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Prompting That Actually Works

The CRAFT Framework for Adult Education Professionals



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Copy of Today's Presentation

Prompting That Actually Works: The CRAFT Framework · Kristin Erhard



https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dmCgSapzK5MfR2yt0d-18beChTed37u3_FkD3cOnFII/edit?usp=sharing

WHY PROMPTS OFTEN FAIL

“Write a lesson about fractions.”

AI fills every blank you leave with an **average guess**. What it assumed:

A 5th grader, not an adult
working toward an HSE

A 45-minute class with every
student present

Pizza-slice examples instead of
paychecks or recipes

THE FRAMEWORK

CRAFT: five questions before AI guesses

The CRAFT method can help instructors and administrators use AI more effectively and creatively to support their learners and programs.

C

Context

What's the situation?

R

Role

Whose expertise should AI use?

A

Action / Aim

What should it do, and why?

F

Format

What should the output look like?

T

Tailor

Who is it for, and what fits them?

Quick poll

Which letter do you usually skip? Type C, R, A, F or T in the chat.

AI doesn't know you teach adults

Context is the situation behind your request. Without it, AI assumes K–12, a typical class and unlimited time.

Add details like

- Program type: ABE, ASE, ESL, IET
- Learner levels (NRS, CASAS, CEFR)
- Class length, schedule, setting
- Real limits: open enrollment, mixed levels, few devices

INSTRUCTOR

“I teach a multilevel adult ESL evening class (NRS levels 2–4). Most learners work full time. We meet twice a week for 2 hours, with open enrollment.”

ADMINISTRATOR

“I direct a WIOA Title II adult education program serving about 400 learners in three rural counties. Our state monitoring visit is in six weeks.”

GOLDEN RULE: DESCRIBE THE SITUATION, NEVER THE PERSON

No names (not even first names), IDs, scores, birthdates, contact, health or immigration details. Unsure? Ask your IT department or director first.

Draw from an expert's point of view

A role tells AI whose knowledge, vocabulary and priorities to use. Name the exact kind of expert.

Add details like

- Specialty: multilevel ESL, HSE math, IET
- Setting: adult ed, workforce, corrections
- A stance: “practical, skeptical of busywork”
- A reader role, to get feedback

INSTRUCTOR

“Act as an experienced adult ESL instructor who specializes in multilevel classrooms and workplace English.”

ADMINISTRATOR

“Act as an adult education program director who knows WIOA Title II well and writes in plain language.”

Hack: Flip the role for feedback. “Act as a new learner reading this flyer. What confuses you?”

One clear verb, plus “so that…”

Action is what AI should do. Aim is why.
The “so that” turns a generic product into one you can use.

Strong verbs

- Create, draft, rewrite
- Summarize, compare, simplify
- Brainstorm, outline, critique
- Translate, adapt, differentiate

INSTRUCTOR

“Create a 10-minute warm-up on asking a supervisor for time off, **so that** learners can practice a conversation they'll really have this month.”

ADMINISTRATOR

“Draft a text to learners who missed two classes in a row, **so that** they feel welcomed back rather than scolded.”

Hack: One main action per prompt. Got three jobs? Send three prompts.

Tell AI exactly what to hand you

Format controls the shape and length of the output. Skip it and you'll get long paragraphs every time.

Ask for

- A table, checklist or step list
- A dialogue, script or role-play
- A handout with the answer key at the end
- An email, text or flyer with a word limit

INSTRUCTOR

“Format it as a two-column table (word | workplace example sentence), then a 5-question matching quiz. Put the answer key at the end.”

ADMINISTRATOR

“Give me a text message under 160 characters, then the same message in Spanish.”

Hack: Always set a length limit. AI's default setting is “more.”

Fit it to the people who will use it

Tailoring adjusts for your real audience: their reading level, language, culture, needs and goals.

Tailor for

- Reading level or CEFR level
- Home languages and culture
- Accessibility: large print, screen readers
- Tone, and what to avoid

INSTRUCTOR

“Use a 3rd-grade reading level, short sentences and names from many cultures. No idioms or slang.”

ADMINISTRATOR

“Warm and plain. No acronyms like WIOA or NRS. Many families will read this on a phone.”

Hack: Tailor is where you say what NOT to do. “No idioms” saves you a whole revision.

CHOOSING A TOOL

CRAFT works in all four free tools

Claude

Strong with long documents, natural-sounding writing and careful reasoning.

Good to know: builds clickable games and activities you can project.

ChatGPT

A versatile all-rounder that can also create images. Many staff already use it.

Good to know: voice mode is handy for modeling speaking practice.

