Practical Prompting Guide

A friendly guide to asking AI for help

Know what to ask.
Make the answer fit.
Keep your own judgement.

YOUR COMPANION TO THE 15 CHEAT SHEETS

Simple instructions, worked examples and a reusable template for everyday life, content and small business.

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You do not need fancy words

HELLO FROM DIGITAL NAN

Ever opened an AI chat and thought, 'Right, what do I actually type?' Start with the job you want help with. You can explain it in ordinary language, just as you would to someone helping you with a first draft.

WHAT IS A PROMPT?

A prompt is the question or instruction you give an AI tool. 'Write a reminder email' is a prompt. Adding who it is for, what it needs to say and the tone you want gives the tool more useful direction.

USE THE TWO PDFS TOGETHER

This guide explains the process. Your **Everyday AI Cheat Sheets** gives you 15 task pages to copy and adapt. Start here, then choose one sheet that matches something you need to do today. You do not have to work through everything in order.

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Give AI a clear job to do

1. TASK: WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Use a clear action: draft an email, explain a term, summarise this text or organise this list. Start with one task rather than asking for an entire business plan in one go.

2. CONTEXT: WHAT MATTERS?

Explain who the answer is for and supply the facts it needs. Include dates, ingredients, time available or product inclusions where relevant. Leave out private details and information that does not help with the task.

3. SHAPE: HOW SHOULD IT LOOK?

Ask for the tone, length and format you want: friendly, under 80 words, in a table, or as five steps. 'Use Australian spelling and plain English' is useful when that suits your reader.

4. BOUNDARIES: WHAT MUST IT AVOID?

Tell it what not to add: invented facts, extra offers or promises. If a missing detail would change the answer, ask it to check with you first. These instructions help guide an answer; they do not guarantee accuracy.

A SIMPLE RECIPE TO COPY

> Help me [task] for [audience or situation]. Use these facts: [facts]. Keep it [tone, length and format]. Do not add [things to avoid]. If an essential detail is missing, ask me before drafting.

From vague to useful

THE STARTING REQUEST

> Write me a post about AI.

WHY IT LEAVES TOO MUCH OPEN

The tool has to guess who the post is for, what you want to say and how it should sound. You might receive a long business article when you wanted a short Facebook conversation starter.

THE CLEARER REQUEST

> Write a Facebook post for everyday people who are curious about AI but do not know what to ask. Mention using AI to draft an email or organise a to-do list. Keep it under 65 words, friendly and in plain Australian English. End by asking which job they would try first. Do not invent my experience or promise results.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE ANSWER

Ever opened an AI chat and wondered what to type? Start with a small job, like drafting an email or sorting a messy to-do list. Explain what you need, read the answer and change anything that does not fit. Which job would you try first?

WHAT CHANGED?

The second request names the audience, platform, subject, tone, length and final question. It also gives a clear boundary. You do not need every detail in every prompt - just enough to avoid important guesses.

Write the email you are avoiding

YOUR SITUATION

A supplier has not sent tracking information for your order. You want an update. Use the email sheet from the companion pack, replacing the brackets with details you have checked.

THE COMPLETE PROMPT

Write a friendly email to a supplier asking for a delivery update on order DN104. I ordered on 5 October and have not received tracking information. Ask for the order status and expected delivery date. Keep it under 90 words, use Australian spelling and include a subject line. Do not invent a delivery deadline, previous conversation or reason for the delay.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE ANSWER

Subject: Delivery update for order DN104

Hi there,
I ordered DN104 on 5 October and have not received tracking information yet. Could you please confirm the order status and expected delivery date?
Thanks for your help.
Kind regards,
[Your name]

A USEFUL FOLLOW-UP

Make the request slightly firmer while keeping it polite. Keep the facts unchanged and do not add a deadline.

YOUR FINAL CHECK

Check the order number and date against your receipt. Add your name, read the tone aloud and send the message yourself. A draft is not confirmation that an email has been sent.

