

# The Reusable Prompt

“ **One-liner:** Turn a task you do repeatedly into a reusable AI prompt template that works every time — your first step toward automation.

## ? Jump in (Tinkerers start here)

Think of something you do at least once a week that involves writing, analyzing, or summarizing. Examples: writing a status update, summarizing meeting notes, drafting an email to a client, reviewing a document.

**Step 1 — Do it once with AI.** Open any AI chat and do the task the way you normally would — just ask the AI to help. Don't overthink the prompt. Just get the job done.

**Step 2 — Reverse-engineer your prompt.** Now send this:

“ Look at the prompt I just gave you and the output you produced. Help me turn this into a **reusable template** that I can use every time I need to do this task. The template should have:

1. **Clear placeholders** — marked with [BRACKETS] for the parts that change each time
2. **Fixed instructions** — the parts that stay the same every time
3. **Output format specification** — exactly what the result should look like (length, structure, tone)

Write the template so someone else on my team could use it without any additional explanation.

**Step 3 — Test it.** Copy the template. Start a new chat. Paste the template and fill in the placeholders with a different example of the same task. Does the output match the quality of your original? If not, adjust the template.

**Here's a concrete example:**

*Original task:* "Summarize this meeting for my team"

Reusable template:

“ Summarize the following meeting notes for a team update.

**Meeting notes:** [PASTE NOTES HERE]

**Output requirements:**

- Start with a 1-sentence summary of the main decision or outcome
- List action items with owner names in bold
- Flag any unresolved questions
- Keep the total summary under 150 words
- Tone: professional but informal

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## ? Plan first (Planners start here)

Here's what you're about to do:

1. **Identify a repeatable task** — Pick something you do weekly that involves text: writing, summarizing, analyzing, or formatting. The more repetitive, the better.
2. **Do it once with AI** — Complete the task normally. Don't try to be clever — just get a result you're happy with.
3. **Extract the template** — Ask the AI to help you identify what's fixed (instructions, format, tone) vs. what changes (the input data). Build a reusable template with clear placeholders.
4. **Test with a new example** — Use the template on a fresh instance of the same task. Compare quality to the original.
5. **Refine if needed** — If the template didn't produce equally good output, identify what was missing and add it.

**"Done" looks like:** You have a saved prompt template with clear placeholders that consistently produces good output for your repeatable task.

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## ? Why this matters (Strategists start here)

Most people use AI in one-off conversations that disappear. This exercise introduces the shift from **ad-hoc prompting to systematic workflows** — the foundation of all AI automation. A reusable

template is the simplest form of an AI workflow: defined input, consistent process, predictable output. At the intermediate level, you'll chain multiple templates together into multi-step workflows. Every automated AI process in production started as someone's reusable prompt.

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# Reflection

- What did you have to add to the template that wasn't obvious from the original prompt?
- Did the template produce consistent quality with different inputs, or did you need to tweak it? What was missing?
- How much time will this template save you per week? Is it enough to justify the setup effort?
- ☐ *Send your template to a colleague who does the same task. Can they use it without any explanation? Their confusion points reveal where the template needs more specificity.*  
(Social Learners)

## ?? Level up

Ready for more? Try [WA-Intermediate-01](#) — where you'll chain multiple prompt templates into a multi-step workflow.

Back to [Workflow Automation](#)

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Revision #1

Created 2026-03-16 15:48:19 UTC by Admin

Updated 2026-03-16 15:48:19 UTC by Admin