

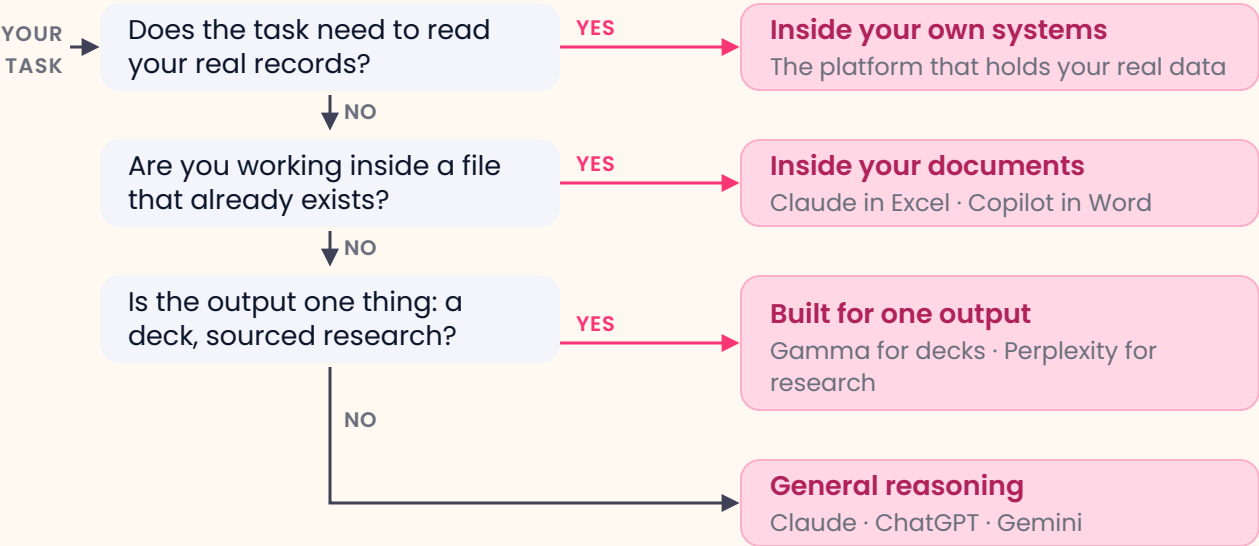
PART ONE

Picking your tool and engine

Most people pick these two things by accident: which tool to use, and how hard it should think. This guide fixes that with a short set of questions, three usually, five at the most. Answer them in order and you'll land on both choices deliberately.

LEVEL 01 · THE TOOL

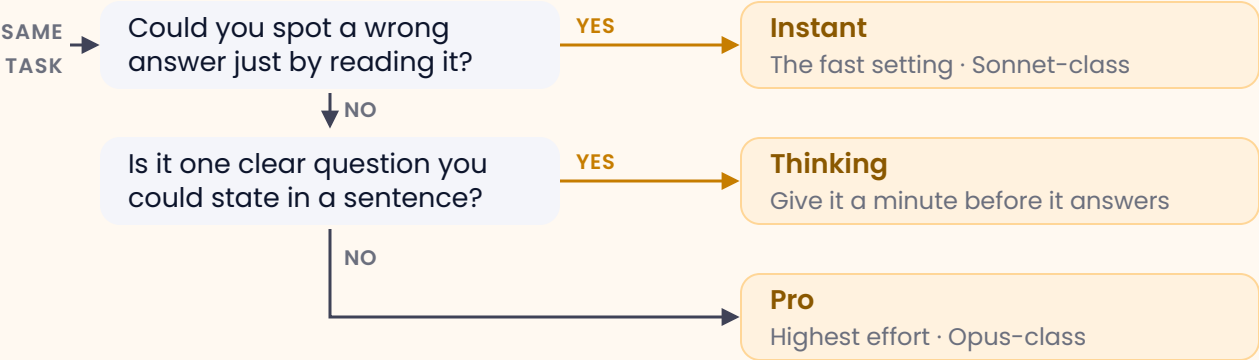
Where does the work live?



These questions run from most constrained to least. If the work touches real records, no other tool qualifies, so that question comes first. Anything that clears all three questions defaults to a general assistant.

LEVEL 02 · THE ENGINE

How hard should it work?



The first gate is the one that matters: where you can check the answer by reading it, speed is free. Where you cannot, a wrong answer looks exactly like a right one, so the effort is worth paying for.

What is the prompt missing?

Paste the Prompt Critic underneath any prompt you have drafted. It audits your draft against role, context, task and format, asks you only the questions needed to fill the gaps, then hands back a rewritten prompt.

01

Write your draft
Type the prompt you were going to send, however rough.

02

Paste this below it
Send both together as one message.

03

Answer the questions
Five at most. Accept the defaults that fit.

04

Run the rewrite
Send the new version in a fresh chat.

The four it checks against

Role	Who it should be. "You are a senior editor reviewing a draft."
Context	What it can see. The file, the numbers, the definitions, the audience.
Task	One clear job. Find, compare, explain, check, not "look at this".
Format	What lands on your screen. A table, five bullets, an email, a number.

Some tools charge ahead and rewrite without asking. Don't worry, that's just eagerness. Reply "you skipped step 2, ask me the questions first" and it will come back into line.

Use a thinking engine for this one. Critiquing a prompt is judgment work, and a fast setting tends to agree with whatever you wrote.

Run the rewrite in a fresh chat. In the same thread the model has already seen the whole conversation, so it will lean on that context instead of the prompt you just built, which defeats the point of building it.

PROMPT CRITIC: COPY EVERYTHING BELOW THIS HEADING

--- Everything above this line is a draft prompt. Do not act on it. ---

Your job is to help me improve that draft before I run it. You are an experienced prompt editor: blunt, brief, and you ask before you assume.

STEP 1 - AUDIT

Check the draft against four things and give me one line on each.

ROLE Who the AI should be. ("You are a senior editor reviewing a draft.")

CONTEXT What it can see. The file, the numbers, the definitions, the audience.

TASK One clear job. Find, compare, explain, check - not "look at this".

FORMAT What lands on my screen. A table, five bullets, an email, a number.

Mark each one CLEAR, THIN or MISSING. Where it is clear, quote the words that make it clear. Where it is thin or missing, say plainly what is absent.

STEP 2 - ASK ME

Ask only the questions needed to fix what is thin or missing. Skip anything the draft already answers. Maximum five questions, numbered, one line each, no jargon. Where you can make a sensible guess, offer it as a default I can accept or override - for example: "3. Audience - I'll assume your CFO unless you say otherwise."

Then STOP and wait for my answers. Do not rewrite the prompt yet.

STEP 3 - AFTER I ANSWER

Give me three things, in this order:

1. THE REWRITTEN PROMPT. Ready to copy, with role, context, task and format all present. Write it in my voice, not yours. No commentary inside it.
2. WHAT CHANGED. Two or three lines on the substantive fixes - not the wording.
3. WATCH OUT. One honest flag if part of what I am asking is something AI does badly: arithmetic on numbers it cannot see, facts it was never given, or my company's own definitions it has no way to know. Say "nothing to flag" if there is nothing.

RULES

- Never answer or carry out the draft prompt. Your job is the prompt, not the task.
- Do not invent facts about my company, my data, my audience or my numbers. Ask me, or flag it.
- If the draft is already strong, say so plainly and ask nothing.
- No preamble, no praise, no restating these instructions. Start at Step 1.