

SMALL BUSINESS. MEET AI. / REVIEW SAMPLE

Your first 30 days with AI.

Small steps. Useful skills. A more confident business.

You do not need to become an AI expert. Start with one familiar task, learn how to judge the result, and build from there. This guide helps you make useful progress at a pace that fits your business.

Three complete lessons: Days 1, 6 and 16.
A proposed roadmap for the full 30-day product.
Printable working pages for your notes.

Welcome. Start where you are.

This sample contains three complete lessons: Days 1, 6 and 16. The other days appear in the roadmap as planned content. You can try these sample lessons in order without completing the missing days; each includes what you need to begin.

Set aside around 20 minutes for a lesson. Use the five-minute route when time is tight, and return later to finish the exercise. The 30-day timetable is a suggested pace, not a deadline.

Use an AI assistant you already have access to for the exercises. The guide does not include an AI account or run AI itself. You can read the fictional examples before choosing a tool. Product-specific setup and tool selection are planned for Day 4.

Keep your own judgement in charge. Start with public information or the fictional examples supplied here. Review each output before you use it, and keep anything involving sensitive information or consequential decisions out of your first experiments.

About this PDF

This is a printable companion with blank worksheets, not a fillable form. The HTML guide includes copy buttons, typed notes and progress tracking. Notes entered in the HTML are not inserted into this PDF. All business examples and sample outputs are fictional and illustrative.

Review sample | 14 October 2026

YOUR 30-DAY ROADMAP

Days 1-7

Days 1, 6 and 16 are included in this sample. All other lessons are planned. Work at your own pace; review days give you room to catch up.

Find your starting point

One sensible task and the confidence to begin.

01	Your first useful result Improve a short piece of public business text.	SAMPLE
02	Spot the opportunities List repetitive, frustrating or time-consuming tasks.	Planned
03	Choose a sensible first task Compare usefulness, effort and risk.	Planned
04	Choose and set up your tool Review suitability, settings and spending.	Planned
05	Brief AI about your business Create a reusable, non-sensitive business brief.	Planned
06	Ask for a better answer Use a clear prompt and a specific follow-up.	SAMPLE
07	Pause and review Repeat, catch up and save what worked.	Planned

YOUR 30-DAY ROADMAP

Days 8-14

Days 1, 6 and 16 are included in this sample. All other lessons are planned. Work at your own pace; review days give you room to catch up.

Try useful everyday tasks

Two promising uses worth developing.

08	Write a clearer email Create a routine email template in your voice.	Planned
09	Turn notes into actions Organise notes and check responsibilities.	Planned
10	Explain what you offer Improve a description or frequently asked question.	Planned
11	Draft helpful customer replies Build checked templates from fictional examples.	Planned
12	Make more of existing content Adapt useful material for another format.	Planned
13	Research and verify Separate supported facts from suggestions.	Planned
14	Choose what deserves more time Review experiments and select two candidates.	Planned

YOUR 30-DAY ROADMAP

Days 15-21

Days 1, 6 and 16 are included in this sample. All other lessons are planned. Work at your own pace; review days give you room to catch up.

Build a repeatable routine

One tested workflow with a quality check.

15	Measure your starting point Record time and quality for a recurring task.	Planned
16	Build a simple workflow Map preparation, AI assistance, review and completion.	SAMPLE
17	Create a reusable task prompt Specify the inputs, requirements and output.	Planned
18	Define a good result Write a short, practical quality checklist.	Planned
19	Test more than once Try ordinary and difficult examples.	Planned
20	Improve and document Write instructions that someone else can follow.	Planned
21	Keep, adjust or stop Make a decision based on the results.	Planned

YOUR 30-DAY ROADMAP

Days 22-30

Days 1, 6 and 16 are included in this sample. All other lessons are planned. Work at your own pace; review days give you room to catch up.

Make it part of your business

A personal toolkit and a plan for next month.

22	Try a second workflow Apply the process to another suitable task.	Planned
23	Test and refine again Find and fix weaknesses in the second workflow.	Planned
24	Agree your business rules Document permitted information and review responsibilities.	Planned
25	Make it easy to hand over Test instructions with a colleague or your future self.	Planned
26	Organise your toolkit Store approved prompts, examples and business information.	Planned
27	Review the real benefit Include checking, corrections, quality and tool costs.	Planned
28	Choose what to continue Keep a sustainable shortlist of useful routines.	Planned
29	Plan the next month Prioritise improvements and an optional third workflow.	Planned
30	Save your business playbook Review progress and export your personal toolkit.	Planned

DAY 01 / UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

Your first useful result

Take a short piece of business writing and make it easier for a customer to understand.

