

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TOMORROW WITH COPILOT TO WIN BACK YOUR **TIME**

START HERE

This is that start

You have Copilot. Maybe it got switched on months ago and has been sitting there since, while you meant to find the time to learn it. This is that start. Each of the 10 things below is small, takes about a minute, and hands back time you are spending by hand right now.

The one skill behind all of them is being **specific**.

Tell Copilot what to look at, what to do, and what to skip, and it handles the rest. These 10 go past the obvious features most people stop at. Copy a prompt, swap in your own details, and run it.

Pick the one that matches something on your plate today and start there.

CONTENTS

The 10 tips

01	EMAIL	Clear a packed inbox without opening a single email	05
02	EMAIL	See where your time actually goes in your inbox	06
03	EMAIL	Answer several similar emails at once	07
04	DRAFTING	Link a real file, meeting, or person with "/"	08
05	MEETING	Build a meeting agenda from your actual project context	09
06	SEARCH	Pull everything on a topic across email, Teams, and files	10
07	MEETING	Pull the full history before a tough conversation	11
08	PRESENTING	Have Copilot interview you on your own document	12
09	DOCUMENTS	Rewrite a recurring report with new data, same structure	13
10	SETUP	Teach Copilot your writing style once	14

BEFORE YOU START

2 setup notes

2 quick things make every prompt in this guide work.



Turn on Work mode

These prompts assume you have Microsoft 365 Copilot, the licensed version your organization provides, since that is what can access your emails, meetings, chats, and files. In Copilot Chat, make sure it is set to **Work**, not **Web**.



Make each prompt yours

Anything in **[square brackets]** is a placeholder. Swap it for your own detail before you send. Where a prompt asks for your emails, your data, or your document, paste it in or attach it first; Copilot only works best with what it can see. You can also change the specifics, the time range, the tone, the number of questions, to fit your situation. Keep the structure of the prompt and change what sits inside it.

EMAIL

01

Clear a packed inbox without opening a single email

After 2 days out, a few hundred unread emails are waiting and only a handful actually need you. The skill is finding those few fast, without reading from the top down.

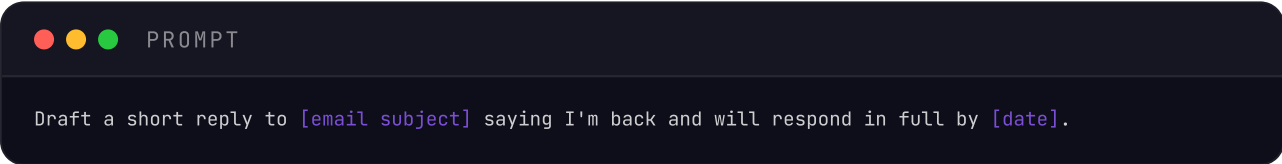
Open Copilot Chat in Outlook (the Copilot icon in the left sidebar) and paste this:

A dark-themed chat window with three colored dots (red, yellow, green) and the word "PROMPT" in white. Below the header, a text prompt is displayed in a monospaced font.

PROMPT

I have hundreds of unread emails. Scan my inbox and tell me: 1) Any emails needing a reply from me today. 2) Anything from [your manager's name]. 3) Any emails mentioning a deadline this week. Skip newsletters, CC-only emails, and automated notifications.

Copilot returns a short, prioritized list. Click any item to jump straight to that email. Then follow up:

A dark-themed chat window with three colored dots (red, yellow, green) and the word "PROMPT" in white. Below the header, a text prompt is displayed in a monospaced font.

PROMPT

Draft a short reply to [email subject] saying I'm back and will respond in full by [date].

Swap in a project name, a client, or a keyword and the list narrows accordingly. The emails that do not make the cut will wait. Most resolve themselves.

BEFORE



A few hundred unread, a handful that matter



AFTER



A short, prioritized list. The rest waits.

EMAIL

02

See where your time actually goes in your inbox

A lot of email time goes into patterns that are hard to spot while you are in the middle of them: the same senders, the same unresolved topics, the threads that never land. Seeing them laid out is the first step to changing them.

