

How to talk to AI — the 5-part prompt

The CRISP Framework

Most people talk to Copilot like a search box, then wonder why the answer is mush. The gap between a vague reply and a great one isn't the model — it's structure. Give Copilot all five and it stops guessing.

C Context — BACKGROUND & SITUATION

Point it at the right source and say why you need it — a file, a Teams channel, a SharePoint folder. Copilot can't read your mind any better than a new hire could.

| *"Prepping for tomorrow's leadership sync. Use the Q3 Planning folder and the #leadership Teams channel from the last two weeks."*

R Role — WHO COPILOT SHOULD BE

Assign it a hat. The role sets the vocabulary, the priorities, and the lens it answers through.

| *"Act as my chief of staff who's sat through every exec meeting we've run."*

I Instruction — THE TASK

Say exactly what you want done. One clear verb beats five vague ones: summarize, draft, compare, find the gaps.

| *"Summarize the three decisions we still owe the leadership team, and who owns each."*

S Structure — FORMAT OF THE OUTPUT

Tell it the shape you need: a table, five bullets, a Word doc, an email ready to send. Skip this and you'll reformat by hand.

| *"Give it as a table: Decision | Owner | Status | What's blocking it."*

P Parameters — CONSTRAINTS, LIMITS, RULES

Set the guardrails: which files to use, word count, tone, what to ignore. Scope it tight or Copilot pulls from the whole tenant.

| *"Only use documents from the last 30 days. Keep it under 150 words. No filler."*

You don't always need all five — but the more you give, the less the AI guesses. **Start CRISP, then trim.**

Want your team prompting like this?

CRISP is one piece of the Copilot Activation Workshop — where your people learn to get real work done with AI, in your own environment. Led by Asif Rehmani, 20x Microsoft MVP and founder of VisualSP.

Book a session → asifrehmani.com/copilot-activation-workshop

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