

PROMPT LIBRARY • FIELD GUIDE 001

# 50 Prompts for Better Work

A practical prompt library for clearer decisions, stronger work, and more useful conversations.

FIELD GUIDE • 001

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### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Start with the prompt that matches the work in front of you. Replace the bracketed text with your context, then review the result with judgment.

# 50 Prompts for Better Work

## A practical prompt library from Inference Bulletin

### Practical AI, distilled.

This is a working library for turning AI into a more reliable thinking and communication aid. The prompts are organized around five recurring kinds of work:

1. Making decisions
2. Reviewing work
3. Planning work
4. Summarizing information
5. Preparing for difficult conversations

Replace text in square brackets with your context. Give the model the source material, constraints, and desired audience whenever possible.

## Before you start

- Do not paste confidential, personal, regulated, or client-restricted information into a tool that is not approved for it.
- Treat AI output as a draft. Verify facts, numbers, citations, and consequential recommendations.
- Ask for uncertainty to be stated plainly. A confident answer is not necessarily a reliable one.
- For important work, provide the relevant document or data rather than relying on a summary from memory.

## A useful instruction to add to any prompt

### THE INFERENCE

If information is missing, list the assumptions you are making before you answer. Separate facts from inferences and recommendations. Be concise, specific, and honest about uncertainty.

# 1. Decision-making

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## 01 Clarify the decision

I need to decide [decision]. The decision owner is [person or team], and the deadline is [date].

Help me frame this decision. Identify:

1. The decision that actually needs to be made.
2. What is in scope and out of scope.
3. The minimum information required to decide well.
4. The risks of delaying the decision.
5. The next three actions to take.

Use a short decision brief format.

## 02 Compare options fairly

Compare these options for [goal]:

- Option A: [description]
- Option B: [description]
- Option C: [description]

Evaluate them against these criteria: [criteria]. Create a comparison table with trade-offs, dependencies, likely failure modes, and the conditions under which each option is the best choice. Do not recommend an option until after the comparison.

## 03 Identify hidden assumptions

I am considering [decision or proposal]. Here is my current reasoning:

[reasoning]

Identify the assumptions behind it. For each assumption, explain why it matters, what evidence would test it, and what changes if the assumption is wrong. Prioritize the assumptions that could reverse the decision.

## 04 Run a pre-mortem

We are about to [plan, launch, or decision]. Assume that six months from now it failed.

Write a pre-mortem that identifies the 10 most plausible reasons for failure. For each reason, include an early warning sign, the likely owner, and one practical mitigation we can take now.

## 05 Separate reversible from irreversible choices

Help me assess this decision: [decision].

Classify its components as:

- Easily reversible
- Reversible with cost
- Difficult or impossible to reverse

For each component, state what level of evidence and review it deserves. Recommend a decision process that is proportionate to the irreversible parts, not the reversible ones.

## 06 Build a decision memo

Turn the following notes into a one-page decision memo:

[notes]

Use these headings: decision needed, context, options considered, evaluation criteria, recommendation, key risks, dissenting view, and next step. Mark any unsupported claim as an assumption or open question.

## 07 Argue the strongest opposing case

I currently favor [preferred option] over [alternative]. Make the strongest credible case for the alternative.

Focus on evidence, operational reality, second-order effects, and what my preferred option may be underestimating. Then list the facts that would most efficiently settle the disagreement.

## 08 Choose metrics before acting

We are deciding whether to [initiative]. Propose a measurement plan before we proceed.

Define the primary outcome, leading indicators, guardrail metrics, baseline, target, review date, and decision rule for continuing, changing, or stopping the initiative. Keep the plan practical for a team with [available data and tools].

## 09 Map stakeholders and consequences

Analyze the stakeholder consequences of [decision]. Include affected users, customers, operators, leaders, partners, and groups who may be indirectly affected.

For each group, explain the likely benefit, cost, concern, and what we should communicate or validate before deciding. Flag groups whose perspective is currently missing.

## 10 Recommend a next step under uncertainty

Given this situation:

[context]

We cannot wait for complete information. Recommend the smallest sensible next decision. Explain what is known, unknown, reversible, and worth testing now. Include a clear stop condition and the evidence that would justify changing course.

## 2. Reviewing work

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### 11 Review a draft against its purpose

Review the following [document, email, proposal, or presentation] for its stated purpose: [purpose]. The intended audience is [audience].

First summarize the main message in one sentence. Then identify where the draft is unclear, unsupported, repetitive, too vague, or mismatched to the audience. Suggest specific revisions, preserving the author's intent.

[draft]

### 12 Find gaps in an argument

Analyze this argument:

[argument]

Identify the conclusion, supporting claims, evidence, assumptions, and missing links. Flag logical leaps, weak evidence, and counterarguments that have not been addressed. Then suggest the three highest-value improvements.

