



Generative AI Basics:  
**Prompt Writing**



Edwards

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## Introduction

This guide provides an overview of how to write effective prompts for content creation when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) . It will be updated as use of Gen AI evolves at Edwards.

The effectiveness of your prompt depends on a number of factors:

- **How clear is your intent?** Whether you are asking for information or a visual asset, using direct and clear language helps Gen AI know what you want. For text-based outputs, you can specify the format you desire (bullet points, short summary, paragraphs, etc.) as well as other aspects to suite your needs (simple, detailed, targeted for a specific knowledge level).
- **How well is it structured?** Large Language Models (LLMs) that power Gen AI work well with detailed, step-by-step instructions that include clear delineations between items. If your prompt is complicated, breaking it down into steps and stages may yield the best results.
- **Other strategies to keep in mind:** Use proper spelling and grammar, and in most cases, a concrete idea is better than an abstract concept. Try to balance being detailed and concise, provide context when applicable, and avoid using exotic or overly complicated words.

## What Is A Prompt?

What makes Gen AI so revolutionary is its ability to interpret commands written in plain language that anyone can construct. No longer do you need to be an expert, code writer, designer, or the privileged few with access to expensive supercomputers.

A “**prompt**” is typically a few sentences asking the Gen AI tool for information or content, which it then processes to return your result. This prompt could be a research question, data set, command, or references needed to generate new assets.

If you aren’t sure where to begin, **Microsoft’s Copilot Lab** has a section called “Prompts to try” that will provide you with relevant starting points: [copilot.cloud.microsoft](https://copilot.cloud.microsoft)

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## Simple Text Prompt Examples – Microsoft Copilot

- List the top 3 heart valve companies based on gross revenue
- Summarize e-mails from Jane Smith from June 2024 (Outlook)
- Add a new slide about the benefits of meditation (Powerpoint)



## Advanced Text Prompt Examples – Microsoft Copilot

- Write 3 short paragraphs about why team building is important, provide specific examples of its benefits, write in a style that balances creative humor with a straightforward corporate tone, the target audience is new interns with no work experience
- Create a list of 7 “Communication Principles” where the first word of each principle spells out “Empathy” vertically when the list is complete, make the last word of each line rhyme, use well known business terms, make the first letter of each line bold and capitalized

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## Simple Image Prompt Examples – Adobe Firefly

- cinematic view of snowy mountain peaks in Yosemite, waterfalls, hyper realism

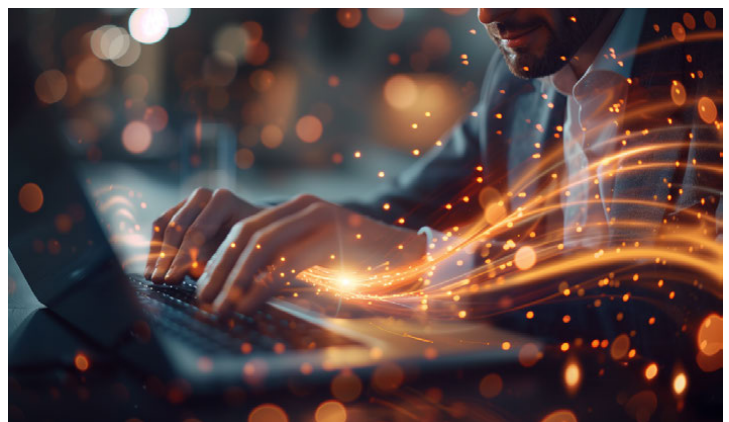


- realistic stock profile photo of a corporate woman smiling in a modern office



## Advanced Image Prompt Example – Midjourney

- zoomed in wide angle photo of a corporate man working on a laptop, the laptop screen has very small swirls of energy coming out of it, the keyboard is traced in thin light, the man looks happy and determined, warm colors, the environment is a corporate tech office, hyper realism, depth of field --ar 16:9 (Midjourney is a leading AI app)



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## Prompt Writing Basics

**Be specific.** A common mistake in prompt writing is the use of vague language. Start with a concise description of key elements you require in your results, as well as anything you want excluded.

Consider the following examples when using Microsoft Copilot or Adobe Firefly:



**Bad Copilot prompt:** summarize my emails from Jane

**Good Copilot prompt:** summarize emails from Jane Smith between June 1, 2024 through July, 15 2024 that include the words “design concept”, “digital sign”, or “cost estimate”. Exclude emails I have replied to.



**Bad Firefly prompt:** a stock photo of a man

**Good Firefly prompt:** close-up profile portrait of a man in his 60s smiling as a doctor hands him a medical chart, the man is sitting in a brown leather chair in a modern office, bright lighting, depth of field, joyful mood

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## Break It Down Step-By-Step

Complex prompts can be broken down into parts or step-by-step instructions.

For example, imagine you’ve written several unedited paragraphs about an upcoming event. Your first draft highlights Edwards’ focus on patient care and the importance of building trust.

**You can paste your paragraphs into Copilot and precede it with the following prompt:**

“First, summarize the following passage. Second, analyze the overall theme and list three main points to emphasize. Third, list keywords to highlight in a presentation.”

Experiment with using the phrase “step-by-step” in your prompt if it makes sense for your desired output, as it can make your results more organized.

