CAPABILITY 01 / 15 MINUTES

The useful task brief

Turn a vague request into work you can check.

Write a task that helps a colleague or an AI tool understand who needs the result, why it matters and what to deliver. Finish with a clear way to decide whether the work is acceptable.

1

Name the decision

Who will use the result? What decision or next action should become easier? A summary is a format; identifying the cases that need intervention is a purpose.

2

Define the boundary

Specify the available inputs, the period covered and what to do with missing information. Keep suggestions based on the material separate from commitments that have already been approved.

3

Describe what done means

Go beyond length and tone. Define required fields, source references and the checks that must happen before the result is passed on.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Monday's management decision

Illustrative example. The original request is: “Summarise the projects.” The status table contains project IDs, due dates, owners and blockers. It contains no cost data.

Prepare a decision list for the operations lead's Monday review, using only the status table. Include project ID, blocker, source row, suggested next step and known owner. Mark missing owners; do not estimate cost variance. Suggestions are not approved actions. Before handing over, match every project ID to the source.

YOUR OWN TASK

Make your next move.

Choose one real situation. Fill in the four fields, then check your decision.

1 User and decision

Who will use the result, when and for which decision?

2 Task and inputs

What single job should be done? Which data, files and reporting period may be used?

3 Required output

Which format, mandatory fields and source references are needed? Show one good example row.

4 Acceptance and limits

What gets checked, who accepts the work, and what happens when data is missing or contradictory?

YOU ARE READY WHEN…

- ☐ The recipient can explain what the result will help them do.
- ☐ An important claim can be traced to an allowed source.
- ☐ The acceptance condition is more specific than “make it good”.

HAND IT TO A COLLEAGUE

Ask them to explain what they would produce and what they would still need to ask. Add any recurring question to the brief, then try it on one task.