Tips for Writing Effective AI Prompts

Step Up and Succeed

To get the best results from Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, you need to ask the right questions. Here are some helpful tips for writing AI prompts and getting the result you want the first time.

Clearly Define Your Goal

AI works best with well-defined instructions. Be specific and clear. Ask yourself

- What do I want to achieve from the prompt?
- What format do I want the results in? (list, comparison, summary, etc.)
- What information do I need to give AI to get the results that I want?

Example If you're hiring, your goal might be to **identify qualified candidates quickly.**

"I want to reduce the time it takes to screen resumes for a plumbing apprenticeship position in Hamilton, Ontario. I've uploaded (or copy-pasted) the job description and 20 resumes. Screen the resumes and list the top 5 candidates based on the job description. Provide a summary for each applicant and explain why they're qualified."

Customize the Prompt to Your Business

AI software allows you to upload information that it will remember over time.
Give as much detail as possible when writing prompts in a new AI software.
This gives AI the context it needs to understand your business, needs and goals.

Include details like

- ✓ your industry and/or trade(s)
- ✓ your location
- ✓ the size of your business
- ✓ your clearly defined goal(s)

Example For materials sourcing, your goal might be to **create a list of trusted local suppliers to make informed purchasing decisions.**

"I run a small carpentry business in Peterborough, Ontario. I'm looking for local or regional suppliers of sustainable hardwoods. Provide a list of at least five reputable suppliers, including contact information, product range and any certifications (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified).

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Watch for Errors or Biases

It's important to review and refine anything AI gives you before using it. AI tools can be very helpful but they aren't perfect! It learns from patterns in the human-generated data we provide. This means it can also learn human mistakes or biases.

Always remember to

- ✓ **train yourself and your staff** on **how to use AI tools effectively**
- ✓ **fact-check information** like suppliers, grant eligibility or materials pricing
- ✓ **review and revise your prompts** to make sure you get the right output that matches your business's tone, branding and goals
- ✓ **compare different versions** of the output to see what works best (e.g., job ads or client emails)
- ✓ **get team feedback** to catch errors and improve clarity

Example

A small construction company used an AI tool to screen resumes. To train the tool, they uploaded resumes from successful hires over the past 30 years to identify strong candidates.

Generative AI will find patterns in the resumes of successful hires and use this to screen candidates. But some patterns are unrelated to the candidate's ability to do the job, such as their school, neighborhood, cultural background or gender (which AI may assume from their name).

As a result, qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds may be filtered out of the screening process.

To reduce errors or bias

- ✓ use AI to **support tasks**, not make final decisions
- ✓ include **diverse examples** when teaching your AI tool
- ✓ **review and test** your AI prompts to make sure they're fair, inclusive and reflect your business practices

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Use the Right Tools

To optimize your results, use AI tools that are designed for the task at hand.

Use a **generative AI assistant** for tasks that involve writing, research and decision making, such as

- writing job descriptions
- researching government incentives
- summarizing data, reports or other text
- writing or rephrasing text

Use tools like [ChatGPT] [Copilot] [Copy.ai]

Use **AI powered spreadsheet tools** for tasks that involve organizing, calculating and analyzing data, such as

- tracking employee hours
- comparing supplier quotes
- managing inventory
- budgeting and tracking expenses

Use add-ons like [Copilot for Excel] [Numerous.ai] [Excelmatic]

Use **AI automation tools** for streamlining everyday tasks like

- sending appointment reminders
- auto-generating invoices
- scheduling follow-up emails
- syncing data into a spreadsheet

Use tools like [Jobber Receptionist] [Quickbooks Intuit Assist] [Zapier]

Note: These tools are provided as examples only. Literacy Link South Central doesn't endorse or have any affiliation with the companies/tools mentioned.

Want to find more AI tools and tips?

[Click this link] or scan the QR Code with your mobile device's camera to check out our **Leveraging AI tip sheet!**

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