Describe what you actually offer

START WITH THE FACTS

Before asking for a sales post, write down what the buyer receives. This stops the draft drifting into made-up bonuses, coaching or results. You still need to check the answer against the actual product.

THE COMPLETE PROMPT

> Write a Facebook post introducing my Everyday AI Cheat Sheets to beginners. It is a downloadable PDF with 15 task sheets covering everyday life, content and small business. Each sheet includes a prompt, example, follow-up and checks. Use a friendly Australian tone and no more than 75 words. End with an invitation to view the kit. Do not add a price, testimonial, bonus or income claim.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE ANSWER

Not sure what to ask AI? My Everyday AI Cheat Sheets gives you 15 practical tasks to start with, from emails and planning to creating content. Each sheet includes a prompt you can change, an example, a follow-up and things to check before using the answer. View the kit to see what is included.

MAKE IT SOUND LIKE YOU

> Make the opening more conversational. Keep every product detail unchanged and remove any phrase that sounds like a big sales pitch.

YOUR FINAL CHECK

Add the correct product link yourself. Confirm that the description matches the files buyers receive. Only use your own genuine experience or feedback you have permission to share.

When the first answer misses

TELL IT WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO CHANGE

You do not have to start again. Point to the problem rather than only saying 'make it better'. Keep working in the same conversation while you are revising the same task.

TOO LONG?

Cut this to 60 words. Keep the date, request and friendly tone. Remove repeated points.

TOO CORPORATE?

Rewrite this in plain Australian English, as if I were explaining it to a friend. Keep the facts and remove jargon.

MISSING A DETAIL?

Add that the appointment is at 10 am on Tuesday. Keep the rest unchanged. Do not add a location.

IT ADDED SOMETHING UNTRUE?

Remove the claim about customer results. I have not supplied evidence for that. Use only the facts in my original prompt.

KNOW WHEN TO PAUSE

If the task is tangled with an unrelated topic, start a fresh conversation and paste only the relevant facts. If the answer needs information you do not have, collect it first. More rewriting will not turn a missing fact into a reliable one.

Give enough context, safely

LEAVE OUT INFORMATION THAT IS NOT NEEDED

Use placeholders such as [customer], [order number] or [child]. Do not paste passwords, card details, account numbers or private client records. Removing a name alone may not be enough if the remaining details identify someone.

BEFORE: TOO MUCH PERSONAL DETAIL

> My customer [full name], who lives at [street address], ordered using [payment details]. Write a reply about their delayed parcel.

AFTER: ENOUGH FOR THE DRAFT

> Write a polite reply to a customer whose parcel is delayed. Tracking has not updated since Monday. I can check with the carrier and send an update tomorrow. Do not promise a delivery date or refund. Use [customer name] as a placeholder.

CHECK ATTACHMENTS AS WELL

Before uploading a file or image, look for names, addresses, signatures and other identifying details. Use a clean copy containing only the information required. If you cannot remove private material confidently, describe the situation in general terms instead.

A PROMPT DOES NOT CONTROL STORAGE

Saying 'keep this private' in a prompt is not a substitute for checking a tool's privacy settings and terms. Those vary by service and can change. If you are unsure whether information is appropriate to share, leave it out.

A confident answer can be wrong

CHECK THE FACTS AGAINST THE SOURCE

Compare names, dates, amounts, quotations and product inclusions with the original. Recalculate important totals yourself. Asking the same AI to check its answer can help spot problems, but it is not independent proof.

CHECK CURRENT INFORMATION SEPARATELY

For prices, opening hours, product features or rules, visit the relevant official source. If an answer gives a link, open it and check that the page supports the claim. Do not assume a source exists because it looks convincing.

USEFUL CHECKING PROMPT

> Review this draft against the facts below. List each statement that is unsupported, each missing detail and any inconsistency. Do not fill gaps with guesses. Draft: [draft]. Confirmed facts: [facts].

