

Prompting Basics • Part 3: Practice Worksheet

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This worksheet is the companion to Parts 1 and 2 of the Prompting Basics series. The goal is to practice the principles, not to produce perfect outputs. Work through each exercise in order — they build on each other. An answer sheet with example responses is at the end.

Exercise 1: Diagnose a Weak Prompt

For each prompt below, identify what is missing. Use the Role / Context / Task / Format / Constraints lens from Part 1. Do not rewrite the prompt yet — just note what information is absent and why it matters.

A "Summarize the report."

What is missing from Prompt A?

B "Write an email about the budget."

What is missing from Prompt B?

C "Help me prepare for the meeting."

What is missing from Prompt C?

Exercise 2: Strengthen a Prompt

Now rewrite each of the three prompts from Exercise 1. Apply whatever elements are missing. There is no single correct answer — a strong prompt is one that gives a capable colleague enough to produce something genuinely useful. Note briefly what you changed and why.

Prompt A — Rewritten:

Your stronger version of Prompt A:

What did you change and why?

Prompt B — Rewritten:

Your stronger version of Prompt B:

What did you change and why?

Prompt C — Rewritten:

Your stronger version of Prompt C:

What did you change and why?

Exercise 3: Build From Scratch

Three scenarios are described below. For each one, write a full prompt from scratch. Use whatever structure feels natural — no formula required. Focus on giving the AI enough context to produce something genuinely useful on the first try.

Scenario 1:

You need to explain a complex new process to a team that has never encountered it before.

Your prompt for Scenario 1:

Scenario 2:

You want to draft a professional but warm message declining a request you cannot fulfill.

Your prompt for Scenario 2:

Scenario 3:

You have qualitative feedback from a group and need to identify the key themes.

Your prompt for Scenario 3:

Exercise 4: Practice Iteration

Below is a prompt and a sample AI output. The output is not wrong — it is just generic and not quite right. Write a follow-up prompt that would meaningfully improve it. You are not rewriting the original prompt; you are continuing the conversation.

Original Prompt:

"Write a summary of our team meeting."

Sample AI Output:

The team meeting covered several important topics. Attendees discussed current projects and their progress. Some challenges were identified and potential solutions were proposed. Action items were assigned to team members with deadlines. The group agreed to follow up at the next meeting.

Overall, the meeting was productive and the team is aligned on next steps.

What is not quite right about this output? What is missing?

Your diagnosis:

Your follow-up prompt:

Write a follow-up prompt that would get a more useful output:

Exercise 5: Reflect

These questions have no wrong answers. The goal is self-awareness, not a test.

1. What element do you most often forget to include when prompting?

Your reflection:

2. What task in your work would benefit most from AI assistance right now?

Your reflection:

3. Write a prompt for that task right now.

Don't overthink it. Apply what you've practiced. This one is for you.

Your prompt:

Answer Sheet

These are example responses, not the only correct answers. Good prompts take many forms. If yours is more specific, more contextual, or better suited to your actual work than these examples — yours is better.

Exercise 1: Diagnose a Weak Prompt

Prompt A "Summarize the report."	Missing: Which report? What kind of summary — executive overview, detailed breakdown, action-item list? Who is the audience? What length? What should be emphasized? The AI has no basis for choosing between a 3-sentence abstract and a 3-page analysis.
Prompt B "Write an email about the budget."	Missing: What is the email's purpose — to request approval, provide an update, flag a concern? Who is the recipient and what is their relationship to the budget? What specific budget information should be included? What tone is appropriate? What action, if any, is the reader expected to take?
Prompt C "Help me prepare for the meeting."	Missing: What kind of meeting? What is the topic and who will be there? What is your role — presenter, participant, facilitator? What does preparation look like — talking points, questions, a briefing document, anticipated objections? What outcome do you want from the meeting?

Exercise 2: Strengthen a Prompt

Prompt A Strengthened	"You are a clear and concise writer with experience in professional communications. I am going to paste in a 10-page project status report. Please produce a 3-paragraph executive summary for a senior leadership audience who will read it before a board meeting. Emphasize key milestones reached, risks or blockers, and recommended decisions needed from leadership. Use plain language — no jargon."
Prompt B Strengthened	"You are an experienced finance communicator. I need to write an email to my department heads explaining that our Q3 budget has a 12% shortfall and we need to identify cuts before end of month. The tone should be direct but not alarming — we want people to take it seriously without panicking. Please draft a 4-paragraph email that explains the situation, what we need from each department, the timeline, and next steps."
Prompt C Strengthened	"You are an experienced executive coach. I have a 30-minute check-in meeting tomorrow with my manager to discuss my performance on a high-visibility project that had some setbacks. I want to come across as self-aware and solution-focused rather than defensive. Please help me prepare three key talking points that acknowledge what went wrong, demonstrate what I learned, and outline what I'm doing differently. Keep each point to 2-3 sentences."

Exercise 3: Build From Scratch

Scenario 1 Example Prompt	"You are an experienced trainer skilled at explaining unfamiliar processes to non-technical audiences. I need to explain a new expense reimbursement process to a team of 15 people who have never used it before. The process involves three steps: submitting receipts through an online portal, getting manager approval, and receiving payment within 10 business days. Please write a clear, friendly explanation of the process in plain language, formatted as a short numbered guide with a brief intro paragraph. Assume readers are busy and somewhat skeptical of new systems."
Scenario 2 Example Prompt	"You are a professional communications writer with experience in stakeholder relations. I need to decline a request from a community partner who has asked us to co-sponsor their event. We have a genuine relationship with this organization and want to preserve it, but our sponsorship budget is committed for the year. Please draft a short, warm email that declines the request clearly, acknowledges the importance of the relationship, and leaves the door open for future collaboration. Keep it to 3 short paragraphs and avoid corporate-sounding language."
Scenario 3 Example Prompt	"You are a skilled qualitative researcher with experience in thematic analysis. I am going to paste in open-ended feedback from 24 participants in a professional development program. Please identify the 4-5 most prominent themes in the feedback — both positive and critical. For each theme, give it a short descriptive label, a one-paragraph summary of what participants said, and one representative quote that captures the theme well. Note any patterns that seem to cut across multiple themes."

Exercise 4: Practice Iteration

Diagnosis	The output is vague and generic. It describes a meeting without providing any actual content — no specific decisions, no real action items, no named owners, no actual challenges. It could describe any meeting. It is plausible-sounding but useless as a working document.
Example Follow-Up Prompt	"This summary is too generic to be useful. Please rewrite it using the notes I'm about to provide. Structure it with three clear sections: (1) Decisions Made — what was agreed and by whom; (2) Open Questions — what still needs resolution and who owns it; (3) Action Items — specific tasks, owner names, and due dates. Be concrete and specific. If something is unclear in the notes, flag it with a question mark rather than guessing. [Paste notes here]"

Exercise 5: Reflect

No answer sheet for this exercise. Your reflections are personal — there are no wrong answers. The goal is self-awareness: knowing which elements you tend to skip is the first step to building better prompting habits. If you completed Question 3 and wrote a real prompt for a real task, you've already put the practice to work.