



How to Get Better Answers From ChatGPT

The Simple Art of Writing Better Prompts

Introduction

Many people try ChatGPT once or twice and then conclude that it's not very useful.

The truth is that ChatGPT is only as good as the instructions it receives.

The good news is that you do not need technical skills, coding knowledge, or special training to get excellent results. You simply need to learn how to ask better questions.

This skill is called **prompting**.

Think of a prompt as giving directions to a helpful assistant. The clearer your instructions, the better the result.

In this guide, you'll learn a simple formula that can dramatically improve the quality of ChatGPT's answers.

What Is a Prompt?

A prompt is simply the message you type into ChatGPT.

For example:

Weak Prompt:

Tell me about gardening.

This is very broad.

Better Prompt:

I am a beginner gardener in South Africa. What vegetables are easiest to grow during winter?

Notice how the second prompt gives more information.

The more context you provide, the more useful the answer becomes.



The Four-Part Formula for Better Prompts

Whenever possible, include these four elements:

1. Tell ChatGPT Who You Are

Give some background information.

Example:

I am a retired person with little computer experience.

or

I am a beginner investor.

2. Explain What You Want

Be specific.

Instead of:

Help me with Facebook.

Try:

Show me how to create a Facebook page for a small home business.

3. Give Important Details

Provide relevant information.

Example:

My budget is R500 per month.

Or

I only have a smartphone.

4. Explain the Format You Want

Tell ChatGPT how to present the answer.

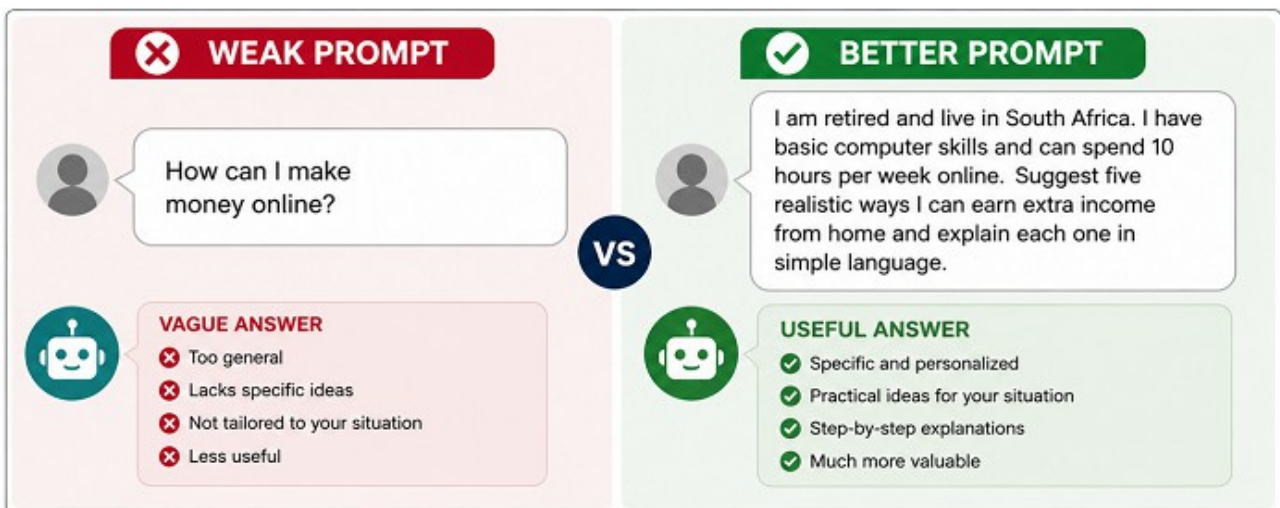
Examples:

Explain it step-by-step.

Use simple language.

Give me a checklist.

Create a table.



Example: Weak vs Strong Prompt

Weak Prompt

How can I make money online?

Strong Prompt

I am retired and live in South Africa. I have basic computer skills and can spend 10 hours per week online. Suggest five realistic ways I can earn extra income from home and explain each one in simple language.

The second prompt will usually produce a far more useful answer.

