The Student's AI Survival Kit

30 Prompts to Study Smarter, Write Better, and Ace Your Classes

---

Your AI tutor is waiting. You just need to ask the right questions.

What's Inside

6. Productivity & Organization

How to Use This Kit

Every prompt in this kit is designed to be **copied, pasted, and customized** in 30 seconds or less. Replace the [bracketed text] with your specific details and hit enter.

These prompts work with **ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot** — any AI chatbot. You don't need a paid subscription (though paid versions give better results).

Each prompt includes a **"Why It Works"** section so you understand the technique, not just the template. That way you can adapt them to any class, any subject, any assignment.

A Note on Academic Integrity

This kit is designed to help you **learn better**, not cheat. Every prompt is built around a simple principle: **AI is your tutor, not your ghostwriter.**

Use these prompts to understand concepts, prepare for exams, strengthen your arguments, and organize your work. The thinking is still yours. The writing is still yours. AI just helps you get there faster.

If your school has an AI use policy, follow it. When in doubt, ask your professor.

1. Understanding Hard Concepts

Turn confusing lectures into clear understanding

PROMPT 01

The ELI5 Ladder

Use when a concept just won't click, no matter how many times you re-read it

```
Explain [CONCEPT] to me at 5 levels of complexity:

1. Like I'm 10 years old (simple analogy, no jargon)
2. Like I'm a high school student (basic terminology, real-world example)
3. Like I'm a college freshman (proper terms, how it fits the bigger
picture)
4. Like I'm a junior in the major (technical depth, edge cases, nuances)
5. Like I'm a grad student (current debates, open questions, cutting-edge
applications)

I'm currently at level [YOUR LEVEL] and trying to get to the next one. After
all 5 levels, tell me what the most common misconception about this topic
is.
```

Why it works: Instead of getting one explanation that may or may not match your level, you get a ladder. You can find where your understanding sits and climb from there. The misconception at the end catches gaps you didn't know you had.

PROMPT 02

The Analogy Engine

Use when you understand something in one domain but need to transfer it to a new one

```
I understand [THING YOU KNOW WELL] really well, but I'm struggling to
understand [NEW CONCEPT FROM CLASS].

Create 3 analogies that map [NEW CONCEPT] onto [THING YOU KNOW WELL]. For
each analogy:
1. Show me the mapping: what corresponds to what
2. Where the analogy holds up perfectly
3. Where the analogy breaks down (so I don't over-extend it)

Then tell me which analogy is the most accurate and why.
```

Why it works: Learning science shows we understand new things by mapping them onto things we already know. By explicitly asking where the analogy breaks down, you avoid the common trap of taking a metaphor too literally.

PROMPT 03

The Prerequisite Mapper

Use when you're lost in class and suspect you're missing background knowledge

```
I'm taking [COURSE NAME] and we're currently covering [CURRENT TOPIC]. I'm
struggling and I think I might be missing some prerequisite knowledge.

1. List the 5-7 prerequisite concepts I MUST understand before [CURRENT
TOPIC] makes sense
2. For each one, give me a one-sentence explanation
3. Create a quick diagnostic: ask me one question per prerequisite so I can
identify exactly where my gap is
4. Then wait for my answers before continuing

I want to find my actual gap, not re-learn everything from scratch.
```

Why it works: Most students who are "lost" aren't bad at the current material — they're missing something from 2 weeks ago. This prompt finds the exact gap instead of wasting time reviewing everything.

PROMPT 04

The "Teach It Back" Checker

Use to test whether you actually understand something or just think you do

```
I'm going to try to explain [CONCEPT] to you as if you're a classmate who
missed the lecture. After I'm done, I want you to:

1. Rate my explanation 1-10 for accuracy
2. Identify anything I got wrong or stated imprecisely
3. Point out important aspects I left out
4. Tell me if my explanation would actually help someone understand it
5. Ask me one follow-up question that would test whether I truly understand
or just memorized

Here's my explanation:
[YOUR EXPLANATION]
```

Why it works: The Feynman Technique (teaching to learn) is proven to be one of the most effective study methods. But without a study partner, you can't get feedback. This prompt gives you an always-available study partner that actually pushes back.

