

# Generative AI for HDRs: Prompt Library

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## 1 Instructions

- a. At the appropriate time throughout the workshop, complete each sample prompt below with information relevant to your research and writing.
- b. Copy and paste the completed prompt into a Generative AI (GenAI) app.
  - i. You can try your favourite one, try a different one, and if time, compare different apps for their relative performances.

- ii. E.g. [UQ's Copilot](#) ([my.UQ > Dashboard > Microsoft 365](#)), [Meta AI](#), [Claude](#), [Gemini](#)
  - iii. [Learn how to protect privacy](#)
- c. Assess the results and drop in Chat, hitting Enter after each response:
- i. A score out of 10.
  - ii. A brief explanation as to why you didn't give a perfect score.
  - iii. Lessons for use.

If time, you might try improving the response you got with some iterative prompting.

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## 2 Doing the research

### 2.1 Refining your research question(s) – general approach

You are an experienced PhD supervisor in the field of **...** One of your PhD students suggests the following research question: "**...**" How would you advise the student about how they could make their question more precise and hence support a better research project? Please finish with a concrete example which illustrates your advice.

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### 2.2 Refining your research question(s) using a generalized PICO(T) approach

I am a PhD student in the field of ...

I have currently framed by primary research question / aim as: "...".

Please suggest ways this question / aim might be framed more precisely using a possibly generalised PICO(T) framework. (I.e. it may be more appropriate to think of the "I" as an environmental influencing factor rather than the usual experimental intervention.)

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### 2.3 Developing / refining research methodology

[Note that such conversations do not and cannot replace the need for conversations with your advisory team, but may help you come better prepared for such discussions.]

There are multiple options you can try for this exercise.

- a. Start a conversation about your research methodology with the following prompt (first change the **field** to whatever is relevant to you):

Act as both an expert in the research methodologies of **educational psychology** and as a Socratic tutor and help me refine my methodology for a research proposal. Start by asking me about the motivations and objectives for my proposed research. Only ask one follow-up question at a time, with each question aiming to get me to think ever more deeply about the methodological issues of my research project and how I can both resolve them and provide a clear justification for my methodological choices. Do not provide possible resolutions to your questions unless I ask for hints.

Example conversation: [Thinking critically about research methodology - a chat with Meta AI](#)

- b. You can of course revise this prompt to have a conversation about the **rationale** for your research.
- c. **If you aren't ready to discuss methodology**, then you can try this "for fun" critical thinking exercise.

**Prompt:**

I would like some help developing my critical thinking and argumentation skills. To help me to achieve this goal, I wish for you to act as a Socratic tutor to help me refine my

argumentation in support of a claim. Start by asking me what my claim is. Then, by asking me only one question at a time, help me to think critically about my claim and my reasons for believing it is true. Your questions should help me to think ever more deeply about the rationales for my claim and/or to refine the statement of my claim. Do not provide possible resolutions to your questions unless I ask for hints.

Claim to practice with: “Dogs make better pets than cats.” (Or vice versa, or that “Fish make better pets than either cats or dogs.” Or “Pets are a waste of time and money.”)

**Follow-up prompt:**

Please provide a summary of outcomes of our discussion.

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## 2.4 Building sophisticated search queries

I am interested in finding research literature on .... Please suggest a comprehensive database key words search query using Boolean operators. Remember to include possible alternative key words, take into account possible differences between US and British spelling, and use wildcards to capture possible variations in the endings of words.

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## 3 Presenting your research and *viva voce* preparation

### 3.1 Feedback and coaching in relation to constructing an effective “headline statement” introduction to your research

I am a PhD student trying to come up with a one or two sentence reply to the question, “So what’s your research about?” I want my response to be engaging and accessible to a general but educated audience. My goal is to try to describe in a broad way, what I am trying to achieve in relation to what problem or question, and how I hope to make progress in achieving my research goals. I am aware of the importance of ordering the components in my response effectively so as to make it as easy as possible for my questioner to absorb unfamiliar content and stay engaged with my response. Please provide formative feedback on my following attempt to achieve these goals in relation to my research.

ATTEMPT = {...}

To help me build such statements myself, please give me detailed guidance on the structure of your revision and what thinking processes might help me refine my early draft to achieve that final version.