## Describe The Format You Desire

When writing a prompt, keep in mind how you want your output presented. Using descriptive terms for formatting can save you valuable time.

**Examples of text-based formats:**

statistical analysis, report, summary, highlights, conversational dialogue, press release, paragraphs, bullet points, short story, ordered list, persuasive essay, email blast, and many more.

Try using phrases like “Present this in the form of...” and describe your ideal output structure.

You can also begin your prompt with, “Create a *[format or type of output]* summarizing the main points of *[your input data or subject matter]*”. Experiment until you find what works for you!

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## Utilize Negative Prompting

When crafting a prompt, beginners often get so focused on what they want in their results – they forget to include instructions about what they don't want.

**Example of a prompt with negative instructions:**

Summarize this email thread and format it into two paragraphs of key highlights, followed by an ordered list of tasks and deadlines related to "AI website launch". Write the deadlines and due dates in bold, **but don't include due dates from before today. Don't include emails prior to April 1, 2024 or emails from Frank Owens.** In the ordered list of tasks, group them based on who they are assigned to but **exclude all tasks related to John Smith.** Use Oxford commas and **don't use adverbs.**

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With negative prompting techniques, you can exclude specific dates, people, subjects, writing styles, companies, formatting options, words, phrases, and much more.

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## Consider Tone And Audience

Who is your audience and how do you want your information received? You can direct Gen AI to give you results written in a certain tone or literary genre, targeted for specific age groups or levels of expertise, and even reference famous writers, historical figures, or works of art.

**If referencing external styles or resources, ensure you are not infringing on copyrights before using any AI generated content.**

## Build On Success, Correct Mistakes, Give Feedback

You don't have to write the perfect prompt on your first try. Start with the basics and experiment by adding complexity in subsequent iterations. You'll learn to identify strengths and weaknesses in your prompting, as well as catch mistakes made by AI.

For example with Copilot, if you notice something factually incorrect in an output, you can reply in a conversational way to call out what was wrong and ask for a new generation.

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## Understanding What Gen AI Can Do For You

While what's possible is evolving each day, Gen AI is already changing how content is created and edited across all aspects of production. Here are a few examples:

- **Writing:** data analysis, email thread summaries, theme ideas, creative copy, error checking
  - **Images:** realistic stock photos, design assets, backgrounds, layouts, logos, brand concepts
  - **Audio:** voice cloning, voiceovers, sound effects, music, removal of glitches and filler words
  - **Video:** auto-transitions, animations, special effects, removal of filler words, HD upscaling
- New video assets can now be generated from text prompts, images, and existing videos.*
-

## Writing Effective Image Prompts

With the infinite variation offered by AI image generation, it's important to be clear on what you're looking for. The more you hone your skill to visualize and articulate what the ideal asset would look like, the better you'll be at writing prompts.

Consider the following aspects of an image's composition when crafting a prompt:

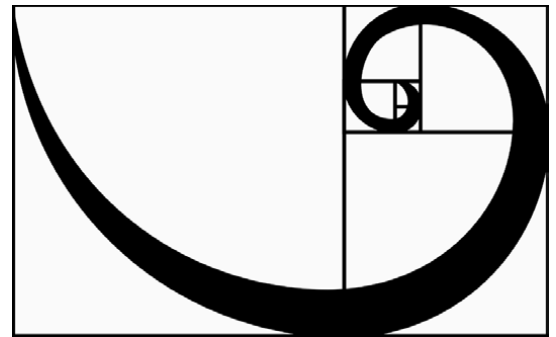
### Focal Point

What's the subject of your image? Where do you want the viewer's attention to go?

A principle to experiment with is the **Fibonacci Spiral**. When your composition leads the viewer's focus to somewhere near the "eye" of the spiral, the human mind tends to view such images as pleasing.

#### Example words and phrases:

[subject] is [on the right, behind, above, etc], foreground, background, horizon, the main focus is [subject]



### Color

When you want more control over the use of colors in your image, include terminology related to the desired palette or overall mood.

#### Example words and phrases:

muted, saturated, watercolor, pastel, vibrant, complimentary, intense, soft, gradient, psychedelic, black & white, vivid, metallic, warm, cool, inverted, neon, electric, sepia, high contrast.

**Note:** try alternatives to standard colors – jade, sapphire, ruby, emerald, amethyst, obsidian, etc.

### Light

Much like color, lighting has significant influence on your image generations and there are many prompting techniques to employ.

#### Example words and phrases:

cinematic, floodlight, backlight, spotlight, rim lighting, neon, dim/dark/bright, god rays, natural, sunbeam, moonbeam, fluorescent, incandescent, electric, glow, nightlight, mood lighting, soft/hard/accent, volumetric, split, Rembrandt, high-key, downlight, uplighting, ray tracing, ultraviolet

### Depth of Field

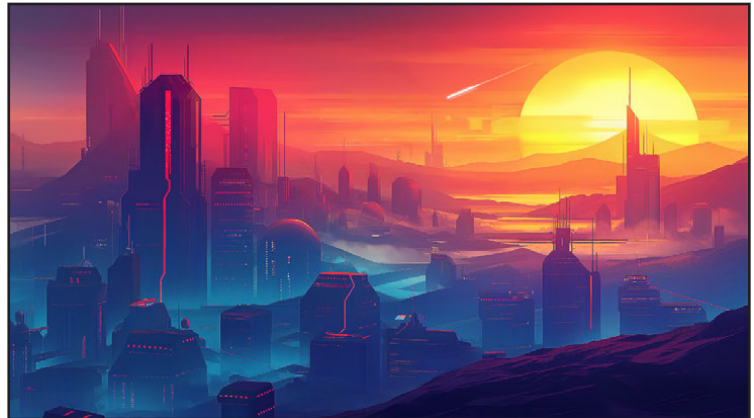
Focus and blur are powerful tools for enhancing your focal point or creating a sense of depth. The phrase "**depth of field**" can be used in a prompt to create focus on the subject in the foreground and blur in the background – a technique commonly used in portrait photography.