PROMPT 05

The Concept Connector

Use when you understand individual topics but can't see how they relate

```
In my [COURSE] class, we've covered these topics so far:
[LIST YOUR TOPICS]

I understand each one individually, but I can't see the big picture. Please:
1. Draw me a concept map showing how these topics connect to each other
2. Explain the 3 most important connections between topics
3. Show me which topic is the "foundation" that everything else builds on
4. Predict what we'll probably cover next based on this progression
5. Give me one question that can ONLY be answered by combining knowledge
from multiple topics

Use plain text/ASCII for the concept map.
```

Why it works: Professors design courses with a hidden structure, but students often can't see it. This prompt reverse-engineers the course design, which is exactly what top students do intuitively. The combined-knowledge question is the kind of thing that shows up on exams.

2. Study & Exam Prep

Study less time, remember more

PROMPT 06

The Active Recall Generator

Use to create flashcard-style questions from your notes or textbook chapters

```
Here are my notes from [CLASS/CHAPTER]:
[PASTE YOUR NOTES]

Create 20 active recall questions from this material:
- 10 factual questions (who/what/when/where)
- 5 conceptual questions (why/how does this work)
- 3 application questions (how would you use this in a real scenario)
- 2 connection questions (how does this relate to [OTHER TOPIC])

Format each as: Question → [BLANK LINE] → Answer

Make the questions hard enough that I can't answer them just by recognizing
keywords — I should have to actually understand the material.
```

Why it works: Active recall (testing yourself) beats re-reading by 50-70% for retention. But making good questions is hard and time-consuming. This prompt creates a complete study session in 30 seconds. The mix of question types ensures you're prepared for any exam format.

PROMPT 07

The Practice Exam Builder

Use 2-3 days before an exam to simulate the real thing

```
I have a [EXAM TYPE: midterm/final/quiz] in [COURSE] covering [TOPICS]. The
exam format is [FORMAT: multiple choice / short answer / essay / mixed].

Create a realistic practice exam with:
- The same number of questions as my real exam ([NUMBER] questions)
- Difficulty that matches a college [LEVEL: intro/intermediate/advanced]
course
- A mix of easy (30%), medium (50%), and hard (20%) questions
- An answer key at the end with brief explanations for each answer

Important: Include at least 2 "tricky" questions — the kind where the
obvious answer is wrong and you need to think carefully. These are the ones
professors love.
```

Why it works: Practice testing under realistic conditions is the #1 predictor of exam performance. The 30/50/20 difficulty split mirrors how most professors design exams. The "tricky" questions prepare you for the ones that separate A's from B's.

PROMPT 08

The Spaced Repetition Planner

Use at the start of a study period to plan when to review what

```
My exam is on [DATE] and today is [TODAY'S DATE]. I need to study these
topics:
[LIST YOUR TOPICS]

Create a spaced repetition study schedule that:
1. Introduces each topic on a specific day
2. Schedules reviews at increasing intervals (1 day, 3 days, 7 days)
3. Puts the hardest topics earliest so they get the most review cycles
4. Keeps daily study sessions under [TIME] hours
5. Includes a final review day before the exam that covers everything

Format it as a simple daily checklist I can print out.
```

Why it works: Spaced repetition is the most evidence-backed study technique in all of cognitive science. The problem is that planning it manually is tedious. This prompt does the scheduling for you so you just follow the checklist.

PROMPT 09

The Weak Spot Finder

Use when you've been studying but aren't sure what you still don't know

```
I'm studying [TOPIC/COURSE] for an exam. I'm going to answer 10 rapid-fire
questions from you to find my weak spots. Here are the rules:

1. Ask me one question at a time
2. Wait for my answer before asking the next
3. Cover different sub-topics within [TOPIC]
4. Start easy and get progressively harder
5. After all 10 questions, give me a diagnostic report:
   - What I clearly understand (stop studying this)
   - What I sort of understand (review once more)
   - What I don't understand (focus here)
   - Suggested study order for my weak areas

Start with question 1.
```

Why it works: Students waste huge amounts of time re-studying things they already know. This prompt identifies exactly what you don't know in 10 questions, so you can spend your remaining study time on what actually matters.

