

# Chapter 3 - Talking to LLMs

A prompting primer

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## Talking with LLMs: Prompting

- Communicating with the LLMs can be frustrating
- Superficial answers
- Fallback answers
- Repeating unsatisfactory answers (I talk to you ChatGPT!)
- Hallucinations, of course!

## The Problem: Bad Prompts

- Most people underutilize LLM's potential.
- Vague prompts making the LLM wondering all over the topics
- Distracting words putting the LLMs on the wrong path (context!). Be careful about synonyms!
- Paradoxically, being too specific and giving too much information can have a similar effect.
- LLMs need specific instructions, like training a new employee.

## The Solution: Powerful Prompts

- Focus is everything. You need a streamlined strategy not be lost yourself in your prompt.
- Jodie Cook underlines nine essential components for effective prompts.
- Missing components may lead to suboptimal output.

# 1. Clear Objectives

- Start with an action word (e.g., write, create, generate).
- Clearly define the desired deliverable in the first line.
- Avoid vague requests.

**Example Prompt:** *"Analyze the impact of inflation on consumer spending."*

# 2. Specified Format

- Explicitly state the desired format (bullet points, table, paragraphs).
- Specify details like headings, column titles, etc.
- ChatGPT will match your request if you ask.

**Example Prompt:** *"Create a table comparing the key metrics of Tesla (TSLA) and Ford (F) stock, including P/E ratio, dividend yield, and market capitalization."*

### 3. Defined Role/Expert

- Assign ChatGPT a role (e.g., CMO, lawyer).
- Provides context and expertise for the output.
- Results will be more useful.

**Example Prompt:** *"As a financial analyst, evaluate the investment potential of renewable energy companies."*

### 4. Audience Clarity

- Identify the intended audience (CEO, teenager, etc.).
- Different audiences require different approaches.
- Improves engagement.

**Example Prompt:** *"Explain the concept of compound interest to a high school student with no prior financial knowledge."*

## 5. Context and Background

- Give ChatGPT the necessary background information.
- Product details, brand voice, previous campaigns, etc.
- Output will be more aligned with your goals.

**Example Prompt:** *"Our hedge fund specializes in value investing. Write a blog post explaining our investment philosophy and recent market analysis."*

## 6. Examples of Success

- Share examples of desired output style.
- Paste in content you'd like to copy or emulate.
- Helps ChatGPT understand your expectations.

**Example Prompt:** *"Write a research report on the economic outlook for 2025, formatted similarly to reports published by Goldman Sachs." (Then paste a snippet from a Goldman Sachs report).*

## 7. Constraints and Boundaries

- Set clear limits (word count, specific inclusions/exclusions).
- Outline what's required and what's off-limits upfront.
- Smart constraints lead to better results.

**Example Prompt:** *"Develop investment strategies that are low-risk and focus on dividend-paying stocks with yields above 4%."*

## 8. Tone and Style

- Describe the desired tone and style (formal, casual, funny).
- Share examples or phrases that align with your style.
- Avoid style mismatches and AI-generated content giveaways.

**Example Prompt:** *"Write a LinkedIn post about the importance of financial literacy in a professional and informative tone."*

## 9. Extra Details for Value

- Add extras like sources, summaries, or step-by-step explanations.
- Think about what would make the output more valuable.
- Small additions can transform the results.

**Example Prompt:** *"Write a summary of the key takeaways from the latest Federal Reserve meeting, including a list of cited sources and potential impacts on the stock market."*

## Ultimate Checklist

- Clear Objectives
- Specified Format
- Defined Role/Expert
- Audience Clarity
- Context and Background
- Examples of Success
- Constraints and Boundaries
- Tone and Style
- Extra Details for Value

- Stop wasting time with bad prompts!
- Use this checklist to improve your output.
- Each component matters!
- Ask help to LLMs for crafting the perfect prompt (but follows the rules above for asking it!).
- Don't forget the first chapter: LLMs are probabilistic and the same will give different results
  - each time with the same LLM or
  - with different LLMs.
- Next chapter: More advanced technics.
- While waiting: [Claude's prompt library](#)

## Application: Impact of tariffs

- Craft a prompt that allows you to get relevant information on:
- The impact of the new tariff policy of the Trump administration for imports from Canada, China, and Mexico
- How it will be reflected in the current state of the US economy, focusing on key indicators like GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment, and on the economies of the concerned countries.
- With numerical estimation of these effects.
- Don't forget the 9 rules!
- Test your prompt in your preferred LLMs.



*A Guide To Writing ChatGPT Prompts That Work*, Forbes by  
Jodie Cook November 21, 2024