PROMPT LIKE A PRO | CANVA AI 2.0 EDITION

Course Design Document

Version 2.0 | November 11, 2026 | Designer: Martine Brown, M.Ed. | Describes the course as built, including decisions that were reversed and why

1. Project overview

Field	Detail
Working title	Prompt Like a Pro: Canva AI 2.0
Format	Articulate Storyline 360 course, published as HTML5 for the web
Length	10 to 12 minutes, roughly 5 minutes of it optional video
Structure	Eight screens, two practice interactions, one scored item
Audience	Freelance designers, virtual assistants, marketing coordinators, and small business owners who make social and marketing assets in Canva
Delivery	Web build for demo access. Structured to publish with xAPI or SCORM if required.
Portfolio role	Self-directed instructional design portfolio piece

2. Business need

People get inconsistent results from AI design tools and blame the tool. A vague prompt produces a generic design, the user concludes "AI is not there yet," and abandons a capability that would have saved hours of production time.

The gap is not technical. The audience can already operate Canva. What they cannot reliably do is describe an outcome precisely enough for a generative tool to act on it. The tool is not underpowered. It is under briefed.

This course teaches one transferable prompt structure, Subject, Style, Mood and Palette, Format and References, and practises it across three unrelated clients so learners internalise the structure rather than memorising an example: a candle shop feed post, a florist Story, and a yoga studio ebook cover. Learners leave with four questions they can ask on any brief, plus a job aid.

3. Audience

Attribute	Profile
Canva proficiency	Comfortable. Can build from a template unassisted.
AI experience	Has tried AI generation. Results felt random. May have stopped using it.
Prompt engineering	None assumed. No technical vocabulary.
Motivation	High and practical. They have client work waiting.
Time available	Low. Will not sit through a 45 minute module.

Device	Desktop primary, tablet secondary.

What that implies for the design

Learner reality	Design response
Short attention, real deadlines	10 to 12 minute seat time; all video optional and skippable
No technical vocabulary	Plain language throughout. No "tokens," no "parameters," no jargon.
Learns by doing	Two practice interactions, one demonstration, minimal lecture
Needs it to work Monday morning	Downloadable job aid; every example is a real client scenario
Will apply it to different work than the examples	Three clients, three industries, three canvases, one method

The audience is assumed to include keyboard-only and screen reader users. That assumption changed an interaction pattern (see section 8).

4. Learning objectives

Terminal objective. Given a client brief and access to Canva AI 2.0, the learner will construct a four-part design prompt that produces an on-brief first draft without further clarification.

By the end of the course, the learner will be able to:

#	Objective	Level	Assessed on
1	**Identify** the three places in Canva AI 2.0 where prompting happens, and the job each performs	Remember	Screen 3
2	**Describe** the function of each of the four prompt components	Understand	Screen 4
3	**Distinguish** specific prompt language from vague language for each component	Analyse	Screens 4 and 6
4	**Construct** a complete four-part prompt from supplied components	Apply	Screen 6
5	**Evaluate** competing well-formed prompts against a brief and select the best fit	Evaluate	Screen 7, scored
6	**Apply** the refinement pattern: name one change rather than regenerating	Apply	Screen 5, demonstrated

Out of scope: Canva navigation and basic design skill (assumed), brand kit setup, team features, publishing workflows, non-Canva AI tools, and design theory beyond what a prompt needs to name.

5. Instructional strategy

Whole to parts to whole. Learners see a complete working prompt, take it apart one component at a time, watch it reassembled in a live demonstration, build one themselves, then judge one against a brief. The

audience does not want a taxonomy. They want a thing that works, and they need to understand its parts well enough to adapt it.

