



THE CRAIG WEISS
GROUP

WORKS WITH ANY AI CHATBOT — CHATGPT, CLAUDE, GEMINI, WHATEVER

Prompting Without Burning Through Your Budget

No settings to touch. No technical anything. Just a smarter way to ask for what you actually want.

The One Thing That Actually Matters

Everything else in this guide is just a variation on this

Here's the thing nobody tells you up front.

Every AI chatbot — doesn't matter which one — gets billed the same basic way. It reads everything you type. It writes something back. Somebody pays for all of it. That's the whole system. It's not more complicated than that, no matter what anyone tries to sell you.

So saving money isn't some hidden setting. It isn't a trick. It comes down to one habit, and it's not a fun one to admit you're bad at: **say what you actually want. The first time.**

Nobody blows their budget with one expensive question. I've never seen it happen. What actually happens is five cheap, vague ones stacked on top of each other. You ask something fuzzy. The AI guesses. You correct it. It guesses again. You correct it again. Every one of those little messages drags the whole conversation with it, and gets billed all over again. A clear ask beats five fuzzy ones. Every time. No exceptions.

SEE THE DIFFERENCE

"Can you help me with a presentation?" — then three follow-ups just to pin down the topic, the audience, the length. Versus: "Build me a 10-slide presentation on Q3 sales results for our regional managers, visual, light on text." Same result. A fraction of the cost. Not even close.

Give It the Good Stuff Up Front

The stuff you'd tell a new hire on their first day

Before you hit send, run through three things in your head. You don't have to spell out every one of them every time. But the more you include, the less back-and-forth you're going to pay for later.

- Who's this actually for?
- What do you want out of it — a list, a paragraph, a full plan?
- Roughly how long or short should it be?

That's not a formula. I'm not going to pretend it's some framework with a clever acronym. It's a checklist. Answer those three things and most AI tools get it right on the first try. Most.

Say the Length You Want, Out Loud

Left alone, AI tends to over-write. Every time. Ask for three bullet points, you'll get three bullet points. Say nothing, and you might get three paragraphs you never asked for — and guess what, you're paying for every word of it. Wanted or not.

TRY THIS

"Summarize this in 3 sentences." "Give me a short answer, no more than 100 words." Small phrases like that quietly keep your costs in check, without changing anything else about how you talk to it.

Bundle Your Edits, Don't Trickle Them In

Say all your notes in one message, not five

If you've got three things you want changed, say all three. Right now. Don't send "make it shorter," wait for the reply, then "also fix the tone," wait again, then "oh, and add a call to action" like it just occurred to you. Each one of those is a full conversation getting re-sent and re-billed, just to make one small tweak.

Think of it like giving notes on a draft. You'd rather give one solid round of feedback than interrupt someone three separate times for three separate sentences. Nobody likes that person. Don't be that person with your AI bill.

New Topic? Start a New Chat

Conversations don't clean themselves up. I wish they did. If you finish one task and jump to something totally unrelated in that same chat, the old conversation is still sitting there in the background, riding along, getting billed with every new message — even though it has nothing to do with what you're asking now.

New topic, new chat. It costs you nothing to do it. It keeps everything running lean. There's really no excuse not to.

Only Hand Over What You Actually Need

More pages in, more tokens billed — every time

If you only need help with one section of a 40-page document, don't upload the whole thing. I get the instinct — just dump it all in, let the AI sort it out. But the AI reads every page you give it, relevant or not, and you're paying for all of it. Copy in the section that matters. Or ask it to work from a summary instead of the full file.

It's Fine Not to Know Exactly What You Want

Sometimes you genuinely don't have a clear ask yet. That's fine. That happens to everybody, including me, more often than I'd like to admit.

Just say so. Directly. Ask the AI to ask you a few questions before it starts. That's still cheaper than fumbling through five guesses on your own — and honestly, it usually gets you to a better answer, faster.

TRY THIS

"I need help with a training plan but I'm not sure where to start — ask me a few questions first, then put something together." One message. The AI does the narrowing-down for you.

Bad Prompts, and Why They're Bad

Real examples of the stuff that quietly costs the most

Let's talk about bad prompts.

Everybody writes them.

I don't care how long you've been using AI — you've typed something lazy into that box at least once this week. So have I.

Here's the part nobody tells you: a lazy prompt isn't free. It's not like tossing out a bad guess and moving on with your day. Every vague thing you type gets read in full, along with everything you said before it. Then the AI guesses. Then you correct it. Then it guesses again. You're paying for every lap of that — in tokens, in time, in your own patience.

BAD: "Help me with this."

Help with what, exactly? The AI doesn't know. Honestly, half the time you don't know either — that's the real problem. Now you're both guessing, and guessing isn't free.

BAD: "Can you look at my document and tell me what you think?"

Think about what? The grammar? The structure? Whether the whole argument even holds up? You didn't say. So you'll get an answer to a question you never actually asked, then spend two more messages dragging it toward what you meant.

BAD: "Make it better."

Better according to who? I've heard "make it better" mean shorter, longer, funnier, more serious, and "I don't know, just fix it" — sometimes all in the same afternoon. The AI will pick one. Probably not the one you meant.

BAD: "I need a presentation." (and nothing else)

No audience. No topic depth. No length. So now you're building the brief one painful question at a time instead of just handing it over like an adult, in the first message.

BAD: "Fix this" — followed by a 20-page document pasted in full

If the actual problem is one paragraph on page 3, guess what — the AI still reads all twenty pages to find it. You're paying for pages 1 through 20 when you only needed page 3. That's not the AI's fault. That one's on you.

Notice something?

Every one of these is missing the same three things.

Who it's for. What you actually want. How much of it you need.

That's it. That's the whole list. Get those three things into your first message, and most of this just goes away.

The Short Version

If you only remember one page, make it this one

BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

- Say who it's for, what you want, and how long it should be — all in one go.
- If you don't know exactly what you need yet, just say that too.
- Only paste in the part of the document that actually matters.

WHILE YOU'RE GOING BACK AND FORTH

- Bundle your feedback — all your edits in one message, not five.
- Ask for the length you actually want, plainly.
- New topic? Open a new chat instead of piling on.

None of this takes any technical skill. Zero. It's really just thinking for a few extra seconds before you hit send — the same way you'd pause before firing off a text to a coworker who's actually trying to help you. That's the whole trick. That's the whole guide, honestly.