Gemini

Fits Google programs: works with Docs, Gmail and Drive, with Google Search built in.

Good to know: personal and work accounts have different privacy protections.

Copilot

Fits Microsoft 365 programs: Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams.

Good to know: your work login adds data protection.

Hack: for high-stakes tasks, run the same CRAFT prompt in two tools and keep the better answer.

Whatever the tool: the golden rule protects learners. Unsure what's allowed? Ask IT or your director.

One reading, three levels

THE PROMPT

[C] I teach a multilevel adult ESL class (NRS levels 2, 3 and 4). [R] Act as an adult ESL curriculum specialist. [A] Rewrite the article below about earthquakes into three versions, one per level, so the whole class can discuss the same topic together. [F] For each level: provide a passage with 5 bold-faced key words, a separate section with simple definitions, 5 comprehension questions and 3 discussion questions in Google Doc format. [T] Level 2: under 150 words, present tense, simple language. Level 3: about 250 words, present and past tense. Level 4: about 350 words. No idioms.



Check it out on ChatGPT

<https://chatgpt.com/share/6ac48984-6514-83ea-b458-8d3379d1c3e6>



The article

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/earth>

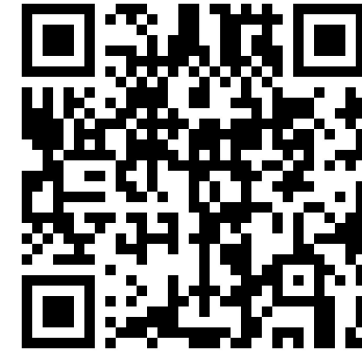
Watch for

Same key ideas at every level? Is Level 2 truly simpler?

Let AI build the tool, never see the data

THE PROMPT

[C] I coordinate an adult ed program. Our attendance records stay in our secure system, so I will not share them. **[R]** Act as a spreadsheet trainer for non-technical staff. **[A]** Build a sample attendance tracker with 8 rows of obviously fake data (Learner A, Learner B...), so I can copy its structure and formulas into our secure file. **[F]** Columns: Class, Weeks 1–4 hours, Total, and a Follow-up flag that says “Check in” under 12 total hours. Then list each formula and which cell it goes in. **[T]** Beginner-friendly steps that work in Excel and Google Sheets.



Check it out on ChatGPT

<https://chatgpt.com/share/6ac4a70d-c0c4-83ea-a7ca-da3587e24b3a>

Watch for

Is every row clearly fake? Test each formula before you trust it.

Four CRAFT prompts to steal for your program

Staff PD session

“I lead PD for 25 part-time ESOL instructors with varying degrees of teaching experience from beginner to veteran instructors. Act as a PD facilitator. Design a 90-minute session in the form of a slide deck on using gallery walk and information gap activities in the classroom for contextualized learning. Instructors should try both strategies from a learner and instructor role. Include an agenda with times, brief 5 minute getting-to-know / hello again activity since they don’t see each other for 2 weeks on activity, and exit ticket.”



Check it out here

<https://chatgpt.com/share/6ac491fd-16d8-83ea-9c24-04b6995a99ce>

Policy memo for staff

“Act as a program director who writes for busy part-time instructors. Summarize what changes in the policy below, so staff know exactly what to do next month. A 150-word memo plus a 5-item checklist. Flag anything unclear instead of guessing.”

Employer partner email

“I coordinate an IET program in [field]. Act as a workforce partnership specialist. Draft a 150-word email asking a local employer for a 20-minute call about a site visit, so we can start a hiring partnership. Friendly, specific, one clear request.”

Learner re-engagement

“Some learners stop coming after month one because of work, childcare or transportation. Act as a retention specialist. Write a text under 160 characters, so they feel welcome to return. Mention only these options: [your real options]. No guilt, no acronyms.”

Get creative: AI as game designer and actor

Real-life math escape room

“Act as an escape-room designer. For my adult HSE math class, create 4 linked clues on percents using a paycheck stub, a store receipt and a rent notice. Clue cards plus an answer key. Adult themes, not childish. Include an introduction that explains what the escape room game is and how it works”

Job interview simulator

“Act as a hotel hiring manager. Interview me for a front-desk job, one question at a time. After 5 questions, give 2 strengths and 1 thing to practice. Use simple English (CEFR A2).”

The confused student

“Act as an adult learner who is confused about equivalent fractions. My class will take turns explaining it to you. Ask honest questions, make one common mistake, and only ‘get it’ when the explanation is clear.”

Choose-your-path story

“Write an interactive, digital choose-your-path story at a 4th-grade level about a parent's first parent-teacher conference. 3 decision points with 2 choices each, plus 5 key words, so ESL learners can read and debate the choices.”



