



Founders AI

founders-ai.dev

PRACTICAL AI FIELD GUIDE

The AI Prompt System

How to Create Prompts That Improve as You Work

A practical prompt framework for founders, business owners, creators, employees, and everyday people who want better AI answers.

- Use the PROMPT+ Loop
- Repair weak prompts
- Grade AI outputs
- Build a prompt library
- Create reusable templates
- Improve as you work

Start here

Most people do not need a folder of 500 prompts.

They need one prompt system they can reuse.

The problem with most AI advice is that it treats prompting like a trick. Use this phrase. Add this word. Say "act as." Ask it to be smarter. That sometimes helps, but it does not give you a working system.

A better prompt does three things:

- It tells the AI what job it is doing.
- It gives the AI the context it would not otherwise know.
- It defines what a good answer looks like.

OpenAI describes prompt engineering as writing effective instructions so the model consistently generates content that meets requirements, and its guidance emphasizes identity, instructions, examples, and context as common prompt sections ([OpenAI prompt engineering guide](#)). Google's Gemini guide uses four beginner-friendly prompt ingredients: persona, task, context, and format ([Google Gemini prompt guide](#)). Microsoft's Copilot guidance uses a similar four-part structure: goal, context, expectations, and source ([Microsoft Copilot prompt guidance](#)).

The point is simple:

Better prompts are not longer because longer is better. Better prompts are clearer because they remove guessing.

The Founders AI rule

Use this rule:

AI answers improve when the prompt includes the job, the context, the standards, and the next improvement loop.

That is why this guide uses the **PROMPT+ Loop**.

The PROMPT+ Loop

PROMPT+ is a reusable prompting format:

Letter	Meaning	What to include
P	Purpose	What are you trying to accomplish?
R	Role	Who should the AI act like for this task?
O	Operating context	What situation, audience, background, or constraints matter?
M	Materials	What source text, notes, examples, data, links, or files should it use?
P	Parameters	What rules, tone, limits, risk level, or exclusions should it follow?
T	Target format	What should the answer look like?
+	Test and Tune	How should the answer be checked and improved?

The plus sign is the important part. Most people write a prompt, get an answer, and stop. PROMPT+ adds a review loop so the prompt improves as the work continues.

The basic PROMPT+ template

Copy this:

You are helping me with:
[task or role]

Purpose:
[what I am trying to accomplish]

Operating context:
[audience, situation, background, business goal, constraints]

Materials:
[paste notes, draft, transcript, email, document, data, links, examples, or say "no source material yet"]

Parameters:
- Tone: [direct, friendly, expert, simple, persuasive, etc.]
- Depth: [quick answer, detailed guide, beginner explanation, expert analysis]
- Do not: [things to avoid]
- Must include: [requirements]

Target format:
[table, checklist, email, script, plan, SOP, comparison, bullets, etc.]

Test and tune:
Before finalizing, check the answer for:
1. Clarity
2. Completeness
3. Accuracy risks
4. Missing context
5. Practical usefulness

If important context is missing, ask up to 3 clarifying questions before answering.
After the answer, include:
1. What you changed or assumed
2. What I should verify
3. How I could improve this prompt next time

Use this when the output matters. For tiny tasks, you do not need every section.

Why this works

The PROMPT+ format works because it follows the common structure recommended by major AI providers: it defines the task, adds context, sets expectations, and specifies the output format ([Google Gemini prompt guide](#), [Microsoft Copilot prompt guidance](#)). It also adds examples, materials, and review criteria, which OpenAI recommends for steering outputs and building more reliable prompt behavior ([OpenAI prompt engineering guide](#)).

The Test and Tune section turns a prompt into a feedback loop. Anthropic describes an evaluator-optimizer workflow where one LLM call generates a response and another provides evaluation and feedback in a loop, and it says the pattern works best when evaluation criteria are clear and iterative refinement has measurable value ([Anthropic evaluator-optimizer workflow](#)). The Self-Refine paper describes a similar generate-feedback-refine pattern in which an LLM generates an initial output, gives feedback on it, and uses that feedback to refine the output ([Self-Refine paper](#)).

