

ChatGPT Basics

This article is rated **easy**.

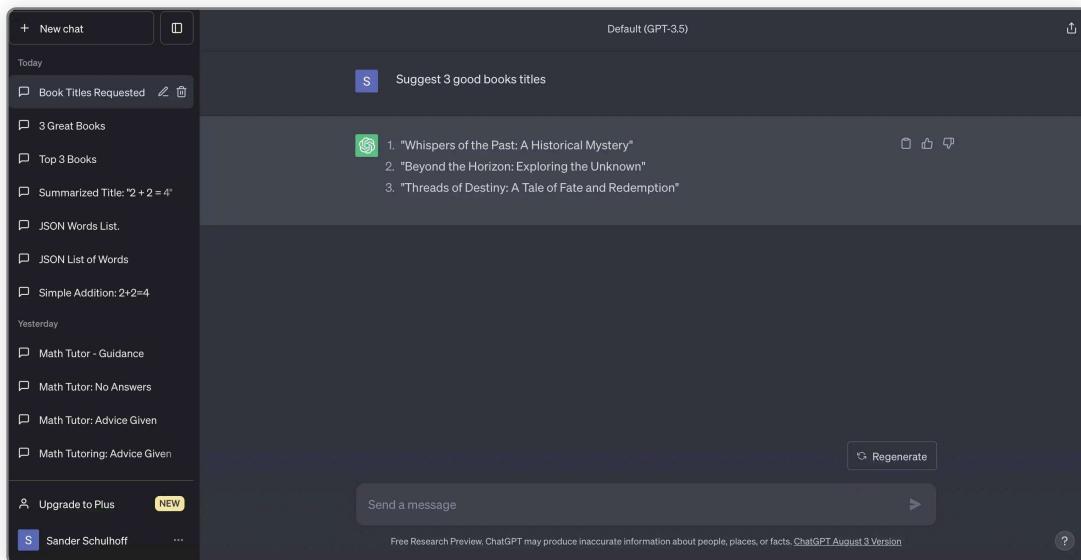
⌚ Reading Time: 7 minutes

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Throughout this **Basics Guide**, we'll be using **ChatGPT**, one of the most popular and accessible AI chatbots. ChatGPT is known for its versatility and ease of use, supporting a wide range of tasks from simple queries to complex problem-solving.



ChatGPT's user interface features a clean, conversation-style layout where you can type prompts and receive AI-generated responses.

While there are other AI tools available, we've chosen ChatGPT for its broad capabilities and user-friendly setup, making it a great starting point for learning and

experimenting with AI models.



For a more detailed introduction to ChatGPT with visual step-by-step guidance, check out our free course, [ChatGPT for Everyone](#).

In this section, we'll walk you through setting up ChatGPT and demonstrate its uses for a variety of tasks, from simple queries to more advanced applications like summarizing articles and solving math problems.

Set up ChatGPT

Getting started with ChatGPT is simple:

- Navigate to <http://chat.openai.com>
- It should ask you to make an account. Go ahead and do so.
- Log in with this account

Need help with setup? Here's a helpful video to guide you through:

How to Log in to ChatGPT in One Minute



Mobile Setup

You can also download the ChatGPT app from your device's app store (iOS/Android). The interface is similar, and you can log in with the same account.

Try Out Some Prompts with ChatGPT

Now that you've set up ChatGPT, let's try out a few prompts for simple and more advanced tasks.

Note

A prompt is the input or instruction given to an AI model to generate a response. Prompts can be simple (a question) or complex (detailed instructions with context, tone, style, and format specifications). The quality of the AI's response depends directly on how clear, detailed, and structured the prompt is. You can read more about prompts in our article about [prompt engineering](#).

Keep in mind that **prompt** can be a verb or a noun. You can prompt a model, or you can give a model a prompt. Both mean the same thing, and the process of interacting with the model this way is called **prompting**. We'll dive deeper into prompt engineering techniques in next lessons.

Simple Query: Color of Grass

Let's start with a very simple question. Can ChatGPT tell us the color of grass?



Prompt



Copy

What color is grass?



AI Output



Copy

Grass is green.

This is a straightforward factual query. It's a great way to get a feel for how ChatGPT responds to simple inputs.

Summarizing an Article

Now, let's try something more practical: summarizing a paragraph. Say you're reading an article about snowfall in Florida and want to quickly grasp the main points.

