

A FREE GUIDE FROM YDLC VIRTUAL SERVICES

# The Beginner's Claude Cheat Sheet

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*Everything people are charging for...  
without the \$27 price tag.*

*If you've been seeing posts about 'Claude codes' and 'secret prompts'... this is what they're actually selling. Saved you a click.*

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# Start Here

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There's a whole industry built around making AI sound complicated. Cheat sheets, codes, mega-prompts, \$97 courses... most of it is the same five ideas dressed up to sell.

Here's what actually works. No fluff, no upsell. Save it, print it, share it.

## TRY THIS FIRST

*Open Claude (or ChatGPT) and paste this in. See what happens:*

**"I want to write a LinkedIn post about why small businesses should try AI tools. My audience is solo entrepreneurs. Tone: friendly, not salesy. Give me two options, under 75 words each. No jargon."**

Now compare it to what you'd get from just typing "write me a LinkedIn post."

Big difference, right? That's the whole game. The rest of this guide shows you why.

## What's inside

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# The 5 Things That Actually Work

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01

## **Give context upfront**

Don't just say "write me a caption." Say who you are, who it's for, what tone you want, and how long. The more the AI knows, the less generic the output.

02

## **Tell it what NOT to do**

AI defaults to AI-sounding writing. The fastest way to fix that is to call out what you don't want. "No emojis. No hype words. Don't end with a call to action."

03

## **Ask for 2-3 variations**

One polished answer means rewriting it if it misses. Three options means you can pick the closest, combine pieces, and refine. Always ask for choices on creative work.

04

## **Iterate, don't restart**

If a draft is 70% there, don't open a new chat. Tell it what's off. "Cut the intro. Soften the close. Keep the middle." Push back like you would with a human writer.

05

## **Show examples when you can**

If you have a past post, email, or paragraph you loved, paste it in and say "match this voice." Examples beat description every single time.

# Words & Phrases to Avoid

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These are the words and phrases that scream "AI wrote this." Tell Claude to skip them and your output will sound more human immediately.

## Words that give it away

- |                        |                      |                  |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| × delve                | × tapestry           | × landscape      |
| × leverage             | × robust             | × comprehensive  |
| × holistic             | × seamless           | × transformative |
| × groundbreaking       | × revolutionize      | × elevate        |
| × empower              | × unlock             | × unleash        |
| × navigate (as filler) | × journey (overused) | × pivotal        |
| × crucial              | × utilize            |                  |

## Phrases to skip

- × "In today's fast-paced world..."
- × "It's important to note..."
- × "Let's dive in..."
- × "Embark on a journey..."
- × "Game-changer" / "move the needle"
- × "At the end of the day..."
- × "In conclusion..."
- × "Whether you're a [X] or a [Y]..."

## Patterns that read as AI

- × The "No X. No Y. Just Z." structure.
- × Three-word triplets ("polished, professional, and powerful").
- × Starting every sentence with the same rhythm.
- × Ending with a call to action you didn't ask for.

# Prompts You Can Copy

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Fill in the brackets. Adjust to fit. These work for any AI chatbot.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA CAPTION**

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*Write 3 [Instagram/Facebook] caption options about [topic]. Tone: [warm/professional/playful]. Audience: [who]. Under [X] words. No emojis. Don't start with a question.*

## **EMAIL OR MESSAGE**

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*I need to send a [client/colleague/friend] a message about [situation]. Tone: [direct but warm]. Give me 2 versions: one firmer, one softer.*

## **HELP ME WRITE [ANYTHING]**

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*Help me write [thing]. Here's what I want it to do: [goal]. Here's who it's for: [audience]. Voice: [describe yours]. Length: [target]. Skip [things you don't want].*

## **BRAINSTORM**

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*Brainstorm 10 ideas for [thing]. Skip the obvious stuff. Tell me which ones are stronger and why.*

## **FIX SOMETHING I WROTE**

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*Here's what I wrote: [paste]. What's working, what's not, what would you cut? Don't rewrite it for me yet.*

# When the Output Misses

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Almost nobody gets a perfect first draft. The skill is in the second and third pass... here's how to redirect without starting over.

