

FOCUS ON: GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

GETTING STARTED WITH CHATGPT

V 1.3 (MAY 2024)



WHAT IS CHATGPT?

ChatGPT is short for “Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer” and it is a type of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) also known as a Large Language Model (LLM). The University’s Working Group for GenAI Tools has developed a [series of GenAI guides for staff](#). These guides introduce GenAI tools, including ChatGPT, and offer advice on how to support your students in using these tools for learning and assessment, all while maintaining and considering matters such as academic integrity and inclusivity.

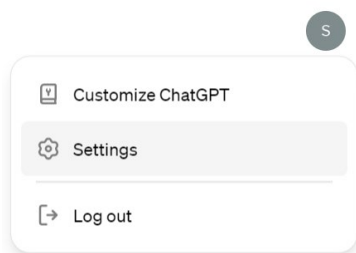
ChatGPT was developed by a San Francisco-based company called OpenAI which was founded in 2015. OpenAI released the original GPT in June 2018 and it was groundbreaking because it demonstrated the ability to generate coherent and contextually relevant text based on prompts provided by users. Building upon the success of GPT, subsequent versions - GPT-2 and GPT-3 - were released, each with improvements in scale, capability and performance. Toward the end of 2022, ChatGPT-3.5 had taken the world by storm and according to OpenAI, it had acquired 1 million users just 5 days after its launch in November 2022. At the time of writing, ChatGPT currently has around [180.5 million users](#). ChatGPT-4 offers a subscription-only service whereas ChatGPT-3.5 remains free to use. However ChatGPT-4o (where ‘o’ stands for omni-model), a version [released only very recently](#), is available to try for free depending on demand.

HOW DO I USE IT?

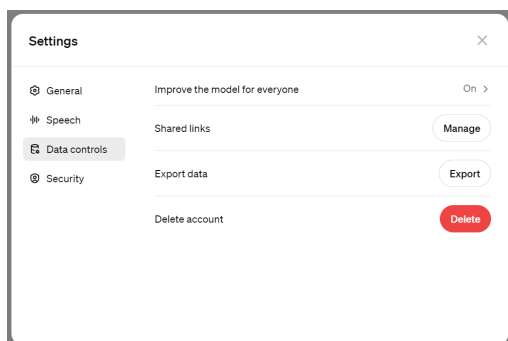
Before you start, please have your OpenAI ChatGPT login details to hand. You may need to refer to the handout on [‘How to set up a ChatGPT account \(free version\)’](#) first.

If you are using your University of Reading email address for your ChatGPT account, **the following is a mandatory step** to help you stay in control in relation to how the data you type into ChatGPT is used for the training of OpenAI’s LLMs:

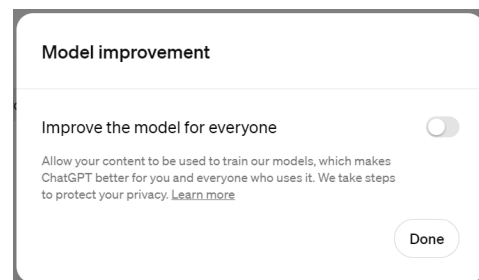
1. In the top-right corner, select your account name or initial and from the drop-down menu that appears, select **‘Settings’**



2. In the **Settings** window, select **Data controls** and toggle the option that relates to **Improve the model for everyone** – note the default option is switched On – select **On >**



3. Then *uncheck* the **Improve the model for everyone** option so that it is no longer green and select **Done**



4. Ensure that **the Improve the model for everyone** option is **Off** and close the Settings window

Data controls for other GenAI tools

Here we’re focusing on ChatGPT, however [there are thousands](#) of GenAI tools / LLMs available to use! As a responsible user of these tools you need to find out how to toggle the data control settings that apply to these. If you can’t find or can’t access these settings, please follow the golden rules for safe GenAI use below.

3 GOLDEN RULES FOR SAFE USE (DATA CONTROLS)

1. Do not input sensitive personal data, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, student numbers, usernames, email addresses or any other identifiable information. Anonymise where necessary, using pseudonyms or general terms instead of real names and specific details.
2. Do not share confidential business, commercial, research, R&D information or proprietary data.
3. Ensure that you are using a secure connection (HTTPS) when accessing ChatGPT to prevent data interception.

Useful resources related to maintaining privacy and compliance with data protection regulations:

University of Reading guidelines (produced by IMPS, May 2024): [Data Protection and AI \(reading.ac.uk\)](https://www.reading.ac.uk/data-protection-and-ai)

OpenAI Usage Policies: These policies provide guidelines on what is permissible when using OpenAI's models, including data protection practices: [Usage policies | OpenAI](https://openai.com/policies/usage-policies)

OpenAI Privacy Policy: Details on how OpenAI handles user data and what measures are in place to protect it: [openai.com/en-GB/policies/privacy-policy/](https://openai.com/en-gb/policies/privacy-policy/)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) Compliance Guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr-compliance-guidelines)

UK ICO Data Protection Principles: [A guide to the data protection principles | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/privacy/data-protection-principles/)

PROMPT ENGINEERING

“Prompt engineering” is very much a phrase synonymous with the widespread prevalence of GenAI tools, indeed ‘prompt’ was the Oxford dictionary’s [2023 word of the year!](https://www.oxford.com/dictionary/2023-word-of-the-year) Prompt engineering describes the art of communicating with a GenAI model. It’s about asking questions in a way that gets you the answer you want. When writing prompts you need to be specific about what you want ChatGPT to do. The table on the next page¹ outlines components you can consider when creating prompts, together with an example.

