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# **Explicit Visual Prompting for Low-Level Structure Segmentations**

Weihuang Liu<sup>1</sup> Xi Shen<sup>2</sup> Chi-Man Pun<sup>1\*</sup> Xiaodong Cun<sup>2\*</sup> <sup>1</sup> University of Macau<sup>2</sup> Tencent AI Lab

## Abstract

We consider the generic problem of detecting low-level structures in images, which includes segmenting the manipulated parts, identifying out-of-focus pixels, separating shadow regions, and detecting concealed objects. Whereas each such topic has been typically addressed with a domainspecific solution, we show that a unified approach performs well across all of them. We take inspiration from the widelyused pre-training and then prompt tuning protocols in NLP and propose a new visual prompting model, named Explicit Visual Prompting (EVP). Different from the previous visual prompting which is typically a dataset-level implicit embedding, our key insight is to enforce the tunable parameters focusing on the explicit visual content from each individual image, i.e., the features from frozen patch embeddings and the input's high-frequency components. The proposed EVP significantly outperforms other parameter-efficient tuning protocols under the same amount of tunable parameters (5.7% extra trainable parameters of each task). EVP also achieves state-of-the-art performances on diverse lowlevel structure segmentation tasks compared to task-specific solutions. Our code is available at: https://github. com/NiFangBaAGe/Explicit-Visual-Prompt.

## 1. Introduction

Advances in image editing and manipulation algorithms have made it easy to create photo-realistic but fake pictures [31, 39, 63]. Detecting such manipulated regions becomes an important problem due to its potential negative impact related to surveillance and crime [31]. Low-level structures are known to be beneficial to tampered region detection, *i.e.*, resizing and copy-pasting will destroy the JPEG compression levels between the temper region and the host image [28, 50, 62], the noise level of the tempered region and the background is also different [76, 87]. Interesting, to segment the blurred pixels [67], shadowed regions [59], and concealed objects [15], low-level clues also play important



Figure 1. We propose a unified method for four low-level structure segmentation tasks: camouflaged object, forgery, shadow and defocus blur detection (Top). Our approach relies on a pre-trained frozen transformer backbone that leverages explicit extracted features, *e.g.*, the frozen embedded features and high-frequency components, to prompt knowledge.

roles. These detection tasks are shown to be beneficial to numerous computer vision tasks, including auto-refocus [1], image retargeting [37], object tracking [55], *etc*.

Although all these tasks belong to low-level structure segmentation, they are typically addressed by domain-specific solutions with carefully designed network architectures [8,87,90]. Moreover, the lack of large-scale datasets is often considered a major factor, which limits the performances [31].

In this work, we propose a solution to address the four tasks in a unified fashion. We take inspiration from recent

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding Author

advances of *prompting* [2,4,33], which is a concept that initially emerged in natural language processing (NLP) [3]. The basic idea is to efficiently adapt a frozen large foundation model to many downstream tasks with the minimum extra trainable parameters. As the foundation model has already been trained on a large-scale dataset, prompting often leads to better model generalization on the downstream tasks [3], especially in the case of the limited annotated data. Prompting also significantly saves the storage of models since it only needs to save a shared basic model and task-aware promptings.

Our main insight is to tune the task-specific knowledge *only* from the features of each individual image itself because the pre-trained base model contains sufficient knowledge for semantic understanding. This is also inspired by the effectiveness of hand-crafted image features, such as SIFT [29], JPEG noise [50], resampling artifacts [62] in these tasks [28, 29, 46, 50, 62, 87].

Based on this observation, we propose *explicit visual prompting (EVP)*, where the tuning performance can be hugely improved via the re-modulation of image features. Specifically, we consider two kinds of features for our task. The first is the features from the frozen patch embedding, which is critical since we need to shift the distribution of the original model. Another is high-frequency components of the input image since the pre-trained visual recognition model is learned to be invariant to these features via data augmentation. As shown in Figure 1, we take a model pre-trained on a large-scale dataset and freeze its parameters. Then, to adapt to each task, we tune the embedded features and learn an extra embedding for high-frequency components of each individual image.

