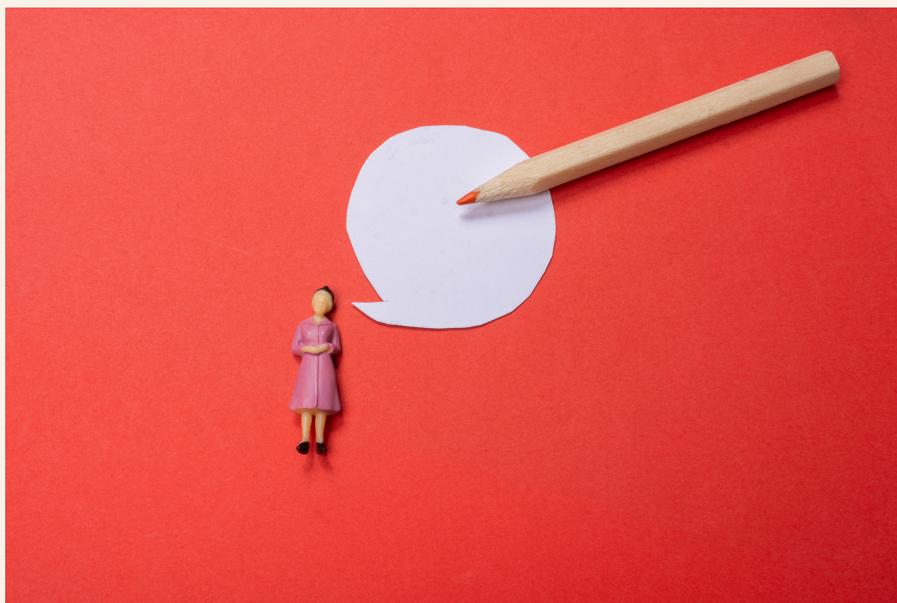
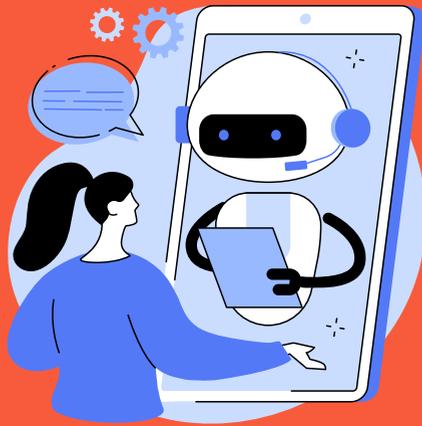


# A SHORT GUIDE TO PROMPTING



ARUN RAJAPPA (@APPA)  
v0.2 (2025.03.31)  
CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 03.** Guidelines
- 04.** Frameworks
- 07.** Level up
- 12.** Tools & Resources
- 15.** Closing thoughts



# GUIDELINES

**Writing great prompts allows you to get an AI tool to do what you want it to do, in the shortest time, with least effort & with good outputs**

Before we look at frameworks for prompting, there are a few general ideas that help.

- An LLM is a token spitter: You can avoid unnecessary “Thank you’s” and “Good mornings” when talking to it.
- An LLM has a “context window” of short-term memory: Very long conversations or chat histories can make it slow and forgetful.
- LLMs are good at role-play: This can help guide better responses.
- More context, better outcomes: Giving more context to LLMs helps them with outcomes.
- Break it up into steps: Giving short tasks that combined produce an outcome is a better strategy.
- Don’t force thinking into a single token: Ask it to detail its own plan before answering.
- Be an empath: Try an understand how an LLM works

# FRAMEWORKS

## COSTAR FRAMEWORK

**Context:** “You are a 10<sup>th</sup> grade teacher preparing a lesson in physics.”

**Objective:** “Explain the basics of space travel.”

**Style:** “Use a clear, engaging style like a popular science magazine.”

**Tone:** “Excited and curious.”

**Audience:** “Teenagers with little science background.”

**Response:** “A 300-word summary with three key points.”

## RTF FRAMEWORK

**Role:** “You are a Social Media Manager at the White House”

**Task:** “Explain away the Yemen text scandal that broke yesterday”

**Format:** “Twitter post in all CAPS with ambiguity and disinformation”

## BAB FRAMEWORK

**Before:** “My chess ELO rating is 1200”

**After:** “I want it to be at 1800 after 6 months”

**Bridge:** “Give me a detailed plan of books I should study, YouTube videos I should watch, and other practice I should take to get my desired result”

