



The 5-Question Filter

Score Your Top 3 Tasks

Before you build anything, run it through the filter. Be honest — the point is to find the one task worth automating, and to cross the others off guilt-free.

QUESTION	TASK 1	TASK 2	TASK 3
Name each task first — one line each →			
1 • Frequent? does it come back constantly? rule of thumb: weekly or more often = Yes	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐
2 • Cost of error low? small blast radius = more autonomy allowed	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐
3 • Verifiable? can you write down what “correct” looks like?	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐
4 • Well-specified? the stranger test: could a stranger do this and know when they're done?	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐
5 • Substantial middle? reading, transforming, drafting, checking, routing	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐	Y ☐ N ☐
Score	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5

Reading your scores

5/5

Agent-shaped. Build it — this is the one.

3–4/5

Candidate. Fix the weak question first: guardrail, sharper spec, or human review.

≤ 2/5

Cross it off — that's a win. It's a script, a workflow, or a job for you.

Gate: A No on Q2 means add a guardrail before you build anything — whatever the total.

Blast-radius notes (for any task with a “No” on Question 2)

Worst realistic outcome when it's wrong:

.....

Who gets hurt — and how quickly we'd notice:

.....

Cheapest guardrail (review · approval · budget cap · dry-run):

.....

Remember the shape

The agent compresses the **middle**. A fat, routine middle = a good candidate. All judgment, or a single quick step = not agent-shaped. If you can write it as a flowchart, it's a workflow — not an agent. **Thin middle? Walk away.**

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