4-Step
AI Prompting Checklist

Get the Most From Your AI Chats with Clear Steps on Prompting

IMPACT

Clear instructions to AI LLMs equals clearer answers, and saves time and tokens with the back-and-forth. Use the below 4-step process to create AI chat inputs that will result in better outputs.

1 Specificity: Say exactly what you want

Tell the AI the job to do and what "good" looks like.

ASK

- ☐ What action do I want?
- ☐ What is the topic and scope?
- ☐ What makes this successful?

FILL IN

- ☐ Task: [action verb] [topic]
- ☐ Scope: [audience] | [length/depth]
- ☐ Success: Must include [X]; avoid [Y]

2 Context & Role: Who is speaking to whom, and why?

Set the "voice" and who it's for.

ASK

- ☐ Who should the AI act like?
- ☐ Who is the audience?
- ☐ What's the purpose or situation?

FILL IN

- ☐ Role: You are a/an [role/persona]
- ☐ Audience: [who + level/industry]
- ☐ Purpose: [goal/use case]

3 Constraints: Show a quick example and the rules

Show a tiny sample and set do/don't rules.

ASK

- ☐ Can I show 1 short "good" example?
- ☐ What must be included?
- ☐ What must be avoided?

FILL IN

- ☐ Positive example: "[short sample]"
- ☐ Must-have: [constraint 1], [constraint 2]
- ☐ Must-avoid: [forbidden topics/tones/claims]

4 Output Format: Tell it how to lay out the answer

Choose the shape of the answer.

ASK

- ☐ What format do I want?
- ☐ What structure/fields?
- ☐ Any limits?

FILL IN

- ☐ Format: [bullets | steps | table | JSON]
- ☐ Structure: [headings/fields and order]
- ☐ Limits: [counts/length]

Master Prompt:

You are a/an [**role**]. Create a [**format**] for [**audience**] that [**action verb** + **topic**]. Scope: [**length/depth/timeframe**]. Must include [**X**]; avoid [**Y**]. Use this structure: [**structure**]. Positive example: "[**short sample**]."

Quick "Before You Hit Enter" Checklist:

- ☐ Specificity: Did I name the task, scope, and success?
- ☐ Context: Did I set a role, audience, and purpose?
- ☐ Constraints: Did I add 1 short example, must-haves, and must-avoids?
- ☐ Format: Did I specify format, structure, and limits?