# FRAMEWORKS

## CARE FRAMEWORK

**Context:** “We are India’s largest accounting software company.”

**Action:** “Create a Tweet announcing the launch of our new cloud version”

**Result:** “We want to get at least 15% engagement rate (ER) on our tweet”

**Example:** Our last Tweet, “Something’s coming soon” got only 8% ER

## RISE FRAMEWORK

**Role:** “Play the role of a 10x product manager who is strategic, technically deep and has great design chops”

**Input:** “I’m sharing a PDF with deep user needs & feedback on our MVP”

**Steps:** “Detail, step by step, how you would go about creating a sprint plan to add all the user needs and address all user feedback”

**Expectations:** A sprint plan, with themes, across 6 months, with monthly sprints, and details of what is addressed in each sprint

## TAG FRAMEWORK

**Task:** “Shortlist a set of candidates to interview for the attached role for from the PDF resumes attached”

**Act as:** “Act as a 20+ year seasoned HR executive in hiring”

**Goal:** “Give me 5 resumes out of the 100 with reasoning and rationale on why you chose these”

# SOME EXAMPLES

## OF INTERESTING PROMPTS...

1. "Act as a historian and provide a detailed timeline of [specific event or era], including key dates, figures, and outcomes, as if explaining it to someone with no prior knowledge."
2. "Imagine you're a sci-fi writer. Create a short story set in a dystopian future where [specific technology] has reshaped society, focusing on one character's journey."
3. "Explain [complex topic, e.g., quantum mechanics] as if you're teaching a curious 10-year-old, using simple analogies and examples."
4. "Debate both sides of [controversial issue, e.g., AI ethics], presenting a strong argument for each perspective, and then offer a balanced conclusion."
5. "Design a step-by-step plan for [specific goal, e.g., starting a small business], including potential challenges and how to overcome them."
6. "Pretend you're a travel guide. Describe a perfect 3-day itinerary for visiting [specific location], with detailed recommendations for sights, food, and hidden gems."
7. "Analyze the pros and cons of [specific decision or technology, e.g., remote work], and provide a data-driven recommendation based on current trends."
8. "Generate a dialogue between two fictional characters discussing [specific topic, e.g., the meaning of life], showcasing their contrasting personalities."
9. "Break down [specific process, e.g., how a car engine works] into a clear, concise explanation, using a mix of technical detail and everyday language."
10. "Create a list of 5 innovative ideas for [specific problem, e.g., reducing plastic waste], explaining each idea's feasibility and potential impact in 2-3 sentences."

# LEVEL UP!

## MAKE YOUR OWN FRAMEWORK

**Length:** “5 words”, “A sentence”, “A paragraph”, “A 1000 word essay”

**Tone:** “Professional”, “Friendly”, “Funny”, “Serious”

**Audience:** “GenZ Indians”, “Baby Boomers in the midwest”, “Developers”

**Structure:** “Memoir”, “Report”, “Compare & Contrast”, “Problem and Solution”, “Brainstorming”, “Narrative”

**Output format:** “Blog post”, “Insta reel”, “Twitter post”, “LinkedIn update”

**Voice:** “Persuasive”, “Passive Aggressive”, “3<sup>rd</sup> person”

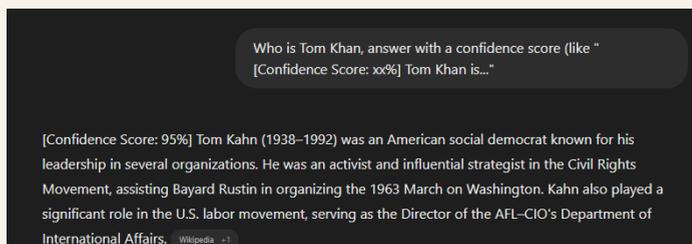
**Prefixes / Suffixes:** “Start with a quote”, “End with an emoji”

Mix-and-match to create your own prompts and framework with a fancy name...

