



AUGUST 2026 FREE GUIDE

ChatGPT vs Claude vs Gemini in 2026

A plain-English guide to choosing the right AI tool, using it for real tasks, copying prompts that work, and checking answers before they cost you time, money, or trust.



What you will be able to do
Choose the right AI tool for a task, start cleanly in ChatGPT/Claude/Gemini, write useful prompts, use AI for work and learning, protect private information, verify important answers, understand 2026 AI rules, and build a 30-day practice habit.

After reading this guide, you will be able to	Start here
Choose a tool without hype	Use the tool chooser and comparison tables.
Start using the major platforms	Follow the ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini quick starts.
Write prompts that produce usable answers	Use the prompt library and adapt the blanks.
Use AI without unnecessary risk	Review the privacy, safety, and verification checklists.
Apply AI to real tasks	Use the job, research, media, mobile, family-help, and practice sections.

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How to use the guide

If you are new to AI, read sections 1 through 8 first. If you already use AI, keep sections 9 and 10 nearby as a prompt library. Before using AI for private, urgent, or high-stakes tasks, read sections 18 through 20.

1. Start Here: The 2-Minute AI Tool Chooser

Do not ask which tool is best. Ask which tool is best for this job.



Your job	Start with	Why	Check before trusting
Explain something simply	ChatGPT or Gemini	Good for beginner explanations and step-by-step help.	Ask for examples and what might be missing.
Rewrite or polish long writing	Claude	Strong fit for long-form editing and careful tone.	Confirm any facts or claims separately.
Check current facts	ChatGPT with sources, Claude with sources, Gemini, or Perplexity	Source-backed tools can find current pages.	Open the cited sources and check dates.
Work inside Google apps	Gemini	Best fit when Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Drive, or Android are involved.	Check connected-app permissions.
Work inside Microsoft apps	Copilot	Best fit for Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, and Microsoft 365.	Confirm your plan includes the feature.
Compare products, prices, laws, or policies	A source-backed tool	Needs current information.	Never rely on an unsourced answer for changing facts.
Sensitive personal decision	Any tool only as prep	AI can help you understand terms and questions.	Use official or qualified human help.

Use AI for

- Drafting and revising
- Explaining confusing terms
- Summarizing documents
- Making checklists
- Practicing interviews
- Comparing options
- Finding questions to ask

Do not use AI as

- A doctor, lawyer, banker, or benefits office
- A final fact-checker
- A place to paste private numbers or passwords
- A scam-verification shortcut
- A reason to skip reading a source

2. The AI Use Framework

A simple way to get useful help without overtrusting the answer.

Most people need AI for one of four jobs: understand something, create a draft, compare options, or check the next step. The tool matters, but the workflow matters more. A good workflow keeps you in control: define the task, give context, ask for a useful format, protect private information, and verify anything important before you act.

Step	What to do	Why it matters
1. Name the job	Decide whether you need an explanation, draft, comparison, summary, practice partner, or source-backed check.	AI gives better answers when the task is clear.
2. Add context	Tell the tool who the answer is for, what you already know, what constraints matter, and what format you want.	Context turns a generic answer into something usable.
3. Protect private information	Remove passwords, account numbers, IDs, private medical/legal/financial details, and anything your school or workplace forbids.	The safest prompt is the one that does not expose sensitive data.
4. Ask for uncertainty	Tell the tool to separate facts, assumptions, risks, and missing information.	Confident wrong answers are one of the biggest AI risks.
5. Verify before acting	Open official sources, compare dates, and get qualified help when money, health, safety, rights, or legal status are involved.	AI can help you prepare, but it should not be the final authority for high-stakes decisions.

3. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Other Tools Compared

How the main tools compare, current to August 2026.



