

# Cheat Sheet: Build your prompt step by step

Step-by-step prompting = breaking a big task into smaller instructions. This gives more control, fewer errors, and a clearer end result.

## Why it matters

If you ask AI to do everything at once, the answer is often vague or messy. By first creating structure and then working through it step by step, you keep an overview and can adjust along the way.

## START in focus

**S – Situation** → who, where, when

**T – Task** → what should AI do

**A – Attention points** → audience, tone & style

**R – Role** → from which perspective does AI answer

**T – Type of output** → in what form should the answer come

👉 Here it's about the **method**: dividing a task into steps (*prompt chaining*). (Not to be confused with [iterative refinement](#): that's improving the same prompt.)

## Examples

❌ *“Write a full annual report for our association.”*

✅ *“First make an outline with 5 chapters → then expand each chapter separately → finally improve language and style.”*

## One-step vs. Multi-step

One-step	Multi-step
“Write a product description for a smart coffee machine.”	1 “List the features of the coffee machine.”
	2 “Write a short description for each feature.”
	3 “Rewrite everything in a persuasive style.”



## Step-by-step build-up

1. **Outline** – create an overview or structure.
2. **Expansion** – fill in the content per section.
3. **Improvement** – adjust language, style, or audience.

## Tips

1. Start with an outline: *“Make an overview of ...”*
2. Use plain language – short, simple instructions work best.
3. Work on one section at a time before moving on.
4. Keep it interactive: adjust if a step goes wrong.
5. Finish with an improvement prompt (shorter, new audience, new tone).

## ✓ Checklist

- ☑ Break it down – cut the task into small parts.
- ☑ Order – start broad, then go into detail.
- ☑ Dialogue – check along the way if adjustments are needed.
- ☑ Final check – only improve once everything is in place.

## Try this: three-part prompt

Topic: *Blog about healthy eating*

1. *“Make an outline with 5 headings.”*
2. *“Write up to 100 words under each heading.”*
3. *“Rewrite the whole text in an informal style for students.”*

👉 Same task, but much clearer and easier to control.

## Also try

- “First create a scheme for a lesson plan, then expand the explanation.”
- “Give three angles for an article, then work out one version.”
- “Summarise a text in bullets, then rewrite it as a LinkedIn post.”

## Learn & apply

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

👉 **Tip:** Begin with structure: write a mini cheat sheet in 3 steps (Outline → Expansion → Improvement).

## Discover more

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

 More cheat sheets on prompting: [symbio6.nl/en/sheets](https://symbio6.nl/en/sheets)

