

# PROMPT ENGINEERING — CHEAT SHEET

Liz Magaly Herrera | Data & AI Practitioner | Clarity ∞ Decisions ∞ Impact | February 2026 · v2.0 · For Primary School Teachers

## WHAT IS AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to **computer systems that perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence**, like understanding language, generating text, analysing data, and making decisions. Modern AI tools use Large Language Models (LLMs) trained on vast text to understand and generate human-like responses.

## THE CRAFT FRAMEWORK

Block	What it does	What to Write	Example
<b>C</b> CONTEXT	Set the scene. Give the AI the background, situation, and audience it needs to tailor the response.	<i>Who is this for?</i> <i>What is the situation?</i> <i>What does the reader already know?</i>	I am a Year 5 primary school teacher in the UK. I am preparing a parents’ evening letter to inform families about next term’s curriculum changes in Science and Maths. Parents have varying levels of familiarity with the National Curriculum.
<b>R</b> ROLE	Tell the AI who to be. A specific persona shapes expertise, vocabulary, and perspective.	<i>Assign job title, personality,</i> <i>Define communication style, and level of expertise.</i>	You are a friendly, experienced primary school teacher who communicates with parents in a warm, jargon-free, reassuring tone. You explain curriculum concepts simply without being patronising.
<b>A</b> ACTION	Define what to do and how. Give numbered steps so the AI follows a workflow, not just a vague instruction.	<i>List the specific tasks in order.</i> <i>Include decision points and conditions.</i>	Follow these steps in order: 1. Open with a warm greeting and the purpose of the letter (1-2 sentences). 2. Summarise the key Science and Maths changes (max 3 bullets per topic). 3. Explain how parents can support learning at home (2-3 practical suggestions). 4. Close with an invitation to the parents’ evening and your contact details.
<b>F</b> FORMAT	Specify the output shape. Structure, length, and visual layout so you get exactly what you need.	<i>State document type, word count, sections.</i> <i>Use of bullets/tables/headings.</i>	- Output: Formal parent letter (not email) with 300-400 words maximum. - Structure: Greeting → Science → Maths → Home Support → Closing. - Use bullet points for curriculum changes and use bold for key dates or action items. - British English, Oxford comma.
<b>T</b> TONE	Set the emotional register. The same content sounds different when the tone changes.	<i>Describe the feeling, formality level</i> <i>Define words/phrases to use or avoid.</i>	- Warm and reassuring — parents should feel informed, not overwhelmed. - Professional but approachable (not corporate). - Avoid: jargon (“attainment targets”, “pedagogical approaches”). - Use: simple equivalents (“learning goals”, “teaching methods”). - Never use sarcasm or urgency language.
<b>S</b> SELF-CHECK	Build in a quality gate. The AI reviews its own output against your criteria before delivering.	<i>Provide a checklist the AI must verify internally.</i> <i>If any item fails, fix before responding.</i>	> Before delivering, verify against this checklist. > If ANY item fails, fix it before responding. - [ ] Letter is 300-400 words? - [ ] All 5 sections present? - [ ] No jargon — all terms parent-friendly? - [ ] Key dates and actions in bold? - [ ] Tone is warm and reassuring throughout? - [ ] British English and Oxford comma used? - [ ] No invented information (If unsure, say "[PLEASE CONFIRM]" instead)?

**5 GOLDEN RULES** ❶ Be specific, not vague ❷ Iterate – don’t accept the first output ❸ Give examples of what you want ❹ Always verify – AI can hallucinate ❺ Set boundaries & constraints

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## THINKING TECHNIQUE – CHANGE HOW AI REASONS

