QuestionCraft Cheat Sheet
The Research-Backed Framework for Asking Better Questions

The Three Research Domains

QuestionCraft uniquely synthesizes three domains that have never been integrated before:

60+ Years of Questioning Research	5+ Years of AI Prompting Science	Evidence-Based Pedagogy
Bloom's Taxonomy, Socratic Method, Question Formulation Technique, 5W1H, Appreciative Inquiry	Chain-of-thought, Few-shot learning, Context provision, Role assignment, Structured outputs	Adult learning theory, Deliberate practice, Metacognition, Zone of Proximal Development
What makes questions effective for human thinking	*What makes questions effective for AI systems*	*How people actually develop questioning skills*

The QuestionCraft Formula

Five elements that transform average questions into exceptional ones:

- **1. Goal Clarity:** What outcome do you actually want? Not 'help me' but 'I need to decide X' or 'I want to produce Y'
- **2. Relevant Context:** Your situation, constraints, prior attempts, why this matters. Include anything that would change the answer.
- **3. Cognitive Level:** Remember/Explain (shallow) vs. Analyze/Evaluate/Create (deep). Match to your actual need.
- **4. Specificity:** Format, length, tone, structure, what to include, what to avoid. Specific beats vague every time.
- **5. Actionability:** What will you DO with this answer? Best questions have clear 'so I can...' statements.

The 60-Second Question Check

Before asking any important question, run through these five checks:

- **GOAL:** What do I actually want? — Not 'information' but a specific outcome.
- **CONTEXT:** What does the responder need to know? — Situation, constraints, prior attempts.
- **LEVEL:** Am I asking at the right cognitive level? — Facts vs. analysis vs. evaluation?
- **SPECIFICITY:** Have I removed ambiguity? — Format, length, tone, structure.
- **ACTION:** What will I DO with this answer? — If you can't envision using it, rethink.

The Question Upgrade Ladder

When your question isn't working, try these upgrades in order:

1. **Add Goal** → "...so that I can [specific outcome]"
2. **Add Context** → "Given that [relevant information]..."
3. **Add Structure** → "Please provide: (1)..., (2)..., (3)..."
4. **Add Constraints** → "In under 200 words..." or "Focus specifically on..."
5. **Request Reasoning** → "Think through this step by step before answering"

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Key Frameworks, AI Best Practices & Examples

Bloom's Taxonomy: The Cognitive Depth Ladder

Most people ask questions at Levels 1-2. Go deeper for better answers:

Level	Type	What It Does	Example Starter
1	Remember	Recall facts	"What is...?" "List..."
2	Understand	Explain concepts	"How does...?" "Explain..."
3	Apply	Use in new situations	"How would X affect...?"
4	Analyze	Draw connections	"What's the relationship...?"
5	Evaluate	Justify decisions	"Which option is best...?"
6	Create	Produce original work	"Design..." "Develop..."

AI Prompting Research: Key Findings

- **Chain-of-Thought:** 'Think step by step' improves complex reasoning by 30-40%
- **Specificity:** Specific prompts outperform vague ones by 2-3x in usefulness
- **Context Provision:** Providing relevant context improves response relevance by 40-60%
- **Role Assignment:** 'You are an expert X' activates more focused, expert-like responses
- **Structured Requests:** Specifying format (bullets, numbered, table) gets near-100% compliance

Before & After Transformations

The Parent

✗ Before: "My kid won't listen. What should I do?"

✓ After: "My 7-year-old started refusing homework with full meltdowns a month ago when school got harder. I've tried rewards, consequences, sitting with her. Is this normal developmental stuff, or should I be concerned? What questions should I ask her teacher?"

The Manager

✗ Before: "How do I give negative feedback?"

✓ After: "I need to tell my direct report she's not getting the promotion she expected. She's strong but not ready for management—struggles with delegation, had conflicts with two peers. How do I deliver this honestly without losing her? What should I say in the first two minutes?"

5 Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **The Lazy Open:** 'Tell me about leadership' → Infinite answers. Add goal + context + specificity.
- **The Kitchen Sink:** 500-word question asking 12 things → One question, one clear goal.
- **The Assumption Trap:** 'Why isn't my strategy working?' → Question your question first.
- **The Vague Emotion:** 'I'm frustrated with my team' → Translate emotion into desired outcome.
- **The Answer-in-Disguise:** 'Don't you think we should...' → Ask what you actually want to know.

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