PROMPT 10

The Last-Night Study Guide

Use when the exam is tomorrow and you need maximum efficiency

```
My [EXAM TYPE] in [COURSE] is TOMORROW. I've been studying but I need a
final review. The exam covers: [TOPICS].

Give me the "if you only remember 10 things" cheat sheet:
1. The 10 most important facts/concepts/formulas I absolutely must know
2. For each one, a one-sentence memory hook or mnemonic
3. The 3 most likely exam questions (based on what professors typically ask
about these topics)
4. The 2 most common mistakes students make on this material
5. One "big picture" sentence that ties everything together

Keep it SHORT. I don't need explanations right now — I need anchors for what
I've already studied.
```

> **Why it works:** The night before an exam, new learning is almost impossible. What works is consolidation — organizing what you already know into retrievable chunks. This prompt creates those chunks. The memory hooks give your brain something to grab onto during the exam.

3. Essay & Paper Writing

Write better papers in less time (without AI writing them for you)

PROMPT 11

The Thesis Sharpener

Use when your thesis statement feels vague or generic

```
Here's my current thesis statement for a [PAPER TYPE] in [COURSE]:
"[YOUR THESIS]"

Help me strengthen it:
1. Rate it 1-10 for specificity, arguability, and significance
2. What's the strongest counterargument to my thesis? (If there isn't one,
my thesis is too obvious)
3. Rewrite it 3 ways, each more specific and arguable than the last
4. For the strongest version, tell me what evidence I would need to prove it
5. Does this thesis pass the "so what?" test — why should anyone care?

Don't change my core argument — just make it sharper.
```

Why it works: The #1 reason papers get mediocre grades is a weak thesis. Professors can tell in the first paragraph whether a paper will be good. The counterargument test is key — if no one could disagree with your thesis, it's not an argument, it's a summary.

PROMPT 12

The Outline Architect

Use after you have a thesis but before you start writing

```
I'm writing a [LENGTH]-page [PAPER TYPE: essay/research paper/analysis] for
[COURSE].

My thesis: "[YOUR THESIS]"
Key sources I'm using: [LIST 3-5 SOURCES]

Build me an outline that:
1. Opens with a hook that isn't a dictionary definition or "Since the dawn
of time..."
2. Has [NUMBER] body paragraphs, each with a clear claim that supports my
thesis
3. Addresses the strongest counterargument (don't ignore it — defeat it)
4. Shows me where to use each of my sources
5. Ends with a "so what" conclusion that goes beyond restating the thesis

For each body paragraph, give me: Topic sentence → Evidence needed →
Analysis direction → Transition to next paragraph.
```

> **Why it works:** An outline is where the actual thinking happens — the writing is just executing the plan. This prompt forces you to think about argument structure, evidence placement, and counterarguments before you write a single sentence. That's what professors mean by "organization."

PROMPT 13

The Argument Strengthener

Use when your paper feels like it's just summarizing instead of arguing

```
Here's a paragraph from my paper:
"[PASTE YOUR PARAGRAPH]"

This paragraph is supposed to argue that [YOUR POINT]. Analyze it:
1. Am I actually making an argument, or just summarizing/describing?
2. Is my evidence doing the work, or am I just dropping quotes without
analysis?
3. Rewrite my analysis sentences (not the evidence) to be more analytical
4. Add a "This matters because..." sentence that connects this paragraph to
my thesis
5. Rate the paragraph before and after: is it stronger?

Keep my voice and my evidence — just sharpen my analysis.
```

Why it works: The difference between a B paper and an A paper is almost always analysis. B papers describe and summarize; A papers argue and analyze. This prompt teaches you to see the difference in your own writing by showing you the "before and after."

