

Cheat Sheet: Prompt like a pro: use START

The best prompts are clear, specific, and set in context. With **START** you build strong prompts step by step: Situation, Task, Attention points, Role, and Type of output.

Why it matters

Good prompts follow the same logic as a good cheat sheet: **short, clear, and well-structured**. START helps you remember every element and turns AI from a guessing machine into a useful partner.

✅ Your checklist: START

S – Situation → what is the context or background?

T – Task → what should AI do exactly?

A – Attention points → audience, tone & style

R – Role → from which expertise or voice should AI respond?

T – Type of output → the form of the result (e.g. bullets, table, schema, list, dialogue)

👉 With every prompt ask yourself: have I included all five?

Example: START fully applied

“**You are** a social media expert (**Role**).

Write a post about healthy breakfasts (**Task**)

for busy parents with young children (**Attention points**)

in the context of a weekly meal plan (**Situation**).

Give the answer as 3 short tips with emojis (**Type of output**).”

👉 All five START elements combined = a sharp, useful prompt.

✅ Do's (things to do)	❌ Don'ts (things to avoid)
Be concrete and specific	Give vague instructions
Include context and role	Change everything at once
Specify the result format (output)	Only ask yes/no questions
Refine answers iteratively	Expect AI to guess what you mean

Best practices – summary from earlier cheat sheets

1. **Start simple** – even 2–3 elements are enough.
2. **Be contextual** – more specific = better.
3. **Match your audience** – child ≠ student ≠ manager.
4. **Give AI a role** – expert, coach, or writer changes the answer.
5. **Divide or refine** – break down tasks or improve step by step.
6. **Iterate** – a prompt is not a one-off question, but a dialogue.

Pro tip

Prompting = a **conversation in rounds**:

👉 Question → Answer → Refine → Repeat.

Try this: make a START prompt

Choose a topic that interests you (e.g. travel, cooking, learning).

👉 Write a prompt where you include **all 5 START elements**.



Also try

- Take an old prompt and check: which START elements are missing?
- Ask someone else to review your prompt using the checklist.

Learn & apply

“A good cheat sheet is not a copy, but your own version. The most valuable learning comes from making one yourself!”

👉 **Tip:** Try creating a cheat sheet **without using your textbook**. Everything you forget to include is exactly what you need to practise.

Glossary

- **Prompt** → your instruction or question to AI
- **Situation/Context** → background or setting
- **Task** → the action you want AI to perform
- **Attention points** → audience, tone, style, constraints
- **Role** → the expertise or voice AI should adopt
- **Type of output** → the form of the result (bullets, table, schema, list, dialogue...)
- **Step-by-step prompting** → breaking a task into smaller steps
- **Iterative refinement** → repeating and improving the same prompt
- **Prompt chaining** → a sequence of prompts that build towards a larger result

Discover more



Podcast – Episode 6: [Graduation Day – You've Promptly Done It!](#)



More cheat sheets on prompting: symbio6.nl/en/sheets