Session 2 Handout: Getting More: Passes and Critique

FAST-03 Prompt Engineering for the Workplace · 7formations · Instructor: Wadood Chaudhary · All examples fictional

Why this session matters

One big prompt asking for a perfect final draft usually produces something that's almost right in ways that are hard to spot. Working in **passes** (structure, then facts, then audience, then polish) keeps each step checkable and stops the model from quietly changing facts while you ask it to "make it friendlier."

Key concepts

1. The four passes

Pass	Ask for	You check
1 Headings	Section headings only	Is this the right job? Are all questions covered?
2 Fill	Content for each heading from the source only	Every fact traces to the source; gaps flagged
3 Audience	Rewrite for a named reader: tone, word choice, length	No facts added, removed, or changed
4 Polish	Final trims: length, greeting, formatting	Same as pass 3

Rule: after pass 2, the facts are frozen. Later passes change *how*, never *what*. If pass 3 changes the job (answers a different question) or adds a fact, go back to the pass-2 text and constrain the prompt: "Change tone only. Do not add, remove, or change facts."

2. Asking for assumptions without adding them

Useful follow-up: *"List what you assumed and what's missing from the source. Do not change the draft."* This gives you a checklist, not new content. **You** decide what to add, from the real source, and record where it came from. Avoid "make it more complete": it invites the model to fill gaps on its own.

3. Chaining and fresh starts

Chaining means running small dependent steps in one chat: headings → fill → audience. It works well within one job and one source. Start a **new chat** when:

- the job changes (a new guest, a different document);
- the source changes;
- the chat is long and old details start appearing (drift);
- restricted data was entered (reject, report, restart clean; never carry it forward).

4. Three workplace patterns

Pattern	Reader needs	Key Format lines	Check step
Customer reply	Answers to their questions, warmly	Under 100 words; answer each question in order	Every answer from source; unknowns say "we'll confirm"
Internal summary	What happened, what changes for me	5 bullets; actions with owners	Five-fact check against the source
Read-ahead	What's being decided, options, open questions	Decision needed / options / questions; one page	Options and numbers trace to source; open questions listed

Save each as a template: the five parts plus the check step.

Worked example: the parent's question

Guest (sanitized): "What happens if it rains? Will someone watch my 8-year-old? Is there parking?"

Pass 1: Headings: Rain plan / Children / Parking. ✔ All three covered.

Pass 2 (source only): "Rain plan: we'll confirm and let you know (not in source). Children: children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult; there is no lifeguard on duty. Parking: meet at the east parking lot kiosk; we'll confirm any parking details." Gaps: rain plan; parking fees.

Pass 3 (first try): "...Don't worry, our friendly staff will keep an eye on the little ones!" ✖ New fact, and a safety-critical one.

Pass 3 (fixed prompt): "Rewrite for a parent who wants reassurance: warm, plain, under 100 words. Do not add, remove, or change any facts; answer the same three questions." Output keeps "an adult must accompany children under 12; no lifeguard on duty." ✔

Checklist: running passes

- ☐ Pass 1 confirms the job before content.
- ☐ Pass 2 uses only the fenced source; gaps flagged.
- ☐ Assumptions requested as a separate list.
- ☐ Passes 3 and 4 say "do not add, remove, or change facts."
- ☐ Diff check: pass 2 vs final, sentence by sentence.
- ☐ New chat for a new job, new source, or drift.

Do and don't

Do	Don't
Freeze facts after pass 2	Ask for "more complete" in later passes
Name the reader in pass 3	Write "make it better"
Compare pass 2 and final side by side	Trust that tone edits leave facts alone

Do	Don't
Start fresh for each new job	Run a whole day's work in one chat
Save working pass prompts as templates	Rebuild passes from memory every time

Try this at work

1. Pick a reply or summary you write often.
2. Write the four pass prompts with placeholders.
3. Run on a sanitized example, then diff pass 2 vs final.
4. Save the prompts as a template and note one drift symptom you saw.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Pass	One focused round of prompting with a single purpose
Chaining	Dependent steps in one chat, each building on a checked result
Drift	A long chat mixing in details from earlier, unrelated work
Diff check	Comparing two versions to find any changed facts
Read-ahead	Pre-meeting brief: decision, options, open questions
Assumptions list	The model's list of what it assumed or found missing, kept separate from the draft

Key takeaways

- Structure, facts, audience, polish, in that order.
- Facts freeze after pass 2.
- New job or drift means a new chat.