Mastering AI
Make AI Work for You

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT / PROMPTING / OCTOBER 2026

Prompting Toolkit

Build clearer requests, improve weak drafts, and check the result before you use it.

A useful prompt gives the assistant enough direction to help while leaving room for questions and iteration. You do not need a perfect formula; you need a clear goal, relevant context, and a way to judge the result.

01 / The five useful parts of a prompt

- Goal: what you want to accomplish.
- Context: what the assistant needs to understand.
- Inputs: the text, data, or constraints it should use.
- Output: the format, length, audience, or tone you need.
- Checks: what must be verified, preserved, or flagged.

> *Help me [GOAL]. Context: [BACKGROUND]. Use these inputs: [MATERIAL]. Deliver the result as [FORMAT] for [AUDIENCE] in a [TONE] tone. Preserve [REQUIREMENTS]. Flag assumptions and facts that need verification.*

02 / Vague request and improved request

Vague: Tell me about AI.	Improved: Explain how generative AI can help a small retail business with customer r planning. Use two realistic examples, explain the limits, and avoid implying that AI ac
Vague: Write a blog post.	Improved: Draft a 500-word article for first-time AI users explaining three ways to imp encouraging tone, one before-and-after example per section, and a short verification

03 / Fill-in-the-blank templates

> *Act as a [USEFUL PERSPECTIVE] and help me [TASK]. Use this context: [CONTEXT]. Ask questions before answering if a missing detail would materially change the result.*

> *Explain [CONCEPT] to [AUDIENCE] using [EXAMPLE OR ANALOGY]. Cover [REQUIRED POINTS]. State where the analogy stops being accurate.*

> *Give me three options for [DECISION]. Evaluate each against [CRITERIA], show tradeoffs, and tell me what additional information could change the recommendation.*

> *Turn this into a [FORMAT] for [AUDIENCE]: [CONTENT]. Preserve all names, numbers, qualifications, and approved claims. Do not add facts.*

> *Review this [DRAFT / PLAN / ANALYSIS] for [GOAL]. Separate factual errors, unclear reasoning, missing context, and matters of preference: [CONTENT].*

04 / Reusable follow-up prompts

- Make this clearer and more concise without changing the meaning.
- Show me what you changed and why.
- What assumptions are you making?
- What evidence supports this? Include accessible sources for current claims.
- What important counterargument or alternative view is missing?
- Ask me the three questions that would most improve the result.
- Turn this into a reusable template with placeholders.

05 / Before using the answer

- Check names, dates, figures, links, quotations, and legal or policy claims.
- Compare important claims with primary or authoritative sources.
- Confirm the answer follows your actual constraints.
- Remove private or sensitive information from anything you plan to share.
- Rewrite the final material in your own voice and apply your judgment.
- For health, legal, financial, safety, or other high-stakes matters, use qualified professional guidance.

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