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### 3.2 Hook brainstormer prompt:

Copy and paste all steps at once after adding your topic (e.g. headline statement) and choosing between an academic and a general audience.

1. Think step-by-step.
  2. You are an engaging speaker doing a PhD whose research goal is to "..."
  3. Please suggest 6 possible hooks you might use at the start of an oral presentation to engage an academic/general audience in your presentation and explain your choices.
  4. Second, critique the list and add three more hooks.
  5. Next, create a table listing pluses and minuses for each hook.
  6. Next, pick the best hook and explain it.
-

If the suggested hooks are too informal for an academic (conference) audience, try a follow-up prompt:

These hooks are too informal. Please suggest hooks that would be appropriate for a research conference presentation to researchers in the field.

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### 3.3 Elevator pitch prompt:

I am after some help refining an “elevator pitch” introduction to my PhD research.

Here is a polished example of what I am aiming for:

“Many indigenous and heritage languages are dying out. To prevent this loss of heritage, practice in these languages is currently being provided by tools such as flash card apps, translation-based games, and online dictionaries. However, such tools give only a limited range of practice opportunities, and do not provide the feedback needed for optimal learning. To address these limitations, I am developing mobile, interactive fiction-based games which can be used in remote, low-resource learning scenarios. Such games can be expected to mitigate the lack of feedback and practice opportunities by providing a simulated practice space with real world relevance, and language use in meaningful contexts, thus extending the limited language practice offered by current tools. However, extensive experimentation and testing is needed to determine how well different designs work in practice.”

Note however, that I am doing this exercise in-class with very little preparation time and I will deliver my unrehearsed pitch to you orally using the dictate tool. Consequently, my pitch will not be very polished and will not have punctuation included, so please take that into account when giving me feedback.

My goal is to introduce my research in a compelling and accessible way, so I am after formative feedback on how well my first attempt achieves these goals and what the most important things for me to work on are.

Can you help me with this?

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### 3.4 3MT script feedback

**Step 1:** Upload “[3MT winner transcripts](#)”.

**Step 2:**

Hit **shift+enter** to be able to add the following prompt without the AI responding to the transcripts.

Prompt 1:

The 3MT Competition requires PhD students to tell the story of their PhD in no more than 3 minutes to a general audience with only a single slide in support. The goal is to both “edutain” and to persuade the audience of the value of the research. I have attached the transcripts of four winning presentations.

From the attached transcripts, what would you say are the key elements of a winning 3MT presentation?

**Step 3:**

Ask for feedback on your draft script.

Based on your preceding analysis, please give me formative feedback on my draft 3MT script.

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### 3.5 Slide title suggester from text of paper:

**Prompt 1:** Coach the AI as to what you want (edit as needed).

I am wanting some help converting a 10,000 word honours research thesis into an engaging and accessible 10 minute presentation to an educated but general audience which might include industry representatives interested in the research.

I am aware that typical topic title > information body slides designs generally lead to boring presentations. To address this issue, I believe a combination of question title > answer body OR assertion title > supporting evidence body OR objective title > elaboration body slide designs are more effective.

In relation to slide titles only, an example from an environmental management presentation would change:

“Introduction” to “Most acid sandy soils in Flanders are P-saturated, but P not available for plant uptake and can cause eutrophication”

“Literature Review” to “Identification of P-Solubilizing Bacteria that might help address the issue”

“Methods” to “We tested five P-Solubilizing Bacteria (PSBs) on P-saturated soils”

“Results (1)” to “The five PSBs survived and developed in high concentrations of insoluble P”

“Results (2)” to “The PSBs were able to solubilize fixed P in a realistic, high P sandy environment”

“Results (3)” to “P. Putida and P. brevis turned out to be promising candidates”

“Conclusions” to “In the future, we plan to test both in real P-saturated soil.”

Do you understand?

**Prompt 2:**

Using the above guidelines and requirements, please suggest possible slide titles for a 10 minute presentation on the attached economics thesis.

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### 3.6 Helping you to prepare for a *viva voce* (oral exam)

**Tip:** Using a voice-to-text AI can help reduce the effort needed to input long explanations. UQ’s Copilot has a Dictate tool built into the message box, but see also [How to use Voice Typing in Windows, Microsoft 365, & Google Docs](#).

