

PROMPT ENGINEERING

Chain complex prompts for stronger performance

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ⓘ While these tips apply broadly to all Claude models, you can find prompting tips specific to extended thinking models [here](#).

When working with complex tasks, Claude can sometimes drop the ball if you try to handle everything in a single prompt. Chain of thought (CoT) prompting is great, but what if your task has multiple distinct steps that each require in-depth thought?

Enter prompt chaining: breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable subtasks.

Why chain prompts?

1. **Accuracy:** Each subtask gets Claude's full attention, reducing errors.
2. **Clarity:** Simpler subtasks mean clearer instructions and outputs.
3. **Traceability:** Easily pinpoint and fix issues in your prompt chain.

When to chain prompts

Use prompt chaining for multi-step tasks like research synthesis, document analysis, or iterative content creation. When a task involves multiple transformations, citations, or instructions, chaining prevents Claude from dropping or mishandling steps.

Remember: Each link in the chain gets Claude's full attention!

Ask Docs 

How to chain prompts

1. **Identify subtasks:** Break your task into distinct, sequential steps.
2. **Structure with XML for clear handoffs:** Use XML tags to pass outputs between prompts.
3. **Have a single-task goal:** Each subtask should have a single, clear objective.
4. **Iterate:** Refine subtasks based on Claude's performance.

Example chained workflows:

Multi-step analysis: See the legal and business examples below.

Content creation pipelines: Research → Outline → Draft → Edit → Format.

Data processing: Extract → Transform → Analyze → Visualize.

Decision-making: Gather info → List options → Analyze each → Recommend.

Verification loops: Generate content → Review → Refine → Re-review.



Optimization tip: For tasks with independent subtasks (like analyzing multiple docs), create separate prompts and run them in parallel for speed.

Advanced: Self-correction chains

You can chain prompts to have Claude review its own work! This catches errors and refines outputs, especially for high-stakes tasks.

Example: Self-correcting research summary

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Example: Analyzing a legal contract (with chaining)

Example: Multitenancy strategy review

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.

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