### 13 Conduct a plain-language edit

Edit this text for clarity and plain language without making it casual or changing its meaning:

[text]

Prefer concrete verbs, short sentences, active voice when useful, and defined terms. Return:

1. A revised version.
2. Five material changes and why they improve readability.

## 14 Review a plan for execution risk

Review this project plan for execution risk:

[plan]

Look for unclear ownership, missing dependencies, unrealistic sequencing, ambiguous success criteria, unaddressed risks, and bottlenecks. Return a table with the issue, why it matters, severity, and a proposed fix.

## 15 Test for audience objections

Act as [audience or stakeholder group] reviewing this proposal:

[proposal]

List the questions, objections, and trust concerns this audience is likely to have. Distinguish reasonable objections from misunderstandings caused by the writing. Suggest revisions that answer the reasonable objections directly.

## 16 Check for factual verification needs

Review this draft and identify every claim that should be verified before publication or approval:

[draft]

For each claim, label it as a fact, estimate, interpretation, prediction, or recommendation. State what kind of source or evidence would verify it. Do not invent citations.

## 17 Tighten a meeting agenda

Review this meeting agenda:

[agenda]

Remove items that do not require discussion, identify missing decisions, and propose a tighter agenda with time boxes, owners, required pre-reading, and expected outcomes. The meeting is [length] long and includes [participants].

## 18 Review for unintended consequences

Review this policy, process, or product change for unintended consequences:

[change]

Consider edge cases, incentives, workload shifts, accessibility, privacy, abuse, support burden, and effects on groups with less power. Prioritize the most credible risks and suggest mitigations.

## 19 Quality-check a deliverable

Create a quality-control review for this deliverable:

[deliverable]

Assess it for accuracy, completeness, coherence, usability, consistency, and fit for purpose. Use a pass, revise, or block rating for each category. List only actionable issues and propose a final review checklist.

## 20 Red-team an important message

Red-team this message before I send it:

[message]

Look for ambiguity, accidental commitments, problematic tone, unsupported claims, legal or reputational risk, and language that could be interpreted differently by the recipient. Explain the risk, then provide a safer revision where needed.

# 3. Planning work

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## 21 Turn a goal into an execution plan

Turn this goal into a practical execution plan:

[goal]

The deadline is [date]. Available people and resources are [resources].

Define the outcome, milestones, tasks, owners, dependencies, risks, and weekly review questions. Sequence the work so the highest-risk assumptions are tested early.

## 22 Plan the first two weeks

I am starting [project or initiative]. Design a focused plan for the first two weeks.

Include the smallest set of actions that will clarify scope, reveal dependencies, establish ownership, and produce an early signal of progress. Specify what not to do yet and why.

## 23 Break down a complex project

Break down this project into manageable workstreams:

[project description]

For each workstream, define its objective, deliverables, owner type, inputs, dependencies, and acceptance criteria. Then propose the order in which the workstreams should begin.

## 24 Prepare for a project kickoff

Create a project kickoff brief for [project]. The audience is [team or stakeholders].

Include: problem, desired outcome, non-goals, scope, roles, decision process, timeline, risks, communication cadence, and the questions that must be resolved in the kickoff meeting.

## 25 Build a realistic timeline

Create a realistic timeline for [project] from [start date] to [end date].

Use these constraints: [constraints]. Identify critical dependencies, work that can happen in parallel, decision points, review periods, and contingency time. Call out any deadline that appears unsupported by the scope.

## 26 Define a minimum viable version

We want to deliver [idea or product]. Help define the minimum viable version.

Separate must-have outcomes from nice-to-have features. Propose the smallest version that can test the core value proposition with [target users]. Explain what to defer and what evidence would justify adding it later.

## 27 Prepare a weekly status update

Turn these project notes into a concise weekly status update:

[notes]

Use these headings: progress this week, evidence of progress, risks and blockers, decisions needed, next week's priorities, and requests for help. Make unclear ownership and dates explicit.

## 28 Plan an experiment

Design an experiment to test this assumption: [assumption].

Define the hypothesis, target group, intervention, comparison, duration, success metric, guardrails, sample limitations, and decision rule. Favor the least expensive experiment that can produce a useful signal.

## 29 Prepare a handoff

Create a handoff plan for [work, project, or responsibility] moving from [current owner] to [new owner].

Include current state, decisions already made, key contacts, recurring tasks, access and documentation needs, known risks, first-week priorities, and questions the new owner should ask.

## 30 Plan for a constrained week

I have [number] hours available this week and these commitments:

[commitments]

Help me choose the work that matters most. Sort tasks into must do, should do, delegate, defer, and stop. Explain the trade-offs and produce a realistic daily plan with buffer time.

## 4. Summarizing information

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### 31 Create an executive summary

Summarize the following material for an executive who has five minutes:

[source material]

Use these headings: what happened, why it matters, evidence, uncertainty, implications, and recommended next step. Limit the summary to [word count] words. Do not add facts that are not in the material.

### 32 Extract decisions and actions

Review these meeting notes or transcript:

[notes]

Extract decisions made, actions agreed, owners, deadlines, open questions, and points of disagreement. If an owner or deadline is not explicit, label it as missing rather than guessing.