The self-improving prompt workflow

Here is the beginner version:

1. **Draft the prompt.**
2. **Run it on a real task.**
3. **Grade the answer.**
4. **Ask what was missing.**
5. **Rewrite the prompt.**
6. **Save the better version.**
7. **Reuse it next time.**

That is a self-improving prompt.

It does not mean the AI becomes magically smarter. It means the prompt becomes better because you are adding better context, clearer standards, stronger examples, and better review criteria as you learn what works.

The prompt scorecard

After you get an answer, grade it:

Score	Question
1-5	Did it answer the actual question?
1-5	Was it specific enough to use?
1-5	Did it follow the requested format?
1-5	Did it use the context provided?
1-5	Did it avoid obvious mistakes or unsupported claims?
1-5	Did it save time or create a reusable asset?

Then ask:

Review this answer against the scorecard below.

Scorecard:

1. Answered the actual question
2. Specific enough to use
3. Followed the requested format
4. Used the context provided
5. Avoided unsupported claims
6. Saved time or created a reusable asset

For each category:

- Give a score from 1 to 5
- Explain the issue
- Suggest one prompt improvement

Then rewrite my original prompt so it would produce a better answer next time.

This is how the prompt improves as you work.

The prompt repair checklist

When the answer is bad, do not immediately blame the AI.

First, ask what was missing from the prompt.

Problem	Likely cause	Repair
The answer is too generic.	Not enough context.	Add audience, situation, goal, examples, and source material.
The answer is too long.	No output limit.	Specify length, format, and depth.
The answer sounds fake.	No tone or audience.	Add voice, reader, and examples of what "good" sounds like.
The answer misses the point.	Purpose was unclear.	Start with the outcome you want.
The answer invents facts.	No source constraint.	Require citations, source-only answers, or verification notes.
The answer is hard to use.	No target format.	Ask for a checklist, table, SOP, script, or step-by-step plan.
The answer is risky.	No review criteria.	Add "what to verify," "risk level," and "do not use for final decision without review."

OpenAI's evaluation flywheel recommends understanding failures first, labeling recurring failure modes, measuring them, and then making targeted improvements such as rewriting prompts or adding examples ([OpenAI evaluation flywheel](#)). That same idea works for normal users: every bad answer is a clue about what the prompt needs next.

The 3-question improvement loop

Use this after any important output:

```
Ask me 3 questions that would help you produce a better version.
```

```
Then tell me:
```

1. What context was missing
2. What assumption you made
3. What should be added to my reusable prompt for next time

This is especially useful when you do not know what context the AI needs.

Google's Gemini guide recommends making Gemini your prompt editor with a prompt like "Make this a power prompt," and it also recommends asking what questions would help provide the best output ([Google Gemini prompt guide](#)). OpenAI's meta-prompting cookbook describes using a stronger model to improve a simpler prompt and evaluate whether the enhanced prompt produces better outputs ([OpenAI meta-prompting cookbook](#)).

The prompt improver prompt

Use this when you have a weak prompt:

```
You are helping me improve a prompt.
```

```
My current prompt:
```

```
[paste prompt]
```

```
What I want the prompt to accomplish:
```

```
[goal]
```

```
Where the current output failed:
```

```
[too generic, wrong tone, missed context, bad format, hallucinated, etc.]
```

```
Improve the prompt by adding:
```

1. Clearer purpose
2. Better context
3. Better source/material instructions
4. Better constraints
5. Better output format
6. Better review criteria

```
Return:
```

1. Improved prompt
2. Why it is better
3. What context I should save for future versions

Use this when you find yourself asking the same type of question more than twice.

The output evaluator prompt

Use this when the answer matters:

```
You are reviewing the output below.

Original task:
[paste original task]

Output to review:
[paste AI output]

Evaluate it against these criteria:
1. Does it answer the actual task?
2. Is it specific and practical?
3. Does it follow the requested format?
4. Does it make unsupported claims?
5. What should be verified?
6. What is missing?

Return:
- Pass / Needs revision
- Scores by category
- Specific issues
- Revised answer
- Improved prompt for next time
```

This mirrors the evaluator-optimizer pattern in a simple way. Anthropic's agent guidance says evaluator-optimizer workflows work when clear evaluation criteria exist and feedback improves the result ([Anthropic evaluator-optimizer workflow](#)).

The prompt library system

Do not save every prompt.

Save prompts that produce repeatable value.

