

The 1-Page Prompt Cheat Sheet

Better answers from ChatGPT and Claude in under a minute. Print it, stick it by your screen.

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1. The 5-part formula

1. **Role:** who should the AI act as?
2. **Task:** what exactly do you want?
3. **Context:** your situation, audience, limits.
4. **Format:** list, table, email, 3 options...
5. **Tone:** friendly, formal, short, simple.

Act as [role].
I need you to [task].
Context: [situation, who it's for, limits].
Give it to me as [format].
Keep the tone [tone].

2. Before and after

Vague: "Write an email to my landlord about the heater."

Better: "Act as a polite but firm tenant. Write a short email to my landlord saying the heater has been broken since [date], I reported it on [date], and I'd like a repair date this week. Under 120 words, friendly but clear."

3. Magic phrases that help

- "Ask me **3 questions first** before you answer."
- "Think it through **step by step**."
- "Give me **3 different options**."
- "If you're not sure, say **so**. Don't guess."
- "Explain it like I'm **new to this**."
- "Put it in a **table**." / "Keep it **under 100 words**."
- "What am I missing?"

4. Didn't like the answer? Follow up

- "Make it shorter / friendlier / more formal."
- "That's too generic. Here's more detail: [...]"
- "Give me a version for a [10-year-old / my boss]."
- "Which of these would you pick, and why?"
- "Check your answer for mistakes."

Your first prompt is a draft. The follow-up is where the good answer shows up.

5. Show an example

Paste something you like and say: "**Match the style of this example**, but for [new topic]." One example beats a paragraph of instructions.

6. Stay safe

- **Never paste** passwords, Social Security, bank or card numbers.
- Blank out names and account numbers on bills before pasting.
- **Double-check facts**, numbers, quotes and links. AI can sound sure and still be wrong.
- Use it to prepare for, not replace, a doctor, lawyer or tax pro.

7. Everyday starters

- "Explain this bill/letter in plain English: [paste, details removed]."
- "Plan 5 easy dinners for a family of [4] under \$[60]."
- "Help my child understand [topic] without giving the answer."
- "Turn these notes into a polite text to [person]."

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