

# 11 Tips to Take Your ChatGPT Prompts to the Next Level

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ChatGPT and tools like it have made AI available to the masses. We can now get all sorts of responses back on almost any topic imaginable. These bots can come up with sonnets, code, philosophy, and more.

However, while you can just type anything you like into ChatGPT and get it to understand you, there are ways of getting more interesting and useful results out of the bot. This “prompt engineering” is becoming a specialized skill of its own.

Sometimes all it takes is the addition of a few more words or an extra line of instruction and you can get ChatGPT responses that are a level above what everyone else is seeing— and we've included several examples below.

For the purposes of this guide, we tested these prompts with GPT-4: The latest version of ChatGPT at the time of writing, but only available to some users. However, they should work fine with older versions of ChatGPT too.

## Get Your Answers in Tabular Form

ChatGPT can give you responses in the form of a table if you ask. This is particularly helpful for getting information or creative ideas. For example, you could tabulate meal ideas and ingredients, or game ideas and equipment, or the days of the week and how they're said in a few different languages.

Using follow-up prompts and natural language, you can have ChatGPT make changes to the tables its drawn and even produce them in a standard format that can be understood by another program (such as Microsoft Excel).

## Output Text in the Style of Your Favorite Author

With some careful prompting, you can get ChatGPT out of its rather dull, matter-of-fact, default tone and into something much more interesting—such as the style of your favorite author, perhaps.

You could go for the searing simplicity of an Ernest Hemingway or Raymond Carver story, for instance, or the lyrical rhythm of a Shakespearean play, or the density of a Dickens novel. The end results don't come close to the genius of the actual authors themselves, but it's another way of being more creative with the output you get.

ChatGPT can produce output in all kinds of styles.

## Set Limits on the Answers You Get

ChatGPT can really impress when it's given restrictions to work inside, so don't be shy when it comes to telling the bot to limit its responses to a certain number of words or a certain number of paragraphs.

It could be everything from condensing the information in four paragraphs down into one, or even asking for answers with words of seven characters or fewer (just to keep it simple). If ChatGPT doesn't follow your responses properly, you can correct it, and it'll try again.

## Keep Your Audience in Mind

Another way of tweaking the way that ChatGPT responds to you is to tell it who its audience is. You might have seen the videos in which complex subjects are explained to people with different levels of understanding, and this works in a similar way.

For example, you can tell ChatGPT that you are speaking to a bunch of 10-year-olds or to an audience of business entrepreneurs and it will respond accordingly. It works well for generating multiple outputs along the same theme.

Specify the audience to change the way that ChatGPT responds.

## Produce Prompts for Other AI Engines

ChatGPT is a very capable prompt engineer itself. If you ask it to come up with creative and effective inputs for artificial intelligence engines such as Dall-E and Midjourney, you'll get text you can then input into other AI tools you're playing around with. You're even able to ask for tips with prompts for ChatGPT itself.

When it comes to generating prompts, the more detailed and specific you are about what you're looking for the better: You can get the chatbot to extend

and add more detail to your sentences, you can get it to role-play as a prompt generator for a specific AI tool, and you can tell it to refine its answers as you add more and more information.

### **Get Your Outputs in the Form of ASCII Art**

While ChatGPT is based around text, you can get it to produce pictures of a sort by asking for ASCII art. That's the art made up of characters and symbols rather than colors. It won't win you any prizes, but it's pretty fun to play around with.

The usual ChatGPT rules apply, in that the more specific you are the better, and you can get the bot to add new elements and take elements away as you go. Remember the limitations of the ASCII art format though—this isn't a full-blown image editor.

### **Copy and Paste Text From Other Sources**

You don't have to do all the typing yourself when it comes to ChatGPT. Copy and paste is your friend, and there's no problem with pasting in text from other sources. While the input limit tops out at around 4,000 words, you can easily split the text you're sending the bot into several sections and get it to remember what you've previously said.

Perhaps one of the best ways of using this approach is to get ChatGPT to simplify text that you don't understand—the explanation of a difficult scientific concept, for instance. You can also get it to translate text into different languages, write it in a more engaging or fluid style, and so on.

Pull in text from elsewhere on the web to use with ChatGPT.

### **Provide Examples to Work With**

Another way to improve the responses you get from ChatGPT is to give it some data to work with before you ask your question. For instance, you could give it a list of book summaries together with their genre, then ask it to apply the correct genre label to a new summary. Another option would be to tell ChatGPT about activities you enjoy and then get a new suggestion.

There's no magic combination of words you have to use here. Just use natural language as always, and ChatGPT will understand what you're getting at. Specify that you're providing examples at the start of your prompt, then tell the bot that you want a response with those examples in mind.

### **Act Out a Role-Play**

In the same way that ChatGPT can mimic the style of certain authors that it knows about, it can also play a role: a frustrated salesman, an excitable teenager (you'll most likely get a lot of emojis and abbreviations back), or the iconic Western star John Wayne.

The types of roles you can play around with are almost endless. These prompts might not score highly in terms of practical applications, but they're definitely a useful insight into the potential of these AI chatbots.

### **Get Answers That Are More Than the Sum of Their Parts**

Your answers can be seriously improved if you give ChatGPT some ingredients to work with before asking for a response. They could be literal ingredients—suggest a dish from what's left in the fridge—or they could be anything else.

So don't just ask for a murder mystery scenario. Also list out the characters who are going to appear. Don't just ask for ideas of where to go in a city; specify the city you're going to, the types of places you want to see, and the people you'll have with you.

### **Hear Both Sides of a Debate**

You've no doubt noticed how binary arguments have tended to get online in recent years, so get the help of ChatGPT to add some gray in between the black and white. It's able to argue both sides of an argument if you ask it to, including both pros and cons.

From politics and philosophy to sports and the arts, ChatGPT is able to sit on the fence quite impressively—not in a vague way, but in a way that can help you understand issues from multiple perspectives.