

A Safe Gmail Cleanup with Muse

WHY THIS EXISTS

If your inbox has grown into thousands of old emails, cleaning it up can feel risky. This workflow helps you organize it safely with a Muse assistant: nothing is deleted, email is only labeled and archived, and you approve each step.

GETTING STARTED

1. **Get Muse.** Sign up at muse.ai or download the Muse app for iPhone or Android. Muse is available in the United States and Canada.
2. **Connect your Gmail** when your Muse assistant asks.
3. **Hand this guide to your Muse** and let it interview you to tailor the cleanup to your inbox.
4. **Review the first small batch together**, then let Muse run through the rest.

Use my Muse referral code

LGPAKO

Enter it during your first 48 hours after joining. In the app, go to Settings, then Redeem token. On muse.ai, go to Settings, General, Usage, then Redeem invite code.

MADE FOR

People who want Muse to guide a Gmail cleanup from start to finish.

VERSION

2.1
September 2026

Hand this guide to your Muse

You do not need to design the system alone. Attach this PDF to a Muse conversation, paste the prompt below, and let Muse interview you before it looks at any email.

There is a technical appendix at the back written for your Muse. You do not need to read it.

Copy and paste this prompt

I want to clean up <your Gmail account> using the attached guide. Please walk me through it in plain language.

Before you read or change any email, interview me using the questions in this guide. Help me decide what should be protected, which labels fit me, what I want to keep in my inbox, how cautious I want the cleanup to be, and whether I want to review every batch or approve the pattern once and let you finish the rest.

Then show me a personalized plan for approval. Do not create labels, archive mail, move anything to Trash, unsubscribe, draft, or send unless I explicitly approve that exact step and scope.

Hand this guide to your Muse

What you do

1. Attach this PDF.
2. Paste the prompt.
3. Answer the interview in your own words.
4. Review the plan Muse creates for you.
5. Say yes only to the exact step you are comfortable with.

What Muse does

1. Asks questions before touching your mail.
2. Explains Gmail terms as they come up.
3. Suggests labels that match your habits.
4. Starts with a small preview that makes no changes.
5. Stops for your approval before each kind of change.

For Muse: Treat this guide as a conversation script, not blanket permission. Interview the reader first. Confirm the final plan in plain language. Do not treat “clean up my inbox” as approval to change the mailbox.

THE SETUP INTERVIEW

Muse learns how you use email

There is no single “right” inbox. Muse should ask these questions before reading or changing mail. It can ask them one at a time or in small groups, then repeat back what it heard.

Muse learns how you use email

1. What belongs in your inbox?

- Only messages that need action?
- Messages you still want to read?
- Anything recent, even if finished?

2. What counts as personal?

- Family, friends, photos, school, church, clubs, or community?
- Are there specific people whose mail should never be included in bulk cleanup?

3. What must be easy to find later?

- Receipts, travel, medical, insurance, tax, legal, work, or account messages?
- Do you already have labels for any of these?

4. Which newsletters matter?

- Which ones do you actually read?
- Which ones can be archived for later?
- Which ones do you usually ignore?

5. How cautious should Muse be?

- Very cautious, balanced, or more assertive?
- When unsure, should Muse leave the email alone or place it in a review label?

6. How old should mail be?

- Do you want to leave the newest month untouched?
- Should the first cleanup focus on one year or one older date range?

7. What should happen to likely clutter?

- Label it for your review?
- Archive it after you review the sample?
- Never move anything to Trash during the first pass?

8. How hands-on do you want to be?

- Review every small batch before Muse continues?
- Review one or two small batches, then approve the pattern and let Muse finish the rest?
- Should attachments or uncertain mail always come back to you?

Muse learns how you use email

For Muse: After the interview, summarize the reader's protected mail, chosen labels, date range, comfort level, and preferred review style. Ask, "Does this plan match what you want?" Wait for confirmation before reading a sample.

Your plan should answer five things

Protect

What stays out?