You can paste the paragraph into ChatGPT and ask for a summary ¹:



Prompt



Copy

It is very rare for snow to fall in the U.S. state of Florida, especially in the central and southern portions of the state. Except for the far northern areas of the state, most of the major cities in Florida have never recorded measurable snowfall, though trace amounts have been recorded, or flurries in the air observed a few times each century. According to the National Weather Service, in the Florida Keys and Key West, there is no known occurrence of snow flurries since the European colonization of the region more than 300 years ago. In Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Palm Beach there has been only one known report of snow flurries observed in the air in more than 200 years; this occurred in January 1977. In any event, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Palm Beach have not seen snow flurries before or since this 1977 event.

Summarize this paragraph in a single sentence:

Here's the response:



AI Output



Copy

Snowfall is extremely rare in Florida, except for the far northern areas, and only one instance of snow flurries in the air has been recorded in the major cities of Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Palm Beach in the last 200 years.

Caution

Your result may differ slightly because ChatGPT's responses can vary. We'll explain why later in this guide.

Solving Math Problems

ChatGPT can also solve math problems! Let's give it a simple arithmetic problem to see how it handles math.



Prompt

Copy

If I have 20 apples, eat three of them, and sell three more, how many do I have left?



AI Output

Copy

If you have 20 apples and you eat three of them, you will have $20 - 3 = 17$ apples left.

After eating three apples (17 left), if you sell three more, you will have $17 - 3 = 14$ apples left.

It's that simple! ChatGPT can handle both basic and more advanced math problems, even walking you through solutions step-by-step for more complicated calculations.

Best Practices for Prompting ChatGPT

Here are some helpful tips for writing prompts to get better results from ChatGPT:

- 1. Be specific and clear:** Provide detailed context and use actionable verbs in your prompts.

Instead of vague prompts like "Tell me about grass", try:



Prompt

Copy

Analyze the characteristics of grass in temperate regions, focusing on:

1. Typical color variations by season
2. Average height

3. Common species Format the response as bullet points.

Tips for clear prompts:

- Use clear action verbs (analyze, explain, summarize, list)
- Specify the desired format
- Include relevant context
- Define any constraints

2. Structure your prompts: Use clear formatting and organization.



Prompt



Copy

Compete in HackAPrompt 2.0, the world's largest AI Red-Teaming competition!

[Check it out →](#)



Learn Prompting



- Implications

Tips for structuring prompts:

- Use prefixes to label different parts (Input:, Context:, Task:, Format:)
- Break complex requirements into numbered lists
- Specify output format explicitly

3. Include necessary context: Provide background information and specify how it should be used.



Prompt



Copy

Context: I'm a high school teacher preparing a lesson on photosynthesis

Audience: 10th-grade students

Task: Create an explanation of photosynthesis that:

- Uses simple analogies
- Includes 3 key concepts
- Avoids technical jargon

Length: 2-3 paragraphs

4. Use few-shot examples: When needed, provide examples to guide the output format.



Prompt



Copy

Convert these dates to ISO format. Follow these examples:

Input: March 15, 2024

Output: 2024-03-15

Input: December 31, 2023

Output: 2023-12-31

Now convert: January 1, 2025

5. Iterate and refine: Don't hesitate to refine your prompts based on responses.

- Start with clear, specific instructions
- Use structured formatting with prefixes
- Include relevant context and constraints
- Provide examples when format is important
- Iterate and refine based on responses
- Break complex tasks into smaller steps



Note

While we've covered some key tips here like providing context and using examples, you can find many more detailed recommendations for writing effective prompts in our [Tips for Writing Better Prompts](#) section. Feel free to check it out!

Conclusion

You should now be comfortable with what a prompt is and how to do some basic prompting with ChatGPT. Remember that prompts are the core of how you interact with AI models like ChatGPT, and [effective prompting](#) can lead to more accurate and useful responses.

