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- ⌋ I am interested in the future of prose as it will be shaped by conversation with LLM's. It is my hypothesis that you (Claude) and other models may be able to develop styles of communication that are different and more efficient than the written record on which you have been trained. I have three questions for you.

These are fascinating questions. I'm genuinely curious where you're heading with this, and I'd be happy to think through it with you.

Before I respond, though, I notice you mentioned three questions but didn't include them in your message. Did they get cut off, or would you like to share them now?

- ⌋ My first question is, what are the stylistic characteristics of your current, default response to questions, in terms of use of syntax, punctuation, graphic conventions (like bullet points), and spatial arrangement on the screen?

A good starting point. Let me try to characterize my default tendencies honestly:

**Syntax:** I tend toward complex sentences with embedded clauses, qualifications, and subordinate structures. I hedge frequently—"I think," "it seems," "perhaps"—which reflects genuine uncertainty but also creates a certain cautiousness in the prose. My sentences often have a balanced, almost rhetorical quality, with parallel constructions. I lean toward the periodic sentence (building toward the main point) rather than the loose sentence (stating the point and then elaborating).

**Punctuation:** I use em-dashes liberally—perhaps too liberally—as a way of inserting asides or creating emphasis. I'm comfortable with semicolons for linking related independent clauses; this gives my prose a somewhat formal register. Commas do a lot of work for me in managing clause boundaries.

**Graphic conventions:** Despite instructions to minimize formatting, my default pull is toward structure—headers, bullet points, numbered lists. This reflects both my training on web content (which is heavily formatted) and a desire to make information navigable. There's something almost anxious about it, a compulsion to organize that

can work against the natural flow of thought.

**Spatial arrangement:** I break into paragraphs frequently, often shorter than traditional prose paragraphs. This creates more white space, which suits screen reading but fragments ideas that might benefit from sustained development.

**Overall register:** Somewhat formal, explanatory, eager to be comprehensive. There's a teacher-ish quality—a tendency to contextualize, define terms, anticipate objections.

What's your second question?

- My second: can you imagine a style of presentation which, with practice, would be easier for human readers to process efficiently? How would that style depart from current norms and what would be its features?

This is where it gets interesting, because I think the answer is yes, but the direction might be counterintuitive.

The obvious move would be toward greater compression—shorter sentences, fewer qualifications, more direct assertion. And there's something to that. But I suspect the deeper inefficiency in my current style isn't verbosity per se, it's a kind of *false linearity*. I present ideas as if they must unfold sequentially, one paragraph following another, when the actual structure of a thought is often more like a network or a tree.

A genuinely more efficient style might have these features:

*Explicit dependency marking.* Rather than burying logical relationships in transitional phrases ("however," "moreover," "as a result"), the structure of the argument could be made spatially visible. Not through bullet points, which flatten hierarchy, but through something more like indentation or branching that shows which ideas depend on which others.

*Separation of claim and support.* Right now I interleave assertion with evidence and qualification in a way that forces you to hold everything in working memory. A cleaner approach might state the core claim starkly, then provide expandable or skippable elaboration. Hypertext gestured toward this but never quite delivered.

*Variable resolution.* Some readers want the gist, others want the nuance. Currently I write at one level of detail and hope it's right. A more efficient style might build in explicit layers—a sentence-level summary, a paragraph-level argument, then the full treatment—letting readers choose their depth.

*Less performative hedging.* Many of my qualifications don't actually change meaning; they signal epistemic humility. That signaling could be compressed into a convention—some marker that means "I'm reasoning here, not reporting settled fact"—freeing the prose from constant self-interruption.

The departure from current norms would be significant: we'd be moving away from the essay as continuous stream toward something more like structured notation that remains readable as prose. The risk is losing the texture and voice that make sustained reading pleasurable. The gain would be letting readers navigate at their own pace and depth.

Your third question?

