

Tips for Prompt Engineering for Legal Research

| Tip | Details | Examples |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Craft for the AI Tool | <p>Legal vs. non-legal, open vs. closed, public vs. private</p> <p>Be content aware - don't ask for treatise answers in Westlaw, news answers in Lexis AI, or current news on ChatGPT 3.5 due to January 2022 cutoff</p> | <p>Non-legal sample prompt beginning: I am litigator, practicing in California for over 20 years . . .</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v.</p> <p>Legal platform straight to query: What is the legal standard for X in Y jurisdiction?</p> |
| Know Your Audience | <p>Include your audience in the prompt</p> | <p>Provide some readings for a class on DEIA = included fiction and youth novels</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v.</p> <p>Provide a list of 10 scholarly articles for <u>Fall Associates in a professional course</u> about DEIA in a law firm setting</p> |
| Define the Output | <p>Define and direct the output. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List • Letter • Table • Memo | <p>Summarize the affirmative action cases SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC = vague block paragraph output</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v.</p> <p>Draft a <u>500-word letter</u> to a law firm's client explaining the affirmative action cases SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC</p> <p>Provide <u>7 recommended actions</u> that colleges and universities should take in response to the affirmative action cases SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC</p> |
| Use Charts | <p>Instead of listing top companies, use charts for easier reading and organization or any output format, like HTML, JSON, XML.</p> | <p>10 public traded companies by revenue - list v. chart</p> <p>50-state survey of Anti-SLAPP motion</p> |
| Be Specific | <p>Tailor your prompt to arrive at the specific answer you are seeking (without providing specifics to your scenario you will get too broad an answer).</p> | <p>What is malpractice?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v.</p> <p>What are the elements of legal malpractice in New York, and include examples from the past 5 years?</p> |
| Revise and Edit | <p>As with traditional legal research, if your prompt doesn't lead to desired results, revise and try again. Combine tips on specificity and audience to improve when initial or subsequent results were not perfect. Editing can help narrow, broaden, or pinpoint to what the requestor really needs.</p> | <p><u>Results too broad?</u> Provide greater detail on time, jurisdiction, precedent, etc.</p> <p><u>Results too narrow or no answer?</u> Ask a comparable, more common situation, example: during a merger a COO embezzles v. a company executive embezzles</p> |
| Use AI to Improve Its Results | <p>After completing a task, ask the AI questions about its answer and develop your next prompt for the same tool or a different GAI platform.</p> | <p>Ask "Why did you include this result?" on item that seemed a bit off base or ask GAI to list 10 additional items.</p> <p>Utilize prompt suggestions available in some AI tools or ask for suggestions on what is missing in current query and ask the prompts of the same or a different GAI.</p> |