FREE QUICK GUIDE

What is AI – what is ChatGPT?

A clear guide to using AI assistants at home and at work – ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.

AIVILLE

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Welcome

AI has moved from the headlines into everyday life. You can use it to write, plan, study and solve problems – once you know how to use it and how far to trust its results.

This guide is for you if you want to understand what AI is and try it yourself. No technical background is needed. Every figure has a source, and the sources are listed at the end of the guide.

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The most important tip

Talk to AI as you would to a new, capable colleague: say what you want done, for whom and on what terms. Then check the result.

What is AI?

Artificial intelligence is computer software that performs tasks that used to require human thinking: understanding language, recognising images, drawing conclusions and creating new content.

An old idea, a new breakthrough

The idea of thinking machines dates back to the 1950s. AI has long been used behind the scenes, for example in navigation apps, spam filters and speech recognition. The big change came in November 2022, when OpenAI released ChatGPT and anyone could talk to AI in their own language.

How does a language model work?

ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini are powered by a **large language model**. It has been trained on vast amounts of text and has learned how language, knowledge and reasoning are usually structured. When you type a question, the model produces an answer piece by piece, based on what is the most likely good continuation.

Important to understand

- The model does not "remember" everything it has read word for word, and it does not automatically know the latest events unless it searches the web.
- An answer can sound confident even when it is wrong. That is why important facts are worth checking.
- The newest models "think" before answering and can use tools such as web search.

Generative AI

AI that creates new text, images, audio or video is called generative AI. This guide focuses on AI assistants that you talk to by text or voice.

AI in 2026

In 2026, all three major developers of AI assistants released a new generation of models. At the same time, AI began not only to answer but also to do things.

41%

of Finns aged 16–89 had used generative AI in the previous three months in 2025, up from 23% a year earlier.

Statistics Finland

38%

of Finnish enterprises used AI technologies in spring 2025, up from 24% a year earlier.

Statistics Finland

What changed?

- **New models everywhere.** Anthropic released its Claude 5 models, OpenAI GPT-6 and Google Gemini 4. Even the free versions of ChatGPT and Gemini now run a new-generation model.
- **AI does tasks.** The newest models use a computer, write and run code, and carry out multi-step tasks. AIs like this are called agents.
- **Richer answers.** ChatGPT can now answer with visuals, diagrams and small interactive tools as well as text.
- **Regulation took effect.** The transparency obligations of the EU AI Act took effect on 2 August 2026: a chatbot must say it is AI, and realistic AI-generated images and videos must be labelled.

> **What does this mean for you?** If you tried AI a year ago, today's services are clearly more capable. It is worth trying again.

ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini

The three best-known AI assistants work on the same principle, and all of them have a free version. Pick the one that feels most natural to you. The most important thing is to start.

Service	Developer	Good to know
ChatGPT chatgpt.com	OpenAI	The best-known AI assistant: according to OpenAI, more than 1.2 billion people use it every week. The free version runs the GPT-6 Luna model.
Claude claude.ai	Anthropic	The free version can also search the web, create files and run code. Usage is limited in five-hour and weekly periods.
Gemini gemini.google.com	Google	Works together with Google's services. The free version includes the Gemini 4 Hydrogen model, which the service selects automatically when it suits the question.

Free or paid?

The free version is enough to get started and for everyday use. Paid versions offer more usage, more capable models and extra features. Try it for free first and decide later.

Before you create an account

- Read the service's privacy settings to see how your conversations are used and stored.
- Use a strong password or sign in with an existing account, such as a Google account.

Getting started

Your first conversation takes a few minutes. These five steps get you going.

1. **Choose a service and open it**
   In your browser or the phone app: ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini.
2. **Create an account**
   With your email or an existing account. Check the privacy settings at the same time.
3. **Write your first request**
   Write in plain language, as you would to a person. You can also speak.
4. **Keep the conversation going**
   If the answer misses, don't start over. Refine it: "shorter", "simpler", "give me three options".
5. **Check and edit**
   The AI's answer is a draft. Read it, correct it and make it your own.

Try these as your first questions

- "How could I use you in my daily life? Ask me three questions first."
- "Explain what inflation is as you would to a 12-year-old."
- "Make a weekly meal plan for a family of four. One of us is vegetarian."
- "Write a polite message to my neighbour asking them to move their car."

A good request

An AI's answer is usually only as good as the request. The model developers' own guides advise giving a clear assignment.

A good request has five parts

1. **Result:** what you want done (a message, a list, a plan, an explanation).
2. **Audience:** who will read or use the result.
3. **Background:** the relevant facts the AI cannot know.
4. **Limits:** length, tone and format, for example "at most 100 words, no bullet points".
5. **Done when:** how you will know the work is finished.

Also say whether the AI may make assumptions. For example: "If information is missing, make a sensible assumption and mark it in square brackets."

BEFORE

> Write a newsletter.

AFTER

> Write the December newsletter for the regular customers of our small café. Mention the Christmas opening hours (below) and our new mulled wine. Warm and short, at most 150 words, no emojis. If information is missing, make a sensible assumption and mark it in square brackets. It is done when the text fits on one phone screen.

> **Tip:** if you give the same instructions often, save them. Many services let you save instructions in settings or in a project, so you don't have to type them every time.

Ideas for home and work

AI works best for tasks where you quickly get a good draft and can judge the result yourself.

Use	Example request
Brainstorming	*"Give me ten ideas for an indoor birthday party for an 8-year-old, budget 100 euros."*
Improving text	*"Fix the grammar in this application and make the tone more professional. Don't add anything new."*
Explanations	*"Explain the differences between electricity contracts simply and tell me what to ask the seller."*
Planning	*"Make a three-day itinerary for Helsinki for a family with children, no car."*
Studying	*"Ask me ten questions about World War II and tell me after each one whether I got it right."*
Summarising	*"Summarise this long email in three points and tell me what I need to do."*
Work support	*"Turn these meeting notes into a task list: task, owner and date."*
Problem solving	*"My printer shows 'paper jam' even though no paper is stuck. Walk me through the steps one at a time."*

Remember: don't include other people's personal data or your employer's confidential information in requests without permission.

How reliable is AI?

AI is a powerful tool, but it is not infallible. When you know its weaknesses, you get more out of it and avoid the pitfalls.

Hallucinations: confident-sounding mistakes

AI can invent figures, sources or events that sound believable. Check important facts, especially on health, money and law. Ask the AI for its sources and open them yourself.

Privacy

Don't type passwords, ID numbers or bank details into an AI service. Check the service's settings to see how your conversations are used.

Scams and deepfakes

AI can create realistic images, videos and voices. Be wary of unexpected messages asking for money or credentials, even if the voice or face looks familiar. Under the EU AI Act, realistic AI-generated images and videos must be labelled from 2 August 2026, but scammers don't follow the rules.

When AI acts on your behalf

If you let AI act for you, for example by sending messages or making purchases, grant only the access it needs and decide in advance which actions require your approval. AI may also follow instructions it finds on the web pages it reads.

> **Rule of thumb:** AI produces a draft, a human decides. Use the AI's answer as a starting point, not as the final truth.

Next steps

The best way to learn is to use AI regularly for small tasks. Here is how to continue.

Try it today

- Choose one task that takes up your time every week.
- Ask the AI for a draft using the model on page 7.
- Evaluate: did you save time? What needed fixing?

Read more on the AIvoille blog

- AI at the End of 2026
- The EU AI Act in 2026
- AI Agents at Home and at Work
- Prompting in 2026

www.aivoille.com/en/blogs.html

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