QUICK REFERENCE

Prompting Cheat Sheet

Works with any modern chat model. Better input gets better output, so spend the extra 30 seconds on the prompt.

THE FORMULA Role + Task + Context + Constraints + Format + Examples + Tone = better output

10 CORE TECHNIQUES

01 Assign a role

Tell the model who to be. It sets vocabulary, depth and point of view.

`"You are a senior B2B marketing strategist."`

02 Ask for step-by-step reasoning

On multi-part problems, have it work through the logic before answering.

`"Think through this step by step, then give your answer."`

03 Show examples (few-shot)

Paste one to three samples of the output you want. Examples beat descriptions.

`"Match the style of these: [example 1] [example 2]"`

04 Ask directly (zero-shot)

For simple, well-known tasks, skip the setup and just ask.

`"Translate to French: Where is the train station?"`

05 Specify the output structure

Name the shape: table, JSON, numbered list, sections with headings.

`"Return JSON with keys: title, summary, tips."`

06 Set constraints

Length, scope, audience, and anything to leave out.

`"Under 100 words. No jargon. Skip pricing."`

07 Define tone and style

Say how it should sound and who will read it.

`"Plain and friendly, written for a first-time buyer."`

08 Iterate and refine

Treat the first answer as a draft. Give specific feedback and go again.

`"Cut it by half and make the opening sharper."`

09 Ask for a self-critique

Have the model review its own answer for gaps, errors and weak spots.

`"Critique your answer, then give an improved version."`

10 Combine techniques

The strongest prompts stack several of the above in one request.

`Role + format + examples + constraints`

FILL-IN TEMPLATES

Explain a topic

```
You are an expert in [field]. Explain [topic] in plain terms for [audience]. Use bullet points and one real example.
```

Tip: name the audience.

Write content

```
You are a professional writer. Write a [type] about [topic] in a [tone] tone, about [length]. Include a strong headline.
```

Tip: add keywords to hit.

Write code

```
You are an expert [language] developer. Write code that [task]. Explain it step by step and handle [edge cases].
```

Tip: give versions and limits.

Analyze data

```
You are a data analyst. Review this data: [paste]. Summarize trends, flag outliers and recommend next steps.
```

Tip: say if you want a chart.

Make a decision

```
Compare [option A] and [option B] for [goal]. List pros and cons of each, then recommend one and say why.
```

Tip: rank your criteria.

Learn something

```
Teach me [concept] as if I'm a beginner. Use simple language and examples, then quiz me with 3 questions.
```

Tip: ask for practice.

Brainstorm

```
Give me [number] ideas for [topic]. Make each one distinct and practical, with one line on how to start.
```

Tip: add budget or audience.

Summarize

```
Summarize the text below in [length]. Keep the key points and the original meaning. [paste text]
```

Tip: name the format (bullets, TL;DR).

ADVANCED MOVES

Standing instructions. Set rules once (project or custom instructions) instead of repeating them every chat.

Meta prompting. Ask the model to improve your prompt before you run it.

Attach the source. Paste or upload the docs, data or notes it should work from.

Build across turns. Refer back to earlier answers: "Based on the outline above, now..."

Use the tools. Turn on search, file analysis or code when the task needs facts or math.

MISTAKES TO AVOID

Too vague. Vague in, vague out.

Too much at once. Overloaded prompts get muddled answers. Split big jobs.

No context. Missing background forces the model to guess.

No format. Unstructured output is hard to use.

No limits. Without constraints, answers drift off target.

Stopping at draft one. The first answer is rarely the best one.

BEFORE AND AFTER

WEAK

Write a blog post about AI.

STRONG

As a tech writer, write an 800-word post on AI in healthcare for hospital administrators. Professional tone, three examples, clear conclusion.

WEAK

Give me ideas for a business.

STRONG

Give me 10 low-cost online business ideas for 2027, each with a target customer and a way to make money.

PRE-SEND CHECKLIST

- [ ] Is the goal clear?
- [ ] Did I give enough context?
- [ ] Did I name the format?
- [ ] Did I add an example, if it helps?
- [ ] Did I set length, tone and limits?

WORKFLOW

1. Define what you want
2. Build the prompt with the formula
3. Review the response
4. Refine with specific feedback
5. Repeat, then save prompts that work

FORMATS AND TONES

FORMATS

Bullets, numbered list, table, step-by-step, TL;DR, pros/cons, JSON, CSV, Markdown, outline

TONES

Professional, friendly, casual, persuasive, technical, inspirational, empathetic, funny