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Confirmed facts: The kit has 15 task sheets and examples.
Draft: 'Get 15 sheets, personal coaching and guaranteed results.'
What to remove: Personal coaching and guaranteed results are not supported by the supplied facts.

USE EXTRA CARE FOR IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Use AI to prepare questions or organise information when a task involves health, law or money. Check the underlying information and use an appropriately qualified professional where needed. A well-written draft is not specialist advice.

Your reusable prompt builder

COPY THIS AND CHANGE THE BRACKETS

Task: Help me [write, explain, summarise, compare or plan something].

Context: This is for [audience or situation]. My goal is [what I need].

Facts to use: [Only the relevant details, with private information removed.]

Tone and format: Use [tone] and Australian spelling. Return [a list, email, table or steps] in [length].

Boundaries: Do not invent facts, sources, experiences or promises. Avoid [specific things].

Missing details: If an essential detail would change the answer, ask one focused question before drafting.

YOU CAN KEEP IT SHORTER

For a simple task, you might only need: 'Explain this paragraph in three plain-English bullet points. Use only the text below and keep the dates exact: [text].' Add detail where it helps; there is no magic word count.

A FOLLOW-UP WORTH SAVING

Keep [what works]. Change [what does not]. Use only the facts I supplied. Ask me if something important is missing.

MAKE YOUR OWN PROMPT FOLDER

Save the wording that helps you, with a short label such as 'friendly email' or 'weekly plan'. Keep a clean template with placeholders instead of leaving private information in a saved prompt. Recheck facts each time you reuse it.

One small practice session

CHOOSE A REAL TASK

Pick a short email, a messy to-do list or a social post you already need. Avoid an important or sensitive decision for your first practice. Give yourself about ten minutes; you can stop whenever you need to.

1. WRITE THE BRIEF

What do you want the finished answer to do?

My task: _____
Who it is for: _____
Facts it must include: _____

2. ASK AND REVIEW

Use the prompt builder or the matching cheat sheet. Read the answer once for meaning, then again for facts. Underline or note anything that sounds wrong, is missing or does not sound like you.

3. MAKE ONE SPECIFIC CHANGE

Use a follow-up such as 'Shorten this to five steps' or 'Keep it friendly but remove the repeated apology'. Compare the new draft with your original request, not just with the previous answer.

4. KEEP WHAT HELPED

The detail that helped most: _____
The thing I still needed to check: _____
What I will change next time: _____

A SMALL WIN IS ENOUGH

You are learning how to brief and review an assistant. You do not need a perfect prompt collection. One useful draft and a clearer idea of what to ask next is a reasonable start.

Choose your next cheat sheet

EVERYDAY LIFE AND ORGANISING

Sheets 1-5: Write an email, reply to an awkward message, make writing sound like you, summarise a passage and explain an unfamiliar idea.

Sheets 6-9: Plan a manageable week, build a dinner plan, make a shopping list and break a big job into small steps.

CONTENT AND SMALL BUSINESS

Sheets 10-12: Get content ideas, write a friendly social post and describe a product clearly.

Sheets 13-15: Compare options using supplied facts, turn notes into actions and improve an answer that missed the mark.

THE ROUTINE TO REMEMBER

Ask: Give it one clear task and the facts it needs.
Adjust: Change the tone, length or missing detail.
Check: Verify facts, protect privacy and keep your own judgement.
Use: Edit the final version before you send, share or act.

A NOTE FROM DIGITAL NAN

You are allowed to ask a simple question. You are allowed to say, 'That is not what I meant.' Start with something useful to you, keep the bits that help and leave the rest. You still get the final say.

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Check current features, pricing, usage limits and terms before joining any service. You can use the prompting method with an AI assistant you already have; available features vary by tool.

One next step

Choose one task, try a prompt and check the answer. Save the version that helps you so you can use it again.

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