DAY 08 · Part 1 · What AI Is

Why does changing one question change the whole answer? — Prompts

Five-Minute AI Lessons · Sep 14, 2026

Don't change the AI — change the question

Today's answer

In a nutshell

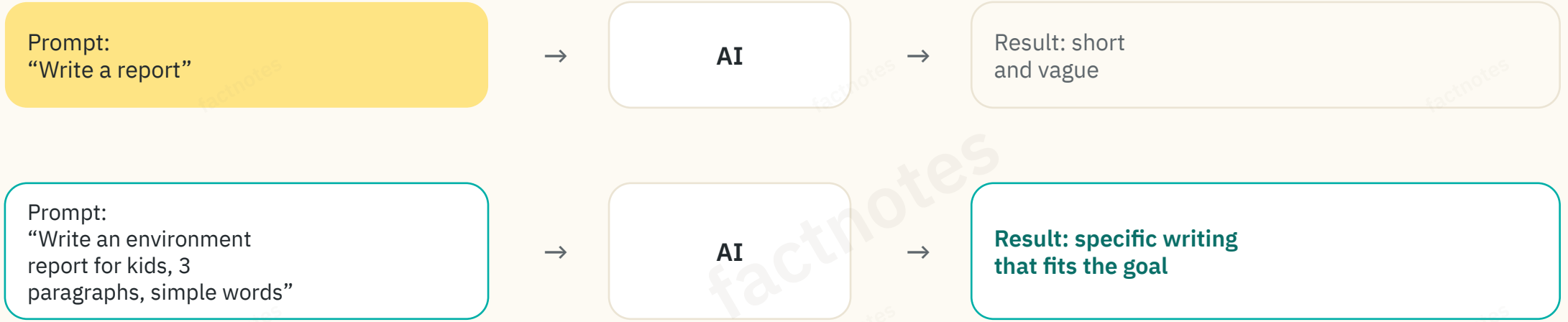
1. A prompt is **the whole text you give the AI** — change the text, and the odds for the next word change completely.

2. A short, vague prompt gets a vague answer. **A prompt that spells out role, conditions and format** gets a much more useful one.

3. Good prompts aren't a trick to fool the AI. They're just **saying more clearly what you want**.

One picture

Same AI, different prompt, different result



Key idea: the AI didn't get smarter — you just said it more clearly.

Try changing the prompt like this

Example 1 · Trip

Before
Plan a trip for me

After
Plan a 4-day, 3-night family trip to London with young kids, mostly indoors

Spell out who it's for and the conditions

Example 2 · Email

Before
Write an apology email

After
Write an email apologizing for a late delivery, polite but plain, 5 lines max

Set the tone and length too

Example 3 · Code

Before
Fix my code

After
Fix only the part of this Python function that errors on an empty list

Pin down what to fix, and where

The key: say clearly 'what, for whom, in what format.'

※ The results are just examples to help explain.

Quick check

Just three questions

Q1

What's the key to a good prompt?

① A secret spell that tricks the AI
② Saying clearly what result you want
③ Keeping it as short as possible
④ Using lots of big words

Q2

(True / False) Change the prompt, and the odds for the AI's next word change too.

Q3

(True / False) No matter how specific your prompt is, the result barely changes.

Know the why, too

Q1

② A prompt is the starting point for the text the AI continues. The more clearly you say what you want, the more the odds lean your way.

Q2

T When the input text changes, the words most likely to come next change completely.

Q3

F The more you spell out who it's for, the format, the length and the tone, the more useful the result gets.

Don't change the AI — change the question.



Next up: Big models and small models — what changes with size?