

6 Techniques for Effective Prompt Engineering

ANTHROPIC

1. Provide context

Before

Tell me about climate change.

After

Explain three major impacts of climate change on agriculture in tropical regions, with examples from the past decade.

Be specific about what you want, providing details about scope, geography, timeframe, and other relevant parameters.

2. Show examples of what “good” looks like

Before

Please convert this technical statement to plain language: “The platform implements end-to-end encryption protocols to safeguard data integrity.”

After

Here are two examples of how to convert technical jargon into plain language:

1. “The quantum algorithm exhibits quadratic speedup.” → “The new method solves problems roughly twice as fast as previous methods.”
2. “The interface leverages intuitive design paradigms.” → “The design is easy to understand and use.”

Now, please convert this technical statement to plain language: “The platform implements end-to-end encryption protocols to safeguard data integrity.”

Providing examples helps the AI understand the pattern, style, or format you're looking for more clearly than descriptions alone.

3. Specify output constraints

Before

Design me a personal art portfolio website.

After

Create a clean, modern single-page portfolio website with these sections: Hero, About Me, Skills, Portfolio/Projects, Experience, and Contact. Make the navigation menu sticky and responsive, with hamburger menu on mobile. Use a sunset color palette and add a dark/light mode toggle.

Be specific about what you want, providing details about scope, geography, timeframe, and other relevant parameters.

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4. Break complex tasks into steps

Before

Analyze this quarterly sales data.

After

I'd like to analyze this quarterly sales data. Please approach this by:

1. Identifying top-performing products
2. Comparing current quarter to previous quarter
3. Highlighting unusual patterns or trends
4. Suggesting possible reasons for these trends

Breaking down complex tasks into clear steps guides the AI's reasoning process and ensures thorough, methodical responses.

5. Ask it to think first

Before answering, please think through this problem carefully. Consider the different factors involved, potential constraints, and various approaches before recommending the best solution.

Giving the AI space to think before responding encourages more thoughtful, comprehensive answers.

6. Define the AI's role

Please explain how rainbows form from the perspective of an experienced science teacher speaking to a bright 10-year-old who's interested in science.

Defining the AI's role, tone, or style helps shape its approach to fit your specific needs and audience.

Secret Weapon: Ask the AI for help with prompting

I'm trying to get you, Claude, to help me with [goal]. I'm not sure how to phrase my request to get the best results. Can you help me craft an effective prompt for this?

When you're not sure how to ask for something, the AI can help improve your prompt. This is perhaps the most powerful technique of all!