

LESSON 10

Prompt Craft: from Vague to Usable

40 minutes

Making with AI

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Learn how to improve vague text prompts by building a ladder of additions including audience details, constraints, quality examples and output format. Test versions to see what makes a difference and when to stop; the same rung shape transfers later to images.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Refine vague prompts into usable text outputs.
- Build a prompt ladder by adding audience, constraints, quality examples and output format sequentially.
- Evaluate which prompt additions improve results and which do not.
- Recognise the point at which further detail no longer helps, and that the same ladder shape transfers later to images.

BEFORE THE BELL

- Select one class task example such as the work experience email.
- Prepare V2-V5 for progressive board reveal (only V1 is on the student screen at first).
- Test your AI assistant on the school network with the worked example.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

4 min	introduction	Start
6 min	content	Examine and Discuss
12 min	activity	Hands-on: Build the Prompt Ladder
4 min	activity	Hands-on: What Earned Its Place
8 min	content	Your Turn
3 min	content	Make Sense
2 min	content	Reflect
1 min	summary	What You Covered

TEACHING MOVES

- Reveal prompt versions one at a time and discuss additions before running them; pin the craft rule only after V5.
- Model the ladder on the board with whole-class input when accounts are limited.
- If behind after V3 on the class ladder, jump to V5 and compare V1/V3/V5 only.
- Highlight cases where additional detail reduced output quality.
- Your turn is V1 plus V5 (run both if accounts work); full five-run personal practice can continue as homework.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Thinking longer prompts are always better; compare actual outputs to disprove this.
- Using vague instructions like 'make it better'; insist on concrete elements such as audience or format.
- Failing to save every version; require students to keep rungs the class way.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer sentence starters for each addition in the ladder.
- Extension: Ask early finishers to test the ladder shape on one image prompt.
- Support: Allow paired work for the individual ladder activity.