

Build, Review, and Reuse Your First Reverse Prompt

Turn a clear goal into a reviewed, ready-to-run AI prompt without guessing how to write the instructions. By the end, you will have completed one guided example, applied the method to your own task, and saved a repeatable process.

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01 Build and run your first reverse prompt

Reverse prompting starts with the destination. You tell AI what a successful result must accomplish, let it interview you for missing context, and review the prompt it creates before allowing it to perform the task.

Pre-flight

- Use any AI chat tool you already have access to.
- Start with the supplied fictional practice task so you do not have to invent anything.
- Do not enter private, sensitive, or confidential information you would not normally provide to that AI system.

1

OPEN

Start a new AI conversation

Open your AI chat tool, sign in if necessary, and choose the option for a new chat or conversation. Place your cursor in the message box.

2

PASTE

Give AI the destination

Copy and paste the complete message below. Do not shorten it for this first attempt.

PROMPT

I need to achieve this outcome: send a clear, warm email introducing a Friday focus-time trial.

The result will be used by a 14-person team before the trial begins. Success means team members understand why we are testing it, what changes, what does not change, and what they need to do.

Before doing the task, ask me the questions you need to understand the context, constraints, tone, facts, and required output. Then write the best prompt for this task. Include a role, objective, relevant context, constraints, output format, quality checks, and a clear instruction not to invent missing information. Do not execute the prompt until I approve it.

3

SEND

Let AI interview you

Submit the message. AI should ask questions about details such as the reason for the trial, timing, meeting boundaries, urgent requests, tone, and required response. It should not draft the email yet.

4

ANSWER**Supply the practice facts**

Paste the following response to its questions. If it asks for a detail not covered here, say that the fact is unavailable and must not be invented.

SCRIPT

Use these facts: It is a four-Friday trial for a 14-person team. The goal is to reduce interruptions and create space for concentrated project work. Internal meetings should not be scheduled after 1 p.m. Client commitments still apply. Urgent issues should go to the team lead by phone. Use a direct, encouraging tone. Keep the final email under 180 words. Ask everyone to acknowledge the plan by Thursday at 3 p.m. If a fact is missing, mark it as [NEEDS INPUT] rather than inventing it.

5

LOOK**Find the generated prompt**

AI should now return instructions for drafting the email rather than the email itself. Wording will vary, but the prompt should contain a role, objective, audience, confirmed facts, constraints, output format, and a rule against invention.

6

REVIEW**Check the prompt before approving it**

Confirm that it says four Fridays, 14 people, no internal meetings should be scheduled after 1 p.m., existing client commitments, urgent calls to the team lead, an encouraging direct tone, a limit of 180 words, and acknowledgment by Thursday at 3 p.m. Correct anything AI changed or omitted.

7

RUN**Approve and execute the prompt**

When the generated prompt passes your review, paste this instruction.

SCRIPT

I approve the prompt. Execute it now using only the confirmed facts. Preserve every boundary and mark any missing fact as [NEEDS INPUT].

What success looks like**CHECKLIST**

- AI asked questions before attempting the email.
- The generated prompt captured the audience, reason, timeframe, boundaries, tone, format, and requested action.
- The final email includes a subject line and stays under 180 words.
- It distinguishes internal meeting restrictions from client commitments.
- It gives the correct urgent-contact path and acknowledgment deadline.
- It does not invent policies, benefits, names, or contact details.

Your result does not need to match the article example word for word. It passes when the facts and boundaries remain correct and the intended reader knows what to do.

02 Nothing happened? Check these first

- If the original message is still sitting in the input box, submit it before waiting for a response.
- If AI drafted the email immediately, reply: Stop. Do not draft the email yet. Ask the necessary questions and then return only the proposed prompt for my review.
- If AI asks vague or irrelevant questions, reply: Ask only questions that affect the audience, facts, constraints, tone, required output, or definition of success.
- If the generated prompt omits supplied facts, paste the practice facts again and ask AI to revise the prompt without executing it.
- If AI invents a missing detail, identify the detail, replace it with [NEEDS INPUT], and request a corrected prompt.
- If earlier conversation is confusing the task, start a new chat and repeat the supplied sequence. Different AI systems may interpret the same instructions differently.

03 Reverse-prompt your real task

You have completed the method once. Now use it on a task that matters to you. Choose the closest starter rather than waiting for the perfect idea.

Choose one concrete task

- Draft an email announcing a process change.
- Turn provided meeting notes into an action summary.
- Create an agenda for a meeting with specific decisions to make.
- Compare several options using criteria you provide.
- Turn an approved policy or procedure into plain-language instructions.

Prepare a small source packet

A source packet is simply the set of facts and reference material AI is allowed to use. It can include confirmed facts, approved language, constraints, examples, required sections, and details AI must not assume. Remove unnecessary private information before submitting it.

CHECKLIST

- The outcome you need
- The people who will use or receive the result
- The situation in which they will use it
- The confirmed facts AI may use
- Length, tone, format, deadline, or policy constraints
- What a successful result must help the audience understand or do
- Anything AI must not invent, promise, change, or disclose

Use the Full Reverse Prompt

TEMPLATE — REVERSE

I need to achieve this outcome: [describe the outcome].

The result will be used by [audience] in [situation]. Success means [describe what a good result must accomplish].

Before doing the task, ask me the questions you need to understand the context, constraints, tone, facts, and required output. Then write the best prompt for this task. Include a role, objective, relevant context, constraints, output format, quality checks, and a clear instruction not to invent missing information. Do not execute the prompt until I approve it.