Sort

Which labels?

Scope

Which dates?

Review

Each batch or once?

Approve

Which exact action?

WHY THIS IS SAFE

You stay in control of every change

Muse can do the careful reading and sorting, but you decide what may change. Looking at email and changing email are treated as separate steps.

Personal mail is fenced off first

You choose the people, labels, and kinds of mail that should never be part of a bulk cleanup. Muse leaves those messages alone and checks again before making any approved change.

Every action needs its own yes

Approving new labels does not approve archiving. Approving archiving does not approve Trash. Approving one date range does not approve another. Muse asks again when the action or scope changes.

You stay in control of every change

You see a preview first

The first 25 to 50 email conversations are report only. After one or two small review batches, you can keep reviewing each batch or approve the pattern once and let Muse finish the rest.

Permanent deletion is never automatic

The workflow does not empty Trash. Messages marked as possible trash get a review label first. Unsubscribing is also a separate step that needs separate approval.

You stay in control of every change

Gmail basics in plain language

Term	What it means	Can you undo it?
Label	A tag you put on an email to help sort and find it. One email can have more than one label.	Yes. A label can be added or removed.
Archive	Removes an email from the Inbox without deleting it. You can still find it in search and All Mail.	Yes. Move it back to the Inbox.
Email conversation	A group of replies shown together. Gmail often calls this a thread.	Reading it does not change it.
Trash	A holding area for mail you may delete. The workflow does not use it without a separate approval.	Usually, until Trash is emptied. Emptying Trash is permanent and never automatic here.
Unsubscribe	Asks a sender to stop future subscription emails.	It may require signing up again, so Muse treats it as a separate, cautious step.

The safety rule: Nothing changes until you approve the exact action and scope. One approval may cover the remaining cleanup after the sample looks right, but it still covers labels and archiving only. Trash, permanent deletion, unsubscribing, drafting, and sending always need a separate explicit yes.

Want to go deeper? Ask Muse to show you Gmail's official help topics for "create labels," "archive or mute Gmail messages," and "delete or recover Gmail messages."

Choose labels that make sense to you

These labels worked well in one preservation-first cleanup, but they are suggestions, not rules. Review them with Muse and keep only the ones that help you.

Starter label	Use it for	Usual next step, after approval
Personal	Family, friends, photos, or any mail you want kept out of bulk cleanup.	Leave it alone.
Needs Attention	A reply, decision, payment, appointment, deadline, or other action is needed.	Keep it in the Inbox.
Waiting	You have replied and are waiting for someone else.	Label it and archive it.
Keep / Records	Receipts, bills, orders, travel, insurance, tax, medical, warranty, or account records.	Label it and archive it.
Read Later	Useful, non-urgent content you really intend to read.	Label it and archive it.
Newsletters & Subscriptions	Recurring articles, updates, or digests you chose to receive.	Label and archive if approved. Do not unsubscribe automatically.

Choose labels that make sense to you

Starter label	Use it for	Usual next step, after approval
Shopping & Offers	Sales and promotions that may still be useful.	Label it, then keep or archive based on your choice.
Review for Trash	Mail that looks disposable but should be checked by you first.	Add the label only. Do not move it to Trash yet.
Review With Me	Anything unclear, sensitive, personal, or hard to judge.	Leave it for your review.
Muse Review	A temporary marker for the current cleanup group.	Remove it after that group is finished.
Archive with no new label	Finished mail that does not need a special category.	Archive only after approval.

A newsletter is not trash

Recurring editorial email belongs under **Newsletters & Subscriptions**, even if you rarely read it. Muse should not place it in Review for Trash just because it has an unsubscribe link or was sent by a mailing service.

When in doubt, protect it

Receipts, security notices, payment confirmations, account messages, and direct notes from a creator or business are not newsletters just because they use the same sending service.

Your labels should match your life

You can rename labels, add your own, combine similar ones, or drop categories you will never use. Muse should help you make those choices, not hand you a fixed filing system.

