

THE DON'T GUESS KIT

Five prompt lines from Anthropic's own docs to cut down AI guessing, a worked example, and a check-before-you-use checklist

AI can sound sure and still be wrong. Anthropic documents a short list of ways to cut down the guessing. This kit puts five of them in plain words, with the exact wording from Anthropic's pages (checked October 10, 2026). They are written for Claude; other AI tools may behave differently, so test them. Educational only. Not legal advice. Not affiliated with Anthropic. These lines reduce guessing, they do not remove it, and no results are promised: you still check what matters.

THE 5 LINES (WHAT ANTHROPIC'S PAGE SAYS)

- Line 1. Let it say "I don't know." Anthropic: "Explicitly give Claude permission to admit uncertainty. This simple technique can drastically reduce false information."
- Line 2. Use only the text you paste. Anthropic: "Explicitly instruct Claude to only use information from provided documents and not its general knowledge."
- Line 3. For long documents, quotes first. Anthropic: "For tasks involving long documents (>20k tokens), ask Claude to extract word-for-word quotes first before performing its task. This grounds its responses in the actual text, reducing hallucinations."
- Line 4. A supporting quote for every claim. Anthropic: "You can also have Claude verify each claim by finding a supporting quote after it generates a response. If it can't find a quote, it must retract the claim."
- Line 5. Run the same prompt a few times and compare. Anthropic: "Run Claude through the same prompt multiple times and compare the outputs. Inconsistencies across outputs could indicate hallucinations."

THE CATCH, IN ANTHROPIC'S OWN WORDS

Claude Platform Docs, Reduce hallucinations (closing note)

"Remember, while these techniques significantly reduce hallucinations, they don't eliminate them entirely. Always validate critical information, especially for high-stakes decisions."

Claude Help Center, article 8525154

"Users should not rely on Claude as a singular source of truth and should carefully scrutinize any high-stakes advice given by Claude."

MY HABIT: I check every number against the official page before I use it in a video. These five lines make that checking faster; they never replace it.

THE FIVE PROMPTS (COPY AND PASTE)

My wording of Anthropic's techniques. Paste the text you want answers from where it says [PASTE YOUR TEXT]. Fill the [BRACKETS].

LINE 1 – Let it say "I don't know"

If you are not sure about any part of this, or the text is missing something you need, say "I don't have enough information to confidently assess this." Do not guess.

LINE 2 – Use only my text

Use only the text between the <text> tags below. Do not use your general knowledge. If the answer is not in the text, say so. <text> [PASTE YOUR TEXT] </text>

LINE 3 – Quotes first (for long documents)

Before you answer, copy out the exact sentences from my text that matter for this question, word for word, and number them. If there are none, write "No relevant quotes found." Then answer using only those quotes, and refer to them by number.

LINE 4 – A supporting quote for every claim (send this after it answers)

Now review each claim in your answer. For each claim, find a direct quote from my text that supports it. If you can't find a supporting quote for a claim, remove that claim and mark where it was removed with empty [] brackets.

LINE 5 – Run it a few times and compare

Ask the same question three times and put the answers side by side. Where they disagree, treat that part as a guess and check it against the source. MY NOTE: answers that match do not prove an answer is right.

THE ORDER I USE

- Message 1: [PASTE YOUR TEXT] plus Lines 1, 2 and 3, then your question.
- Message 2: Line 4, to make it back every claim with a quote or drop it.
- Anything that matters (a price, a deadline, a rule): Line 5, then the checklist on the next page.
- Quote check: use Ctrl+F on your own text to find each quote. A quote that is not there is a guess.

WORKED EXAMPLE (INVENTED PRICE LIST)

EXAMPLE ONLY. The business and the prices below are invented, and the "guess" is an illustration, not a recorded output.

The text I pasted (EXAMPLE)

Sunrise Lawn Care (invented). Mowing, up to a quarter acre: \$45. Edging: \$15. Leaf cleanup: \$90.

Question: "How much is hedge trimming?" Without the lines (EXAMPLE)

A guess can look like this: "Hedge trimming at Sunrise Lawn Care is \$35 per visit." That price is not in the text. It sounds sure, and it is made up.

Same question with Lines 1 and 2 (EXAMPLE)

I don't have enough information to confidently assess this. The text lists mowing, edging and leaf cleanup, but not hedge trimming.

Question: "What do mowing and edging cost together?" with Lines 3 and 4 (EXAMPLE)

Quote 1: "Mowing, up to a quarter acre: \$45." Quote 2: "Edging: \$15." Answer: \$60 for both, from quotes 1 and 2. Note: the text does not say whether the two are priced as one visit; confirm with the business.

THE CHECKLIST: CHECK BEFORE YOU USE IT

What	Check it against	How
Numbers	the official page of the seller	the number AND its conditions
Dates	the official page or notice	the year, and any cut-off time
Names and titles	the company's own page	spelling, role, still current
Quotes	the original page	find the exact words (Ctrl+F)
Laws and rules	the official rule text	your state/county; ask a pro
Links and sources	open every one	does it say what was claimed

- Anything about money, health, safety or legal rules: validate it. Anthropic: "Always validate critical information, especially for high-stakes decisions."
- Educational only, not legal advice. Rules change; read the live page and check your own state or county rules.

WHEN TO TURN ON RESEARCH (EASY-TO-CHECK CITATIONS)

Claude Help Center, Use research on Claude

"Research is available for users with paid Claude plans (Pro, Max, Team, or Enterprise) using Claude on the web, Claude Desktop, or Claude Mobile." "With research, Claude delivers thorough answers in minutes, complete with easy-to-check citations so you can trust Claude's findings." "Important: You must have web search turned on for research to function."

Claude Help Center, article 8525154

"When working with web search results, users should review Claude's cited sources. Original websites may contain important context or details not included in Claude's synthesis."

MY NOTE: "easy-to-check" means you check. Click through every source, find the sentence that supports the claim, and keep the page address with the number.

MY CHECK LOG (ONE LINE PER CLAIM)

Claim (number, date, name, rule)	Where I checked	Matches? Y / N	Fixed it?

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

- Claude Platform Docs: Reduce hallucinations
- Claude Help Center: Claude is providing incorrect or misleading responses. What's going on?
- Claude Help Center: Use research on Claude

Checked October 10, 2026. Pages change; read the live page before you rely on a statement. Written for Claude: other AI tools may behave differently. Educational only. Not legal advice. Not affiliated with Anthropic. No results or income are promised, and none are shown.

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