

The Prompt Machete



By Richard Winser

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**How To Slash Prompt Confusion, Time,
And Energy By Starting
With The Right Verb**

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Introduction

Writing prompts sucks.

Go online and you'll find four-part, six-part, eight-part systems for writing "the perfect prompt." They tell you to define a role, give context, explain the task, specify the output, add examples, include constraints, choose a tone, and on and on.

That can work.

But it also creates a new problem.

Now you're not just trying to get an answer from the AI. You're trying to remember a prompting framework before you even ask the question.

The Prompt Machete gives you a different approach.

Instead of building long, complicated prompts, you start with one thing:

The verb.

Verbs are action words. They tell the AI what to do.

Summarize this.

Compare these.

Rewrite that.

Analyze this problem.

Create a checklist.

Evaluate this offer.

Rank these ideas.

Translate this into simpler language.

That one shift cuts confusion on both sides. It makes your intent clearer to you, and it makes the task clearer to the LLM.

This method comes from an educational tool first introduced in 1956: **Bloom's Taxonomy**. Teachers use Bloom's Taxonomy to

design lessons, activities, and assessments around levels of thinking. At the center of it are verbs.

Teachers don't just say, "Understand this book."

They say:

- Read the chapter.
- Summarize the argument.
- Compare two characters.
- Defend your position.
- Create a new ending.

The verb defines the thinking task.

And that's exactly why this works so well with AI.

By the time you finish this short report, you'll know how to:

1. Get clear on what you want the AI to **do**.
2. Choose the right verb from Bloom's Taxonomy.
3. Start your prompt with that verb.
4. Get cleaner outputs with shorter prompts.
5. Build your own personal list of go-to prompting verbs.

You can apply this before you even finish reading this report. I'd prefer you read the whole thing, though. ;)

Step 1: Stop Starting With Roles

Most people were taught to start prompts like this:

You are a world-class pasta maker...

Or:

Act as a senior marketing strategist with 20 years of experience...

Sometimes that helps.

But often, it adds fluff before you've even defined the actual task.

The AI still needs to know what you want it to **do**.

Bad prompt:

You are a world-class pasta maker. I want to learn more about pasta and how to make it better at home.

Better prompt:

Compare fresh pasta and dried pasta for a beginner home cook. Explain when to use each one.

The second prompt works better because it starts with a specific action.

You are not asking the AI to "be" something.

You are asking it to **compare** something.

That verb gives the AI direction immediately.

Three things to consider

First, roles are not useless, but they are usually secondary. Define the task before you decorate the prompt.

Second, a strong verb gives you a way to judge the output. If you asked the AI to compare, you can immediately see whether it actually compared.

Third, vague prompts usually produce vague answers. Specific verbs produce specific outputs.

Quick exercise

Take your last three AI prompts and underline the main action you wanted the AI to perform.

Was it to summarize?

Rewrite?

Analyze?

Create?

Rank?

Explain?

Diagnose?

Recommend?

What was the action word? That is your real prompt hiding inside the messy one.

Step 2: Choose the Right Thinking Level

Bloom's Taxonomy gives you six levels of thinking:

Remember — recall, list, define, identify

Understand — explain, summarize, classify, paraphrase

Apply — use, demonstrate, solve, prepare

Analyze — compare, break down, organize, question

Evaluate — judge, assess, rank, recommend

Create — design, produce, compose, formulate

I included a fairly comprehensive chart at the end of this report, but you don't need to memorize the whole thing.

Just understand this:

Different verbs ask for different kinds of thinking.

If you ask the AI to **list**, you'll get a simpler output.

If you ask it to **analyze**, you'll get a deeper breakdown.

If you ask it to **evaluate**, you'll get judgment.

If you ask it to **create**, you'll get something new.

Example

Weak prompt:

Tell me about my sales page.

Better prompts:

Summarize the main promise of this sales page.

Analyze where the argument becomes unclear.

Evaluate whether the offer feels urgent enough.

Rewrite the headline to make the promise more specific.

Create three stronger call-to-action options.

Same material.

Completely different outputs.

The verb controls the job.

Three things to consider

First, don't use a high-level verb when you only need a simple task. If you just need a list, ask the AI to list.

Second, don't use a low-level verb when you need judgment. If you need the AI to make a decision, use verbs like **evaluate, rank, choose, recommend, or critique.**

Third, when the output disappoints you, the verb is often the first thing to fix.

Step 3: Start the Prompt With the Verb

This is the heart of the system.

Write your prompt so the first meaningful word is the action verb.

Instead of:

I'm working on a lead magnet and I'm not sure if the title is clear. Can you look at these options and tell me which one is best?

Use:

Rank these lead magnet titles from strongest to weakest for a beginner audience. Explain the reason for each ranking.

Instead of:

I need help making this email sound better.

Use:

Rewrite this email to sound clearer, warmer, and more direct.

Instead of:

Can you help me understand this customer feedback?

Use:

Analyze this customer feedback and identify the top three objections.

This makes the prompt shorter and stronger.

The AI knows the job immediately.

You know the job immediately.

And you can tell immediately whether the AI did what you asked.

The basic formula

Use this:

[Verb] + [thing] + [standard or outcome]

Examples:

Summarize this article in five bullet points.

Compare these two offers for a budget-conscious buyer.

Evaluate this product idea using the low-ticket product audit rubric.

Rewrite this paragraph at a seventh-grade reading level.

Create a checklist for publishing a short report.

Identify the confusing parts of this landing page.

Recommend the best next step based on these notes.

That is The Prompt Machete in action.

It cuts away the extra wording and gets straight to the task.

Step 4: Use Verb Stacking for Better Outputs

Once you get comfortable with verb-first prompting, you can stack verbs.

This means you ask the AI to perform a sequence of actions.

