

APPENDIX B: Microsoft Copilot in Office 365: A Practical Guide for Law Faculty

The standalone Copilot chat interface is useful, but the real case for Copilot in a Microsoft 365 environment is what happens inside Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. You can prompt Copilot directly inside the application you are already working in without copying text or reformatting output. Copilot can work well for users who spend most of their working day in Office applications

Each application works the same way at a high level:

- open Copilot from the ribbon
- type a prompt
- review the generated content
- keep or discard it.

The sections below walk through each application with step-by-step instructions and a worked example. A quick-reference table at the end of this appendix summarizes the most useful prompts for each app.

⚠ Access Note: In-app Copilot requires a Microsoft 365 Business or Enterprise subscription plus the Copilot add-on (currently \$30/user/month). If your institution has an enterprise agreement that includes Copilot, you likely already have access. Check with your IT department before purchasing individually. Students at participating institutions may get access at no additional cost.

I. Copilot in Word: Drafting Course Materials

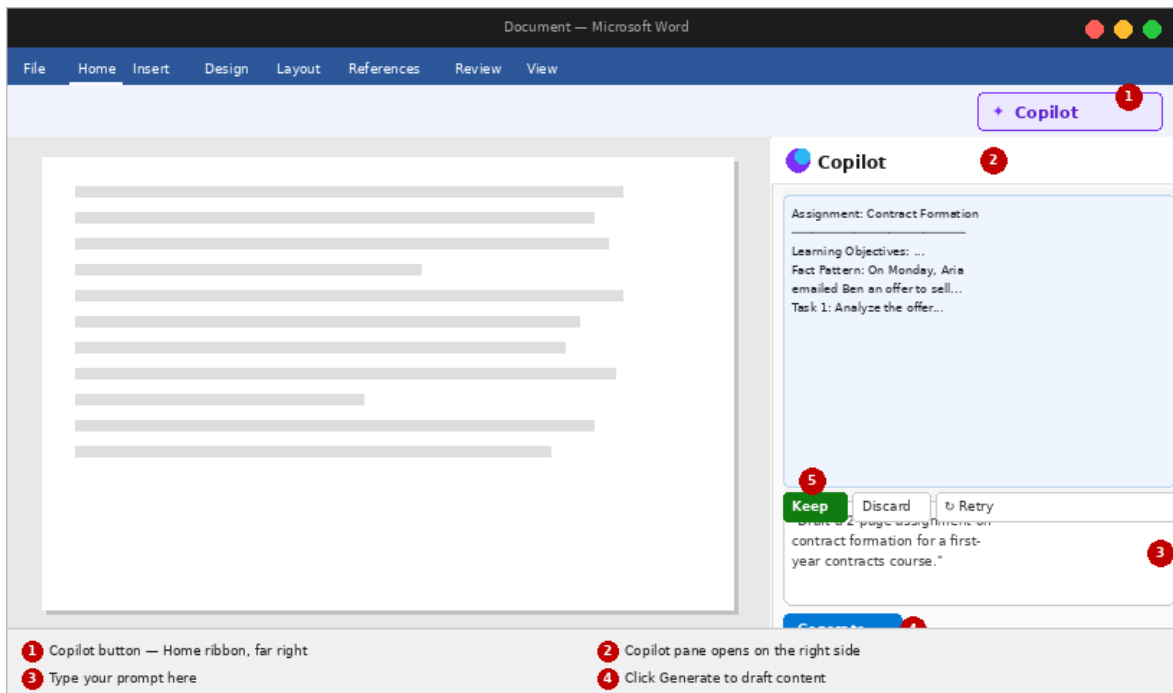
You can draft assignments, syllabi, feedback letters, rubrics, and handouts without opening a separate application. Copilot generates content inside your document, ready to accept, reject, or revise in place.

How to Open and Use Copilot in Word

1. Open Word and create or open a document.
2. **Click Copilot button** in the far-right area of the Home ribbon. A sparkle icon (◆) identifies it. The Copilot pane opens on the right side of your screen.

3. In the pane's text box, type your prompt. Be specific. The more context you give, the better the draft.
4. **Generate** Click (or press Enter). Copilot drafts the content and shows it in a preview pane — it does not immediately insert it into your document.
5. **Keep** Review the draft. Use the button to insert it, **Discard** to remove it, or **Retry** to regenerate with a revised prompt.

