

AI SHORTCUT · VOL 1



The AI Shortcut Playbook

100 workflows that give you back 10 hours a week

R. ROVER

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How to use this book

You don't need to read this book in order. Each chapter solves one job, and each one is built the same way, so you always know where you are.

1. **The story.** A moment you'll recognise, where AI saved time or wasted it.
2. **The shortcut.** The whole method in one or two sentences.
3. **Five workflows.** Numbered steps you can follow today. There are 100 across the book.
4. **Copy-paste prompts.** Ready to use. Swap anything in **[brackets]** for your own details.
5. **Worksheet.** A page to apply the chapter to your own work.
6. **Do this today.** One 15-minute action, so the chapter turns into a habit.
7. **Recap card.** The chapter on one page. Screenshot it and keep it on your phone.

Start here: if you're new to AI, read Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 first. If you already use AI daily, jump straight to the part that matches the job in front of you.

A note on tools. The methods in this book work in any good assistant. Where a specific tool matters, the chapter says so and explains what it's for, so you can swap in whatever you prefer.

02

The prompt formula

Why AI answers go wrong, and the five-part fix that works in every assistant



THE STORY

It's 9:40 on a Tuesday. A client wants a short proposal by lunch, so you open your AI assistant and type the obvious thing:

"Write a proposal for a social media package."

Eight seconds later you have six hundred confident words. They mention "leveraging synergies." They promise results you never offered. They're addressed to nobody in particular, priced at nothing in particular, and written in a voice that sounds like a brochure for a bank. You spend the next forty minutes rewriting it, and by the end you're fairly sure it would have been faster to write it yourself.

Here's the part nobody tells you: the AI did exactly what you asked. You asked for *a* proposal, so you got the average of every proposal it has ever seen. It didn't know who the client was, what you sell, what you charge, how you sound, or how long the thing should be. It filled every gap with a guess, and the guesses were bland.

Now run the same moment again. This time, before you hit enter, you spend sixty seconds filling five short slots: who the AI should be, what it needs to know, what you actually want, what the result should look like, and what it should do when it's done. Same assistant, same nine-forty on a Tuesday. The first draft comes back addressed to the right person, priced correctly, in your tone, on one page, and it ends by listing the two things it wasn't sure about.

You send it at 10:05.

< THE SHORTCUT

A good prompt isn't clever wording. It's five slots filled in: **Role, Context, Goal, Format, Ending**. Fill all five and you get usable answers the first time, in any assistant.

Why answers go wrong

Almost every disappointing AI answer can be traced to a gap. The assistant can't see your screen, your inbox, your history with the client or the picture in your head. When something is missing, it doesn't stop and ask. It quietly fills the hole with the most typical answer it knows, and "typical" is exactly what makes AI writing feel flat.

The five failures below cover nearly every bad answer you'll ever get. Learn to spot them and you'll know what to fix before you've finished reading the reply.

What you see	What was missing	The fix
Generic, could be anyone	Role	Tell it who to be and who it's talking to
Wrong assumptions, wrong details	Context	Give it the facts it can't guess
Long, wandering, misses the point	Goal	Say exactly what a good result does
A wall of text you have to reshape	Format	Describe the shape: length, structure, layout
A dead end, or confident guessing	Ending	Tell it how to finish: questions, options, next step

Notice that none of these is about "magic words." You don't need to flatter the AI, threaten it, or add "you are a world-class genius." You need to hand over the information a smart new colleague would need on their first day.

The new-colleague test. Before you send a prompt, imagine handing the same note to a sharp assistant who started this morning. Would they need to come back with questions? Those questions are your missing slots.

The five slots

1. Role: who should answer, and for whom

The role sets the voice, the level of expertise and the point of view. “Write a reply” gets you a polite nobody. “You’re a friendly customer support lead at a small skincare brand, replying to a first-time customer” gets you someone with a job, a tone and a reader in mind.

A strong role has two halves: **who the AI is** and **who it’s speaking to**. The second half is the one people forget. An explanation of interest rates for a finance director and one for a nervous first-time buyer should not sound the same.

Weak: You are an expert marketer.

Strong: You’re a marketing lead at a small café chain, writing for local customers aged 25–40 who follow us for new menu items.

2. Context: what it can’t possibly know

Context is the facts. Your product, your price, your deadline, what’s already been tried, what the other person said, what must not be mentioned. This is where most of the quality comes from, and it’s the slot people skip because it feels like extra typing.

Paste things in. If you’re replying to an email, paste the email. If you’re writing about a product, paste the product page. If there’s a decision already made, say so. AI is very good at working with material you give it and much less reliable when it has to invent the material itself.

