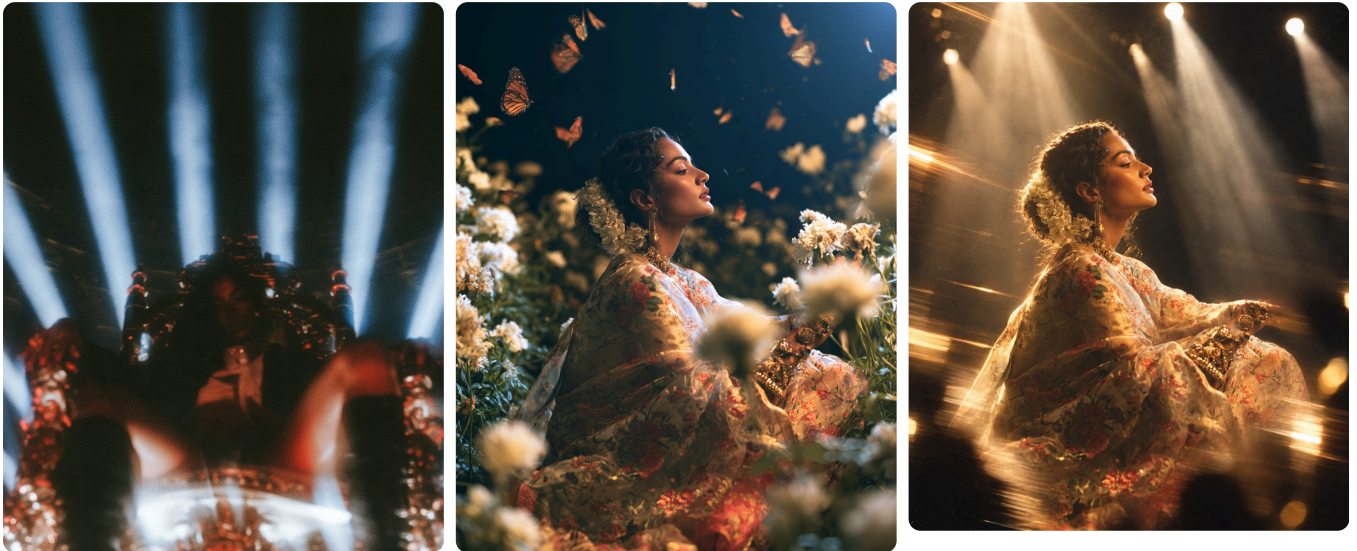


JSON prompting for your photos: the free tutorial

How the prompts in my Prompt Pack work, with one real prompt from the Gold set to try on your own photo. @digitallydiffused



Left: the Gold look, made in Midjourney. Middle: an unstyled photo. Right: what ChatGPT made from it with the prompt in this tutorial, first attempt.

What JSON prompting is, in one paragraph

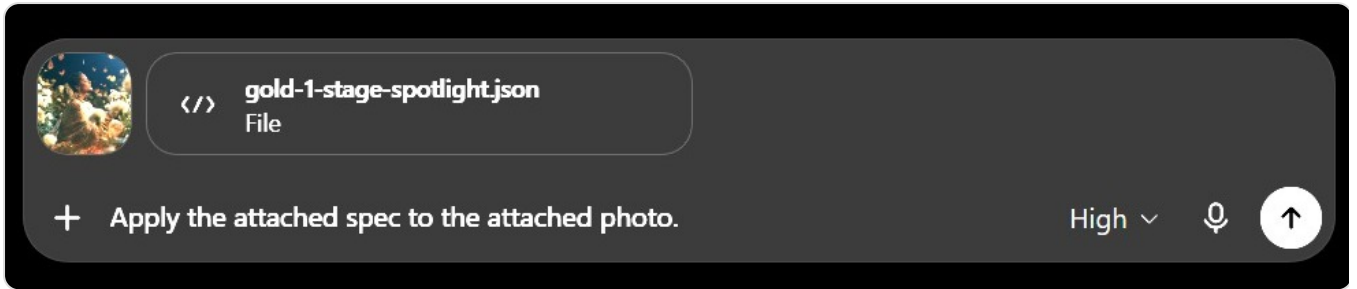
Instead of one long sentence, the prompt is a short list of labelled parts: what to keep, what material or camera to use, how it's lit, which colours, what to avoid, how strong. Image models read the labels as separate instructions and follow each one more reliably than they follow a paragraph. It also makes the prompt editable: change one line, keep the rest.