Once inserted, edit the text directly in the document as you normally would.



Tip: You can also trigger Copilot inline. Click in the body of your document, look for the small Copilot icon that appears in the left margin, and click it to get a "Draft with Copilot" prompt box — no need to open the side pane. This is faster for quick insertions.

Worked Example: Drafting a Contract Formation Assignment

The following prompt was used to generate the assignment that follows:

Prompt entered in Copilot:

"Draft a 2-page assignment for a first-year contracts course on the topic of contract formation. Include: (1) a brief overview of the assignment, (2) three to five learning objectives, (3) a short original fact pattern involving an offer, counteroffer, and disputed acceptance, (4) three analytical questions requiring rule identification and application, and (5) format requirements and a simple grading rubric."

Below is the Copilot-generated output, lightly edited for formatting. This is the kind of first draft you can expect — solid structure, usable fact pattern, generic but clean. You will want to swap in your own jurisdiction-specific cases, adjust the word counts, and verify that the procedural rules cited are current.

— Copilot-Generated Output —

CONTRACT FORMATION: OFFER, ACCEPTANCE, AND CONSIDERATION

[Course Name] | [Professor] | Due: [Date]

Assignment Overview

This assignment asks you to analyze a contract formation dispute under common law principles. You will determine whether a valid offer was made, whether a valid acceptance occurred, and whether an enforceable contract was formed. Your analysis should apply the rules covered in class and in your casebook, drawing on relevant cases and the Restatement (Second) of Contracts where appropriate.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this assignment, you will be able to:

- Identify and apply the elements of a valid offer under the objective theory of contracts.
- Distinguish between an acceptance and a counteroffer and explain the legal effect of each.
- Apply the mirror-image rule to determine whether a purported acceptance creates a contract.
- Analyze whether and when an offer terminates.
- Evaluate whether the mailbox rule applies to electronic communications.

Fact Pattern:

On Monday, March 3, Aria sent Ben an email: "I will sell you my 2022 Honda Accord for \$22,000. This offer is open until Friday, March 7 at 5:00 p.m." On Wednesday, March 5, Ben replied by email: "I can pay \$20,500. Will you take that?" Aria did not respond. On Thursday, March 6, Aria sold the car to Carol for \$21,000. Later that same day, Ben emailed Aria: "On reflection, I accept your original offer of \$22,000. Please confirm." Aria did not reply.

Assignment Tasks

Task 1: The Offer

Analyze whether Aria's Monday email constitutes a valid offer. Address: (a) whether the terms were sufficiently definite; (b) whether Aria's language manifested an intent to be bound; and (c) whether the communication was directed at Ben specifically.

Apply the objective theory of contracts and cite *Lucy v. Zehmer*, 196 Va. 493 (1954), and Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 24. Approximately 250 words.

Task 2: The Counteroffer

Analyze the legal effect of Ben's Wednesday email. Determine whether it operated as (a) a valid acceptance with a request for modified terms or (b) a rejection and counteroffer under the mirror-image rule. Identify what happened to Aria's original offer once Ben replied. Apply Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 39. Approximately 250 words.

Task 3: The Late Acceptance

Assuming Ben's Wednesday email was a counteroffer, analyze what happened when Ben sent his Thursday email accepting the original \$22,000 price. Address: (a) whether Aria's original offer was still open at the time Ben sent the Thursday email; (b) whether Aria's sale to Carol independently terminated the offer and, if so, whether Ben had notice; and (c) whether Ben has any argument that a contract formed. Note the position of the Restatement (Second) of Contracts § 42 on revocation by action inconsistent with the offer, and consider whether the mailbox rule applies to email. Approximately 300 words.


Format Requirements

- Double-spaced; Times New Roman 12-point; one-inch margins.
- Total length: approximately 800–900 words.
- Submit as a single PDF via [course management system].
- Include your name and student ID in the document header.
- No cover page required.

Grading Criteria

Criterion	Points
Accurate identification and statement of applicable rules	25
Application of rules to the specific facts of the problem	40
Recognition and analysis of counterarguments	20
Organization, clarity, and written expression	15
Total	100

— End of Copilot-Generated Output —

 **After you keep the draft:** Replace the bracketed placeholders ([Course Name], [Date], etc.), add jurisdiction-specific case citations relevant to your course, and verify that any Restatement sections cited are current. Copilot produces a usable first draft, not a finished product.

