



THE FREE STARTER KIT / WITH DANIELLE

Brief to buy-in.

Six prompts to turn a fuzzy brief into a direction you can explain.



START HERE

- 01** Open the AI tool you already use.
- 02** Choose one project. Start with the brief on page 2.
- 03** Copy a prompt. Replace the [brackets]. Review the answer.

Practising? Use a made-up project. For client work, use only material and tools you have permission to use.



Give it the brief.

AI cannot read your mind. Give it the few things that actually matter.

DO THIS

Copy this. Rough notes are fine. Write "unknown" in any gaps.

PROMPT 1 / YOUR PROJECT BRIEF

Help me turn these notes into a clear design brief.

Project: [WHAT ARE WE MAKING?]

User: [WHO IS IT FOR?]

Their task: [WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO DO?]

Problem: [WHAT IS GETTING IN THEIR WAY?]

Success: [WHAT SHOULD BE EASIER AFTERWARDS?]

Constraints: [TIME, TECH, BRAND OR ACCESSIBILITY]

Already decided: [WHAT IS NOT UP FOR DEBATE?]

Summarise this in 6 short bullets. Use only my notes.

If a gap would change the direction, ask up to 3 questions, one at a time. Do not fill gaps with guesses.

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / A BOOKING PAGE

Vague: "Make booking easier."

Specific: "Help first-time clients choose a session without emailing us to ask which one fits."

✓ **Save the brief. Paste it with the next prompt, or add it to your AI project.**



Find another way in.

Before you polish the first idea, see what else could solve the problem.

DO THIS

Use your brief. Ask for three genuinely different approaches.

PROMPT 2 / THREE DIRECTIONS

Here is my brief: **[PASTE YOUR BRIEF]**

Suggest 3 different design directions, not 3 visual styles.

For each, give me:

1. The main idea, in one sentence.
2. What the user does before, during and after this screen.
3. Why it could help with the problem in my brief.
4. One trade-off and one thing I would need to test.

Keep each direction under 80 words. Respect what is already decided. Label assumptions. Do not invent research or choose the winner for me.

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / SAME PROBLEM, DIFFERENT APPROACH

- A. Compare the sessions on one page.
- B. Ask two questions to narrow the choice.
- C. Recommend a starting session, with other options visible.

✓ **Choose one direction worth exploring. Write one sentence explaining why.**



Find the pattern. Keep the evidence.

Let AI organise the notes. Check that the themes are really there.

DO THIS

Label permitted notes or excerpts S1, S2, S3 before pasting them.

PROMPT 3 / RESEARCH THEMES

My research question: **[WHAT DO I NEED TO UNDERSTAND?]**

My source-labelled notes: **[PASTE S1, S2, S3...]**

Find up to 3 useful patterns. For each, give me:

- The pattern in plain words.
- The source IDs that support it.
- One exact supporting excerpt, copied from those notes.
- Any contradiction or missing evidence.
- A design question this raises, not a proven solution.

Use only these notes. Do not invent quotes. Separate what people said from your interpretation. If a theme appears in only one source, say so.

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / TRACE THE THINKING

Note S2: "I cannot tell which session is for beginners."

Interpretation: the labels may be unclear.

Design question: would experience-level labels help?

✓ **Check every excerpt against its source. Keep only themes the notes support.**



04 / CHALLENGE

AUTOMATE

Catch the awkward questions early.

A useful critique gives you something to fix, not just something to defend.

DO THIS

Describe your direction. Add a permitted sketch or screen if you have one.

PROMPT 4 / THE USEFUL SCEPTIC

Brief: **[PASTE YOUR BRIEF]**

Direction and reasons: **[PASTE YOUR IDEA]**

Review it from three perspectives:

- Client: what is unclear or disconnected from the goal?
- Engineer: what states, rules or edge cases are missing?
- Design lead: what trade-off or evidence needs a second look?

Return the 5 most useful questions, in priority order.

For each, suggest one check or change. Include relevant empty, loading and error states. Do not invent requirements. If the concern is valid, say what to fix rather than writing a clever rebuttal.

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / TURN CRITIQUE INTO A TASK

Question: "What happens if no times are available?"

Next action: design the empty state and agree what the user can do next.

✓ **Fix the important gaps. Keep unresolved decisions visible.**



Explain the decision. Skip the essay.

Your client and your engineer need different versions of the same thinking.

DO THIS

Choose one audience. Give AI your actual reasons and evidence.

PROMPT 5 / THE HANDOFF

Brief: **[PASTE YOUR BRIEF]**

Chosen direction: **[DESCRIBE IT]**

Reasons and evidence: **[PASTE YOUR NOTES]**

Open questions: **[WHAT IS STILL UNDECIDED?]**

Audience: **[CLIENT / ENGINEER / DESIGN LEAD]**

Write only the version for my chosen audience:

- Client: an email under 150 words with the decision, why it helps and what I need them to confirm.
- Engineer: a checklist of the states, rules and open questions in my notes.
- Design lead: 5 bullets covering the problem, choice, evidence, trade-off and next step.

Use only what I supplied. Mark missing information **[CHECK]**. Do not invent reasons or promise results.

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE / CLIENT VERSION

"I suggest showing the sessions side by side so first-time clients can compare them. Could you confirm whether each session needs a different booking form?"

✓ **Read it as the recipient. Can they tell what you need from them?**



06 / REMEMBER

OPTIMIZE

Stop hunting through old notes.

Keep a small decision log. Ask it questions when the project gets noisy.

DO THIS

Save the brief, decisions and approved notes together. Label each file.

PROMPT 6 / WHAT DID WE DECIDE?

Use only these project notes: **[PASTE OR ATTACH NOTES]**

My question: **[WHAT DO I NEED TO FIND?]**

Give me a short answer with the source file and heading or page, if available. Separate confirmed decisions from proposals and open questions.

Quote the relevant line exactly. If the answer is not in these notes, say "I cannot find that in these notes." Do not treat missing information as proof that no decision was ever made.

YOUR SIMPLE DECISION LOG

Decision / Why / Who confirmed it / Source

Keep the log with the brief. Add confirmed changes as the project moves.

✓ **You have a brief, a direction, evidence and a handoff. Reuse the prompts you need.**

Want to work through it together?

Explore the live AI for Designers workshop with Danielle.

[Get workshop dates >](#)

switchboards.ai/ai-for-designers.html