
The Prompt Pattern Library

Reusable AI Prompt Structures for Common Work Tasks

What a Prompt Pattern Is

A prompt pattern is a fill-in-the-blank structure you can reuse across dozens of tasks, instead of reinventing your wording every time. The six patterns below cover the most common categories of AI-assisted work: research, writing, analysis, planning, review, and brainstorming.

1. The Role-Task-Format Pattern

TEMPLATE

"Act as a [specific role]. [Clear task in one sentence]. Format the output as [structure: list, table, outline, etc]."

Example: "Act as a skeptical editor. Review this paragraph for unsupported claims. Format the output as a numbered list of flagged sentences with a one-line reason each."

2. The Constraint-Stack Pattern

Useful when generic output isn't specific enough. Stack constraints in order of importance, not all at once in a jumble.

1. State the audience first ("for a first-time customer who has never...")
2. State the length or format second ("in under 150 words, as three bullet points")
3. State the tone last ("in a warm but efficient tone")

3. The Compare-and-Contrast Pattern

TEMPLATE

"Compare [Option A] and [Option B] across these dimensions: [list 3-5 dimensions]. Present as a table, then recommend one option for [specific situation]."

4. The Devil's Advocate Pattern

Use this to pressure-test your own thinking before committing to a plan. "Here is my plan: [plan]. Argue against it as convincingly as you can. Then tell me which objection is the strongest."

5. The Step-Back Pattern

When a task feels stuck, zoom out one level before diving into details. "Before answering my specific question, what's the more general principle or category this falls under?" This often surfaces a better path than the original question assumed.

6. The Iterative Refinement Pattern

Pass	Instruction
1	"Give me a rough first draft — don't worry about polish."
2	"Now tighten this by 30% without losing the key points."
3	"Now rewrite the opening line only — make it earn attention in the first 8 words."

HOW TO USE THIS LIBRARY

Keep this page open while you work for a week. Every time you're about to write a prompt from scratch, check if one of these six patterns fits first. Muscle memory builds fast once you've reused a pattern five or six times.

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