Prompt Engineering Guide

🟢 Start Simple with Prompt Writing

When you're new to writing prompts for AI tools like ChatGPT, start small and keep things simple. Prompt writing is a bit like teaching — it gets better with practice, and you'll refine your approach as you go.

🛠️ Prompt Writing Is a Process

Think of it like this: you try something, see what the AI gives you, tweak it, and try again. That's totally normal — and expected!

You don't need fancy tools to begin. OpenAI's playground (or similar sites like Cohere) lets you test prompts quickly and easily.

🧩 Break It Down

If you've got a big task (like "Plan a unit for Year 8 Maths"), don't throw it all into one giant prompt. Instead:

- Break it into smaller steps (e.g. "List 5 engaging lesson ideas for Pythagoras").
- Build up as you go.

Starting simple helps you avoid getting overwhelmed — and helps the AI stay on track.

🧠 What Goes Into a Prompt?

A prompt can include some or all of these parts:

Element	What it is
Instruction	Tell the AI exactly what to do (e.g. *"Summarise this article..."*)
Context	Add helpful background info (*"This is for a Year 6 class..."*)
Input	The text or question you're working with (*"Here is the email to summarise..."*)
Output Format	What you want back (*"Write in bullet points"*)

✍️ Clear Instructions Work Best

Use action words like:

- *Write*, *Summarise*, *Explain*, *Classify*, *Translate*, *List*, *Order by difficulty*, etc.

Be direct, and don't be afraid to experiment. Try slightly different wording and compare what works best.

Example:
"Write three key points from this lesson plan for parents"
is more useful than
"Tell me about this."

🎯 Be Specific, Not Vague

The clearer you are, the better the AI response. For example:

❌ "Help me with this worksheet"
✅ "Suggest 3 extension tasks for this algebra worksheet aimed at high-attaining Year 9s"

You can also give an example in your prompt — it's a great way to guide the AI toward the kind of answer you want.

🔚 Keep Experimenting

There's no "perfect prompt" formula. You'll often find:

- Short and clear is better than long and rambling

- Relevant details = better output

- Too much info can confuse things — include only what the AI *really* needs

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✅ Focus on What You *Do* Want

Instead of saying, "Don't use technical language," say,
🟢 "Explain it in simple, child-friendly terms."

Telling the AI what not to do is less effective. Tell it exactly what to do instead.

🧑‍🏫 Final Thought

You don't need to be a tech wizard to write great prompts. Just like good lesson planning, clarity, structure, and a bit of trial-and-error go a long way.

Have fun with it — and get curious. You might be surprised by what you can create!