1

CUSTOMIZE

Replace the three bracketed sections

Describe the destination, audience, situation, and definition of success. You do not need to write detailed instructions yet. That is the point of the conversation.

2

PASTE

Start in a fresh conversation

Open a new AI chat, paste the customized Full Reverse Prompt, and submit it.

3

ANSWER

Respond with confirmed information

Answer the questions using your source packet. If you do not know something, say so. Do not create a convenient answer simply to keep AI moving.

4

STOP

Keep prompt design separate from execution

Ask AI to return only the proposed prompt. Do not approve execution until you complete the review in the next section.

04 Review before you execute

A generated prompt can sound authoritative while containing a bad assumption. Polish is not permission. Review the prompt as carefully as you would review the resulting work.

PROMPT ELEMENT	WHAT TO VERIFY
Role	The role provides useful perspective without pretending AI has authority it does not have.
Objective	The requested result matches the outcome you actually need.
Context	The audience, situation, and relevant facts are accurate.
Constraints	Length, boundaries, deadlines, policies, exclusions, and tone are preserved.
Output format	The structure will be usable without unnecessary cleanup.
Quality checks	The prompt tells AI how to inspect the result before returning it.
Missing information	The prompt requires [NEEDS INPUT] or a question instead of invention.

CHECKLIST

- Remove invented facts and unsupported claims.
- Correct any broadened boundary, such as changing internal meetings to all meetings.
- Add missing audience, tone, format, or success requirements.
- Remove commitments or promises you did not authorize.
- Confirm that private information is necessary and appropriate to share.
- Check policies, financial language, deadlines, and statements that could affect another person.

Presence is not authority. A fact appearing in your source material allows AI to use that fact; it does not authorize AI to expand the fact, change a policy, make a commitment, or decide what should happen.

When the prompt passes review, approve it and inspect the resulting output against the same facts and constraints. The prompt is not the final checkpoint.

05 Improve the fit

The goal is fit, not a universally perfect prompt. Improve the instruction that caused the problem instead of repeatedly patching individual sentences in the output.

IF THE RESULT IS...	ADJUST THE PROMPT BY...
Generic	Adding the audience, situation, source facts, and a more observable definition of success.
Too long	Adding a word limit, required sections, or a shorter output format.
Wrong in tone	Naming two or three useful tone qualities and language to avoid.
Missing an action	Stating exactly what the audience should do and when.
Factually loose	Limiting AI to the source packet and requiring [NEEDS INPUT] for gaps.
Overconfident	Requiring uncertainty, assumptions, or unresolved questions to be labeled clearly.

REVISION SCRIPT

Revise the prompt rather than the completed output. The problem I observed was: [describe the problem]. Add or change the instructions needed to prevent that problem. Preserve all confirmed facts and constraints, do not invent missing information, and return the revised prompt for approval without executing it.

Change one important instruction, rerun the prompt, and compare the new result with the previous one. This makes it easier to see which instruction actually improved the work.

06 Practice a second variation

Use this supplied fictional task to confirm that you can repeat the process when some information is deliberately missing.

PRACTICE SOURCE PACKET

Outcome: Turn meeting notes into a concise follow-up message.

Audience: A five-person internal project team.

Success: Each person can see the confirmed actions, owners, deadlines, and unresolved questions.

Facts: Priya will revise the onboarding copy, but the deadline has not been decided. Marco will send three vendor questions by Friday. The team will review the revised copy at the next meeting, but the meeting date is unavailable.

Constraint: Do not invent deadlines, meeting dates, decisions, or project details. Mark missing information as [NEEDS INPUT].

1. Open a fresh AI conversation.
2. Customize and paste the Full Reverse Prompt using the supplied outcome, audience, and definition of success.
3. Answer AI's questions using only the practice source packet.

4. Review the generated prompt before approving it.
5. Run the approved prompt and inspect the follow-up message.

Pass criteria

- Marco's Friday deadline appears as confirmed.
- Priya's missing deadline is not invented.
- The next meeting date remains unresolved.
- The message makes owners and actions easy to identify.
- Missing details are labeled [NEEDS INPUT] or presented as unresolved questions.

07 Save the repeatable method

Save the Full Reverse Prompt somewhere you can reach quickly. For future tasks, repeat this operating sequence:

REPEATABLE METHOD

1. **DESTINATION:** State the outcome, audience, situation, and definition of success.
2. **INTERVIEW:** Let AI ask for missing context, constraints, tone, facts, and format.
3. **PROMPT:** Ask AI to convert your answers into complete instructions.
4. **REVIEW:** Correct assumptions, omissions, altered boundaries, and false authority.
5. **APPROVE:** Execute only after the prompt matches your intent.
6. **VERIFY:** Check the result's facts, commitments, format, and effect on other people.

Use guess-and-revise for simple, low-stakes work. Use a trusted template when the task is familiar and stable. Reach for reverse prompting when the task has several moving parts, the audience matters, or a generic answer would create more work.

08 Finish line

You are finished when you have completed the supplied email example, generated a prompt for one real task, reviewed it for assumptions and missing constraints, executed it, and verified the result.

You now have a practical way to move from an empty prompt box to a fitted set of instructions without surrendering judgment. AI can improve the map, but you still own the facts, destination, approval, and final decision.

Want the deeper reasoning behind the method?

Read the related article, 'The CRISP AI Prompt Formula: Turn Questions Into Useful Briefs,' at <https://chuckgoetschel.com/ai-insights/crisp-ai-prompt-formula>

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Name the destination first; then let AI help draw the route.