## Examples of Color Variations

**Prompt:** a mountainous cityscape with futuristic towers, high contrast, [ colors ]

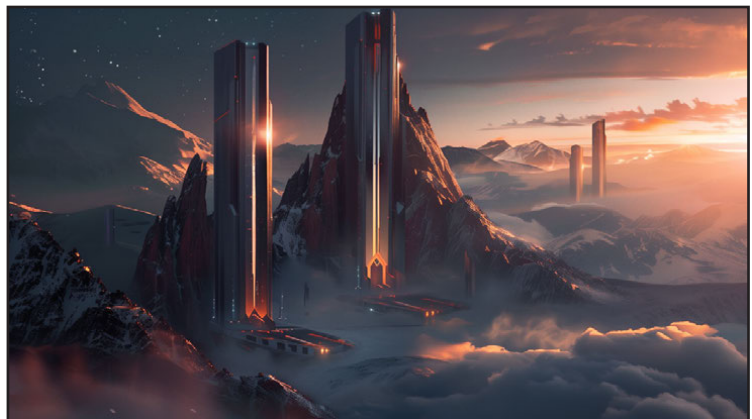
**“Complimentary”**



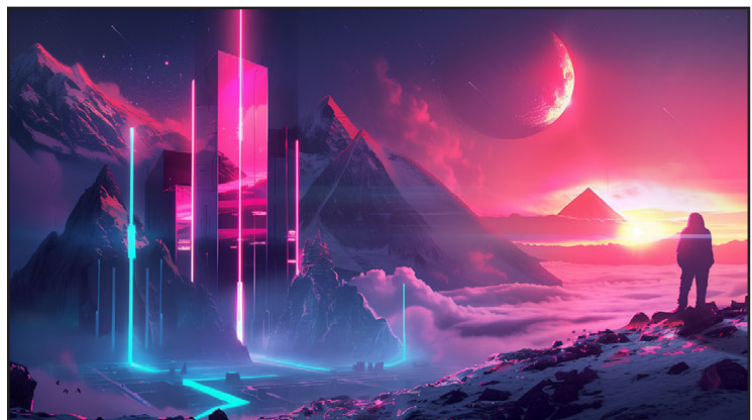
**“Sepia”**



**“Soft, Muted”**



**“Ultraviolet”**



## Examples of Light Variations

Prompt: a modern office desk, [ lighting ]



**“Rim Lighting”**



**“Neon Spotlight”**



**“Incandescent Lighting”**



**“Soft Sunbeams”**



**“Glowing Nightlight”**



**“Backlit Walls”**

## Using Physical Materials In Image Prompts

Try adding “made of [material]” to your prompt to dramatically change the result.

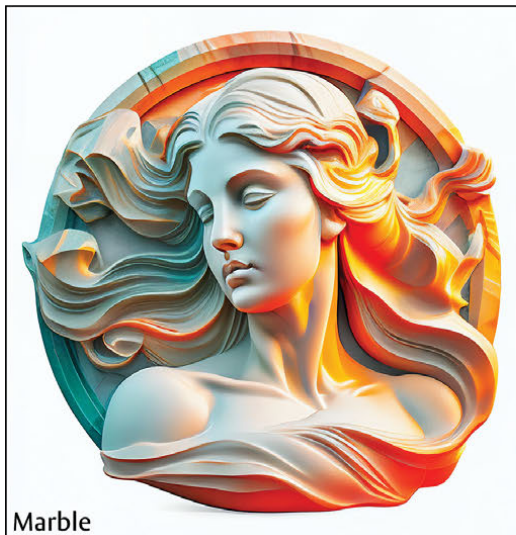
**Prompt:** circular logo design of a goddess made of fire, white background, vibrant color