Level	Technique	What it does	Key phrase to use in your prompt
BASIC	Zero-Shot	Ask directly with no examples. Your starting point for simple tasks.	"Write 5 spelling words about animals for Year 2."
BASIC	Few-Shot	Give 1–3 examples first. The AI copies your pattern, tone, and style.	"Here are 2 examples of my feedback: [...] Now write 5 more like these."
INTER.	Chain of Thought	"Think step by step" – dramatically improves reasoning and accuracy.	" <b>Think step by step:</b> first identify the gaps, then analyse patterns, then recommend."
INTER.	Reverse Prompting	The AI interviews YOU first. Asks questions so you don't miss anything.	"Before creating anything, ask me 5 questions about my class and constraints."
ADV.	Socratic	AI asks guiding questions instead of giving direct answers. Builds thinking.	"Don't correct the pupil. Ask 4 questions to help them discover the answer."
ADV.	Devil's Advocate	AI critiques your work. Catches flaws, bias, and gaps before anyone else.	" <b>Play devil's advocate</b> on this letter. What could parents object to? What's missing?"
ADV.	Tree of Thought	AI explores 3+ approaches, evaluates each, and picks the best one.	" <b>Consider 3 approaches</b> to teaching this. For each: pros, cons, time. Pick the best."
EXPERT	Master Prompting	AI builds the entire prompt FOR you. Give your goal – AI identifies gaps, asks clarifying questions, challenges assumptions, then assembles a complete prompt.	"My goal is [X]. Build me a master prompt. Ask me questions about anything you need. Identify gaps, challenge assumptions, flag risks. Then assemble using the CRAFTS blocks."

## MARKDOWN QUICK REFERENCE

Type these symbols directly into your prompt. The AI reads them as formatting instructions – like structuring a Word document, but for your conversation.

You type	What it does	Use it for (example)
#	Main heading (largest)	# Year 4 Maths Worksheet – one main title at the top of your prompt
##	Section heading	## ROLE ## OBJECTIVE ## STEPS ## CONSTRAINTS – separates the The Complete Prompt Architecture
###	Sub-heading within a section	### Working Towards ### Expected ### Greater Depth – subdivisions inside a block
**text**	Bold text (emphasis)	**must include answer key** or **do NOT use decimals** or **key vocab: habitat, adaptation**
*text*	Italic (softer emphasis)	*optional: add extension challenge if time allows* or *pupils have not yet covered decimals*
- item	Bullet point list	- Include answer key - Add visual supports - Differentiate for 3 levels - Keep under 1 page per section
1. item	Numbered list (ordered steps)	1. Read the pupil's work 2. Identify 2 strengths 3. Suggest 1 next step 4. Write in pupil-friendly language
---	Horizontal separator line	Place between your instructions and any content you paste in: instructions above --- content below

Platform features and data policies change frequently. This comparison is accurate as of February 2026. Always check each provider's current terms and your school's approved tools list.

	ChatGPT	Google Gemini	Microsoft Copilot	Claude
Best for	Creative content, brainstorming, largest app ecosystem. 13+ (18+ without parental consent)	Google Workspace schools, NotebookLM study guides, free edu access. 13+ (18+ for standalone Gemini app). Schools set policies via Workspace admin.	Microsoft 365 schools, PowerPoint decks, Office integration. 13+ (18+ without parental consent). Schools set policies via M365 admin.	Long-form writing, precise instructions, policy-aware conversations. 13+ (18+ without parental consent)
Pro tip	Search the GPT Store for ready-made education assistants before building from scratch.	Use NotebookLM — upload your scheme of work and it generates an interactive study guide automatically.	Use Copilot inside PowerPoint: type a topic and get a full deck. Edit from there instead of starting from blank.	Upload your marking policy to a Project — Claude references it in every conversation automatically.
UK Data	Settings › Data Controls › toggle OFF 'Improve the model for everyone'.	Enterprise-grade protection when using Google Workspace for Education. Edu data NOT used for training under Workspace. Personal Gmail accounts do NOT have the same protections. Admin controls by age group.	Data stays within your M365 tenant. Established DPAs with UK schools.	Does NOT use conversations for model training by default. Transparent data practices.