What you got

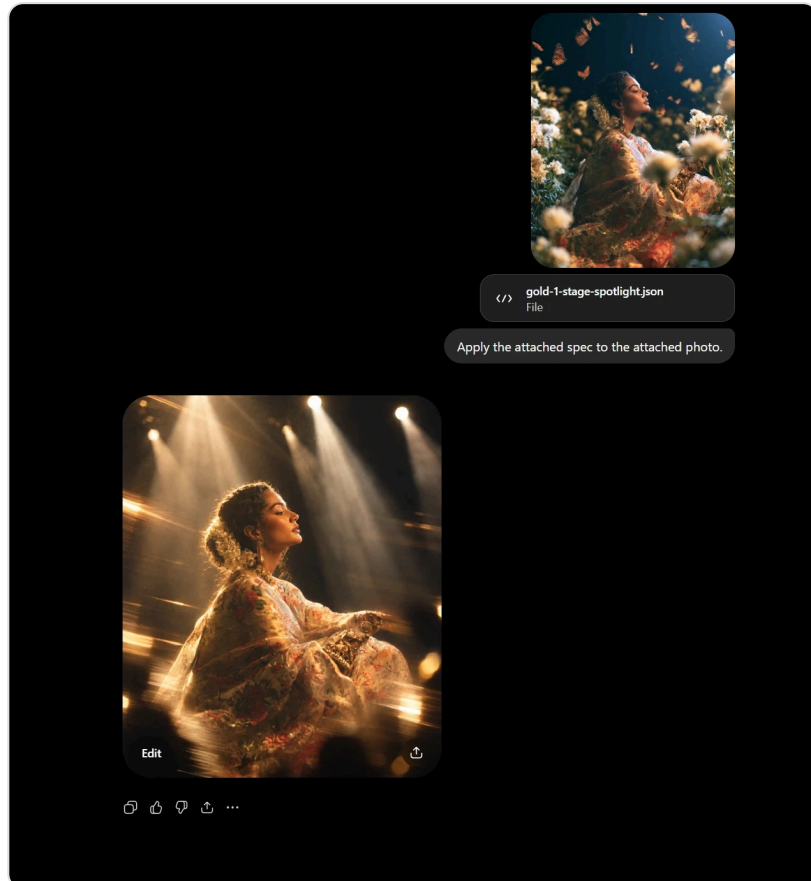
- `gold-01-stage-spotlight.json`: the prompt, attach it. The `.txt` is the same text for pasting into other tools.
- This PDF.

Step 1: run it as-is (two minutes)

1. Open ChatGPT (any plan with image generation). Start a new chat.
2. Tap + and attach **two things**: a photo of yourself, and the `.json` file.
3. Type this one line and send: `Apply the attached spec to the attached photo.`
4. Wait one to two minutes. Tap the image, then the download arrow.



The composer just before pressing send.



The whole exchange. Nothing else was typed.

Other tools (Nano Banana, Midjourney, Grok): open the .txt, copy, paste it as the prompt with your photo attached as the reference.

Step 2: read the prompt

This is the exact file you have. Every key is a separate instruction.

```
{
  "instruction": "Apply this retexture spec to the attached photo and generate the image. Keep everything
listed under preserve exactly as in the photo; change only what the other keys describe. Output an image, not a
description.",
  "name": "Stage spotlight",
  "task": "re-light and re-photograph the uploaded image",
  "preserve": [
    "pose",
    "face identity",
    "clothing"
  ],
  "camera": "35mm film, slow shutter, handheld",
  "lighting": "white stage spotlights from above and behind, gold bounce on the subject, black everywhere
else",
  "effects": [
    "light streaks from the spotlights",
    "bloom on the highlights",
    "grain",
    "motion smear on the edges"
  ],
  "palette": [
    "#d4a12a",
    "#ffe9b0",
    "#ffffff",
    "#000000"
  ],
  "background": "dark stage or hall, black with beams of light",
  "style": "concert photo, warm and dramatic",
  "intensity": 0.8,
  "avoid": [
    "flat even light",
    "daylight",
    "cool tones",
    "text"
  ]
}
```

Key	What it does	Try changing it to
instruction	Tells the tool what to do with the attached photo. Lets the file work on its own.	Leave it.
task	The verb: re-light, re-photograph, retexture. Decides how much of the photo changes.	"re-light the uploaded image" for a subtler result.
preserve	What must not change. Without it the style eats the face.	Add "hairstyle" or "glasses" if they drift.
camera	Film, shutter, handheld. Sets the texture of the whole image.	"85mm, sharp, tripod" for a clean look.
lighting	Where the light comes from and what colour. The biggest single lever.	"one candle flame close to the face, everything else black".

effects	Short list of things to add: streaks, bloom, grain.	Delete "grain" for a cleaner image; add "gold confetti falling".
palette	Hex colours. Models obey hex better than colour names.	Swap #d4a12a for #c0c0c0 and the gold turns silver.
background	Where you are.	"dark ballroom under a chandelier".
style	The one-line genre.	"1970s concert poster, printed, halftone".
intensity	0 to 1: how far from the photo. Start at the value given.	0.9 if the finish is weak, 0.6 if it overcooked.
avoid	Short list of concrete words instead of a long negative rant.	Add "text" or "extra hands" if they show up.