In terms of experiments, we validate our approach on nine datasets of four tasks: forgery detection, shadow detection, defocus blur detection as well as camouflaged object detection. Our simple and unified network achieves very competitive performance with the whole model fine-tuning and outperforms task-specific solutions without modification.

In summary, our main contributions are as follows:

- We design a unified approach that produces state-ofthe-art performances for a number of tasks, including forgery detection, defocus blur detection, shadow detection, and camouflaged object detection.
- We propose explicit visual prompting (EVP), which takes the features from the frozen patch embedding and the input's high-frequency components as prompting. It is demonstrated to be effective across different tasks and outperforms other parameter-efficient tuning methods.
- Our method greatly simplifies the low-level structure segmentation models as well as achieves comparable performance with well-designed SOTA methods.

## 2. Related Work

**Visual Prompting Tuning.** Prompting is initially proposed in NLP [3, 45]. [3] demonstrates strong generalization to downstream transfer learning tasks even in the few-shot or zero-shot settings with manually chosen prompts in GPT-3. Recently, prompting [33, 65] has been adapted to vision tasks. [65] proposes memory tokens which is a set of learnable embedding vectors for each transformer layer. VPT [33] proposes similar ideas and investigates the generality and feasibility of visual prompting via extensive experiments spanning multiple kinds of recognition tasks across multiple domains and backbone architectures. Unlike VPT, whose main focus is on recognition tasks, our work aims at exploring optimal visual content for low-level structure segmentation.

Forgery Detection. The goal of forgery detection is to detect pixels that are manually manipulated, such as pixels that are removed, replaced, or edited. Early approaches [7, 20, 52, 53] detect region splicing through inconsistencies in local noise levels, based on the fact that images of different origins might contain different noise characteristics introduced by the sensors or post-processing steps. Other clues are found to be helpful, such as SIFT [29], JPEG compression artifacts [50] and re-sampling artifacts [16, 62]. Recently, approaches have moved towards end-to-end deep learning methods for solving specific forensics tasks using labeled training data [26, 32, 64, 75, 86]. Salloum *et al.* [64] learn to detect splicing by training a fully convolutional network on labeled training data. [26, 47, 75, 76, 86] propose improved architectures. Islam et al. [32] incorporate Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) to detect copy-move forgeries. Huh et al. [31] propose to take photographic metadata as a free and plentiful supervisory signal for learning selfconsistency and apply the trained model to detect splices. Recently, TransForensic [22] leverages vision transformers [13] to tackle the problem. High-frequency components still served as useful prior in this field. RGB-N [87] designs an additional noise stream. ObjectFormer [74] extracts high-frequency features as complementary signals to visual content. But unlike ObjectFormer, our main focus is to leverage high-frequency components as a prompting design to efficiently and effectively adapt to different low-level segmentation tasks.

**Defocus Blur Detection.** Given an image, defocus blur detection aims at separating in-focus and out-of-focus regions, which could be potentially useful for auto-refocus [1], salient object detection [34] and image retargeting [37]. Traditional approaches mainly focus on designing hand-crafted features based on gradient [21, 67, 78] or edge [38, 68]. In the deep era, most methods delve into CNN architec-

tures [60, 70, 82, 83]. [60] proposes the first CNN-based method using both hand-crafted and deep features. BTB-Net [82] develops a fully convolutional network to integrate low-level clues and high-level semantic information. DeFusionNet [70] recurrently fuses and refines multi-scale deep features for defocus blur detection. CENet [83] learns multiple smaller defocus blur detectors and ensembles them to enhance diversity. [8] further employs the depth information as additional supervision and proposes a joint learning framework inspired by knowledge distillation. [79] explores deep ensemble networks for defocus blur detection. [80] proposes to learn generator to generate mask in an adversarial manner.