- **Contrast pairs (Screen 4).** Every component shown weak and strong, side by side, with the resulting designs. Difference is easier to perceive than definition.
- **Constant evidence (Screen 4).** The same two rendered designs appear on all four panels, so learners see one prompt examined four ways.
- **Portable self-checks (Screen 4).** Each component ships with one question learners can ask themselves later. These are what survives the seat time.
- **Authentic demonstration (Screen 5).** The synthesis video shows real work, including its failures, not a clean happy path.
- **Escalating practice (Screens 6 and 7).** Screen 6 tests spotting filler. Screen 7 tests fit to brief, where every option is well formed. The second is the harder professional skill.
- **Transfer by variation (Screens 4, 6, 7).** Three clients, three industries, three deliverables. The method is the only constant.

The four self-check questions

These are the real curriculum. Everything else is scaffolding to make them stick.

Component	The question
☐ Subject	Could a stranger make the right thing from this alone?
☐ Style	Did I name a look, or just ask for "good"?
☐ Mood and Palette	Do any of my words fight each other?
☐ Format and References	Did I describe the canvas and the hero image?

6. Course structure

#	Screen	Purpose	Primary interaction	Objective
1	Title and Hook	Set the stakes: a client brief, a deadline, a blank canvas	Let's Go button	-
2	Meet Jade	Introduce the first client and the job	Open the Toolkit button	-
3	Three Places to Prompt	Orient to the three places prompting happens in Canva AI 2.0	Three demo videos; all three opened to continue	1
4	Anatomy of a Great Prompt	Teach the four components with weak and strong examples	Four explorable panels; all four opened to continue	2, 3
5	Put It Together	Show one prompt start to finish, including the fixes	Optional video with a Watch For panel	6
6	Build a Prompt (Petal & Pine)	Practise building a complete prompt	Click to build, with two decoys	3, 4
7	Which Prompt Fits (Still Point Yoga)	Judge well-formed prompts against a brief	Graded Pick One question	5

8	Wrap Up	Leave with the reusable skeleton and the job aid	Download the Prompt Pack; open Canva	-

7. Assessment and completion

Screen	Type	Scored	Purpose
3	Completion gate	No	Ensures orientation before instruction
4	Completion gate	No	Ensures all four components are encountered
6	Constructed response	No	Formative. Immediate corrective feedback per error.
7	Selected response, graded	**Yes**	Summative. Reports a score when published with tracking.

- **Why only one scored item.** The course teaches a procedure, not a body of knowledge. Completion gates confirm exposure. One well-designed discrimination item confirms judgement. A longer quiz would add seat time without adding evidence.
- **Feedback design.** Every incorrect response gets specific corrective feedback naming why that choice fails, never a generic "try again." Correct responses get reasoning, not praise.

8. Design decisions

Each of these was argued through and settled. They are recorded with rationale so the reasoning survives the build.

Click to build, not drag and drop

A drag-and-drop interaction was fully designed for Screen 6, then replaced. Drag and drop is the least accessible common pattern in eLearning: pointer dependent, motor demanding, and hard to make keyboard operable. A click-based equivalent meets the same objective and works by keyboard and screen reader by default. Build time dropped from roughly 6.5 hours to 2.5. Accessibility and effort pointed the same direction.

Two interaction types, not one repeated

Screen 6 is a custom click-to-assemble interaction. Screen 7 is Storyline's native Pick One question, restyled in the course palette. Two interaction types read better than the same mechanic twice, and the native question brings scoring and keyboard accessibility with it.

Three screens cut

Cut	Reason
Decision Point (pick the best prompt for Jade's Story)	Screen 7 does the same job harder. All three of its options are well formed.
Refine with Ask Canva	Moved into the synthesis video, where it is demonstrated rather than described, and onto the wrap-up card.
Speed Round (timed, Marisol the baker)	Its unique lesson, describing a hero when no photo is supplied, is now taught by both practice screens. What remained was time pressure, which is flavour.

No gate on the synthesis video

Screens 3 and 4 both gate. A third gate on Screen 5 would demonstrate nothing new and would cost goodwill with reviewers who skim. This screen is the payoff for clearing two gates, not another checkpoint.

