

10 prompt patterns to get genuinely good answers from ChatGPT

10 copy-and-paste prompt patterns you can use every day, how to set ChatGPT up for you, and a short prompt checklist.

burakozerweb.com/en/resources/chatgpt-prompt-patterns

Two people ask ChatGPT the same question. One gets a generic answer you could read anywhere; the other gets something they can use right away. Most of the time the difference is not the model, it is how the question is put together. This guide gives you 10 prompt patterns you can reuse every day, each with what it does, a copyable example and when to use it. At the end you will set ChatGPT up to fit you and get a short checklist to run through before you hit send.

What you need

- A ChatGPT account (the free plan is enough for this guide)
- A real piece of work you are dealing with: an email, a post, a decision, a plan
- About 20 minutes and a willingness to experiment



ChatGPT

An all-round chat assistant for writing, ideas, summaries and everyday questions.

[Open the tool: chatgpt.com](https://chatgpt.com)

The five parts of a good prompt

Every pattern below is a different combination of the same five parts. Keep these in mind and you will not need to memorise the patterns:

- **Role:** Whose eyes should ChatGPT look through? (editor, accountant, teacher)
- **Context:** Who are you, who is this for, why are you doing it?
- **Task:** What exactly do you want? One clear sentence.
- **Constraints:** Length, tone, things to avoid, deadlines.
- **Output format:** Bullet list, table, email draft?

Fill in the square brackets with your own details. The more specific you are, the more the answer will fit you.

10 prompt patterns

1. Role + context

The most basic and most useful pattern. Give ChatGPT an expert role and a few sentences about your situation, and the answer is shaped for you instead of for "everyone".

PROMPT 1

```
You are an experienced [expert role] specialising in [field].  
Context: [describe your work, situation and goal in 2-3 sentences].  
Task: [state what you want in one sentence].  
Constraints: [length, tone, things to avoid].  
Give the output as [a bullet list / a table / a short paragraph].
```

When: Almost every time you start a new chat. Most of the other patterns build on this one.

2. Give examples

Describing what you want can be hard; showing it is much easier. Give two or three examples you like and have ChatGPT pull out what they share first, so it really captures the style.

PROMPT 2

```
Below are three examples of [product descriptions / posts / emails] that I like. First, list what they have in common (length, tone, structure, word choice) in 5 bullet points. Then write 3 new pieces about [topic] in the same style. Do not copy the examples, only capture the style.
```

```
Example 1: [text]  
Example 2: [text]  
Example 3: [text]
```

When: Whenever you want a specific voice or format: social posts, product descriptions, customer emails.

3. Think step by step

Jumping straight to a conclusion on a complex question raises the risk of a wrong answer. Asking the model to lay out its reasoning improves the answer and makes it easier for you to spot where it went wrong.

PROMPT 3

```
I am working on [problem or decision]. Do not jump to the conclusion. First summarise the problem in your own words, then list the factors that matter, assess each one in turn, and finish with a recommendation and your reasoning. Flag any assumptions you are unsure about separately.
```

When: When making decisions, on questions that need calculation or logic, or when looking for the root cause of a problem.

4. Ask me questions first

In my view this is the least used pattern that makes the biggest difference. An answer built on missing information is a guess. When ChatGPT asks first, it finds the gaps and you just fill them in.

PROMPT 4

I need your help with [the task]. Before you start, ask me the 5 most important questions you need answered to do this well. Ask them all at once as a numbered list. Do not produce anything until I have answered.

When: When you are not sure exactly what you want, or the job needs a lot of detail: a business plan, a CV, campaign copy.

5. Critique and improve

By default ChatGPT is polite and tends to praise your work. Explicitly asking for criticism is the fastest way to get feedback you can use.

PROMPT 5

Critique the following [text / plan / presentation draft] from the point of view of [target audience]. First, list the 3 weakest points with your reasoning, then suggest a concrete fix for each. Finally, give me an improved version with those fixes applied. Skip the praise and be honest.

[paste your text here]

When: As a final check before you send or publish anything.

6. Set the format

If you do not say what the answer should look like, you get long paragraphs. Asking for a table with named columns and a row limit makes the information readable at a glance.

PROMPT 6

Give me the information about [topic] as a table. Columns: [Column 1], [Column 2], [Column 3], [Column 4]. No more than [8] rows. Below the table, write the single most important takeaway in one sentence. Do not add any other explanation.

When: For comparisons, summaries, lists, or anything you will paste into a spreadsheet.

7. Change the tone

If you have a text with the right information but the wrong tone, reshape it instead of rewriting it. The key is to say clearly that the meaning must stay the same and nothing new should be added.