Create a simple prompt library with these columns:

Column	What to save
Prompt name	Short label, such as "Rewrite clearly" or "Weekly planning"
Use case	Writing, planning, research, sales, operations, content, learning
Best prompt version	The current working prompt
Inputs needed	What you must paste or provide
Output format	Checklist, table, email, SOP, script, plan
Review criteria	How you know it worked
Last improved	Date you updated it
Notes	What failed, what improved, what to test next

This turns prompting into an asset.

When to use a simple prompt

Use a simple prompt when the task is low-risk, quick, and easy to review.

Examples:

- Rewrite this paragraph more clearly.
- Give me 10 headline ideas.
- Summarize this short note.
- Explain this topic like I am new.
- Turn this list into bullets.

Simple prompts are fine when a bad answer costs almost nothing.

When to use PROMPT+

Use PROMPT+ when the output needs to be useful, reusable, or correct.

Examples:

- Writing a customer email
- Creating a sales script
- Planning a launch
- Summarizing a long meeting
- Comparing vendors
- Drafting a guide
- Building a workflow
- Making a business decision
- Creating content from research
- Turning notes into an SOP

The more the answer matters, the more structure the prompt needs.

The beginner prompt ladder

Start here:

Level 1: Ask

Explain this like I am new:
[topic]

Use for quick learning.

Level 2: Add context

Explain this like I am new.

Context:

I am a [role] trying to use this for [goal].

Topic:

[topic]

Use when you want the answer to fit your life or work.

Level 3: Add format

Explain this like I am new.

Context:

I am a [role] trying to use this for [goal].

Format:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. Common mistakes
4. First 3 steps
5. What to ignore for now

Use when you want something saveable.

Level 4: Add review criteria

Explain this like I am new.

Context:

I am a [role] trying to use this for [goal].

Format:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. Common mistakes
4. First 3 steps
5. What to ignore for now

Review criteria:

Before finalizing, check that the answer is practical, beginner-friendly, and does not assume technical knowledge.

Use when quality matters.

Level 5: Add the improvement loop

Explain this like I am new.

Context:

I am a [role] trying to use this for [goal].

Format:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. Common mistakes
4. First 3 steps
5. What to ignore for now

Review criteria:

Before finalizing, check that the answer is practical, beginner-friendly, and does not assume technical knowledge.

After the answer:

Tell me what context I should add next time to get a better answer.

Use when you want the prompt to improve over time.

Before and after examples

Example 1: Writing

Bad prompt:

Write an email.

Better prompt:

You are helping me write a clear business email.

Purpose:

Follow up with a prospect after a discovery call.

Operating context:

The prospect owns a local HVAC company. They are interested in using AI to reduce admin work, but they are skeptical and busy.

Materials:

Call notes:

[paste notes]

Parameters:

- Tone: direct, helpful, not hypey
- Length: under 180 words
- Do not overpromise

Target format:

Subject line plus email body.

Test and tune:

Check whether the email is specific, believable, and easy to reply to.

Example 2: Learning

Bad prompt:

Teach me AI.

Better prompt:

You are helping me learn AI as a beginner.

Purpose:

Understand how to use AI in everyday work without getting overwhelmed.

Operating context:

I am not trying to become a machine learning engineer. I want practical use cases for writing, planning, research, organization, and decision-making.

Target format:

Create a 7-day learning plan with one practical task per day.

Test and tune:

Make the plan realistic for 30 minutes per day. Tell me what to ignore for now.

Example 3: Decision-making

Bad prompt:

Which tool should I use?

Better prompt:

You are helping me compare tools for a practical business decision.

Purpose:

Choose the best AI note-taking tool for a small business owner.

Operating context:

I care about ease of use, price, transcript quality, integrations, and privacy.

Materials:

Options:

[paste tools]

Parameters:

- Do not invent pricing
- If current facts are needed, tell me what to verify
- Separate facts from judgment

Target format:

Comparison table plus recommendation.

Test and tune:

Check whether the recommendation depends on assumptions I should verify.

20 starter prompts

Prompt 1: Turn messy notes into action

You are helping me turn messy notes into action.

Materials:

[paste notes]

Target format:

1. Summary
2. Decisions
3. Action items
4. Open questions
5. Risks

Test and tune:

Mark anything unclear instead of guessing.

