PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Working With AI

A practical guide for thinking, creating, learning, and getting work done with AI.

AI is much more than a faster way to search for information or write an email.

Used well, it becomes a thinking and working partner: helping you organize information, explore ideas, solve problems, learn new things, create, communicate, challenge your thinking, and get work done more effectively.

> **You don't need to be an AI expert.**
> **You don't need to know the perfect prompt.**
> **You need to learn how to work with it.**

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01

Start With a Different Question

Most people begin with *"What can AI do?"* A better question is: "What am I trying to accomplish, and how could AI help?"

Pay attention when you catch yourself thinking:

> *This takes forever.*

> *I don't know where to start.*

> *I need to organize all of this.*

> *I have too much information to sort through.*

> *I need to write this.*

> *I wish I had someone to bounce this off of.*

> *I don't understand this.*

> *There has to be an easier way.*

> *I've done this manually five times already.*

> *I wonder if there's another way to think about this.*

Every one of those is an opening to ask: **could AI help me here?**

02

Move Beyond the Google Mindset

There are different levels of working with AI. Most people stop at the first one.

SEARCH

"Find something for me."

Useful, but only the beginning.



DO

"Create something for me."

Draft an email. Summarize a document. Build a checklist. Organize notes.

THINK WITH ME

“Help me work through this.”

Explore possibilities. Challenge an idea. Identify what you're missing. Compare approaches. Solve a problem together.

KNOW MY WORLD

“Understand the context around what I'm doing.”

Give AI appropriate information about your role, objectives, preferences, organization, project, previous work, and constraints.

BUILD & REPEAT

“We figured out a good way to do this. Help me make it repeatable.”

Turn successful work into reusable prompts, templates, workflows, projects, or processes.

The further down this progression you go, the more useful AI becomes.

03

A Simple Way to Talk to AI

Forget trying to write the perfect prompt. Remember three things.

CONTEXT

What does AI need to understand?

- Who are you?
- What's happening?
- Who is involved?
- What has already happened?
- What constraints exist?
- What documents would help?

INTENT

What are you actually trying to accomplish?

Not the task itself. The outcome you need the task to produce.

CONVERSATION

Don't stop at the first answer.

React the way you would with a colleague. Tell it what's wrong. Ask questions. Add missing context. Push back. Ask for alternatives.

INSTEAD OF

“Write an email.”

TRY

“I need this person to understand why we're changing the process, feel clear about what happens next, and respond by Friday.”

That second version is your actual intent. And the back and forth that follows is not overhead. The conversation is part of the work.

A SIMPLE PROMPT FORMULA

A simple formula covers most prompts: Role + Task + Context + Format + Tone.

ROLE	TASK	CONTEXT	FORMAT	TONE

EXAMPLE

“You are an experienced office manager `ROLE`. Write a reminder email about the new expense policy `TASK`. The policy takes effect next Monday and receipts are now required for anything over $25 `CONTEXT`. Keep it under 120 words with 3 bullet points `FORMAT`, friendly but clear `TONE`.”

04

Useful Things to Say to AI

You don't need complicated language. Steal any of these.

TO GET A BETTER ANSWER

- Ask me questions before you answer.
- What information would make your answer better?
- Explain this like I'm completely new to it.
- This is too complicated. Simplify it.
- That doesn't sound like me. Ask me questions so you can understand my style better.

TO PRESSURE TEST YOUR THINKING

- What am I missing?
- Challenge my thinking.
- What assumptions am I making?
- Give me three different approaches.

› Don't just agree with me. Tell me where my thinking may be wrong.

TO MOVE THE WORK FORWARD

› Take all of this messy information and help me organize it.

› What would you do next?

› Now turn this into a checklist I can actually use.

› What else could you help me do with this that I haven't thought to ask?

05

Let AI Teach You How to Use AI

You do not need to become a prompt engineer. AI can help you get better at working with AI.