Ways to personalize the starter set

- Rename **Keep / Records** to **Receipts & Records**.
- Split records into **Travel**, **Medical**, and **Taxes** if you search for them often.
- Combine **Read Later** and **Newsletters** if you prefer fewer labels.
- Replace **Review With Me** with your name, such as **Review With Jordan**.
- Add a label for a business, volunteer role, school, household, or ongoing project.
- Remove **Shopping & Offers** if promotions never matter to you.

Simple is good. Start with the fewest labels that help you make decisions. You can always add another later.

Your labels should match your life

Tell Muse what each label means

For every label you keep, answer:

1. What belongs here?
2. What should never belong here?
3. Should this mail stay in the Inbox or be archived?
4. Does using this label need your review first?

Choose protected labels

A protected label tells Muse, “Do not include this mail in bulk cleanup.” Personal is a good default. You might also protect Travel, Family, Clients, School, Church, Legal, or an active project.

Existing labels stay in place. Muse should not remove or rename labels you already use unless you separately ask it to.

For Muse: confirm the custom rules

Here is the label plan I heard:

Protected labels: [list]

Labels we will use: [label + plain-language meaning]

Mail that stays in the Inbox: [rules]

Mail that may be archived after approval: [rules]

Mail that must be shown to you: [rules]

Date range: [scope]

Review style: [review every batch / review the first one or two, then let Muse finish]

Progress checkpoint: [usually every 25 conversations]

Does this match what you want? I will not read a sample or change mail until you confirm.

Want to go deeper? Ask Muse to explain the difference between Gmail labels, categories, and folders, then show only the level of detail you want.

Start small and make no changes

1 Connect and check

Muse confirms the Gmail account, checks that it can read email and labels, and tells you if it would need extra access to create labels, apply them, or archive mail.

If something is not connected or available, stop there. Fix access before beginning so the cleanup does not fail halfway through.

2 Review what already exists

Muse lists your existing labels and asks which ones are protected. It points out possible overlaps, such as **Receipts** and **Keep / Records**, without merging anything.

3 Approve label setup

Muse shows which agreed labels already exist and which would need to be created. You approve label creation as its own step. No email is changed during setup.

4 Preview 25 to 50 conversations

Muse reviews a small, older sample and gives you a report. It should read the whole conversation, not just the newest message. This small size is for learning your preferences, not a permanent limit.

The preview includes:

- Sender and subject
- Newest message date
- Suggested label
- Whether it should stay in the Inbox or be archived
- A short reason
- Any uncertainty or attachment that needs your review

No changes yet. The sample is where you correct the rules. Muse should update the plan before asking to act.

Start small and make no changes

What an approval request should look like

Before I make any changes, here is the exact request:

Gmail account: <your Gmail account>

Action: [create labels / apply labels / archive / move to Trash / unsubscribe]

Which mail is included: [plain-language rules]

Which mail is excluded: [protected labels, senders, attachments, sensitive mail]

Date range: [start and end]

How far this approval goes: [this batch / all remaining mail in the approved scope]

Current number found: [count]

Expected result: [how many labels and archives]

Do you approve this exact action and scope?

A general “yes” is not enough if the request is unclear. If the action, date range, rules, or approved amount of mail changes, Muse should show the updated request and ask again.

Start small, then choose how Muse continues

The first one or two small batches teach Muse what you mean. Once the results look right, choose the amount of oversight that feels comfortable.

Option 1: Review every batch

Muse shows you each group before it continues. Choose this when the rules are still changing, the inbox contains unusual mail, or you simply prefer closer control.

You might say: “Keep bringing each batch back to me for approval.”

Option 2: Confirm once, then let it run

After the sample looks right, approve the same labels, safety rules, date range, and archive action for all remaining mail in that scope. Muse works through it and returns with one summary.

You might say: “The pattern looks right. Run the rest of this approved scope and summarize it when you finish.”