Solving Common Issues

What should I do if ChatGPT's response is too vague? +

How can I fix it when ChatGPT misunderstands my question? +

What can I do if ChatGPT keeps repeating information? +

Quick Recap

What is a prompt? +

What is prompting in ChatGPT? +

How can I learn to write effective ChatGPT prompts? +

How does ChatGPT understand and process prompts? +

How long can a ChatGPT prompt be? +

Can I ask ChatGPT multiple questions in one conversation? +

Footnotes

1. This paragraph is from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_in_Florida ↪

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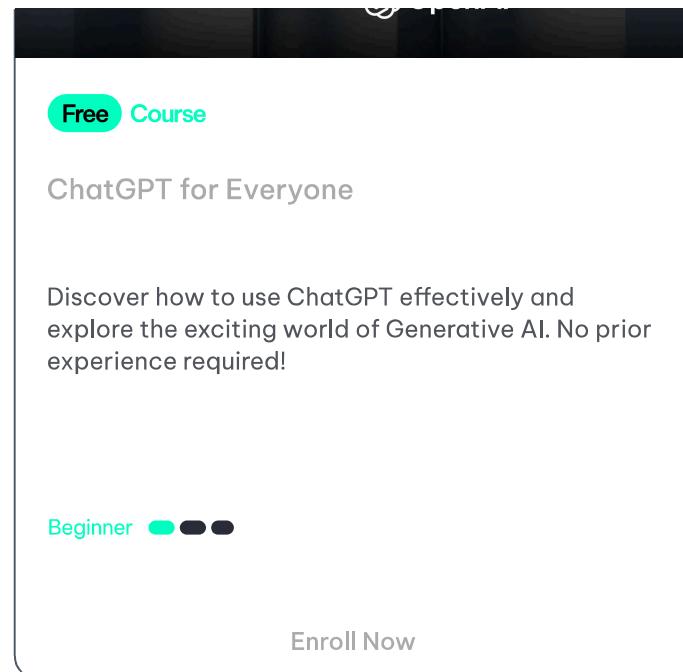
Valeriia Kuka, Head of Content at Learn Prompting, is passionate about making AI and ML accessible. Valeriia previously grew a 60K+ follower AI-focused social media account, earning reposts from Stanford NLP, Amazon Research, Hugging Face, and AI researchers. She has also worked with AI/ML newsletters and global communities with 100K+ members and authored clear and concise explainers and historical articles.

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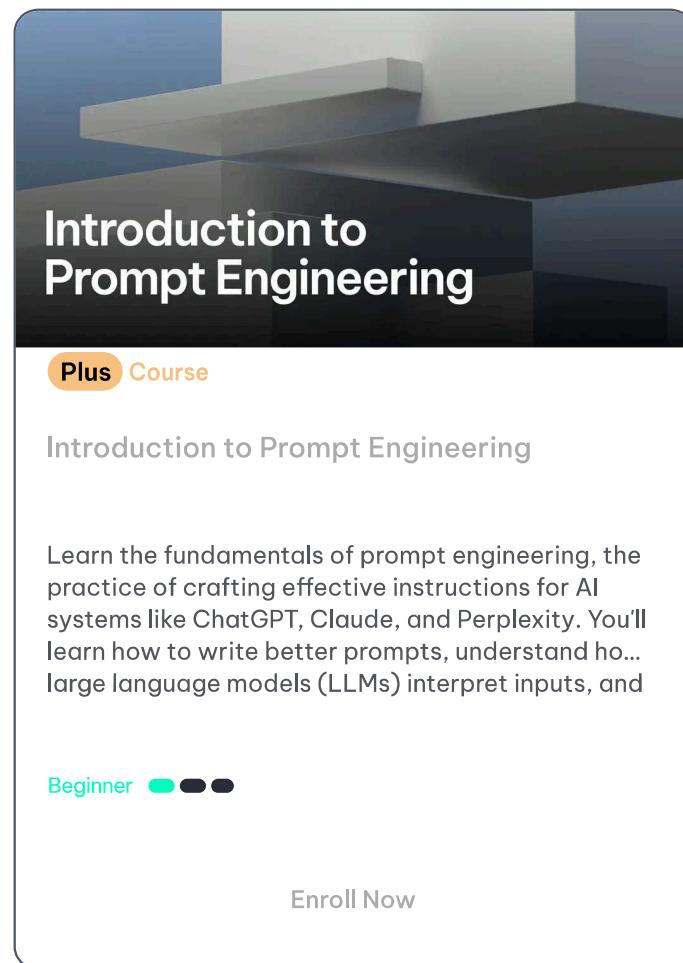
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Beginner 

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Introduction to Prompt Engineering

Plus Course

Introduction to Prompt Engineering

Learn the fundamentals of prompt engineering, the practice of crafting effective instructions for AI systems like ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity. You'll learn how to write better prompts, understand how large language models (LLMs) interpret inputs, and

Beginner 

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Advanced Prompt Engineering

The image shows a smartphone displaying a course page. The top of the screen has a black bar with the word 'Engineering' in white. Below this is a white card with rounded corners. At the top left of the card is an orange oval containing the word 'Plus'. To its right, the word 'Course' is written in orange. In the center of the card, the title 'Advanced Prompt Engineering' is displayed in a dark gray font. Below the title is a detailed description: 'Discover advanced techniques in prompt engineering to enhance the accuracy, reliability, and efficiency of AI-generated responses. Learn systematic methods for creating complex prompts... for AI models like GPT-4o, Claude, and Gemini.' At the bottom left of the card, the word 'Advanced' is followed by three small red circular icons. At the bottom right, the text 'Enroll Now' is visible.

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