GREAT RESULT	"This worked really well. Create a reusable prompt I can use next time to get this kind of result. Include placeholders for anything that will change." Or simply: "Turn what we just did into a repeatable workflow."
BAD RESULT	"This isn't what I was looking for. Help me understand what information or direction was missing from my request."
NO IDEA YET	"I want to accomplish [X], but I don't know the best way to use AI for it. Interview me and help me figure it out."

You don't have to know the right way to use AI before you start. Ask AI to help you figure out the right way.

06

Don't Keep Starting From Zero

Not all context belongs in every prompt. Think about information in three buckets.

TODAY'S CONTEXT

Information unique to the task you're doing right now.

REUSABLE PROMPT OR WORKFLOW

Something you do repeatedly and want AI to help you do consistently.

PERSISTENT CONTEXT

Information that stays relatively stable: your role, responsibilities, preferences, communication style, organization, ongoing projects, and goals.

Depending on the platform and account you're using, persistent context may be handled through features such as:

- `Custom instructions`
- `Memory or personalization`
- `Projects / workspaces`
- `Reference documents and files`
- `Organizational instructions`

The specific features will keep changing. The principle won't: give AI the context it needs without starting over every time.

07

Which AI Should I Use?

You don't need to use every AI tool. Start with the work, then choose the tool.

Gemini	Especially useful when your work already lives inside the Google ecosystem. Depending on your account and available features, it can work alongside Gmail, Docs, Drive, Sheets, and other Google Workspace applications.
ChatGPT	A broad AI working environment for thinking, writing, planning, research, files, ongoing projects, learning, and creative work. Available capabilities depend on your account and settings.
Claude	Another powerful general AI environment, particularly useful for working through substantial information, documents, writing, analysis, projects, and complex thinking.
And many others	There are specialized AI tools for meetings, research, images, video, coding, automation, presentations, and data.

You don't need to chase every new tool. Learn how to work with AI well. That skill transfers.

08

AI Can Help You Think, Not Just Do

Some of the most powerful AI use doesn't save you from doing a task. It helps you think better about the task.

Give AI an idea, then ask:

- What's weak about this?
- What perspective haven't I considered?
- Argue the other side.
- What questions should I be asking?
- Give me five possibilities I probably wouldn't think of myself.

- › Help me understand why this isn't working.
- › Teach me this instead of just giving me the answer.
- › I have an instinct about this but can't articulate it yet. Ask me questions and help me work through it.

AI is most valuable when it complements your thinking rather than replacing it.

09

Use Your Judgment

BEFORE YOU RELY ON IT

AI can be remarkably capable. It can also be confidently wrong. A polished answer is not necessarily a correct answer.

Verify important facts, numbers, dates, sources, medical information, legal or financial information, and other consequential conclusions.

Be thoughtful about what you share. Before entering sensitive personal, health, financial, employee, participant, caregiver, or organizational information, make sure the system and account you are using are appropriate and approved for that information. When possible, remove identifying details AI doesn't actually need to complete the task.

AI can contribute capability. You retain judgment, responsibility, and accountability.

10

Build the AI Reflex

You will not become good at AI by memorizing a list of prompts. You'll become good by using it on real things.

NOTICE → TRY → ITERATE → BUILD → REPEAT

NOTICE	An opportunity inside work you are already doing.
TRY	Bring it to AI, even roughly.
ITERATE	Keep talking until the result improves.
BUILD	Capture what worked.
REPEAT	Build on it next time.

Over time, the biggest change isn't that you know more AI features. It's that you begin looking at work differently.

TAKE AWAY

Your 7-Day Challenge

Before you move on from this workshop, fill these in. Be specific enough that you could start tomorrow.

One thing I will stop doing entirely manually

One recurring activity I will begin doing with AI

One place where I will build context instead of continually starting over

Something I will try with AI in the next seven days

KEEP ONE QUESTION NEARBY

“What else am I doing the old way simply because I haven't imagined another way yet?”