

Structuring a Prompt

Computing

The parts of a prompt that reliably improve an answer.

Not every prompt needs all six, but this is the order that works.

1

Role or context

Who is answering and what they know. One line is enough.

2

The task

One clear instruction. Split compound requests into separate ones.

3

The input

Delimited clearly, so it cannot be confused with the instruction.

4

Constraints

Length, format, what to leave out, what to do when unsure.

5

An example

One good example outperforms a paragraph describing one.

6

Output format

Ask for the exact shape you want to parse.

WEAK VS STRONG

Weak: 'summarise this'

Strong: 'Three bullets, under 15 words each, for a reader who has not seen the document'

If you cannot describe what a good answer looks like, the model cannot either.