



50+ JOB SEEKERS IN MA



STATEWIDE NETWORKING GROUP

50+ Job Seekers

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Prompting 101: Getting Good Answers from AI

What Is a Prompt? A prompt is simply what you type to AI. The way you phrase your request determines the quality of the response. Think of AI like a brilliant assistant who does exactly what you ask — no more, no less. Vague prompts produce vague results; specific prompts produce powerful ones.

The RCE Model — Your Prompting Formula Use this three-part structure every time you sit down with AI:

- **R — Role:** Tell AI who to be. *"Act as an experienced career coach..."*
- **C — Context:** Give it your situation. *"...I have 20 years in healthcare and am looking for a hospital admin role..."*
- **E — Examples:** Show what good looks like. *"...here is my current resume bullet: [paste it]. Rewrite it to show impact."*

Combining all three gives AI everything it needs to deliver something genuinely useful on the first try.

Structure & Tone — Ask for What You Actually Want AI will match any tone, length, or format — but only if you specify it. Take 10 extra seconds to add details like:

- **Tone:** "Professional," "Warm & conversational," "Confident," "Formal"
- **Length:** "Under 200 words," "3 sentences only," "One paragraph"
- **Format:** "Numbered list," "Table," "Email format"

Power tip: Adding "Keep it under 200 words and make it warm and professional" to almost any prompt delivers an instant improvement.

GIGO — Garbage In, Garbage Out The quality of your output is only as good as the quality of your input. If your prompt is under 10 words, it probably needs more detail. Compare these two examples:

- ❌ *"Write me a cover letter"* — AI has nothing to work with.
- ✅ *"Write a cover letter under 200 words for a Healthcare Admin role at a Boston clinic. I have 18 years in patient services. Make it warm and specific."* — Job title, industry, experience, tone, and length are all covered.

Iteration — The Secret Sauce AI doesn't always produce its best output on the first try. Research from Carnegie Mellon University found that iterative refinement improves results by roughly 20% on average. The process is simple:

1. **First Prompt** — Get your first draft. Just read it through.
2. **Read & React** — What's good? What needs to change?
3. **Follow-Up Prompt** — "Make it shorter." "Sound more confident." "Add a specific example."

The first answer is a draft. The follow-up is where the magic happens.

AI Hallucinations — Stay Safe A hallucination is when AI states something confidently that isn't true. It isn't lying — it's pattern-matching without access to verified facts. This happens most often with statistics, names, and dates. To stay safe:

- Always verify facts before using them
- Use AI for writing help, not research
- Check salary data on Glassdoor or LinkedIn
- Trust your own experience — AI doesn't know you

Bottom line: AI is a brilliant writing partner. You are the fact-checker.

Your Four Key Takeaways

1. **Prompting is a skill** — the RCE Model gives you a repeatable structure that works every time.
 2. **Specific prompts get specific results** — details like job title, experience, tone, and length all matter.
 3. **Iteration is the secret** — always follow up; a single follow-up prompt can transform the output.
 4. **AI gives you a first draft — you make it yours** — your experience, judgment, and voice are irreplaceable.
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Try It Yourself — Starter Prompts

- *Resume Bullet:* "Rewrite this bullet point to show impact, not just duties: [paste yours]"
 - *Professional Summary:* "Write a 3-sentence professional summary for someone with [X] years in [field] looking for a [job type] role."
 - *Job Posting Decoder:* "Here is a job posting: [paste it]. What are the top 5 skills they really want?"
 - *Cover Letter:* "Write a cover letter under 200 words for a [job title] role at a [company type]. I have [X] years in [field]. Make it specific and warm."
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Useful Links

- ChatGPT: chat.openai.com
- Claude: claude.ai
- Event page & resources: 50plusjobseekers.org/ai