

HOW TO TALK TO AI AND ACTUALLY GET SOMETHING USEFUL



PROMPT GUIDE

How to Talk to AI and Actually Get Something Useful

A Practical Prompt Guide

Most people get generic output from AI because they give generic input. This guide shows you why that happens and how to fix it.

PART 1: WHY YOUR PROMPTS ARE NOT WORKING

When you type something like help me write a report or give me ideas for my business, the AI has no idea who you are, what you do, or what you are trying to achieve. So it gives you something that could apply to anyone.

The problem is not the tool. It is the instruction. A vague input produces a vague output. A specific, well-structured input produces something you can actually use.

PART 2: THE FIVE QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE ANY PROMPT

Before you type anything into an AI tool, answer these five questions. The more you include, the better the output.

1.	Who should the AI be?	<i>Act as an experienced HR professional reviewing a CV for the first time.</i>
2.	What do I want it to do?	<i>Identify the three weakest parts of this CV and explain why they weaken it.</i>
3.	What does it need to know?	<i>I have 6 years in operations and am applying for a project management role for the first time.</i>
4.	What should it avoid or how long?	<i>Do not give me general advice. Be specific. Keep it to five points maximum.</i>
5.	Can I show it what good looks like?	<i>Here is an example of the tone I want: [paste example]. Match this tone.</i>

PART 3: SEE IT IN ACTION

Here is the same request written two ways.

Without the framework:

WEAK PROMPT

Help me prepare for an interview.

The AI will give you a generic list of interview tips that applies to everyone and is useful to no one specifically.

With the framework:

STRONG PROMPT

Act as a hiring manager for a mid-sized technology company. I have an interview next week for a Customer Success role. My background is in retail banking where I managed client relationships and resolved escalated complaints. I have never worked in tech before. Give me three likely interview questions and for each one, suggest how I should frame my banking experience as relevant to a tech Customer Success role. Keep each answer framework to under 100 words.

The difference is not the tool. It is the deliberateness of the instruction.

PART 4: FIVE PROMPTS YOU CAN ADAPT THIS WEEK

These are not scripts to copy word for word. They are structures to adapt to your own situation.

Prompt 1: Prepare for something important

For interviews, presentations, difficult conversations, or any high-stakes situation.

PROMPT 1

Act as [a hiring manager / a senior colleague / a sceptical audience member]. I have [an interview / a presentation / a meeting] coming up for [describe the situation]. My background is [briefly describe your relevant experience]. Give me the three most likely challenging questions or objections I will face, and for each one, suggest how I should respond clearly and confidently. Keep each response to under 90 seconds when spoken.

Prompt 2: Understand something quickly

For reports, topics, industries, or any subject you need to get up to speed on fast.

PROMPT 2

Explain [topic, document, or concept] to me as if I have a working knowledge of the area but am not a specialist. Focus on what is most practically relevant for someone in [your role or situation]. Summarise the three most important things I need to understand and tell me one thing most people miss or misunderstand about this topic.

Prompt 3: Plan or structure something

For lesson plans, project outlines, content calendars, or any structured deliverable.

PROMPT 3

I need to [plan a lesson / structure a project / build a content calendar] on the topic of [your topic] for [your audience]. The goal is [what you want the audience to walk away with]. Give me a clear structure with [number] sections or stages, a brief description of what each covers, and one practical activity or action for each stage.

Prompt 4: Research a topic, opportunity, or competitor

For market research, industry analysis, competitor review, or opportunity assessment.

PROMPT 4

Act as a business analyst. I need to understand [the market / a competitor / an industry trend] related to [your specific topic]. I am trying to [describe your goal]. Give me a structured summary covering: what the current landscape looks like, what the key players or trends are, and what the most relevant insight is for someone in my position. Where you are uncertain, say so.

Prompt 5: Write or improve something

For CVs, bios, emails, proposals, social media posts, or any written output.

PROMPT 5

Here is what I have written: [paste your draft]. My audience is [describe who will read this]. The goal of this piece is [what you want the reader to think, feel, or do after reading it]. Improve this by making it clearer, more specific, and more relevant to the audience. Do not change my voice entirely. Keep the length similar to the original. Highlight any phrases that are vague or could be misread.

AI is a thinking partner, not a ghostwriter. If the first response is not quite right, do not start over. Tell it what is missing, what to adjust, or what to try differently. Iteration is how you get to something genuinely useful.

For a structured, step-by-step guide to optimising every section of your LinkedIn profile with ready-to-use prompts, access [Mining Signal, Not Attention](#) here.

Ready to take the next step with Thrivvrs? [Book here](#) for a free Discovery Session.