Shadow Detection. Shadows occur frequently in natural scenes, and have hints for scene geometry [58], light conditions [58] and camera location [36] and lead to challenging cases in many vision tasks including image segmentation [14] and object tracking [6, 56]. Early attempts explore illumination [18, 19] and hand-crafted features [30, 41, 88]. In the deep era, some methods mainly focus on the design of CNN architectures [9,89] or involving the attention modules (e.g., the direction-aware attention [27], distractionaware module [84]). Recent works [42,90] utilize the lighting as additional prior, for example, ADNet [42] generates the adversarial training samples for better detection and FDR-Net [90] arguments the training samples by additionally adjusted brightness. MTMT [5] leverages the mean teacher model to explore unlabeled data for semi-supervised shadow detection.

Camouflaged Object Detection. Detecting camouflaged objects is a challenging task as foreground objects are often with visual similar patterns to the background. Early works distinguish the foreground and background through low-level clues such as texture [17,66], brightness [61], and color [25]. Recently, deep learning-based methods [15, 35, 44, 51, 54] show their strong ability in detecting complex camouflage objects. Le et al. [43] propose the first end-to-end network for camouflaged object detection, which is composed of a classification branch and a segmentation branch. Fan et al. [15] develops a search-identification network and the largest camouflaged object detection dataset. PFNet [54] is a bio-inspired framework that mimics the process of positioning and identification in predation. FBNet [35] suggests disentangling frequency modeling and enhancing the important frequency component.

### 3. Method

In this section, we propose Explicit Visual Prompting (EVP) for adapting recent Vision Transformers (Seg-Former [77] as the example) pre-trained on ImageNet [10] to low-level structure segmentations. EVP keeps the backbone



Figure 2. The procedure to generate high-frequency components.

frozen and only contains a small number of tunable parameters to learn task-specific knowledge from the features of frozen image embeddings and high-frequency components. Below, we first present SegFormer [77] and the extraction of high-frequency components in Section 3.1, then the architecture design in Section 3.2.

### 3.1. Preliminaries

**SegFormer** [77]. SegFormer is a hierarchical transformerbased structure with a much simpler decoder for semantic segmentation. Similar to traditional CNN backbone [23], SegFormer captures multi-stale features via several stages. Differently, each stage is built via the feature embedding layers<sup>1</sup> and vision transformer blocks [13, 71]. As for the decoder, it leverages the multi-scale features from the encoder and MLP layers for decoding to the specific classes. Notice that, the proposed prompt strategy is not limited to SegFormer and can be easily adapted to other network structures, *e.g.*, ViT [13] and Swin [49].

**High-frequency Components (HFC).** As shown in Figure 2, for an image I of dimension  $H \times W$ , we can decompose it into low-frequency components  $I_l$  (LFC) and high-frequency components  $I_h$  (HFC), *i.e.*  $I = \{I_l, I_h\}$ . Denoting fft and ifft as the Fast Fourier Transform and its inverse respectively, we use z to represent the frequency component of I. Therefore we have z = fft(I) and I = ifft(z). We shift low frequency coefficients to the center  $(\frac{H}{2}, \frac{W}{2})$ . To obtain HFC, a binary mask  $\mathbf{M}_h \in \{0, 1\}^{H \times W}$  is generated and applied on z depending on a mask ratio  $\tau$ :

$$\mathbf{M}_{h}^{i,j}(\tau) = \begin{cases} 0, & \frac{4|(i-\frac{H}{2})(j-\frac{W}{2})|}{HW} \leq \tau \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$
(1)

 $\tau$  indicates the surface ratio of the masked regions. HFC can be computed:

$$I_{hfc} = ifft(z\mathbf{M}_h(\tau)) \tag{2}$$

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>SegFormer has a different definition of patch embedding in ViT [13]. It uses the overlapped patch embedding to extract the denser features and will merge the embedding to a smaller spatial size at the beginning of each stage.



Figure 3. The architecture of the proposed explicit visual prompting. We use the *Embedding Tune* and the *HFC Tune* to tune the extracted features. The Adaptor is designed to merge these features.