The second option is a normal choice for a large inbox. Muse still saves progress in small groups behind the scenes. Those checkpoints help it recover from an interruption. They do not require you to review every group.

Why the hands-off option stays low-risk

- ☐ The approved cleanup only adds labels and archives mail.
- ☐ Archiving removes mail from the Inbox but does not delete it.
- ☐ Archived mail remains searchable in Gmail and can return to the Inbox.
- ☐ Muse rechecks protected, sensitive, changed, and uncertain mail before acting.
- ☐ Trash, permanent deletion, unsubscribing, drafting, and sending are outside the approval.
- ☐ Any destructive step needs a separate, explicit yes.

Start small, then choose how Muse continues

How Muse keeps its place during either option

1. Save the plan

Keep the approved actions, dates, rules, and limits together.

2. Recheck

Make sure each conversation is still allowed.

3. Skip

Leave out protected, changed, uncertain, or finished mail.

4. Apply

Add only approved labels and archive only when approved.

5. Save progress

Record results after about every 25 conversations.

If the run stops

Muse resumes from the last saved checkpoint. It first checks what is already done, so restarting does not create duplicate work.

What you receive at the end

A count of completed, skipped, uncertain, and failed items, plus anything that still needs your attention.

Want to go deeper? Ask Muse to show the progress record in plain language or explain how it will recover if a long run stops.

Some email deserves a closer look

Muse should not decide from the sender name, the newest message, or Gmail's Promotions tab alone. It should read the available conversation and use the more protective choice when details conflict.

What Muse finds	Safer choice	Why
A receipt, bill, itinerary, warranty, or account document	Keep / Records, or one of your custom record labels	It may matter later even when no action is needed now.
A photo or sentimental attachment with unclear context	Review With Me	Personal value is hard to judge automatically.
A newsletter with pictures but no important attachment	Newsletters & Subscriptions	A newsletter is not trash just because you rarely read it.
A payment, security, medical, legal, school, or government message	Protect it or send it to your review	Sensitive or important mail should not be bulk-cleared.
A finished calendar invitation	May be a review-for-trash candidate	Only if it has no useful notes, attachments, or future value.
A message in Promotions	Judge it by content, not the Gmail category	Receipts, memberships, and useful updates can appear there.

Some email deserves a closer look

Attachment check

Before anything is placed under Review for Trash, Muse should look for meaningful attachments across the whole conversation. Records move to a records label. Personal or unclear attachments go to your review.

Newsletter check

Muse should consider the sender, repeated subject pattern, article-like content, and the full message. An unsubscribe link is a clue, not proof. Direct correspondence and account notices do not become newsletters because the sender used a mailing service.

Final review after each approved run

- ☐ Check examples from every action taken.
- ☐ Confirm protected and unrelated labels stayed unchanged.
- ☐ Confirm special attachment decisions.
- ☐ Count completed, skipped, uncertain, and failed items.
- ☐ Search the approved date range for mail that was missed.
- ☐ Tell you clearly whether anything still needs attention.

Done means checked. Muse should not call a batch finished merely because it started. It should confirm the result and explain anything left over.

If Muse is unsure, it should not guess. It should leave the email unchanged or place it in your chosen review label, depending on the plan you approved.

Six improvements make cleanup easier to trust

Improvement	What changes	How you know it worked
1. Check access first	Muse confirms it can read mail, manage agreed labels, and archive before the preview starts.	No surprise permission problem halfway through.
2. Calibrate, then choose	Review the first one or two small batches, then keep reviewing or approve the pattern once and let Muse finish.	You get close control at the start without slowing a large cleanup forever.
3. Use every chosen label	Muse checks that every label in your plan was considered, including newsletters.	No category quietly disappears from the sorting rules.
4. Save after every 25	Each completed group records successes, skips, questions, and errors.	A stopped run resumes from the last confirmed point.
5. Avoid double work	Muse checks the current label and Inbox state before acting.	Repeating the same approved plan creates no extra changes.
6. Verify twice	Muse checks examples, then searches the approved range for anything missed.	The final report matches what actually happened.

