

The Base Case

Four steps before every task. Every time.

McCloskey.ai
Resources

Most problems with AI are not prompt problems. They are one of these four steps skipped. Run through them in order and the rest takes care of itself.

1 Where are you working?

Pick the room before you type

Chat

A conversation. You steer, turn by turn. Touches nothing on your computer.

Cowork

You delegate. Points at a real folder on your computer and works the files.

Code

For building software. The developer's room.

Made a project? Check which room it lives in. A **Cowork project** is linked to a folder and stays on this computer. A **Chat project** has no folder: it only knows the files you upload, and it follows your account everywhere.

2 What are you delegating, and why?

Name the job before you describe it

- What is the one job you are handing over?
- What should come back: a document, a decision, a plan, a file?
- Why does it matter? The why shapes every choice the AI makes.

3 Say it: brain dump, then SDS

Express step 2 out loud, then structure it

- Talk it out in plain words. Voice-to-text is fine. Messy is fine.
- Then shape it: **S**et the stage · **D**efine the task · **S**pecify the rules.
- One prompt with real context beats ten quick ones.

4 Ask for its opinion

Make it a partner, not a printer

- "Before you answer, ask me two or three clarifying questions."
- "What would you push back on? What could go wrong?"
- You are the expert. It assists, flags and challenges. You decide.