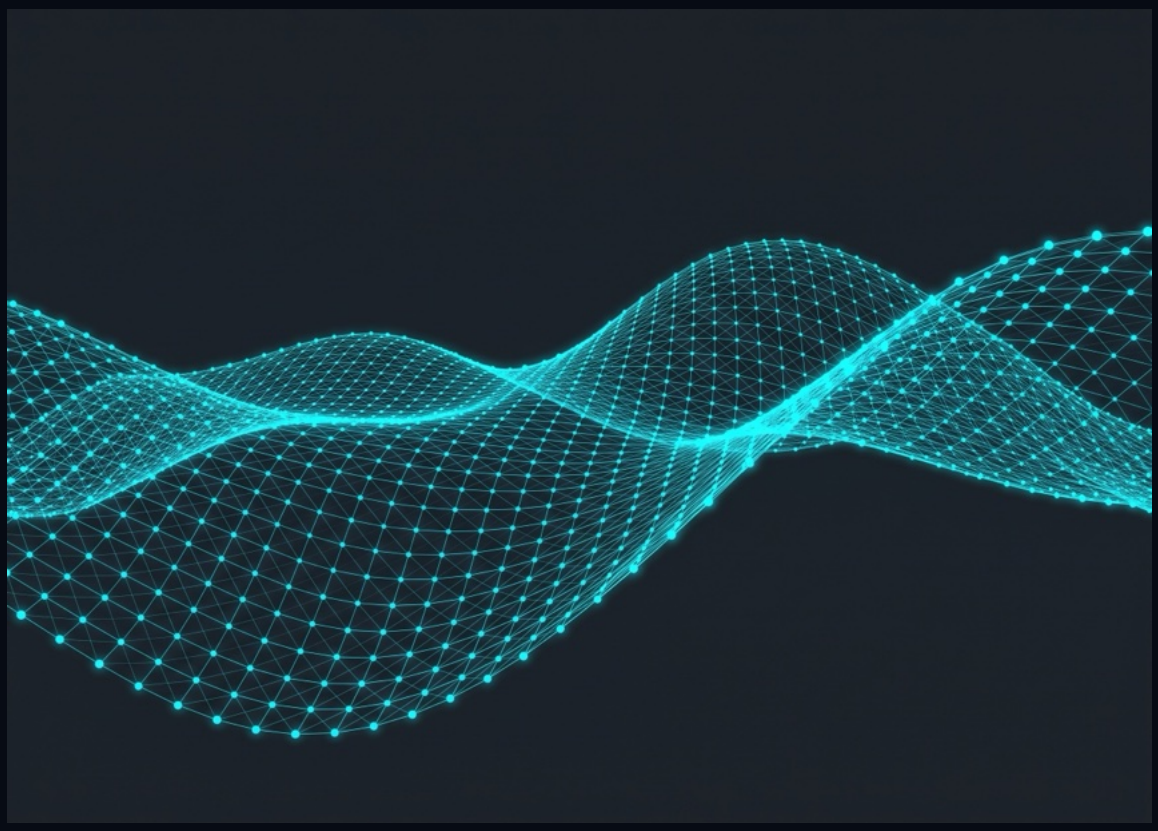
CYBERNOVA
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MICROSOFT 365 COPILOT · FOUNDATIONS

The Copilot Foundations *Prompting Guide*

Seventeen copy-ready prompts to get real work done in Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Copilot Chat — built on a simple four-part recipe you can reuse for anything.

17	6	4	POPIA
COPY-READY PROMPTS	M365 APPS	PART RECIPE	RESPONSIBLE USE

START HERE

Good prompts aren't luck — they follow a recipe

Most people type a few words into Copilot, get a vague answer, and give up. The professionals who get consistent results do one thing differently: they give Copilot structure. Every prompt in this guide follows the same four-part recipe. Learn it once, and you can write your own prompt for almost any task — clearly, safely, and repeatably.

1

Goal

Say plainly what you want Copilot to do. One clear instruction beats a paragraph of hints — "summarise", "draft", "compare", "list".

