

CLAUDE · ZERO TO PRO

The Complete Prompting Cheat Sheet

The whole course, on one page.

The capstone sheet from Module 5. It consolidates all five modules into one keepable reference: the five-step model, the refine loop, the three pro moves almost nobody knows, and the quick is this answer good? check. If you keep one page from this course, keep this one.

The five-step model

The whole craft of prompting, one motion, start to finish. Each step is its own module.

#	Step	The move	A line to start from
1	Decide (M1)	Decide the job before you type: know the job, know the tool, split the work.	<i>"The job is a short notice for customers. Outcome: they know the new hours. Audience: existing customers. Format: one short friendly paragraph + a list."</i>
2	Describe (M2)	Add a role, an example, and a standard.	<i>"Act as my chief of staff. Match the tone of this example I like: [...]. Under 120 words, every item as owner-task-date."</i>
3	Ground (M3)	Feed it your file. Answer only from this, quote the source, or say so.	<i>"Answer only using the file I attached. Quote the exact line you rely on. If it's not covered, tell me instead of guessing."</i>
4	Make (M4)	Ask for a thing, not an answer. It opens beside the chat, refine it in place, take it with you.	<i>"Make me a one-page welcome document with a title, clear sections, and a friendly tone."</i>
5	Refine (M5)	Treat the first answer as a draft. Judge it, then nudge, don't restart.	<i>"Make it shorter. Drop any number you can't back up. And mention their café specifically."</i>

Decide, describe, ground, make, refine. That's it.

The refine loop

The single habit that separates the good ones from everyone else: they never accept the first answer. The first answer is a draft.

Describe



Judge



Refine



Describe

You **describe** what you want. You **judge** what comes back. You **refine** with one specific nudge, and go again. You don't start over, you keep the same conversation and nudge ("make it shorter," "cut that claim," "more like me"). Each nudge steers the same answer closer, instead of rolling the dice on a brand new one.

Needing a second pass is not failure, it's the process working. Nobody good gets it in one. They get it in three, on purpose.

Is this answer any good? (the three-question check)

Refining only works if you can judge. Run these three, fast:

- 1 **Does it fit MY situation?** Not "is it good in general." Does it fit me, my business, my customer, this exact task?
- 2 **Is every claim verifiable?** Any number, fact, or name it states, could you actually check it?
- 3 **Did it obey the format?** You asked short and it gave you long, you asked for a table and got a paragraph? Then it half-listened.

Confident, and wrong. Claude can state a made-up number in the exact same calm voice it uses for a true one. No wobble, no warning. The rule: anything you could check, check. Especially the numbers.

And when a nudge doesn't work: name the exact miss. "Make it better" does nothing. "This part is too long," "this number is wrong," or "this doesn't sound like me." Specific in, specific out.

The three pro moves

The I-didn't-know-Claude-could-do-that ones. Every one works by just typing it, no settings, no tricks.

1 Improve my prompt

Hand Claude your rough prompt and have it sharpen it before answering. Now Claude does the prompt engineering for you.

- PASTE THIS

Here's my prompt: "[your rough prompt]".
Before you answer, rewrite it into a sharper prompt, then answer that.

2 Interview me first

Instead of guessing what you need, Claude asks. Fills in everything you forgot to say.

- PASTE THIS

Before you begin, ask me what you need to know to do this well.
One question at a time.

3 Let it think

For anything hard (a comparison, a decision, a bit of math), have it reason out loud first. Reasoning first makes the answer far more reliable, and you can catch it if the logic slips.

- PASTE THIS

[Your hard task.] Work through it step by step before you answer.

Which to reach for: *Improve my prompt* makes your ask sharper. *Interview me first* fills in what you forgot. *Let it think* makes hard answers trustworthy.

The most powerful refine of all

When an answer is generic, the strongest fix is almost always the same: **add a detail only you know**. Give Claude the specific truth it couldn't guess ("they've reordered three times and always ask for the blue one"), and the result becomes something only you could have sent.

Final check

- ☐ Did I treat the first answer as a **draft**, not the final?
 - ☐ Did I **judge** it: does it fit me, is every claim true, did it obey the format?
 - ☐ Did I **steer** with a specific nudge, instead of starting over?
 - ☐ Did I reach for a **pro move** when the task was big enough to earn it?
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Yes across the board, and you're prompting better than almost anyone.

Good. Fast. Yours.

You've earned all three: good answers, fast, that are truly yours, because you can steer them to exactly what you need. That was the whole promise, and now you can do it.