

The Plain-English Prompt Cheat Sheet

Prompts for grown-ups who've got actual lives. No hype.

Duct Tape World by TraciUnfiltered

You don't need 1000 prompts. You need a handful that actually work, in plain English, for the stuff real life throws at you. Here they are. Steal them, change them, make them yours.

How to use these (30 seconds, then you're off)

1. Talk to your AI like a sharp assistant, not a search box. Give it the backstory.
2. Tell it who the thing is for and how it should sound (warm, firm, short, in your voice).
3. Anything in [brackets] is your part. Fill it in.
4. ALWAYS check its work. It's confident, not always correct. That part is your job, and you're better at it than you think.

One safety rule, because it matters: don't paste anything you wouldn't hand a stranger. No account numbers, passwords, Social Security numbers, or other people's private business.

These work in whichever AI you use - ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, take your pick.

SAY THE THING CLEARLY

1. The email you've been dreading

Help me write a clear, polite email. Here's the situation: [what happened]. Here's what I need from them: [the ask]. Keep it short, warm, and firm. Don't make it sound like a robot or a lawyer.

For the message you've rewritten six times. Dump the mess in, get a clean start out.

Seeing it filled in helps. Here's the same prompt, for real:

Help me write a clear, polite email. Here's the situation: my contractor is three weeks late and has stopped answering my texts. Here's what I need: a firm start date this week, or I'll need to find someone else. Keep it short, warm, and firm. Don't make it sound like a robot or a lawyer.

Can't find the words to start? That's normal. Jump to #19 and let the AI write the ask for you - when you can't say it clearly, you make it help you say it clearly. That one move is the whole heart of what we teach at ducttapeworld.com.

2. Push back without burning the bridge

I need to say no to / disagree with [person or situation]. Here's the context: [...]. Write three versions - gentle, neutral, and firm. I'll pick.

Three flavors of backbone. Choose the one that fits the day.

3. Turn my rant into something I can actually send

Here's how I really feel: [paste your unfiltered version]. Turn it into something I can send to [who] that makes the point without the heat.

Get it off your chest in the box. Let it hand you back the version you won't regret.

MAKE SENSE OF CONFUSING STUFF

4. Decode the fine print

Explain this in plain English like I'm smart but busy. What am I agreeing to, what should I watch out for, and what should I ask before I sign? Here it is: [paste].

Contracts, terms, the wall of text nobody reads. Make it tell you what it really says.

5. What does this bill or letter actually mean?

I got this [medical bill / insurance letter / notice] and I don't fully understand it. Explain what it means, whether anything looks off, and what my options are. Here it is: [paste].

The envelopes that make your stomach drop. Open them with backup.

6. Explain it like I have no background

Explain [topic] to me in plain English, no jargon. Use an everyday example. Then tell me the one thing most people get wrong about it.

For when everyone assumes you already know. You don't have to.

CATCH IT WHEN IT'S WRONG (the important part)

7. Make it show its work

Before you answer, tell me what you're assuming and where you might be wrong. Then give your answer. Then tell me how sure you are and what I should double-check.

The most useful prompt in here. The machine sounds certain even when it isn't. Make it admit it.

8. Is this real, or are you guessing?

For each claim you just made, tell me: do you actually know this, or are you filling in the gap? Mark each one.

It will tell you a wrong thing with a straight face. This is how you call it.

9. Fact-check yourself, honestly

Go back through what you told me and flag anything I should verify with a real source. Don't reassure me. Just be straight.

Trust, then verify. Build this habit and you're already ahead of most people half your age.

GET UNSTUCK AND DECIDE

10. Think it through with me

Help me think through a decision: [the decision]. Ask me 3 or 4 questions first, then lay out the trade-offs. Don't tell me what to do - help me see it clearly.

Not for the answer. For a clear head. You still make the call.

11. The blank-page un-sticker

I need to [write / plan / start] [thing] but I'm staring at a blank page. Ask me a few questions, then give me a rough first draft I can fix.

The blank box is the enemy. This makes the first ugly version so you've got something to push against.

12. Show me the blind spot

Here's what I'm considering: [...]. Give me the honest pros and cons, then point out something I probably haven't thought of.

The value isn't the list. It's the thing you weren't seeing.

REAL-LIFE ADMIN

13. Turn this mess into a plan

Here's everything swirling in my head: [brain dump]. Sort it into a simple, doable plan and tell me what to do first. Keep it realistic, not a productivity-guru fantasy.

Empty your head into the box. Let it sort the pile.

14. Summarize this so I don't have to read all of it

Summarize this in plain English: the main points, anything I need to act on, and anything that looks important. Here it is: [paste].

Long email, long document, long thread. Get the gist and the to-dos in ten seconds.

15. Plan it around real constraints

Help me plan [meal / week / trip / project]. My constraints are: [time, money, people, etc.]. Keep it simple and realistic.

Real life has limits. Tell it the limits and it stops handing you a fantasy.

JOB AND MONEY STUFF

16. Decode a job listing

Here's a job listing: [paste]. Tell me in plain English what they really want, whether I'm a fit, and which of my experiences to highlight if I apply.

Cut through the buzzword soup before you spend an hour on the application.

17. Make my resume sound like a human

Here's my experience: [paste]. Rewrite it to sound clear and confident - not stuffed with buzzwords, and in my voice, not a corporate robot's.

You're a person, not a keyword list. The resume should sound like it.

18. Rehearse the hard conversation

I need to ask for [a raise / a higher price / etc.]. Play the other person. Let me practice, then tell me how I did and what to say better.

Rehearse on the robot so you're steady with the human.

THE ONE THAT MAKES THE REST BETTER

19. When you don't know how to ask

Here's what I'm trying to get from you: [goal]. Before you do it, rewrite my request into a clearer prompt, then answer that one.

Can't find the words? Make it write the ask for you, then watch how it did it. That's how you learn.

That's the set. Nineteen prompts you'll actually reach for, instead of a thousand you'll never open. Change the wording, make them sound like you, keep the ones that earn their place.

This is the free sample. The pantry is a lot bigger.

At **ducttapeworld.com** you get the part that actually changes things:

- The plain-English walkthroughs behind these prompts - watch them work, step by step.
- The one skill that matters most: catching the AI when it's confidently wrong.
- A calm place to learn this without being talked down to, hyped at, or sold a dream.

No funnel. No countdown timer. Just the next thing, whenever you're ready for it.

Come find us. We'll meet you right where you are. ducttapeworld.com

Duct Tape World by TraciUnfiltered. Your time. Back in your hands.