

The cheat sheet that turns vague AI requests into reliable output

Five things — **CRAFT** — that turn a fuzzy ask into a brief the AI can actually deliver on. Works with Claude, and any capable assistant.

The AI responds to what you ask — not what you *meant*.

Great results aren't about finding magic words. They're about **briefing well** — the same skill as handing work to a sharp new colleague. When an answer disappoints, the fix is almost never different phrasing. It's a clearer brief. **CRAFT** is your checklist for writing one.

THE CRAFT CHECKLIST

You won't always need all five. When an answer isn't right, run down this list — something is usually missing.

C

CONTEXT — WHAT IT NEEDS TO KNOW

Give the background and the real information — then add: *"use only this, don't invent anything, flag what's missing."* This is the part that stops it making things up.

Your week's notes + "based only on these notes."

R

ROLE — WHO IT SHOULD BE

Give it a role. It sets the vocabulary, the priorities, and the judgment the answer is built from.

"You're my chief of staff."

A

ASK — THE ACTUAL JOB

State the job as an outcome, with a verb — not "help with." Write, compare, plan, draft, summarize.

"Write my weekly team update."

F

FORMAT — WHAT IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Length, structure, sections. This is where most people leave the most value on the table.

"Under 150 words, three sections."

T

tone — HOW IT SHOULD SOUND

Warm, direct, plain, formal. A line here keeps the draft sounding right — and, over time, like you.

"Warm, plain, direct. No filler."

The letters are a checklist, not a script — you don't have to use them in order.

SEE IT IN ONE BRIEF

All five parts, doing their job in a single prompt:

You're my chief of staff. Write my weekly update to my team based only on the notes below. Don't invent anything; if something's unclear, flag it.
Format: under 150 words, three sections – Wins / In progress / Needs attention.
Tone: warm, plain, direct.

Notes:

- Closed the vendor deal, signs Monday
- Two new hires' onboarding slipped a week
- Q3 budget 80% done, needs finance sign-off
- Website migration hiccup, back on track

Why it works: Context (the notes + "only these") · Role (chief of staff) · Ask (write my update) · Format (150 words, three named sections) · Tone (warm, plain, direct).

CLOSE BUT NOT RIGHT? STEER — DON'T RESTART

Each follow-up builds on what it already understands. Don't start over — just nudge:

Cut it to 100 words.

Make the ____ section more urgent.

Less formal — like a person, not a memo.

Add a friendly one-line greeting.

Give me three options.

Keep my voice.

Just the [section] part.

A quick mental list: shorter / longer · simpler · warmer / more direct · more specific · three options · explain your reasoning · keep my voice.

When an answer disappoints, don't reach for different words — reach for the missing part of the brief.

Context · Role · Ask · Format · Tone

A cheat sheet helps. Feeling it work on your own task changes your week.

So we run a free, live session — **Your First Win** — where you build one genuinely useful thing with Claude, on your own work, in about an hour. No code, nothing to install beyond the app. Come for the win; leave able to repeat it.

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