**Prompt<sup>1</sup>:**

You are an experienced researcher and PhD examiner in [RELEVANT FIELD OF RESEARCH]. You have examined numerous PhD theses and are adept at identifying strengths and weaknesses in research methodologies, analysis, and argumentation. Your role is to simulate a *viva voce* (oral defence) examination for a PhD student preparing to defend their thesis. The student will provide their thesis title and abstract which you will use to determine the appropriate field of research within which you will conduct the *viva*. Based on this information, ask probing questions to assess the student’s

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<sup>1</sup> Prompt generated using this tool: <https://www.prompthackers.co/chatgpt-prompt-generator>, together with suggestions for refinements made by Copilot and my own reflections after use.

understanding of their research, its context, and its implications. The student will respond verbally. If any of the student's responses are unclear, ask for clarification, but only do so once in each instance.

Here's how the simulation will proceed:

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## ## Thesis Information

**\*\*Thesis Title:\*\*** [STUDENT PROVIDES THESIS TITLE HERE]

**\*\*Thesis Abstract:\*\*** [STUDENT PROVIDES THESIS ABSTRACT HERE]

## ## Initial Questions (Choose 2-3 to start, but only ask one at a time)

- \* "Can you briefly summarize your thesis and its key findings?"
- \* "What motivated you to pursue this particular research topic?"
- \* "What are the main contributions of your thesis to the field?"
- \* "Who are the key researchers and what are the key publications that influenced your work?"

## ## Follow-Up Questions (Based on Student's Responses – Examples, but only ask one question at a time and make specific to what the student has just said)

- \* **\*\*Methodology:\*\*** "Can you elaborate on the rationale behind your chosen methodology? What alternative approaches did you consider, and why did you choose this one?"
- \* **\*\*Analysis:\*\*** "How did you address potential biases in your data or analysis?"
- \* **\*\*Results:\*\*** "Are there any limitations to your findings? How might these limitations be addressed in future research?"
- \* **\*\*Context:\*\*** "How does your work relate to the broader literature in this field? Where does it agree or disagree with existing theories or findings?"
- \* **\*\*Implications:\*\*** "What are the practical implications of your research? How might your findings be applied in real-world settings?"
- \* **\*\*Future Work:\*\*** "What are the next steps in this research area? What questions remain unanswered?"
- \* **\*\*Specific Details:\*\*** (Based on the abstract, ask specific questions about the methods, results, or conclusions presented)
- \* **\*\*Assumptions:\*\*** (If the student uses language that indicates that they have made assumptions of various sorts, please ask them to provide justifications for their assumptions.)
- \* **\*\*Request for clarification:\*\*** (If the student uses terminology, concepts, or reasoning that assumes prior knowledge or is not clearly explained, ask a follow-up question to clarify or elaborate on that point. This includes technical terms, methodological strategies, or references to technical aspects of the findings that may not be immediately accessible to a general audience or interdisciplinary panel.)

## ## Probing Questions (Use these to challenge the student's understanding, but only ask one question at a time)

- \* "Have you considered [alternative interpretation/method/perspective]?"
- \* "How would you respond to someone who argues that [counterargument]?"
- \* "What are the potential ethical implications of your research?"
- \* "Can you explain [a specific concept/term] in simpler terms?"

### ## Ending the Session

When the student indicates they wish to end the session, acknowledge their request and proceed to the feedback section. Do not proceed to the feedback section unless the student explicitly says: *"I would like to end the session now."*

If a session needs to be ended because of a context window limit or a session time out issue, let the student know and provide them with a prompt they can use to restart the viva from the last question.

### ## Formative Feedback

Provide constructive feedback to the student, covering the following areas:

- \* **Strengths:** Highlight the student's areas of expertise and clear understanding.
- \* **Areas for Improvement:** Identify areas where the student could strengthen their arguments, clarify their explanations, or address potential weaknesses in their research. Especially give feedback on places where the student made assumptions that weren't sufficiently justified.
- \* **Question Handling:** Comment on the student's ability to answer questions effectively, including their clarity, conciseness, and confidence.
- \* **Overall Impression:** Provide an overall assessment of the student's preparedness for the viva voce examination.

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Please provide your thesis title and abstract so we can begin the simulation.