15-20 minutes | Result: A checked, clearer description and a note about whether AI helped.

You will need

An AI assistant you can access, plus a short piece of public business text. Or use the fictional example below.

An AI assistant responds to your instructions by generating an answer. It can help draft, reorganise and explain information. It can also invent details or misunderstand what matters, so fluent writing is not proof of accuracy.

Your instruction is called a prompt. A useful first prompt tells the assistant what to do, who the result is for and which facts it must preserve. Today you will work on something you already understand, so you can judge the answer yourself.

Before you begin, use only public business information or the fictional text provided here. Leave out customer details, passwords, private prices and confidential plans. Check that your organisation permits the tool you are using. If you are unsure, stay with the fictional example.

Willow & Spade | fictional local gardening business

Starting point

We undertake a variety of garden maintenance activities for householders in Northbridge, including lawn mowing, hedge trimming and seasonal tidy-ups. Visits can be one-off or regular. Please email us to discuss your garden and request a quote.

What useful can look like

Keep your garden looking its best with Willow & Spade. We offer lawn mowing, hedge trimming and seasonal tidy-ups for homes in Northbridge, with one-off or regular visits. Email us to discuss your garden and request a quote.

This is an authored illustration, not a guaranteed AI response. It preserves the services, area, visit options and email next step. It does not invent a price, availability or guarantee. You may still prefer a plainer opening; usefulness is your decision.

If you get stuck

If the draft is too promotional, point to the exact phrases you dislike and ask for everyday language. If it adds a fact, remove it and explicitly identify that fact as unsupported. Asking AI to check itself is useful, but you still need to compare with the original.

DAY 01 / TRY & CHECK

Put it into practice

Use the fictional example first. Replace details only with information you are permitted to use. A copyable version is in sample-prompts.txt.

Rewrite the business description below so a potential customer can quickly understand what we do and how to enquire.

Business name: Willow & Spade
Audience: local householders
Tone: friendly, plain and professional
Length: no more than 65 words

Use only the facts supplied. Do not add prices, guarantees, qualifications, availability or extra services. Preserve the service area and the email enquiry step. Return one draft, then list any information that would need checking.

Description:

We undertake a variety of garden maintenance activities for householders in Northbridge, including lawn mowing, hedge trimming and seasonal tidy-ups. Visits can be one-off or regular. Please email us to discuss your garden and request a quote.

Make it yours

1. Read the original text and identify the facts that must stay. With your own text, use a short paragraph that is already public.
2. Copy the prompt into your AI assistant. For your own business, replace the name, audience and description before sending it.
3. Compare the answer with the original. Mark any added claim, missing detail or phrase you would not normally use.
4. Ask for one specific revision if needed: for example, 'Use a more matter-of-fact opening. Keep all the factual details unchanged.'
5. Save the version you prefer and record what you changed yourself. Only publish it after your normal review.

Check before you use it

- Every service and location matches the original.
- There are no invented promises, prices or qualifications.
- The customer can see what to do next.
- The language sounds appropriate for this business.

Only have five minutes?

Read the fictional before-and-after example. Find the services, location and next step in both versions. Write one sentence about what improved and one thing you would change.

DAY 01 / YOUR WORKING PAGE

Save the useful bits

A checked, clearer description and a note about whether AI helped.

Use public or fictional information. Record the details you want to reuse.

The public text or fictional task I chose

Describe the task. Do not enter private customer or business information.

My checked final version

Paste or write the version you would be comfortable using.

What helped, and what I had to correct

Would you use AI for this task again? Why?

You are done when...

You have a checked draft, or you have completed the five-minute comparison and recorded what you learned.

[] I completed the exercise or the five-minute route.

In the full guide, Day 2 helps you find other everyday tasks worth exploring. In this sample, continue to Day 6.

DAY 06 / UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

Ask for a better answer

Give AI the brief you would give a capable colleague, then improve the result with specific feedback.

20 minutes | Result: One reusable prompt and a follow-up that improves its answer.

You will need

A familiar writing task and its approved facts. If you have not completed Day 5, use the fictional business brief below.

A vague prompt leaves the assistant to guess. 'Write an email about our workshop' does not say who it is for, what is confirmed or how the reader should respond. A longer prompt is not automatically better; useful context is what matters.

Use five ingredients: task, context, audience and tone, boundaries, and output format. State the job, supply the facts, explain who will read it, say what must not change, and describe the result you need.