Prompt 2: Rewrite clearly

You are helping me improve a piece of writing.

Materials:

[paste draft]

Parameters:

- Keep my meaning
- Remove fluff
- Tone: clear, human, direct

Target format:

Give me one improved version and a short list of what changed.

Prompt 3: Build a decision table

You are helping me make a decision.

Decision:

[decision]

Options:

[option 1, option 2, option 3]

Criteria:

[cost, time, risk, ease, upside, etc.]

Target format:

Create a comparison table, then recommend the best option for my situation.

Test and tune:

Separate facts from assumptions. Tell me what I should verify.

Prompt 4: Find my best AI use cases

You are helping me find practical AI use cases.

Materials:

Here are tasks I do every week:

[paste list]

Target format:

Create a table with:

1. Task
2. AI use case
3. Difficulty
4. Risk level
5. First prompt to try

Test and tune:

Focus on realistic beginner use cases. Avoid complicated automation.

Prompt 5: Improve my prompt

You are helping me improve a prompt.

Current prompt:

[paste prompt]

Goal:

[what I wanted]

Problem:

[what went wrong]

Target format:

Return an improved prompt, explain what changed, and tell me what context I should save for next time.

Prompt 6: Create a simple SOP

You are helping me turn a process into a simple SOP.

Materials:

[paste process notes]

Target format:

1. Purpose
2. When to use this
3. Step-by-step process
4. Checklist
5. Common mistakes
6. What to verify

Test and tune:

Make it clear enough that a beginner could follow it.

Prompt 7: Create content from a lesson

You are helping me turn one lesson into social content.

Lesson:

[paste lesson]

Audience:

[audience]

Target format:

Create:

1. YouTube title idea
2. Short-form video hook
3. LinkedIn post
4. 5 tweet ideas

Parameters:

Tone: practical, direct, useful.

Avoid hype.

Prompt 8: Review before publishing

You are reviewing this before I publish it.

Materials:

[paste draft]

Review criteria:

1. Is it clear?
2. Is it useful?
3. Does it overpromise?
4. Does it sound generic?
5. What should be removed?
6. What should be made more specific?

Target format:

Give me a revision plan first, then a revised version.

Prompt 9: Explain like I am new

You are helping me understand a new topic.

Topic:

[topic]

Context:

I am a beginner and want practical understanding, not jargon.

Target format:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. Simple example
4. Common mistakes
5. What to learn next

Prompt 10: Build a weekly plan

You are helping me plan my week.

Materials:

Goals:

[paste goals]

Constraints:

[time, deadlines, energy, obligations]

Target format:

Create a weekly plan with:

1. Top priorities
2. Daily focus
3. Tasks to defer
4. Risks
5. First action today

Prompt 11: Summarize a video or transcript

You are helping me extract value from a transcript.

Materials:

[paste transcript]

Target format:

1. Main idea
2. Most useful points
3. Steps or frameworks mentioned
4. Quotes or phrases worth saving
5. How I could apply this
6. Content ideas based on this

Test and tune:

Do not summarize filler. Extract usable value.

Prompt 12: Turn research into a guide

You are helping me turn research into a practical guide.

Materials:
[paste research notes]

Audience:
[audience]

Target format:
Create a guide outline with:

1. Promise
2. Reader problem
3. Core framework
4. Step-by-step process
5. Examples
6. Downloadable tools
7. Social content angles

Test and tune:
Make it useful enough that someone would save it.

Prompt 13: Create a checklist

You are helping me create a checklist.

Task:
[task]

Audience:
[who will use it]

Target format:
Create a checklist grouped by phase.

Test and tune:
Make each item action-oriented and easy to verify.

Prompt 14: Find gaps in my plan

You are reviewing my plan for gaps.

Plan:
[paste plan]

Review criteria:

1. Missing steps
2. Weak assumptions
3. Risks
4. Dependencies
5. Faster path
6. What to do first

Target format:
Give me a table of issues and fixes.

Prompt 15: Create a customer response

You are helping me respond to a customer.

Situation:
[describe situation]

Goal:
[what I want to happen]

Tone:
Calm, respectful, clear.

Target format:
Write the response and include a short note explaining why it works.

