

How to Properly Ask Questions in AI? — Gemini

Caveats:

I asked GeminiAI the following question on “how to properly ask questions in AI?” Following is Gemini’s reply. In my brief C-3PO role using AI, I’m finding several critical factors that need to be presented in AI training:

1. Check your ego at the keyboard
2. Need for patience
3. Need for humility
4. Ask clear, concise, coherent questions to AI using the following suggestions. AI does not think what you intend to ask, AI only replies to what you ask.
5. Using AI can be frustrating if you are in a hurry and do not think through what you are asking AI. You have to be precise in what you ask for, AI does not read our thoughts. Oh, and verify, what you are asking. “Measure twice; cut once!”
6. AI trains **US** how to communicate more clearly!

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How to Generate a Graphic Image:

This is what I typed:

Generate a graphic with blood red background with a large red apple with a few green leaves with fancy shiny gold lettering superimposed on the apple text on 2 lines of equal height reads “Apple Seeds” below on a shiny golden banner in red lettering “Thank You!”

Q: Suggestions for how I can teach colleagues to properly ask questions in AI

A: from Gemini AI

That’s a fantastic and increasingly important skill to teach! Here are some suggestions for how you can effectively teach people how to properly ask questions of AI, focusing on clarity, context, and desired outcomes:

1. Lay the Foundation: Understanding How AI Works (at a high level)

- **Demystify the “Intelligence”:** Briefly explain that most current AI isn’t truly thinking or understanding in the human sense. It works by identifying patterns in vast amounts of data. This helps manage expectations and highlights why precise language is crucial.
- **Input -> Processing -> Output:** Illustrate the basic flow. Emphasize that the quality of the input (the question) directly impacts the quality of the output (the answer).
- **Different Types of AI:** Briefly touch upon the fact that different AI models are designed for different tasks (e.g., chatbots, image generators, code assistants). This can influence the type of questions that are appropriate.

2. The Art of Asking Clear and Specific Questions:

- **Be Precise with Language:**
- **Avoid Ambiguity:** Use clear and unambiguous wording. Instead of “Tell me about dogs,” ask “What are the common health concerns for Golden Retrievers?”
- **Define Terms:** If using technical terms or jargon, either define them or assume the AI has a basic understanding.
- **Be Direct:** Get straight to the point. Avoid lengthy preambles or conversational fluff unless it provides necessary context.
- **Specify the Desired Format:**
- **Type of Answer:** Do they want a list, a step-by-step guide, a comparison, a summary, code, creative writing, etc.? Encourage them to state this explicitly. “Give me a bulleted list of the main arguments for and against universal basic income.”
- **Length and Detail:** Do they need a brief overview or an in-depth explanation? “Summarize the key findings of the IPCC report in under 100 words.” or “Explain the concept of quantum entanglement in detail, including relevant experiments.”
- **Break Down Complex Questions:** Encourage users to break down multifaceted questions into smaller, more manageable parts. This can lead to more focused and accurate answers.

3. Providing Context and Background:

- **Set the Scene:** Provide any necessary background information that the AI might need to understand the question fully. “Considering a marketing campaign targeting young adults interested in sustainable fashion, what are some effective social media platforms?”
- **State Assumptions:** If the question relies on certain assumptions, it’s helpful to state them. “Assuming a budget of \$500, what are the best options for a beginner DSLR camera?”
- **Reference Previous Interactions (if applicable):** If the AI has memory of past turns, encourage users to refer back to previous information to build upon the conversation. “Following up on our discussion about renewable energy sources, can you elaborate on the challenges of implementing large-scale solar power?”

4. Guiding the AI Towards the Desired Outcome:

- **Specify the Purpose:** What do they want to do with the information? “I want to write a blog post about the benefits of mindfulness. Can you provide three compelling arguments with supporting evidence?”
- **Define Constraints:** Are there any limitations or criteria the AI should consider? “Suggest three logo designs for a coffee shop, keeping in mind a minimalist aesthetic and a color palette of browns and creams.”
- **Ask for Reasoning:** Encourage users to ask “why” or “how” to gain a deeper understanding of the AI’s responses. “You suggested using social media for marketing. Can you explain why you think that would be effective for this target audience?”

5. Iteration and Refinement:

- **Explain the Feedback Loop:** Emphasize that interacting with AI is often an iterative process. If the first answer isn't quite right, encourage them to rephrase, provide more context, or ask a follow-up question.
- **Teach Effective Follow-Up Questions:** Show examples of how to refine a question based on the initial response. "That's helpful. Now, can you provide specific examples of how other sustainable fashion brands have used Instagram effectively?"
- **Experiment with Different Phrasing:** Encourage users to try asking the same question in different ways to see how the AI's response varies. This can help them understand how the AI interprets language.

6. Practical Exercises and Examples:

- **Provide Real-World Scenarios:** Present examples of poorly phrased questions and guide participants in how to improve them.
- **Interactive Practice:** Facilitate exercises where participants formulate questions for different AI scenarios and receive feedback.
- **Analyze AI Responses:** Show examples of AI responses to good and bad questions, highlighting the differences in quality and relevance.

7. Ethical Considerations:

- **Bias in AI:** Briefly discuss the potential for bias in AI outputs and how the phrasing of questions might inadvertently elicit biased responses.
- **Critical Evaluation:** Encourage users to critically evaluate the information provided by AI and not to accept it as absolute truth.
- **Responsible Use:** Briefly touch upon the ethical implications of using AI and the importance of asking questions in a responsible and respectful manner.

8. Teaching Methods:

- **Workshops and Presentations:** Use clear visuals, real-life examples, and interactive elements.
- **Online Courses and Modules:** Offer self-paced learning with quizzes and assignments.
- **Handouts and Guides:** Provide concise summaries of key principles and best practices.
- **Role-Playing Exercises:** Have participants practice asking and refining questions in simulated AI interactions.

By focusing on these areas, you can empower people to become more effective and confident communicators with AI, unlocking its full potential while also fostering a more nuanced understanding of its capabilities and limitations. Good luck!