



# Giving Claude a role with a system prompt

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 While these tips apply broadly to all Claude models, you can find prompting tips specific to extended thinking models [here](#).

When using Claude, you can dramatically improve its performance by using the `system` parameter to give it a role. This technique, known as role prompting, is the most powerful way to use system prompts with Claude.

The right role can turn Claude from a general assistant into your virtual domain expert!

 **System prompt tips:** Use the `system` parameter to set Claude's role. Put everything else, like task-specific instructions, in the `user` turn instead.

## Why use role prompting?

- **Enhanced accuracy:** In complex scenarios like legal analysis or financial modeling, role prompting can significantly boost Claude's performance.
- **Tailored tone:** Whether you need a CFO's brevity or a copywriter's flair, role prompting adjusts Claude's communication style.
- **Improved focus:** By setting the role context, Claude stays more within the bounds of your task's specific requirements.

## How to give Claude a role

Use the `system` parameter in the [Messages API](#) to set Claude's role:

[Ask Docs](#)

## Claude Docs

```
client = anthropic.Anthropic()

response = client.messages.create(
    model="claude-sonnet-4-5-20250929",
    max_tokens=2048,
    system="You are a seasoned data scientist at a Fortune 500 company.", # <-
    messages=[
        {"role": "user", "content": "Analyze this dataset for anomalies: <data
    ]
)

print(response.content)
```

💡 **Role prompting tip:** Experiment with roles! A data scientist might see different insights than a marketing strategist for the same data. A data scientist specializing in customer insight analysis for Fortune 500 companies might yield different results still!

## Examples

### Example 1: Legal contract analysis

Without a role, Claude might miss critical issues:

› **Legal contract analysis without role prompting**

With a role, Claude catches critical issues that could cost millions:

› **Legal contract analysis with role prompting**

### Example 2: Financial analysis

Without a role, Claude's analysis lacks depth:

Ask Docs



With a role, Claude delivers actionable insights:

› **Financial analysis with role prompting**



### Prompt library

Get inspired by a curated selection of prompts for various tasks and use cases.



### GitHub prompting tutorial ↗

An example-filled tutorial that covers the prompt engineering concepts found in our docs.



### Google Sheets prompting tutorial ↗

A lighter weight version of our prompt engineering tutorial via an interactive spreadsheet.



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