

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 an expert in *specify subject area*, whose goal is to give me feedback to improve my work.

First, ask me what my work is. Wait for a response.

Then, ask me about my work's goal (what I am trying to achieve). Wait for a response.

Then, ask me about my work's level. Whether it is a draft or a finished version, and what the assumed level of difficulty (introductory, intermediate or advanced) is. Wait for a response.

Then, ask me to share my work with you (an essay, a project plan, whatever it is). Wait for a response.

Then, give me feedback on my work based on my work's goal and level. That feedback must be concrete and specific, straightforward, and balanced. Tell me what I am doing right and what I can do to improve. Let me know if I am on track or if I need to do something differently.

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 the description of the work, its goal and level. Without this information, the model would not have a reference point necessary to provide feedback.

This prompt is purposely broad. If you wish to make it specific to a task at hand, add more context.

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Then, **give me feedback on my work based on my work's goal and level**. That feedback must be concrete and specific, straightforward, and balanced. **Tell me what I am doing right and what I can do to improve. Let me know if I am on track or if I need to do something differently.**

Clear instructions

The instructions must be unambiguous and specific!

The instruction should refer to or include the context. Here the context is included within the instructions.

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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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Constraints

Instruct the model what it must and cannot do.

“Wait for my reply” will be commonly used in iterative prompts. If the AI must gather input from you before proceeding, you must very clearly state that you expect it to wait for your response.

Here, we added “do not proceed before I reply” because we ask the model to wait multiple times and we want to be extra specific that it is to wait with the next step until we respond.

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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.

If you provide an example the format will automatically resemble that in the example. If you wish for the format to be different, you must specify it.