Restraint in motion

Three motion ideas were designed and then cut: an underline wipe on the anatomy panels, hover states on the prompt lines, and a pulse on the Watch For cards. The accent colour already marks the active element, and on Screen 5 the video is the point. Restraint here is a stated position, not an oversight.

The simulated builder stays generic

Screen 6's prompt builder is a stylised interface in the course palette, labelled SIMULATED BUILDER · NOT THE CANVA INTERFACE. Canva's trademark policy prohibits copying its interface look, and the label is also honest instructional design: learners should know this is not what they will see in Canva.

Screenshots stay unmodified

An earlier version colour-graded the Canva screenshots into the course palette. That modifies the interface, which the trademark policy prohibits. They were rebuilt unmodified and the accent colours moved into the card frames instead.

The wrap-up shows a skeleton, not a winning prompt

The course spans three clients, so the takeaway is a reusable structure, not one example. The headline is Four Parts. Any Client.

9. Visual design system: "Warm Studio"

Three constraints that shaped it

- **Not Canva's brand.** The course teaches a Canva product, so the system had to be recognisably its own. The trademark policy names Canva's blue-purple gradient, typefaces, and interface look.
- **Reviewers skim.** Nothing decorative competes with content.
- **Accessible by construction.** Colour never carries meaning alone.

Palette

Token	Value	Use
Canvas	#FAF7F2	Every slide background. Warm off-white, softer than stark white.
Ink	#1E1B2E	Body and headline text, dark cards. Charcoal-indigo, richer than pure black.
Primary	#5B4CDB	Buttons, the Subject component, the cursor motif. Indigo-violet, clearly not Canva's cyan-purple.
Accent	#E8930C	Eyebrows, the Style component, the download call to action. Amber, echoing the candle shop scenario.
Accent deep	#B8730A	Amber text on light tints. Plain amber fails contrast at small sizes.

Success	#0FA47F	Correct states, the Mood component, progress fills.
Error	#D64550	Wrong states, the Format component, retry panels.
Border	#ECE6DC	Card outlines, dividers.
Body slate	#3A3550	Secondary prose. Replaced grey, which read as "disabled."

Component tints: Subject #EEECFA, Style #FBEFD9, Mood #E7F5F0, Format #FBEAEA.

The colour system does teaching work

The four accents are structural, not decorative. Each maps to one component of the prompt framework and holds that meaning across the whole course: the anatomy cards, the panels, the vocabulary chips, the builder slots, and the wrap-up skeleton. A learner who has seen violet mean Subject four times reads the fifth instance without a label.

Contrast note. White text on the Style, Mood, and Format fills fails WCAG AA at body size, so filled states use tinted backgrounds with ink text rather than saturated fills with white text. This was checked, not assumed.

Type

- Headlines: Poppins Bold. Geometric, friendly, reads as modern product design.
- Body: Inter. High legibility at small sizes, neutral enough not to compete.
- Eyebrows and labels: Poppins Bold, 9 to 12pt, letterspaced.
- Minimum sizes, learned the hard way: prompt text at 15pt after 9pt proved unreadable; body copy at 13 to 14pt; nothing instructional below 10pt except legal text.

Components

- **Cards:** white, 16px corners, 1.5pt #ECE6DC border, soft drop shadow.
- **Buttons:** pill shaped, violet with white Poppins Bold. Disabled state in #D8D3CA with #8A8578 text.
- **Colour spines:** a rounded bar down the left edge of a card in that component's accent, so the mapping is visible before anything is read.
- **Chips:** rounded pills in a component's tint with that component's deep text colour. Used for vocabulary.
- **Toasts:** dark ink panels with white text for corrective feedback. Never red: red is the object's border, the toast is the explanation.
- **Glows:** two soft radial glows (amber, violet) at low opacity for depth.
- **The cursor:** a blinking violet bar after the Slide 1 headline brands the course around the act of prompting.

