DAY 33 · Part 3 · What It Can Do

Why are some answers boring and others off-the-wall? — Coming up with ideas

Five-Minute AI Lessons · Oct 9, 2026

Turn the knob up and your ideas get wider, but the picking is still up to you.

In a nutshell

1. Whether AI gives you a boring answer or an off-the-wall one comes down to this: when it picks the next word, **does it grab only the most likely one, or less likely ones too?**

2. There's a real knob that widens and narrows that range, and it's called **"temperature"**. Turn it down and you only get safe words; turn it up and rarely used words start popping out.

3. So when you're gathering ideas, the trick is to turn the knob up, **generate lots, and pick for yourself**. The higher you go, the more nonsense you get, too.

In one picture

Knob turned down vs turned up

Down · play it safe

· Grabs only the most likely words
· Ask again: nearly the same answer
· Accurate, but obvious

→

Up · go wide

· Grabs unlikely words too
· The answer changes every time you ask
· Gems and junk show up together

The left side isn't bad. Translating and summarizing belong on the left; brainstorming belongs on the right.

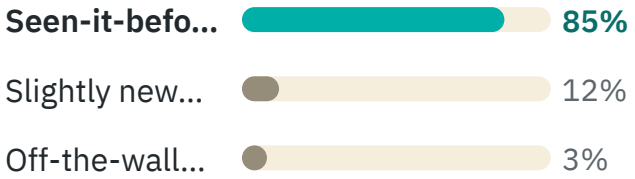
Key idea: turn the knob up and the possibilities widen — and the filtering gets handed to a person

Experiment · Probability slider

What happens to ideas when you turn the knob up?

Knob at 0 — grabs only the safest words

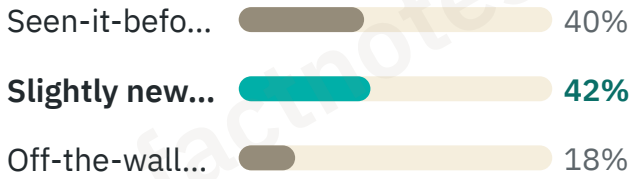
If you generate 100 names, how man...



Almost all of them are names you've seen before, like "Book Club" or "Media Club." Not wrong, but not much use...

Knob at 50 — sometimes grabs unusual words

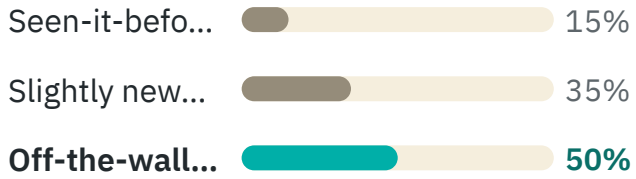
If you generate 100 names, how man...



Around the middle, you get the most slightly new names. This range is handy for the first round of a brainstorm.

Knob at 100 — grabs even unlikely words

If you generate 100 names, how man...



Half of them go weird. One of them might be a really great name, so tossing the rest is your job.

At 0, the knob only grabs the most likely word; at 100, it grabs unlikely words too. Turn it and watch where th...

Try it yourself in the web lesson · next-token.net/en/learn/day-33/

Quick check

Just three questions

Q1

What has to change for AI to come up with off-the-wall ideas?

① Leave the AI on for longer
② Speed up the internet
③ Write a shorter question
④ It picks from a wider range of next words

Q2

What else goes up when you turn the knob up?

① Answers that make no sense
② Accuracy
③ Calculation speed
④ The length of the answer

Q3

What's the trick to using AI in a brainstorm?

① Trust the first answer
② Generate lots, then pick
③ Ask only once
④ Set the knob to 0

Know the why, too

Q1

④

AI picks the next word by probability. Grab only the likely ones and it's boring; grab unlikely ones too and it gets off-the-wall. The knob that sets that range is "temperatur...

Q2

①

As you saw in the experiment, near 100 both the off-the-wall ideas and the ones you'll toss go up. No knob gives you creativity for free.

Q3

②

The key is to ask the same question several times, generate widely, and then pick. AI is great at making lots of options; you're better at choosing.

Turn the knob up and your ideas get wider, but the picking is still up to you.



Tomorrow: Making a plan — what order to split a big job into, so AI can really help.