds
4. Get my reason for a change that recurs
5. Add one entry to the corrections file
6. Ask me yes or no
7. Never edit a guide

Without it, an email where I had corrected two dates added new rules to both guides

Two short skills record your corrections and update the guide

voice-learn-idb

You say: “Learn from my edits”

`README.md`: Section B9, line 278

1. Find the draft and the version I sent
2. Find my voice folder
3. Sort each change into one of three kinds
4. Get my reason for a change that recurs
5. Add one entry to the corrections file
6. Ask me yes or no
7. Never edit a guide

You edit without explaining. The skill offers a guess at your reason and asks

Two short skills record your corrections and update the guide

voice-learn-idb

You say: “Learn from my edits”

`README.md`: Section B9, line 278

1. Find the draft and the version I sent
2. Find my voice folder
3. Sort each change into one of three kinds
4. Get my reason for a change that recurs
5. Add one entry to the corrections file
6. Ask me yes or no
7. Never edit a guide

voice-update-idb

You say: “Update my guide”

`README.md`: Section B10, line 302

1. Find my voice folder
2. Take the corrections I agreed to
3. Keep a dated copy of the guide
4. Replace the line the correction supersedes
5. Put it in the right guide
6. Close the entry with the line and its readers
7. Show me each line before and after

`voice-update-idb` processes accumulated corrections and proposes guide changes for your approval

Most corrections should not become rules

Kind of change	Example from the test	What happens
One-off	“last Friday” became “last Monday”	Nothing to change
Already covered	You deleted Claude’s explanation of why the section was needed; your guide already says not to include it	No new rule to add
Would come back	Opening thanks dropped on a second reminder	One line of the guide replaced, when you say yes

Key takeaway

A guide that grows with every correction stops being followed. Replace a line before adding one

When a draft still misses, ask three questions before adding a rule

Question	How to check: ask Claude	If the answer is no
Was the guide loaded?	"Is my core voice guide loaded? Quote its first heading"	Repair the @ line
Did Claude apply the line?	"Which line of my guide covers this? Quote it, and the sentence where you applied it"	Give it an example to copy; a second sentence gets ignored too
Did the line help?	Read the draft: closer to what you would send?	Narrow it or delete it

Homework

- Email: build your guide from 100 randomly selected sent emails you wrote yourself
  - If Claude has email access, ask it to select those emails randomly

- Research papers: ask Claude to read your papers and build `ResearchPaper_VOICE.md`

  `README.md`: Section C1, line 368

- Repeat for other writing you do, with a separate guide for each type

Despite all that...



Using AI to write from scratch is very mediocre

This is particularly true for long-form writing and presentations:

- Usually a complete absence of logical structure
- Many repetitions, verbose and empty text
- BUT an appearance of logic: **you must be careful!**

Using AI to write from scratch is very mediocre

This is particularly true for long-form writing and presentations:

- Usually a complete absence of logical structure
- Many repetitions, verbose and empty text
- BUT an appearance of logic: **you must be careful!**

Simple rules:

- Don't use AI for the first draft
- If you do, write a very detailed plan; even then, expect to be disappointed
- Use AI for checking and for very pre-formatted texts

You installed two small skills and used one. Now we design a bigger one

Voice pack

- Plain files
- Loaded in every session
- For a preference you always want

Skill

- A folder with instructions
- Called when you ask
- For a job you do sometimes

Key takeaway

Write your preferences down once, show Claude examples, and decide yourself what becomes a rule

Thank you!

Adrien Matray adrien.matray@gmail.com