The process of prompt engineering involves you as the user critically evaluating ChatGPT’s outputs and then refining your prompts in an iterative way through back-and-forth conversations. You can also ask ChatGPT to ask you questions about *how* it should perform the task before it starts (e.g. a role play).

¹ Adapted from Eager, B., & Brunton, R. (2023). Prompting Higher Education Towards AI-Augmented Teaching and Learning Practice. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 20(5). <https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol20/iss5/02/>

Fun prompts to get you started

- Plan an itinerary with a suggested budget to take a trip to visit friends in Florida in April. I want to visit the Kennedy Space Center and Universal Studios for the kids...
- Write me a funny birthday rap for my brother who will be 40 in September. Here are his likes and dislikes to get started...

CRITICALLY EVALUATING OUTPUTS

It is **really important** that you are critical in evaluating the output of any GenAI tool. **These tools do get things wrong.** Their convincing responses, programmed to be naturally conversational and ‘human’-like mean that we can be tricked in trusting the output.

So why do LLMs like ChatGPT get things wrong, make stuff up or as we say - hallucinate?

They use randomness or ‘stochastic-ness’ to deal with prompts they haven’t seen before.



They are called **stochastic parrots** because they just repeat what they have been trained on, (i.e. for ChatGPT this is multiple terabytes of textual data), then repeat this back but with a little bit of randomness added to help them deal with prompts that they don’t have the exact answer for.

CATEGORIES OF PROMPTS

COMPONENT	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Role	Tells ChatGPT how to act/behave.	'Act as an expert in social media marketing'
Verb	Indicates the specific action to be performed.	'Write...'
Object	Provides the process, product, or outcome of the action to be performed (in relation to the 'verb').	'...a case study...'
Context/Condition	Narrows down the scope and clarifies what the content should include.	'...for a first-year undergraduate marketing module. The case study should illustrate the challenges faced by a small business in developing a social media marketing strategy for attracting new clients.'
Alignment	Tells ChatGPT to align content with your intended goals.	'The case study will be used to support students' achievement of [insert learning outcomes].'
Constraints	Notes any parameters ChatGPT should adhere to.	'- The case study should be approximately 1500-words, - include a brief description of the business, - describe the challenges faced by the business in relation to designing and delivering a social media strategy, and possible solutions, and - include case questions for the students to discuss in class.'

TEACHING & LEARNING PROMPTS

For you

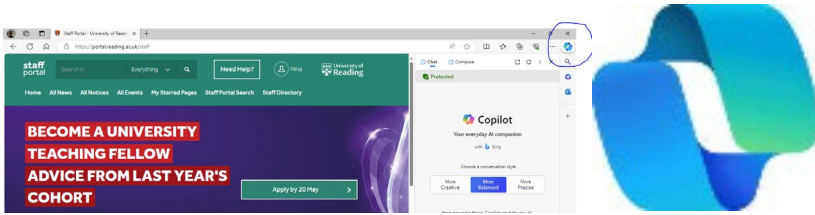
- Create a lesson plan for a final year undergraduate lecture on [topic] that addresses the following [insert learning outcomes]. The lecture is 50 minutes long. The plan should include a brief outline of the content to be covered and suggested active and collaborative learning activities to support student learning.
- Act as an expert learning designer. I teach a module about Bioengineering to 1st year undergraduates. My learning outcomes are [insert learning outcomes]. Can you suggest some ideas for authentic assessment tasks to assess these learning outcomes?

For your students

- Provide me with a list of 20 key terms I will need to understand in my first year [insert programme] degree. Each term should be separated from its definition by a comma and appear on a new line.
- I am a 2nd year undergraduate student studying [insert topic]. Create a short answer and multiple choice quiz that tests my understanding.

COMPARING OUTPUTS

Continuing the good practice of critically evaluating outputs, a top tip is to compare with those from another GenAI tool. For example at the University you can access another GenAI tool known as Copilot (available in the Microsoft Edge sidebar):



To contact us and explore other guides in our **Focus On:** series, please visit <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/teachingresources>



References and Further Reading

CQSD. (2023). *Generative Artificial Intelligence: Guidance for Staff*. URL: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/artificial-intelligence/ai-guidance-for-staff>

Duarte, F. (2024, April 30). Number of ChatGPT users (May 2024). Exploding Topics. <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/chatgpt-users>

OpenAI. (2024, May 13). *Introducing GPT-4o* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/live/DQacCB9tDaw>

Vogel, M. (2024, January 16). The generative AI list of lists: 5000 models, tools, technologies, applications, & prompts. Medium. <https://medium.com/@maximilian.vogel/5000x-generative-ai-intro-overview-models-prompts-technology-tools-comparisons-the-best-a4af95874e94>

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