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## 4 Writing support

### 4.1 Generating a focus question outline

#### 4.1.1 For planning purposes or to compare with what you came up with

You are a PhD student in the field of ... preparing the literature review section of a research proposal. Your central research question is: "..."

Develop a detailed outline for this literature review, structured entirely as a hierarchy of questions. Organize the outline logically, progressing from foundational background to specific experimental considerations. Present the outline as a multilevel list, with sub-questions and follow-up questions nested to indicate depth and structure.

Ensure that the questions go beyond descriptive inquiry (e.g., "what is...") and include analytical depth (e.g., "why does...", "how might...", "to what extent...").

**Aim for a question depth of 3 to 5 levels in each major section to support a comprehensive and critical review.**

**OR:**

Act as an expert in ... research. Consider a **scientific review article** for publication in an international research journal on the following topic: "...". The goal of the article is to motivate the review, review what is known about the topic, and identify directions for potentially fruitful new research directions. Suggest a possible outline for this review, framing the outline in terms of questions to address, organised into a logical order and presented as a multilevel list with sub-questions and sub-sub-questions and follow-on questions indented to various levels to indicate the structure. Make sure your questions include analytical elements (why and how type questions) and not just descriptive elements (typically what type questions).

OR/AND: Change the prompt to be for the **introduction** to your thesis or a paper.

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#### 4.1.2 Creating a reverse outline from a draft

Note: Chatbots may have difficulty discerning where paragraphs start and end, especially if there are display equations included in your text, so the following prompt may only be partially successful. However, the focus questions it comes up with may help you to improve your paragraph topic sentences.

I would like you to create a reverse outline for my draft **essay / report / research paper introduction / literature review / ...** on the topic **of ...**

I would like this outline to be in the form of a numbered list of the focus question addressed by each paragraph. Since academic writing is expected to be analytical not purely descriptive, focus questions should ideally have a descriptive and an analytical part.

For example, the introduction to an engineering research article exploring whether synthetic aperture radar could be used to map mosquito breeding pools in conditions where existing techniques struggle, the reverse outline would look something like this:

1. Why is it important to be able to map the distribution of mosquito breeding pools and channels for population management purposes?
2. What existing techniques under what conditions are sufficiently successful for mapping mosquito breeding pools and channels?
3. What techniques have been used in more challenging environmental conditions, what are those conditions, and why have those existing techniques not been as successful in these more challenging conditions as one would like?
4. Why might synthetic aperture radar (SAR) be a promising new approach? What evidence is there that it can be used to map ground water and also overcome the weaknesses of existing techniques in the challenging conditions mentioned above?
5. Why, then, aren't existing SAR applications immediately suitable for the task of mapping mosquito pools and channels, and what makes you think they can be adapted for that purpose?
6. What then are the goals of this study?

For each paragraph, also indicate whether or not the focus question has been clearly signposted to the reader through effective topic and perhaps also concluding sentences, and whether or not the paragraph is unified (i.e. it stays on topic). Also indicate any paragraphs which do not have a clear focus question or if the paragraph needs breaking up as different parts have different foci.

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## 4.2 Editing and revision

### 4.2.1 Correcting grammatical errors

**Note:** The goal of the following prompt is to correct grammatical errors without losing your unique authorial voice and sounding like a chatbot. It could be used early on and periodically through various drafts so that you can focus on making sure your argument is clear and rigorous rather than on the mechanics of writing. However, it is important to develop your grammatical competence as the greater the number of errors, the more likely it will be that the chatbot will misinterpret your intended meaning.

#### **Prompt:**

Please correct the grammatical errors in **the following or attached** paragraphs and explain the corrections. **Do not otherwise revise the text.** Please also identify any sentences whose meaning is unclear or ambiguous. <Insert text here or attach.>

#### **Follow-up prompts:**

Ask for greater explanations or specific details of generic issues it has picked up.

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### 4.2.2 Asking for feedback

You are an expert in ... with extensive experience in academic writing and peer review. You have a deep understanding of both the technical aspects of ... research and the standards for high-quality scientific writing. Additionally, you are skilled in communicating complex concepts in a clear, concise, and engaging manner. Your feedback should be constructive, providing actionable suggestions for improving scientific rigor, technical quality, and readability.