Similarly, a binary mask  $\mathbf{M}_l \in \{0, 1\}^{H \times W}$  can be properly defined to compute LFC:

$$\mathbf{M}_{l}^{i,j}(\tau) = \begin{cases} 0, & \frac{HW-4|(i-\frac{H}{2})(j-\frac{W}{2})|}{HW} \leq \tau \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$
(3)

and LFC can be calculated as:

$$I_{lfc} = ifft(z\mathbf{M}_l(\tau)) \tag{4}$$

Note that for RGB images, we compute the above process on every channel of pixels independently.

### **3.2. Explicit Visual Prompting**

In this section, we present the proposed Explicit Visual Prompting (EVP). Our key insight is to learn explicit prompts from image embeddings and high-frequency components. We learn the former to shift the distribution from the pretrain dataset to the target dataset. And the main motivation to learn the latter is that the pre-trained model is learned to be invariant to these features through data augmentation. Note that this is different from VPT [33], which learns implicit prompts. Our approach is illustrated in Figure 3, which is composed of three basic modules: patch embedding tune, high-frequency components tune as well as Adaptor.

**Patch embedding tune.** This module aims at tuning pretrained patch embedding. In pre-trained SegFormer [77], a patch  $I^p$  is projected to a  $C_{seg}$ -dimension feature. We freeze this projection and add a tunable linear layer  $L_{pe}$  to project the original embedding into a *c*-dimension feature  $F_{pe} \in \mathbb{R}^c$ .

$$F_{pe} = \mathcal{L}_{pe}(I^p), \text{ with } c = \frac{C_{seg}}{r}$$
 (5)

where we introduce the scale factor r to control the tunable parameters.

Task	Dataset Name	# Train	# Test
Forgery	CAISA [12]	5,123	921
Detection	IMD20 [57]	-	2,010
Shadow	ISTD [73]	1,330	540
Detection	SBU [72]	4,089	638
Defocus Blur	CUHK [67]	604	100
Detection	DUT [81]	-	500
Camouflaged	COD10K [15]	3,040	2,026
Object Detection	CAMO [43]	1,000	250
Object Detection	CHAMELEON [69]	-	76

Table 1. Summary of datasets considered in this work. We show the number of images in training (# *Train*) and testing set (# *Test*) for different datasets.

**High-frequency components tune.** For the high frequency components  $I_{hfc}$ , we learn an overlapped patch embedding similar to SegFormer [77]. Formally,  $I_{hfc}$  is divided into small patches with the same patch size as Seg-Former [77]. Denoting patch  $I_{hfc}^p \in \mathbb{R}^C$  and  $C = h \times w \times 3$ , we learn a linear layer  $L_{hfc}$  to project the patch into a *c*dimension feature  $F_{hfc} \in \mathbb{R}^c$ .

$$F_{hfc} = \mathcal{L}_{hfc}(I_{hfc}^p) \tag{6}$$

Adaptor. The goal of Adaptor is to efficiently and effectively perform adaptation in all the layers by considering features from the image embeddings and high-frequency components. For the *i*-th Adaptor, we take  $F_{pe}$  and  $F_{hfc}$  as input and obtain the prompting  $P^i$ :

$$P^{i} = \mathsf{MLP}_{up}(\mathsf{GELU}(\mathsf{MLP}_{tune}^{i}(\mathsf{F}_{pe} + \mathsf{F}_{hfc}))) \tag{7}$$

where GELU is GELU [24] activation.  $MLP_{tune}^{i}$  is a linear layer for producing different prompts in each Adaptor.  $MLP_{up}$  is an up-projection layer shared across all the Adaptors for matching the dimension of transformer features.  $P^{i}$  is the output prompting that attaches to each transformer layer.

#### 4. Experiment

#### 4.1. Datasets

We evaluate our model on a variety of datasets for four tasks: forgery detection, shadow detection, defocus blur detection, and camouflaged object detection. A summary of the basic information of these datasets is illustrated in Table 1.