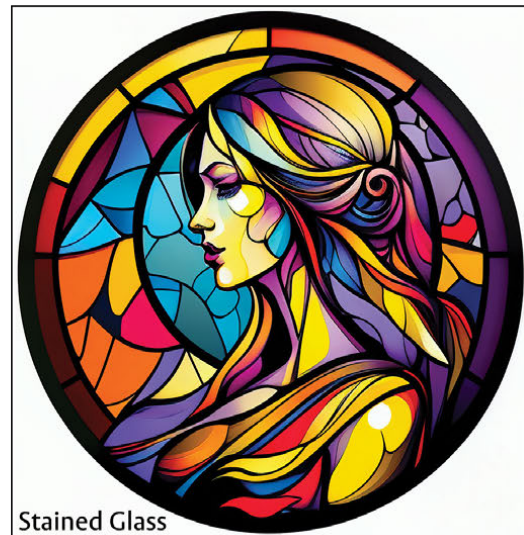
Fire



Water



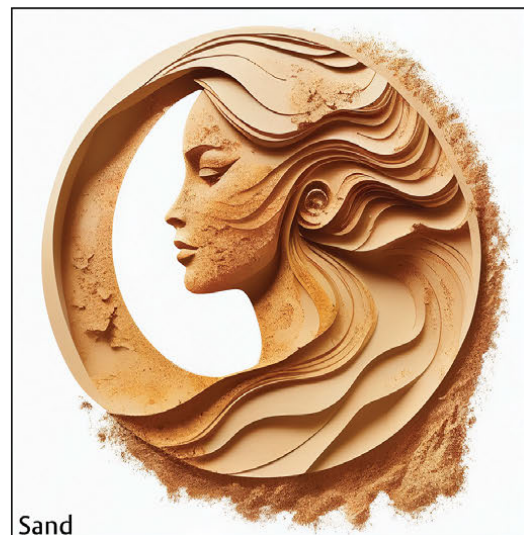
Marble



Stained Glass



Gold



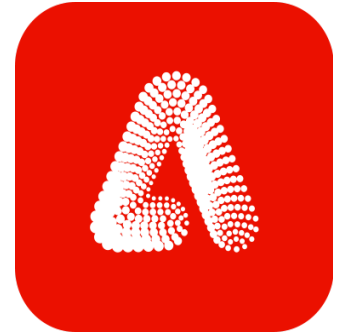
Sand

# Getting Started With Adobe Creative Cloud

If you have access to Adobe Creative Cloud, you may be able to use **Firefly** to generate and modify AI images.

Like most Gen AI applications, Firefly includes a monthly “credit” allowance that is spent each time you generate new images.

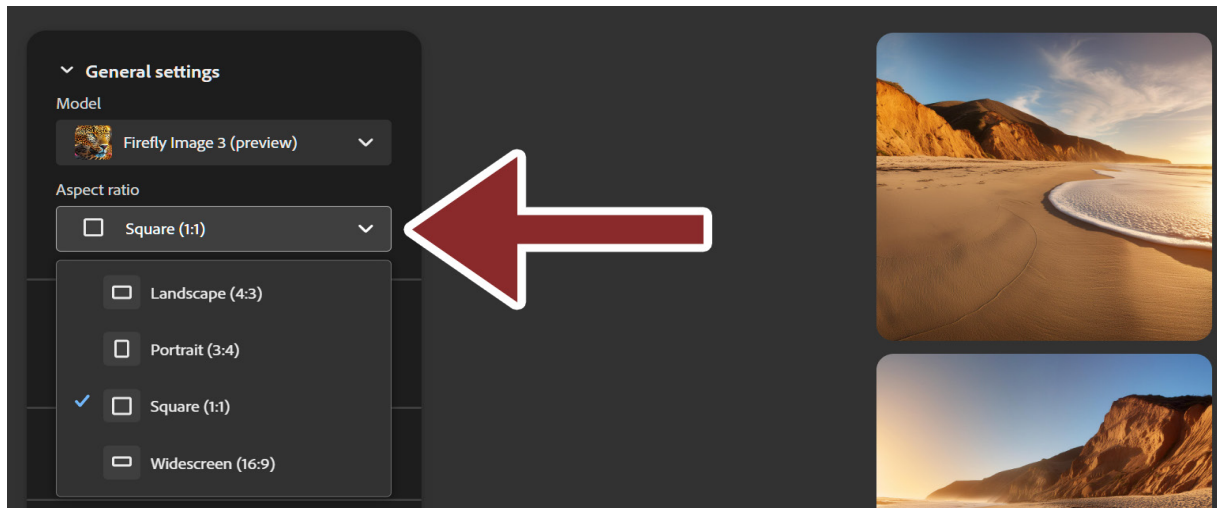
Illustrator, Photoshop, and Premiere Pro also have “generative fill” features for modifying and creating content on demand, which use credits from the same monthly subscription balance.