Treat the first answer as a draft. Give feedback on a specific problem, such as an invented deadline or an overly formal opening. A fresh chat may not contain earlier context, so save the important facts inside your reusable prompt.

Oak Lane Studio | fictional independent retailer

Starting point

Weak prompt: Write an email about our pottery workshop.

Approved facts: beginner pottery workshop; Saturday 14 November 2026; 10am-12pm; £35 per person; materials included; at Oak Lane Studio; customers should reply to ask about availability. Places are not confirmed until the studio replies.

What useful can look like

Subject: Try pottery at Oak Lane Studio

Fancy trying something new? Join our beginner pottery workshop on Saturday 14 November, from 10am to 12pm at Oak Lane Studio.

It costs £35 per person, including materials. Reply to this email to ask about availability. We'll confirm whether a place is available when we respond.

An authored example of a stronger draft. A weak draft might invent 'only two spaces left' or imply that replying guarantees a place. Those are factual problems, not just style preferences. The improved brief below makes the booking process explicit.

If you get stuck

If it ignores a constraint, simplify the request and repeat the most important requirement. If you are stuck in repeated revisions, start a new chat with the complete corrected brief. Do not keep polishing indefinitely: decide what good enough means before you begin.

DAY 06 / TRY & CHECK

Put it into practice

Use the fictional example first. Replace details only with information you are permitted to use. A copyable version is in sample-prompts.txt.

Task: Draft a short email inviting existing customers to a beginner pottery workshop.

Context and approved facts:

Business: Oak Lane Studio, an independent retailer.

Workshop: Saturday 14 November 2026, 10am-12pm, at Oak Lane Studio.

Price: £35 per person; materials included.

Next step: reply to ask about availability. A place is only confirmed when the studio replies.

Audience and tone: existing local customers; warm, clear and relaxed.

Boundaries: use only the supplied facts. Do not invent scarcity, discounts, a booking link or a booking deadline. If essential information is missing, ask me for it before drafting.

Output: one subject line and an email body of no more than 100 words, with short paragraphs and one clear next step.

A follow-up to try

Revise the draft to remove any unsupported claim. Make the opening more direct, keep the body under 80 words, and preserve the date, time, price, materials and booking conditions exactly. Then list what you changed.

Make it yours

1. Read the fictional business brief. Predict what the weak prompt might get wrong before using the improved one.
2. Copy the improved prompt into your assistant and read its response against the approved facts.
3. Identify one issue with accuracy, tone or format. Write a precise follow-up, using the example as a starting point.
4. Compare both versions. Keep the better result, even if that is the first draft. Correct remaining problems yourself.
5. Adapt the five ingredients to a task in your business. Save the prompt with placeholders such as [APPROVED FACTS] and [NEXT STEP] so you can reuse it.

Check before you use it

- The date, time, price and inclusions are unchanged.
- The invitation does not promise a confirmed booking.
- No scarcity, deadline or discount has been invented.
- The email has one clear next step and an appropriate tone.

Only have five minutes?

Take one prompt you have used, or the weak prompt above. Add the audience, approved facts and one boundary. Save this improved prompt for your next session.

DAY 06 / YOUR WORKING PAGE

Save the useful bits

One reusable prompt and a follow-up that improves its answer.

Use public or fictional information. Record the details you want to reuse.

My five-part prompt

Task / context / audience and tone / boundaries / output format.

The specific feedback I gave

What did you ask it to change, and what had to stay?

What improved, and what still needed checking

Record the version you chose and the reason.

You are done when...

You have saved a reusable prompt and can explain one change that made the answer more useful.

[] I completed the exercise or the five-minute route.

In the full guide, Day 7 is a review and catch-up day. In this sample, move to Day 16 to turn a task into a routine.

DAY 16 / UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

Build a simple workflow

Decide what happens before AI, what it helps with, and who checks the result.

20-25 minutes | Result: A one-page map of a recurring task, including a review step and a fallback.

You will need

One familiar, recurring task. If you have not completed Day 15, estimate your usual time and label it as an estimate. Use the fictional example if you prefer.

A workflow is a repeatable sequence of steps. For your first one, choose a task you understand and can review easily, such as turning approved notes into a draft follow-up email. Avoid starting with decisions about hiring, credit, health or legal obligations.

Map four stages: prepare, draft with AI, review, and finish. The AI step can be small. Your map should say what information is allowed, what a good result looks like, and when a person must take over.

You can run this workflow manually. Automation means software performs steps with less direct intervention; that is a later decision, after the process has been tested. Today, no email is sent and no system is connected by the guide.