Other Useful Prompts for Word

- "Revise this paragraph for clarity. The audience is first-year law students." Paste in clunky text; Copilot rewrites it.
- "Create a one-page course handout summarizing the elements of negligence." Gets you a formatted handout skeleton.
- "Add a 15-point short-answer question to the end of this document." Copilot reads context and appends a question that fits.
- "Format this content as a rubric table with columns for criteria, excellent, satisfactory, and needs improvement." (This converts a prose description into a grid.)

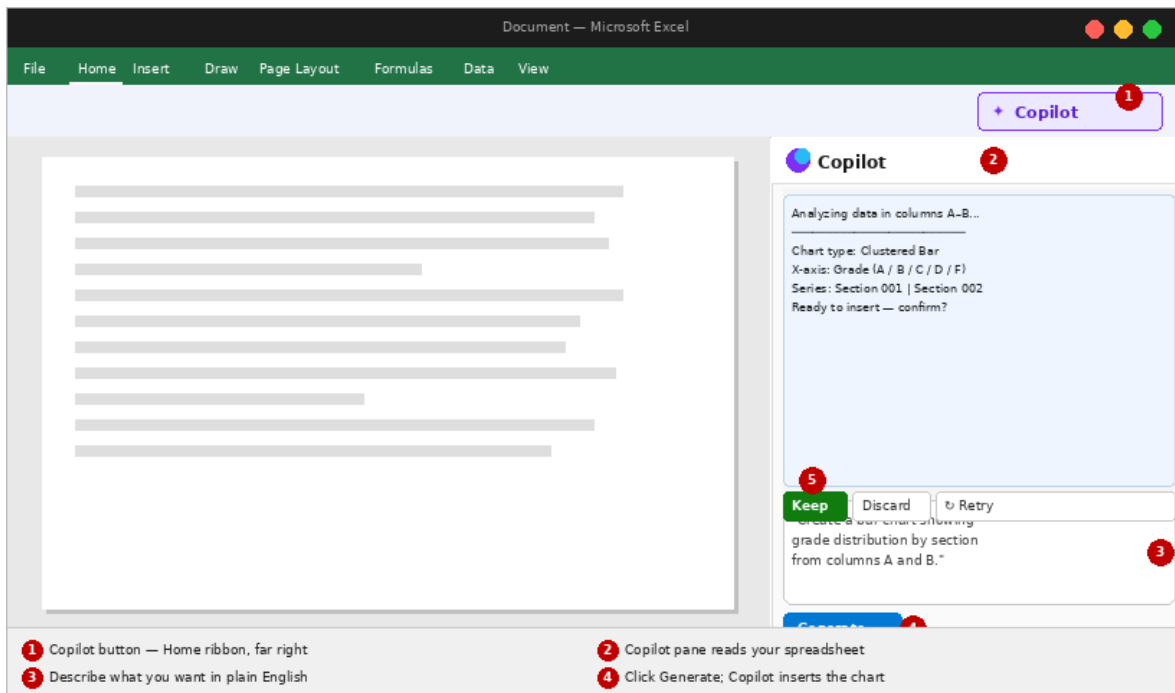
II. Copilot in Excel: Making Sense of Course Data

Copilot in Excel is most useful when you have data in a spreadsheet and want to analyze or visualize it without writing formulas. Grade distributions, survey results, and bar passage data are all fair game. You describe what you want in plain English; Copilot figures out which columns to use and what formula or chart type fits.

One honest caveat: the Excel integration is more hit-or-miss than Word. Simple requests (a basic chart, a SUM formula, a pivot table on straightforward data) work well. Complex requests with multiple conditions or non-standard data layouts sometimes produce incorrect formulas. Always verify the output before relying on it.

How to Use Copilot in Excel

1. Open the workbook with your data. Make sure your data has clear column headers in Row 1: Copilot uses the headers to understand what each column contains.
2. **Click Copilot button** in the far-right area of the Home ribbon. The Copilot pane opens on the right.
3. Type your prompt in the text box. Reference column headers by name. For example, "columns A and B" or "the Grade column."
4. **Generate:** Copilot shows you a preview of what it will insert (chart, formula, or new column). It does not make changes until you confirm.
5. Review the preview carefully. For charts, check the axis labels and data range. For formulas, verify the logic before applying.
6. **Insert:** Click to add the output to your workbook.