PROMPT 14

The Transition Smoother

Use when your paper reads like a list of disconnected paragraphs

```
Here are the last sentence of one paragraph and the first sentence of the
next paragraph in my paper:

Paragraph 1 ends: "[LAST SENTENCE]"
Paragraph 2 starts: "[FIRST SENTENCE]"

The logical connection between these paragraphs is: [WHAT YOU THINK THE
CONNECTION IS]

Give me 3 transition options that:
1. Show the logical relationship (cause/effect, contrast, building on, etc.)
2. Don't use cliché transitions like "Furthermore" or "In addition"
3. Feel natural, not forced
4. Make the reader feel like paragraph 2 is the inevitable next step

Also tell me: is my paragraph order correct, or would the paper flow better
if I swapped them?
```

Why it works: Transitions aren't just connecting words — they reveal your argument's logic. Professors notice when paragraphs feel stitched together vs. when they flow. The "should I swap them?" question often reveals that the real problem is paragraph order, not transitions.

PROMPT 15

The Self-Edit Coach

Use on your final draft before submitting

```
Here's my [PAPER TYPE] for [COURSE]. [PASTE FULL PAPER OR SECTION]

Edit this like a tough but fair professor would. Check for:
1. **Argument**: Is my thesis clear and supported throughout? Any logical
gaps?
2. **Evidence**: Am I using sources effectively, or just dropping quotes?
3. **Clarity**: Any sentences that are confusing or too wordy? Rewrite them.
4. **Flow**: Do paragraphs connect logically?
5. **Style**: Any repeated words, passive voice overuse, or academic
clichés?
6. **Grammar**: Catch errors but don't over-correct my voice.

Give me a prioritized list: fix these 3 things first for the biggest grade
improvement.

DO NOT rewrite the whole paper. Mark specific problems and suggest fixes.
```

Why it works: Most students either don't edit at all, or they just run spell-check. This prompt gives you the feedback a writing tutor would — but it's available at midnight before the deadline. The "prioritized list" ensures you fix the highest-impact issues first.

4. Research & Sources

Find, understand, and use sources like a researcher

PROMPT 16

The Paper Decoder

Use when assigned a dense academic paper you can't make sense of

```
I need to read this academic paper for class but it's very dense. Here's the
abstract (or introduction):
"[PASTE ABSTRACT/INTRO]"

Help me read it efficiently:
1. What is this paper actually arguing in 2-3 plain English sentences?
2. What problem is it trying to solve and why does it matter?
3. What method did they use (in simple terms)?
4. What did they find?
5. What are the limitations they admit to?
6. Give me 5 vocabulary terms from this paper I should know, with simple
definitions
7. What's the one key takeaway I should bring to class discussion?

Don't summarize the whole paper — help me understand the structure so I can
read it myself more effectively.
```

Why it works: Academic papers follow a predictable structure, but nobody teaches you how to read them. This prompt gives you a reading framework. Once you understand the argument and method, the rest of the paper becomes 10x easier to read. The vocab list prevents you from getting stuck on jargon.

PROMPT 17

The Source Evaluator

Use when you're not sure if a source is credible or appropriate for your paper

```
I found this source for my [PAPER TYPE] in [COURSE]:
Title: [TITLE]
Author: [AUTHOR]
Published in: [JOURNAL/WEBSITE/BOOK]
Year: [YEAR]
Key claim: [WHAT THE SOURCE ARGUES]

Evaluate this source:
1. Is this a credible academic source? (peer-reviewed journal, university
press, etc.)
2. Is it current enough for my topic, or outdated?
3. What's the author's expertise/potential bias?
4. How would a professor evaluate this source?
5. Is this source appropriate for a college paper, or should I find
something better?
6. If it's not ideal, what kind of source should I look for instead?

Be honest — I'd rather find a better source now than lose points later.
```

Why it works: Source evaluation is a skill professors expect but rarely teach explicitly. Using a random website or outdated study can tank an otherwise good paper. This prompt teaches you the evaluation criteria so you internalize them for future papers.