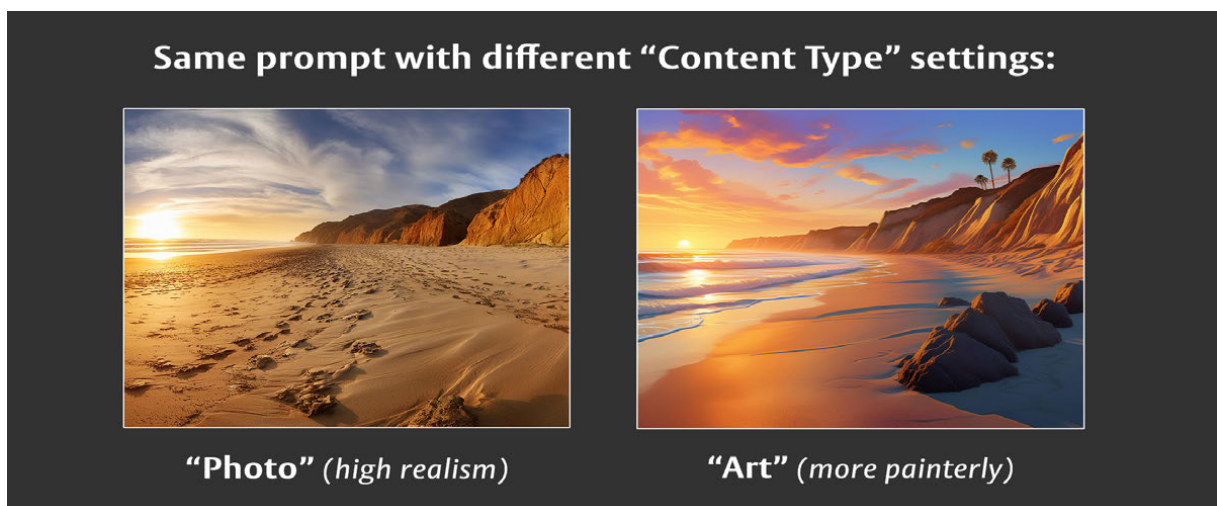
## Interface Basics In Adobe Firefly

To access Firefly, browse to: <https://firefly.adobe.com>

If you need images with an aspect ratio other than 1:1 (Square), change the **Aspect Ratio** setting before you spend credits on generations.



Another setting to check before you begin generating is “**Content Type**”, which currently allows you to select either “Photo” or “Art”. There will likely be more options in the future:

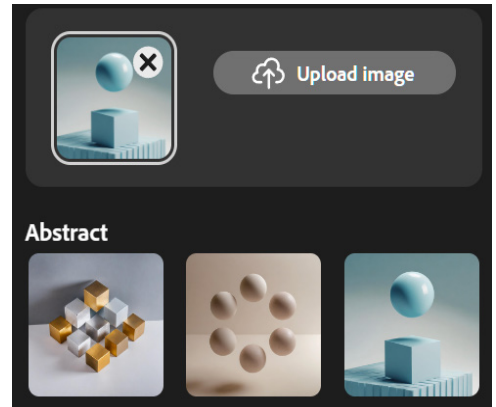


## Structure References in Adobe Firefly

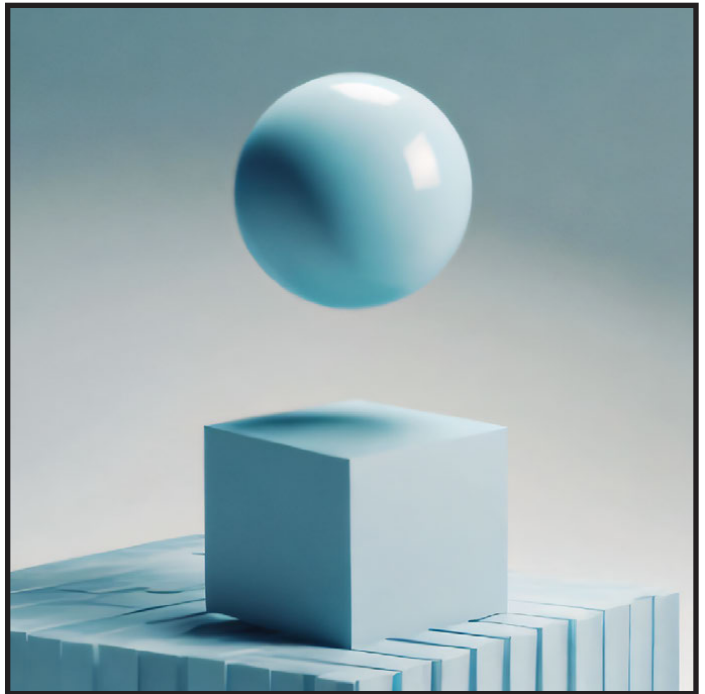
A new feature in Firefly is the option to use a “**Structure Reference**” to create images in concert with your prompt.

You can choose references provided by Adobe or upload one of your own.

“Structure” is more accurately described as the overall composition and arrangement of objects within the image.



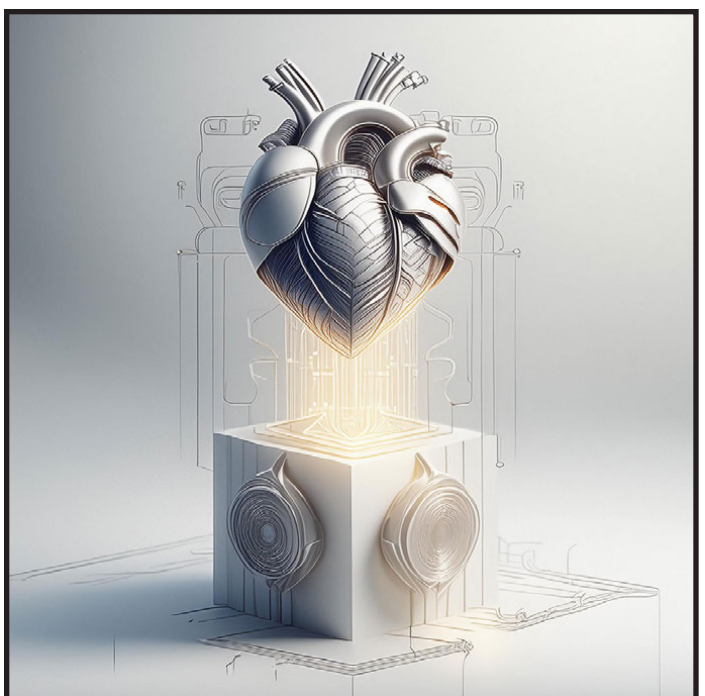
### Example Reference Image for “Structure”:



