

The SDS Prompt Cheat Sheet

Set the stage · **Define the task** · **Specify the rules**

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Resources

A good prompt is not a magic phrase. Before your next conversation with Claude, run through these three steps. Ask yourself the questions under each one.

S Set the stage

Give it the context only you have

- What is my role, and what am I trying to achieve?
- What does Claude need to know that it cannot see?
- Who is this for?

D Define the task

Name the one thing you want done

- What is the single action: write, analyse, build, summarise?
- What does a finished answer actually look like?
- Is this really one job, or three I should ask for one at a time?

S Specify the rules

Say what a good answer looks like

- What tone and style do I want?
- How long should it be?
- Do I have an example I can paste to show the format?

Cannot describe it? Let it interview you

Add one line: **"Before you answer, ask me two or three questions."** Answer them in plain words, and it has the context you would not have thought to give.

First answer a bit off? Steer it

The first answer is a draft, not a verdict. **Ask a follow-up, give feedback, or restart clean.** Specific beats vague every time.