

CORE

Lab 2: From Casual Prompt to Cartographic Design Artifact

CRAFT, directive prompting, and prompt roles for reusable map design

Chapter Chapter 2	Level Beginner	Time ~90–110 min
Mode Individual or pair	Technology Any course-approved LLM	Deliverable Your original casual prompt and assumption list

Why This Lab Matters

Chapter 2 reframes prompting as a professional design literacy. A prompt is not merely a message to an LLM; in prompt cartography, it becomes a design specification, a record of intent, and a reusable artifact that others can critique.

Essential question

What cartographic decision should you be able to defend by the end of this lab?

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish casual prompting from directive prompting in a cartographic workflow.
- Use CRAFT as a framing aid for a map-design prompt.
- Create system, user, and critique prompts that play different roles in one design process.
- Treat prompts as reusable design artifacts with version history and failure notes.

At a glance

Inputs: Lab scenario, prompts, data notes, or map concept supplied in the activity.

Outputs: Your original casual prompt and assumption list; Your completed CRAFT brief; Your Version 2 directive prompt.

Evaluation: Clear purpose, defensible cartographic judgment, concise prompting, and evidence of human verification where needed.

LAB WORK

Setup: Choose a Map Problem ~7 min

Choose one map idea you can use throughout the lab. Professional self-learners should choose a real work-adjacent topic. Students may choose a campus, city, environmental, public health, transportation, or social issue.

- Bike crash risk near campus routes
- Public access to cooling centers during heat waves
- Where invasive species sightings need public reporting
- Walking access to grocery stores for older adults

Setup deliverable

Write a one-sentence map idea and name the audience you care about most.

PROCEDURE

Part 1 — Casual Prompt Baseline ~12 min

Start with the kind of prompt Chapter 2 warns us not to trust for professional work.

Make a web map about [YOUR MAP IDEA].

Save the response. Then annotate it with these labels:

- **Assumed context** What background did the model invent?
- **Assumed audience** Who did it seem to design for?
- **Assumed format** Did it recommend a map, outline, code, data list, or something else?
- **Assumed tone** Did it sound public-facing, technical, urgent, neutral, promotional?

Mini-deliverable

A 4-row assumption list. Do not fix the prompt yet.

PROCEDURE

Part 2 — Ask the LLM to Teach the Concept Back ~10 min

Use the LLM as a study partner before using it as a production assistant. This reinforces the chapter's language while revealing what the model understands generically.

I am studying Chapter 2 of Prompt Cartography, especially the distinction between casual prompting and directive prompting. Explain the difference in the context of designing an interactive web map. Then give me three signs that my prompt is too casual for professional cartographic work.

Compare the answer to the chapter. Mark anything that feels useful, incomplete, or too generic.

Reminder

Do not treat the answer as the book. Treat it as a study prompt that helps you test your own understanding.

PROCEDURE

Part 3 — Build a CRAFT Brief ~18 min

Use CRAFT as a pre-design checklist for your map idea.

CRAFT Element	Your Draft	Question to Answer
Context	Example: Map for neighborhood comparison	What situation, place, data domain, or design problem does this prompt assume?
Role	Example: Map for neighborhood comparison	What kind of reasoning should the LLM perform?

Starter examples only; expand this in your own notes or submission document.

PROCEDURE

Part 4 — Write a Directive User Prompt ~15 min

Transform the CRAFT brief into a directive prompt. This prompt should ask for a specific design artifact.

Context: I am planning an interactive web map about [MAP IDEA] in [PLACE OR SCOPE]. The map should help [AUDIENCE] [DECISION, INSIGHT, OR ACTION].

Role: Act as a cartographic design advisor who prioritizes communication, usability, accessibility, and ethical restraint.

Task: Create a map concept brief that includes:

1. communicative purpose
2. intended audience
3. recommended map type and why
4. 3-5 possible data layers, with cautions about over-inclusion
5. interaction ideas that support understanding rather than novelty
6. likely risks, limitations, or misleading interpretations
7. one thing users should remember after using the map

Format: Use a concise table followed by a 150-word design rationale.

Tone: Professional, careful, and plain-language. Do not write code.

Run the prompt. Save the response as Version 1.

PROCEDURE

Part 5 — Add System and Critique Prompt Roles ~20 min

Chapter 2 distinguishes prompt types by role. Simulate that structure in an ordinary free LLM chat.

System-style framing prompt

For this conversation, behave as a careful prompt cartography assistant. Prioritize purpose, audience, accessibility, uncertainty, and ethical interpretation. If my prompt is vague, identify the missing information before giving recommendations.

Critique prompt

Critique the map concept you just produced against my stated purpose, audience, and CRAFT fields. Identify:

- 2 places where the output follows the prompt well
- 2 places where it drifts or adds assumptions
- 2 revisions I should make to the prompt itself
- 1 risk that remains my responsibility as the cartographer

Mini-deliverable

Save the critique and revise your original directive prompt into Version 2.

PROCEDURE

Part 6 — Treat the Prompt as a Design Artifact ~15 min

Create a version log. This is what makes prompting professional rather than disposable.

Version	What Changed?	Why?	What Improved?	What Still Failed?
v0 Casual	Example: Short note	Example: Keeps the choice defensible	Example: Short note	Example: Short note
v1 Directive	Example: Short note	Example: Keeps the choice defensible	Example: Short note	Example: Short note
v2 Critiqued	Example: Short note	Example: Keeps the choice defensible	Example: Short note	Example: Short note

Starter examples only; expand this in your own notes or submission document.

DELIVERABLE

Submission ~15 min

- Your original casual prompt and assumption list
- Your completed CRAFT brief
- Your Version 2 directive prompt
- Your critique prompt and LLM critique
- Your version log
- A 300-500 word reflection explaining how your prompt became more reusable, traceable, and professional