PROMPT 18

The Literature Map

Use when starting a research paper and you don't know what's out there

```
I'm writing a research paper on [YOUR TOPIC] for [COURSE]. I need to find
relevant academic sources.

Help me map the landscape:
1. What are the 3-4 main "camps" or perspectives on this topic?
2. Who are the key researchers/thinkers I should know about?
3. What are the landmark studies or papers on this topic?
4. What search terms should I use in Google Scholar/JSTOR/my university
database?
5. What related topics might lead me to useful sources I wouldn't find with
obvious search terms?

I'm not asking you to be my sources — I'm asking you to help me find them
myself. I'll verify everything in my university library database.
```

Why it works: The hardest part of research isn't reading — it's knowing what to search for. This prompt gives you a map of the territory before you start exploring. The search terms suggestion is especially valuable because academic papers use specific terminology that's different from how you'd naturally describe a topic.

PROMPT 19

The Citation Helper

Use when you need to properly cite a source and aren't sure how

```
I need to cite this source in [FORMAT: APA/MLA/Chicago/Other]:

Type of source: [book/journal article/website/etc.]
Author(s): [NAME(S)]
Title: [TITLE]
Publication: [WHERE IT WAS PUBLISHED]
Year: [YEAR]
Other info: [volume, issue, page numbers, URL, DOI, etc.]

Give me:
1. The in-text citation (parenthetical and narrative versions)
2. The full reference/works cited entry
3. An example of how to integrate this source into a sentence (with proper
citation) for each of these scenarios:
   - Direct quote
   - Paraphrase
   - Summarizing the author's main argument

Double-check the formatting — citation errors are easy to make.
```

Why it works: Citation formatting is tedious and error-prone, but getting it wrong can cost you points (or worse, look like plagiarism). This prompt doesn't just format the citation — it shows you how to actually use the source in your writing, which is the part most students struggle with.

PROMPT 20

The Research Question Refiner

Use when your research topic is too broad, too narrow, or too vague

```
I'm writing a research paper for [COURSE] and my initial topic idea is: "
[YOUR TOPIC IDEA]"

Help me turn this into a great research question:
1. Is this too broad, too narrow, or about right for a [LENGTH]-page paper?
2. If too broad: suggest 3 ways to narrow it down
3. If too narrow: suggest 3 ways to expand it
4. Give me 3 different research questions I could pursue within this topic,
ranging from safe/conventional to ambitious/original
5. For each question, tell me: is there enough existing research to write
this paper, or would I be stuck?
6. Which question would impress a professor the most, and why?

I want a question that's specific enough to answer but interesting enough to
be worth reading.
```

Why it works: "My topic is climate change" vs. "How did the 2015 Paris Agreement change corporate sustainability reporting in the automotive industry?" — the second one leads to an A paper. This prompt helps you find that sweet spot between too broad and too narrow, which is the single most important decision in a research paper.

5. Math & Problem Solving

Understand the process, not just the answer

PROMPT 21

The Step-by-Step Solver

Use when you need to understand HOW to solve a problem, not just the answer

```
I need to solve this problem from [COURSE]:
[PASTE THE PROBLEM]

Walk me through it step by step:
1. Before solving: what TYPE of problem is this? What technique/formula
applies?
2. Solve it one step at a time — show every step, even the "obvious" ones
3. At each step, explain WHY you're doing that operation (not just what)
4. After solving: how would I recognize this type of problem on an exam?
5. Give me a similar problem (with different numbers) to try on my own, with
the answer at the bottom so I can check

I need to understand the process, not just copy the answer.
```

Why it works: Math textbooks skip steps that authors think are "obvious." This prompt fills in every gap. The "recognize this type" question is crucial — exams test pattern recognition more than raw calculation. The practice problem ensures you can actually do it yourself.

PROMPT 22

The "Where Did I Go Wrong?" Debugger

Use when you got the wrong answer and can't figure out why

```
I tried to solve this problem and got the wrong answer. Help me find my
mistake.

The problem: [PASTE PROBLEM]
The correct answer: [CORRECT ANSWER, if you know it]

Here's my work:
[PASTE YOUR WORK, STEP BY STEP]

1. Find the exact step where I went wrong
2. Explain what I did vs. what I should have done
3. Is this a conceptual error (I don't understand something) or a mechanical
error (I understand but made a calculation mistake)?
4. If conceptual: what do I need to review?
5. What's a common reason students make this specific mistake?
```

Why it works: Finding your own errors is one of the most valuable learning activities, but it's hard without a tutor. The conceptual vs. mechanical distinction is key — if it's mechanical, you just need to be more careful. If it's conceptual, you need to go back and relearn something. This saves hours of re-studying the wrong thing.

