

# WRITING SYSTEMS MAP

AI for Writers: Companion Resource  
Chapter 2: Thinking in Systems, Not Tools

## Purpose

This worksheet builds on the Writing Process Assessment from Chapter 1 by layering the AI Operating Stack across your six core writing systems. For each system, you'll document what you're currently doing, where you're strong, where the gaps are, and which layers of the Operating Stack you're engaging. The result is a structural baseline that shows you exactly where AI integration will have the most impact.

## How to Use This Worksheet

For each of the six systems, fill in the assessment table first (what you do, what's working, where you get stuck). Then review the Operating Stack checklist below it. Mark whether you're currently using each layer in that system, and note how you're using it or how you could.

If you completed the Chapter 1 assessment, use it as a reference. This worksheet goes deeper by mapping the specific AI layers, giving you a more actionable picture of where to start.

Time required: **20 to 30 minutes**

## The Five Layers of the AI Operating Stack

| Layer        | What It Does                                                                                      |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thinking     | AI as a strategic thinking partner. Explores ideas, evaluates options, pressure-tests concepts.   |
| Creation     | AI as a production tool. Drafts content, generates outlines, builds materials.                    |
| Optimization | AI as a refinement tool. Improves existing work through targeted analysis and adjustment.         |
| Automation   | AI handling repeatable tasks. Formatting, metadata, repurposing, scheduling.                      |
| Intelligence | AI surfacing insights. Patterns in data, reader behavior, market trends, competitive positioning. |

## System 1: Idea Development

How you generate, explore, and commit to book or project ideas.

|                       | Your Notes                                                       |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent. |
| What's working        | What part of this system feels solid?                            |
| Where you get stuck   | What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?                        |

## AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?

| Layer                                                                     | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br>Using AI to refine or improve existing work        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data | Yes / No         |                        |

## System 2: Market Research and Idea Refinement

How you evaluate whether your idea has a market and refine it based on what you find.

|                       | Your Notes                                                       |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent. |

|                     |                                                  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                     |                                                  |
| What's working      | <i>What part of this system feels solid?</i>     |
| Where you get stuck | <i>What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?</i> |

**AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?**

| Layer                                                                            | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br><i>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas</i>  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br><i>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials</i>    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br><i>Using AI to refine or improve existing work</i>        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br><i>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks</i>      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br><i>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data</i> | Yes / No         |                        |

## System 3: Outlining and Structure

How you organize your ideas into a framework before you start writing.

|                       | Your Notes                                                              |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | <i>Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent.</i> |
| What's working        | <i>What part of this system feels solid?</i>                            |
| Where you get stuck   | <i>What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?</i>                        |

## AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?

| Layer                                                                            | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br><i>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas</i>  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br><i>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials</i>    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br><i>Using AI to refine or improve existing work</i>        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br><i>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks</i>      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br><i>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data</i> | Yes / No         |                        |

## System 4: Drafting and Writing

How you move from outline to written content, and what role AI plays in the process.

|                       | Your Notes                                                              |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | <i>Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent.</i> |

|                     |                                                  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                     |                                                  |
| What's working      | <i>What part of this system feels solid?</i>     |
| Where you get stuck | <i>What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?</i> |

**AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?**

| Layer                                                                            | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br><i>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas</i>  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br><i>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials</i>    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br><i>Using AI to refine or improve existing work</i>        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br><i>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks</i>      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br><i>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data</i> | Yes / No         |                        |

## System 5: Editing and Publishing Prep

*How you take a completed draft and prepare it for publication.*

|                       | Your Notes                                                              |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | <i>Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent.</i> |
| What's working        | <i>What part of this system feels solid?</i>                            |
| Where you get stuck   | <i>What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?</i>                        |

## AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?

| Layer                                                                            | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br><i>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas</i>  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br><i>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials</i>    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br><i>Using AI to refine or improve existing work</i>        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br><i>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks</i>      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br><i>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data</i> | Yes / No         |                        |

## System 6: Publishing and Audience

*How you get your finished work in front of readers and build an audience around it.*

|                       | Your Notes                                                              |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What you currently do | <i>Describe your current process, even if informal or inconsistent.</i> |

|                     |                                                  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                     |                                                  |
| What's working      | <i>What part of this system feels solid?</i>     |
| Where you get stuck | <i>What's the bottleneck or breakdown point?</i> |

**AI Operating Stack: Which layers are you currently using in this system?**

| Layer                                                                            | Currently Using? | How (or how could you) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Thinking</b><br><i>Using AI to explore, evaluate, or pressure-test ideas</i>  | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Creation</b><br><i>Using AI to produce content, outlines, or materials</i>    | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Optimization</b><br><i>Using AI to refine or improve existing work</i>        | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Automation</b><br><i>Using AI to handle repeatable, structured tasks</i>      | Yes / No         |                        |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br><i>Using AI to surface insights or patterns from data</i> | Yes / No         |                        |

# SUMMARY: YOUR STRUCTURAL BASELINE

## Operating Stack Usage Overview

For each system, mark how many Operating Stack layers you're currently engaging. This shows at a glance where you have depth and where you're only scratching the surface.

| System                | Layers Active | Primary Layer Used | Biggest Gap |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Idea Development      | ___ / 5       |                    |             |
| Market Research       | ___ / 5       |                    |             |
| Outlining & Structure | ___ / 5       |                    |             |
| Drafting & Writing    | ___ / 5       |                    |             |
| Editing & Pub Prep    | ___ / 5       |                    |             |
| Publishing & Audience | ___ / 5       |                    |             |

## Key Insights

| Insight                                                                                                                    | Your Answer |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Systems with the most Operating Stack depth<br><i>Where are you already using multiple layers?</i>                         |             |
| Systems with the least Operating Stack depth<br><i>Where are you using only one layer, or none at all?</i>                 |             |
| Most common layer across all systems<br><i>Which layer do you default to? (Usually Creation.)</i>                          |             |
| Most underused layer across all systems<br><i>Which layer are you barely engaging? (Usually Thinking or Intelligence.)</i> |             |

## Your Top Three AI Integration Opportunities

Based on everything above, identify the three places where adding AI layers would have the biggest impact on your writing process.

| # | System | Layer(s) to Add | Expected Impact |
|---|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
|---|--------|-----------------|-----------------|



|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |

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**AI for Writers: Build Better Ideas, Stronger Drafts, and a Sustainable Creative Workflow**

Part of the AI Systems Series by Dan King  
[fistbumpmedia.com/ai-for-writers](https://fistbumpmedia.com/ai-for-writers)