THE USEFUL TECH

MACOS 27 · GOLDEN GATE

The Siri Prompt Vault for Mac

62 phrasings that work, sorted by where you type them. Tested across seven weeks on the beta.

62	6	4
PROMPTS	SECTIONS	WAYS TO INVOKE

START HERE

Siri stopped being a button and became a text field. That changes what you should type into it.

The old Siri wanted commands. You learned a short list of phrasings that worked and you never strayed from them, because straying meant getting a web search you did not ask for.

The version in macOS 27 works the other way around. It handles vague, and it handles follow-ups, which means the useful skill now is knowing **where** to ask rather than exactly how. The same question gets a different quality of answer depending on whether you asked it in Spotlight, in a Finder right-click, or with something selected on screen.

That is how this vault is organised. Six sections, one per place you can reach Siri, with the phrasings that reliably work in each. Anything in square brackets is yours to fill in.

THE FOUR WAYS IN

`Cmd + Space`

Spotlight

Siri lives here now. Type or speak a full request instead of a filename.

`Two-finger click`

Ask Siri in Finder

Select files first. The Ask Siri field sits at the top of the context menu.

`Shift + Cmd + 6`

Anything on screen

Crosshairs, like a screenshot. Drag over what you want it to read.

`Shortcuts → New`

Describe an automation

Say what should happen in plain language. It builds the action chain.

01

Ask Siri about your files

Select files in Finder, two-finger click, then use the Ask Siri field at the top of the context menu.

> **NOTE**
> Siri reads inside the files, not just the filenames, so scanned PDFs and screenshots work too.

01 **“How much did I spend in total across these?”**

Reads every selected invoice and returns one figure.

02 **“Break that total down by vendor.”**

Use as a follow-up. It returns a table.

03 **“What are the differences between these two documents?”**

Best on two versions of the same thing, or two rate cards.

04 **“Summarise each of these in two lines.”**

Fast triage on a folder you have not opened in months.

05 **“Which of these files mentions [term]?”**

Searches inside the content of the selection, not filenames.

06 **“Pull out every date mentioned in these and list them in order.”**

Useful on contracts and project briefs.

07 **“Is there anything in these about payment terms?”**

Point it at agreements before you sign anything.

08 **“Which of these images has text in it?”**

Sorts a screenshot dump from actual photos.

09 “Turn this into a bulleted summary I can paste into an email.”

Works on a single long PDF.

10 “Which of these is the most recent, based on the content rather than the file date?”

For when everything is named final-v3-actual.

11 “List every name and email address mentioned across these.”

Good on event sign-up sheets and exported lists.

12 “What is this document actually asking me to do?”

Cuts through legal and admin language.

02

Command + Space

Siri now lives inside Spotlight. Press Command + Space and type or speak the whole request.

> **NOTE**
>
> Command 1 through 4 still work as before: apps, files, actions, clipboard history.

13 “Draft a reply to the last email from [name] saying I will have it by Friday.”

Composes it without opening Mail.

14 “What is on my calendar tomorrow after 2pm?”

Faster than opening Calendar and scrolling.

15 “Find the file I was working on last Tuesday.”

Works when you remember the day but not the name.

16 “Open the note where I wrote about [topic].”

Searches note contents rather than titles.

17 “Set a reminder to follow up with [name] on Monday morning.”

Lands in Reminders with the date parsed correctly.

18 “Summarise the last five emails from [name].”

Catching up on a thread you have been ignoring.

19 “What did I agree to in my last message to [name]?”

Checks what you committed to before you reply again.

20 “Add an event for [thing] next Thursday at 4pm and mark it busy.”

Always verify the dates afterwards. This is its weakest area.

21 “Show me every screenshot I took this week.”

Scoped to date, not folder.

22 “What is my flight number for the trip next month?”

Pulls it from the confirmation email.

23 “Which apps launch at login?”

System question, answered without opening Settings.

24 “Set a reminder to withdraw cash next time I am at [shop name].”

Location triggers work from plain language.

03

Shift + Command + 6

Crosshairs appear, exactly like taking a screenshot. Drag over any part of your display, then choose Ask Siri.

> **NOTE**
> For dates, wait a second without clicking. An Add to Calendar option appears on its own.

25 `[Select dates, then wait]`

The Add to Calendar chip appears with every date pre-parsed.

26 `“Add these as reminders to my grocery list.”`

Splits a recipe's ingredients into individual reminders.

27 `“What is this?”`

Object and place identification from any image on screen.

28 `“Add these to a new list in Reminders called [name].”`

Creates the list as part of the same request.

29 `“Extract the email addresses from this and list them.”`

Works on screenshots of sign-up sheets.

30 `“Turn this table into a markdown table.”`

For anyone who writes in Markdown.

31 `“What is the total of these numbers?”`

Point it at a receipt or a spreadsheet region.

32 `“Translate this into English.”`

Handles menus, signs, and forms in images.

33 “Explain what this error message means and what usually causes it.”

Select the dialog box itself.

