

Fifteen myths about prompting

Fifteen claims about prompting, each with a verdict and the reason. False means the measurements contradict it; partly means the effect is small or unstable.



01 Avoid hallucinations. Do not guess

Verdict: false. The model does not know the term and keeps computing probabilities regardless.



02 Never use X

Verdict: false. Negation is the weakest instruction form for a model. State what should hold instead.



03 Critique your own draft

Verdict: false. Drafting and judging run in the same computation. An outside checker is a different thing.



04 You are a world-class senior architect

Verdict: false. A role as costume changes the tone, not the correctness.



05 I will tip you 200 dollars

Verdict: partly. The usual story does not hold. Measured effects are small and unstable.



06 Please and thank you cannot hurt

Verdict: partly. Two studies, two results. Politeness is not a reliable lever.



07 Take a deep breath and think logically

Verdict: partly. The most famous incantation is the most often misquoted. It came out of a search, not a rule.



08 Format and markup do not matter

Verdict: false. Change only the format and keep the content: the results shift measurably.



09 The order of examples does not matter

Verdict: false. Swap only the order and nothing else: the results change.



10 Pack every rule into one long prompt

Verdict: false. Where a fact sits matters. The middle is what gets lost.



11 Huge window, so pour everything in

Verdict: false. Holding is not finding. A large window does not search by itself.



12 Temperature at zero means reproducible

Verdict: false. The dial switches off one source of randomness. The hardware brings a second.



13 Written-out steps mean a right answer

Verdict: false. The supplied reasoning often does not name the real reason for the answer.



14 A pack of 500 ready-made prompts

Verdict: false. What you buy is tied to a model and a date. Both change.



15 Once the prompt is right, the product stands

Verdict: false. Same model, same tasks, three months later: different results.