Don’t paste what you shouldn’t share. Client passwords, card numbers, ID numbers and anything confidential stay out of public AI tools. Replace them with placeholders like [CLIENT NAME] or [AMOUNT] and fill them in afterwards.

3. Goal: what a good result actually does

“Write a post about our sale” is a topic, not a goal. A goal describes the outcome: “*Get followers to click the link and use code AUTUMN before Sunday.*” Once the AI knows what the text is for, it makes better choices about everything else: what to lead with, what to cut, what to repeat.

A useful habit is to finish this sentence before you write the prompt: **“This is good if...”**

- This is good if the client says yes to a call.
- This is good if my manager can read it in under a minute.
- This is good if a beginner can follow it without asking me anything.

4. Format: the shape of the answer

Format is everything about how the result looks: length, structure, headings or none, bullet points or paragraphs, a table, a subject line, plain text for WhatsApp, three options instead of one. If you don’t specify it, you’ll usually get something longer than you wanted, with more headings than you needed.

Be concrete. “Short” means different things to different people; “under 80 words” doesn’t. “Make it clear” is a wish; “one sentence per point, no jargon, a table at the end” is a format.

Weak: Keep it short and professional.

Strong: Under 120 words. Three short paragraphs. No bullet points. End with one clear question.

5. Ending: what it does when it’s finished

This is the slot almost nobody uses, and it’s the one that turns AI from a vending machine into a collaborator. The ending tells the assistant how to close the job:

- **Ask before answering:** “Before you write anything, ask me up to 3 questions about anything unclear.”

- **Flag doubts:** “After the draft, list anything you assumed that I should check.”
- **Offer options:** “Give me 3 versions with different tones, labelled.”
- **Point forward:** “End with the single next step I should take.”

Without an ending, the AI treats every request as finished the moment it stops typing. With one, it tells you where it guessed, which is exactly where mistakes hide.

THE FIVE-SLOT PROMPT

Role	· You are [who], writing for [whom].
Context	· Here's what you need to know: [facts, pasted material, constraints].
Goal	· This is good if [outcome].
Format	· Give it as [length, structure, layout].
Ending	· Then [ask questions / flag assumptions / give options / next step].

You won't always need all five at full strength. A quick question (“What's the capital of Portugal?”) needs none of them. But anything you'd be annoyed to rewrite (a message, a document, a plan, a post) deserves the sixty seconds.

The five workflows

WORKFLOW 06

The 60-second upgrade

Use it when: you've typed a one-liner and you're about to hit enter.

1. Stop before sending. Read your prompt and ask: which of the five slots is empty?
2. Add one line for each empty slot. Don't polish; fragments are fine.
3. Paste any material the AI would need: the email, the notes, the product details.
4. Send. Compare the result with what you'd normally get.

Example. The one-liner “*Write a caption for our new hoodie*” becomes:

You're the social media manager for a small streetwear brand; our followers are 18–30 and like a dry, funny tone. We're launching an oversized black hoodie, AED 180, heavyweight cotton, limited to 200 pieces, available Friday at 6 pm on our website. Goal: get people to turn on post notifications so they don't miss the drop. Under 60 words, two short lines plus a call to action, max 3 hashtags. Then give me one alternative opening line.

Same request, about forty extra seconds of typing, and a caption you can actually post.

WORKFLOW 07

Interview me first

Use it when: the task is big or fuzzy (a plan, a proposal, a bio, a strategy) and you're not sure what details matter.

1. Describe the task in one or two sentences.
2. Instead of asking for the result, ask the AI to interview you: one question at a time, with a limit.
3. Answer each question briefly. Short answers are fine; this is a conversation, not an essay.
4. When it has enough, tell it to produce the result using everything you've said.

This flips the work. Instead of you guessing which context matters, the AI asks for what it needs. It's the fastest way to fill the Context slot when you don't know where to start.

Limit the questions. “Ask up to 5 questions” keeps the interview short. Without a limit, some assistants keep asking long after they have enough.

WORKFLOW 08

The fix-it loop

Use it when: you got an answer that’s close but wrong, and you’re tempted to start over.

1. Don’t start a new chat. The AI already holds everything from the first attempt.
2. Name the symptom using the table at the start of this chapter: too generic, wrong details, off target, wrong shape, or guessing.
3. Fix only the missing slot in one short follow-up.
4. If it’s still off after two follow-ups, ask the AI what it would need to get it right.

Symptom → follow-up:

- *Too generic* → “Rewrite this as [role] speaking to [audience].”
- *Wrong details* → “Correction: [fact]. Also note [constraint]. Update the draft.”
- *Off target* → “The goal is [outcome]. Cut anything that doesn’t serve that.”
- *Wrong shape* → “Same content, but [under 100 words / a table / 3 bullets].”
- *Guessing* → “List every assumption you made, then ask me about the ones that matter.”