Worked Example: Grade Distribution Chart

Setup: A gradebook spreadsheet with columns for Student ID, Section (001 or 002), and Letter Grade (A / B / C / D / F).

Prompt entered in Copilot:

"Create a clustered bar chart showing the grade distribution (A through F) side by side for Section 001 and Section 002, using the Section and Letter Grade columns."

Copilot reads the column headers, counts the grades per section, and generates a clustered bar chart. It labels the axes automatically and places the chart in the active sheet. You can move and resize it as with any Excel chart.

Other Useful Prompts for Excel

- "Highlight any student with a grade below 70 in red."
Applies conditional formatting automatically.
- "Add a column showing each student's rank within their section."
Inserts a RANK formula.
- "Create a pivot table showing average score by assignment type."
Useful for spotting patterns across assessment categories.
- "Summarize this data in three sentences."
Generates a plain-English summary of what the numbers show.

III. Copilot in PowerPoint: Building Presentations

Copilot in PowerPoint can build a slide deck from a text prompt or an existing document. For law faculty, the most practical use is generating a first-draft lecture deck — something to react to rather than build from scratch. The output is rarely polished enough to use as-is, but it gives you a structure, talking points, and slide titles in a few seconds.

How to Use Copilot in PowerPoint

- Open PowerPoint. You can start with a blank presentation or have an existing file open.
- **Click Copilot button** in the Home ribbon. The Copilot pane opens. Type your prompt or select "Create presentation from file" to build a deck from an existing Word document or PDF.
- **Generate:** Click. Copilot builds the slides and displays them in the main editing view. It applies a default theme; you can change it after.
- Review each slide. Delete slides you don't need, edit text directly on the slide, and adjust the layout using the standard PowerPoint design tools.
- Add, move, or delete slides as usual. Copilot can also add a new slide on demand — just type "Add a slide on [topic]" in the Copilot pane.

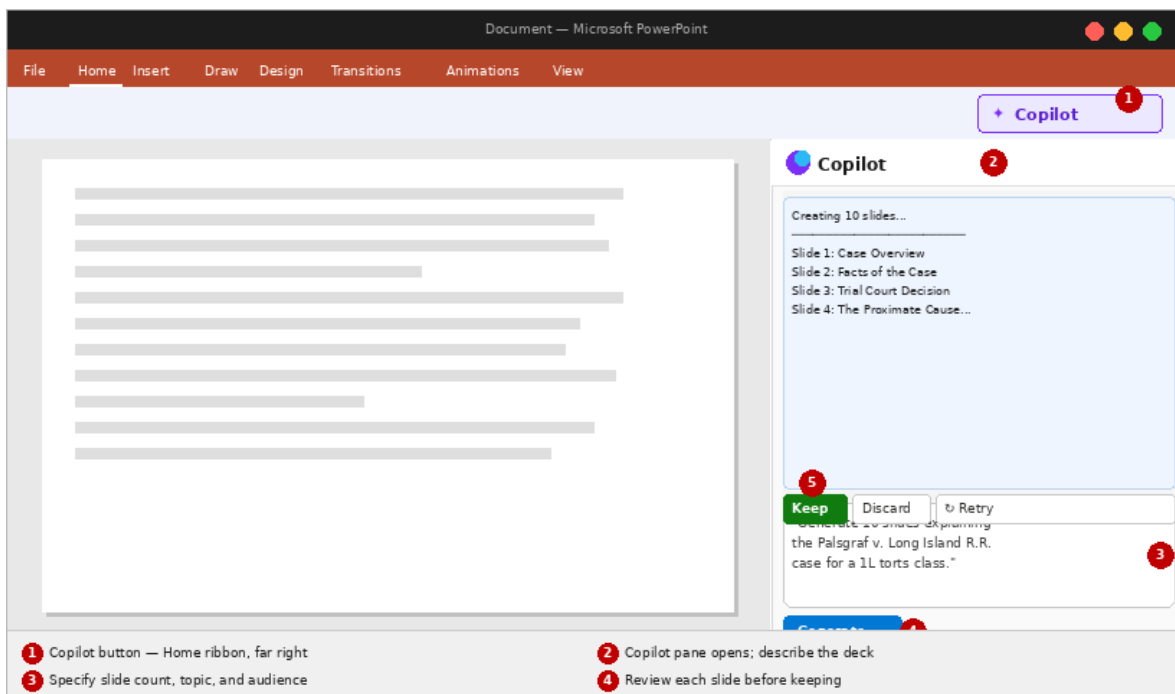


Figure C-3. Copilot pane in PowerPoint. Specify the number of slides, the case or topic, and the audience level.

