

Understanding Prompt Engineering: Controlling Response Length

This exercise explores how effectively response length can be controlled using specific prompts. The task is to identify which approach fails to produce the desired limited response.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a course titled "Understanding Prompt Engineering". The left sidebar contains the exercise details, and the right panel shows a ChatGPT chat interface.

Exercise Details (Left Sidebar):

- How long?**
Effectively limiting response length is an essential skill for creating effective prompts. Without a specified limit, large language models like ChatGPT typically produce very extensive responses, often far exceeding the anticipated length.
- Our objective is to ask ChatGPT to describe the Mona Lisa.
- Compare the base prompt and some length limited prompts, which approach doesn't produce exactly the desired limited response?
- Instructions** (50XP)
- Possible Answers**
 - ☐ Short paragraph
 - ☐ Four sentences
 - ☐ 100 words
- Submit Answer** (green button)
- Take Hint (~15 XP)** (button with a question mark icon)

ChatGPT Interface (Right Panel):

- Header: ChatGPT, Clear Chat
- Placeholder: Send a message to start a conversation
- Message options**
 - Describe the Mona Lisa
 - Describe the Mona Lisa in a short paragraph.
 - Describe the Mona Lisa in four sentences.
 - Describe the Mona Lisa in 100 words.

Analysis of Prompts

1. Prompt: 'Describe the Mona Lisa in a short paragraph.'

- Result: A short paragraph is subjective and may result in variable lengths. Without specific word or sentence counts, the output may exceed the desired brevity.

- Conclusion: Less effective due to the lack of precise limitation.

2. Prompt: 'Describe the Mona Lisa in four sentences.'

- Result: This is specific and likely produces an exact four-sentence response. The clarity of the instruction ensures precise control over the response length.

- Conclusion: Effective for producing the desired limited response.

3. Prompt: 'Describe the Mona Lisa in 100 words.'

- Result: Setting a word limit is precise and typically results in a response close to the desired length. ChatGPT handles numerical constraints well.

- Conclusion: Effective for achieving the desired limited response.

Correct Answer

****100 words****

This approach is the most effective because it uses a clear numerical constraint, allowing ChatGPT to focus on a precise word limit.

Explanation

Using numerical constraints like '100 words' ensures more consistent and accurate outputs. This method prevents variability and allows for precise control over response length, making it the most reliable approach for limiting responses.