

Prompt Engineering Playbook

Beginner Techniques (Foundations)

1. Role Prompting

Assign the model a persona or role.

- Text Example: 'You are a career coach. Write a motivational email to someone who failed a job interview.'
- Image Example: 'A medieval knight, cinematic style, hyper realistic.'

2. Instruction + Context + Constraint

Combine a clear instruction, background context, and strict rules.

- Text Example: 'Context: A 10-year-old is learning fractions. Instruction: Explain division of fractions. Constraint: No math jargon, under 80 words.'
- Image Example: 'A cozy coffee shop interior. Constraint: photorealistic, 4K resolution, warm tones.'

3. Zero-shot vs. Few-shot Prompting

Zero-shot: Just the instruction. Few-shot: Add examples to guide output.

- Text Example: Zero: 'Write a haiku about rain.' Few-shot: Example: Haiku about snow → White silence falling... Task: Write a haiku about rain.
- Image Example: Zero: 'A dog in space.' Few-shot: use style reference images.

4. Output Formatting

Tell the AI how to structure results.

- Text Example: 'Return the answer in JSON with fields: title, summary, keywords.'
- Image Example: 'Generate an infographic-style poster.'

Intermediate Techniques (Better Control)

5. Chain of Thought (CoT)

Ask the model to reason step-by-step.

- Text Example: 'Solve step by step: A shop sells 3 apples for \$2. How much for 9 apples?'
- Image Example: 'Sketch the evolution of a seed to a tree, showing each stage in a sequence.'

6. Tree of Thought (ToT)

Explore multiple reasoning paths, evaluate, pick the best.

- Text Example: 'List 3 possible business ideas for AI tutoring. Rate them for feasibility and impact. Expand the best one.'
- Image Example: 'Generate 3 variations of a futuristic cityscape. Pick the most realistic.'

7. Self-Reflection / Critique Prompts

Ask the model to improve or critique its own answer.

- Text Example: 'Draft a blog intro. Now critique it for clarity and rewrite a stronger version.'
- Image Example: 'Generate a fantasy castle. Now reimagine it with more dramatic lighting.'

8. Delimiters & Separation

Use markers to separate content.

- Text Example: 'Summarize the following text: <<< [insert text]>>>'
- Image Example: 'Inside the frame: a dragon. Outside the frame: a medieval village.'

Advanced Techniques (Pro-Level)

9. Prompt Chaining

Break tasks into sequential prompts.

- Text Example: 1. 'Make a blog outline on climate change.'
2. 'Expand section 2 into 500 words.'
3. 'Rewrite for an 8th-grade reading level.'
- Image Example: 1. 'Sketch a city skyline.'
2. 'Add neon cyberpunk lights.'
3. 'Render in photorealistic style.'

10. Generated Knowledge Prompting

Ask the model to recall/generate facts first → then solve task.

- Text Example: 'First, list facts about the French Revolution. Then, explain why it happened.'
- Image Example: 'First describe features of an Egyptian pyramid. Then generate an image using those features.'

11. Negative Prompting

Explicitly tell the AI what not to do.

- Text Example: 'Write a product review. Do NOT mention price or shipping.'
- Image Example: 'Portrait of a woman, photorealistic, –no glasses, –no text, –no blur.'

12. RAG / Context Injection

Provide external knowledge or docs.

- Text Example: 'Using the provided report, summarize in 3 key findings.'
- Image Example: 'Using this uploaded sketch as a base, generate a 3D rendered version.'

Pro Tips Across All Tools

1. **Be Specific, Not Vague** - The more detail, the better.
2. **Iterate** - Rarely do you get the best result in one prompt.
3. **Think like a Teacher** - Guide the model step by step.
4. **Always Save Your Best Prompts** - Build your own library.

☒ With this toolkit, you can walk into any LLM or AI tool and know how to control it.
The trick is: **role + instruction + context + constraints → iterate + refine.**