#### Prompt:

high tech design of a futuristic heart, simple technical schematic on white paper, high contrast, leonardo da vinci style

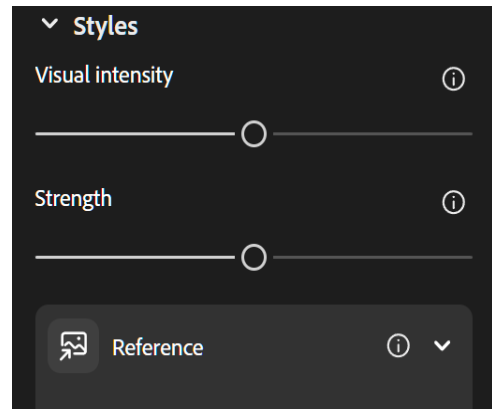
### Resulting Image:



## Style References in Adobe Firefly

Another powerful method of enhancing your prompt is to use a **Style Reference**. Like the “Structure” option, you can choose references provided by Adobe or upload a custom image of your own, as well as adjust Intensity and Strength.

“Style” can be thought of in many ways: artistic medium, light, color, render method, era, famous artists, and more. It can even relate to a specific camera lens or movie.



### Example Reference Image for “Style”:



#### Prompt:

high tech design of a futuristic heart, simple technical schematic on white paper, high contrast, leonardo da vinci style

### Resulting Image:



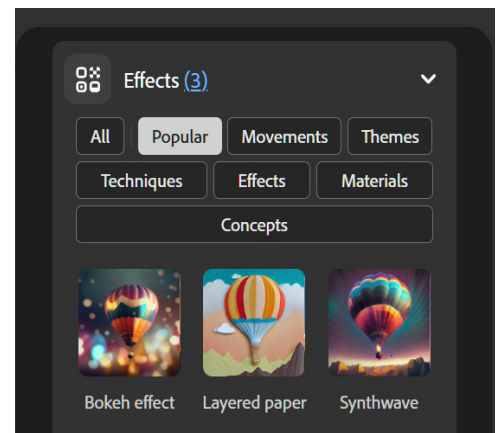
## Effects Options in Adobe Firefly

In addition to Structure and Style references, you can also select from a wide array of optional **Effects**.

You can run your prompt with no effects at all or choose a combination of as many as you like.

Much like “Style”, “Effects” can be thought of in many ways: physical material, concepts, artistic medium, drawing technique, time period, theme, render method, and so on.

Consider the examples below that use the same prompt with a different “Effect” selected.



**Prompt:** 2D design of a mountain range with a frozen lake and moon in the sky



“Layered Paper”



“Steampunk”



“Synthwave”



“Wood Carving”

# Generative Expand & Fill – Adobe Creative Cloud

You might generate a nearly perfect image for a project, but the composition is wrong or there are unwanted details. Don't despair! **Generative Expand** helps you adjust aspect ratios, negative space, or overall dimensions – while **Generative Fill** is an easy way to add or subtract objects.

## Adobe Firefly Interface For “Generative Expand”

1) Unedited AI image.



2) Canvas expanded to the left.



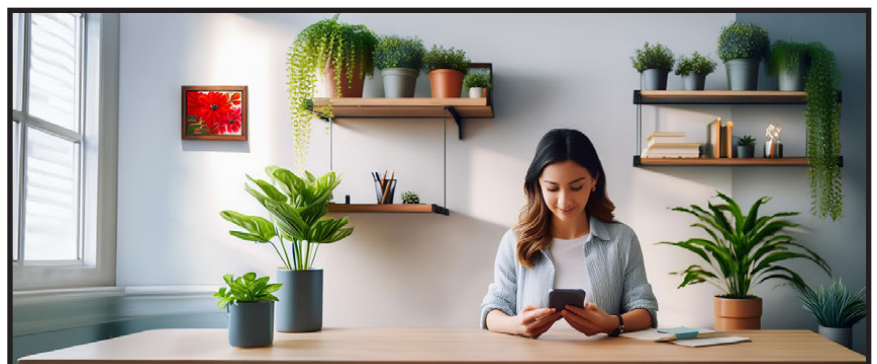
3) Expansion area filled in.



## “Generative Fill” Example

Painting of flowers added on the wall; laptop deleted.

Done in Photoshop.



