Most bad AI output is a briefing problem

A model writes whatever fits the widest range of cases. Give it a vague prompt and it fills every gap with the safest average. Give it your specifics and it has nothing left to guess at.

What most people send

```
Make me a pitch deck for our product.
```

What gets a usable deck

```
12 slides for a Tier 1 exchange BD lead.
Goal: agree to a 30-day pilot. Next step is
a technical call, not a signature. They
already run two competitor widgets. Lead
with their user drop-off, not our feature
list...
```

Five minutes of brief, roughly an hour of rework saved.

01

Which tool for which job

Anything visual

Slides, one-pagers, landing pages, social assets

Claude Design

`claude.ai/design`

Anything contractual

NDAs, MSAs, term sheets, memos, redlines

Claude chat

`upload the file`

Claude Design exports to PPTX, PDF, standalone HTML, a shareable URL, or across to Canva. It is in research preview on Pro, Max, Team and Enterprise plans. On Enterprise an admin has to switch it on first.

02

The five fields

Fill these in before asking for anything. The same five work for a deck or a one-pager.

1 **Objective**

The decision you want made, not the topic you want covered. Say who is in the room, what stage the relationship is at, and whether this gets presented live or sent as a leave-behind. Text density changes a lot between those two.

2 What the reader walks away with

The sentences you want them repeating to their boss the next day. Most people skip this field and it does more for the output than any other. If you cannot write these sentences, the deck is not ready to be built, which is worth finding out before you lose an afternoon.

> **They should be able to say:**
>
> 1. Their users leave our terminal to check X.
> 2. Integration is a script tag, about two days of work.
> 3. Free for 30 days and we can kill it any time.

3 Structure

Give the skeleton. Claude produces a competent default flow without it, but yours is better because you know the room. If the deck has an arc, say so. "Slides 2 and 3 should feel uncomfortable, slide 4 should feel like relief" is a usable instruction.

4 Brain dump

Everything you know, unstructured. Real numbers, customer quotes, objections you expect, what competitors claim, anything you do not want mentioned. Where this field is thin the model fills the gap with plausible filler, which is why so many AI decks read hollow.

5 Assets

Logo, brand guidelines, hex codes, product screenshots, and a deck you liked as a style reference. With no brand kit, point Claude Design's web capture tool at your website and it pulls colours and type from there.

deck-brief.txt

```
OBJECTIVE
[X]-slide deck for [audience, role, company].
Context: [what happened before this]
Format: [presented live / leave-behind]
Decision I want: [specific next step]

WALK-AWAY
They should be able to tell their boss:
1.
2.
3.

STRUCTURE
1.
2.
3.

CONTENT
[Brain dump. Unstructured is fine.]

CONSTRAINTS
Tone: [...]
Don't mention: [...]
Max [N] words per slide.
Use only the facts above. Ask me if
something is missing rather than inventing it.

ASSETS
[logo, guidelines, screenshots, reference deck]
```

03

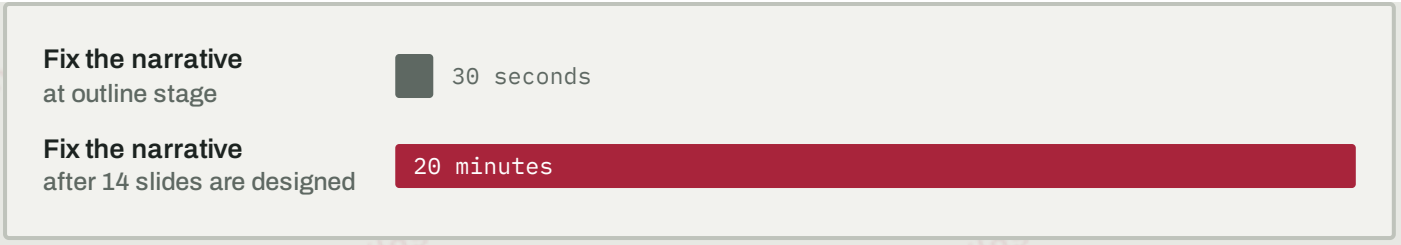
Building the deck

01	02	03	04	05
Set brand once	Get the outline	Confirm it	Let it build	Iterate, export

Steps two and three are the ones people skip.

outline-first.txt

```
Before designing anything, give me the
slide-by-slide outline: title, the one message
per slide, what goes on it. I'll confirm
before you build.
```



Same correction, forty times the cost.

Iterating without going in circles

One change per message.

"Make it better" sends the design drifting in a random direction.

Name the slide and the element.

"Slide 4, the metric callout is competing with the headline."

Describe the problem, not the fix.

"This feels corporate and we sell to traders who hate corporate" gives Claude something to reason with.

Ask for options when unsure.

Three versions of the same slide, then pick one.

Use every surface.

Chat, inline comments on elements, direct edits, or the sliders Claude generates for layout.