Test and tune:
Do not blame the customer. Do not overpromise.

Prompt 16: Create an automation idea

You are helping me find simple automation opportunities.

Materials:
Here are repetitive tasks I do:
[paste list]

Target format:
Create a table with:

1. Task
2. Trigger
3. Action
4. Tool needed
5. Complexity
6. First manual version

Test and tune:
Start with workflows I can test manually before automating.

Prompt 17: Make this beginner-friendly

You are helping me simplify this for beginners.

Materials:
[paste explanation]

Target format:
Rewrite it for someone who is new.

Parameters:

- Use plain language
- Keep the important details
- Remove jargon or explain it
- Include a simple example

Prompt 18: Create a reusable template

You are helping me turn this into a reusable template.

Materials:
[paste example]

Target format:
Create:

1. Template
2. Fill-in-the-blank fields
3. Instructions for use
4. Example completed version

Prompt 19: Compare options with uncertainty

You are helping me compare options when some facts may be uncertain.

Options:
[options]

What I know:
[facts]

What I do not know:
[unknowns]

Target format:
Create a comparison table.

Test and tune:
Label facts, assumptions, and unknowns separately.

Prompt 20: Create the next better prompt

You are helping me improve my use of AI over time.

Task I just completed:

What not to do

Do not use AI output blindly. Microsoft tells Copilot users to review and verify responses because LLMs can produce incorrect content ([Microsoft Copilot prompt guidance](#)).

Do not use AI for high-risk decisions without expert review. Anthropic's eval guidance emphasizes clear tasks, reference solutions, graders, transcript review, and human validation when quality matters ([Anthropic evals guidance](#)).

Do not save prompts that only worked once. Save prompts that work repeatedly.

Do not keep adding words to a bad prompt without knowing what failed. OpenAI's evaluation flywheel recommends diagnosing failure modes before improving prompts ([OpenAI evaluation flywheel](#)).

Do not let the AI "self-improve" without criteria. Anthropic says evaluator-optimizer workflows are best when clear evaluation criteria exist ([Anthropic evaluator-optimizer workflow](#)).

The 7-day practice plan

Day 1: Build your PROMPT+ template

Copy the basic PROMPT+ template into a note.

Use it once on a real task.

Save the result.

Day 2: Add context

Take yesterday's prompt and add:

- Audience
- Goal
- Background
- Constraints
- Example of what good looks like

Run it again.

Compare the result.

Day 3: Add target format

Ask for a specific format:

- Table
- Checklist
- Email
- SOP
- Sprint

Notice how much easier the output is to use.

Day 4: Add review criteria

Add a Test and Tune section.

Ask the AI to check:

- Clarity
- Completeness
- Accuracy risks
- Practical usefulness
- Missing context

Day 5: Use the prompt improver

Paste your original prompt, the output, and your feedback.

Ask the AI to rewrite the prompt for next time.

Save the new version.

Day 6: Build your prompt library

Create a simple table with:

- Prompt name
- Use case
- Best version
- Inputs needed
- Output format
- Review criteria
- Last improved

Save only prompts worth reusing.

Day 7: Create your top 3 prompts

Pick the three AI tasks you will actually repeat.

For most people, those are:

- Rewrite clearly
- Summarize into action items
- Make a decision table

Turn each into a PROMPT+ template.

Final rule

The best prompt is not the longest prompt.

The best prompt is the one that gives the AI enough structure to produce a useful answer, enough criteria to check itself, and enough feedback to improve next time.

Prompting is not the skill of asking once.

Prompting is the skill of building a repeatable loop:

Prompt. Output. Review. Improve. Save. Reuse.

Saveable tools

One-page cheat sheet

PROMPT+

- Purpose: What am I trying to accomplish?
- Role: Who should the AI act like?
- Operating context: What situation matters?
- Materials: What source text or examples should it use?
- Parameters: What rules, limits, tone, and constraints matter?
- Target format: What should the output look like?
- Test and Tune: How should the output be checked and improved?

Prompt scorecard

Category	Score 1-5	Notes
Answered the real task		
Specific enough to use		
Followed requested format		
Used provided context		
Avoided unsupported claims		
Saved time or created an asset		

Prompt library template

Prompt name	Use case	Best version	Inputs needed	Output format	Review criteria	Last improved