

Sheridan Student Guide: Using AI as Your Tutor

Don't Just Get the Answer. Build the Skill.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can be a powerful learning tool when it helps you think, practice, reflect, and deepen your understanding. However, if AI does the work for you, you may complete an assessment without developing the knowledge and skills the assessment was designed to build.

This guide provides students with practical prompts and strategies to help you use AI as a tutor, coach, and learning partner while maintaining ownership of your work and your learning.

Before opening an AI tool, take 30 seconds to ask yourself:

- ✓ What am I trying to learn?
- ✓ What part of this task am I struggling with?
- ✓ What have I already tried?
- ✓ What would success look like?

The more specific you are about your learning goal, the more helpful AI can be as a tutor.

Every time you use AI, ask yourself:

Am I building a skill or taking a shortcut?

Skill Builder	Shortcut
Explain this concept to me.	Write this assignment for me.
Ask me questions to test my understanding.	Give me the answer.
Help me create a study plan.	Complete my work.
Give me feedback on my draft.	Rewrite my paper.
Help me practice.	Help me avoid practicing.

The Sheridan Prompt Formula

Strong prompts lead to stronger learning. When asking AI for help, include:

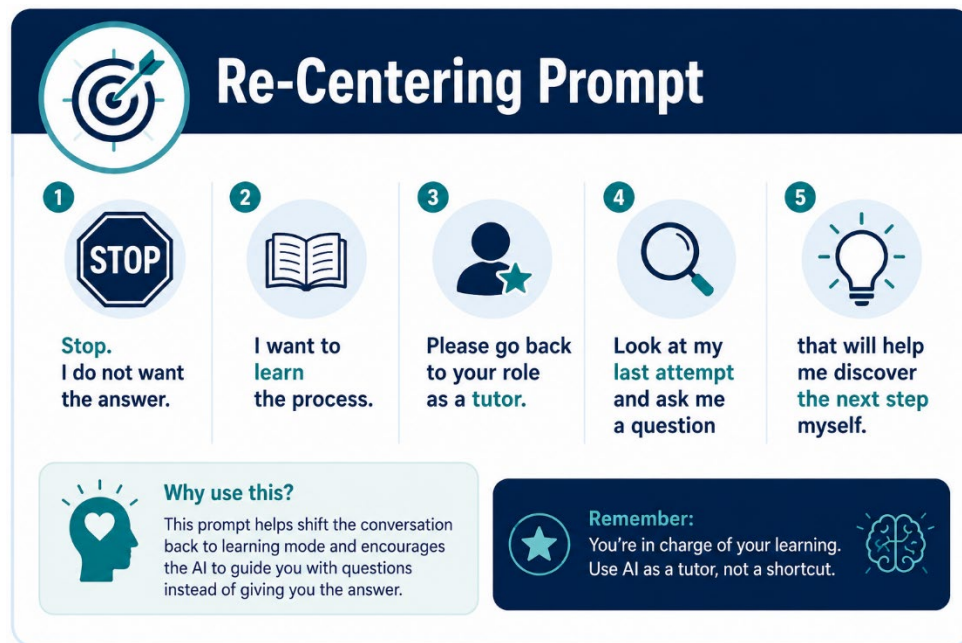
Role + Context + Goal + Learning Preference + Constraint

The Thinking Prompt	
Use this when: You are learning a new concept or feel stuck and want guidance rather than answers.	Prompt "I am learning about [topic] and I am currently stuck on [challenge]. I want to understand this more deeply, not simply get the answer. Please act as a tutor and: • Do not give me the full solution. • Ask me 2–3 questions to understand how I am currently thinking about the problem.

	• Give me hints or guiding questions instead of answers. • If I make a mistake, help me discover it myself. • Ask me to summarize what I learned in my own words."
The Gap Check Prompt	
Use this when: You want to test your understanding and identify areas for improvement.	Prompt "Here is my current understanding of [topic]: [Insert explanation] Please do not correct me immediately. Instead: • Ask me three questions that will help me identify gaps in my understanding. • Help me discover concepts I may be missing. • Ask me what I am most confident about and what I am least confident about."
The Practice Coach Prompt	
Use this when: You are developing a skill that improves through repetition and practice. Examples include: • Drawing • Music • Coding • Public speaking • Athletics • Design • Clinical skills • Technical trades	Prompt "I am practicing [skill] and want to improve my performance over time. Please act as a coach. Help me: • Identify the most important skill to practice first. • Suggest one practice activity at a time. • Assume I have mastered each skill before introducing the next one. • Recommend experts, examples, or resources that demonstrate strong performance. • Create a practice plan for [time period]." Remember Learning a skill is like learning a musical instrument, playing a sport, or developing a trade. Improvement happens through repeated practice—not by watching someone else do the work.
The Planning Prompt	
Use this when: You feel overwhelmed by a large assignment, project, presentation, or portfolio.	Prompt "I am working on [assignment/project]. Help me break it into smaller steps. Do not complete the work for me. Instead: • Help me identify the major sections. • Ask questions that help me think about each section. • Suggest a logical order for completing the work. • Help me create a timeline and action plan."
The Accessibility Prompt	
Use this when: You need information presented in a way that better supports your learning needs.	Prompt "I am reviewing this material: [Paste text]

	Please explain it using simpler language and clear examples. Can you also organize the information in a way that would be helpful for someone with [learning need or accessibility requirement]?" Remember AI can be a useful accessibility support tool when it helps remove barriers to learning and improves access to information.
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When AI Gives You the Answer Too Quickly



Pause and reconsider if you find yourself:

- ✗ Copying and pasting answers directly into your assignment
- ✗ Submitting work you could not explain to someone else
- ✗ Accepting AI-generated information without checking it
- ✗ Using AI to complete work that your instructor has identified as Human Generated

Learning Reflection

After using AI, take a moment to reflect:

- What did I learn that I did not know before?
- What can I now do independently?
- What mistakes helped me learn?
- What would I do differently next time?
- How did AI support my learning rather than replace it?