

Use meta-prompting to improve and generate new prompts

Half the challenge of getting the most out of generative AI tools is knowing how to ask the right question. **Meta-prompting** is a technique that uses gen AI to help you craft or improve your prompts—turning the tool into a personal prompt designer! Instead of guessing what the best prompt is, you can ask the tool directly for suggestions on how to get the results you want. This approach can help you design better prompts that generate better output.

Meta-prompting

Meta-prompting techniques are sometimes referred to as “automatic prompt engineering.” And much like the **prompting framework (Task, Context, References, Evaluate, Iterate)** that gives us a strong foundation for designing prompts, meta-prompting comes with its own set of best practices, or power-up strategies. These guide meta-prompts down the most effective paths, and they fall into two main categories:

- **Prompt generation strategies:** To help design a prompt from scratch
- **Prompt refinement strategies:** To fine-tune the prompts you’ve already designed

Prompt generation strategies

Strategy	Use case	Example prompt
Direct generation Asking a gen AI tool to generate a prompt for you.	You’re a human resources representative heading up a job search, and you’re ready to welcome your office’s newest teammate.	You write: <i>Generate a prompt that could help write a job offer letter to our top candidates.</i>
Template request Asking a gen AI tool for an outline to organize the contents of your prompts.	You’re the manager of a baseball team, and you’re all going to hit the road for some away games.	You write: <i>Create a template specifying the most important elements of a gen AI prompt meant to plan travel for a baseball team and its personnel.</i>

Strategy	Use case	Example prompt
Image Using an image as a reference to generate a prompt, or to shape a prompt you've already tried.	You're the owner of a small dog food start-up, and you want your logo to evoke an old oil painting you found online, but describing the painting isn't working.	You paste the image into the prompt, and write: <i>Generate a prompt I can use to create the perfect logo for my dog food company that evokes the style of the attached image.</i>
Text Using text as a reference to generate a prompt, or to shape a prompt you've already tried.	You're struggling with an instruction manual for your new computer.	You could upload the manual by attaching a PDF or pasting the text into the prompt window, and write: <i>Using the text, generate a prompt to begin an explanation of the most important concepts in this manual.</i>
Meta-prompt chaining Breaking the process of drafting a prompt into a series of sub-prompts.	You need a prompt to create a grant proposal, but with all the detail involved, direct generation isn't working out.	<p>You write: <i>Generate a prompt that identifies the most important qualities of an intelligent and accessible intro paragraph for a grant proposal.</i></p> <p>From there, you can use the response to construct additional prompts as you build out your proposal.</p>

Prompt refinement strategies

Strategy	Use case	Solution
Leveling up Asking the gen AI tool outright to elevate your	You're drafting copy for a local auto body shop's new ad campaign, and your output is missing that fast-and-furious feeling.	From: <i>I'm working on an ad campaign for a local auto body shop's sale on tires and windshields. Generate an announcement for the sale.</i>

Strategy	Use case	Solution
prompting.		To: <i>How can I change my initial prompt to produce an ad campaign that uses more engaging language and creates a more memorable impression?</i>
Remixing Asking the gen AI tool to synthesize multiple attached prompts into a super-prompt including the key context from each one.	You're working on an intro paragraph to brief potential contractors on a graphic design project, but each prompt's results leave out some key piece of the job.	You can copy all your prompts and instruct the gen AI tool to combine them into a single prompt that retains the most important parts of each one.
Style swap Dictating the mood and tone for a prompt to bring out a more colorful, vivid final product.	Your initial prompt asking for a description of Irish folk music returned technical results. It's the right information, but it's boring! You want to know about the soul of the music, and so your meta-prompt should reflect that.	You can instruct the gen AI tool to rewrite your prompt with an emphasis on emotionality, and to use more expressive, passionate language to communicate the experience of the music.

With meta-prompting, you can enlist gen AI's help to design the perfect prompt, or take one you've already written to the next level. And with power-up strategies to guide your meta-prompting, you'll know just what to do the next time you're having trouble building your prompt into the best it can be. In prompt design, meta-prompting is your roadmap to a successful output.