



## Alexa Extra: Tips for writing sample utterances

A *sample utterance* tells your skill what a user might say when they want a specified intent. A sample utterance works well if it mimics real-world language. Crafting utterances that map reliably to the correct intents is a process of trial and error. Here are some tips to help.

### Tip #1: Use *ask* and *tell*

Your sample utterances should flow naturally when combined with the words "ask" and "tell."

- "ask *Recipes for a kid-friendly beet salad*"
- "tell *My Coffee Shop to pre-order a triple espresso*"

### Tip #2: Include the five W's

Journalists are taught to report the who, what, when, where, and why of any story, and you should keep these in mind, too. In addition, try utterances with *which, will, would, was, and were*. As shown in the following examples, these words work well with the *tell me* and *ask <invocation name>* variations.

- "ask *Quick Trivia what a concierge is*"
- "tell *Plan My Trip to show me where winnipeg is*"
- "when *does the dry cleaner closes*"

### Tip #3: Offer lots of variations

It's better to include too many samples than too few. Think about all the ways a user might ask for something.

- "find..."
- "get..."
- "look up..."
- "how can I..."
- "what's the best..."

### Tip #4: Use contractions

Some of your samples should include contractions.

- "what's the weather like in Tallahassee?"
- "where's the closest place to buy fresh yams?"
- "didn't the Cardinals win again today?"

### Tip #5: Supply short utterances

Users don't always speak in complete sentences. Include one-word and two-word utterances, abbreviations, and nicknames in addition to your longer sample utterances.

- "horoscope"
- "Philly traffic"
- "Ole Miss shuttle"

### Tip #6: Refine your utterances

The job of writing sample utterances is never complete. Check your skill's metrics to see which phrases don't map consistently to the right intent. Test your skill in the Alexa Simulator and with your voice. Then adjust your utterances to improve your skill's accuracy.