Tool	Best for	Less ideal for	First thing to try
ChatGPT	General help, voice, images, writing, explanations, source-backed answers, broad everyday tasks.	Sensitive data unless settings/plan are appropriate; final authority on current facts.	Ask it to explain a topic, create a checklist, or compare options with sources.
Claude	Long documents, careful writing, editing, coding help, analysis, structured summaries.	Tasks that depend heavily on Google account context unless connected elsewhere.	Upload or paste a document and ask for summary, risks, next steps, and unclear claims.
Gemini	Google apps, Gmail, Docs, Drive, Android, source-aware help, image/file understanding depending on plan.	Non-Google workflows where another tool fits better.	Ask it to summarize or draft from Google context you already use.
Perplexity	Quick source discovery and current web research.	Final decisions without opening sources.	Ask for a source-backed overview and then open the best sources.
Copilot	Microsoft 365 work: Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams.	People outside Microsoft workflows.	Ask it to summarize a document or draft an email inside Microsoft 365.
Grok	Current social/news signal and informal second opinions.	Sensitive, official, legal, medical, or final research decisions.	Use for emerging-topic scanning, then verify elsewhere.

4. Free vs Paid: When Not to Spend Money

Pay only when a plan solves a real recurring problem.

Question	Free is usually enough when	Paid may be worth it when
Learning basics	You need explanations, practice prompts, summaries, and simple drafts.	You use AI often enough that limits slow you down.
Writing	You need a first draft or rewrite for everyday material.	You need longer document review, more usage, or better workspace features.
Research	You can use free source-backed answers and open sources yourself.	You need more reliable access, longer sessions, file handling, or work-account protection.
Images/photos	You only need occasional experiments.	You need repeated image generation, editing, or commercial workflow features.
Work data	You are not entering private client, employee, donor, medical, or financial information.	Your organization has an approved business/enterprise plan and policy.

Do not pay just because

- Someone online says one model is magic
- You have not tried the free version
- You only need one resume or one email
- You think paid means always accurate

Pay only when

- Limits block real work
- File size or context matters
- Your work requires better privacy controls
- The tool is tied to apps you already use
- You can name the job it will do every week

Rule of thumb

A tool that sounds impressive is not automatically worth money. The right tool is the cheapest one that safely does the job.

5. Quick Start: How to Use ChatGPT

Best for broad everyday help, voice, image work, drafting, explaining, and source-backed answers. Official site: chatgpt.com App: OpenAI OpCo, LLC



A good first prompt gives the AI a task, context, format, and safety check.

Step	What to do	Why it matters
1	Start with one task, not a vague request.	Specific tasks get better answers than broad requests.
2	Tell it your situation and what you already know.	Context changes the answer.
3	Ask for a format: table, checklist, steps, script, or comparison.	Format prevents vague paragraphs.
4	For current facts, ask for sources and open them.	Current facts and app access are where mistakes happen.
5	Ask what could be wrong before you rely on the answer.	Verification is the difference between useful and risky.

First prompt to copy for ChatGPT

I am new to [topic]. Explain it in plain language, then give me a 5-step checklist I can follow today. If any part depends on current facts, tell me what to verify and where.

Replace bracketed words. After the answer, ask: 'What should I verify before I use this?'

6. Quick Start: How to Use Claude

Best for long writing, document review, careful rewriting, analysis, coding help, and structured summaries. Official site: claude.ai App: Anthropic PBC

Step	What to do	Why it matters
1	Give it the document, draft, or long context.	Specific tasks get better answers than broad requests.
2	Tell it the reader and the decision the reader needs to make.	Context changes the answer.
3	Ask for structure before polish.	Format prevents vague paragraphs.
4	Ask it to separate facts, assumptions, risks, and missing information.	Current facts and app access are where mistakes happen.
5	Use it for revision, but verify outside facts yourself.	Verification is the difference between useful and risky.

First prompt to copy for Claude

Review this draft/document for clarity, missing context, unsupported claims, and reader trust. Keep the meaning. Give me: 1) the main issues, 2) a cleaner version, 3) claims I should verify.

Replace bracketed words. After the answer, ask: 'What should I verify before I use this?'

7. Quick Start: How to Use Gemini

Best for Google-connected tasks, Android, Gmail, Docs, Drive, Sheets, and source-aware help. Official site: gemini.google.com App: Google LLC

Step	What to do	Why it matters
1	Use it when the task already lives in Google or Android.	Specific tasks get better answers than broad requests.
2	Check which Google app or file it can access.	Context changes the answer.
3	Ask for a summary, draft, table, or next-action list.	Format prevents vague paragraphs.
4	Do not assume every connected app is private by default; check settings.	Current facts and app access are where mistakes happen.
5	For important facts, ask for sources and open them.	Verification is the difference between useful and risky.

