



The handoff

Stop collecting prompts. Half of them stopped working the moment the model changed. What doesn't expire is what you say before you ask — four parts, briefed like you'd brief a capable new hire.



README

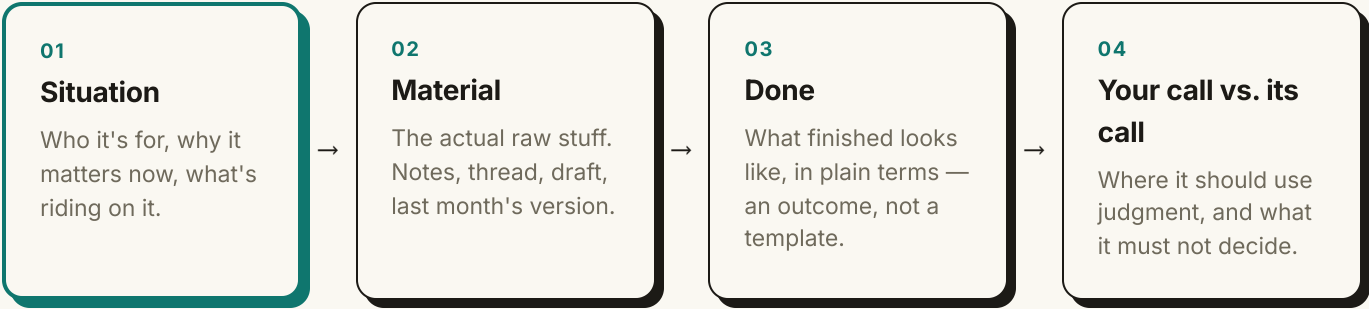
What this is. The four-part brief that replaces the prompts you copied off the internet, plus three prompts for writing one, pressure-testing it, and fixing the part everyone gets wrong.

How to use it. Read page 2, then write your first brief on page 3 against a real task you have this week. Everything in a bordered box is copy-paste ready.

The running example. Throughout, you're an operations manager at a mid-size company. Dana is a client whose deadline you just missed. Your manager is Priya, and a vendor onboarding rollout is in week three of six.

Brief it like a person

You'd never tell a new hire "write the update" and walk away. You'd tell them four things. Say the same four things here and the output stops needing a rewrite.



- a Part four is the new one.** Two years ago models couldn't be trusted with judgment, so everyone learned to over-specify and lock everything down. The good ones can handle it now — but only if you say where it applies.
- b What transfers.** Different task, different week, same four questions. That's the part that doesn't expire when the next model ships.

Weak version, strong version

PART	WHAT PEOPLE WRITE	WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS
Situation	"Write an email to a client."	"Dana's annoyed we missed Thursday. I want the relationship, not the argument."
Material	Nothing, or a one-line summary.	The actual thread, plus your rough notes on what went wrong internally.
Done	"Make it professional."	"Four sentences I can send without editing."
Your call	Left out entirely.	"Pick the wording yourself. Don't invent a new date — that's mine to confirm."

Write one, then `test` it

The first is the template you'll reuse forever. The second is the one that finds what you left out, which is usually part four.

1 · The handoff template

COPY-PASTE · FILL IN THE FOUR PARTS

Situation: [who this is for, why it matters now, what's riding on it]

Material: [paste the actual raw material – thread, notes, last version]

Done looks like: [the outcome in plain terms, not a rigid template]

Your call vs mine: [where you should use judgment] – but do not decide [the thing that is yours], I'll confirm that separately.

2 · Pressure-test the brief before you send it

COPY-PASTE · FIND THE GAP

Here is a brief I'm about to give you: [paste your brief]

Before you do the task, tell me what's missing or ambiguous. Specifically:

- Is it clear who the audience is and what they already know?
- Do you have enough raw material, or are you about to fill gaps by guessing?
- Is "done" described as an outcome, or as a format I've imposed?
- Do you know which decisions are mine and which are yours?

List only what's genuinely unclear. If the brief is workable, say so and don't invent problems.

The part everyone `skips`

Part four is where the leverage moved. Most briefs either lock everything down or leave everything open — both produce work you have to redo.

3 · Draw the judgment line

`COPY-PASTE · YOUR CALL VS. ITS CALL`

For this task: [describe the task in one line]

Split the decisions into two lists.

Yours: the calls you can make well from the material I gave you — wording, structure, ordering, what to cut.

Mine: the calls that need something you can't see — commitments, dates, money, anything about a person, anything I'd have to defend later.

Then tell me which list you're least sure about, and why.

Where the line usually falls

`SAFE TO HAND OVER`

Tone, sentence structure, ordering, what to cut for length, which of your points leads, how to phrase something you've already decided to say.

`KEEP FOR YOURSELF`

New dates or commitments, numbers you haven't verified, anything evaluative about a person, and any position you'd have to defend in a room later.

The sentence to steal: *"Use your judgment on tone, don't touch the numbers."* Useless two years ago. Today it's the difference between output you can send and output you rewrite.

The same email, **twice**

A client is annoyed you missed Thursday. Here's the version most people write, and the version that gets sent without editing.

Before — the vague ask

PROMPT · WHAT MOST PEOPLE TYPE

Write a professional email apologising to a client for a missed deadline.

WHAT CAME BACK

"We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused and remain fully committed to delivering excellence..." — generic, over-formal, invents a recovery date you never agreed to, and sounds like it was written by someone who wasn't there.

After — the four-part brief

PROMPT · THE HANDOFF

Situation: replying to Dana, a client who's annoyed we missed Thursday's deadline. I want to keep the relationship, not win the argument.

Material: [the thread so far, plus my notes — our vendor handoff slipped, nothing to do with anything on her side]

Done looks like: four sentences I can send without editing.

Your call vs mine: pick the wording yourself. Don't invent a new delivery date — I'll confirm that with the team first.

WHAT CAME BACK

"Hi Dana, you're right that we missed Thursday, and that one's on us. The holdup was our vendor handoff, nothing to do with anything on your side. I don't want to give you a new date until I've confirmed it with the team, so I'll have that to you Monday. Happy to get on a call before then."

Three ways briefs fail

01 Leaving out part four entirely

The most common, and the most expensive.

Without a judgment line, the model either invents things it shouldn't — dates, numbers, commitments — or plays so safe the output is useless. Naming what it must not decide is what makes the rest safe to delegate.

02 Describing the situation but withholding the material

Produces confident, plausible fiction.

A rich description of the problem with no raw material means it fills the gaps by guessing. Paste the actual thread, the actual notes, last month's actual version. Strip the confidential parts and keep the structure — see the guide on what never to hand over.

03 Turning "done" into a rigid template

Gets you a form, not a result.

"Use exactly these five headings" locks out the judgment you're paying for. Say what finished looks like — "four sentences I can send", "one page Priya can skim walking in" — and let it choose the shape.

RECAP

You now have

- 1 The four-part brief: situation, material, done, your call vs. its call.
- 2 A fill-in template, a prompt that finds what you left out, and one that draws the judgment line.
- 3 A worked example showing the same email briefed badly and briefed properly.
- 4 The three failure modes, and what to write instead.

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