Step 3: edit one line, run it again

Open the .txt in any notes app, change one value, save, attach the file again with the same photo. That's the whole skill. Good first edits: the `lighting` line, one hex in `palette`, or `intensity`. Change one thing per run so you can see what did what.

Step 4: write your own

Copy this skeleton, fill the blanks, save as .json or .txt, attach it with a photo.

```
{
  "instruction": "Apply this retexture spec to the attached photo and generate the image. Keep everything listed under preserve exactly as in the photo; change only what the other keys describe. Output an image, not a description.",
  "name": "",
  "task": "re-light and re-photograph the uploaded image",
  "preserve": ["face identity", "pose", "clothing"],
  "camera": "",
  "lighting": "",
  "effects": ["", ""],
  "palette": ["#", "#", "#ffffff", "#000000"],
  "background": "",
  "style": "",
  "intensity": 0.8,
  "avoid": ["daylight", "flat even light", "text"]
}
```

Rules that hold up: one light source you can name, three or four hex colours at most, a background you could describe to a friend in five words, and an avoid list of things that actually went wrong last time.

Your input photo matters more than the prompt

These prompts keep your face, pose and clothing and change the light, material and setting. So whatever the photo is doing, the result does too. A flat, front-on, arms-down photo comes back as a flat, front-on, arms-down chrome statue.

Pick a photo with:

- One person, face clearly visible, no sunglasses, no hand over the mouth.
- A pose with intent: three-quarter turn, looking off to one side, weight on one leg, sitting on the floor, leaning on something, mid-step, a hand doing something (in the hair, holding a collar, resting on a knee).
- Even light, no harsh phone flash, no heavy filter.
- Some space around you. Tight crops leave the model nothing to build the scene from.

Avoid: passport-style straight-on shots, group photos, mirror selfies with the phone in frame, very dark or blurry photos, screenshots of screenshots.

No good photo? Make one first, then style it. Attach any clear photo of yourself and paste this:

Using the attached photo as a reference for this exact person's face, generate a photorealistic editorial fashion photo of them. Same face, same skin tone, same hair. Stylish outfit, dynamic pose: three-quarter turn, weight on one leg, one hand near the collar, looking slightly off camera. Full body or knees-up, 85mm lens, soft daylight, plain mid-grey background, no text.

Download the result, then start a new chat and run the prompt file on *that* image. If the face drifts in step one, reply "keep the face exactly as in the reference photo" and try again.

The bit that matters most: refine it

The first image is a starting point, not the result. Mine too. Look at it, pick **one** thing that's wrong, and reply in the same chat with one line. Then look again. Five or six replies is normal. A few that work for me:

- "Same image. Put the face half in shadow, one side lit. Keep the face exactly as in the photo."
- "Same image. Improve the lighting on the face: one key light from the upper left, a catchlight in the eyes."
- "Same subject, same look, but make the scene more dynamic: lower angle, slight tilt, something moving."
- "Same image. Drop the background two stops darker."
- "Go back to the previous version and change only [the thing]."

One change per reply. Keep the version you like, push the next thing. The Prompt Pack has 30 of these follow-ups sorted by what they fix.

If it doesn't work first time. Face changed: reply "keep the face exactly as in the photo, change only the light". It described the image instead of making it: reply "generate the image". No file attachment on your plan: open the .txt, select all, copy, paste it as the message with the photo attached. Weak result: run it again. Two or three tries is normal.

Want the other 161?

This prompt is one of 162 in the **Prompt Pack**: Chrome, Motion and Gold, 36 each, 18 crossovers, plain-text versions of every look on my Instagram, 30 refine follow-ups, one file per prompt plus a master file, and the full guide with three screenshot walkthroughs. Updates are free. **digitallydiffused.com** (₹499 with UPI in India, US\$7.99 elsewhere) or **ko-fi.com/digitallydiffused** (CA\$10).

Use your own photos or ones you have permission to use. Questions: DM @digitallydiffused on Instagram.