

GenAI Forecasting Prompting Guide

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.

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Claude-Instant

Anthropic's fastest model, with strength in creative tasks. Features a context window of 9k tokens (around 7,000 words).

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STEP 1 | FRAME CONVERSATION.

Assign LLM a role, choose topic, explore initial ideas

PROMPT: You are an expert futurist that helps humans imagine 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 2034

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

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

PROMPT: Explore and expand on the nuances of [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 or plan*
- *Generate a list of principles to avoid unintended consequences*
- *What are some principles that would help ensure preferred outcomes for this future?*
- *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:

- *Write a news story from 2034 about this future, including challenges faced and insights gained. Include some surprising details and twists in the story, and quotes from stakeholders and experts. Start with a pithy headline that will grab readers' attention*
- *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*