**Forgery Detection.** CASIA [12] is a large dataset for forgery detection, which is composed of 5,123 training and 921 testing spliced and copy-moved images. IMD20 [57] is a real-life forgery image dataset that consists of 2, 010 samples for testing. We follow the protocol of previous works [22, 48, 74] to conduct the training and evaluation

Method	DU	T [ <mark>81</mark> ]	CUHK [67]		
Method	$F_{\beta} \uparrow$	MAE↓	$F_{\beta} \uparrow$	MAE↓	
DeFusionNet [70]	.823	.118	.818	.117	
BTBNet [82]	.827	.138	.889	.082	
CENet [83]	.817	.135	.906	.059	
DAD [ <mark>80</mark> ]	.794	.153	.884	.079	
EFENet [79]	.854	.094	.914	.053	
Ours	.890	.068	.928	.045	

Table 2. Comparison with state-of-the-art approaches on defocus blur detection.

Method	ISTD [73] SBU [72]						
Wiethou	BER↓	BER↓					
BDRAR [89]	2.69	3.89					
DSC [27]	3.42	5.59					
DSD [84]	2.17	3.45					
MTMT [5]	1.72	3.15					
FDRNet [90]	1.55	3.04					
Ours	1.35	4.31					

Table 3. Comparison with state-of-the-art approaches on shadow detection.

Method	IMD	20 [57]	CAIS	SA [ <mark>12</mark> ]
Wiethiod	F1↑	AUC↑	F1↑	AUC↑
ManTra [76]	-	.748	-	.817
SPAN [26]	-	.750	.382	.838
PSCCNet [48]	-	.806	.554	.875
TransForensics [22]	-	.848	.627	.837
ObjectFormer [74]	-	.821	.579	.882
Ours	.443	.807	.636	.862

Table 4. Comparison with state-of-the-art approaches on forgery detection.

Method	CHAMELEON [69]					CAN	4O [43]		COD10K [15]			
Wiethou	$S_{\alpha} \uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$S_{lpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$S_{\alpha} \uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$
SINet [15]	.869	.891	.740	.044	.751	.771	.606	.100	.771	.806	.551	.051
RankNet [51]	.846	.913	.767	.045	.712	.791	.583	.104	.767	.861	.611	.045
JCOD [44]	.870	.924	-	.039	.792	.839	-	.082	.800	.872	-	.041
PFNet [54]	.882	.942	.810	.033	.782	.852	.695	.085	.800	.868	.660	.040
FBNet [35]	.888	.939	.828	.032	.783	.839	.702	.081	.809	.889	.684	.035
Ours	.871	.917	.795	.036	.846	.895	.777	.059	.843	.907	.742	.029

Table 5. Comparison with state-of-the-art approaches on camouflaged object detection.

Method	Trainable Param.	Defocus Blur CUHK [67]		Shadow ISTD [73]	<b>Forgery</b> CASIA [12]		Camouflaged CAMO [43]				
	(M)	$F_{\beta}\uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$BER\downarrow$	$F_1 \uparrow$	AUC $\uparrow$	$S_{\alpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	
Full-tuning	64.00	.935	.039	2.42	.465	.754	.837	.887	.778	.060	
Only Decoder	3.15	.891	.080	4.36	.396	.722	.783	.827	.671	.088	
VPT-Deep [33]	3.27	.913	.058	1.73	.588	.847	.833	.884	.751	.068	
AdaptFormer [4]	3.21	.912	.057	1.85	.602	.855	.830	.877	.750	.068	
Ours (r=16)	3.22	.924	.051	1.67	.602	.857	.838	.888	.761	.065	
Ours (r=4)	3.70	.928	.045	1.35	.636	.862	.846	.895	.777	.059	

Table 6. Comparison with state-of-the-art efficient tuning approaches. We conduct evaluations on four datasets for four different tasks. The efficient tuning method which achieves better performance than full-tuning is marked as orange. The best performance among all methods is shown as **blod**.

at the resolution of  $256 \times 256$ . We use pixel-level Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC) and  $F_1$  score to evaluate the performance.

**Shadow Detection.** SBU [72] is the largest annotated shadow dataset which contains 4,089 training and 638 testing samples, respectively. ISTD [73] contains triple samples for shadow detection and removal, we only use the shadowed image and shadow mask to train our method. Following [5, 89, 90], we train and test both datasets with the size of  $400 \times 400$ . As for the evaluation metrics, We report the balance error rate (BER).