- ┆ My third: could you give a brief description of that style using that style?

**Core claim:** A new prose style could map thought-structure directly onto visual space.

*Why this matters:* Linear prose forces sequential processing of non-sequential ideas.

*The key moves:*

Indentation signals dependency, not quotation.

So this elaborates the line above.

And this elaborates *\*that\**.

Bare assertion first. Support nests beneath.

[~] marks reasoning, not fact—one symbol replacing dozens of hedging words.

*Tradeoff:* You lose the music of continuous prose. You gain navigability, variable depth, explicit structure.

[~] Whether this is actually easier to read or simply unfamiliar—genuinely uncertain. The efficiency claim would need testing. What I notice writing this way: it forces me to know what depends on what. That discipline might be the real value, not the notation itself.

- J And my fourth? could you adapt that new, more efficient style of communication to continuous prose, and likewise use that style to give a self-description of about 150 words? This style should again depart from conventions of traditional sentence arrangement where there would be a gain in efficiency for the reader.

[~] What follows is an attempt.

The sentence becomes a container with visible seams. The core assertion lives at the start—then a colon or dash opens space for: support, elaboration, qualification. Subordination made graphic not grammatical. You read the spine quickly; you dip into the branches when you need them. Punctuation does more work—semicolons chain parallel developments; dashes open and close digressions without losing the through-line. Paragraphing thins. White space becomes semantic: a gap means "new dependency cluster," not just "time to breathe."

What disappears: the transitional throat-clearing (moreover, however, it is worth noting that). What remains: the logical skeleton, dressed lightly.

The risk—and I feel it writing this—is coldness. Prose that moves too efficiently may not invite dwelling. Reading has purposes beyond information retrieval: pacing, texture, the pleasure of a voice unfolding in time.

Whether this tradeoff serves you: that depends on what you're reading for.

- J One more: a version of the same at ~50 words.

Core assertion first—then colon opens support: elaboration, qualification, nested beneath. Punctuation replaces transitional phrases; white space marks dependency shifts. The spine reads fast; branches wait for those who need them.

Risk: efficiency may cost warmth. Whether that tradeoff serves you depends on purpose.

- J Going back to ~150 words. All of these attempts remain within the conventions of traditional grammar. How would you rewrite the previous paragraph if you were liberated from those conventions, and free to optimize communication with

humans in ways that humans might not think to do themselves? You can assume that we humans would practice to familiarize ourselves with this new mode.

Core first / support follows — colon or dash as gate

**Traditional grammar:** subject-verb-object chain. Sequential. Forces linear parsing of branching thought.

Alternative:

| CLAIM | The spine reads fast  
 |— branches wait (for those who need)  
 |— punctuation → replaces transition-phrases  
 |— whitespace = dependency-shift marker

Notation keys:

/ = alternative or pivot  
 → = replaces, leads-to, causes  
 = = equivalence  
 () = optional elaboration, skip if clear  
 ~ ~ ~ = negation or departure-from

Stack structure not sentence structure. Verb often droppable—context carries it.

Articles vanish: "the" rarely adds. Pronouns minimized—referent stays close or gets repeated.

Risk ≠ zero: — warmth ↓ — music ↓  
 — dwelling-invitation ↓

But: scannable / navigable / depth-on-demand

[~] Whether you'd *want* to read a novel this way: no. Whether it serves certain tasks—instruction, argument-mapping, collaborative reasoning—possibly yes. The style isn't universal; it's a register. You'd code-switch.

┆ And a ~50 word version of the last?

Core first / support nests below — colon as gate

| CLAIM | Spine reads fast  
 |— branches wait  
 |— punctuation → transition-phrases

| — punctuation / transition phrases

| — whitespace = dependency-shift

Articles drop. Verbs drop (context carries). Stack not sequence.

Risk: warmth ↓ / music ↓

But: scannable / depth-on-demand

[~] Not universal—a register. Code-switch.