Open Copilot Chat in Outlook and paste this:

 PROMPT

Act as a productivity analyst reviewing how I spend my time in email. Analyze my inbox from the last 30 days and tell me: 1) Which senders email me most frequently? 2) What topics keep coming up without resolution? 3) Which threads have the most back-and-forth without a clear outcome? 4) Where did simple yes or no questions turn into long threads?

Then act on what it finds:

 PROMPT

Based on this analysis, suggest 3 specific changes I could make to reduce my email volume this month.

Go a step further if you want:

 PROMPT

Draft a short message I can send to [top sender] to agree on a better communication rhythm going forward.

The patterns are usually obvious once you see them on a screen instead of carrying them in your head.



BEFORE

**Patterns you can't spot
from inside them**



AFTER

**The pattern on a screen,
with fixes**

EMAIL

03

Answer several similar emails at once

When several people ask the same thing in a week, the answer is the same but the wording shifts for each reader. Copilot can handle that wording for you, once you give it the substance.

Open Copilot Chat in Outlook, paste in the emails you need to answer (or use / to pull each one in, see tip 4), and add this:

 PROMPT

The emails below all ask about the same topic. Here is the answer I want to give: [type the actual answer in a sentence or two]. Draft a personalized reply to each sender using that answer. Keep each reply brief and match the tone to the sender's style. Emails: [paste the emails here, or use / to pull each one in].

Tell Copilot what the actual answer is. It handles the wording and tone for each person; you provide the substance. What comes back is a separate draft per sender, each adjusted automatically: formal and high-level for a director, direct and detailed for a peer, diplomatic for an external contact. Copy each into the right thread and you are done.

BEFORE



The same answer, reworded for each reader



AFTER



1 prompt, a tailored draft per person

DRAFTING

04

Link a real file, meeting, or person with "/"

Ask Copilot to “write a follow-up from yesterday's planning meeting” with nothing to go on, and it fills the gaps with generic text. Give it the real meeting to read and the output changes completely.

When you are drafting with Copilot in Outlook or Word, type / at any point in your prompt. A search box appears. Search for a real meeting from your calendar, a real file from SharePoint or OneDrive, or a real person from your contacts, and select it. It attaches as a grounded reference. Then finish your prompt:

 PROMPT

```
Draft a follow-up email referencing /[meeting name]. Summarize what we agreed, the open items, and my next steps.
```

Copilot reads the actual meeting transcript (when the meeting was recorded) or document and writes from what was really there: real decisions, real names, real action items. 2 extra seconds in your prompt, completely different quality of output.

The technique that makes every other prompt better

This is the single technique most people never discover, and it makes almost every other prompt in this guide better. Add a / reference to almost any prompt here and the output goes from generic to grounded.

BEFORE



Generic text, invented from nothing



AFTER



Real decisions, names, and action items

MEETING

05

Build a meeting agenda from your actual project context

An agenda written from memory tends to miss what actually moved last week. Pointing Copilot at your real project files keeps the agenda current.

In Copilot Chat, use / to link your real project files, then ask:

 PROMPT

Act as my project manager preparing this check-in. Build a 30-minute agenda for my [project name] meeting. Use /[latest status doc] and /[last week's meeting] to base it on where we actually are: open decisions, items that are slipping, and anything raised last time that we did not close. Put the most important item first, and flag the one risk I should not leave the room without addressing.

You get an agenda grounded in what is really happening. Adjust the time box and it re-paces the items for you.

BEFORE



**An agenda written
from memory**



AFTER



**Grounded in where you
actually are**

SEARCH

06

Pull everything on a topic across email, Teams, and files

The thing you need is often spread across email, Teams, and files, which is why one detail can mean a search through 3 apps. Copilot can search all of them at once.

Open Copilot Chat and paste this:



PROMPT

```
Find everything across my emails, Teams chats, and files about [topic or project name]. Give me the current status, the most recent decisions, who owns what, and any open questions no one has answered. Link the sources so I can check them.
```

1 search across everything you have access to, with the sources attached.