PROMPT 7

Rewrite the text below to be [warmer / more formal / shorter and clearer]. Reader: [who]. Keep the meaning and all the information; do not add anything new. Stay under [word count] words. At the end, summarise what you changed in 3 bullet points.

[text]

When: When you need to deliver the same information to a client, a manager or your followers in different tones.

8. Compare options

Ask "which is better?" and you get a generic answer. Give your criteria and your situation and you get an assessment that actually fits you.

PROMPT 8

I cannot decide between [Option A], [Option B] and [Option C] for [the decision]. My situation: [budget, time, skills, priorities]. Compare these options in a table on [criterion 1], [criterion 2], [criterion 3] and [criterion 4]. Then tell me which one I should choose given my situation, and under what conditions that recommendation would change.

When: When choosing a tool, method, course, supplier or strategy.

9. Turn it into a plan or checklist

Turning a goal into to-dos is often the hardest part. Give the time frame, how much time you have each week and ask for a "done" criterion, and you get a plan you can actually follow.

PROMPT 9

My goal: [goal]. Time frame: [duration]. Time I can spend per week: [hours]. Turn this into a workable plan: split it into weeks, list no more than 3 concrete tasks per week, and state the criterion for each task to count as done. At the end, add the 3 most common sticking points and how to prevent each one.

When: When learning a new skill, starting a project, or turning scattered notes into an organised list.

10. Iterate and refine

The first answer is a draft, not the final version. Instead of opening a new chat, say in the same chat what you want changed, as a numbered and specific list, and ask it to keep the parts you like.

PROMPT 10

This is a good start. Now change only the following:

1. [e.g. cut the intro in half]
2. [e.g. use a concrete example instead of abstract wording]
3. [e.g. add a clear call to action at the end]

Leave everything else exactly as it is and give me only the updated version.

When: Always. A good result usually comes after two or three rounds of edits.

Combine the patterns

You do not have to use the patterns on their own. I usually combine 1 and 4: I give the role and context first, then say "ask me questions before you start". Once the answer comes in, I go over it with 5 and 10.

Set ChatGPT up to fit you

You do not have to introduce yourself in every chat. ChatGPT's settings have a Personalization section. Menu locations change from time to time, but you can usually find it by clicking your profile icon and opening Settings. Three things there are worth your time:

- **Custom instructions:** Where you write what ChatGPT should know about you and how you want it to respond. What you write here applies to all new chats.
- **Style and tone:** Settings that set the overall feel of the answers (for example more professional, friendlier, more concise).
- **Memory:** Lets ChatGPT keep details it learns from your chats or that you ask it to remember. You can see what it remembers, delete entries you do not want, or turn the feature off entirely.

Fill in the template below and paste it into the custom instructions field:

PROMPT 11

About me: [your job / what you do], [who you serve or your audience]. I mostly use ChatGPT for [writing content / email / planning / learning].

How I want you to respond: Be brief and clear, lead with the answer, then add detail if needed. Say clearly when you are unsure; do not make things up. If information needed for the task is missing, ask first. Organise long answers with headings and bullet points. No flattery or filler openings.

Be careful what you put into memory and chats

Do not type ID numbers, passwords, bank details, your clients' personal data or your company's confidential documents into custom instructions or chats. You can also check in the data controls part of Settings whether your chats may be used to improve the models.

Prompt checklist

Before sending an important prompt, spend 30 seconds on this table. You do not need a "yes" on every line, but the more yeses, the better the answer.

Check	What happens if it is missing
Did I give it a role?	The answer stays generic and shallow.
Did I say who I am and who this is for?	You get a tone and content that do not fit the audience.
Is the task one clear sentence?	ChatGPT guesses what to prioritise.
Did I state length, tone and what to avoid?	The text comes out too long or in the wrong tone.
Did I specify the output format?	You get long, hard-to-read paragraphs.
Did I give an example where possible?	It takes several more rounds to capture the style.
Did I ask it to flag what it is unsure of?	Wrong information may be presented as fact.

Common mistakes

1. Writing a one-line prompt and expecting a perfect answer. A short question gets a short, generic answer.
2. Settling for the first answer. The second and third rounds are often where the real difference is.
3. Cramming everything into one prompt. Split research, drafting and editing into separate steps.
4. Using numbers, dates, sources or legal details without checking them. ChatGPT can produce information that sounds confident but is wrong.
5. Opening a new chat for the same topic over and over. Stay in the same chat to keep the context, or briefly carry the context over to the new one.

Next step

This week, pick just three of these 10 patterns and try them on real work. Save the ones that fit you in a notes file; within a few weeks you will have your own prompt library. If you want to try other tools too, [browse the other guides](#). To hear when new prompts and guides come out, [join the newsletter](#).

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