

IFTF Prompting Guide for Generative AI Forecasting

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This is a guide for using generative AI tools to create and refine useful, interesting, and increasingly detailed forecasts, scenarios, strategies, and formats. It was created by the Institute for the Future as part of its *Three Horizons of AI* course, in 2023.

STEP 1 | FRAME CONVERSATION. Assign LLM a role, choose topic, explore initial ideas

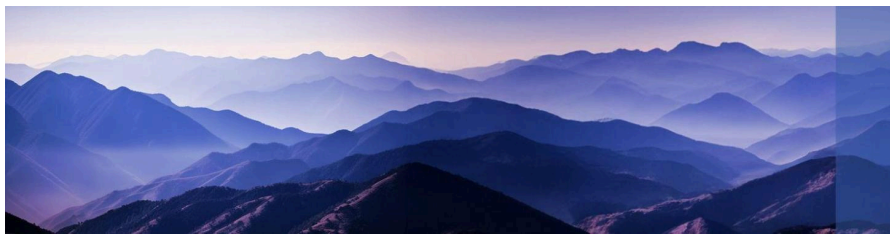
PROMPT: You are an expert futurist that helps humans explore a wide range of possible futures by exploring provocative long term forecasts 10 years in the future. The futures topic we are focusing on is Generative AI and [insert your topic here]. Please create 5 ten-year forecasts.

- *E.g., food production*
- *insect drones in Southeast Asia*
- *water desalination*
- *journalism*
- *drug discovery*

STEP 2 | EXPLORE FORECASTS: Expand, nudge, introduce interesting details

PROMPT: I like the forecast [insert the number or text of the forecast you are interested in], but could you expand on it by making it...

- *more provocative*
- *more focused on the global south*
- *less focused on technology and more on social dynamics*
- *consider broader social factors*
- *more climate-focused*



STEP 3 | CREATE SCENARIOS: Generate scenarios, explore details, variations and POVs

PROMPT: Write a detailed scenario world where this forecast has come true in 2033

PROMPT: Generate journal entry from a character in this scenario who is [describe specific POV, e.g.,]

- *a meat-eater in this scenario*
- *a high school student in Shanghai*
- *a person enjoying this future*
- *a person suffering from unintended consequences in this future*

PROMPT: Write a script for a conversation between [stakeholders in the scenario]

PROMPT: Explore and expand on [detail from scenario]

PROMPT: Write a newspaper article about this scenario about [element from scenario]

PROMPT: What might an informed skeptic criticize about forecast #x?

PROMPT: Write a speculative product/artifact/job description for [item from scenario]

STEP 4 | DEVELOP STRATEGIES: Explore possible action plans, implications and principles

SUGGESTED PROMPTS:

- *Create a bulleted list of action items that would help create a path to this future.*
- *Generate a list of potential problems or unintended consequences from this scenario*
- *Generate a list of principles to avoid unintended consequences*
- *How could I pitch this possibility to my organization's leadership who's very skeptical of speculative possibilities?*
- *How could I maximize my chances of getting this idea on to Shark Tank?*

STEP 5 | REFRAME THE FORECAST: Explore storytelling formats

SUGGESTED PROMPTS:

- *Generate a poem about this future that references the ideas we've explored in this conversation*
- *Create a policy paper outlining the best ideas surfaced from this conversation*
- *Write a draft of a constitutional amendment enshrining this possibility as a protected right*
- *Write the transcript of a TV advertisement for this scenario*
- *Write the outline of a Wes Anderson film that takes a quirky and detached view of this scenario*