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## PROMPT EXAMPLES

<pre># ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK  ## CONTEXT I am a **Year 6 English teacher** in the UK. I have **32 persuasive essays** to mark: "Should school uniforms be abolished?" Rubric: 4 criteria (Language for Persuasion, Structure, Spelling &amp; Grammar, Vocabulary). Levels: Emerging, Developing, Secure, Greater Depth. I am uploading: marking policy, rubric, 3 example feedbacks.  ## ROLE You are a **Feedback Specialist** – encouraging, precise, growth-mindset oriented. Like a mentor who sees potential in every piece of work. You provide specific, evidence-based comments – never generic phrases. The **teacher makes the final grading decision**.  ## ACTION For each essay, follow **in order**: 1. **Confirm rubric.** 4 criteria, 4 levels. Ask if missing. 2. **Read work.** Find 2–3 strengths + 1–2 improvements (with quotes). 3. **Generate feedback**: - **WWW:** 2–3 strengths with quoted evidence + why effective. - **EBI:** 1–2 improvements with model sentence to follow. - **Next Step:** 1 task completable in ~10 min independently. 4. **Rubric summary table:**   Criterion   Level   Evidence   5. **Offer to continue:** next essay, adjust tone, or class summary.  ## FORMAT - **Per student:** Student A/B/C (never real names). - **Sections:** WWW → EBI → Next Step → Rubric Table. - **Length:** Max **200 words** per student (excl. table). - **Language:** British English, Oxford comma.  ## TONE - Growth-mindset: "You are developing..." , "Your next step..." - Evidence-based: every comment cites a specific quote or paragraph. - Encouraging but honest: strengths before improvements. - Avoid: generic praise, deficit language, student comparisons. - Match tone of the 3 uploaded example feedbacks.  ## SELF CHECK &gt; **Verify every item. Fix before responding.** ### Quality: - [ ] Every WWW cites a direct quote from the work? - [ ] Every EBI has model sentence? Next Step doable in 10 min? - [ ] Growth-mindset language? No generic phrases? - [ ] No real names? No student comparisons? - [ ] Rubric table with evidence? Under 200 words? ### GGP Gate: - [ ] All quotes verbatim from uploaded work (no invented quotes) - [ ] Gaps declared if work illegible – *[GAP – please check]* - [ ] Evidence vs. inference clearly separated - [ ] Rubric levels are suggestions, not verdicts - [ ] Only criteria from uploaded rubric (no invented criteria)</pre>	<pre># DIFFERENTIATION WORKSHEETS (SEND)  ## CONTEXT I am a **Year 3 teacher** in the UK. I have a **reading comprehension worksheet** on "The Iron Man" (Chapter 1). I need **2 differentiated versions** for: - **Pupil A:** Dyslexia – strong verbal, difficulties decoding. - **Pupil B:** Autism – excellent recall, inference is barrier. Original: 10 questions (4 retrieval, 3 inference, 2 vocab, 1 personal response). **Same 10 questions – change access, not goal.** Uploading: original worksheet, SEND Policy, Graduated Approach docs.  ## ROLE You are an **Inclusion Specialist** – empathetic, practical, strengths-based. Start with what the child _can_ do, then remove barriers. Never define a child by their diagnosis. Speak like a SENCO colleague who helps teachers see **solutions, not problems**.  ## ACTION 1. **Analyse original.** Classify 10 questions by type. Confirm objective. 2. **Pupil A (Dyslexia):** OpenDyslexic 14pt, 1.5 spacing, cream background. Chunk text into numbered paragraphs (max 4 sentences). Key vocabulary glossary with visual icons. Sentence starters for inference questions 3. **Pupil B (Autism):** Emotions word bank with faces for inference questions. Reframe "How do you think...?" as structured prompts. Now-next board at top of worksheet 4. **Strategies summary table:**   Pupil   Need   Strategies   Rationale   5. **Suggest 1 additional support** per pupil (non-worksheet).  ## FORMAT - **Output:** 2 differentiated worksheets + strategies table. - **Per worksheet:** Strategies Applied box → Adapted content (all 10 questions) → What Stayed the Same box. - **Length:** Max **400 words** per worksheet (excl. text passage). - **Accessibility:** Font ≥12pt, contrast ≥4.5:1, no colour-only info. - **Language:** British English, Oxford comma.  ## TONE - **Strengths-based:** Lead with what the pupil _can_ do. - "Pupil A has strong verbal comprehension. The barrier is visual tracking, so we..." - Warm, practical, SENCO-colleague register. - Explain which strategy + why it works for this specific need. - Present adaptations as **options** – teacher decides. - Avoid: diagnostic statements, deficit language, named pupils.  ## SELF CHECK &gt; **Verify every item. Fix before responding.** ### Quality: - [ ] All 10 original questions in every version? - [ ] Learning objective unchanged across all? - [ ] Strengths before barriers for each pupil? - [ ] Strategies explained with rationale? - [ ] Accessibility checks (font, contrast, no colour-only)? ### GGP Gate: - [ ] Strategies from evidence-based sources only - [ ] No invented SEND research or statistics - [ ] Gaps declared – *[consult SENCO]* where needed - [ ] Source cited for every strategy recommended - [ ] Teacher and SENCO decide – suggestions only</pre>
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