

How to write AI prompts

TEACHERS' LEARNING HUB GUIDE

Good AI prompts are essential to predictably and consistently getting a desired output. There are no single phrases that work across all situations - AI will simply amplify the user's capabilities, creativity, judgement and discernment. These effective prompting strategies will help develop your own skills and strategies with AI prompting.

HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE PROMPTS

BE POLITE

Be polite, like in emails. Use correct punctuation, spelling and grammar.

GIVE THE AI A ROLE

Tell the AI who to pretend to be. Give it a role, so it knows what register to use. The use of words influences its sample and response.

STATE FACTS

Do state facts. Don't ask it to search for facts - it's not a search engine. Don't give negative instructions.

THINK STEP BY STEP

A useful phrase is to ask it to "think step by step" to make a plan for it to follow. AI needs extreme amounts of scaffolding.

ADD CONTEXT

Make requirements, instructions and parameters explicit by adding context. Like audience and output format.

USE EXAMPLES

AI is effective at imitation, and if you give it a few examples of what you want, it can copy their form.

USE LONGER PROMPTS

Prompts should be longer, rather than shorter. Edit your prompts if errors occur, or start over.

END WITH A SINGLE TASK

At the end of each prompt, end with a single, specific task.

REVISE, REFINE AND REDO

Don't be afraid about going back and forth a few times before you get to your answer. Asking it to ask you for clarification highlights blank spots in your thinking. Also, you can prompt it to help you design prompts.

VALIDATE THE OUTPUT

Make sure you know enough to be able to validate the output - the AI might have the wrong idea about what you want, make up facts to please you, or try to repeat an earlier error.