AI Engineering Usage Cheat Sheet

by wsparrish via cheatography.com/219182/cs/48503/

1. Start with the task

Known command or obvious quick fix
Editor, terminal or script.
Build or test fails
Rerun the failing check; read the first error. Unclear? Gemini CLI.
Write, plan or compare options
Gemini Web, with approved context.
Explain code or make a bounded change
Gemini CLI, even across several files.
Complex problem remains unresolved
Consider Kiro. Check the middle column first.

CLI = command-line app. Use tools approved for your data.

No match? Use this order

Standard tool can do it in 10 minutes?
Use it. Otherwise:
No local files or commands needed?
Gemini Web. Otherwise:
Gemini CLI has the access and quota?
Try it. Kiro is a deliberate escalation.

Quota = usage allowance. For an incident, follow the runbook and involve on-call first.

2. Before starting Kiro

Use it for a result worth the cost.
Other tools cannot finish the task; expect 30+ minutes saved or significantly lower risk.
Write three lines:
Finish: [specific result]
Done: [observable check]
Stop: [time/spending limit]
Check remaining allowance and permissions.
Watch actual usage; a prompt is not a spending cap.

10 / 30 minutes are guidelines. Urgency alone does not justify Kiro.

Set today's Kiro allowance

At the start of the day:
1. Set aside 2,000 for urgent work.
2. Divide the rest by workdays left.
3. Cap at 300.

Before each task: deduct today's spend.
Allowance used? Gemini or standard tools.
Balance 2,000 or less? No routine Kiro.
Reserve spending is your decision; agents must ask.

Personal example: 10,000/month, 20 workdays. 500/day spends all; 400/day keeps the reserve. Past burn: 10k in 3-5 days. Credits measure Kiro usage.

3. Stuck? Check progress

Same failure, no new evidence?
Try a different approach.
Two approaches without progress?
Stop. Report what you tried, evidence, blocker and one next step.
Progress means:
A useful new fact, a smaller reproduction of the failure, or a passing check.

Also stop at the limit, missing permission, or work beyond the agreed task. No automatic Kiro escalation.

Copy this brief | Any task

Deliver [specific result].
Use [relevant evidence/context].
Stay within [files/topic; exclusions].
Done when [observable check].
Stop at [time; credits if visible].
Use approved tools. Make changes only as needed and verify the result. Stop at the limit or after two approaches without progress.
Ask before adding work, switching to Kiro or spending the reserve. Report result, checks and blockers.

Fill every bracket. Works for analysis, writing or code.

Before you move on

Review the result. Is it safe to use?
Record the cost. Was it worth it?
Recheck the balance. What is left?

Personal operating guide | v3.1

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