HOSTINGER

How to write your own AI skill

AI agent resources ▪ Guide

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A **skill** turns a task you repeat into a reusable workflow your agent can run on its own. This guide shows you how to write one SKILL.md file that works in Hermes Agent, Claude, OpenClaw, ChatGPT and any other agent that reads the same standard.

How to use this guide: read it top to bottom once, then build alongside it. You will end with a single SKILL.md file you can drop into your agent and reuse forever. Everything here follows the open SKILL.md standard, so the same file works across most modern AI agents. No coding experience needed, though a little helps.

START HERE

What IS a "Skill"?

A skill is a short set of instructions saved in a file named SKILL.md. It teaches your agent how to handle one specific job: what the job is, when to do it, the steps to follow, and how to check the result.

Your agent only reads the file when that job actually comes up, so skills stay out of the way until they are needed. Think of it as a playbook you write once and your agent runs every time.

Your SKILL.md is:

- [ ] **Reusable**
  Write the workflow once, run it every time the task appears.
- [ ] **Loaded only when needed**
  The agent opens it when the task comes up, not before, so it stays fast.
- [ ] **Portable**
  One file that works across Hermes, Claude, OpenClaw and more.

THE FILE

The anatomy of a SKILL.md file

Every skill file has two parts. The frontmatter at the top is a short block of settings sitting between two lines of three dashes. The body below it is plain writing that tells the agent what to do.

SKILL.MD EXAMPLE

```
---
name: drafting-product-descriptions
description: Writes SEO friendly product descriptions in the store's brand voice. Use when the user adds a new product or asks for a product description.
---

# Drafting product descriptions

## When to use this
Use this whenever a new product needs a description.

## Steps
1. Read the product details you were given.
2. Write a short description that leads with the main benefit.
...
```

- [ ] **Frontmatter**
  The Settings -- a short id in lowercase with hyphens, no spaces or capitals. description is one line covering what the skill does and when to use it. These two lines are all a skill needs to be found.

- [ ] **Body**
  The Instructions -- plain writing under simple headings. It tells the agent when to use the skill, the steps to follow, and how to check its work. This is where the real workflow lives.

THE PROCESS

Build it step by step

1 Pick one task you repeat

Skills pay off on the boring, repeated jobs, not the one-offs. Look for something you do the same way most weeks. Write down three things: what sets it off (the trigger), the steps you take, and what you end up with (the output).

EXAMPLE:
Trigger: a new product is added to the store.
Steps: pull the product details, write a short description in our brand voice, add three relevant keywords.
Output: a ready to paste product description.

2 Name it like an action

Use the verb-ing form so the name says what the skill does. Keep it lowercase with hyphens between words, and avoid the words claude and anthropic, which are reserved on some agents.

Good: writing-weekly-reports, drafting-product-descriptions, checking-competitor-prices
Avoid: helper, my-tool, stuff

3 Write the description, the line that matters most

Your agent reads this single line to decide whether to use the skill at all. A vague description means the skill sits unused. Cover two things: what it does, and when to use it. Write it in the third person, as if describing the skill to someone else, and include the words a user would actually say.

Good: Writes SEO friendly product descriptions in the store's brand voice. Use when the user adds a new product or asks for a product description.
Avoid: Helps with product stuff.

4 Write the workflow

List the steps in order, with the most common path first and the rare cases lower down. Keep it short: your agent is already smart, so you do not need to explain what a keyword is or how a website works. Only add what it could not guess, such as your brand voice or your house rules. When a step has a value the user should swap in, mark it clearly so it does not get copied word for word, like this: [your store name].

5 Add a check, then test it for real

Before the skill finishes, have it check its own work against your rules, fix anything that is off, and only then hand back the result. This one habit lifts quality more than any other. Then run the skill on a real task, watch where it drifts, and tighten the wording. Skills get better through use, not guesswork.

Keep the main file lean. Aim to keep SKILL.md short and easy to read. If you have long reference material, such as a full brand style guide or a big list of examples, put it in a separate file in the same folder and point to it from SKILL.md. Your agent opens it only when the task needs it, which keeps the skill quick.

COPY AND ADAPT

A complete worked example

COMPLETE SKILL.MD EXAMPLE

```
---
name: drafting-product-descriptions
description: Writes SEO friendly product descriptions in the store's
  brand voice. Use when the user adds a new product or asks for a
  product description.
---

# Drafting product descriptions

## When to use this
Use this whenever a new product needs a description, or when
someone asks to rewrite an existing one.

## What you need
- The product name and a few key details (materials, size, who it is for)
- The store's brand voice notes below

## Brand voice
- Store name: [ your store name ]
- Tone: [ friendly and plain, no hype ]
- Always: short sentences, sentence case, one clear benefit up front
- Never: buzzwords, fake urgency, all caps

## Steps
1. Read the product details you were given.
2. Write a description of 40 to 70 words that leads with the main benefit.
3. Work in three keywords a shopper would search for, without stuffing.
4. Add a one line call to action at the end.

## Check before finishing
- Does it match the brand voice above?
- Is it between 40 and 70 words?
- Are the three keywords present and natural?
If any answer is no, fix it and check again before handing back the result.
```

WHERE IT LIVES

Make it portable

The same file works across most modern agents. Only the folder it lives in changes.

- [ ] **For Hermes Agent**
  Save the file as SKILL.md inside a folder named after your skill, under ~/.hermes/skills/. For example: ~/.hermes/skills/drafting-product-descriptions/SKILL.md. Hermes picks it up automatically, and you can run it by typing /drafting-product-descriptions.

- [ ] **Optional Hermes settings**
  In the frontmatter you can also add version, author, platforms (to limit the skill to macOS, Linux or Windows), and setup fields such as required_environment_variables for API keys. Start without these and add them only when a skill actually needs them.

- [ ] **For other agents**
  Claude, OpenClaw, ChatGPT based agents and similar tools read the same SKILL.md standard. Keep the file as it is and place it wherever that tool stores its skills. The workflow you wrote does not change.

SHARE IT

Distributing your skill

Sharing a skill is as simple as sharing the folder. Once you have a skill you like, you can pass it to your team or share with the wider community on a site like GitHub

01 **Share the folder**
Zip the skill folder and send it. Anyone can unzip it into their own skills directory and use it straight away, with nothing else to install.

02 **Put it on GitHub**
Share it with a team
Hermes can read a shared skills folder alongside your personal one, so a team can keep its skills in one place that everyone points to. If the same skill exists in both, your local copy wins, so you can safely tweak a shared skill just for yourself.

REFLECT

Jot down what you're taking with you.

Use this space for the ideas, questions, and next steps you want to remember.

Ready to put your skill to work?

Skills are most useful when your agent stays online, so scheduled and repeat tasks keep running without you watching. Managed Hermes Agent from Hostinger gives you an always on workspace where your skills load, run, and improve over time.

Try Managed Hermes Agent

https://www.hostinger.com/managed-hermes-agent?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=hostingeracademydownloadables&utm_content=