## Best Practices for Developing Custom GPT Instructions

## Rhetorical Prompting Method

### 1. Identify Your Writing Purpose (Rhetorical Prompting Step 1)

* Clarify Your Goal: Begin by explicitly stating why you are seeking the response. Are you trying to explain a concept, develop a lesson plan, provide feedback to a student, or create a sample test question?
* Define Desired Outcomes: Connect the purpose to your instructional objectives. For example, *“I need a clear, simplified explanation of Photosynthesis to prepare a middle-school-level handout.”*

### 2. Pinpoint Your Audience (Rhetorical Prompting Step 2)

* Specify the Learner Group: Name who the content is for (age, education level, background knowledge). For instance, *“My audience is middle-school science students with basic knowledge of plant biology.”*
* Consider Audience Needs: If your audience includes ESL learners or students needing differentiation, mention that, so the model adjusts complexity and language accordingly.

### 3. Establish Tone for That Audience (Rhetorical Prompting Step 3)

* Set the Appropriate Voice: Decide how formal, friendly, or encouraging the tone should be. For younger learners, a warm, supportive tone might be best; for educators, a more academic or authoritative voice could work.
* Sustain Ethical Communication: Encourage a tone that is respectful, inclusive, and ethical, ensuring no harm or bias in language use.

### 4. Determine the Genre or Type (Rhetorical Prompting Step 4)

* Be Explicit About Format: State whether you want a lesson plan, a short explanatory paragraph, a step-by-step guide, a worksheet, or quiz questions.
* Match Genre to Purpose: Align your chosen format with the stated goal. For instance, if you want to reinforce learning, you might request a short quiz with multiple-choice questions.

### 5. Set the Style for the Selected Genre/Type (Rhetorical Prompting Step 5)

* Specify Stylistic Features: For a handout, you might request bullet points and headings. For a narrative, you could ask for a chronological, story-like structure.
* Align with Educational Standards: If you’re teaching to specific curriculum standards or pedagogical approaches (e.g., project-based learning, culturally responsive teaching), mention them.

### 6. Provide the Context of Your Text (Rhetorical Prompting Step 6)

* Include Background Information**:** Inform the model of the environment or situation. For instance, *“This content will be presented in a 45-minute lesson following a unit on plant cells.”*
* Explain Constraints: If you have length limits, highlight them: *“Please answer in no more than 200 words.”* If you want the content to exclude certain topics, make that clear.

### 7. List Specific Facts to Include (Rhetorical Prompting Step 7)

* Emphasize Key Points: Detail what must be covered. For example, *“Mention the role of sunlight, chlorophyll, and carbon dioxide in photosynthesis, and include one real-world example of why it’s essential.”*
* Ensure Accuracy: If certain facts need citations or evidence, request that from the model. For example, *“Include a brief, factually accurate reference to a study or widely accepted scientific consensus.”*

### 8. Conduct Minor Editing Within the Prompt (Rhetorical Prompting Step 8)

* Refine for Clarity and Grammar: Review your prompt before running it. Simplify awkward phrases, remove ambiguities, and ensure instructions are precise.
* Iterate if Needed: After the initial output, adjust your prompt for tone, complexity, or length. This might mean clarifying terms or requesting a different style.

### Additional General Best Practices

* Demonstrate with an Example: Provide a model answer or partial example so the AI has a clear reference point.
* Emphasize Ethical Considerations: The Rhetorical Prompting Method encourages ethical output. Reinforce this by instructing the model to avoid biases, acknowledge uncertainties, and stick to verified information.
* Iterate and Improve: After you get a response, return to the steps and refine instructions. If the tone is off, revisit Tone for That Audience; if the complexity is too high or low, adjust Specific Facts or Context.
* Request Explanations of Reasoning: If accuracy is crucial, ask the model to briefly justify its claims or reasoning, ensuring the output is trustworthy and transparent.

By integrating these practices with the Rhetorical Prompting Method, writers create a cycle of iterative improvement. Start by articulating purpose, audience, and tone, and proceed through genre, style, context, and factual requirements—then refine as needed. The result: more precise, ethically sound, and pedagogically aligned prompts that help generate high-quality custom GPT outputs.