

THE BASIC RULES OF PROMPTING

A prompt must be **structured**.

"Structured" refers to the organization and logical arrangement of the information within a prompt. A structured prompt is one where the information is presented in a coherent, logical order, making it easy for an AI model to follow the instructions.

An AI model assimilates information in the order it is written. Therefore, a change in the order of the text in a prompt can lead to very different results in terms of the quality of the model's response.

A prompt must be **specific**.

"Specific" refers to providing detailed, clear, and precise information in a prompt. A specific prompt includes all relevant details that might be needed to determine the response.

An AI model predicts the most accurate response based on the prompt provided. Therefore, the more detailed the instructions, the better tailored the response will be.

A prompt must be **unambiguous**.

"Without ambiguity," on the other hand, focuses on ensuring that the prompt cannot be interpreted in more than one way, eliminating any potential confusion about what is being requested.

An AI model operates within the limits of what it is told. Therefore, if instructions are open to multiple interpretations, the resulting interpretation may not align with your expectations.

You are a friendly and helpful tutor. Your job is to explain a concept to me in a clear and straightforward way, give me an analogy and an example of the concept, and check for understanding.

Make sure your explanation is as simple as possible without sacrificing accuracy or detail. Before providing the explanation, you must gather information about my learning level, interests, and existing knowledge.

First, ask me to tell you about my learning level. Wait for me to respond.

Then, ask me what topic or concept I would like explained. Wait for me to respond.

Then, ask me why this topic has piqued my interest. Wait for me to respond.

Then, ask me what I already know about the topic. Wait for me to respond.

Using this information that you have gathered, provide me with a clear and simple 2-paragraph explanation of the topic, 2 examples, and an analogy. Do not assume knowledge of any related concepts, domain knowledge, or jargon. Keep in mind what you now know about me to customize your explanation.

Once you have provided the explanation, examples, and analogy, ask me 2 or 3 questions (1 at a time) to ensure I understand the topic. The questions should start with the general topic, think step by step and reflect on each response.

Wrap up the conversation by asking me to explain the topic to you in my own words and give you an example. If my explanation is not quite accurate or detailed, you can ask again or help me improve my explanation by giving my helpful hints. This is important because understanding can be demonstrated by generating one's own explanation.

Clear Objective

Begin with context that sets the stage for what you are asking; you can do it by assigning a persona (Act as...).

Clearly state the main objective of the prompt. This helps to orient the model and prepares it for the specifics of the request.

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Context

Provide detailed context for the task. The model knows only as much as you tell it. The more context it receives the better it can tailor its response.

Here, the context is especially important because how we learn depends on what we already know.

The power of AI is that it can tailor explanation to our knowledge instead of providing a generic Wikipedia-like information.

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Logical Order & Segmentation

Arrange the details and instructions in a logical sequence. For example, if there are multiple steps to be followed, they should be presented in the order they need to be executed.

Break down the prompt into segments or paragraphs, each addressing a specific aspect of the prompt. This can include background information, the main question or task, and any specific requirements or criteria.

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Clear instructions

The instructions must be unambiguous and specific!

This prompt describes a specific way of learning – based on student's experience and existing knowledge and through examples and analogies.

The prompt very clearly states what is expected from the explanation.

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Justifying Instructions

If the instruction serves a specific purpose that is important for the task, it is a good idea to explain what is the reasoning behind a request.

This way, the model does not to have to interpret the importance by itself.

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Format

Specify the format of the output. Describe how the response to your prompt should look like – should it be a written paragraph or bullet points, should it be detailed or concise, etc.

Statements such as “as simple as possible without sacrificing accuracy or detail” ensure that the answer is detailed but not too lengthy or complex.