2

Context

Explain why, for whom, and any constraints. Who reads this? What tone, what must be avoided, what matters most?

3

Source

Point Copilot at the right material — this email thread, that document, this meeting, this spreadsheet. Grounding beats guessing.

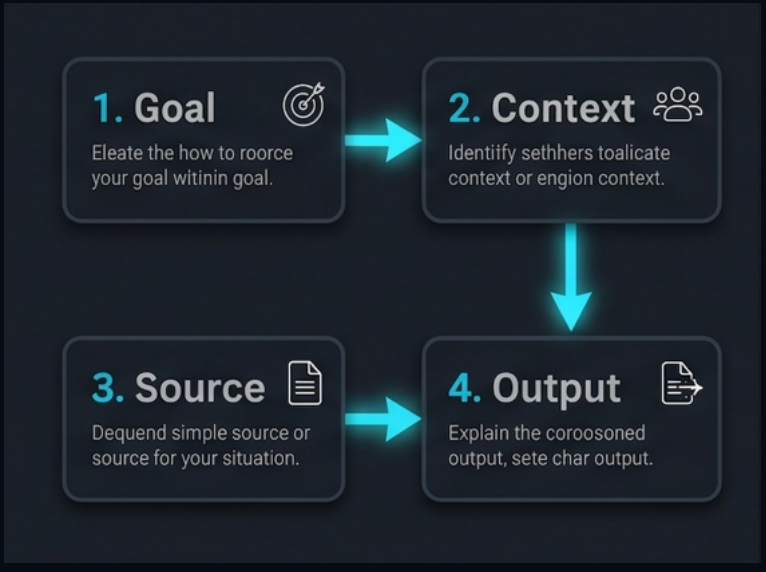
4

Output

Describe the finished shape: format, length, tone, and how you'll check it. "Five bullets, plain English, flag anything uncertain."

How to use this guide. Each prompt below is ready to paste into Copilot. Replace anything in [cyan brackets] with your own details, then run it. Start with one app you use daily, get a quick win, and build from there. Everything here maps to Level 1 of the CyberNova Copilot Foundations course.

One habit before you start. Copilot works from what it can see and what you tell it. Be specific, keep sensitive personal information out of prompts where you don't need it, and always give important output a human read before you send or act on it. More on responsible use on the final page.



THE PROMPTS

Everyday wins across your inbox, meetings, and documents

Outlook EMAIL

01 Summarise a long email thread

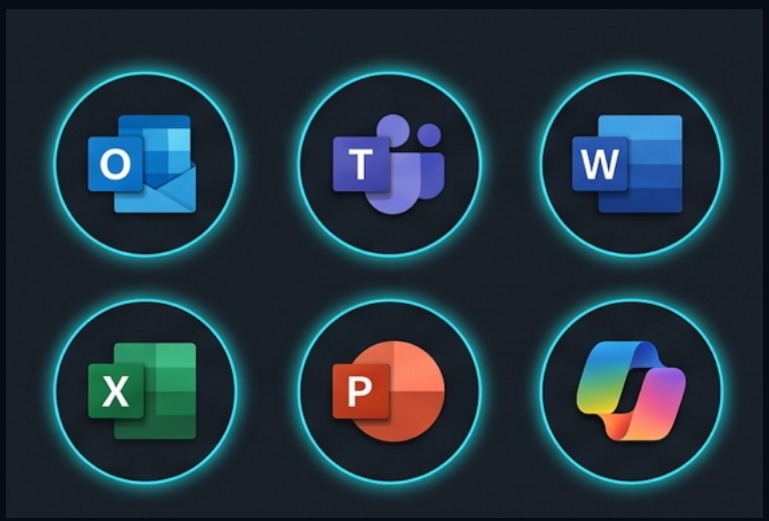
Summarise this email thread for me. Focus on decisions made, open questions, and anything I'm expected to do. Give it as short bullets in plain English, newest points first.

02 Draft a clear reply

Draft a reply to this email. I want to [agree and confirm the meeting for Thursday]. Keep it warm but concise, under 120 words, and end with a clear next step.