Use it before you ask a colleague “where are we on this?” You will often already have the answer.



BEFORE

**One detail, a hunt through
3 apps**



AFTER

**1 search, every
source, linked**

MEETING

07

Pull the full history before a tough conversation

Going into a hard conversation, the details of what was agreed months ago are easy to half-remember, especially when the other person recalls them differently. Having the actual record in front of you changes how the conversation goes.

Open Copilot Chat in Outlook and paste this:

 PROMPT

```
Search my email history for all conversations with [name] about [topic]. What was decided? What was committed to? What's the most recent thing said on this topic?
```

Copilot returns the thread: what was promised, what changed, the last word on it. Then:

 PROMPT

```
Act as my advisor preparing me for this conversation. Based on this email history, what are the 3 things I should be ready to address, where am I most exposed, and what is the one question I should be ready for but probably am not?
```

You walk in with the actual record of what was said, when, and by whom. That changes how you show up.

BEFORE



Half-remembering what was agreed



AFTER



The full record: who said what, when

PRESENTING

08

Have Copilot interview you on your own document

A proposal can look solid right up until a tough question lands in the room. Rehearsing those questions in advance is what keeps you ready for them.

Upload your document to Copilot Chat (or link it with /), then paste this:



PROMPT

My [document or proposal] is attached above. Act as a skeptical [senior stakeholder or client]. Read it, then ask me your 8 hardest questions, and wait for my answer to each before moving to the next.

You rehearse the hard questions in private before you ever stand up. By the time you present, nothing catches you off guard.



BEFORE

A tough question you didn't see coming



AFTER

The hard questions rehearsed in private

DOCUMENTS

09

Rewrite a recurring report with new data, same structure

Recurring reports usually keep the same structure while only the numbers change, yet they often get rebuilt from a blank page each time. Copilot can carry the structure forward for you.

In Word, open Copilot, attach last period's report (or link it with /), and paste this:

 PROMPT

```
Act as the analyst who wrote the original report. Last quarter's report is attached. Here is this quarter's data: [paste the new numbers here, or attach the file]. Rewrite the report with the new numbers, keeping the exact same structure, section headings, and tone as the original. Flag anything in the data that looks off or worth calling out, the way the original author would.
```

You get a first draft that already looks like your report, so you spend your time editing instead of rebuilding. The flagging line is the part people miss: Copilot catches the number that moved 40% before your reader does.

BEFORE



Rebuilding the report from a blank page



AFTER



A first draft that already looks like yours

SETUP

10

Teach Copilot your writing style once

Out of the box, Copilot drafts in its own voice: polished, a little generic, not quite yours. That is why drafts often need a rewrite. You can teach it your style once and skip most of that.

This takes 2 steps. First, open Copilot Chat and paste this:

 PROMPT

```
Analyze my sent emails and recent documents. Summarize my writing style: how I open, my tone, sentence length, what phrases I use and avoid. Give me a 3 to 4 sentence summary I can use as a writing instruction.
```

Copilot reads your real content and describes your style back to you.

Second, in Copilot Chat open the settings cog, then Personalization, then

Custom instructions, paste in that summary, and save.

Set it once, runs in the background

Copilot Chat then keeps that style as your default, so you stop re-prompting it every time. Set it once and it runs in the background. Custom instructions are still rolling out, so if you do not see the option yet, paste the style summary at the top of any prompt instead; it works the same way.

BEFORE



Every draft sounds like Copilot



AFTER



Every draft sounds like you

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

You do not need all 10 this week

Take whichever matches a problem you had in the last few days, and use it tomorrow. The rest will still be here when you need them.

Each prompt is a working example, not a script. The structure is what makes it reliable, so keep that in place. The wording, the tone, the detail in the brackets: rewrite all of it to fit your role and how you like to work.

ONE LAST HABIT

Save the prompts you like, right inside Copilot.

When a prompt earns its place, don't leave it in this PDF. In Copilot Chat, run it, then hover over the prompt and click **Save** to keep it in your prompt gallery. It then sits one click away the next time you need it.



For more practical Copilot tips, visit

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