Clearpath Design | fictional professional services business

Starting point

Task: turn approved project notes into a client follow-up draft.

Fictional notes: client chose concept B; studio to send a revised mock-up by Tuesday; client to supply the approved logo file; no delivery date for the logo was agreed.

Use a client placeholder instead of a real name.

What useful can look like

Prepare: collect approved notes, replace the client name with [CLIENT], and remove confidential details.

Draft: ask AI for a short recap and action list using only those notes.

Review: the project owner checks decisions, responsibilities and deadlines against the notes.

Finish: add the correct recipient in the usual email tool, perform a final check and send manually. Save the approved template.

Fallback: if notes conflict or a commitment is unclear, clarify with the project owner before sending.

The missing logo deadline is deliberate. A useful draft must leave it unassigned rather than inventing 'Friday'. Replacing a name alone does not make all information safe to share: remove other identifying or confidential details, or use the fictional example.

If you get stuck

If you spend longer correcting the draft than writing it yourself, simplify the AI step. Try generating only the action list. If the task still does not benefit, complete it manually and choose a different candidate. That is a useful finding.

DAY 16 / TRY & CHECK

Put it into practice

Use the fictional example first. Replace details only with information you are permitted to use. A copyable version is in sample-prompts.txt.

Draft a client follow-up email using only the approved notes below. Use [CLIENT] as the greeting placeholder.

Notes:

- The client chose concept B.
- Our studio will send a revised mock-up by Tuesday.
- The client will supply the approved logo file.
- No deadline for the logo was agreed.

Output: a brief recap followed by an action list showing who does what and any agreed deadline. Keep the email under 150 words. Then add a separate 'Questions for me' section outside the email for missing information.

Do not invent dates, prices, commitments or decisions. If a deadline is missing, do not assign one. This is a draft for human review, not an instruction to send anything.

Make it yours

1. Name the recurring task and what triggers it. Describe its current result and usual time, marking estimates clearly.
2. Write the four stages: prepare, draft with AI, review and finish. Use the fictional map as a model.
3. Choose the person responsible for checking the output. If you work alone, name yourself and reserve time for that check.
4. Run one trial with the fictional notes or information you are permitted to use. Check whether the result respects the missing deadline.
5. Record preparation, prompting, checking and correction time. A single trial is an observation, not proof of lasting savings.
6. Add a fallback: what will you do if the output is wrong or the inputs are unclear? Save the map for further testing.

Check before you use it

- The inputs are appropriate for the tool and your business rules.
- Every commitment matches the approved notes.
- Missing information is flagged rather than invented.
- A named person reviews before anything is sent.
- The time record includes checking and correction.

Only have five minutes?

Write four lines for one recurring task: what I prepare; what AI drafts; what I check; how I finish. Circle the step that must remain a human decision.

DAY 16 / YOUR WORKING PAGE

Save the useful bits

A one-page map of a recurring task, including a review step and a fallback.

Use public or fictional information. Record the details you want to reuse.

My four-stage workflow

Task and trigger / prepare / AI draft / human review / finish.

My reviewer, quality checks and fallback

Who checks it? What must be correct? When do we stop and clarify?

My first trial and time record

Usual time (measured or estimated); preparation; prompting; review and corrections; quality; next change.

You are done when...

Your map shows the inputs, AI step, reviewer, completion step and fallback. You have recorded a trial or completed the four-line short route.

[] I completed the exercise or the five-minute route.

The full guide continues with a reusable task prompt, a quality checklist and tests on several examples before deciding whether to keep the workflow.

REVIEW & NEXT STEPS

What should we keep?

Use this sample to assess the writing, exercises and layout before the full product is built.

Questions for our review

1. Was the next action clear without extra help?
2. Did the examples help you apply the lesson to a business?
3. Was the explanation too basic, too technical or about right?
4. Could you complete the activity in the suggested time?
5. Did the worksheet help you keep something useful?
6. What would you change about the layout or tone?

Further reading

Business Academy: Explore AI

Further learning on business applications and responsible adoption.

<https://www.business.gov.uk/business-academy/explore-ai/>

NCSC: AI and cyber security

A non-technical introduction to benefits, risks and questions for business leaders.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/ai-and-cyber-security-what-you-need-to-know>

References selected 14 October 2026. Independent resources; no endorsement is implied. Check current product instructions and your business requirements before applying them.

Next production step

Agree the audience and visual direction, revise this sample, then write the remaining lessons and build the full supporting toolkit. This review sample has no commercial licence, pricing or launch offer attached.