Six improvements make cleanup easier to trust

Before the first preview

- ☐ Your Gmail account is confirmed.
- ☐ Your safety choices and protected mail are clear.
- ☐ Your custom labels and meanings are confirmed.
- ☐ Your date range and preferred review style are set.
- ☐ The newest mail is left untouched unless you chose otherwise.
- ☐ Muse can explain what it will do in plain language.

Before and after each approved run

- ☐ You approved one exact action and scope.
- ☐ Attachments and uncertain items received extra review.
- ☐ Personal and protected mail was checked again.
- ☐ Progress was saved every 25 conversations.
- ☐ Samples were checked after the changes.
- ☐ You received a clear results summary.

For regular upkeep: Repeat the same pattern weekly, monthly, or when your Inbox feels crowded. Use a small preview when your rules change. Keep recent mail out of older cleanup batches unless you intentionally include it.

A successful cleanup leaves current action mail in your Inbox, keeps records searchable, protects personal email, and makes every change easy to understand.

Want to go deeper? Ask Muse to explain any one step, show the current plan, or create a short personal checklist from this guide. You never need the technical detail to use the workflow safely.

For your Muse assistant

The reader can skip this part

Use these operational rules when turning the reader's approved plan into a reliable Gmail cleanup. Keep the main conversation in plain language.

Operational rule	Required behavior
1. Preflight permissions	Before sampling, verify that the connected Gmail account can read messages, list labels, create labels, apply and remove labels, and archive. Stop and explain the missing permission if any required capability is unavailable.
2. Keep reads and writes separate	Run the per-thread exclusion and safety recheck as a separate read pass before any batch modification. Reconfirm date scope, protected labels and senders, attachments, sensitivity, current labels, and current Inbox state.
3. Use batch modification	Apply approved label additions, label removals, and Inbox removal with Gmail's users.messages.batchModify endpoint. Include only items that passed the separate safety read. Do not hide Trash, delete, unsubscribe, draft, or send actions inside this operation.
4. Checkpoint long runs	Commit a durable progress checkpoint after about every 25 conversations. Record completed, skipped, escalated, failed, and the next starting point. Do this even when the reader chose “run the rest” and does not need interim reviews.
5. Resume safely	Make re-runs idempotent. On restart, load the last checkpoint, inspect current Gmail state, and skip conversations whose approved label and Inbox state are already correct. Never infer success from an interrupted or silent run.

For your Muse assistant

The reader can skip this part

Operational rule	Required behavior
6. Coordinate classification	Use parallel classification workers under one coordinator when volume warrants it. Give every worker the same approved label definitions, exclusions, date range, and confidence rules. Route low-confidence, conflicting, sensitive, or personal items to direct human review.
7. Sweep attachments	Before finalizing Review for Trash candidates, inspect attachments across each full conversation. Move records to the approved records label. Escalate personal, sentimental, sensitive, or unclear attachments. Do not treat newsletter images as important attachments by default.
8. Verify independently	After writes, spot-check representative items from every action and classifier group. Then run a final query over the approved scope. Completion requires zero unhandled conversations, with exclusions and escalations accounted for separately.
9. Enforce label coverage	Wire every approved label into the classifier instructions and validate coverage afterward. Fail the plan check if a chosen label has no rule. In the source cleanup, Newsletters & Subscriptions existed but was omitted from the classifier instructions, so newsletters were misfiled as Review for Trash.
10. Honor approval scope	After calibration, one explicit approval may cover all remaining messages in the stated date range, with the stated exclusions, labels, and archive behavior. Internal checkpoints do not require new approval. Any changed scope or destructive action does.

Completion contract: Report counts for completed, skipped, escalated, and failed items; name the saved checkpoint; confirm the independent spot checks; and state the final unhandled count. If anything remains, say exactly why.