Make it turn on the work

```
critique.txt
```

```
You're the BD lead receiving this. Where do
you get bored? Where do you not believe me?
What would make you say no?
```

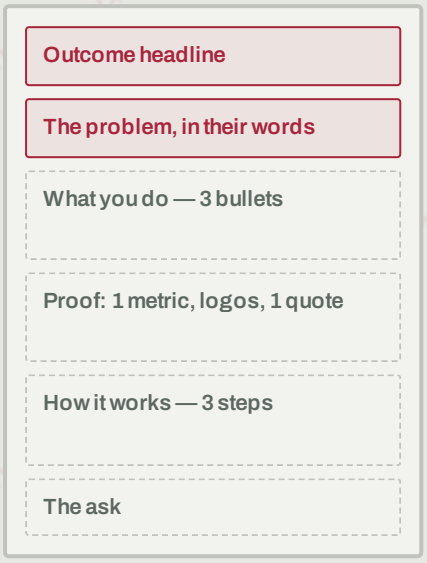
Failure modes

Symptom	Fix
Reads generic	Feed it real numbers, quotes and objections
Too much text per slide	`Max 20 words per slide, detail in speaker notes`
Wrong narrative	You skipped the outline step
Off-brand	Upload assets, or use web capture
Invented statistics	`Use only facts I provide. Never invent a number.`
Endless tweaking	One change per message

04

One-pagers

Same five fields, tighter constraints. A one-pager is harder than a deck because nobody is standing there to narrate it.



The two red zones carry the argument. Assume 40 seconds of attention and everything below the fold is a bonus.

Add these three lines to the brief:

Read alone, with no one presenting. Every claim stands on its own. Assume 40 seconds of attention. Single page, portrait, readable in black and white.

05

Contracts and commercial documents

The inputs change here. A deck moves someone toward a decision, while a contract allocates risk between two parties, so the brief is about terms rather than narrative.

Claude is not a lawyer and neither is this guide. Use it to draft faster, understand what you are about to sign, and arrive at your lawyer's desk with something already 80% done.

Have counsel review anything that gets signed, and check your company policy before uploading confidential agreements anywhere.

Where it saves real time

Drafting from your own template.
Yours already encodes positions your company has argued before. A random internet template does not.

Triaging a counterparty draft.
Get the risk summary before you read the thing properly.

Plain English on demand.
What clause 8.3 says, and what could actually go wrong under it.

Diffing versions.
What changed between v1 and v2, and which of it matters commercially.

Building a fallback playbook.
Ideal, acceptable and walk-away position for the clauses you negotiate every month.

Obligation tracking after signature.
Dates, notice periods, renewals. This catches the auto-renewals people forget about.

contract-brief.txt

```
DOCUMENT
Type: [mutual NDA / MSA / partnership / term sheet]
Governing law: [e.g. Singapore]
Who is drafting: [us / them]

PARTIES
Us: [entity, what we do]
Them: [entity, what they do]

THE DEAL IN PLAIN ENGLISH
[What is exchanged, who does what, over what
period, for what money.]

KEY TERMS
Term and renewal / Payment / Exclusivity / IP /
Data / Confidentiality period / Termination /
Liability cap / Publicity

RISK POSTURE
[Protective of us / balanced and fast to sign /
we want this badly and can concede X]

NON-NEGOTIABLES
[The two or three you will not give up]

ATTACHED
[your template, a similar past agreement,
their draft]
```

Three prompts worth keeping

triage.txt

```
Review this as my commercial lawyer. List every
clause that is unusual, one-sided, or worse than
market standard. For each: the plain English,
what could go wrong, how to push back. Rank by
what actually matters commercially.
```

pre-signature.txt

```
What have I agreed to that I might regret in
18 months? Look at auto-renewal, exclusivity,
liability, IP assignment and termination.
```

negotiation-prep.txt

```
I want to change clauses 4, 7 and 11. For each,
give me the redline, my one-line justification
for the call, and my fallback if they refuse.
```

06

Habits worth keeping

Save your briefs.

A good one is mostly reusable the next time you need something similar.

Keep one context block.

Company description, positioning, proof points, tone rules. Paste it at the top of anything you start.

Work in two passes.

Outline before artefact. Plain-English terms before contract draft.

Ask it to argue against the work.

Most people never use it this way, and it catches more than another round of visual polish.

Forbid invention in every brief.

One line removes the most common failure in commercial documents.

07

Before you build anything

- [ ] What decision should this cause?
- [ ] What should the reader repeat to their boss?
- [ ] What is the flow?
- [ ] What do I know that a stranger could not guess?
- [ ] Where are my assets?

- [ ] Outline confirmed before design
- [ ] One change per message
- [ ] No invented facts
- [ ] Made it critique itself
- [ ] Lawyer has read anything being signed

@mingbuilds

@mingbuilds · Claude Design is in research preview and its export options may change. Check claude.ai/design for current behaviour.