03 Fix the tone of a draft

Rewrite this draft to sound [more professional and calm]. Keep my key points and facts unchanged, remove anything that reads as blunt, and keep it roughly the same length.



Teams MEETINGS & CHAT

04 Recap a meeting you missed

Recap this meeting for someone who wasn't there. Cover the main decisions, action items with owners, and any deadlines mentioned. Keep it to a short summary followed by a bullet list of actions.

05 Catch up on a busy channel

Catch me up on this channel from the last [two days]. Highlight anything that mentions [my project] or needs my input, and skip the small talk.

06 Turn a chat into next steps

From this chat, pull out every commitment or task that was agreed. List each one with who owns it and any date mentioned. If an owner isn't clear, flag it.

Word DOCUMENTS

07 Summarise a document

Summarise this document in [five bullets] for a busy reader. Lead with the main point, then the key supporting details. Note anything that looks like an open question or a risk.

08 Improve clarity of your writing

Improve the clarity of this text without changing my meaning. Shorten long sentences, cut jargon, and keep my voice. Show me the revised version only.

09 Draft a first version

Draft a first version of a [one-page project brief] about [topic]. Structure it with a short intro, three key sections, and a next-steps list. Keep the tone practical.

THE PROMPTS

From raw data to slides to a planned day

Excel DATA

10 Explain what the data shows

Look at this data and tell me what it shows in plain English. Point out the biggest trend, anything surprising, and what I should look at more closely. Don't change the sheet.

11 Explain or build a formula

I want to [work out the month-on-month change for each row]. Suggest a formula, explain what each part does in simple terms, and tell me where to put it.

12 Spot outliers

Scan this column for values that look unusual or out of range. List them with the row, and tell me why each one stands out. Treat it as a check, not a change.



PowerPoint SLIDES

13 Create a slide outline

Create a slide outline for a [10-minute update] on [topic] for [my team]. Give me a title slide plus five to seven slides, each with a heading and two or three bullet points.

14 Turn a document into slides

Turn this document into a short deck. Keep one idea per slide, use plain headings, and don't lose the key numbers. Aim for around [eight] slides.

Copilot Chat PLAN & ORGANISE

15 Plan your day

Based on my calendar and flagged emails, help me plan today. Suggest an order for my tasks, protect time for [deep work], and flag anything urgent I might be missing.

16 Write a project update

Draft a short project update on [project] for [my manager]. Cover progress, what's next, and any blockers. Keep it to a few lines, confident and clear.

17 Build a to-do list from notes

Turn these notes into a clean to-do list. Group related items, put the most urgent first, and phrase each as a clear action starting with a verb.

Level up. Notice how each prompt names a **goal**, gives **context**, points at a **source**, and describes the **output**. Once that pattern feels natural, you're no longer copying prompts — you're writing your own.

RESPONSIBLE USE

Fast, useful — and safe by habit

Copilot is a powerful assistant, not a decision-maker. These seven habits keep your prompting productive and aligned with POPIA — run through them until they're second nature.

- ☑ **Confirm the context.** Make sure Copilot is pointed at the right file, thread, or meeting before you trust the answer.
- ☑ **Separate fact from guess.** Ask Copilot to flag anything it's unsure about or has inferred.
- ☑ **Human review where it counts.** Legal, financial, and security output always gets a person's eyes before it goes out.
- ☑ **Save what works.** When a prompt lands well, keep it in a shared team library so good practice spreads.
- ☑ **Keep secrets out.** Don't paste passwords, ID numbers, or personal data you don't need in the prompt.
- ☑ **Verify names, dates, numbers.** Check the details that matter against the source before you rely on them.
- ☑ **Keep accountability with people.** The final call — and responsibility — stays with you, not the tool.

Ready for all 50 prompts?

This guide is Level 1 of the CyberNova Copilot Foundations course. The full programme adds intermediate analysis and advanced governance, risk, and strategy prompts — plus the 4-part recipe worked through step by step, a responsible-use framework, community access, and a certificate.

Foundations	Foundations + Intermediate	Complete
R399	R699	R899
17 beginner prompts	34 prompts · most popular	All 50 prompts

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