



THE VINYL ACADEMY

User Guide & Standard Operating Procedure

All Training for Today's Professional

Everything you need to use the site — at every level.

No experience required.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Start Here · Your First 5 Minutes · The GCES Method
Tracks & Scenarios · Your Personal Tools · FAQ · Cheat Sheet

Version 1.0

How to Use This Guide

This guide works for **every level of user**. You don't have to read it cover to cover — jump to what you need:

Find your starting point

Brand new to AI? Start with **Part 1: Start Here** and **Part 2: Your First 5 Minutes**. That's all you need for day one.

Ready to dig in? **Part 3: The GCES Method** and **Part 4: Tracks & Scenarios** show you how to get great results.

Want the power tools? **Part 5** covers My Path, Progress, the Workbench, Search, and the Tour Manager helper.

Just need a quick answer? Use the **Table of Contents**, the **FAQ**, or the one-page **Cheat Sheet** at the back.


Throughout, look for  **Roadie Tips** — quick, friendly pointers — and **callout boxes** that highlight the important stuff.

Table of Contents

Part 1 — Start Here (Read This First)

AI isn't here to replace you. It's here to be your roadie. A roadie carries the heavy gear, tunes the guitars, and sets up the stage — so you can do the part only you can do: play the show. That's exactly what AI does here. It handles the tedious busywork so you can focus on the work that actually needs your judgment.

There's **no coding, no tech degree, and no pressure**. If you can send a text message, you can do everything in this guide.

Will this take my job?

The straight answer

The people who get replaced aren't the ones who use AI — they're the ones who **don't learn it while everyone else does**. Learning this is how you stay in the band.


AI is genuinely bad at the things that make you valuable: judgment, knowing your customers, catching when something's off, and deciding what actually matters. It's only good at the tedious busywork you'd happily hand off anyway.

Use it for the grunt work. Keep doing the thinking.

The two tools you'll use

Everything here works with one of two AI assistants your company provides. You don't need both — use whichever you have.

Tool	Best at	Where you'll find it
Microsoft Copilot	Working inside your Microsoft files — Excel, Outlook, Teams, Word, PowerPoint	Built into your Microsoft 365 apps
Claude	Reasoning, analysis, writing, and working with text you paste in	A web page or app you open in your browser

 **Roadie Tip:** Each scenario on the site is labeled with the tool that fits it best, so you never have to guess.

Part 2 — Your First 5 Minutes

The goal here is one small, confidence-building win. That's it. Follow these three steps and you'll have used AI before your coffee gets cold.



Step by step

1. **Open your AI tool.** Open Claude or Microsoft Copilot — whichever your company gave you. It's just a box you type into, like texting a very fast assistant.
2. **Copy this starter prompt.** Don't overthink it. Paste it in and press Enter:

Act as my friendly assistant. In plain language, give me 3 quick ways AI could save me time in a typical workday. Keep it short and practical — no jargon.

3. **Read what comes back.** Congratulations — you just used AI. It didn't bite! Keep what's useful, ignore what's not.

That's the whole job

Everything else on the site is a variation of that same move: **say what you want, in plain words, and let it help.** When you're ready for more, pick the track that matches your job, or open [My Tour](#) → [My Path](#) for a guided setlist.

Part 3 — The GCES Method (The One Skill That Matters)

A one-line prompt gets a vague answer. **GCES** is a simple four-part recipe that gets you exactly what you need. It's the backbone of the entire Academy.



What each part means



Part	What it answers	Example
Goal	What do you want it to do?	<i>"Summarize these overdue invoices"</i>
Context	What's your situation?	<i>"I'm in AP, prepping for a CFO review"</i>
Expectations	What format / tone / length?	<i>"As a table; flag anything 90+ days late"</i>
Source	What data should it use?	<i>"The emails in my inbox tagged AP"</i>

See the difference

You don't have to include all four every time — but the more you add, the better the result. Here's the same request, weak versus GCES:

Weak Prompt vs. GCES Prompt

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Weak — you'll get a vague answer</p> <p><i>"Write a payment reminder."</i></p> <p>No context, no format, no details — so the AI guesses, and you spend time fixing a generic result.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> GCES — you'll get exactly what you need</p> <p>Goal: Write a payment reminder email</p> <p>Context: Supplier 45 days overdue, \$24,800 invoice</p> <p>Expectations: Professional, firm but polite; include invoice number</p> <p>Source: My sent-email history for tone</p>
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 **Roadie Tip:** Stuck building a GCES prompt? Open the **Tour Manager** helper (the  button, bottom-right) and choose “Help me with a prompt.” It walks you through it.


Part 4 — Tracks & Scenarios

Tracks are departments — Accounting, Sales, Inventory, HR, and 16 more. Each one is full of **scenarios**: real, practical examples of using AI for that kind of work, each with a ready-to-copy prompt.

How to use a track

1. **Pick your track.** On the site, go to **Tracks** (“Choose Your Track”) and tap the department closest to your job. They’re listed alphabetically.
2. **Choose a level.** Each track has three levels — start wherever feels comfortable:


Level	What to expect
Beginner	Quick wins. Copy-and-paste prompts that work right away.
Intermediate	Multi-step tasks — analysis, comparisons, longer documents.
Proficient	Advanced workflows and building reusable AI assistants (agents).

3. **Open a scenario and copy the prompt.** Tap a scenario to reveal its prompt, then tap  **Copy Prompt**. Paste it into Claude or Copilot and swap in your own details (anything in [brackets]).
4. **Mark it complete.** Tap  **Mark Complete** to earn XP and track your progress (more on that in Part 5).

