

Adjust AI Output with Constraints

When AI output has the right information but the wrong format, add constraints.

Length

Controls how much the AI writes.

Give a number, not a vague phrase.

EXAMPLES

- "Keep it under 200 words."
- "No more than three paragraphs."
- "Give me five bullet points."

Format

Controls the shape of the output.

Describe the structure: list, table, paragraphs.

EXAMPLES

- "A numbered list, one sentence each."
- "Use a table with columns for pros and cons."
- "Write it as a three-paragraph email."

Scope

Controls what the output covers.

Specify what's in and what's out.

EXAMPLES

- "Cover only the timeline and next steps."
- "Focus on the budget. Skip the background."
- "Only include information from the attached document."

Style

Controls how the output reads.

Be specific about how it should sound.

EXAMPLES

- "Friendly and direct, like a message to a colleague."
- "Use plain language. No jargon."
- "Match the tone of the attached email."

Tell the AI What to Leave Out

You can also use constraints to cut things you don't want.

IF YOU DON'T WANT...

ADD THIS TO YOUR PROMPT

A generic introduction

"Skip the introduction. Start with..."

Unnecessary disclaimers and qualifiers

"Be direct. Skip phrases like 'it's important to note' and 'keep in mind.'"

Basics the reader already knows

"Don't define basic terms. The reader already knows them."

Stiff, formal language

"Use plain language. Avoid words like 'utilize' or 'leverage.'"

From the free [AI Prompting Essentials course](#).

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