

The AI prompt-writing checklist

Tick what your prompt has. Works for ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude and most AI tools.

1 Clear task

Does the AI know exactly what to make?

- ☐ Starts with a clear action word: Write, Plan, Explain, Compare, Summarize
- ☐ Names the result you want back: an email, a 5-point list, a one-page plan
- ☐ Asks for one main thing (follow up for the rest)

"Write a cover letter..." not
"Help me with a cover letter"

2 Context

Does the AI know who it is for and why?

- ☐ Gives the AI a role, such as "Act as a hiring manager"
- ☐ Says who will read or use the result
- ☐ Adds one line about your situation, or pastes the draft, job ad or notes

"...for first-year students. I'm writing it for our college newsletter."

3 Output format

Does the AI know what the answer should look like?

- ☐ Names the layout: bullets, numbered steps, a table, 3 short paragraphs
- ☐ Gives a length: "under 150 words", "5 ideas"
- ☐ Names the tone: friendly, formal, plain

"Use 5 numbered tips, under 600 words, friendly tone."

4 Limits

Does the AI know what to avoid?

- ☐ Has at least one "do not" rule: no jargon, no emojis, no buzzwords
- ☐ Sets a hard limit where it matters: budget, word count, only these sources
- ☐ Guards against made-up facts: "Do not invent numbers; ask me if something is missing"

"Do not invent statistics; if you need a number, ask me."

5 Concrete details

Does the AI have real facts to work with?

- ☐ Includes real names, numbers, dates or a short example
- ☐ Swaps vague words ("good", "nice", "stuff") for what you mean
- ☐ Marks what you still need to fill in with [BRACKETS]

"...such as splitting a \$10 streaming plan with 3 roommates."

PHOTO EDITS

- ☐ Says what to keep: "keep my face, features and skin tone the same"
- ☐ Says what to change: outfit, background, light, style
- ☐ Attaches the photo instead of describing it

NEW IMAGES

- ☐ Leads with the subject, then style, lighting and framing
- ☐ Gives the shape: square 1:1, vertical 9:16, wide 16:9
- ☐ Puts any words for the image in "quotes", and keeps them short

VIDEO

- ☐ Reads like a shot list: framing, camera move, what happens
- ☐ Gives the length and the look: "8 seconds, handheld, golden hour"
- ☐ Changes one thing per take, not everything at once

BEFORE YOU SEND

- ☐ Every [BRACKET] is filled in with your own facts
- ☐ No passwords, ID numbers or private details about other people
- ☐ Plan to check names, numbers and claims in the answer before you use it