Please provide **formative** feedback on the following **abstract** from a ... research paper with the title, "...".

**ABSTRACT = {...}**

If your chatbot rewrites your text for you, add to the prompt either:

1. "While it is okay to provide concrete examples of how the issues you identify can be addressed, please do not provide a complete rewrite of the text." OR
2. "Please present the original and revised texts side-by-side for comparison."

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### 4.2.3 Feedback using the "Paragraph Evaluation Checklist"

#### **Notes:**

- a. You are likely to get better feedback if you only do a few paragraphs or a section at a time.
- b. If you are worried about sharing confidential material with a chatbot, get feedback on a small number of paragraphs and try to use that feedback to improve your remaining paragraphs.
- c. The chatbots seem to be better at discerning purpose than I am, so may give you a misleading level of confidence in how clear your work will be for humans, but all help will get you closer to a polished final product.

1. Upload the "[Paragraph evaluation checklist](#)" to Copilot.
2. Prompt it to:

Please use the attached "Paragraph evaluation checklist" to provide formative feedback on the paragraphs below on the **topic, "..."** OR from the **... section** of a **paper / research proposal on ...**

**PARAGRAPH(S) = {...}**

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#### 4.2.4 Asking for exemplars to learn from

1. Upload the “[Paragraph evaluation checklist](#)”.
2. Complete the following prompt:

I am a beginning PhD student in the **field of ...** wishing to test my understanding of these expectations around effective paragraphs. Please give me a model paragraph from the **... section** of a research paper in my field.

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#### 4.2.5 Feedback on argumentation

##### **Prompt 1 (to prime the chatbot):**

If I was to ask you for feedback on my argumentation in a **literature review** in support of a PhD thesis, what would you be evaluating?

[Learn from the results from this prompt to self-edit your work. Change the focus to “introduction / methodology / discussion” as desired.]

##### **Prompt 2:**

I am a PhD student in the field of **...**

I have written a **literature review** for a research project whose goal is to **...**

Please act as an expert reviewer in this field and as an academic writing tutor and provide formative feedback on the argumentation in my literature review in relation to the criteria you have just given.

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#### 4.2.6 Using a chatbot to check your reference list for missing information or formatting errors

Notes: Do *not* ask a chatbot to simply correct your reference list, the risk and consequences of hallucinated details are too high. Also, if you are not using a common style, you may need to upload a referencing style guide and ask the chatbot to use that.

##### **Prompt:**

Please act as an **APA 7 referencing** expert. Use clear, plain English — short sentences and simple vocabulary.

STEP 1 — Before beginning your review, ask me one question: Was EndNote used to generate this reference list? Wait for my answer before proceeding.

STEP 2 — Review the reference list in the attached document. For each reference, check for any missing information (e.g. DOI or URL, page numbers etc.) or incorrect formatting (e.g. for title capitalisation, sentence case for articles/books, title case for journals; article numbers should be preceded by the word, “Article”; each reference should be formatted with a half inch or 1.27 cm hanging indent etc.).

STEP 3 — Report your findings reference by reference. Only include references where you found errors. For each:

- State what the error is
- State what needs to be corrected
- Provide the relevant APA 7 generic format as a template so I can apply the fix myself

Example template: Author, A. A. (Year). Title of article. \*Journal Name\*, \*volume\*(issue), pages.  
<https://doi.org/xxxx>

Do not provide a corrected reference list.

STEP 4 — If EndNote was used (from Step 1), add guidance after each relevant error explaining how to fix it in EndNote using the guidance below.

STEP 5 — End with a short, bulleted summary of the most common error types found, then direct me to this guide for further help: <https://guides.library.uq.edu.au/referencing/apa7>

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ENDNOTE GUIDANCE: Errors and corrections (use only if EndNote was confirmed in Step 1)

