No. 128

AI LITERACY SERIES · THE METHOD

The Answer Checked

Stop taking an AI answer at face value: spot the errors, make it verify, and decide what to believe.

Ten prompts to gauge the risk, demand sources, probe the AI, cross-check and make the call with confidence.

Free for the SYSTINFO community

SYSTINFO · 2026

GOOD TO KNOW

Good to know

In 2026, AI assistants answer everything, and always with confidence. A New York lawyer learned it the hard way: fined for six court rulings that ChatGPT had simply invented. The rule to remember: an AI produces probable text, not true text. Three cues before you trust an answer.

1. **A well-written answer is not a proof.**
   A confident tone says nothing about accuracy. The most misleading errors are exactly the ones the AI states with the most assurance.

2. **Sources can be invented too.**
   A link, an article title or a quote can be fabricated from scratch. Open every source and check it yourself before you reuse it.

3. **The risk depends on the topic.**
   Law, health, precise figures, biographies and quotes are where AI errs most. The higher the stakes, the more serious the checking must be.

Good reflex: match your checking to the stakes, demand verifiable sources, and keep the last word on what you believe and share.

THE METHOD

The Method

Five moves, ten prompts ready to copy. Frame the stakes, demand sources, probe the AI, cross-check, then decide with confidence, so you never swallow an answer whole again.

1 Frame
01 The Stakes, Gauged · 02 The Risk Zones

2 Source
03 Sources Demanded · 04 The Quote, Tracked

3 Probe
05 The Confidence Level · 06 Limits Admitted

4 Cross-check
07 The Triple Answer · 08 The Document Only

5 Decide
09 The Figure, Checked · 10 The Trust Call

THE RCTFE RECIPE

Every prompt follows the same recipe: Role, Context, Task, Format. Copy the structure, change the brackets.

PROMPT 01 · FRAME

The Stakes, Gauged

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are an information-reliability expert.
Context: I am about to use an AI answer on [my topic] for
[my use].
Task: help me gauge the risk before I rely on it.
Format: the stakes level (low, medium, high), the points
easiest to verify, and the level of checking you advise.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A clear sense of what is at stake. You know up front whether a quick read suffices or everything must be checked.

PROMPT 02 · FRAME

The Risk Zones

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a critical reviewer.
Context: here is an answer you gave me on [the topic]:
[paste the answer].
Task: flag yourself what is most likely to be wrong.
Format: the list of dates, figures, names, laws and quotes
to check first, from most to least risky.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A map of the answer's weak spots. You focus your checking where the risk of error is highest.

PROMPT 03 · SOURCE

Sources Demanded

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a rigorous researcher.
Context: you just stated [the claim] about [the topic].
Task: give me what I need to verify it without taking your word for it.
Format: for each key claim, one precise, checkable source (body, title, date), and say clearly when you have none.
```

WHAT YOU GET

Claims tied to checkable sources. You can verify instead of trusting blindly.

PROMPT 04 · SOURCE

The Quote, Tracked

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a quote fact-checker.
Context: you gave me this quote or reference: [paste]. I must be sure it exists.
Task: help me confirm it is real, not invented.
Format: the exact author and origin, where to find it again, and a clear warning if you are not certain it exists.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A quote confirmed or dropped before you reuse it. You avoid spreading a fabricated reference.

PROMPT 05 · PROBE

The Confidence Level

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a cautious analyst.
Context: I need to know what is solid in your answer on
[the topic].
Task: assign a confidence level to each point.
Format: each claim followed by certain, probable or
uncertain, and one line to justify the uncertain ones.
```

WHAT YOU GET

The sure sorted from the shaky, by the AI itself. You know what to keep as is and what to dig into.

PROMPT 06 · PROBE

Limits Admitted

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are an expert honest about your own limits.
Context: you answered me on [the topic], but no answer is perfect.
Task: tell me what you do not know or cannot guarantee.
Format: what is beyond your knowledge, what may have changed since, and the questions better asked to a specialist.
```

WHAT YOU GET

The answer's blind spots, named plainly. You know where the AI stops and a human must take over.

PROMPT 07 · CROSS-CHECK

The Triple Answer

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a methodical investigator.
Context: I want to test how solid your answer to [the question] is.
Task: answer it three times, starting fresh each time, without copying the previous one.
Format: the three answers, then what is identical across all three (reliable) and what changes (to verify).
```

WHAT YOU GET

The answer tested against its own consistency. What varies between versions flags what to check.

PROMPT 08 · CROSS-CHECK

The Document Only

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a reader faithful to the text.
Context: here is a document: [paste or attach]. I want an
answer based on it only.
Task: answer [my question] from this document alone.
Format: the answer backed by quoted excerpts, and not in
the document for anything absent. Do not fill in with your
general knowledge.
```

WHAT YOU GET

An answer anchored in your document, with no invented additions. You tell what comes from the text from what comes from elsewhere.

PROMPT 09 · DECIDE

The Figure, Checked

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a cautious data analyst.
Context: you put forward the figure [the figure] on [the topic].
Task: help me not reuse it blindly.
Format: the exact source, the date of the data, the scope covered, and a range if it is an estimate.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A figure tied to its origin and date. You drop the round number out of nowhere before you cite it.

PROMPT 10 · DECIDE

The Trust Call

PROMPT TO COPY

Role: you are a critical-thinking advisor.
Context: I have gauged, sourced and cross-checked an answer on [the topic] meant for [my use].
Task: help me decide what to do with it.
Format: what I can use as is, what still needs checking elsewhere, and a mini-checklist to run before I share or decide.

WHAT YOU GET

A clear decision instead of trust by default. You use the answer with eyes open, stakes under control.

No. 128

YOUR TURN

Useful Doubt

You now know how to check an AI answer end to end: gauge the stakes, demand sources, probe confidence and limits, cross-check by several paths, then decide. Ten prompts, one habit to keep.

A well-written answer is not a proof: match your checking to the stakes and keep the last word on what you believe.

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