

Prompt brief worksheet

Fill it in before you ask an AI assistant for something you plan to use: who it acts as, what it must know, what to do, in what form, and how you will check the answer.

Write in your own words. Start with the task: if it does not fit in one sentence, split it into two briefs. Then type the fields into the chat in the same order, as one message. Leave a field empty only when you have decided it does not matter.

1. The brief

Role: who should the assistant act as?

A job and a manner, not 'an expert'. For example: the person who answers enquiries at a small studio.

Context: what must it know that it cannot guess?

Who will read the result, what happened before, your product and your terms. Paste the source text instead of retelling it.

Task: one action, one result

Start with a verb: write, shorten, compare, list, check.

Constraints: what must and must not be in the answer

Length, tone, words to avoid, which facts it may use, what to do when a fact is missing.

Output format

Plain text, a table, a list of five points, a subject line and a body. Name the language.

2. Examples

An output I would accept

One sentence or a short sample is enough. Say what makes it good.

An output I do not want

Something you have already received. Say what is wrong with it.

3. How the answer will be checked

Facts to verify, and against which source

Prices, dates, names, quotes, links, calculations.

Who reads it before it is used

A person, by name. It can be you.

It is ready when

A test with a yes or no answer.

This sheet makes your request clear. It does not make the facts in the answer correct. An assistant can state a wrong price or date as confidently as a right one, so the check stays with you.

Weak and specific wording: a product description

Field	Weak	Specific
Role	Be an expert.	You write product descriptions for a small online shop that sells handmade candles. You write plainly and do not exaggerate.
Context	Here is our product.	The product details are pasted below: size, materials, burn time, price. The buyer is choosing a gift and reads on a phone.
Task	Write a description.	Write one description for the product page: what it is, who it suits and what is in the box.
Constraints	Short and catchy.	60 to 80 words. No exclamation marks. Use only the details pasted in. If a detail is missing, do not make it up: list it at the end as a question.
Format	Make it look good.	One paragraph of plain text, then three points: size, materials, care.
Check	Looks fine.	Before it is published, I compare every size, material and price with our own product record.

A filled-in example

EXAMPLE: A REPLY TO A CUSTOMER ENQUIRY

An invented two-person design studio receives this message: 'Hello, I am opening a coffee shop in spring. How much is a logo and how long does it take? Can you also do the menu?' The owner filled in the brief as shown below. The studio, its prices and its terms are made up for this example.

Field	What the owner wrote
Role	You answer new enquiries at a two-person design studio. You are polite and direct, and you do not oversell.
Context	The enquiry is pasted below, with the name and phone number removed. Our terms: a logo from \$600, 10 working days after the client fills in our questionnaire, two rounds of changes. A menu is quoted separately once we see the text. We start after a 50% deposit.
Task	Write a reply that answers both questions and asks one question back: where the logo will be used (sign, cups, social media).
Constraints	Under 120 words. No exclamation marks. Use only the prices and terms above. If something is not in the context, write 'to be confirmed'. Do not name a deadline for the menu.
Format	A subject line, then three short paragraphs of plain text. Sign as Sam.
Examples	Good: 'A logo starts at \$600 and takes 10 working days once we have your answers.' Bad: 'We would love to bring your vision to life.' It has no price, no timing and a sales tone.
Check	Sam compares the price, the days and the deposit with the price list and reads the reply aloud once. It is ready when the client can decide without writing back to ask the price.

Before you reuse the wording of the example, replace its prices and terms with your own. Keep a brief that worked, and update it when your prices or terms change.

Before you send it

- ☐ No names, phone numbers, emails, addresses or ID numbers of real people. Replace them with [client], [phone].
- ☐ No passwords, API keys, access codes, bank or card details.
- ☐ Nothing confidential, unless the rules of your company and of the service allow it.
- ☐ There is one task, and it starts with a verb.
- ☐ Every fact the answer may use is in the context, and I have said what to do when one is missing.
- ☐ The tone, the length and the reader are stated.
- ☐ I know which facts I will verify and where.

When the answer is wrong

- Too generic: add context. Say who reads it, what you sell and what happened before.
- Wrong tone or shape: show an example of an output you would accept.
- Off the point or doing too much: narrow the task to one action and cut the rest.
- A fact looks doubtful: ask where it comes from, then open that source yourself. A link or a quote in an answer still needs checking.
- A long or tangled job: split it into steps. Ask for an outline first, check it, then ask for each part.