Two kinds of prompts in every track

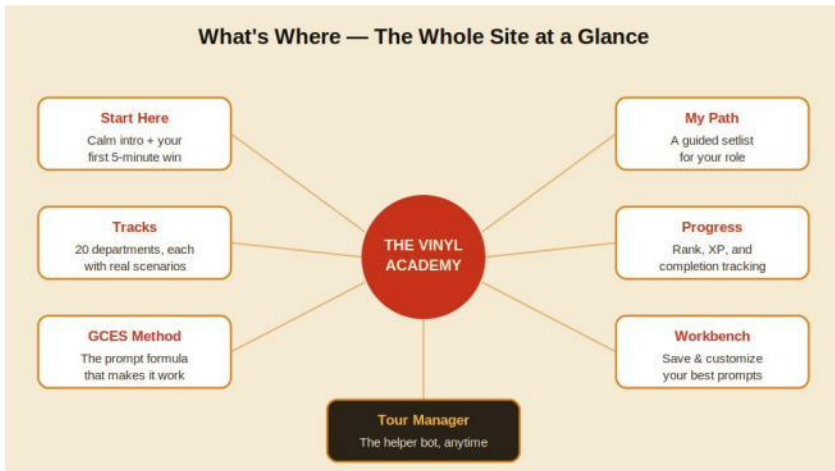
Scenarios — guided examples with explanation, the main way to learn.

Prompt Library — a tab next to Scenarios with quick, copy-ready prompts for that department once you know what you need.

 **Roadie Tip:** There’s also a **Prompt Vault** of all-purpose prompts that works for any role — great for everyday tasks outside your department.

Part 5 — Your Personal Tools

These four features make the Academy **yours**. On the site they live in the amp-shaped control panel in the top bar — the **My Tour** menu holds the first three, and **Search** sits beside it.



My Path — your guided setlist

Not sure where to start? **My Path** turns 20 tracks into one clear program. Open **My Tour** → **My Path**, pick the role closest to your job (Finance, Sales, Logistics, and so on), and you get an ordered checklist of scenarios to work through. Each step links straight to the scenario, and checks itself off as you finish. Change your role anytime.

Progress — your rank & achievements

Open **My Tour** → **Progress** to see how far you've come: your total XP, scenarios completed, a bar for every track, and achievements you've unlocked. As you complete scenarios you climb the ranks:

Rank	Reached at
Roadie	0 XP — everyone starts here
Opening Act	100 XP
Club Circuit	300 XP
Gold Record	700 XP
Headliner	1,500 XP

👉 **Roadie Tip:** Finish every scenario in a track and a 🏆 **Certificate of Completion** appears in your Progress dashboard — printable, with your name on it. Great for your records or your manager.

The Workbench — save your best prompts

When a prompt works well, save it. On any scenario prompt, tap ★ **Save to Workbench**. Then open **My Tour** → **Workbench** anytime to:


- **Copy** a saved prompt with one tap.
- **Edit** it — customize the wording for your own work (it saves your version and marks it “edited”).
- **Reset** back to the original, or **Remove** it.

This turns the site from something you read once into a toolkit you come back to every day.

Search — find anything instantly

Tap **Search** in the control panel (or press **Ctrl/Cmd + K** on a laptop) to jump to any scenario, agent, prompt, or video. It even shows suggestions before you type.

The Tour Manager — your in-app helper

The  **Tour Manager** button (bottom-right corner) is your guide. Tap it anytime to ask how something works, take a guided tour, or get help shaping a prompt — all without leaving the site. It fades out of the way while you scroll and comes back when you stop.

Themes & the volume knob

Prefer a different look? The **Theme** button offers four palettes (Rock & Roll, Studio Modern, Midnight, Sunrise). And yes — the amp's volume knob is turned up to 10, just for fun. 🙌

Part 6 — Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I need to install anything?

A: No. The Academy runs in your web browser, and the AI tools (Claude, Copilot) are either web pages or already built into your Microsoft apps.

Q: Is my work saved?

A: Your progress, saved prompts, and chosen role are stored privately in your own browser. Using the same browser on the same device, they'll be there next time.

Q: Will AI give me wrong answers?

A: Sometimes — that's why you stay in charge. Always read what comes back and apply your own judgment. AI is a fast assistant, not the final word.

Q: Is it safe to paste company information?

A: Follow your company's data policy. When in doubt, ask your manager or IT which tool is approved for sensitive information, and avoid pasting anything confidential into tools that aren't approved.

Q: What if I get stuck?

A: Tap the 🎧 Tour Manager (bottom-right) and ask. It can explain features, run a tour, or help you build a prompt.

Q: Do I have to earn XP or finish tracks?

A: No. XP and ranks are just there to make progress visible and a little fun. There's no test and no deadline — go at your own pace.

Q: I'm still nervous. Where do I start?

A: Part 2 — Your First 5 Minutes. One prompt, one copy-paste, one quick win. That's genuinely all you need on day one.

Quick Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. It's the whole site in one glance.

The 3-step move

1. Pick one boring, repetitive task.
2. Copy a ready-made prompt from your track.
3. Paste it into Claude or Copilot, swap in your details, read the result.

The GCES recipe

- Goal — what you want
- Context — your situation
- Expectations — format, tone, length
- Source — the data to use

Where things live

I want to...	Go to
Get a gentle intro & first win	Start Here
Learn AI for my department	Tracks
Follow a guided plan for my role	My Tour → My Path
See my rank, XP & certificates	My Tour → Progress
Save & reuse my best prompts	My Tour → Workbench
Find something fast	Search (or Ctrl/Cmd + K)
Ask for help anytime	 Tour Manager, bottom-right

Remember

AI is your roadie, not your replacement. Hand it the busywork, keep the thinking. Go at your own pace — it'll all be here whenever you're ready. 🎸

The Vinyl Academy

Site and guide created by The Vinyl Academy — AI Training for Today's Professional.