

Prompt Anatomy

Part	What to write
Subject	Who or what is on screen. Be concrete: "a ceramic teapot", not "an object"
Action	One visible thing that happens: steam rises, a hand waves, mist drifts
Setting	Where and when: "on a pale wooden table", "quiet park path at dusk"
Camera	One shot size and one camera move: "medium shot, slow push in"
Lighting	Source, direction, quality: "soft window light from the left"
Style	Look and texture: "realistic, natural colours", "warm neutral palette"
Format	Aspect ratio, duration and resolution are set in the tool's controls. The text only describes framing
Order	Subject → action → setting first, then camera, light and style
Scope	One shot per prompt. Several locations or a whole story in one short clip is hard to control

Camera Moves

Term	Effect on screen
Static / locked-off	Camera does not move; safest when the scene is busy
Push in / dolly in	Camera moves toward the subject; builds focus
Pull out / dolly out	Camera moves away; reveals surroundings
Pan left / right	Camera turns horizontally from a fixed spot

Camera Moves (cont)

Tilt up / down	Camera turns vertically from a fixed spot
Tracking / trucking	Camera travels alongside a moving subject
Orbit / arc	Camera circles the subject; good for products
Crane / pedestal up	Camera rises vertically, often to reveal a scene
Handheld	Slight natural shake; documentary feel
Zoom in / out	Lens changes focal length; the camera stays put
Rule	One move per shot. Don't combine conflicting moves, e.g. "locked camera" plus "rapid handheld zoom"

Shot Sizes

Shot	Frames
Extreme wide (EWS)	Subject small in a big landscape; sets location
Wide / long (WS)	Whole subject plus surroundings
Medium-wide (MWS)	Roughly knees up; body language and setting
Medium (MS)	Waist up; the default for people talking or gesturing
Medium close-up (MCU)	Chest up; face plus some context
Close-up (CU)	Face or a whole product fills the frame
Extreme close-up (ECU)	One detail: an eye, a texture, a logo-free label
Over-the-shoulder (OTS)	Behind one person, looking at another or at an object

Shot Sizes (cont)

POV	What the subject sees
Low / high angle	Camera below or above eye level; adds power or smallness

Lighting Terms

Term	Look
Soft light	Diffused, gentle shadows (overcast, window with curtain)
Hard light	Crisp, defined shadows (direct sun, bare bulb)
Golden hour	Warm, low-angle light just after sunrise or before sunset
Blue hour	Cool, even twilight just before sunrise or after sunset
Backlight / rim light	Light behind the subject; outlines edges
Side light	Light from one side; shows texture and shape
Key / fill	Main light vs. softer light that lifts the shadows
High key	Bright, low contrast, few shadows
Low key	Dark, high contrast, moody
Practical light	A visible lamp, neon sign or screen in the scene
Colour temperature	"Warm" (orange) vs. "cool" (blue); name both if you mix them

Motion & Pacing Words

Word	Use it for
Slowly / gently	Calm, controlled motion; usually the most stable choice
Gradually	Change that builds across the clip (light rising, mist thinning)
Steadily	Constant speed with no sudden changes
Briskly / quickly	Energetic action; expect more artefacts
Drifts / floats	Weightless motion: mist, smoke, petals, dust
Sways / ripples	Small repeating motion: grass, fabric, water
Continuous shot	Asks for no cuts within the clip
Real-time	Normal speed; avoids an accidental slow-mo look
Slow motion	Stretched action: splashes, hair, falling objects
Pacing tip	One main action plus at most one small background motion

Aspect Ratios & Format

Ratio	Typical use
9:16 (vertical)	Shorts, Reels, TikTok, Stories. Keep the subject near the centre and leave space for captions
16:9 (horizontal)	YouTube, websites, presentations, cinematic landscapes
1:1 (square)	Feed posts, product tiles, carousels
Check support	Not every model offers every ratio; pick one that the chosen model supports

Aspect Ratios & Format (cont)

Set it in controls	Choose ratio, duration and resolution in the tool's settings
"4K" in text	Writing "4K" in a prompt does not change the output resolution you selected
Duration	Short clips favour one simple action; save longer ideas for several shots

Negative Cues & What to Avoid

Cue / habit	Why
"No titles, captions or logos"	Stops stray on-screen text; add your own text later in an editor
"No cuts"	Keeps one continuous shot
"No people"	Use it for landscapes and products that should stay empty
"Keep the [subject] fully in frame"	Phrasing it positively often works better than "don't crop"
Negative field	If the tool has a separate negative-prompt field, put exclusions there; otherwise add one short "No..." sentence at the end
Avoid: stacked adjectives	"Epic, stunning, ultra, cinematic, 8K" adds noise, not detail
Avoid: conflicting cues	"Static camera" plus "swinging drone shot"

Negative Cues & What to Avoid (cont)

Avoid: story in one clip	Multiple scenes, outfit changes or locations in a single short generation
Avoid: real brands or people	Use unbranded objects and generic people unless you have the rights

Image-to-Video Tips

The image already fixes the subject, composition and style. Spend the prompt on **motion and camera**.

Describe what moves and what stays still: "- steam rises; the teapot stays fixed in frame".

Start with a clean, well-lit image with a clear subject. Clutter usually turns into wobble.

Match the image's aspect ratio to the output ratio to avoid unwanted cropping.

Keep camera moves small (slow push in, gentle orbit) so the scene doesn't drift away from the source.

Don't re-describe the image with different details. Conflicting text can pull the result off-model.

Use reference images only on models that accept them, and only images you have the right to use.

Worked Example: Before → After

BEFORE

a cool cinematic video of a cat in a city, epic, 4K, ultra realistic

AFTER

A ginger cat walks along a rain-wet stone wall in a quiet city alley at dusk. Neon signs reflect in the puddles below. Medium -wide shot; the camera tracks slowly alongside at the cat's eye level in

Worked Example: Before → After (cont)

> one continuous shot. Soft blue ambient light with a warm glow from the signs, realistic fur texture. No text, captions or logos.
WHAT CHANGED
 + concrete subject, one action, a named setting and time
 + one shot size and one camera move
 + lighting with a source and colour
 + one exclusion sentence
 - removed "epic", "cinematic" and "4K" (set resolution in controls)
 Ratio and duration: chosen in the settings, e.g. 9:16 for a Short

Common Fixes

Symptom	Change
Motion is chaotic or busy	Simplify to one action; add "slowly"; drop background motion
Camera ignores the move	State one move plainly near the start of the camera sentence; remove other camera words
Shaky or warping scene	Try a static camera first, then add movement back
Subject drifts out of frame	Add "keep the [subject] fully in frame"; use a wider shot size
Subject changes look mid-clip	Shorten the prompt; describe the subject once with fixed details; for image-to-video, use a cleaner source image
Random text or logos appear	Add "No titles, captions or logos"

Common Fixes (cont)

Wrong mood	Change only the lighting line (e.g. soft → low key) and keep the rest
Framing wrong for vertical	Choose 9:16 in the controls; centre the subject; say "medium shot" rather than "wide"
Looks low-res despite "4K"	Pick a higher resolution in the controls; the text doesn't override it
Many things wrong at once	Change one variable per attempt and note which change helped

Further reading: a longer walkthrough on how to write AI video prompts, with adaptable example briefs for products, people and landscapes.