One precise follow-up beats three vague ones like “make it better.” The AI can’t fix “better”; it can fix “shorter, warmer and without the second paragraph.”

Show, don't describe

Use it when: you want a specific style, tone or structure that's hard to put into words.

1. Find one or two examples of what good looks like: an email you're proud of, a post that did well, a competitor's layout you like.
2. Paste them and label them clearly as examples.
3. Tell the AI what to copy (the tone, the length, the structure) and what *not* to copy (the topic, the exact words).
4. Ask for the new piece.

Describing a voice is hard. "Friendly but professional" means a hundred different things. A single real example carries more information than a paragraph of adjectives, and the AI is very good at matching a pattern it can see.

Copy the pattern, not the work. Use examples of your own writing, or use other people's only to show structure. Ask for something new in that style; don't ask the AI to reproduce someone else's text.

Save it once, use it forever

Use it when: you notice you're typing the same context again and again: your business details, your tone, your audience.

1. Write one "about me" block: who you are, what you do, who you serve, how you like to sound, and words you never want used.
2. Save it where you can reach it in two clicks. Most assistants let you store standing instructions or project notes (the feature names vary: custom instructions, projects, gems, saved memory). A note on your phone works too.

3. Save your three best five-slot prompts the same way, with [brackets] for the parts that change.
4. Each time a prompt works well, save it. Each time one fails, fix the slot and save the fixed version.

Within a couple of weeks you'll have a small library that covers most of your repeat tasks. Chapter 4 goes deeper into making AI remember your business, so you set the context once instead of in every chat.

Copy-paste prompts

Swap anything in [brackets] for your own details.

PROMPT The five-slot starter

```
You are [role], writing for [audience].
Here's what you need to know: [facts, pasted material, constraints].
This is good if [the outcome you want].
Format: [length, structure, layout].
When you're done, [list any assumptions I should check / ask me up
to 3 questions first].
```

PROMPT Interview me first

```
I need [the task, in one sentence]. Before you write anything,
interview me to get what you need. Ask one question at a time,
maximum [5] questions, and wait for each answer. When you have
enough, write the [result] using everything I've told you.
```

PROMPT Upgrade my prompt

```
Here's a prompt I'm about to use: "[your prompt]". Rewrite it so it
clearly covers role, context, goal, format and ending. Wherever
information is missing, put a [bracketed placeholder] describing
what I should add. Return only the improved prompt.
```

PROMPT Diagnose a bad answer

That answer isn't what I need. Before rewriting it, tell me in 3 bullets what you assumed about my audience, my goal and the format. Then ask me the one question that would help most.

PROMPT Match my style

Here are [2] examples of my writing, labelled EXAMPLE 1 and EXAMPLE 2. Study the tone, sentence length and structure, but don't reuse their topics or phrases.

[paste examples]

Now write [new piece] about [topic] in the same style. Under [length].

PROMPT Three ways to say it

Write [the message] in three versions, labelled CALM, WARM and DIRECT. Each under [60] words. After them, tell me in one line which you'd send to [the recipient] and why.

WORKSHEET

My five-slot prompts

Pick three tasks you'll do with AI this week. Fill the slots before you open the assistant.

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
The task			
Role (who / for whom)			
Context (facts to paste)			
Goal (this is good if...)			
Format (length, shape)			
Ending (questions, options, checks)			
Result: usable first time?	Yes / Nearly / No	Yes / Nearly / No	Yes / Nearly / No
Slot I'll fix next time			

DO THIS TODAY

15 minutes, right now.

1. Open your last three AI chats. For each one, write down which of the five slots was missing. (5 min)
2. Pick the most useful of those tasks and redo it with a full five-slot prompt. (5 min)
3. Save the prompt that worked in a note called **My prompts**, with [brackets] for the parts that change. (5 min)

RECAP CARD

CHAPTER 2 · THE PROMPT FORMULA

The idea · Bad answers come from gaps, not bad wording. When information is missing, AI fills it with the most typical answer.

The formula · Role · Context · Goal · Format · Ending.

Spot the gap · Generic → Role. Wrong details → Context. Off target → Goal. Wrong shape → Format. Guessing → Ending.

The five workflows

06 · The 60-second upgrade: fill the empty slots before you send.

07 · Interview me first: let the AI ask for what it needs.

08 · The fix-it loop: fix the missing slot, not the whole prompt.

09 · Show, don't describe: one real example beats ten adjectives.

10 · Save it once: build a small library of prompts that work.

Remember · If a smart new colleague would need to ask, the AI needed to be told.

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That was a free sample.

The full book has 20 chapters, 100 workflows, 300+ prompts and the bonus pack.

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