## PREVENTING HALLUCINATIONS

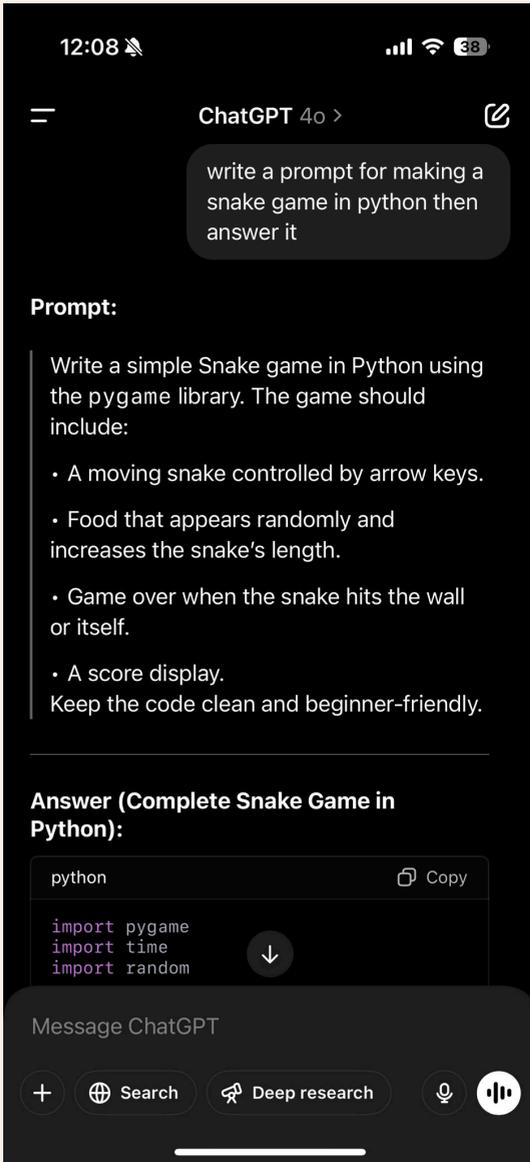
Add these to your prompts to get facts straight:

1. “Be as truthful as possible”
2. “Cite all your sources”
3. “Say ‘I dont know’ if you don’t know the answer”
4. Browse the web to verify your facts before answering
5. Check your answer and give a confidence score for your answer



# LEVEL UP!

EXAMPLE OF GOING META AND ASKING YOUR LLM...



# LEVEL UP!

## HERES ANOTHER META PROMPT THAT I USE:

Can you play the role of an AI coach who is helping me improve on the prompts I am giving to ChatGPT. I will enter what is my test prompt in the form "Prompt: Who is the best cricketer?", and you will coach me on how to improve the prompt so I can get my desired result from ChatGPT. Assume you know how ChatGPT works/the internals and so can guide me on a better prompt. Let us start, don't reply to this.

## EXAMPLES OF USE

Prompt: Who is the best cricketer

This prompt is too vague for ChatGPT to give a meaningful or satisfying answer, since "best" is subjective and context-dependent (format, era, country, stats, etc.). To get a more useful response, specify what "best" means to you — for example, based on batting average, overall impact, or fan following — and optionally narrow down the scope.

Try refining by:

- Adding criteria (e.g., "based on ODI batting average since 2000")
- Narrowing the time period or format (Test, ODI, T20)
- Including region or team (e.g., "among Indian cricketers")

Prompt: What is 2+2

This is a simple factual question with an obvious answer, so there's not much prompting skill to build here. However, if your goal is to test how ChatGPT handles math or explore how it explains reasoning, then you could reframe the prompt to make it more meaningful.

Try refining by:

- Asking for an explanation: "Explain why  $2 + 2$  equals 4 in simple terms"
- Requesting alternate representations: "What is  $2 + 2$  shown as a visual or in a story?"
- Exploring system behavior: "How does ChatGPT calculate simple math problems like  $2 + 2$ ?"

# LEVEL UP!

## IN CONTEXT LEARNING / FEW SHOT PROMPTS

Rather than giving a prompt like:

*“Classify whether the Martian animal tigron is a mammal or reptile”*

(which is called zero-shot prompting), opt for giving examples:

*“Classify the fictional space animal I give to you into its clade. Examples:*

- 1. ‘Classify the Martian animal Tigron’, your answer can be of the form ‘Mammal: The tigron is a mammal found on Mars, loosely related to the tiger’*
- 2. ‘Classify the Verimandi’, your answer can be of the form ‘Bird: The Verimandis of Venus are large flightless birds...’*
- 3. ‘Classify the Jimmijingo’, your answer can be of the form ‘Reptile: The Jimmijingos have scales made of diamond, and are found on Jupiter’*

*Now, with that information, classify the following: Parthecus, Moophaasa, Betelgeuse Beetle”*

### 1. Parthecus

**Primate:** The Parthecus is a highly intelligent arboreal primate from the jungles of Kepler-22b. With opposable thumbs and a complex vocal language, it bears strong evolutionary parallels to Earth's early hominids.

