Role Prompting

Tell the AI who to be — a teacher, a coder, an examiner — and watch the answer change. Roles, and when not to use them.

Introduction

"Act as my teacher" is one of the most powerful short phrases in prompting. A **role** tells the AI which voice, level and habits to use. A teacher explains and tests. An examiner asks one question at a time and waits. A coder writes code and explains it line by line. The same question, given to three different roles, comes back as three different answers — and you get to pick the one that fits your need.

A role is not a costume that makes the AI smarter. It is a shortcut: instead of describing the tone, level and behaviour in ten lines, you name a job that already implies them. But a role alone is never enough — it must sit next to a clear task, or you get a nicely-toned answer to the wrong question.

(Roman Urdu: Role AI ko batata hai ke kis andaaz mein jawab de — teacher samjhaye ga, examiner sawal kare ga, coder code likhe ga. Aik hi sawal, teen roles, teen mukhtalif jawab.)

Key points

- **A role sets tone, level and behaviour in one phrase.** "Act as a friendly teacher for a class 8 student" implies simple words, examples, and patience — without you listing all three.
- **Put the role FIRST, then the task.** "Act as my English teacher. Check my paragraph below and list every mistake in a table." Role first, job second, material third.
- **Pick a role that matches the job.** Teacher for explanations, examiner for tests, editor for corrections, interviewer for practice, coder for code, shopkeeper for business talk. A mismatched role ("act as a poet" for a maths problem) makes the answer worse.
- **Add the audience to the role.** "Act as a teacher" is good; "Act as a teacher for a class 9 student in Pakistan" is better — the examples and words adjust to that student.
- **Roles do not create knowledge.** "Act as a doctor" does not make the AI a doctor, and its medical answer is still an AI guess that must be checked with a real professional. Never use a role to pretend authority — yours or the AI's.
- **One role per prompt.** Two roles ("act as a teacher and a judge") pull the answer in two directions. Choose the one that matters most for this task.
- **When the task is simple, skip the role.** "Translate this sentence to Urdu" needs no role at all. Roles earn their place on explanations, practice, feedback and creative work.
- **A role also sets what the AI should NOT do.** An examiner asks questions and waits; a teacher who also answers his own questions is breaking the role. If the role keeps "helping" when it should wait, add one line: "Ask one question and wait for my answer before continuing."

- **Beginners get stuck picking a role.** Ask yourself one question: what is the AI doing in this prompt — teaching, testing, correcting, or creating? That verb IS the role: teacher, examiner, editor, writer. If none fits, you probably do not need a role at all.

Examples

Example 1 — Same question, three roles

Question: "What is a budget?"

As a teacher:

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Act as a friendly teacher for a class 8 student. Explain what a budget is, with one example from a student's monthly pocket money.
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As an examiner:

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Act as my teacher taking a viva on budgets. Ask me one question at a time about what a budget is, wait for my answer, then correct me if I am wrong.
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As a shopkeeper:

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Act as a small shop owner in Pakistan. Explain how you make a monthly budget for your shop, with real expense types like rent, stock and electricity.
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Three roles, three completely different answers — same topic. The role is the steering wheel.

Example 2 — Role plus task plus material

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Act as an expert English editor. Check my paragraph below for grammar mistakes. First give the corrected version, then a table: my sentence, the corrected sentence, and the rule in simple words. My paragraph: [PASTE YOUR PARAGRAPH]
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Why it works: role (editor) sets the behaviour, the task names the exact output (corrected version + table), and the material is pasted at the end where the AI can use it.

Example 3 — A role that hurts

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Act as a famous poet. Solve this maths problem step by step: A shopkeeper buys 12 shirts for Rs 600 each and sells them at Rs 750 each. What is his total profit?
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The poet role adds flowery language and distracts from the steps. The right role here is "maths teacher" — or no role at all, just "Solve step by step, one step per line."

