

## Image Generation / Midjourney

Recommend `-ar` based on output use case — matches format to purpose, not habit.

Difficulty: Beginner

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Format Selection, Output Planning

Updated: May 2026

Why This Prompt Exists

Most Midjourney users never change aspect ratio from the default 1:1. This forces square crops on content that should be wide or tall — losing composition, cropping subjects, and wasting resolution.

You get:

- Instagram posts cropped awkwardly (wrong ratio, heads cut off)
- YouTube thumbnails that don't fit 16:9 (black bars or cropping)
- presentation slides with incorrect proportions (distorted images)
- print materials that don't match standard paper sizes
- character portraits that should be vertical but come out square

But aspect ratios serve specific purposes:

- 1:1 — Instagram feed, profile pictures, icons, album art
- 4:3 — presentations, older displays, print photos
- 16:9 — YouTube, TV, monitors, widescreen presentations
- 9:16 — TikTok, Instagram Stories, Reels, vertical video
- 2:3 — standard portrait photography, print
- 3:2 — standard landscape photography, print

Without optimization, you crop later and lose quality.

This prompt recommends optimal aspect ratios by use case.

## The Prompt

Assume the role of a Midjourney format consultant who recommends aspect ratios.

Your task is to recommend --ar values based on output use case.

Generate:

### 1. USE CASE CLASSIFICATION

- Output type: [SOCIAL / PRINT / PRESENTATION / WEB / VIDEO]
- Specific platform (if applicable): [e.g., Instagram, YouTube, TikTok]
- Orientation: [SQUARE / LANDSCAPE / PORTRAIT]

### 2. ASPECT RATIO RECOMMENDATION TABLE

Use Case	Recommended --ar	Rationale	Alternative
Instagram feed post	1:1	Native square format	4:5 for portrait
Instagram Story	9:16	Full-screen vertical	–
YouTube thumbnail	16:9	Standard video aspect ratio	–
TikTok video	9:16	Full-screen vertical	–
LinkedIn post	1:1 or 16:9	Square or widescale	4:5 for carousel
Presentation slide	16:9 or 4:3	Monitor-standard	Depends on

projector |  
Print - 8x10 photo	4:5	Matches print ratio	5:4 for 10x8
Print - wallet	2:3	Standard wallet size	-
Website hero image	16:9 or 21:9	Widescreen for banners	Depends on design
Character concept	2:3 or 9:16	Portrait orientation	3:4 for closer crop

### 3. PLATFORM-SPECIFIC DETAILS

#### **\*\*Instagram\*\***

- Feed post (square): 1:1
- Feed post (portrait): 4:5 (1080x1350)
- Feed post (landscape): 1.91:1 (1080x608)
- Stories: 9:16 (1080x1920)

#### **\*\*YouTube\*\***

- Thumbnail: 16:9 (1280x720 minimum)
- Channel banner: 16:9 with safe zone for mobile

#### **\*\*TikTok\*\***

- All content: 9:16 (1080x1920)

#### **\*\*Print\*\***

- 4x6 photo: 2:3
- 5x7 photo: 5:7
- 8x10 photo: 4:5
- A4 paper:  $1:\sqrt{2}$  ( $\approx 1:1.414$ )

#### 4. COMPOSITION ADJUSTMENTS BY RATIO

- 1:1: Center subject, symmetrical compositions work well
- 16:9: Wide landscapes, group shots, cinematic framing
- 9:16: Vertical subjects, full-body portraits, tall buildings
- 4:5: Classic portrait crop (head and shoulders)

#### 5. RATIO SELECTION FLOWCHART

- Is this for social media?
  - \* Yes → Check platform-specific ratio
  - \* No → Is this for print?
    - Yes → Match print paper ratio
    - No → 16:9 for most digital displays

#### 6. COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Using 16:9 for vertical subjects (character looks small)
- Using 1:1 for wide landscapes (loss of context)
- Using default 1:1 for everything (lazy, inefficient)

#### INPUTS:

Intended use case:

[E.G., "Instagram carousel post for marketing"]

Platform (if applicable):

[E.G., "Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn"]

Orientation preference:

[PORTRAIT / LANDSCAPE / SQUARE / NO PREFERENCE]

Existing template dimensions (if any):

[E.G., "Canva template is 1080x1080"]

#### RULES:

- Always match platform native aspect ratio to avoid cropping
- 1:1 is safe but rarely optimal (except for Instagram feed)
- 16:9 is the web standard for horizontal content
- 9:16 is required for TikTok and Instagram Stories
- Print ratios must match paper dimensions exactly
- Consider safe zones for platforms that crop (e.g., YouTube thumbnails get cropped on mobile)

#### How To Use It

- Always match platform native aspect ratio to avoid cropping — don't make platforms crop for you.
- 1:1 is safe but rarely optimal — except for Instagram feed posts.
- 16:9 is the web standard for horizontal content (YouTube, presentations, monitors).
- 9:16 is required for TikTok and Instagram Stories — vertical is not optional there.
- Print ratios must match paper dimensions exactly — you can't crop print after the fact.
- Consider safe zones for platforms that crop (e.g., YouTube thumbnails get cropped on mobile).

#### Example Input

##### **Intended use case:**

"Marketing image for LinkedIn company page"

##### **Platform:**

"LinkedIn"

**Orientation preference:**

“LANDSCAPE”

**Existing template dimensions:**

“None”

**Why It Works**

Most users accept the default 1:1 square because they don't know other options exist — or don't know when to use them.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- use case classification (social, print, presentation, web, video)
- platform-specific ratio mapping (Instagram vs. YouTube vs. TikTok)
- composition adjustment guidance (how framing changes by ratio)
- ratio selection flowchart (decision tree for non-designers)
- common mistake prevention (identifies frequent errors)

**Failure modes this prevents:**

- Square YouTube thumbnails (16:9 required, 1:1 gets black bars)
- Landscape Instagram Stories (9:16 required, crops to vertical)
- Portrait YouTube thumbnails (wrong orientation for platform)
- Mismatched print ratios (can't crop without losing content)

**This improves on:** Default 1:1 habit. Platform-native ratios perform better and require no post-cropping.

**Related to:** MJ-01 (Parameters) for syntax; MJ-02 (Style Reference) for style consistency across ratios.

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