

How to Use AI: A Quick Reference Guide



Popular GenAI Tools

Tool	Website	Login Required?	Cost
ChatGPT	chat.openai.com	Works without login for basic queries	Free access with usage limits; paid tiers for expanded
Claude	claude.ai	Account needed (email)	Free access with usage limits; paid tiers for expanded
Gemini	gemini.google.com	Google account needed for full features	Free access with usage limits; paid tiers for expanded
Copilot	copilot.microsoft.com	Works without login; Microsoft account unlocks more	Free with limits; also built into Windows 11 and Edge browser

How to Use Tools

1. **Prompt** → Write clear directions for the AI
2. **Refine** → Revise your prompt through conversation
3. **Verify & Personalize** → Check that the information is accurate; make it yours

Step 1: Write a Good Prompt

A strong prompt is specific, gives context, and includes examples when possible.

■ **Weak:** “Help me with a cover letter”

- ❑ **Stronger:** “I’m applying for a customer service job at a retail store. I have 5 years of experience in food service. What key points should I highlight to show my skills transfer well?”

■ **Weak:** “Give me interview tips”

- ❑ **Stronger:** “I have a job interview for an administrative assistant position next week. I’m nervous about answering questions about my weaknesses. My weaknesses are x, y, and z. Can you suggest 3 ways to answer that question honestly but positively?”

What to Include in Your Prompt: Your goal, context and audience, specific requirements or constraints, and desired format (list, paragraph, step-by-step, etc.)

Protect Your Privacy: Never share sensitive information with AI tools—no Social Security numbers, passwords, financial details, or other people’s private information.

Step 2: Refine and Revise

Don't expect perfection on the first try. Treat AI like a conversation. Keep refining until you get what you need.

Helpful phrases:

"Can you expand on the second point?"

"Make this shorter"

"Make this more casual/professional"

"Give me more examples"

"Explain this like I'm new to the topic"

"I liked X but can you change Y?"

"That's not quite what I meant. I'm looking for..."

"Can you try again, but this time..."

Tip: Not sure how to ask for what you want? Try: *"Help me craft a strong prompt about [your topic]. Ask me clarifying questions first, then generate the final prompt."*



Step 3: Verify the Output

AI sounds confident even when it's wrong. Always check before you trust, share, or act on AI-generated information. **Use the SIFT method:**

- **S – Stop:** Before acting on information, ask: "What are the consequences if this is wrong?" The higher the stakes (money, health, legal issues), the more carefully you should check.
- **I – Investigate the Source:** Who created the information AI is pulling from? Is it a company trying to sell something? A news organization? A blog? Sources go through different review processes—an edited news article is more reliable than an unchecked social media post.
- **F – Find More Coverage:** Don't rely on just one source. Look for the same information in multiple trustworthy places. Remember: AI finds sources that match patterns, not necessarily the best sources.
- **T – Trace Claims to the Original:** Click through to the original source. Ask yourself: Did the AI get this right? Are these sources reliable? Is the information up to date?

Final Step: Personalize

Don't just copy and paste what the AI says. AI doesn't know your real life and often gets facts wrong. Use the AI to help you organize your thoughts, but make sure the final version is yours: based on your ideas, your voice, and conveys what *you* want to share.