## Step 1 — Name what's off

Before you re-prompt, get specific. Is it the voice? The length? The structure? Too generic? Wrong tone? You can't fix it until you can name it.

## Step 2 — Redirect specifically

Instead of "try again," tell it exactly what to change. The more specific you are, the closer the next version gets.

### INSTEAD OF...

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"Try again."

"Make it better."

"More personality."

"Shorter."

### TRY...

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*"The intro is too dramatic. Start with the second paragraph instead."*

*"Cut anything that sounds like marketing. Keep it conversational."*

*"Read this past post of mine: [paste]. Match that rhythm."*

*"Cut it to 100 words. Keep the core message in the first line."*

## Step 3 — Start fresh only if it's truly broken

If you've redirected 3-4 times and it's still off, the original prompt was probably the problem. Start over with a tighter version... add the context you forgot, cut what confused things.

### About the Regenerate or Try Again button

Most AI tools have one. Use it sparingly... random retries usually give you the same kind of answer. Intentional feedback ("too formal, soften it") beats clicking regenerate three times.

# What AI Can't Do

Setting honest expectations saves you frustration. Here's what AI is and isn't... before you ask it to do something it can't.

THE MYTH	THE REALITY
<b>AI can read your mind.</b>	It only knows what you tell it. Vague prompts get vague results.
<b>There's a magic prompt for everything.</b>	Good results come from clarity and iteration. There is no shortcut.
<b>AI is always right.</b>	AI sometimes makes up facts. This is called a "hallucination." Always double-check anything that matters.
<b>AI can replace your expertise.</b>	It's a tool. It's only as good as your judgment about what to keep, change, or throw out.
<b>AI knows everything that's happening today.</b>	Most AI tools have a knowledge cutoff. They may not know about recent events unless they can search the web.
<b>Every AI tool is the same.</b>	Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, and others have different strengths. Try a few and see which fits your style.

***Treat AI like a smart assistant, not a magic answer machine.***

# The Truth About "AI Codes"

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You've probably seen posts about "secret Claude codes" or "the prompt frameworks they don't want you to know." Here's what they actually are.

## Special characters & symbols

Stuff like ###, >>>, or [SYSTEM]. These are just formatting markers that help organize a complex prompt. Useful... but not magic. You'd get the same result writing "Section 1:" in plain English.

## Acronym frameworks (CRAFT, RACE, APE...)

These are real checklists for writing complete prompts. They work because they remind you to include context, role, format, and tone. Same as everything on page 3 of this guide.

## Mega-prompts with "world-class expert" intros

Long preambles like "You are an expert with 20 years of experience. Take a deep breath. Think step by step..." Some of this helped older AI models. On Claude today, clear instructions matter more than incantations.

## The bottom line

Good prompting is clear writing. You don't need codes. You need to say what you want, who it's for, what to avoid, and what to do when it misses. That's it.

# What to Do Next

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You don't have to read this whole guide twice. Here's how to actually use it.

01

## Try the Quickstart prompt today.

Even if you don't have a specific need, just paste it in and see what comes back. Get a feel for the difference.

02

## Save this PDF somewhere you'll find it.

Bookmark it. Email it to yourself. Print page 5. Whatever works. The point is having the prompts when you need them.

03

## Try one of the prompt templates this week.

Pick one real task — a caption, an email, a brainstorm — and use a template instead of winging it. Compare what you get.

04

## Share this with someone who'd use it.

Send it to a small business owner, a friend who's curious about AI, or anyone you've heard complain about ChatGPT output. Free is meant to be passed around.

### One quick privacy note

Don't paste confidential info into any AI tool — client data, passwords, financial details, anything you wouldn't want public. Treat AI chats like a public forum. Most tools may store or use what you share to improve their models.

*If this helped, share it with a small business owner who needs it.*

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