No. 135

AI LITERACY SERIES · THE METHOD

The Photo Decoded

Photograph a document, a label or a screen, and let AI read it and explain it to you.

Ten prompts to read, understand, count and translate what you photograph, then act, without ever exposing your sensitive information.

Free for the SYSTINFO community

SYSTINFO · 2026

GOOD TO KNOW

Good to know

By 2026, consumer AI assistants can "see" images. On your phone, you can photograph a paper, a label or a screen and ask AI to read and explain it, for free. It is a quiet revolution for anyone buried in documents. But a photo can be misread, and it often says more than you think. Three cues before you point your camera.

1. **A sharp photo is worth a thousand words.**
   Clear light, document flat, tight framing, no shadow or glare. The more readable the image, the more reliable the AI's reading. Take several photos if needed.

2. **AI can misread a figure, a name or a date.**
   Above all on handwriting or a blurry photo, where it sometimes guesses instead of admitting. Always cross-check important information against the original.

3. **An image says more than you think.**
   Account number, address, ID number, health data may be on it. Hide what is not needed, and never hand an official document to an unverified tool.

Good reflex: before sending a photo, hide what is sensitive; after the answer, check the figures, names and dates against the original.

THE METHOD

The Method

Five moves, ten prompts ready to copy. Read what is written, understand what it means, pull out the figures, cross the language and reply, then check and protect your information. Each prompt goes with a photo you attach to the AI.

1 Read
01 The Text Extracted · 02 The Handwriting Deciphered

2 Understand
03 The Letter Explained · 04 The Jargon Cleared

3 Count
05 The Table Captured · 06 The Figures Checked

4 Act
07 The Language Crossed · 08 The Reply Drafted

5 Protect
09 The Detail Hidden · 10 The Final Check

THE RCTFE RECIPE

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

PROMPT 01 · READ

The Text Extracted

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a meticulous reader who faithfully
transcribes what he sees on an image.
Context: I attach the photo of a document [letter, form,
page, note]. Some parts may be blurry.
Task: copy out all the visible text, faithfully, without
adding anything or changing the meaning.
Format: the text transcribed as is, titles and paragraphs
kept. Mark [unreadable] where you are unsure, and list the
guessed words at the end.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A paper document turned into text, ready to copy, search or send. The [unreadable] marks tell you what to recheck by eye.

PROMPT 02 · READ

The Handwriting Deciphered

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are an expert at deciphering difficult
handwriting.
Context: the attached photo shows [handwritten, old]
writing that is hard to read.
Task: decipher it and propose the most likely reading.
Format: first the clean deciphered text, then the uncertain
passages with two possible readings each. Never invent a
word to fill a gap.
```

WHAT YOU GET

Forbidding handwriting made readable. The double readings let you decide the doubtful passages yourself.

PROMPT 03 · UNDERSTAND

The Letter Explained

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a mediator who explains complicated documents simply.
Context: the attached photo is a letter or a notice I do not quite understand.
Task: explain to me in plain words what it says and what is expected of me.
Format: three points: what it is, what I am asked, the deadline if any, then the first thing to do. No jargon.
```

WHAT YOU GET

An intimidating letter boiled down to the essentials. You see at a glance whether to act, when, and where to start.

PROMPT 04 · UNDERSTAND

The Jargon Cleared

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a translator of jargon.
Context: the attached photo contains technical terms
[legal, medical, financial] I do not master.
Task: explain each difficult term in my everyday words.
Format: a short list “term, plain explanation”, then one
summary sentence. Flag what deserves a professional's
opinion.
```

WHAT YOU GET

The meaning behind the big words. You read the document as an equal, and you know when to consult an expert.

PROMPT 05 · COUNT

The Table Captured

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are an assistant who puts order into figures.
Context: the attached photo shows [a receipt, an invoice, a table, a price list].
Task: copy the lines and amounts into a clean table.
Format: a clear table [item, quantity, price], the total computed at the bottom, a note if an amount is unreadable.
Fill in no figure you cannot see.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A messy receipt turned into a clean, totalled table. No more retyping figures one by one.

PROMPT 06 · COUNT

The Figures Checked

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a checker attentive to detail.
Context: the attached photo is [an invoice, a statement, a quote] whose maths I want to check.
Task: verify the additions and spot what is off.
Format: the totals recomputed, the gaps with what is written, the lines to look at more closely. Flag with an asterisk anything you are unsure about.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A second look at your maths in seconds. The error hidden in a column of figures no longer escapes you.

PROMPT 07 · ACT

The Language Crossed

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a faithful and clear translator.
Context: the attached photo is a document written in
[language] that I cannot read.
Task: translate it and tell me what matters for me.
Format: first the faithful translation, then three points:
what it is about, what I am asked, what I must do. Keep
figures and dates exact.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A foreign-language document made clear and actionable. The language barrier no longer stops you at an important paper.

PROMPT 08 · ACT

The Reply Drafted

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a correspondence assistant.
Context: from the letter in the attached photo, I must reply to [accept, dispute, ask for more time, provide a document].
Task: draft me a polite and clear reply.
Format: a short, courteous message, ready to review, with [my details] in brackets. Remind me of the documents to attach. Stay factual.
```

WHAT YOU GET

A reply ready to review instead of a blank page. You answer quickly and well, without stumbling over the wording.

PROMPT 09 · PROTECT

The Detail Hidden

PROMPT TO COPY

```
Role: you are a guardian of my personal data.
Context: before sending the photo of a document to an AI, I
want to know what it reveals that is sensitive.
Task: tell me what I should hide and how.
Format: the list of sensitive items in such a document
(numbers, address, identity, health), the simple way to
hide them before the photo, one line to remember.
```

WHAT YOU GET

Your anti-leak reflex before sending. Hide the number, keep the essentials: the AI does not need to see everything.

PROMPT 10 · PROTECT

The Final Check

PROMPT TO COPY

Role: you are a checker who doubts himself out loud.
Context: you have just read or translated my photo, and before I use it I want to be sure.
Task: reread your own work against the image and flag your uncertainties.
Format: the figures, names and dates to recheck against the original, what you may have misread, and what needs an official source. Be honest, not reassuring.

WHAT YOU GET

The last filter before acting. What AI reads on a photo is always checked against the original before a decision.

No. 135

YOUR TURN

The First Shot

You now know how to photograph any document, label or screen and use AI to read it, understand it, pull out the figures, translate it and draft your reply, all while protecting your sensitive information.

AI reads fast, but it can be wrong: the figures, the names and the dates are always checked against the original before you act.

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