The four-part brief

Turn a vague request into a clear brief: goal, context, constraints and output format, with a filled-in example.

Time **about 5 minutes** Updated **11 Nov 2026** Fill in online at **Learn › Worksheets**

HOW TO USE IT

1. Fill in the four parts for one real request.
2. Copy the finished brief into any AI chat tool.
3. If you aren't sure what to include, add the optional last line so the model asks you first.

Your brief

Each part removes a guess the model would otherwise make.

1. Goal

What do you want to end up with, and what is it for?

2. Context

What does the model need to know that it can't guess? Audience, product or project, what's been tried, facts that must be included.

3. Constraints

Length, tone, reading level, things to avoid, and anything that must be exactly right (dates, prices, names).

4. Output format

How should the answer be laid out? A list, a table, three options, plain text to paste.

Optional last line

- [ ] Before you start, ask me up to five questions you need answered.

Before you use the answer

Check against a source you trust

- [ ] Names
- [ ] Numbers and prices
- [ ] Dates and times
- [ ] Quotes and citations

Example answers

> The example is the bakery email from the prompting guide. It's illustrative: your brief will be about your own task.

Your brief

Each part removes a guess the model would otherwise make.

1. Goal

What do you want to end up with, and what is it for?

> A 120-word email inviting past customers to our spring open day.

2. Context

What does the model need to know that it can't guess? Audience, product or project, what's been tried, facts that must be included.

> We are a small family bakery. Customers are mostly local families. The open day is Saturday 4 April, 10am to 2pm. There will be free tasting of three new sourdoughs.

3. Constraints

Length, tone, reading level, things to avoid, and anything that must be exactly right (dates, prices, names).

> Warm and plain. No exclamation marks. No discount codes.

4. Output format

How should the answer be laid out? A list, a table, three options, plain text to paste.

> Two subject-line options, then the email body.

Optional last line

- [ ] Before you start, ask me up to five questions you need answered.

Before you use the answer

Check against a source you trust

- [x] Names
- [ ] Numbers and prices
- [x] Dates and times
- [ ] Quotes and citations

Fluent is not the same as correct. Check names, numbers, dates and quotes before an answer leaves your hands. Free to use and adapt for your own work.