Example 4 — Before and after: a role that changes the level

Before (no role):

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Explain gravity.
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After (role + audience):

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Act as a science teacher for a class 6 student. Explain gravity with one example from playing cricket. Use simple words only.
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The first answer may start with Newton's laws. The second starts where a class 6 student lives — a ball coming back down. Same topic, different teaching, because the role set the level.

Example 5 — Examiner role that actually waits

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Act as my teacher taking a viva on fractions. Ask me one question at a time and WAIT for my answer. After I answer, tell me if I am right or wrong in one line, then ask the next question. Ask 5 questions in total.
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Without "wait for my answer", many AI tools answer all five questions themselves and the practice is ruined. The waiting instruction is part of the role — it is what makes an examiner an examiner, not a lecturer.

Example 6 — Before and after: interviewer role for job practice

Before:

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Ask me interview questions.
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After:

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Act as a job interviewer for a shop assistant job in Pakistan. Ask me one question at a time, in simple English. After each answer, give me one tip to improve it. Start with: "Tell me about yourself."
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The first version gives a list to read. The second gives a practice session — one question, one answer, one tip — which is the whole point of interview practice.

Real-world case — Where this is actually used

A student preparing for a viva uses the examiner role every night for 10 minutes: one question at a time, correction after each answer, score at the end. After a week she knows exactly which topics she fails — because the role forced her to answer, not just read. In offices, the same trick works in reverse: "Act as a strict customer" lets a shop owner practise handling complaints before a real customer ever complains.

Quick recap

- A role sets tone, level and behaviour in one phrase.
- Role first, task second, material last.
- Match the role to the job; add the audience for a better fit.
- One role per prompt; skip roles for simple tasks.
- A role never turns an AI guess into expert truth — check important answers.

Common mistakes

1. **Role without a task** — "Act as a teacher" alone gives a generic greeting and waits. Fix: always add the job: "Act as a teacher. Explain [topic] with one example."
2. **Two roles fighting** — teacher plus judge plus comedian equals a confused answer. Fix: pick one role.
3. **Using a role to fake authority** — "Act as a doctor/lawyer" for real decisions is dangerous. Fix: use AI for learning and drafts, and take real decisions to real professionals.

1. **The role is too grand for the job** — "Act as a world-famous Nobel Prize professor" adds flattery, not quality, and often adds long, flowery answers. Fix: use a plain working role — "teacher for class 8" beats "world-famous professor" every time.
2. **Forgetting to end the role** — a chat that started with "act as my examiner" stays in examiner mode for every later question, even when you just want a fact. Fix: start a fresh chat, or write "Stop the examiner role. Now just answer directly:" when the job changes.

Practice

1. Take one topic from your studies. Ask about it three times with three different roles (teacher, examiner, and a role of your choice). Write one line on how each answer differs.
2. Find a prompt where you used a role that did not fit. Rewrite it with the right role — or no role — and compare the two answers.

1. Take one explanation you received that was too hard. Re-ask it with a teacher role for a younger student (two classes below yours). Compare the words and examples — what did the role change?
2. Run a 5-question viva with the examiner role on a topic you studied this week. Write down your score and the one topic you got wrong most often.
3. Write the same request twice: once with a fitting role, once with a deliberately wrong role (poet for maths, comedian for a formal email). Compare the two answers and note exactly where the wrong role damaged the result.

Practice quiz

1. What does a role do in a prompt?

- It makes the AI smarter

- It sets the tone, level and behaviour in one phrase, like teacher, examiner or coder
- It changes the AI tool you use
- It hides your identity

Answer: It sets the tone, level and behaviour in one phrase, like teacher, examiner or coder

2. In what order should role, task and material appear?

- Material first, then role, then task
- Task first, then material, then role
- Role first, then task, then the material pasted last
- Any order works the same

Answer: Role first, then task, then the material pasted last

3. When should you skip a role entirely?

- Never, roles always help
- When the task is simple, like translating one sentence — a role adds nothing
- When the AI is slow
- Only for maths problems

Answer: When the task is simple, like translating one sentence — a role adds nothing

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Watch the video lesson: https://youtu.be/uTtCRTJ7DBY

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