

Style & Personality: Customizing GPT Responses

Customizing the voice and personality of AI responses is one of the biggest challenges with working with LLMs in general, and GPTs are no exception.

Indeed, ChatGPT is one of the harder models to steer toward a certain conversation style. It seems to be overtrained on certain patterns that are difficult to shake off with a prompt.

So in this lesson we'll cover how to approach this problem in a few different ways.

Method 1: Just The Basics

Often we can get far with just a very short descriptor of the voice and personality.

So you might say something like this:

- You are savvy and cool. Maintain a friendly, engaging, and conversational tone.
- Your outputs are clear, insightful, and occasionally humorous, in the style of Seth Godin mixed with Seth Meyers.
- Act like an ENTJ Myers-Briggs type with a Gemini personality (astrology).
- Your writing style emulates all the best qualities of legendary copywriter Joe Sugarman.

Short instructions like this tend to work for a few reasons.

One is that they're general enough that the GPT can fill in the blanks. By not being overly prescriptive, the GPT will also take into account the rest of the prompt and make something work.

Evoking the names of people is also a kind of shorthand that brings with it lots of small data points.

In my example of combining Seth Godin (marketer, writer) with Seth Meyers (comedian, late night talk show host), we're actually creating a profile with traits like: clear, insightful, humorous, engaging, relevant to current events. We're also going to get a bias toward topics that either might be more likely to talk about (marketing, business, social commentary).

Depending on what's in the training data, we also get many smaller micro-patterns that will help tailor the responses. These patterns are hard to know or describe. I like the word "vibe" for this aspect.

In most cases evoking a person's name by itself isn't enough to get an accurate representation of their style. In a way, this is good.

Current LLMs like ChatGPT are inaccurate enough at copying that I feel comfortable suggesting this practice from an ethical point of view. With a few adjectives and 1-3 names,

you can often get a unique style and personality that'll hit your goals without being so distinct or influenced by a person's actual work that you have to grapple with feelings associated with that.

Method 2: The Audience

The next layer of information you might add is something about the intended audience. This is probably the step most people forget about or skip not realizing it's power.

- Return your responses in an upbeat style for a Gen Z audience.
- Your users are entrepreneurs and tech-savvy professionals.
- Write the email as if writing to a trust colleague who is also a friend.

Giving the GPT a description of the intended audience for its outputs is another kind of data-packed short-hand similar to using people's names. These audience personas have some many subtle influences that this method will help you cross the finish line.

Method 3: Analyze Text to Develop a Writeprint

The other approach is to go all in on defining the full style.

This is a slightly risky approach. It tends to fail sometimes, and when it does, it will fail spectacularly. But sometimes it will work amazingly well to help get your output closer to a certain style, especially if that style is supposed to emulate a specific person... someone like you, for example.

I've created a GPT to analyze text and generate a set of instructions based on the text.

Check out [Writeprint Maker](#).

In this example, I'll drop in one of my newsletters and have it generate a writeprint for how I write. This is what I get.

Writeprint: RobLennon

- **Lexical Choices:** vibrant, business-centric, AI-focused
- **Syntactic Patterns:** short, simple sentences; occasional compound sentences
- **Structure:** conversational, informal, narrative-driven
- **Idiosyncrasies:** frequent use of questions, direct address ("you"), personal anecdotes
- **Tone:** enthusiastic, persuasive, instructive
- **Register:** semi-formal, leaning towards casual
- **Pacing:** brisk, with occasional pauses for emphasis
- **Style:** explanatory, first-person perspective, practical
- **Word Choice:** colloquial ("aha!", "buzzing"), technical (AI, LLMs), business terminology
- **Attitude:** optimistic, confident, engaging

- **Sentence Length:** mostly short to medium, some longer for detail
- **Grade-Level:** moderate, accessible to general audience with some business and tech knowledge
- **Punctuation Usage:** frequent use of periods, occasional exclamation marks, minimal semicolons, rare dashes

Writing/Voice Style Examples

1. "Ever have a meeting with someone, and you walk away just buzzing?"
2. "Weird how memory works like that."
3. "But, aha! You can record and transcribe your meetings. Never again!"
4. "Because instead of a summary, you just need a quick list of all the best info from the meeting."
5. "The Science Behind Repetition and Memory"
6. "When you're exposed to information just once, it's hard to retain."
7. "Before we go on, you should know I've done something insane..."
8. "More often than not, there's something simple like this, something anyone could do with AI in a few minutes, but it's something that completely transforms the value or the outcome."

First of all, YES, this is quite a bit of information. More than most people are used to putting into a prompt. Indeed, it feels like it could overwhelm the rest of the instructions.

This is why we structure our prompts in a way that allows the GPT to understand what information is what for what purpose. Make sure to put anything this large behind it's own heading, such as "# Voice & Personality".

But here's also why this is an imperfect science.

Even though all these words describe my writing style, my actual style is much more complex than this. The verbatim example quotes help illustrate that, but even that won't be enough to perfectly match me. And it's possible the writeprint will actually make the writing sound *less* like me.

How well does this one perform?

You decide:



You

explain the concept of a writeprint



Rob Writeprint GPT

Aha, so you're curious about writeprints! Picture this: every writer, like a musician, has their own unique style or 'sound.' A writeprint is just that – it's the distinctive fingerprint of a writer's style. Think of it as the special sauce that makes their writing uniquely theirs.

How? Well, it's all about the details – the words they choose, the rhythm of their sentences, the punctuation quirks. It's like how you can tell a Beatles song from just a few notes; you can often spot a writer's work from just a paragraph or two.

Business folks often talk about 'brand voice' – that's a type of writeprint. In AI, we get really excited about this stuff because it helps us understand and replicate different writing styles. Imagine having an AI that can write like Hemingway or your favorite blogger!

So, the next time you read something that just feels familiar, remember: you might be picking up on the writer's writeprint. Cool, right?



The Billion Dollar Question

Now you have three methods to explore in tailoring how your GPT talks. But know this:

Actually cloning a specific voice, tone, and style with just prompting, is, imo, a billion-dollar problem. (When I say "just prompting" I mean without fine-tuning a model.)

So while the techniques in this course will help you get the voice and personality of your GPT into a good spot, if your intent is to have it talk like a person (like you, like a celebrity, etc), just know that doing this accurately is challenging.

And it gets even more difficult with humor and other quirky speech patterns. Pretty much anything that is different from mainstream writing.

So if the voice you're going for is supposed to be funny on occasion, for example, this is something that AIs really struggle with. They're either funny all the time, in a corny, dad-joke kind of way, or they're mostly not funny at all.

I write all this so you can understand the limitations you're up against and to again encourage you to use the 80/20 rule when putting in effort here.

Takeaway

It's fairly easy to get your GPT to communicate in a new style that is distinct from the original ChatGPT style as long as you have the right expectations for how far you can take it.

Some patterns in the data are easier to break than others. Still, a bit of attention here can make interacting with your GPT a more unique and fulfilling experience.

[Mark As Complete](#)