



# Giving Claude a role with a system prompt

 Copy page 

 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](#)



```
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.



Solutions

AI agents

Code modernization

Coding

Learn

Blog

Catalog

Courses

Ask Docs



---

[Financial services](#)[Government](#)[Life sciences](#)[Partners](#)[Amazon Bedrock](#)[Google Cloud's Vertex AI](#)[Customer stories](#)[Engineering at Anthropic](#)[Events](#)[Powered by Claude](#)[Service partners](#)[Startups program](#)[Company](#)[Anthropic](#)[Careers](#)[Economic Futures](#)[Research](#)[News](#)[Responsible Scaling Policy](#)[Security and compliance](#)[Transparency](#)[Help and security](#)[Availability](#)[Status](#)[Support](#)[Discord](#)[Terms and policies](#)[Privacy policy](#)[Responsible disclosure policy](#)[Terms of service: Commercial](#)[Terms of service: Consumer](#)[Usage policy](#)[Ask Docs](#)