

Cheat Sheet: Short & Sharp Prompting

⚡ Long isn't always better – sometimes short & sharp works surprisingly well.

Why this matters

Many users assume that a long prompt automatically produces better results. In our training sessions we see that short prompts are often **faster, clearer, and more usable**. The key is choosing deliberately: short for speed and overview, long for nuance and structure.

Example

✗ Long prompt:

“You are a historian. Write an 800-word essay on the causes of the French Revolution, with an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion, formal tone and sources.”

✓ Short prompt:

“Summarise the French Revolution in 5 bullet points for students.”

👉 Short = quick overview. Long = more nuance and structure.

Tips

- Start short: test if the AI captures the core.
- Add detail if you need more nuance or structure.
- Medium prompts (2–3 sentences) are often the sweet spot.
- Use [START as a checklist](#): choose deliberately which elements are truly needed.

✓ Checklist – Short or Long?

Choose short if...	Choose long if...
You want speed or overview	You need nuance or structure
You mainly want to generate ideas	You want a full, worked-out result
The question is simple	The task is complex or multi-step
You want to test multiple variants	You want one in-depth answer



Try this

Write three versions of the same prompt about climate change:

- **Short:** “Give 3 causes of climate change in bullet points.”
- **Medium:** “Explain the causes in 3 paragraphs for secondary school students.”
- **Long:** “Write an 800-word essay with sources, formal tone, clear structure.”


Learn & Apply

The real difference doesn't come from reading a cheat sheet, but from writing your own. The shorter you formulate, the sharper you think.

Explore more

 Podcast – Episode 4: [Debate Night – Which Prompt Wins?](#)

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

 In our masterclasses you'll learn how to use both short and long prompts effectively.