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Prompt Perfect: Using AI to Power Your Work & Life

HELOA Conference | January 2026

GECKO

What We'll Do Today

By 11am, you'll be able to:

1

**Write prompts
that actually
work**

(not just "write me
an email")

2

**Use AI
confidently for
real tasks
you're doing
this week**

3

**Spot when AI
is helping vs.
when it's
trying to help**

4

**Leave with a
cheat sheet
you'll actually
use**

This is hands-on...
Phones and laptops out!

The AI Reality Check

Think of AI like an enthusiastic placement student who:

- ✓ Has read everything on the internet
- ✓ Writes quickly and sounds confident
- ✓ Never gets tired of revising
- ✗ Doesn't know your students
- ✗ Sometimes invents "facts" (hallucinations)
- ✗ Needs clear instructions

Your job:

Ask better questions.

Check its work.

Add the human touch.

Data Privacy: The 10-Second Rule

NEVER paste into AI:

- Student names or contact details
- Sensitive personal data
- Anything you wouldn't post publicly

ALWAYS fine to use:

- Anonymised data ("School A had 45 enquiries...")
- Public information
- Your own writing that needs editing

When in doubt, check your institution's AI policy

Exercise 1: Prompt Surgery

PROMPT:

"Write an email about open day"

"Write an email to a new school about your offer"

YOUR CHALLENGE (5 mins):

In pairs, rewrite this prompt using the **4Ps Framework** →

Every good prompt needs...

#1 Purpose

What's the goal?
(Inform? Persuade?
Summarise?)

#3 Parameters

How long? What
format? Any must-
haves?

#2 Persona

Who's writing? Who's
reading? Tone matters!

#4 Polish

What should it avoid?
What makes it "you"?

Exercise 1: Prompt Surgery

~~BAD~~ PROMPT:

"Write an email about open day"

IMPROVED PROMPT:

"Write a 150-word email to Year 12 students who registered but didn't attend our October open day. Friendly and encouraging tone—not pushy. Invite them to our February event and mention we've added new accommodation tours based on feedback. Avoid jargon like 'stakeholders' or 'offerings'."

Now let's test it live...

See the difference?

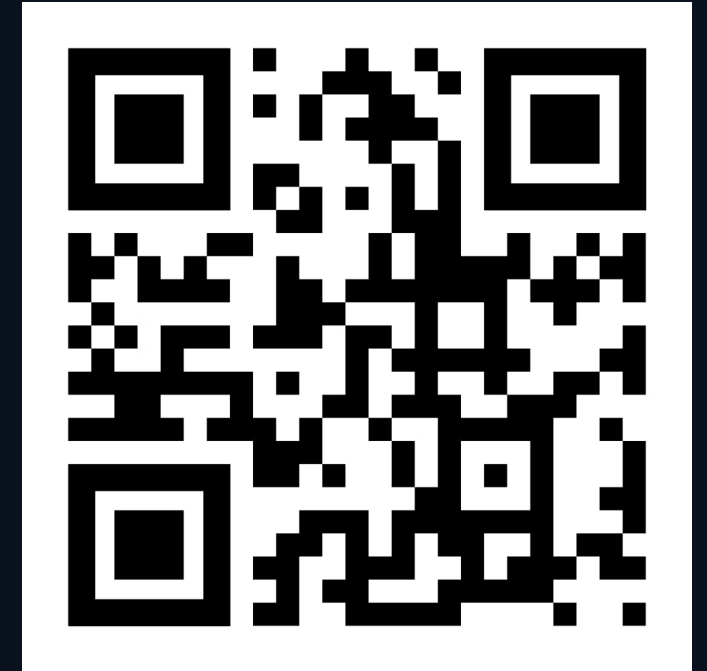
Refinement Prompts:

When It's Not Quite Right

Try these follow-up prompts:

- "Make it warmer and more conversational"
- "Shorten by half but keep the key points"
- "Rewrite for a Year 10 reading level"
- "Add a relevant statistic or example"
- "Remove any jargon or corporate language"
- "Give me 3 alternative versions to choose from"

Exercise 2: Real Work, Real AI



1

Task: **Social Media Blitz**

Turn a long open day report into 3 Instagram captions + 1 LinkedIn post

3

Task: **Email Rescue**

Rewrite formal policy text for Year 12 students

2

Task: **Data Detective**

Analyse school visit data and find patterns/insights

4

Task: **Local Intel**

Research a school and get 5 conversation starters for your next visit

10 minutes: Prompt → Run → Refine → Share your best output

Your AI Toolkit: Take It Away

School data review	"I've attached a spreadsheet of school visits. Identify the top 10 by conversion and suggest 3 reasons why."	Analyse school data	ChatGPT-4, Claude
Research a school	"Profile of [School Name]: demographics, Ofsted rating, HE progression rates, 3 interesting facts."	Research schools	ChatGPT, Perplexity
Draft emails	"120-word email to Year 12s who enquired about [subject]. Encouraging tone. Mention [event]. No jargon."	Write student emails	ChatGPT, Claude
Simplify policies	"Rewrite this for 16-year-olds. Bullet points, short sentences, Year 10 reading age."	Simplify policy docs	ChatGPT, Claude
Social Checks	"Turn these testimonials into 3 Instagram captions (under 150 chars). Hashtags: #UniLife #[Uni]"	Social media posts	ChatGPT
Workshop a workshop	"30-min session on 'Choosing the Right Course' for Year 12s. Give me 5 activities and 3 myths to bust."	Workshop content	ChatGPT, Claude
Generate FAQs	"Based on this feedback, write 8 FAQs about accommodation. Answers under 50 words each."	Generate FAQs	ChatGPT
Tidy spreadsheets	"This CSV has messy formatting. Clean it up and flag duplicates."	Tidy spreadsheets	ChatGPT, Claude
Sector News	"Summarise last month's HE policy changes in 5 bullets. Focus: student finance and admissions."	Sector news summary	Perplexity, ChatGPT
Event Agendas	"2-hour open day for [subject]. Include timings, activities, speaker notes. Audience: Year 13 + parents."	Event agendas	ChatGPT, Claude
Role-play	"Simulate 5 challenging Year 12 questions about fees, mental health support, or career outcomes."	Role-play questions	ChatGPT, Claude
Scale Outreach	"Template email for 50 schools. Customise with [school name] and [stat]. Under 100 words."	Scale outreach	ChatGPT

Your AI Toolkit: **Take It Away**



Scan for:

- Prompt Hacks Cheat Sheet (12 ready-to-use templates)
- Links to today's slides
- Resources and examples
- Our contact details

**Use it Monday morning.
Seriously.**

AI at Gecko: **From Prompt to Product**

Everything we've talked about today powers:

- Smart chatbots that answer student questions 24/7
- Automated data insights for recruitment teams
- Personalised email journeys at scale
- AI that frees you up for the work that *actually* needs a human

The difference?

We've done the prompt engineering for you.



Scan this to:

- Build a working AI chatbot in under 60 seconds
- See how LLMs work for your institution
- Test it with real student questions
- ai.geckoengage.com

No coding. No cost. Just curiosity.

Let's Stay Connected

Grab us during the conference for:

- Gecko swag (yes, we have socks)
- A chat about your AI challenges
- Demo of how this works in Gecko

Thank You

Now Go Prompt!

Your challenge for next week:

Use ONE prompt from the cheat sheet in your actual work.

Then tell us what happened (good or hilariously bad).

You've got this.