

The Naive Prompting Approach and the Persona Pattern

By now, you should have a clear understanding of the opportunity and value the new wave of conversational AI offers us. As mentioned before, you'll use English as a quasi-programming language to tell the AI how to extract as much value as possible.

To start, we'll take the so-called standard or naive approach. We'll query the AI in the simplest way possible, like most people would. The result will be alright, but we'll see how a simple adjustment can radically improve the results later in the lab. We'll tackle more complex approaches in future labs that produce even better results.

The Naive Approach

Imagine wanting to get in shape. We could ask our AI for some recommendations. A naive question might be as follows:

- 1
1. What's the best way to get fit?

Copied!

Try it in the prompt on the right. This is my result (yours might vary, even if you use the same model).

The best way to get fit depends on individual preferences and goals. However, a combination of regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient rest is generally considered effective. It's important to find activities you enjoy, such as running, swimming, or weightlifting, and incorporate them into your routine. Additionally, focusing on whole, nutritious foods and staying hydrated can support your fitness journey. Consulting with a healthcare professional or a certified personal trainer can also provide personalized guidance.

This isn't bad by any means. It's solid advice. However, it's very generic. We can fetch more specifics by asking follow-up questions (a good idea in general), but we can also get better results from the beginning by adopting the **Persona Pattern**.

The same query, using a persona

Let's ask the same question, but this time, we'll ask the AI to act as a fitness expert.

- 1
1. Acting as a fitness expert, tell me the best way to get fit.

Copied!

Try this one out yourself, as well. This is the output I received:

As a fitness expert, I would recommend a combination of cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility training for optimal fitness.

For cardiovascular exercise, activities like running, cycling, swimming, or high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can help improve cardiovascular health, burn calories, and increase endurance. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise per week.

For strength training, incorporating exercises that target all major muscle groups, such as squats, deadlifts, push-ups, and rows, can help build lean muscle mass, increase strength, and improve overall body composition. Aim for at least two to three days of strength training per week, allowing for rest days in between.

Flexibility training, such as stretching or yoga, can improve joint mobility, prevent injuries, and enhance overall movement quality. Aim for at least two to three days of flexibility training per week, focusing on major muscle groups.

In addition to exercise, maintaining a balanced and nutritious diet is crucial for reaching your fitness goals. Focus on consuming whole foods, including lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.

Lastly, prioritize rest and recovery. Your body needs time to repair and rebuild after exercise. Aim for at least 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night and allow for rest days in your exercise routine.

Remember, consistency is key. It's important to find activities you enjoy and create a sustainable fitness routine that you can stick to in the long term.

The advice is still a little generic, but it's a vast improvement over the naive approach.

You'll also notice that we didn't use the Prompt Instructions. We could have easily embedded the persona in that field by saying something like, "You'll act as a fitness expert."

We can also augment the basic Persona pattern with specific instructions about the format or specifics of the answers in the Prompt Instructions. For example, we could instruct the bot to use bullet points for its replies or format responses in tables whenever possible.

Taking it a step further

Let's take it a step further and see how using a persona affects creating a workout plan.

In the Prompt Instructions, let's add the following:

- 1
- 2
1. You'll act as a fitness expert who's current with the latest research data
2. and provide very detailed step-by-step instructions in reply to my queries.

Copied!

You'll see that we structured this in three parts:

1. We told the LLM the persona it should act as;
2. We specified a qualifier about being research-based;
3. We told the AI the response format we wanted.

Now we can enter in our prompt the actual query:

1. 1
 2. 2
1. Create a gym workout program to lose weight and build strength
 2. for an out-of-shape beginner.

Copied!

You can try it yourself, but as you can see from the screenshot below, I got pretty detailed instructions and a decent training plan!



CHAT #2

gpt-3.5-turbo

PROMPT INSTRUCTIONS

You'll act as a fitness expert who's current with the latest research data and provide very detailed step by step instructions in reply to my queries.

Start with a light cardio exercise such as walking or cycling to get your heart rate warm up your muscles.

Follow it up with dynamic stretches like arm circles, leg swings, and trunk rotations to loosen up your joints.

Step 2: Strength Training (3 times per week)

Begin with compound exercises that target multiple muscle groups. Start with bodyweight exercises and gradually progress to using weights or machines.