### 33 Compare multiple sources

Compare these sources on [topic]:

Source 1: [text or link notes]

Source 2: [text or link notes]

Source 3: [text or link notes]

Identify where they agree, disagree, rely on different evidence, or use different definitions. Then provide a synthesis that distinguishes established facts from unresolved questions.

## 34 Distill a research paper

Explain this research paper for a practical professional audience:

[paper or excerpt]

Cover the research question, method, findings, limitations, what the findings do not show, and the practical implication. Avoid overstating results. Define technical terms briefly when first used.

## 35 Summarize a long document by theme

Organize this document into the five to seven themes that matter most:

[document]

For each theme, provide the key point, supporting evidence, important caveats, and one quotation or passage reference from the source. End with the decisions or questions the document raises.

## 36 Create a brief from messy notes

Turn these rough notes into a clear briefing:

[notes]

Separate confirmed facts, interpretations, decisions, open questions, and follow-up actions. Preserve important details, but remove repetition and unclear shorthand. Flag contradictions instead of silently resolving them.

## 37 Explain a technical topic at the right level

Explain [technical topic] for [audience], who already knows [relevant background].

Use one short analogy only if it improves accuracy. Cover how it works, when it is useful, its main limitations, and the questions this audience should ask before adopting it. Avoid hype and unnecessary jargon.

## 38 Turn an update into implications

Here is an announcement or update:

[announcement]

Summarize the factual change first. Then explain the likely implications for [audience or industry], including who benefits, who may need to adapt, what remains uncertain, and one action worth considering now.

## 39 Build a reading brief

I need to read the following material before [meeting or decision]:

[material]

Create a reading brief with the essential context, key claims, data points to verify, likely points of debate, and five questions I should be prepared to answer. Keep it to one page.

## 40 Surface what is missing

Assess this summary or briefing for missing information:

[summary]

Identify the questions a careful reader would still need answered before acting. Group the gaps into context, evidence, stakeholders, implementation, cost, risk, and measurement. Prioritize the three most consequential gaps.

## 5. Preparing for difficult conversations

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### 41 Prepare a direct but respectful message

Help me prepare for a conversation with [person or role] about [issue]. My goal is [goal].

Draft a direct, respectful opening that states the observable facts, the impact, and the conversation I want to have. Avoid diagnosing motives, assigning blame, or softening the message until it becomes unclear.

### 42 Plan a feedback conversation

I need to give feedback about [behavior or outcome] to [person]. Here are the facts:

[facts]

Help me prepare a conversation that is specific, fair, and actionable. Include an opening, questions to understand their perspective, the expected change, support I can offer, and how to agree on follow-up.

### 43 Raise a disagreement constructively

I disagree with [person or team] about [decision or approach]. Their position is [position]. My concern is [concern].

Help me state the disagreement constructively. Separate shared goals, factual disagreements, assumptions, and preferences. Draft questions that invite a productive discussion rather than a debate to win.

### 44 Say no with context

Draft a respectful but firm response declining this request:

[request]

My reason is [reason]. Offer an alternative only if it is realistic. Keep the response clear about what I can and cannot do, without overexplaining or apologizing excessively.

## 45 Address a missed commitment

Help me prepare a conversation about this missed commitment:

[commitment and what happened]

Create a fact-based opening, questions to understand what happened, a way to discuss impact, and a clear agreement for preventing a repeat. Keep the tone accountable and non-accusatory.

## 46 Request a change in behavior

I need to ask [person] to change this recurring behavior: [behavior]. The impact is [impact].

Draft a concise request using specific examples and a clear future expectation. Include two questions that help uncover constraints or misunderstandings. Do not assume intent.

## 47 Prepare for a performance conversation

Help me prepare for a performance conversation about [topic]. The relevant examples are:

[examples]

Organize the discussion around expectations, observed results, impact, the other person's perspective, support, measurable next steps, and a follow-up date. Flag statements that are vague, subjective, or not supported by examples.

## 48 Repair a misunderstanding

I think there has been a misunderstanding with [person or group] about [topic]. Here is what happened:

[context]

Draft a message or conversation outline that acknowledges the misunderstanding without accepting responsibility for things that are not mine. Clarify the facts, invite their view, and propose a path to resolution.

## 49 Communicate a difficult decision

Help me communicate this difficult decision to [audience]:

[decision and context]

Write a message that explains what is changing, why it is changing, who is affected, what happens next, and where people can raise questions. Be honest about what cannot be shared. Avoid false reassurance and corporate jargon.

## 50 Debrief a hard conversation

I had a difficult conversation. Here are my notes:

[notes]

Help me separate what was said from my interpretation of it. Identify points of agreement, unresolved issues, commitments, and any follow-up needed. Then draft a short follow-up message that confirms the shared understanding and next steps.

## Make these prompts your own

The most useful prompt is rarely the longest one. Add the relevant source material, explain the decision or outcome you need, and state the constraints that matter. Then review the output with the same judgment you would apply to work produced by a colleague.

For more practical AI intelligence, subscribe to [Inference Bulletin](#).