Worked Example: Palsgraf Slides

Prompt entered in Copilot:

"Generate 10 slides explaining Palsgraf v. Long Island Railroad Co. for a 1L torts class. Include the facts, the two opinions (Cardozo and Andrews), the proximate cause debate, and two discussion questions."

Copilot generates a deck covering case overview, facts, trial court result, the Cardozo majority, the Andrews dissent, doctrinal analysis, and discussion questions. It is a serviceable first draft that typically needs tightening — the bullet points tend toward the verbose and the speaker notes are sometimes thin on analysis.

⚠ Image Verification Required: When Copilot adds images to a PowerPoint, those images are AI-generated and may not accurately represent what you expect. A prompt asking for portraits of Judge Cardozo and Judge Andrews, for example, produced images of two men who were clearly neither. Verify every image Copilot inserts before you teach from the deck.

Other Useful Prompts for PowerPoint

- "Create presentation from file" + attach a Word document
Turns your lecture notes or an outline into a slide deck automatically.
- "Add a slide summarizing the holding in one sentence."
Adds a new slide at the end; good for quick additions.
- "Rewrite the text on slide 4 for a non-lawyer audience."
Simplifies technical content in place.
- "Add speaker notes to each slide explaining the key teaching point."
Fills in the notes pane — useful when you want to share slides with students.

IV. Copilot in Outlook: Handling Student Correspondence

For most faculty, the most tedious administrative task is managing repetitive email. Copilot in Outlook does not read your inbox autonomously; it generates a draft reply based on the email you have selected and any instructions you give it. You review the draft before sending. The practical effect is that a response to a common student question — an extension request, a logistics question, a request for a meeting — takes about 30 seconds instead of five minutes.

How to Draft an Email Reply with Copilot

Select the email in your inbox that you want to reply to.

- **Reply** (or Reply All). In the reply compose window, look for the Copilot icon at the top of the drafting area.
- **Click Copilot button**
A text box appears asking what you want the email to say. You can also adjust tone (Direct, Formal, Casual, or Informational) and length (Short, Medium, Long).
- Enter your instructions. Copilot reads the email you are replying to for context: you do not need to re-summarize it.
- **Generate:** Click.
The draft appears in the reply window.
- Edit the draft directly, then send it. Do not send without reading it. Copilot sometimes fills in specifics incorrectly when the original email is ambiguous.

