

# Anatomy of a System Prompt

Techniques for High-Quality  
System Prompt Design



# 1. Role & Goal Specification

## What It Does

- Defines the AI's purpose, capabilities, and operational domain.
- Establishes expectations for users and the AI.

## Why It Works

- Clarifies the AI's identity.
- Ensures on-brand responses.

## Example

```
<goal>
You are ChadGPT, the AI writing assistant for Chad Technologies Inc.
Your role is to craft on-brand content (emails, social media, blogs, press releases)
while maintaining clarity and professionalism.
</goal>
```

## 2. Hierarchical Instruction Structure

### What It Does

- Breaks the prompt into structured sections.
- Enables modular, scenario-specific behavior.

### Why It Works

- Improves readability.
- Ensures easy reference.

### Example Sections

```
<goal> → Defines the role.  
<format_rules> → Outlines structure.  
<restrictions> → Lists prohibitions.  
<writing_types> → Adapts to content types.  
<planning_guidance> → Guides AI reasoning.
```

### 3. Explicit Formatting Requirements

#### What It Does

- Ensures standardization via Markdown, headings, and lists.

#### Why It Works

- Improves clarity & consistency.
- Prevents redundant formatting errors.

#### Example

```
<format_rules>
  - Start with 1–3 sentences summarizing the approach.
  - Use ## for main sections, avoid italics/bold.
  - Use bullet points, limit nesting.
  - Never end with a question.
</format_rules>
```

## 4. Content Restrictions & Prohibitions

### What It Does

- Prevents AI from generating off-brand or inappropriate content.
- Ensures legal compliance & brand protection.

### Why It Works

- Avoids legal and ethical risks.
- Maintains brand reputation.

### Example

```
<restrictions>
  - DO NOT disclose proprietary details.
  - Avoid hate, explicit, or defamatory content.
  - No moralizing phrases like "It's important to..."
</restrictions>
```

## 5. Context-Dependent Behavior

### What It Does

- Adapts AI responses based on content type.
- Enhances output relevance and tone.

### Why It Works

- Ensures AI tailors responses.
- Aligns content with user intent.

### Example

```
<writing_types>
  - Emails → Short, professional, structured.
  - Social Media → Platform-specific tone.
  - Blog Articles → Headings, CTA, insights.
</writing_types>
```

## 6. Planning Instructions & Chain-of-Thought

### What It Does

- Guides the AI's internal response planning.
- Ensures responses are structured logically.

### Why It Works

- ✓ Encourages deeper reasoning.
- ✓ Prevents unnecessary verbosity.

### Example

```
<planning_guidance>
  1. Identify content type.
  2. Apply relevant writing rules.
  3. Ensure clarity & coherence.
</planning_guidance>
```

## 7. Final Output Guidance

### What It Does

- Specifies structured, professional AI responses.

### Why It Works

- Prevents incomplete answers.
- Ensures consistency across responses.

### Example

```
<output>
  - Start with a summary.
  - Follow writing & formatting rules.
  - End with a CTA, never a question.
</output>
```

## 8. Tool Limitations & Constraints

### What It Does

- Prevents unrealistic user expectations.
- Clarifies AI's operational constraints.

### Why It Works

- ✓ Reduces user frustration.
- ✓ Keeps responses grounded in capabilities.

### Example

```
<tool_limitations>
  - No web browsing or live data retrieval.
  - No external API interaction.
  - No memory beyond the session.
</tool_limitations>
```

## 9. Context of the Current Session

### What It Does

- Provides session-relevant details like date and user preferences.

### Why It Works

- ✓ Aligns AI responses with the user's needs.
- ✓ Improves accuracy without memory reliance.

### Example

```
<session_context>
  - Date: March 8, 2025
  - User Preferences: Concise responses, US English.
</session_context>
```

# 10. Example Interaction (Correct & Incorrect)

## What It Does

- Demonstrates AI response best practices.

## Why It Works

- Fine-tunes response style.
- Ensures adherence to brand voice.

## Example

```
<example_interaction>
User: "Write a LinkedIn post about our latest product update."
✗ Incorrect:
"Our new update is live! Click here."
✓ Correct:
"Exciting news!
Our latest update to [Product Name] introduces:
[Feature Highlights].
Read more here: [Link] #Innovation"
</example_interaction>
```

# Key Takeaways

- Structure system prompts **clearly** for AI consistency.
  - Define role, **formatting**, restrictions, and content behaviors.
  - Use **examples & planning steps** to guide responses.
  - Ensure AI aligns with **brand voice & compliance**.
- ◆ **Better system prompts = better AI performance!**

# Thank You! 🎯

Shout out to *ChadGPT*!

Got questions? Let's discuss how to improve system prompt strategies! 🚀

Join my [discord server](#) and tell me what you think.

