

You've got a big job: where do you even start? — Making a plan

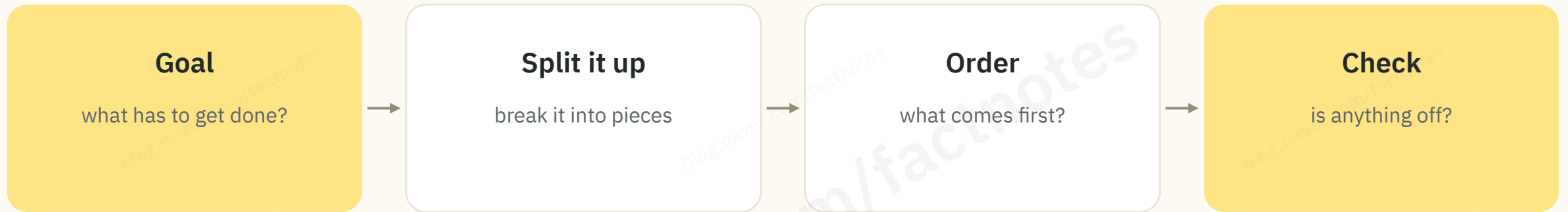
Five-Minute AI Lessons · Oct 10, 2026

Planning isn't knowing the right answer — it's breaking a big lump into small pieces.

In a nutshell

- 1 When you feel stuck, don't ask AI for the answer — **ask it to break the job down**. Planning isn't about knowing the right answer; it's about deciding what to do first.
- 2 There's a set shape for breaking things down: **goal → split → order → check**. Fill in those four boxes and you've got a plan.
- 3 AI research uses the same trick. When AI was made to **break a hard problem into small ones and solve them in turn**, it did much better than when it was asked all at once.

The four boxes of a plan



The two end boxes get skipped the most: starting without writing down a goal, or running all the way to the end without checking.

Key idea: planning means breaking a big lump into small pieces and putting them in order

Tap the four boxes in order

3-week project report

- 1 Write the goal in one line
- 2 Break it into tasks
- 3 Set the order and dates
- 4 Check in halfway

Split things up without setting a goal, and you end up working hard on the wrong...

Sports day class shirts

- 1 Decide what shirt to make
- 2 List every job needed
- 3 Count back from the deadline
- 4 Review the mockup and fix

Count the order back from the deadline, not forward from the start, and nothing...

When AI makes the plan

- 1 Give the goal and limits
- 2 Get a split-up list
- 3 Ask it to reorder
- 4 Ask what's missing

Don't use AI's plan as is — ask one more time, "What's missing?" That one quest...

Tap the mixed-up pieces in plan order. Swap even one box, and you'll see right away why the plan falls apart.

Try it yourself in the web lesson · next-token.net/en/learn/day-34/

Just three questions

Q1

What should you decide first when you make a plan?

- ① The to-do list
- ② The goal you have to reach
- ③ The deadline
- ④ Which friend to work with

Q2

Which is a better request when you have AI make a plan?

- ① Just handle all of it
- ② Just tell me the answer
- ③ Give goal and limits, ask it to break it down
- ④ Wait without saying anything

Q3

What does the "check" box do in a plan?

- ① Adds more work
- ② Erases the goal
- ③ Pushes back the deadline
- ④ Catches problems early

Know the why, too

Q1

②

Without a goal, you can't even tell what to split up. The list and the dates come after the goal is set.

Q2

③

Without limits, AI makes up any plan that sounds good. Tell it how much time you have, how much work it is, and what you can do, and you get a plan you can actually use.

Q3

④

Checking doesn't add work — it buys you time to undo mistakes. Find out on the last day and there's no time left to fix things.

**Planning isn't knowing the right answer —
it's breaking a big lump into small pieces.**



Tomorrow: Handing over a whole task — AI can even make the plan, but can you hand it the doing too?