PROMPT 23

The Word Problem Translator

Use when you can do the math but can't figure out what the word problem is asking

```
I'm stuck on this word problem:
"[PASTE THE WORD PROBLEM]"

I can do the math if I know what to set up, but I can't translate the words
into equations. Help me:
1. What are the key quantities in this problem? Label each one with a
variable
2. What relationships between these quantities does the problem describe?
3. Translate each relationship into a mathematical equation or expression
4. What is the problem actually asking me to find? (What's the unknown?)
5. Now that I have the equations, what method should I use to solve? (Don't
solve it — let me try)

Just translate — don't solve it for me.
```

Why it works: Word problems test two separate skills: translation (words → math) and computation (solving the math). Most students who struggle with word problems are actually fine at the computation — they just can't set up the problem. This prompt isolates the translation step so you can practice it separately.

PROMPT 24

The Practice Problem Factory

Use when you've done all the textbook problems and need more practice

```
I'm practicing [TOPIC] from [COURSE]. I can handle basic problems but
struggle with [SPECIFIC DIFFICULTY].

Generate 5 practice problems for me:
1. Problem 1: Easy warm-up (I should get this right to confirm I have the
basics)
2. Problem 2: Medium (standard exam-level difficulty)
3. Problem 3: Medium with a twist (requires an extra step or insight)
4. Problem 4: Hard (the kind that's worth the most points on an exam)
5. Problem 5: Challenge (beyond exam level — if I can do this, I can do
anything on the test)

Give me all 5 problems first without answers. Then put the answers and
solutions at the bottom, separated by a clear line, so I don't accidentally
see them.
```

Why it works: Textbooks have limited practice problems, and they're often all the same difficulty. This prompt creates a progressive difficulty ladder that builds confidence (problems 1-2) while pushing your limits (problems 4-5). The challenge problem is there for students aiming for an A+.

PROMPT 25

The Formula Cheat Sheet Builder

Use before an exam to create a condensed reference sheet

```
I have an exam on [TOPICS] in [COURSE]. I'm allowed a [SIZE: one page /
index card / no notes] formula sheet.

Create an optimized cheat sheet:
1. List every formula/equation I need, grouped by topic
2. Next to each formula, write what each variable means (I always forget)
3. Add a one-line "when to use this" note for each formula
4. Include common constants or values I might need
5. If space is limited, tell me which formulas I can derive from others (so
I can skip those and save space)

Organize it so I can find things fast during the exam — not alphabetical,
but by topic/problem type.
```

Why it works: Making a formula sheet is one of the best study activities — it forces you to organize and prioritize information. The "when to use this" notes are the real value, because on an exam, the hard part isn't computing — it's knowing which formula to use. Even if your exam doesn't allow notes, making this sheet is great study practice.

6. Productivity & Organization

Work smarter, stress less, actually have free time

PROMPT 26

The Semester Planner

Use at the beginning of the semester to map out all your deadlines

```
Here are my courses this semester and their major assignments/exams:

[LIST EACH COURSE WITH:
- Course name
- Major assignments + due dates
- Exam dates
- Weekly workload estimate (hours)]

Create a semester-at-a-glance plan:
1. Put everything on a week-by-week timeline
2. Flag "crunch weeks" where multiple things are due
3. For each crunch week, suggest what I should start early to avoid the
pileup
4. Identify the 3 most dangerous weeks of the semester
5. Build in buffer time — when should I be "ahead" so I can handle
surprises?

Format as a simple week-by-week checklist I can reference all semester.
```

Why it works: The students who get burned aren't lazy — they're ambushed by deadline clusters they didn't see coming. This prompt reveals the danger zones before they hit, so you can start assignments early when it actually matters.

