

The one-page cheat sheet

The formula for a good prompt

THE ACTION

Start with a verb:
write, explain,
compare, shorten

WHO I AM

Age, level, who
the text is for

CONTEXT

Details, dates,
amounts,
constraints

FORMAT

Length, tone,
table or list

QUESTIONS FOR ME

"If you need
more, ask me"

Aim for: about 21 words. The main beginner mistake is being too short.

Five phrases that always help

- "Explain it more simply, as if I were 10 years old."
- "Too long. Cut it down to five sentences."
- "Search the web and give me links to your sources."
- "If you're not sure, say so instead of making something up."
- "What questions do you have for me so you can answer better?"

Works / doesn't work

WORKS	DOESN'T WORK (OUT OF DATE)
Detailed context and specifics	"You are an expert with 20 years of experience"
Refining in rounds rather than starting over	"Think step by step"
Attaching the document with the paperclip	"I'll pay you \$1,000"
Switching on web search	Pleading, threats, urgency
Asking it to ask you questions	Special symbols and tags

Never type into a chat

ID documents · national ID or tax numbers · card and account numbers · passwords · **one-time codes** · photos of documents · a medical record with your name on it · other people's details · work secrets · anything about an ongoing legal dispute.

A conversation with an AI carries no legal privilege. In January 2026 a court ordered OpenAI to hand over a sample of 20 million conversations (de-identified).

Checking facts — 4 steps

1. Ask for links — and **open** them
 2. Search to confirm the source exists
 3. Ask the same thing differently, in a new chat
 4. For anything important, check with a person: doctor, lawyer, bank
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Protecting yourself from scammers

- **A code word with your family** — the FBI's advice. Meaningless, said out loud, never written in a message.
 - **Hang up and call back yourself** on a number you already have.
 - **Check through another channel** — they called, so send a message.
 - **They insist on a money-transfer service, a transfer to a stranger's card, cryptocurrency or gift cards** — they're scammers.
 - **Well-written text no longer proves anything.** Look at what is being asked for, not at how it's written.
 - **A five-minute pause** kills almost any scheme.
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Apps: don't get a fake

Install only from the app store, having searched for it yourself. The developer must be exactly: **OpenAI / Anthropic PBC / Google LLC**. A weekly subscription is a scam.