



SESSION 2 · APRIL 6, 2026

Prompting 101: Getting Good Answers from AI

Goal: Establish prompting as a skill — not guesswork

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MCOA 50+ Job Seekers Series ·*

50plusjobseekers.org/event/406/

Today's Agenda

Here's how we'll spend our time together today — from introductions through hands-on practice and a fun quiz.

1 Welcome & Introductions
Eric · 10 min

2 Prompting 101 — Presentation
Zara · 25 min

3 Prompt Workshop — Hands-On Practice
Zara · 20 min

4 Kahoot Quiz — AI Myth Busters!
Zara · 10 min

5 Breakout Rooms
All · 20 min

6 Discussion, Q&A & Wrap-Up
Zara + Eric · 15 min



WHAT IS A PROMPT?

A prompt is simply what you type to AI.

The way you phrase your request determines everything about the quality of the response. Think of AI like a brilliant assistant who does exactly what you ask — no more, no less. Your job is to ask well.

✗ Vague Prompt

"Fix my resume"

AI doesn't know what to fix, which section to focus on, or what "fixed" even means to you. Vague in → vague out.

✓ Specific Prompt

"Rewrite this bullet point to show impact: [paste text]"

AI knows exactly what to do and delivers something you can actually use. Specific in → powerful out.

Your Prompting Formula: Role · Context · Examples

The RCE Model is a simple three-part formula that transforms vague requests into precise, powerful prompts. Use it 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."*

 Put all three together and you have a prompt that gives AI everything it needs to deliver something genuinely useful on the first try.

Ask for What You Actually Want


AI will match any tone, length, or format — but only if you ask. Most people forget this step entirely. Take 10 extra seconds to specify, and the results will be dramatically better.



 Tone

"Professional" "Warm & conversational" "Confident" "Formal"



 Length

"Under 200 words" "3 sentences only" "One paragraph" "Bullet points"



 Format

"Numbered list" "Table" "Script format" "Email format"



Power tip: Add *"Keep it under 200 words and make it warm and professional"* to almost any prompt for an instant improvement — no other changes needed.



ITERATION

Iteration: The Secret Sauce

"AI does not always produce its best output on the first try. Iterative refinement improved results by ~20% on average."

— Madaan et al. (2023) Self-Refine, Carnegie Mellon University & Allen Institute for AI

1

1 · First Prompt

Get your first draft. Don't judge it yet — just read it through.

2

2 · Read & React

What's good? What needs to change? What's missing or off-tone?

3

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.

GIGO

Garbage In → Garbage Out

The quality of your output is only as good as the quality of your input. This is the single most important principle in prompting. Give AI nothing to work with, and it gives you nothing useful back.

✗ Weak Prompt

"Write me a cover letter"

No job title. No company. No experience mentioned. AI has nothing to work with — it writes something so generic you'll delete it immediately.

✓ Strong Prompt

"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 ✓ Length ✓ — AI has everything it needs.


📌 **Rule of thumb: If your prompt is under 10 words, it probably needs more detail. Take 30 more seconds to flesh it out — the results will be dramatically better.**


HALLUCINATIONS


What Are AI Hallucinations?


A hallucination is when AI states something confidently that is simply not true. It isn't lying — it's pattern-matching without access to verified facts. This happens more often with statistics, names, and dates. Knowing this keeps you safe.

⚠ Watch Out For


 Fake statistics or research citations


 Wrong company names or job titles


 Made-up contact information


 Outdated salary figures


✓ How to Stay Safe

 Always verify facts before using them

 Use AI for writing help, not research

 Check salary data on Glassdoor / LinkedIn

 Trust your own experience — AI doesn't know you

 Bottom line: AI is a brilliant writing partner. YOU are the fact-checker. Your expertise and judgment are what make the final result trustworthy.

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Your Turn — Try It Live!

Open ChatGPT (chat.openai.com) or Claude (claude.ai) right now and try one of these starter prompts. Remember: read the result, then follow up!

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?"

Try the prompt → Read the result → Then add: *"Make it shorter"* or *"Sound more confident"* to see iteration in action.



Build Your Own Prompt

10 minutes · Try it live · Share one result with the group Step 1 — Choose your challenge. Step 2 — Replace [] with YOUR details. Step 3 — Hit Enter. Step 4 — Follow up!

1

A · Resume Bullet

"Rewrite this resume bullet point to show impact and results, not just duties: [paste your own bullet point here]"

Follow-up: *"Now do the same for 2 more of my bullet points."*

2

B · Professional Summary

"Write a 3-sentence professional summary for someone with [X] years of experience in [field] looking for a [job type] role. Make it warm and confident."

Follow-up: *"Make it shorter and sound less formal."*

3

C · 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, not generic."

Follow-up: *"Add that I am excited about their mission and shorten by 30 words."*

4

D · Job Posting Decoder

"Here is a job posting: [paste it]. What are the top 5 skills this employer is really looking for? Which would I need to highlight most?"

Follow-up: *"Which of these skills can I demonstrate from my background: [list your experience]?"*



QUICK POLL — ANSWER IN ZOOM

Let's See What You Think!

Check your Zoom toolbar for the poll — answer now! Your honest responses help us make these sessions even more useful for you.

Poll 1

Before today, how would you describe your experience with AI tools?

Poll 2

Which part of the RCE model do you think you'll use most — Role, Context, or Examples?

Poll 3

What's the #1 thing stopping you from using AI in your job search right now?

Poll 4

After today's session, how confident do you feel about writing your own prompts?



QUIZ TIME!



Kahoot!

AI Myth Busters!

Test everything you've learned today — and bust a few myths along the way. 12 questions · 20–30 seconds each · Let's see what you know!



Go to: kahoot.it · Game PIN: [PIN]

Post the Kahoot link in the Zoom chat now

BREAKOUT ROOMS

Breakout Rooms — Practice Together

Groups of 8–10 people · 2 rounds · You'll be moved automatically. This is your chance to try prompts with real peers and see what works!

Round 1 — Resume & Summary

Try one of these:

- *"Rewrite this bullet point to show impact: [paste yours]"*
- *"Write a 3-sentence professional summary for someone with [X] years in [field]."*

Round 2 — Job Search & Interviews

Choose one:

- *A. "Decode this job posting – top 5 skills they want?"*
- *B. "Write a cover letter under 200 words for a [role]."*
- *C. "Act as my interviewer for a [role] and ask me 3 questions."*



Need help? Click 'Ask for Help' in your breakout room. To return early: click 'Leave Breakout Room'. Zoom brings you back automatically when time is up.

You Did It! 🎉

You've just learned one of the most practical skills in the modern job search. Here are your four key takeaways to carry forward:

- 1 Prompting is a skill — and you now have the formula
The RCE Model (Role · Context · Examples) gives you a repeatable structure that works every time.
- 2 Specific prompts get specific results
Details matter. Job title, experience, tone, length — the more you give AI, the better it performs.
- 3 Iteration is the secret — always follow up
The first answer is just a starting point. A single follow-up prompt can transform it completely.
- 4 AI gives you a first draft — you make it yours
Your experience, judgment, and voice are irreplaceable. AI assists; you decide.