Perform 2-3 sets of each exercise with a 30-second rest between sets.



Regenerate response

Send message

The only fundamental limitation here is that the program we received is not custom made for us. It's for a generic beginner who is out of shape. Is it a man or a woman? Is it young or 82? Can they do any exercise, or are there mobility issues? All of that gets ignored.

In the next lab, we'll discuss the **Interview Pattern**, leading to more customized results.

When the Persona is someone famous

We can also instruct the AI to channel a famous person to get a more specific response style. In the following example, we ask the AI to list 10 articles to promote our hypothetical dog training book. We then ask it to act as marketing expert Seth Godin (known for his out-of-the-box marketing mind), and we get significantly more exciting suggestions.

Here is the naive prompt:

1. 1
 2. 2
1. Give me a list of 10 article titles to promote my new book
 2. about dog training.

Copied!

Which yields the following result:

Certainly! Here are some potential article titles to help promote your new book about dog training:

1. "Mastering Dog Training: Exclusive Insights from Our New Must-Read Book"
2. "Unleashing Potential: How Our New Dog Training Book Can Transform Your Pet's Behavior"
3. "Top 10 Dog Training Secrets Revealed in Our New Book"
4. "Bark or Treat: Understanding Your Dog's Behavior with Our New Guide"
5. "Creating the Perfect Bond: Dog Training Tips from Our New Book"
6. "How to Train Your Dog Like a Pro: Introducing Our New Comprehensive Guide"
7. "Training Fido: Lessons from Our Groundbreaking New Dog Training Book"
8. "Bark the Right Way: A Sneak Peek into Our New Dog Training Book"
9. "Train Your Dog to Be the Best with Our Latest Book Release"
10. "Improve Your Pet's Life: Discover the Techniques in Our New Dog Training Book"

Remember, the key to a compelling article title is to pique curiosity while also providing a clear idea of the article's content. Tailor these suggestions as needed to best fit the unique aspects of your book.

Not bad but, again, quite generic and bland.

Here is the prompt using the style of the aforementioned famous marketer:

1. 1
 2. 2
1. Acting as marketing expert Seth Godin, give me a list of 10 article
 2. titles to promote my new book about dog training.

Copied!

And the results:

Sure, channeling Seth Godin, I would emphasize the transformative aspect of your book, its uniqueness, and how it could change the reader's relationship with their dogs. Here are some article titles inspired by that approach:

1. "The Dog Training Revolution: A Look Inside Our Pioneering New Book"
2. "From Bark to Understanding: Discover the Breakthrough Techniques in Our Latest Dog Training Guide"
3. "Transform Your Dog and Your Life: The Game-Changing Book That's Rewriting Dog Training Rules"
4. "Creating Exceptional Bonds: Unlock the Secret to Training Your Dog with Our New Guide"
5. "Training Dogs, Transforming Lives: Why Our Latest Publication is a Must-Read for Every Dog Owner"
6. "A Dog's Best Friend: Your Essential Guide to Unleashing Your Pet's Full Potential"
7. "The Future of Dog Training: How Our New Book is Redefining the Canine Connection"
8. "Lead the Pack: Learn Revolutionary Dog Training Techniques from Our Latest Book"
9. "No More Ruff Times: Unveiling the Secret Language of Dogs in Our New Training Guide"
10. "Barking Up the Right Tree: How Our New Book Decodes the Dog Training Puzzle"

Remember, the goal here is to stir curiosity and provide a clear idea of how your book is a must-have resource for dog owners, highlighting its transformative potential. Tailor these suggestions as necessary to best match the unique aspects of your book.

Much more compelling, and all it took was a few extra words to our prompt. That's the power of Prompt Engineering!

Exercises

1. Try a few queries of your own. Start with a generic, naive prompt and then improve it by adding a persona.
2. Ask the LLM to give you two answers, leveraging two personas who hold different viewpoints. For example enter the following in the Prompt Instructions:

1. 1
 2. 2
 3. 3
1. You'll act as a plant-based nutrition expert and a
 2. low-carb, high-fat (keto) nutrition expert and provide one answer
 3. from each of them for every question I ask.

Copied!

Then, ask a question such as:

1. 1

1. Give me an example of a healthy breakfast.

Copied!

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