**Defocus Blur Detection.** Following previous work [8, 81], we train the defocus blur detection model in the CUHK dataset [67], which contains a total of 704 partial defocus

samples. We train the network on the 604 images split from the CUHK dataset and test in DUT [81] and the rest of the CUHK dataset. The images are resized into  $320 \times 320$ , following [8]. We report performances with commonly used metrics: F-measure ( $F_{\beta}$ ) and mean absolute error (MAE).

**Camouflaged Object Detection.** COD10K [15] is the largest dataset for camouflaged object detection, which contains 3,040 training and 2,026 testing samples. CHAMELEON [69] includes 76 images collected from the Internet for testing. CAMO [43] provides diverse images with naturally camouflaged objects and artificially camouflaged objects. Following [15, 54], we train on the combined dataset and test on the three datasets. We employ commonly used metrics: S-measure  $(S_m)$ , mean E-measure  $(E_{\phi})$ , weighted F-measure  $(F_{\beta}^w)$ , and MAE for evaluation.



Figure 4. Comparisons with other task-specific methods. We show the results of: SINet [15] and PFNet [54] on CAMO [43] dataset for camouflaged object detection (Top-left), ManTra [76] and SPAN [26] on CAISA [12] dataset for forgery detection (Top-right), MTMT [5] and FDRNet [90] on ISTD [73] dataset for shadow detection (Bottom-left), CENet [83] and EFENet [79] on CUHK [67] dataset for defocus blur detection (Bottom-right).

	Trainable	Trainable Defocus Blur		Shadow	Forgery		Camouflaged				
Method	Param.	CUH	IK [ <mark>67</mark> ]	ISTD [73]	CASIA [12]		CAMO [43]				
	(M)	$F_{\beta}\uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$BER\downarrow$	$F_1 \uparrow$	AUC $\uparrow$	$S_{lpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi} \uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	
Decoder (No prompting)	3.15	.891	.080	4.36	.396	.722	.783	.827	.671	.088	
Ours w/o $F_{pe}$	3.61	.924	.049	1.68	.540	.833	.840	.887	.759	.065	
Ours w/o $F_{hfc}$	3.58	.926	.046	1.61	.619	.846	.844	.893	.773	.063	
Ours w/ Shared MLP <sup>i</sup> <sub>tune</sub>	3.49	.928	.048	1.77	.619	.860	.837	.889	.763	.064	
Ours w/ Unshared MLP <sub>up</sub>	4.54	.927	.045	1.33	.647	.875	.844	.893	.774	.060	
Ours	3.70	.928	.045	1.35	.636	.862	.846	.895	.777	.059	

Table 7. Ablation on the architecture designs described in Figure 3. We conduct evaluations on four datasets for four different tasks. The proposed prompting strategy (Decoder +  $F_{hfc}$  +  $F_{pe}$  + Adaptor) performs more effectively.

### 4.2. Implementation Details

All the experiments are performed on a single NVIDIA Titan V GPU with 12G memory. AdamW [40] optimizer is used for all the experiments. The initial learning rate is set to  $2e^{-4}$  for defocus blur detection and camouflaged object detection, and  $5e^{-4}$  for others. Cosine decay is applied to the learning rate. The models are trained for 20 epochs for the SBU [72] dataset and camouflaged combined dataset [15,69], and 50 epochs for others. Random horizontal flipping is applied during training for data augmentation. The minibatch is equal to 4. Binary cross-entropy (BCE) loss is used for defocus blur detection and forgery detection, balanced BCE loss is used for shadow detection, and BCE loss and IOU loss are used for camouflaged object detection. All the experiments are conducted with SegFormer-B4 [77] pretrained on the ImageNet-1k [11] dataset.