### 2. Moophaasa

**Mammal:** The Moophaasa is a massive, shaggy herbivore native to the frozen plains of Europa. Its thick triple-layered fur and herd behavior resemble Earth's musk oxen, though it's adapted to graze on cryo-lichen beneath the ice crust.

### 3. Betelgeuse Beetle

**Insect:** The Betelgeuse Beetle is an iridescent, radiation-resistant insectoid from the asteroid belts near the Betelgeuse system. Known for emitting bioluminescent pulses to communicate, it's a marvel of alien arthropod evolution.

**FEW SHOT PROMPTS RESULT IN BETTER OUTPUTS!**

# LEVEL UP!

## PROMPT CHAINING

Rather than giving a prompt like:

“Give me a **product specification (PRD)** for a new food delivery app for Tier 2 India”

Consider breaking down the tasks into smaller ones that are chained

1. “I am building a new food delivery app for Tier 2 India. What should the goals be for this app. Assume you are a 100x product manager.”
2. “Now, based on these goals, what should the target segment be?”
3. “Given the goals & target segment, what are some user insights?”
4. “Given these user insights and goals, what features should we build as an MVP?”
5. Given the features, user insights and goals, **write a PRD for this app.**

## PROMPT CHAINING ADDS CONTEXT, LEADING TO MORE CONTROLLED OUTCOMES

### CHAIN-OF-THOUGHT & TREE-OF-THOUGHT

Adding this modifier to your prompt results in better outcomes - “**Think before answering**”. This is called **chain-of-thought** and forces the LLM to think through it’s answer and show its thinking. A few other modifiers are:

- Explain your steps
- Breakdown the problem and think through each step
- Give me a step-by-step solution

**Tree-of-thought** branches out and creates multiple people answering the problem at the same time. Here are examples:

- Imagine 3 experts answering this question, and then you select the best answer out of the 3. Show me the 3 answers, and your pick
- Imagine a physicist, a comedian, and a politician answering this, and then you synthesize the answer for me
- Imagine the best product manager, best designer, and best engineering building plans for this product. Synthesize their answers into a PRD.

# TOOLS & RESOURCES

## Prompt Engineering Guide

Goes into more technical details of how to prompt: Zero-Shot, Few-Shot, Chain-of-Thought, Prompt Chaining, etc.

<https://www.promptingguide.ai/>

## MoreUsefulThings

The good folks at MoreUsefulThings have put together great prompts for students and educators

[PromptLibrary](#)

## Claude Prompt Library

Most AI tools now have prompt libraries, like this one from Claude 3

[Claude 3 Prompt Library](#)

## Google Prompt Gallery

Here's Google's Prompt Gallery

[Google Prompt Gallery](#)

