

BUILD A PROMPT WORTH RUNNING

Turn one real task into a tested prompt and a checked draft.

You don't need to guess the perfect instructions before you start. Let AI interview you, then write a prompt for your approval. The useful twist is to name a believable wrong answer first, so you have a reason to reject a polished result—not just admire its formatting.

You'll need: An AI chat tool you're allowed to use; available privacy and personalization controls vary by tool, account, and interface; One small task, such as a process-change email or meeting action list, with source facts you can check; A document to save your task notes, approved prompt, and test result.

1. Define the win and the miss

Choose a task where a missed detail would cause real editing, not a sentence that just needs trimming.

1. In your document, write what you need to produce, who'll use it, and what that person must understand or do afterward. Keep the outcome small enough to judge from one draft.
2. Add the confirmed facts and boundaries the output must preserve, including relevant dates, exceptions, and scope. List missing facts separately, with the person or source that can settle each one.
3. Describe one answer that could look useful but still fail. For meeting notes, that might be an action list assigning an owner nobody agreed to.
4. Turn that miss into an observable rejection test: every named owner must be supported by the notes; otherwise, the output must say [NEEDS INPUT]. You now have a standard to review against.

Before sharing material, remove details the task doesn't need. Don't upload protected, confidential, or third-party information unless your organization's rules and the tool's approved settings permit it. Privacy controls aren't permission to share.

2. Let AI interview you

The interview should find gaps that matter, not manufacture more homework.

1. Start a chat and paste the prompt below. Replace both bracketed sections with your task notes and rejection test.

2. Answer each question with a confirmed fact or a decision you're authorized to make. When you don't know, say so and ask for [NEEDS INPUT] rather than supplying a convenient guess.
3. If the questions miss an important boundary, add it before the interview ends. If AI starts doing the task, redirect it to finish the questions and return instructions only.
4. Keep the proposed prompt in the conversation for review. The expected result is a set of instructions, not the finished email or action list.

Help me build instructions for one task before doing it.

Task notes: [paste outcome, audience, success test, confirmed facts, boundaries, and unknowns].

Believable wrong result and rejection test: [paste both].

Ask up to five focused clarifying questions, one at a time, waiting for each answer. Ask only about missing information that would materially change the result.

Then return only a proposed task prompt for my approval. Include the objective, relevant context, constraints, output format, and a specific check for my rejection test. Make it usable without this conversation, identifying any source material it needs. Separate confirmed facts from assumptions and suggested requirements. Instruct it not to invent missing information and to mark unresolved facts or decisions [NEEDS INPUT]. Do not perform the task yet.

3. Approve the instructions, not the confidence

1. Compare the proposed prompt with your notes and original sources. Check names, dates, rules, and exceptions individually. Watch scope: "internal meetings" isn't "all meetings."
2. Tell AI which additions to keep, change, or remove, and request a revised prompt only. A suggested word limit may be useful; an invented deadline isn't.
3. Resolve unknowns that change what someone should do, using the responsible person or original source. Leave other gaps visibly marked rather than turning them into facts.
4. Read the revision yourself. Approve it only when it preserves your facts, includes the rejection test, and contains all necessary context or explicitly names its required inputs.

AI's self-review can catch inconsistencies, but it isn't independent fact verification. For material affecting someone's job, money, or reputation, have the appropriate human expert review the relevant content.

4. Test without the interview

1. Open a fresh chat and submit only the approved task prompt and its required source material. Don't bring the interview along: you're testing whether the instructions carry their own context.
2. Compare the resulting draft directly with your sources and success test. Apply your rejection test explicitly; for the meeting example, locate supporting text for each assigned owner.
3. If the result fails, identify the missing or unclear instruction, revise the saved prompt, and rerun it in a fresh chat. Don't add rules unrelated to the failure.
4. Save the latest prompt, the tested draft, and a short note recording the rejection test and whether it passed. Mark unresolved failures as needs work.

For a cleaner ChatGPT test, use Temporary Chat, which doesn't use personalization memories, and disable task-specific custom instructions. Other tools have different controls; a fresh chat alone may not isolate personalization.

You're done when...

You're done when the saved draft meets your success test and avoids the named failure without unsupported facts. Use it after any required human approval; check future outputs too.

Official setup & help

[OpenAI Help: Temporary Chat FAQ](#)

[OpenAI Help: Data Controls FAQ](#)