Example:

Analyze this sales page, **identify** the three weakest sections, then **rewrite** the opening paragraph.

That is better than:

Can you look at this sales page and make it better?

Why?

Because “make it better” is vague.

Analyze, identify, and rewrite are specific.

Here are useful verb stacks:

Summarize → Analyze → Recommend

Good for decisions.

List → Rank → Explain

Good for choosing between options.

Identify → Diagnose → Rewrite

Good for improving copy.

Compare → Evaluate → Choose

Good for product, offer, or strategy decisions.

Extract → Organize → Create

Good for turning notes into usable content.

Example for content creation

Weak prompt:

Help me turn these notes into a report.

Better prompt:

Extract the main ideas from these notes, **organize** them into a short report outline, then **write** the introduction in a direct, conversational style.

That one prompt gives the AI a clear path.

Step 5: Build Your Personal Verb List

You do not need all the verbs on the chart every day.

After enough reps, you'll find that you use the same 8–10 verbs most of the time.

For example, my go-to prompting verbs would be:

Summarize
Analyze
Rewrite
Compare
Evaluate
Rank
Create
Identify
Recommend
Simplify

Your list may be different.

A copywriter might use:

Rewrite, critique, strengthen, simplify, compare, generate, adapt.

A teacher might use:

Explain, summarize, classify, demonstrate, assess, create.

A business owner might use:

Analyze, rank, recommend, forecast, compare, diagnose.

A researcher might use:

Extract, synthesize, categorize, evaluate, cite, summarize.

The goal is not to memorize Bloom's Taxonomy.

The goal is to train yourself to think:

What do I actually want the AI to do?

Once you know the verb, the prompt gets easier.

Quick Reference: Prompt Machete Verbs

Use these when you want a fast result.

For simple outputs

- List** the main points.
- Define** this term.
- Identify** the problem.
- Summarize** this article.
- Describe** the process.

For clearer understanding

- Explain** this like I'm new.
- Paraphrase** this in plain English.
- Classify** these ideas into categories.
- Compare** these two options.
- Give examples** of this concept.

For practical use

- Apply** this framework to my offer.
- Solve** this problem.
- Prepare** a checklist.
- Demonstrate** how this works.
- Use** this structure to write a draft.

For deeper thinking

- Analyze** this argument.
- Break down** this process.
- Differentiate** these options.
- Organize** these notes.
- Question** the assumptions.

For decisions

Evaluate this idea.

Rank these options.

Choose the strongest version.

Recommend the best next step.

Justify your recommendation.

For creation

Create a draft.

Design a worksheet.

Compose an email.

Develop a plan.

Rewrite this section.

Formulate a better offer.

Conclusion

Prompting can start with a verb.

When you lead with the verb, you force yourself to get clear on the job you want done. That clarity helps the AI produce a better answer.

The system is simple:

1. Get clear on what you want the LLM to do.
2. Pick the right verb.
3. Start your prompt with that verb.
4. Add the object and standard.
5. Use verb stacking when you need a sequence.
6. Build your personal list of go-to verbs.

This is not a trick, loophole, or temporary hack.

It works because verbs define action.

And prompting is asking the AI to take action.

Print the Bloom's Taxonomy chart at the end of this report. Keep it next to you. Use it until thinking in verbs becomes second nature.

The next time you open ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or any other LLM, don't start with:

You are a world-class expert...

Start with:

Analyze...

Rewrite...

Compare...

Evaluate...

Create...

That is the Prompt Machete.

Cut the confusion.
Cut the time.
Cut the energy.
Get to the output.

To Your Success,

Richard Winser

Revised Blooms Taxonomy Action Words

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
copy	ask	act	advertise	appraise	adapt
define	associate	administer	analyze	argue	anticipate
describe	cite	apply	appraise	assess	arrange
discover	classify	articulate	break down	choose	assemble
duplicate	compare	calculate	calculate	compare	choose
enumerate	contrast	change	categorize	conclude	collaborate
examine	convert	chart	classify	consider	collect
identify	demonstrate	choose	compare	convince	combine
label	describe	collect	conclude	criticize	compile
list	differentiate	complete	connect	critique	compose
listen	discover	compute	contrast	debate	construct
locate	discuss	construct	correlate	decide	create
match	distinguish	demonstrate	criticize	defend	design
memorize	estimate	determine	deduce	discriminate	develop
name	explain	develop	devise	distinguish	devise
observe	express	discover	diagram	editorialize	express
omit	extend	dramatize	differentiate	estimate	facilitate
quote	generalize	employ	discriminate	evaluate	formulate
read	give examples	establish	dissect	find errors	generalize
recall	group	examine	distinguish	grade	hypothesize
recite	identify	experiment	divide	judge	imagine
recognize	illustrate	explain	estimate	justify	infer
record	indicate	illustrate	evaluate	measure	integrate
repeat	infer	interpret	experiment	order	intervene
reproduce	interpret	interview	explain	persuade	invent
retell	judge	judge	focus	predict	justify
select	observe	list	illustrate	rank	make
state	order	manipulate	infer	rate	manage
tabulate	paraphrase	modify	order	recommend	modify
tell	predict	operate	organize	reframe	negotiate
visualize	relate	paint	outline	score	organize
	report	practice	plan	select	originate
	represent	predict	point out	summarize	plan
	research	prepare	prioritize	support	prepare
	restate	produce	question	test	produce
	review	record	select	weigh	propose
	rewrite	relate	separate		rearrange
	select	report	subdivide		reorganize
	show	schedule	survey		report
	summarize	show	test		revise
	trace	sketch			rewrite
	transform	solve			role-play
	translate	stimulate			schematize
		teach			simulate
		transfer			solve
		use			speculate
		write			structure
					substitute
					support
					test
					validate
					write