

THE PROMPT FORMULA · LOOK

Stop writing cinematic, 8K.

Why most AI video still looks like AI, and the exact words I replaced "cinematic, hyper-realistic, 8K" with to make it look real.

CREATOR	MODEL	FIX
@by.jadla	Seedance 2.5	Concrete, not generic

It's not the model

OVERVIEW

"Cinematic" and "8K" aren't things a camera can see, they're marketing words. A model can't render a feeling, so it falls back on its most generic, most-average interpretation of "expensive-looking" — and that average IS the AI look.

THE TELL

Aesthetic adjectives. "Cinematic, hyper-realistic, 8K, ultra detailed, masterpiece, perfect skin, sharp focus" all just mean "make it look expensive" — so every model answers with the same over-smoothed, generically lit average face.

THE FIX

Nouns over adjectives. Replace the feeling with something a camera would literally see: a pore, a named light source, one small flaw.

THE ORDER

Skin, then eyes, then one detail. Start with the skin, then the eyes, then a small detail nobody else would think to prompt.

THE PROOF

Same subject, same model. Only the prompt style changes — the rest of the setup stays identical.

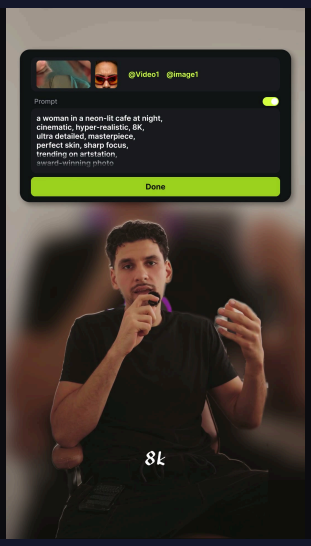
Why this matters. Those nine words show up on millions of generic stock and render images in every training set. Prompting them doesn't push the model toward anything specific — it pushes it toward the average of everything ever tagged that way. That average is exactly what "looks like AI."

1 Delete these words

THE LIST

These are the nine words I see in almost every broken AI-video prompt. Individually they sound harmless. Together, they are the reason the output looks synthetic.

- **cinematic** — describes a feeling, not a lens, a light or a frame.
- **hyper-realistic** — the model already tries to be realistic; this just pushes it toward an over-sharpened, plastic average.
- **8K** — a resolution, not a look. Video models don't sample detail because you named a resolution.
- **ultra detailed** — tells the model nothing about which details.
- **masterpiece / award-winning photo / trending on artstation** — pure vibes, no visual information at all.
- **perfect skin** — the single biggest tell. Real skin is never perfect; asking for perfect skin is asking for the AI look.
- **sharp focus** — real footage has falloff, motion blur and shallow depth of field. "Sharp focus" flattens all of it.



The exact card from the reel: the nine words crossed out, one by one.

2 Write what a camera would see

SKIN, EYES, SMALL DETAILS

Realism lives in the details nobody prompts. Once the nine words are gone, replace them with three layers, in this order.

SKIN

Pores. A faint sheen of sweat. Sun redness across the nose. A healed scar above one eyebrow. Uneven tone at the jawline.

EYES

A visible limbal ring. One named catchlight source ("a single window camera-left"). Slightly asymmetric eyelids. Faint redness at the inner corner.

ONE SMALL DETAIL

A loose thread on the collar. Dust lit by the window. A chipped fingernail. Something so specific nobody else would think to write it.

LIGHT & CAMERA

Name the real source ("overcast sky through a north-facing window") instead of "dramatic lighting". Name a real lens or film stock instead of "8K".

3 The prompt formula

PASTE AND FILL IN THE BRACKETS

This is the structure I use for every talking-head or portrait shot. It forces skin, eyes and one small detail before anything else, and ends with the nine words as a forbidden list.

PASTE THIS · REUSABLE TEMPLATE

TEMPLATE

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SUBJECT: [who they are, what they're doing].

SKIN: [two concrete skin details — pores, sheen, a mark, uneven tone].
EYES: [iris/limbal detail] + [named catchlight source].
ONE SMALL DETAIL: [one specific, unglamorous object or imperfection nobody else would prompt].

LIGHT: name the real source, not an adjective (e.g. "a single tungsten desk lamp camera-right,
everything else falls into shadow").
CAMERA: name a real lens or film stock, not a resolution (e.g. "Sony FX3, 35mm, f/1.8, slight film
grain").
IMPERFECTION: one thing that is slightly wrong — a strand of hair out of place, an uneven grade, a
small motion blur on the hand.

FORBIDDEN: cinematic, hyper-realistic, 8K, ultra detailed, masterpiece, perfect skin, sharp focus,
trending on artstation, award-winning photo.
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BEFORE / AFTER · SAME SUBJECT

EXAMPLE

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BEFORE: a woman in a neon-lit cafe at night, cinematic, hyper-realistic, 8K, ultra detailed,
masterpiece, perfect skin, sharp focus, trending on artstation, award-winning photo.

AFTER: a woman at a corner table in a near-empty cafe at night. Skin: faint sheen under the neon
sign, a small scar above her left eyebrow. Eyes: tired, a pink neon catchlight reflected in each
iris. One small detail: a chipped nail tapping the rim of her cup. Light: the neon sign camera-left,
everything past the table falling into shadow. Camera: 50mm, f/1.4, shallow depth of field.
Imperfection: a strand of hair caught in the light, slightly out of place.
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Pro tips

BEFORE YOU GENERATE

- **Name a real lens or film stock** instead of "cinematic" — "Sony FX3, 35mm, f/1.8" beats any adjective.
- **Name a real light source** instead of "dramatic lighting" — one window, one practical lamp, one named direction.
- **One flaw beats ten adjectives.** A slightly asymmetric smile reads more real than "hyper-realistic" ever will.
- **If you don't know what a real camera setting would actually produce, don't prompt it** — describe only what you can literally see.
- **Test the same subject with and without the forbidden words** side by side before you trust a new model's default style.

The old-AI clip on the cover is "Will Smith eating spaghetti" (2023, ModelScope), original by u/chaindrop on r/StableDiffusion — used here only to show how far the models moved, even before the prompt changed.

NOW WRITE YOUR OWN

Skin. Eyes. One small detail.

Delete the nine words, write the three layers instead, and end every prompt with the forbidden list. Same model, same subject, completely different result.

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