PROMPT 27

The Assignment Breaker

Use when you have a big assignment and don't know where to start

```
I have this assignment due [DATE]:
[PASTE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION/RUBRIC]

I tend to procrastinate because big projects feel overwhelming. Break this
down:
1. List every sub-task needed to complete this assignment (be specific)
2. Estimate how long each sub-task takes (be realistic, not optimistic)
3. Put them in the order I should do them
4. Identify the "first 15 minutes" — what's the smallest possible step I can
take right now to get started?
5. Flag any sub-tasks that need external input (office hours, library, group
members) so I can plan those early
6. Create a day-by-day plan from now until the due date

The "first 15 minutes" is the most important part — make it stupidly easy so
I actually do it.
```

Why it works: Procrastination isn't about laziness — it's about overwhelm. When a task feels too big, your brain avoids it. Breaking it into tiny steps removes the overwhelm. The "first 15 minutes" trick exploits the fact that starting is the hardest part — once you're in motion, you usually keep going.

PROMPT 28

The Procrastination Killer

Use when you know you should be working but keep avoiding it

```
I need to work on [TASK] but I keep procrastinating. It's due [DATE].

Be my accountability partner:
1. Ask me: what specifically about this task am I avoiding? (Wait for my
answer)
2. Based on my answer, diagnose the real reason I'm procrastinating:
   - Is it too boring? → Help me make it interesting
   - Is it too hard? → Help me find the easy entry point
   - Is it too vague? → Help me clarify what "done" looks like
   - Am I afraid it won't be good? → Help me set a "good enough" standard
3. Give me a 25-minute focused work plan (Pomodoro style): exactly what to
do in the next 25 minutes
4. Set a tiny goal: what's the minimum I could accomplish that would still
count as progress?

Just get me started. That's all I need.
```

Why it works: Procrastination has different root causes, and the fix depends on the cause. Boring tasks need gamification, hard tasks need scaffolding, vague tasks need clarity, and perfectionism needs permission to be mediocre. The 25-minute Pomodoro removes the "I have to do this all day" dread and replaces it with "just 25 minutes."

PROMPT 29

The Group Project Saver

Use when your group project is disorganized and nobody knows who's doing what

```
I'm in a group project for [COURSE]. Here's the assignment:
[PASTE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION]

Our group has [NUMBER] people. The project is due [DATE].

Create a project plan:
1. Break the project into clear, independent tasks (so people can work
without waiting on each other)
2. Estimate hours for each task
3. Suggest how to assign tasks fairly based on [NUMBER] group members
4. Create a timeline with milestones: "By [date], we should have
[deliverable]"
5. Identify the critical path — which tasks MUST be done first or everything
stalls?
6. Draft a message I can send to my group chat proposing this plan (keep it
friendly, not bossy)

The goal is to make this so clear that even the group member who does the
least still knows exactly what they need to do.
```

Why it works: Group projects fail because of ambiguity, not laziness. When everyone "kinda knows" what they should do, nothing gets done. This prompt creates the clarity that eliminates the most common excuse: "I didn't know what I was supposed to do." The group chat message is key — being organized without being annoying is a real skill.

PROMPT 30

The Lecture Note Organizer

Use after a lecture to turn messy notes into study-ready material

```
Here are my raw notes from today's [COURSE] lecture on [TOPIC]:
[PASTE YOUR MESSY NOTES]

Organize these into a study-ready format:
1. Clean up the structure: add headers, bullet points, and logical grouping
2. Fill in gaps: if I wrote shorthand or left something incomplete, expand
it based on standard [TOPIC] knowledge
3. Highlight key terms and definitions
4. Add "connections" — how does today's lecture connect to previous topics
we've covered ([LIST RECENT TOPICS])?
5. Create 5 potential exam questions from this lecture
6. Flag anything that seems important but I might not have captured well
(things a professor would emphasize)

Keep my original notes' content — just organize and enhance them.
```

Why it works: The act of reorganizing notes within 24 hours of a lecture dramatically improves retention (the "encoding" effect). This prompt does the tedious formatting work so you can focus on understanding. The exam questions turn passive notes into active study material immediately.