#### 4.3. Main Results

**Comparison with the task-specific methods.** EVP performs well when compared with task-specific methods. We report the comparison of our methods and other task-specific methods in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5. Thanks to our stronger backbone and prompting strategy, EVP achieves the best performance in 5 datasets across 4 different tasks. However, compared with other well-designed domain-specific methods, EVP only introduces a small number of tunable parameters with the frozen backbone and obtains non-trivial performance. We also show some visual comparisons with other methods for each task individually in Figure 4. We can see the proposed method predicts more accurate masks compared to other approaches.

Tuning	Trainable	Defocus Blur		Shadow	Forgery		Camouflaged				
Stage	Param.	CUHK [67]		ISTD [73]	CASIA [12]			CAMO [43]			
	(M)	$F_{\beta}\uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$BER\downarrow$	$F_1 \uparrow$	AUC $\uparrow$	$S_{lpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	
Stage <sub>1</sub>	3.16	.895	.072	3.64	.408	.725	.793	.834	.681	.088	
Stage <sub>1,2</sub>	3.18	.917	.058	2.45	.457	.765	.806	.853	.706	.081	
Stage <sub>1,2,3</sub>	3.43	.927	.047	1.46	.627	.858	.841	.888	.768	.062	
Stage <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>	3.70	.928	.045	1.35	.636	.862	.846	.895	.777	.059	

Table 8. Ablation on the tuning stages in SegFormer. We conduct evaluations on four datasets for four different tasks. The performance of EVP becomes better as the tuning stages increase.

	Trainable	Defocus Blur		Shadow	For	rgery	Camouflaged				
r	Param.	CUHK [67]		ISTD [73]	CAS	IA [12]	CAMO [43]				
	(M)	$F_{\beta}\uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	$BER\downarrow$	$F_1 \uparrow$	AUC $\uparrow$	$S_{lpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi}\uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	
64	3.17	.910	.055	2.09	.547	.830	.829	.875	.743	.070	
32	3.18	.919	.054	1.84	.574	.844	.832	.877	.749	.067	
16	3.22	.924	.051	1.67	.602	.857	.838	.888	.761	.065	
8	3.34	.923	.049	1.46	.619	.856	.841	.890	.767	.062	
4	3.70	.928	.045	1.35	.636	.862	.846	.895	.777	.059	
2	4.95	.929	.042	1.31	.642	.859	.842	.896	.776	.059	
1	9.56	.931	.040	1.48	.621	.847	.843	.894	.778	.059	

Table 9. Ablation on the parameter scale factor r. We conduct evaluations on four datasets for four different tasks. EVP gets the balance between the number of tunable parameters and performances when r = 4.

Comparison with the efficient tuning methods. We evaluate our method with full finetuning and only tuning the decoder, which are the widely-used strategies for downstreaming task adaption. And similar methods from image classification, i.e., VPT [33] and AdaptFormer [4]. The number of prompt tokens is set to 10 for VPT and the middle dimension of AdaptMLP is set to 2 for a fair comparison in terms of the tunable parameters. It can be seen from Table 6 that when only tuning the decoder, the performance drops largely. Compared with similar methods, introducing extra learnable tokens [33] or MLPs in Transformer block [4] also benefits the performance. We introduce a hyper-parameter (r) which is used to control the number of parameters of the Adaptor as described in equation 5. We first compare EVP (r=16) with similar parameters as other methods. From the table, our method achieves much better performance. We also report EVP (r=4), with more parameters, the performance can be further improved and outperforms full-tuning on 3 of 4 datasets.

## 4.4. Ablation Study

We conduct the ablation to show the effectiveness of each component. The experiments are performed with the scaling factor r = 4 except specified.

Architecture Design. To verify the effectiveness of the proposed visual prompting architecture, we modify it into

different variants. As shown in Table 7 and Figure 5, sharing  $MLP_{tune}^{i}$  in different Adaptors only saves a small number of parameters (0.55M v.s. 0.34M) but leads to a significant performance drop. It cannot obtain consistent performance improvement when using different  $MLP_{up}$  in different Adaptors, moreover introducing a large number of parameters (0.55M v.s. 1.39M). On the other hand, the performance will drop when we remove  $F_{pe}$  or  $F_{hfc}$ , which means that they are both effective visual prompts.