Motion

One rule: fade 0.5s entrances, staggered 0.15 to 0.3s; fade 0.25s on panels; fade 0.3s slide transitions. Nothing else. Two functional exceptions: the cursor on Slide 1, and the video on Slide 5, which is the point of that screen.

10. Accessibility

- Interaction patterns chosen for keyboard operability: click to build instead of drag and drop, and a native Pick One question with its radio buttons kept.
- Captions on all narration and video.
- Colour never carries meaning alone, and contrast was checked on text over tinted fills.
- Every slide advances by an on-slide button; player Prev, Next, and swipe are off so the gates cannot be bypassed.

11. Third-party content compliance

Canva product screenshots appear on Screen 3 for instructional purposes, which Canva's published Trademark Policy permits. The required attribution, worded exactly as the policy specifies, appears beneath the screenshots and in the job aid.

Requirement	How it is met
Screenshots used instructionally	That is their only use
No screenshot on the cover or primary visual	The course card is abstract concept art; the title slide has no interface
Brand name in plain text, correct spelling and capitalisation	"Canva AI 2.0" throughout, no stylised versions
Brand name not at the start of the title	"Prompt Like a Pro" leads; "Canva AI 2.0 Edition" is the eyebrow
Brand name not the primary feature of the title	Secondary, smaller, below the headline
No Canva logo used as an asset	Logos appear only inside unmodified screenshots, which is permitted
Not copying the look and feel	The Warm Studio palette was built deliberately away from Canva's blue-purple gradient
No implied affiliation	Disclaimer present; SIMULATED BUILDER badge on Screen 6

All clients, businesses, and briefs in the course are fictional.

12. Technical approach

Field	Detail
Authoring tool	Articulate Storyline 360
Output	HTML5, published for web
Slide size	1920 x 1080, 16:9
Audio	Text-to-speech narration in a single voice across all clips, with captions

Video	MP4 H.264, 1080p, player controls including fullscreen
Tracking	None in the hosted demo build. Structured to publish with xAPI or SCORM if required.
Browsers and devices	Current Chrome, Edge, Safari, Firefox. Desktop primary, tablet supported.

13. Assumptions and risks

Assumptions

- Learners have a Canva account and basic familiarity
- Learners have a near-term task to apply this to
- Desktop or laptop for first completion
- Canva AI 2.0 features remain broadly as documented at time of build

Constraints

- **Software volatility.** AI features change often. The course teaches transferable prompt structure rather than click paths, which limits how fast it dates.
- **Output variability.** Generative results differ on every run. The course says so rather than implying repeatable output.
- **No live tool integration.** The course simulates the prompting flow, and every simulated interface is labelled.
- **Single author.** Design, development, media, and QA by one person.

Risk	Mitigation
Canva interface changes make screenshots dated	Screenshots isolated to one screen; raw captures archived for re-cutting
Learners expect the course to generate designs	Simulated interfaces labelled; results labelled as author-run
Video length deters completion	All video optional and skippable; no gate on the longest video
Unverifiable claims about how the tool behaves	Every claim must be observable. A line saying Canva defaults to "whatever is trending" was cut and replaced with "Leave it out and Canva decides for you, and you may not get the same thing twice."

14. Evaluation plan

Level	Method	In scope
1. Reaction	Completion rate, qualitative feedback	Partial
2. Learning	Screen 7 score, first-attempt accuracy	Yes
3. Behaviour	Job aid download as intent proxy; 30-day follow-up	Out of scope
4. Results	Self-reported change in revision rounds	Out of scope

Levels 3 and 4 are out of scope because this is a portfolio build without a learner population. The structure supports them if deployed.

Fictional clients and content created for Martine Brown's instructional design portfolio. The Canva trademark is owned by Canva. This publication is not endorsed, sponsored, or otherwise approved by Canva or its brands.