## Adobe Firefly Image Showcase

1) **Prompt:** macro photo centered on a red metal lotus flower floating on water, saturated colors, morning light, god rays, depth of field —————>



Above left: the original 4:3 aspect ratio modified with Firefly's "Generative Expand"

2) **Prompt:** "future technology shield", plus the keywords listed under each image



"watercolor", "happy vibrant colors", "bright warm lighting"



"Dark background", "saturated colors", "dark lighting"



"grey background", "muted tones", "rim lighting"

3) **Prompt:** "superheroes" in various render styles



"vector cartoon", "ruby cape"



"3D render", "sapphire cape"



"charcoal sketch", "sunbeams"

## Automation & Prompting In Copilot



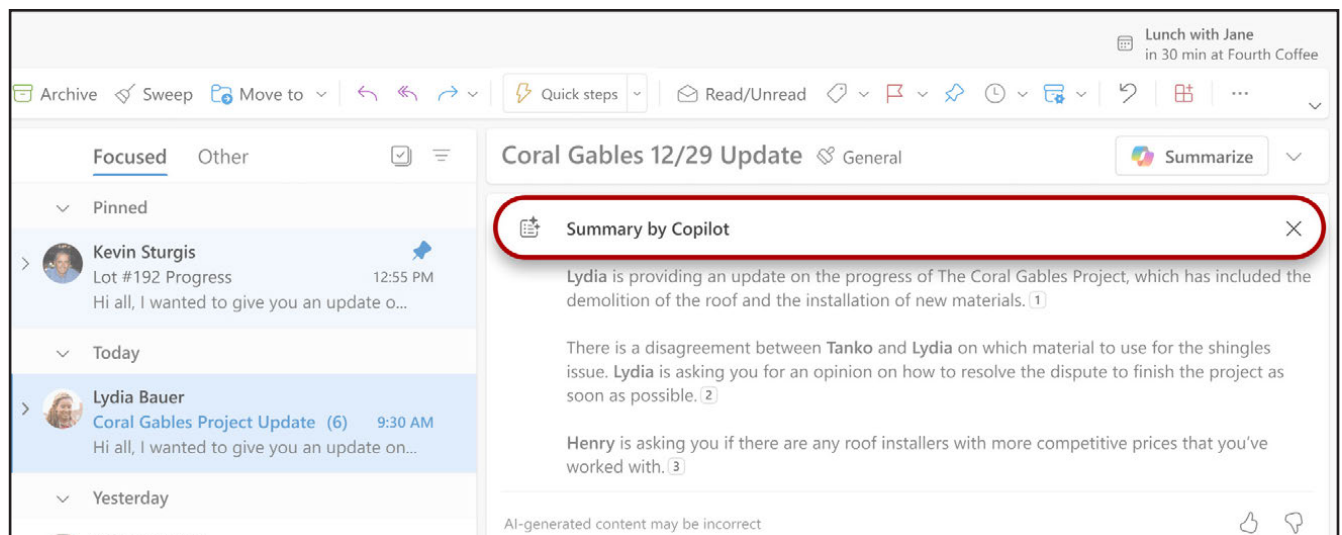
Microsoft's **Copilot Lab** is an online resource for learning Copilot basics and exploring use cases that may be relevant to you.

To access Copilot Lab, head to: [copilot.cloud.microsoft](https://copilot.cloud.microsoft)

### Automatic Suggestions - No Prompt Necessary

Many of your interactions with Copilot will begin with automatic suggestions that appear on screen, so writing a prompt may not be necessary to generate useful data.

However, keep in mind the results may still be prone to errors or omissions.



Clicking the “**Summary by Copilot**” button as seen in Outlook is convenient and may give you a quick summary, but it has been shown to leave out key points as well. Its accuracy is sure to improve in the future – just don't rely on it for critical information.

### Basic Text Prompts - Get Answers Quickly

You can ask Copilot questions using plain language, in the same conversational way you'd run a Google search or enter prompts with Chat GPT.

#### Example Prompts:


- Who are the global leaders in heart valve technology?
- What are the next 3 meetings on my schedule?
- Create me a summary of emails from May 2024 with the keyword “podcast”
- Do I have any pending meeting invites to respond to?

**Note:** if asking for information that comes from your email inbox or calendar, you'll need to ask those questions while in Copilot for Outlook or Teams.


## Using Copilot To Brainstorm Ideas

When your creative fire needs stoking, Copilot can be a great tool for sparking fresh ideas. You may find it useful when drafting a team email, designing Powerpoint presentations, or exploring themes for an upcoming project.

Consider the following example:

 **You**

suggest theme names for a heart-centered presentation

 **Copilot**

Certainly! Here are some theme names for a heart-centered presentation:

1. **“Cardiovascular Health”**: Explore topics related to heart health, prevention, and treatment.
2. **“Heartbeat Harmony”**: Emphasize the rhythm and vitality of a healthy heart.
3. **“Healing Hearts”**: Focus on recovery, compassion, and support for heart patients.

Even if you don’t use a specific suggestion, Copilot often provides a starting point that may trigger your next golden idea.

## Create PowerPoint Slides From A Prompt

Copilot for PowerPoint can create and populate new slides from scratch based on your prompts. In most cases the slides will require manual refinement but are still useful for brainstorming.

