

POND / AI IN TRAINING

Canva 101

a plain-language start for someone who has never opened Canva before

**8 copy-paste prompts · 1 chapter · complete beginners opening
Canva for the first time**

A FIELD GUIDE, NOT A BINDER

Choose the prompt that fits what you're doing right now. Nothing here requires reading start to finish.

WELCOME

What this pack helps you build

a plain-language start for someone who has never opened Canva before

THE HUMAN BOUNDARY

AI may help draft, summarize, organize, and create first-pass materials. A responsible human confirms facts, context, permissions, tone, and final decisions. This pack does not cover: inventing impact numbers or donor figures; sending AI-generated donor or board messages without review; making governance or personnel decisions with AI.

Getting Started with Canva

Canva is a design tool that lets you build graphics, presentations, and documents by dragging and dropping, without needing design training. This chapter is everything you need for your first real session — how to talk to it, what it's good at, and where to be careful.

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Your First Conversation

PURPOSE

Gets you comfortable typing a real request into Canva for the first time.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use this as literally your first message.

I'm brand new to Canva. I want help with [describe a real task you actually need done, in plain words]. Ask me any clarifying questions you need before starting, and explain anything I might not know as you go.

PRO TIPS

- Use a real task, not a test question — you'll learn faster from something that matters to you.
- It's fine to say 'I don't understand' at any point — ask it to explain differently.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A first response, plus clarifying questions back to you.

What's next → Try Rewrite in Plain Words to see how editing works.

Rewrite in Plain Words

PURPOSE

Shows how to ask for a rewrite in a different tone or simplicity level.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use whenever an answer feels too complicated or too formal.

Rewrite your last answer in plain, everyday words, like you're explaining it to a friend. Keep the same information, just simpler language.

PRO TIPS

- This works on almost anything — a legal term, a technical explanation, your own writing.
- You can also ask for the opposite: 'make this more formal' works the same way.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A simplified version of the previous answer.

What's next → Try Be More Specific to see how detail changes the output.

Be More Specific

PURPOSE

Demonstrates how adding detail to a request changes the quality of the answer.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use when an answer feels too generic to actually use.

That answer feels too general to use. Here's more context: [add specifics — who it's for, what format you need, any constraints]. Please redo it with that in mind.

PRO TIPS

- The single biggest lever for better answers is specificity — audience, format, length, tone.
- Save a mental list of details you tend to forget to mention, and add them upfront next time.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A sharper, more usable version of the answer.

What's next → Try Canva on a Real Task to put it to work.

Canva on a Real Task

PURPOSE

Walks through a complete real task from start to finish.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use once you're comfortable with the basics.

Let's work through this task together, step by step: [describe a task with a few parts — e.g. drafting an email, planning something, organizing information]. Start with the first step and check in with me before moving to the next.

PRO TIPS

- Breaking a big task into steps, with check-ins, usually beats asking for everything at once.
- Save what works — that back-and-forth pattern is worth reusing on future tasks.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

The task completed step by step, with your input along the way.

What's next → Try Fact-Check This Answer before you rely on anything important.

Fact-Check This Answer

PURPOSE

Builds the habit of checking outputs before trusting them.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use any time the answer includes a fact, number, date, or claim you plan to rely on.

Which parts of your last answer are you confident are accurate, and which parts should I double-check myself before relying on them? Be specific.

PRO TIPS

- Canva can sound confident while being wrong — always verify facts that matter before you act on them.
- This is especially important for numbers, dates, names, and anything legal or medical.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A breakdown of what's likely reliable vs. what needs your own verification.

What's next → Try Ask It to Show Its Reasoning for anything complex.

Ask It to Show Its Reasoning

PURPOSE

Shows how to ask for the reasoning behind an answer, not just the answer itself.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use for anything with real stakes — a decision, a recommendation, an analysis.

Before giving me a final answer, walk through your reasoning step by step, including anything you're uncertain about.

PRO TIPS

- Seeing the reasoning often reveals a wrong assumption before it becomes a wrong answer.
- If the reasoning has a gap, you can correct just that step instead of starting over.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A step-by-step reasoning trail alongside the final answer.

What's next → Try Save This as a Template for anything you'll repeat.

Save This as a Template

PURPOSE

Turns a successful prompt into a reusable template for next time.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use whenever a prompt worked well and you'll likely need something similar again.

Turn this prompt into a reusable template with [brackets] for the parts that change each time, so I can reuse it for similar tasks in the future: [paste the prompt that worked well].

PRO TIPS

- Keep a personal document of templates that worked — it saves real time over weeks.
- Revisit and refine templates as you learn what details matter most.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

A reusable template with clearly marked variable parts.

What's next → Try Know the Limits to round out your first day.

Know the Limits

PURPOSE

Explains, in plain terms, where Canva tends to struggle or needs extra caution.

WHEN TO USE IT

Use once, early on, so you know what to watch for going forward.

In plain language, what are the main things Canva tends to get wrong or struggle with, that I should watch for as a new user? Be honest, not just reassuring.

PRO TIPS

- Canva won't fix a message that isn't clear yet — get your words right first, design second.
- Canva shines at fast, good-looking visual output from templates — flyers, social posts, presentations.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

An honest list of common limitations to watch for.

What's next → You're ready for real work — revisit this guide any time something feels unfamiliar.

You have a working system

- ☐ recognize where this applies to our own work
- ☐ choose the prompt that fits the task at hand
- ☐ confirm facts and figures before anything goes out
- ☐ get the right human review before sending or publishing
- ☐ decide what to reuse as a standing part of our workflow

Keep the human accountable. Let the prompts make the work repeatable.