Seven Simple Prompt Starters

These phrases can improve almost any ChatGPT conversation.

1. Explain This Like I'm a Beginner

Example:

Explain cryptocurrency like I'm a complete beginner.

2. Give Me Step-by-Step Instructions

Example:

Show me step-by-step how to create a Gmail account.

3. Create a Checklist

Example:

Create a checklist for planning a holiday.

4. Give Me Examples

Example:

Give me five examples of social media posts for a small business.

5. Simplify This

Example:

Simplify this article into plain English.

6. Compare These Options

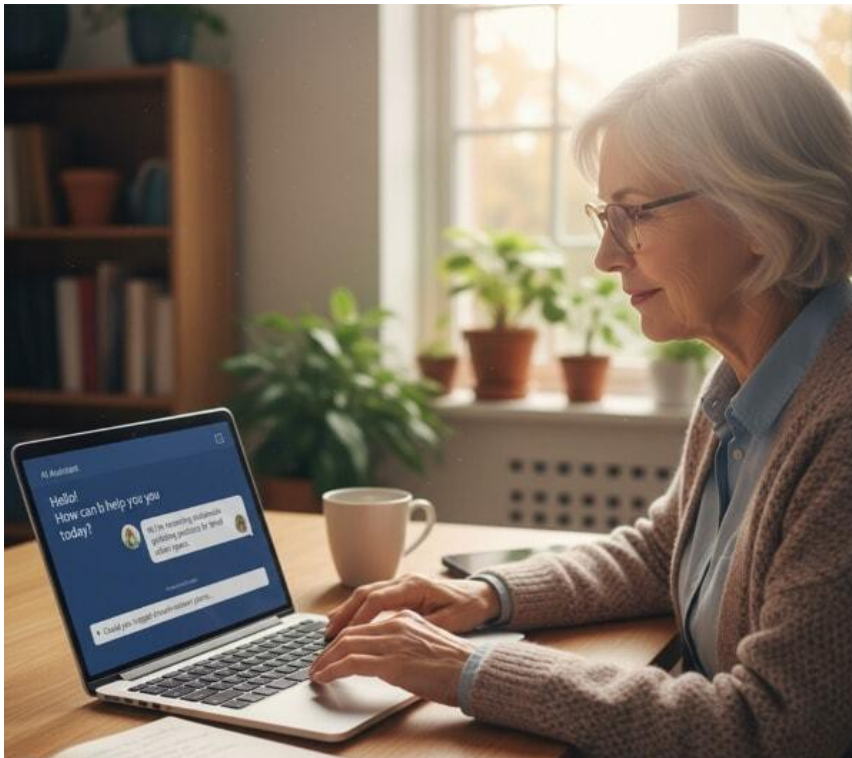
Example:

Compare WordPress and Wix for beginners.

7. Improve This

Example:

Improve this email and make it sound professional.



A Powerful Prompt Template

Copy and save this template:

I am [your situation].

I would like help with [your goal].

Please consider [important details].

Explain the answer in [desired format].

Example

I am retired and want to start a small online business.

I have a limited budget and basic computer skills.

Suggest three simple business ideas.

Explain each idea step-by-step using plain language.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Being Too Vague

Instead of:

Tell me about investing.

Try:

Explain investing options suitable for a retired beginner in South Africa.

Asking Multiple Questions at Once

Avoid:

Tell me about AI, investing, gardening, travel, and Facebook marketing.

Break large topics into smaller questions.

Giving No Context

ChatGPT performs much better when it understands your situation.

Practice Exercise

Try this simple exercise.

Ask ChatGPT:

I am retired and want to use AI to save time each day. Suggest five practical tasks AI can help me with and explain each one in simple language.

Then improve the prompt by adding more details.

Notice how the quality of the answer improves.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ Better prompts produce better answers.
- ✓ Give ChatGPT context about your situation.
- ✓ Be specific about what you want.
- ✓ Include important details.

- ✓ Ask for a specific format.
- ✓ Use simple prompt templates whenever possible.
- ✓ Practice regularly and your results will improve quickly.