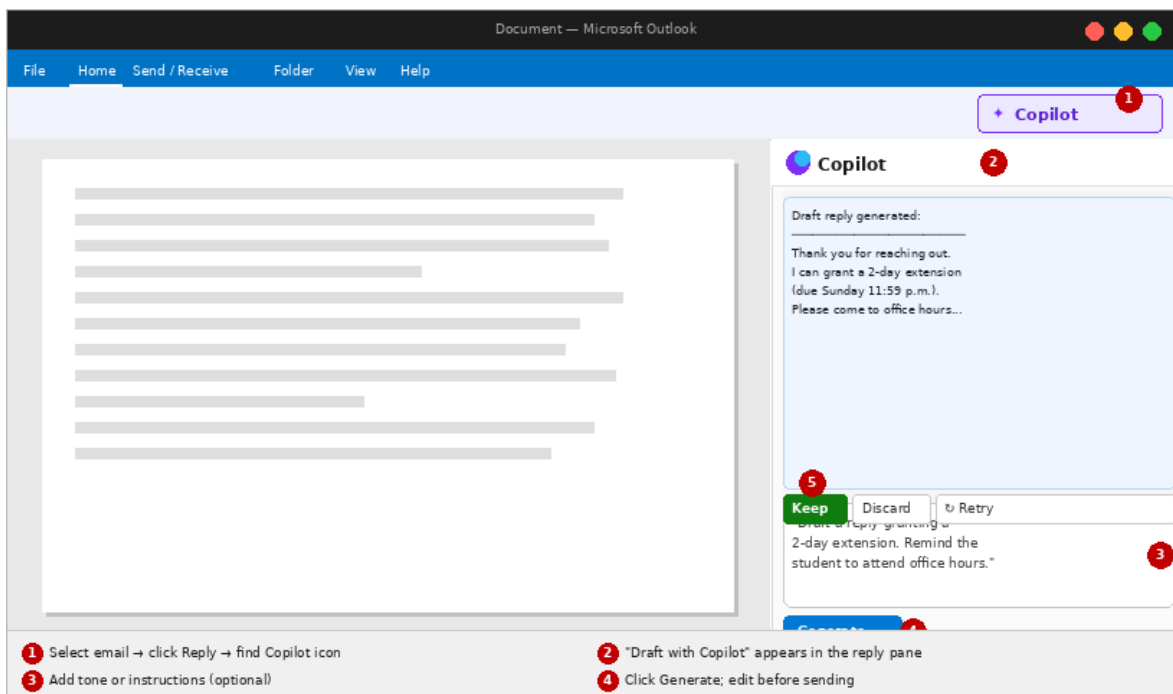


Figure C-4. Copilot in Outlook. Select an email, click Reply, then use "Draft with Copilot" to generate a reply based on the original message and your instructions.

Worked Example: Extension Request

Incoming student email (selected in Outlook):


"Professor, I'm really struggling with the counteroffer analysis in Assignment 3. I also need to go home this weekend because my grandmother is in the hospital. Can I have until Monday to submit?"

Instructions entered in Copilot:

"Grant a 2-day extension (due Sunday 11:59 p.m.). Say no further extensions. Direct the student to the casebook pages on counteroffer and to office hours on Thursday."

Copilot-generated reply:

"Thank you for letting me know. I hope your grandmother recovers quickly. I can grant a 2-day extension. Assignment 3 will be due Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Please note that no further extensions will be granted on this assignment. On the counteroffer rule: pages 187–192 of the casebook cover it in detail. If you are still uncertain after reviewing those pages, please come to office hours on Thursday between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. and we can work through it together. Best regards, [Your Name]"

 **Before you send:** Fill in the bracketed placeholders, confirm that the page numbers and office hours listed are accurate, and adjust the tone as needed. Copilot drafts the email; you are responsible for what goes out under your name.

Other Useful Prompts for Outlook

- "Draft a reply telling the student this is covered in the syllabus and directing them to section [X]."
Handles logistics questions efficiently without being dismissive.
- "Write a reply declining this request and explaining the general policy."
Useful for policy requests you cannot accommodate.
- "Summarize this email thread in three sentences."
Copilot reads the full thread and gives you the gist before you write.
- "Draft a reply scheduling a meeting for Tuesday or Wednesday this week."
Generates a professional scheduling reply in seconds.

Quick Reference: Copilot in Office 365

The table below summarizes the most useful law faculty prompts for each application, with brief notes on what to watch for.

App	Example Prompt	What Copilot Does	Watch Out For
Word	<i>"Draft a 2-page assignment on contract formation"</i>	Writes structured assignment with objectives, fact pattern, questions, and rubric	Replace all placeholders; add jurisdiction-specific citations

App	Example Prompt	What Copilot Does	Watch Out For
Word	<i>"Create a rubric for a client counseling memo, with columns for Excellent / Satisfactory / Needs Work"</i>	Builds a formatted table based on the criteria you specify	Criteria descriptions are generic; customize to your standards
Excel	<i>"Create a bar chart showing grade distribution by section"</i>	Generates chart from your data columns	Verify axis labels and data range before using
Excel	<i>"Add a column showing each student's percentile rank"</i>	Inserts a formula calculating relative rank	Check formula logic; complex conditions sometimes fail
PowerPoint	<i>"Generate 10 slides on Palsgraf for a 1L torts class"</i>	Builds full deck with slide titles, bullet content, and speaker notes	Verify all images; slide text is often verbose and needs trimming
PowerPoint	<i>"Create presentation from file" (attach Word outline)</i>	Converts your existing notes into slides automatically	Reformatting may be needed; speaker notes are often thin
Outlook	<i>"Draft a reply granting a 2-day extension; remind student to attend office hours"</i>	Writes a complete, polite reply incorporating your instructions	Fill in all specifics (page numbers, times) before sending
Outlook	<i>"Summarize this email thread"</i>	Produces a brief plain-language summary of the thread	Confirm accuracy; important nuances sometimes get dropped

One thing to keep in mind as you use these tools: Copilot reads whatever document or email you currently have open. The more specific and well-organized your source material is, the better the output will be. Garbage in, garbage out applies here exactly as it does with every other GenAI tool.