

TOP 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROMPT ENGINEERING FOR UNIVERSITY

1. Clarity and specificity

Ensure that your prompts are clear and specific to avoid ambiguous outputs. Clearly define the task, context, and desired outcome to guide the AI effectively.

Unclear Prompt: "Write about climate change."

Clear and Specific Prompt: "Summarise the key impacts of climate change on coastal ecosystems, focusing on sea-level rise and ocean acidification."

2. Ethical use

Use AI tools ethically by ensuring that the prompts you create do not encourage academic dishonesty. Avoid prompts that would result in AI-generated work being submitted as your own.

Unethical Prompt: "Write a complete essay on the causes of World War II that I can submit as my own."

Ethical Prompt: "Provide a detailed outline for an essay on the causes of World War II, and suggest sources that I should read to prepare for this assignment."

3. Context Awareness

Clear prompts should provide sufficient context to guide AI responses effectively. Context-aware prompts ensure that the generated content is relevant and specific to the intended subject or application.

Lack of Context: "Explain the importance of biodiversity."

Context-Aware Prompt: "Explain the importance of biodiversity within the context of tropical rainforest ecosystems and their role in carbon sequestration."

4. Emphasise Process over Product

Good prompts will generally focus on the process of how to achieve a product rather than the product itself.

Product-Focused Prompt: "Produce a comprehensive business report on the market analysis of renewable energy technologies."

Process-Focused Prompt: "Outline a research plan for preparing a business report on the market analysis of renewable energy technologies. Help me identify the type of data I will need to analyse market trends, evaluate competitor strategies, and inform strategic business decisions."

5. Critical Evaluation of AI Output

AI is not perfect and it can both make mistakes and provide misleading or factually incorrect information, so it is important to always cross-reference any AI output in order to evaluate it.

AI-generated Output: "Data suggests a 15% increase in renewable energy adoption in 2022."

Official Report: "A report from the International Energy Agency (2022) suggests a 12% increase in renewable energy adoption."

HANDY TIPS

Role Definition: Assign a specific persona with background details (e.g., author, teacher, designer) to frame the AI's response.

Boundaries/Scope: Define limits like length, depth level, and focus boundaries to keep the AI's output within the required scope.

Audience Profile: Specify target demographics like age, region, job role, knowledge level, and interests to tailor the content to the audience.

Facts/Research: Include relevant research, articles, or data sources to inform the AI for customised output.

Tone: Maintain a specific language style that matches the audience and brand to align with expectations.

Writing Style: Supply samples or list attributes for a preferred creative style to guide the AI.

Situational Context: Establish the setting, use case specifics, and previous events to frame the content within a specific context.

"Assume the role of a market analyst with ten years of experience in the renewable energy sector."

Write an overview of current market trends in solar and wind energy in Europe. Focus on market growth over the past five years, key industry players, and emerging technologies, excluding other renewable energy sources.

The target audience is mid-level business professionals aged 30-45, with moderate knowledge of the industry and an interest in sustainable investment opportunities.

Base your response on recent reports from the International Energy Agency.

Use a professional and informative tone suitable for a business report.

Follow a concise writing style, similar to articles in the Financial Times.

This overview will be used to help me do research for a market analysis report to inform investment decisions."

PROMPTS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

1. Explain [topic] in simple terms. Explain it to me as if I'm a beginner.
2. Help me brainstorm ideas for [specific topic or industry].
3. I'm trying to learn about [subject or skill]. Give me a [number] day study plan.
4. Offer headings I could include in a business report based on the task below: [paste task].
5. Provide a step-by-step plan on how to approach the task below [paste task].
6. Explain the significance of [event/person/concept] in [field of study].
7. Explain the relationship between [concept A] and [concept B].
8. Create a table to compare and contrast [two theories or models] in [field].
9. Identify key concepts in [course/subject].
10. Generate a list of possible solutions to [problem/challenge] in [field]."

BASIC COMPONENTS OF A GOOD PROMPT

Imagine you are an expert in the field of sociology. Help me outline, in simple terms, the steps I should take to complete an essay comparing and contrasting the terms "globalisation" and "cultural globalisation" in the context of global sociology, that is, the world as singular system.

Role definition

Tone

Clarity and specificity

Contextual information