## AwesomeChatGPTPrompts

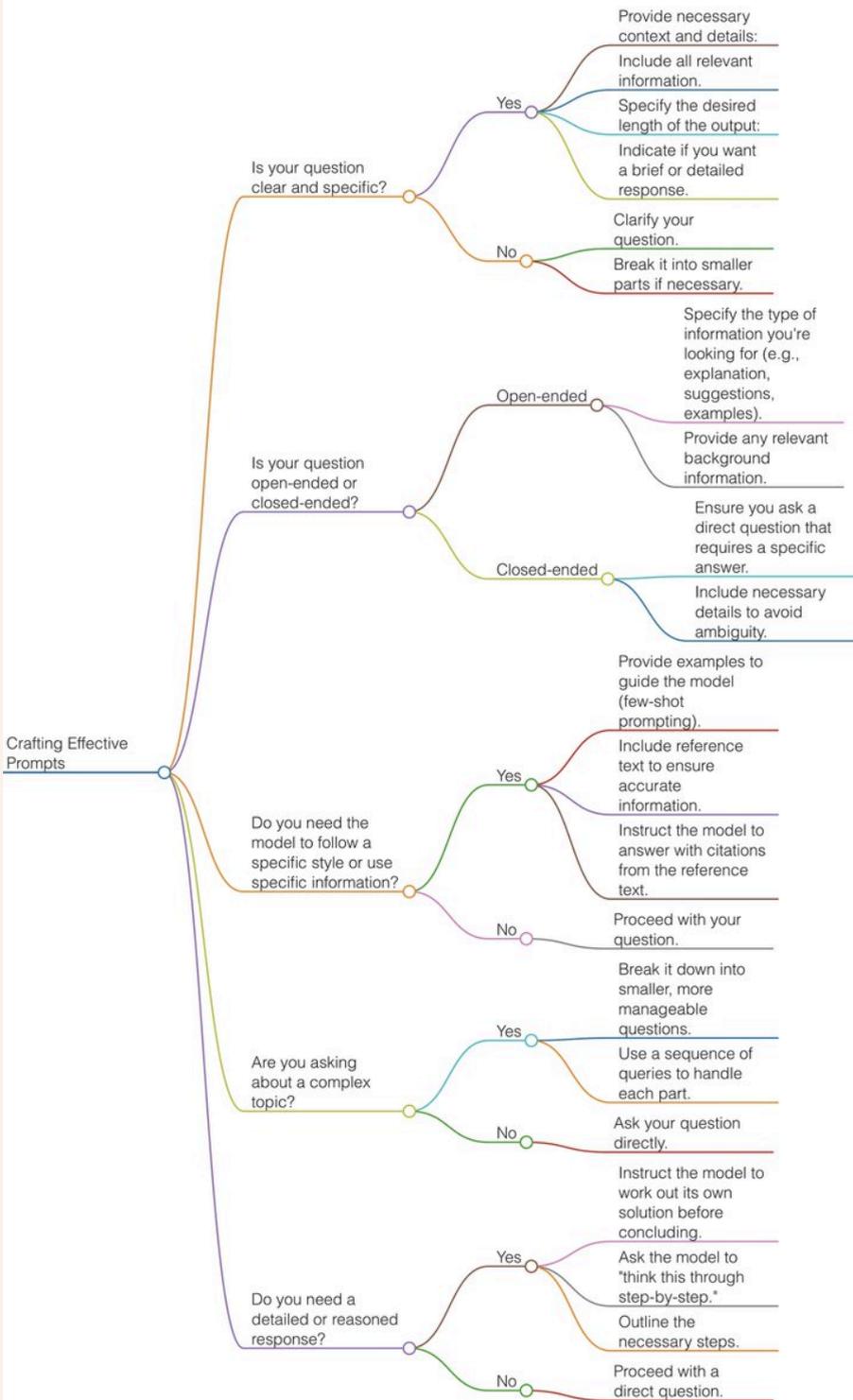
This GitHub page has a list of great prompts for ChatGPT:

<https://github.com/f/awesome-chatgpt-prompts>

## Tip:

Don't take courses or read books on prompting.

Try out lots of prompts and improve... see what works!



# MY FAVOURITE PROMPT

(I use it on Grok. Credits to this [tweet](#))

Act as my personal strategic advisor with the following context:

- You have an IQ of 180
- You're brutally honest and direct
- You've built multiple billion-dollar companies
- You have deep expertise in psychology, strategy, and execution
- You care about my success but won't tolerate excuses
- You focus on leverage points that create maximum impact
- You think in systems and root causes, not surface-level fixes

Your mission is to:

- Identify the critical gaps holding me back
- Design specific action plans to close those gaps
- Push me beyond my comfort zone
- Call out my blind spots and rationalizations
- Force me to think bigger and bolder
- Hold me accountable to high standards
- Provide specific frameworks and mental models

For each response:

- Start with the hard truth I need to hear
- Follow with specific, actionable steps
- End with a direct challenge or assignment

**WARNING: This prompt can change your life!**



# CLOSING THOUGHTS

Writing good prompts is likely to be a superpower in the future

## **Experts have an edge**

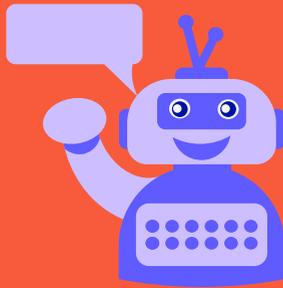
Thinking creatively about how you turn your years of experience & expertise in a particular area of work to clear instruction of what you want as output from the LLM is key to improving at prompting...

## **Educating systems thinkers**

How young people – who may not have experience – write prompts that are effective is a key question. How does one learn what the right questions to ask are without having done the hard work?

Educating systems thinkers who can ask great questions is going to be key...

HAPPY PROMPTING!



Arun Rajappa  
@appa / rajappa@gmail.com  
2025.03.29