Check it out here <https://claude.ai/artifact/3uSC2cyd6ZcmqrEBpTTCc9>

Hack: Show AI one activity your learners loved and say, “Make three more like this” (and add more context, of course!)

Visuals, data and slides

The pattern: Ask AI for the structure and content, then build it in a tool you already use. AI drafts; you design, check and decide. **Data:** practice with fake numbers only.

Infographic

“Turn the 5 steps to register for the HSE exam into a visually interesting infographic with a title, one sentence per step and an icon idea for each. 4th-grade reading level.”

Build in: CanvaAI or ChatGPT

Flowchart

“Map our new-learner intake process, from first call to first class, as a flowchart with short labels and yes/no decision points, so new staff can follow it.”

Build in: Claude or CanvaAI

Dashboard

“Using only the fake numbers below, build a one-page interactive dashboard with 3 summary tiles and a bar chart by class, so staff can picture what we could track.”

Build in: Claude or ChatGPT

Spreadsheet

“Create a 12-week curriculum map I can paste into a spreadsheet. Columns: Week, CCR standard, Skill focus, Activity, Quick check, Materials. Short cells.”

Build in: ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot and get in Google Sheets or Excel format.

Presentation

“Create a 6-slide orientation deck for new learners that includes the information in the document I’m attaching below. Per slide: a title, 3 short bullets max, a picture idea and speaker notes. Warm, 4th-grade level.”

Build in: Claude, Google Slides, ChatGPT, PowerPoint or CanvaAI

Infographic examples



Check out here

<https://canva.link/o5e8eh95eeceil7>



As a website with

CanvaAI
<https://gedstudentenrollmentstaff.my.canva.site/>

Class activities and games

Gallery walk

“Create 6 gallery walk posters on workplace safety signs. Each: a short scenario, an image idea and 2 discussion questions for small groups. CEFR A2.”

Use: print, or post on Padlet

Information gap

“Create a pair activity: Partner A and Partner B each get half of a bus schedule and must ask questions to plan a trip to work. Add question frames and a key.”

Use: print two partner handouts

Interactive review

“Write 15 flashcards and 10 quiz questions on reading a pay stub, with answers, as a table I can paste into Quizlet, Kahoot or Google Forms.”

Use: Quizlet, Kahoot or Forms

Whole-class game

“Create a Jeopardy-style review game as one interactive web page: 5 categories on fractions and percents, click-to-reveal answers and a team scoreboard.”



Check it out here

Try: Gemini or ChatGPT, and project it in class.

<https://share.gemini.google/lcC3kvkDPLlm>

Drag-and-drop sort

“Make an interactive web page where learners sort 12 job tasks into Healthcare or Hospitality, with large text, instant feedback and a Try Again button.”



Check it out here

Use: project it, or share the link

<https://chatgpt.com/share/6ac4a804-abd8-83ea-b2f2-5f32c97b51c3>

Test before class

Click every button and check every answer. AI-made games can have wrong answers or broken buttons.

Bonus: playing as a class needs no learner logins or names.

YOUR TURN · 5 MINUTES

CRAFT a prompt for a real task

- 1. Pick your task from the warm-up (no personal data)
- 2. Fill in each line of the worksheet
- 3. Run it in any AI tool
- 4. Try one follow-up
- 5. Paste your before and after in chat



Scan for the worksheet, or use the link in chat:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1srE5-jSSlNekEzPEp6t6ogFUbiTKxDIKgG2fEGR5lrI/edit?usp=sharing>

Letter	Ask yourself	My notes
C Context	What's the situation?	
R Role	Whose expertise do I need?	
A Action / Aim	What should it do, and why?	
F Format	What shape? How long?	
T Tailor	Who's it for? What to avoid?	

First answer missed? Don't start over

1 · Ask for options

“Give me 3 versions: one formal, one warm, one very short.”

2 · Surface assumptions

“What did you assume about my learners? List your assumptions.”

3 · Dial the level

“Rewrite this at an NRS 2 level, with shorter sentences.”

4 · Self-check

“Compare your answer to my prompt. What did you miss? Fix it.”

5 · Point to the spot

“Keep everything except paragraph 2. Make that one more concrete.”

6 · Fresh start

Chat went off the rails? Open a new chat and paste your improved prompt.

Hack: Treat the first answer as a rough draft that gets you about 70% of the way there, your careful and professional review, judgement and editing is always key before anything you create with AI is public-facing

ADVANCED TECHNIQUE 1

Reverse prompting: let AI ask the questions

Instead of guessing what to include, have AI interview you, or work backward from an example you love.