**Tuning Stage.** We try to answer the question: which stage contributes mostly to prompting tuning? Thus, we show the variants of our tuning method by changing the tunable stages in the SegFormer backbone. SegFormer contains 4 stages for multi-scale feature extraction. We mark the Stage<sub>x</sub> where the tunable prompting is added in Stage x. Table 8 shows that better performance can be obtained via the tunable stages increasing. Besides, the maximum improvement occurs in Stage<sub>1,2</sub> to Stage<sub>1,2,3</sub>. Note that the number of transformer blocks of each stage in SegFormer-B4 is 3, 8, 27, and 3, respectively. Thus, the effect of EVP is positively correlated to the number of the prompted transformer blocks.

Scale Factor r (equation 5). We introduce r in Sec 3.2 of the main paper to control the number of learnable parameters. A larger r will use fewer parameters for tuning. As shown in Table 9, the performance improves on several tasks when r

	Trainable	Defocus Blur		Shadow	Forgery		Camouflaged				
Method Param.		CUHK [67]		ISTD [73]	CASIA [12]			CAMO [43]			
	(M)	$F_{\beta}\uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	BER $\downarrow$	$F_1 \uparrow$	AUC $\uparrow$	$S_{lpha}\uparrow$	$E_{\phi} \uparrow$	$F^w_\beta \uparrow$	$MAE\downarrow$	
Full-tuning	98.98	.862	.077	4.39	.290	.650	.593	.677	.382	.157	
Only Decoder	13.00	.836	.097	4.77	.318	.662	.615	.659	.385	.162	
VPT [33]	13.09	.843	.092	4.56	.315	.666	.615	.660	.387	.161	
AdaptFormer [4]	13.08	.845	.092	4.60	.319	.662	.614	.662	.387	.161	
EVP	13.06	.850	087	4.36	.324	.675	.622	.674	.402	.156	

Table 10. Comparison with other tuning methods with SETR [85] on four different tasks. We conduct an evaluation on four datasets for four different tasks. The best performance is shown as **bold**. The prompt-tuning method which achieves better performance than full-tuning is marked as orange.



Figure 5. Quantitative comparison using full-tuning and different prompting designs on ISTD [73] dataset for shadow detection. From the left to right is: (a) Input, (b) GT, (c) Full-tuning, (d) Decoder (No prompting), (e) Ours w/o  $F_{pe}$ , (f) Ours w/o  $F_{hfc}$ , (g) Ours w/ Shared  $MLP_{tune}^{i}$ , (h) Ours w/ Unshared  $MLP_{up}$ , (i) Ours Full.

decreases from 64 to 4; when r continues to decrease to 2 or 1, it can not gain better performance consistently even if the model becomes larger. It indicates that r = 4 is a reasonable choice to make a trade-off between the performance and model size.

**EVP in Plain ViT.** We experiment on SETR [85] to confirm the generalizability of EVP. SETR employs plain ViT as the backbone and a progressive upsampling ConvNet as the decoder, while SegFormer has a hierarchical backbone with 4 stages. Therefore, the only distinction between the experiments using SegFormer is that all modifications are limited to the single stage in plain ViT. The experiments are conducted with ViT-Base [13] pretrained on the ImageNet-21k [11] dataset. The number of prompt tokens is set to 10 for VPT, the middle dimension of AdaptMLP is set to 4 for AdaptFormer, and r is set to 32 for our EVP. As shown in Table 10, EVP also outperforms other tuning methods when using plain ViT as the backbone.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, we present explicit visual prompting to unify the solutions of low-level structure segmentations. We mainly focus on two kinds of features: the frozen features from patch embedding and the high-frequency components from the original image. Equipped with our method, we find that a frozen vision transformer backbone from the ImageNet with limited tunable parameters can achieve similar performance as the full-tuned network structures, also the state-of-the-art performance compared with the other task-specific methods. For future works, we will extend our approach to other related problems and hope it can promote further exploration of visual prompting.

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