34 “Add these dates to my calendar and set a reminder two days before each.”

One request, two actions.

04

Questions with the details missing

Siri searches mail, messages, notes and calendar together, so you can ask the way you actually think.

> **NOTE**
> This only covers Apple's own apps. Third-party apps stay invisible until developers adopt App Intents.

35 **“Did I already reply to [name] about [topic]?”**

Yes or no, with a link to the exact thread.

36 **“When should I leave for the airport this weekend?”**

Finds the booking, works out the drive, links to Maps.

37 **“What did I pay for [thing]?”**

Searches email, calendar and notes together.

38 **“Find the confirmation number for [booking].”**

Saves you searching four different inboxes.

39 **“What did [name] say about pricing in our last exchange?”**

Pulls the specific detail, not the whole thread.

40 **“When did I last email [name]?”**

Useful before you follow up and look forgetful.

41 **“What is the address for [place] that someone sent me?”**

It does not matter whether it arrived by mail or message.

42 **“Find the recipe [name] messaged me.”**

Searches attachments and links inside Messages.

43 “What deadline did we agree on for [project]?”

Checks what was actually written, not what you remember.

44 “Summarise everything I have about [project].”

Pulls across mail, notes and calendar in one answer.

45 “Which of my invoices have not been paid, based on my email?”

Cross-references sent invoices against replies.

46 “I meant an email.”

Say this when it searches the web by mistake. It goes back and looks properly.

05

Describe a Shortcut

Open Shortcuts, create a new one, and describe what you want in plain language. Conditionals included.

> **NOTE**
> Right-click and choose Edit Actions to check what it built before you let it run unattended.

47 “When I add a file to Downloads, move PDFs to Documents and images to Screenshots.”

The folder-sorting automation most people never build.

48 “Every morning at 8, send me a summary of today's calendar.”

Time triggers are the easiest to describe.

49 “When I connect to my monitor, turn on Work focus and switch to Dark Mode.”

Display connection is a supported trigger.

50 “Rename my screenshots with today's date and move them to [folder].”

Two actions chained from one sentence.

51 “When my battery drops below 20 percent, turn on Low Power Mode.”

Battery level triggers work reliably.

52 “Convert any WEBP file added to this folder into a JPEG.”

Fixes the format nothing else opens.

53 “When I join my home Wi-Fi after 6pm, turn on Do Not Disturb until morning.”

Two conditions in one description.

54 “When an event with [keyword] starts in 15 minutes, send my location to [contact].”

Say when it should run before you say what it does.

06

Writing and rewriting in place

Siri drafts and rewrites in any text field on the system, including inside most third-party apps.

> **NOTE**
> In Mail and Messages it matches how you normally write to that specific recipient.

55 **“Rewrite this at half the length and keep the numbers.”**

The most reliable editing instruction there is.

56 **“Make this sound like how I usually write to this person.”**

Only works in Mail and Messages.

57 **“Turn these bullet points into a paragraph.”**

For when you drafted in a hurry.

58 **“Proofread this without changing my tone.”**

The tone clause matters. Leave it out and it flattens you.

59 **“Draft a polite decline that leaves the door open.”**

Useful for sponsorship enquiries you want to revisit.

60 **“Rewrite this as a subject line under eight words.”**

Give it a number or it will give you fifteen words.

61 **“Give me three variations of this so I can pick one.”**

Better than asking for one and rerolling.

62 **“Make this more direct and cut the hedging.”**

Removes the qualifiers you added without noticing.

07

Six things no prompt will fix

These are the failures I hit repeatedly across seven weeks. Knowing them upfront saves you the twenty minutes I spent assuming I had phrased something wrong.

It gets dates wrong.

An all-day event asked for the third to the fifth came out as the third to the fourth. Twice. Check everything it puts in your calendar.

It cannot unsubscribe you from anything.

Ask it to get you off a mailing list and it finds the link, then tells you to click it yourself.

It has no memory between conversations.

Every session starts from zero, which is why the same question in ChatGPT or Claude often comes back better informed.

Third-party apps are not in yet.

Everything here works across Apple's own apps. Your task manager and notes app stay out of scope until those developers adopt App Intents.

It is slow on older Apple silicon.

Personal context searches on an M1 take long enough that searching Mail yourself is sometimes faster.

It answers shopping questions badly.

For finding where to buy something in an image, use the reverse image search option next to Ask Siri instead.

This is the free sample.

I have been writing about Apple on Medium for over six years, and there has always been a gap between what I publish and what I actually run. The real setups, the automations I use daily but never turn into posts, the apps I quietly delete and why.

The Useful Tech Club is where that lives. A searchable database of curated app recommendations, a Shortcuts library with monthly drops, monthly transparency reports with earnings screenshots, and direct access to me for setup reviews.

Join The Useful Tech Club

Everything in this vault was tested on the macOS 27 Golden Gate beta. Apple ships the OS around September and Siri AI as a beta later in the year, so some phrasings will behave differently by the time it reaches you. Found one that stopped working, or a better version? Reply to any newsletter issue and tell me.