**Prompt:** add a slide about the benefits of meditation, include a photo of a person meditating



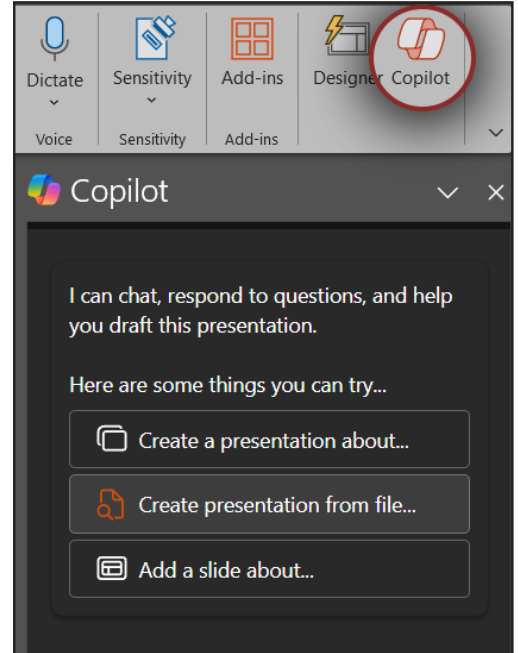
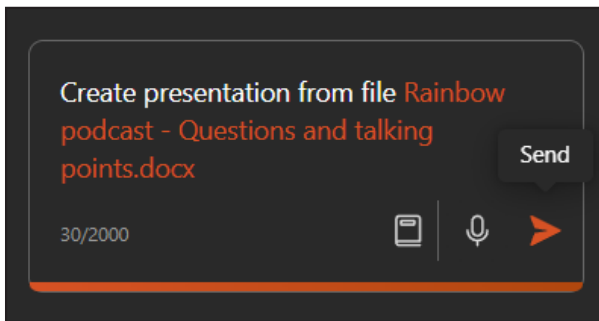
# Create PowerPoint Presentations From A File

You can also use Copilot to construct new PowerPoint presentations directly from a Word document, text file, or even complex PDFs.

When Copilot generates your presentation, it will include images you embedded in the selected file.

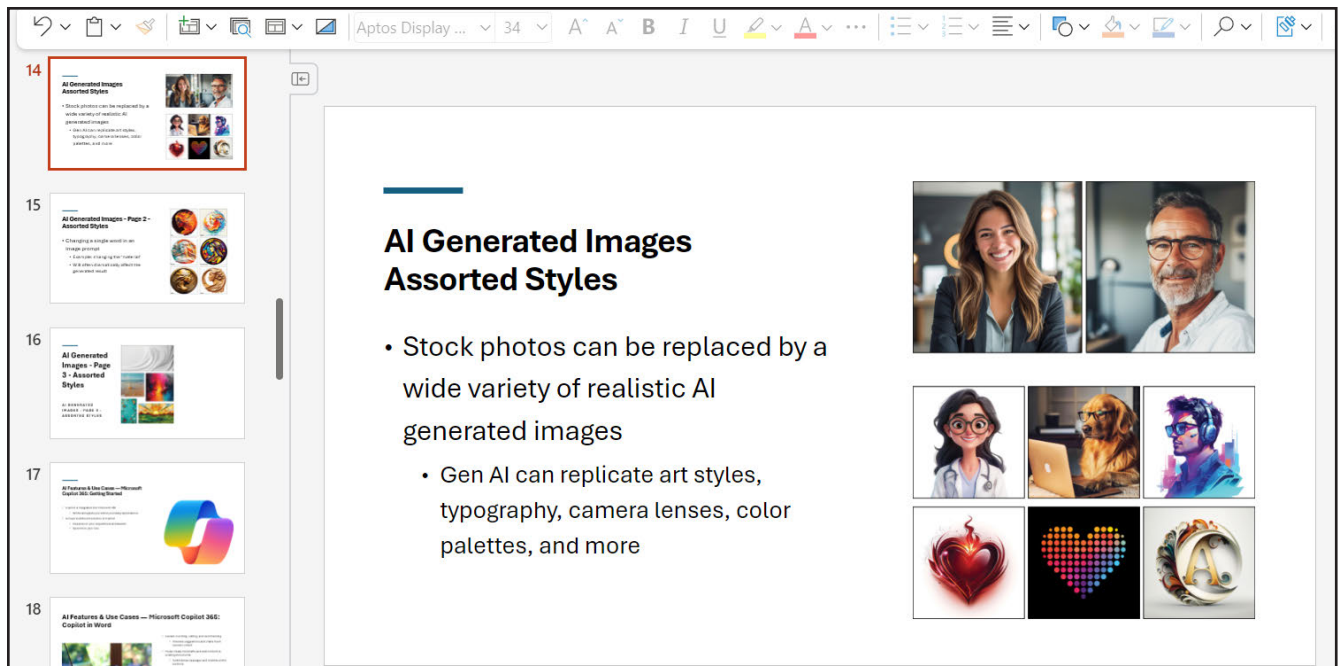
With any PowerPoint presentation open, **click the Copilot button** at the top right of the menu bar and you'll see the options available for creating new content.

Simply select any compatible file on your local drive or network, then click the **“Send”** button as shown below:



**Note:** colors and menu elements may look different depending on your system settings.

# Example Presentation Created From A PDF



Copilot quickly transformed the PDF into a fully populated presentation, automatically arranging images in each slide. While the design may need fine tuning, this process saved a lot of time.

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## Additional Links & Resources

[Microsoft Copilot Lab](#) - Tips for getting started, prompts, use cases.

[Copilot Prompts To Try](#)

[Copilot For Microsoft 365](#)

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[Adobe Firefly Homepage](#) - Start generating images now.

[Adobe Firefly FAQ](#)

[Adobe Firefly Community Gallery](#)

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[Midjourney AI Community Showcase](#) - Images for inspiration and prompt ideas.