

# Cheat Sheet: START strong with AI prompts

Prompting = giving instructions or questions to AI. The better your prompt, the better the answer. With the **START formula**, you'll get faster and more useful results.

## Why it matters

A vague question often produces a vague answer. The more concrete and specific your prompt, the more useful the output. In our workshops we always see: the quality of your input determines the quality of your result.

## The START formula

The 5 building blocks of every good prompt:

**S – Situation** → sketch the context.

**T – Task** → what should AI do?

**A – Attention points** → constraints (tone, length, audience).

**R – Role** → who or what should AI be?

**T – Type of output** → how do you want the result (list, table, text)?

👉 This is your **first introduction** to START. In the [following cheat](#) sheets we'll zoom in on each element, so you learn step by step how START makes your prompts stronger.

## Example

✗ *“Tell me something about dogs.”*

✓ *“Imagine you are a dog expert (**Role**). Explain in 3 bullets (**Type of output**) why labradors are good family dogs (**Situation**), in language for a 12-year-old (**Attention point**).”*

## Tips

1. Start with a **verb** (*write, explain, create*).
2. Add at least **one detail** (audience, tone, or situation).
3. Choose an **output format** (list, table, short text).

## ✔ Checklist

- ✔ Situation mentioned
- ✔ Task clear
- ✔ Attention points included
- ✔ Role chosen
- ✔ Type of output specified

## Try this

Rewrite:

- Vague: *“Help with holiday.”*
- START: *“Create a 3-day itinerary for a family holiday (**Situation**), with 3 activities per day (**Type of output**), in a cheerful tone (**Attention point**).”*

## 🎲 Also try

- *“Write a bedtime story about a time-travelling cat that’s afraid of robots.”*
- *“Explain quantum physics using sandwich metaphors.”*
- *“Give me a Monday morning pep talk from a slightly grumpy AI coach.”*

## Learn & apply

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

👉 **Tip:** *Write a mini cheat sheet with just two elements. Even half a START can already give surprisingly good results.*

## Discover more

- 🎧 Podcast – Episode 1: [Prompting: Don’t Ask, Don’t Get!](#)
- 🔗 More cheat sheets on prompting: [symbio6.nl/en/sheets](https://symbio6.nl/en/sheets)