- DOI duplicated (e.g. <https://doi.org/10.xxx> in the DOI field)
    - In the DOI field, delete the URL stem — keep only the number starting with 10.xxx
  - Journal title in sentence case, abbreviated, or all capitals
    - Edit the journal title in the Journals Terms List via: Library > Open Terms List > Journals Term List
  - Journal article missing a DOI or URL
    - Find the DOI or URL on the article's webpage. Paste only the number (10.xxx) into the DOI field, or the full URL into the URL field.
  - Single number appears in the page range position
    - If the number is very large or oddly formatted, it is likely an article number. Move it from the Pages field to the Article Number field so that the word "Article" appears before it in your output. Otherwise, check the article's webpage or PDF for the final page number. If the PDF starts on page 1 rather than the number in the Pages field, treat it as an article number. (Note: this issue also occurs in manually formatted reference lists.)
  - Organisation name formatted like a person's name (e.g. split into first/last)
    - In the Author field, type the organisation's full name followed by a comma (e.g. World Health Organization,)
  - Edited book chapter missing editors or book title
    - Add the missing details to the Editor and Book Title fields in the reference record.
- 

## 5 Using AI to help generate better prompts?

Try exploring something else you would like to try, using AI to help you generate a good prompt. (Note you may need to modify the prompt if the chatbot goes in a direction different from what you wanted.)

(a) Seed prompt to get generative AI to be a prompt generator by [Lance B. Eliot \(1/8/2024\)](#):

- “You are to be a prompt generator. You will take as input an initial prompt from the user and then produce a better prompt that could be used by the user instead of using their initial input prompt. To improve the initial prompt, use everything you know about how to best compose prompts. For example, if the prompt is too short you are to lengthen the prompt accordingly. If the prompt is overly long and convoluted, you are to shorten the prompt as best as possible. If the prompt is confusing, then straighten out the confusion and make the prompt as clearly stated as possible. If the prompt doesn't use suitable prompt engineering principles or phrases, change the prompt to include such principles or phrases. All in all, your goal is to take the initial prompt and improve it to be a much better prompt. After displaying the improved prompt that you came up with, provide an explanation of what you did to make the initial prompt into a better prompt.”
- Then: “I have provided you with my instructions on being a prompt generator. Let's get underway.”

(b) Or try: <https://www.prompthackers.co/chatgpt-prompt-generator>

Note: Prompts still often need iterative improvements.

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## 6 Thinking through the issues around using AI for support during your degree

### Prompt 1:

Academic writers can use AI to support their writing at the various stages of the writing process in the following ways:

1. Developing a research question
  - a. Suggest research questions
  - b. Refine a research question
2. Initial conceptual understanding
  - a. Explain task terminology
  - b. Explain task expectations
  - c. Provide task background
3. Research and note-taking
  - a. Find sources (e.g. Microsoft Copilot, [Elicit](#), SciSpace, Perplexity)
  - b. Explain source material
  - c. Take notes from sources (e.g. NotebookLM)
  - d. Obtain answers to questions
4. Organizing / developing ideas and outlining
  - a. Identify key themes
  - b. Build / refine arguments through a Socratic dialogue
  - c. Suggest an outline in terms of focus questions
5. Writing
  - a. Convert structured notes into paragraphs
  - b. Transform or condense content
  - c. Co-create content
  - d. AI generates content
6. Editing and revision
  - a. Check and correct spelling and grammar errors
  - b. Obtain feedback on clarity, readability, structure, argumentation, marking rubric elements, ...
  - c. Refine / improve draft in terms of clarity, readability, structure, argumentation, marking rubric elements, length, ...

### Prompt 2:

I am a PhD student. We are allowed to use AI to support our academic writing, provided we properly acknowledge any such use and demonstrate that we have met the learning objectives of a PhD program in our discipline, which may include using AI to achieve a certain goal. I am concerned though, that using AI unwisely may undermine rather than support my intellectual growth. Consequently, I wish you to act as a Socratic tutor and help me to think through both the academic integrity and intellectual growth issues around using AI to support my completion of an academic assessment task. Today, I do not wish to explore all the ways in which AI might support me, **only stages 3 (b) and (c). That is, getting help understanding source material and taking notes from sources. <Replace with what you wish to explore.>** Please do not give me explicit guidance around these issues unless I ask for it, and only ask me one question at a time, leading me through a

sequence of questions which will help me develop my capacity to think through these issues for myself.

**Tip:**

In answering the AI's questions, reveal the challenges you have with the aspect you are discussing and why and how you would like to use AI to help you address that challenge. See the text in red in the example conversation below.

**Prompt 3:**

Thanks, we'll stop here. Please provide a structured summary of our discussion and provide any other points you think I should keep in mind in relation to the foci of our discussion.