Interview me first

"I need a 4-week IET unit for CNA prep. Before you write anything, ask me up to 5 questions, one at a time. Then write it."

Best for: big or unfamiliar tasks

Reverse-engineer it

"Here's a handout my learners loved. Write the CRAFT prompt that would create something like it, so I can reuse it."

Best for: building a reusable prompt library

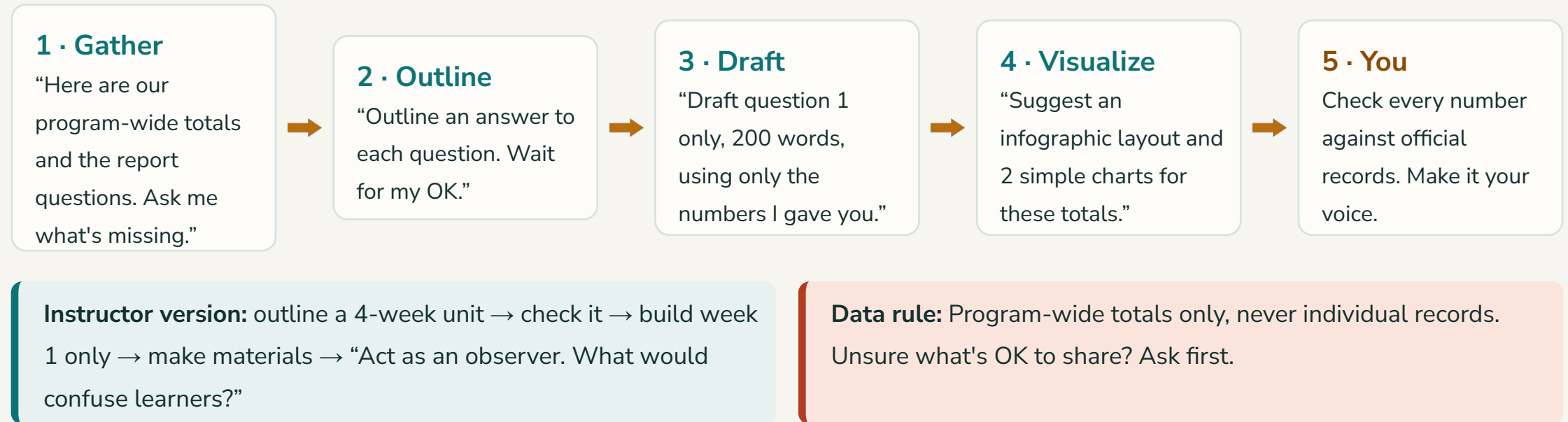
Prompt the prompt

"Improve this prompt using the CRAFT framework. Show me what you added and why." [Paste your prompt]

Best for: getting better at prompting itself

Big job? Chain it: a funder progress report

One giant prompt gives you a generic report. Small steps in one chat, with you checking each one, give you your program's story.



ETHICS

Six commitments for using AI in adult ed

Protect privacy

No personal data, not even first names.
Unsure? Ask IT or your director.

Verify everything

Check facts, dates and numbers against the source. AI can be confidently wrong.

People decide

Never let AI decide placement, eligibility, grades or discipline.

Check bias and fit

Look at names, examples and assumptions. Would your learners see themselves?

Be transparent

Tell staff and learners when AI helped.
Follow funder rules on AI use.

Count the costs

AI uses real energy and water. Use it on purpose, or choose not to.

Discuss in chat: Where would you choose NOT to use AI in your program, and why?

YOUR NEXT STEP

Take the 7-day CRAFT challenge

Fill the blanks before AI guesses. Treat the first answer as a draft. For big jobs, flip and chain.

1 · Today

Scan the code and make your own copy of the worksheet.

2 · This week

CRAFT one real task, then try one follow-up move.

3 · Next staff meeting

Share one prompt that worked, and teach your team the five letters.



Worksheet, prompt bank and resources

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1srE5-jSSlNekEzPEp6t6ogFUbiTKxDlKqG2fEGR5lrI/edit?usp=sharing>

Exit ticket in chat: Which CRAFT letter will you add to your next prompt?

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Prompting That Actually Works: The CRAFT Framework

Kristin Erhard · COABE AI Virtual Summit, October 2026.
Slides, demos and the full CRAFT prompt bank.



https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1dmCgSapzK5MfR2yt0d-18beChTed37u3_FkD3cOnFI/edit?usp=sharing

Generative AI in Education Consulting

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AI office hours, ethics and guideline development, and implementation support for adult education programs across the country. The goal: help your team understand what AI can and can't do, so you can make an informed choice.



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