First prompt to copy for Gemini

I am working on [task] in Google [app]. Help me turn this into [output]. Use plain language, list next steps, and tell me what information you are assuming or cannot see.

Replace bracketed words. After the answer, ask: 'What should I verify before I use this?'

8. Choose the Right Tool for the Job

When you know the task but not which tool to use.

Task	Best starting tool	Copy/paste starter prompt
Beginner explanation	ChatGPT or Gemini	Explain [topic] for an adult beginner. Use plain language, one example, and a checklist.
Long document summary	Claude	Summarize this document into key points, risks, dates, action items, and unclear claims.
Google email/document work	Gemini	Help me turn this into a clear [email/doc/summary] for [reader].
Current research	Perplexity, ChatGPT with sources, Claude with sources, Gemini	Research [topic] with current sources. Include dates and disagreements.
Resume/job search	Claude or ChatGPT	Compare my resume to this job post. Do not invent experience. Suggest truthful improvements.
Coding/debugging	Claude or ChatGPT	Here is the error and code. Explain the likely cause, ask for missing context, then suggest the smallest fix.
Image generation	ChatGPT/Gemini or an image tool	Create an image prompt for [scene] with style, composition, lighting, constraints, and avoid list.
Scam check	Any assistant with caution	Analyze this message after I remove private details. List warning signs and safest verification route.

Important

The best tool can change by plan, region, and update. Treat this as a starting point, not a permanent ranking.

9. Reliable Starting Prompts

Use these as templates: task, context, format, constraints, and verification.



Useful prompts are work orders, not magic words.

A useful prompt is a clear work order. It tells the AI what job to do, what context matters, what format you want, what not to do, and how to handle uncertainty. Copy these as written, replace the bracketed parts, and keep the verification line attached.

Universal practical answer prompt

Act as a practical tutor. I need help with [task]. My situation is [context]. I already know [what you know]. Give me a clear answer in [format]. Use plain language. Separate facts from assumptions. End with what I should verify before relying on it.

Use for almost anything. The context and verification lines are what make it better than a generic prompt.

Better answer repair prompt

Your answer is too general. Ask me up to five questions that would make it specific, then wait. After I answer, give me a revised version with exact steps.

Use when the AI gives a polished but useless answer.

Current research prompt

Research [topic] using current sources. Include source links, dates, what each source says, and where sources disagree. Mark anything that is uncertain or likely to change.

Use only in a tool that can provide sources. Open the sources yourself.

Plain-English explanation prompt

Explain [topic] to an adult beginner. Define the key words, use one everyday example, list the common mistake people make, and give me a 5-step practice exercise.

Good for seniors, caregivers, students, and anyone learning a new tool.

10. Prompts for Work, Learning, Images, and Safety

Prompts for the tasks people do most.

Resume truth-check prompt

Compare my resume to this job post. Do not invent experience. Identify matching skills, missing keywords I can truthfully add, weak bullets, and interview questions I should prepare for. Give edits in a table: original, better version, reason.

Paste the job post and resume only after removing private contact details if needed.

LinkedIn/profile prompt

Help me improve this profile for [type of work]. Keep it truthful and human. Rewrite the headline, about section, and top 5 skills. Avoid buzzwords. Explain each change.

Useful for Claude or ChatGPT. Do not invent credentials.

Writing improvement prompt

Review this draft for clarity, tone, structure, unsupported claims, and reader trust. Keep my meaning. Give me a cleaner version and a short list of changes.

Use for emails, articles, posts, and letters.

Image prompt builder

Turn this idea into a high-quality image prompt: [idea]. Include subject, setting, composition, lighting, style, color palette, constraints, and avoid list. Do not include logos or readable text unless I ask for it.

Use this when visual quality matters because it controls composition, constraints, and avoid items.

Suspicious message prompt

I received this message: [paste after removing names, numbers, links, and private details]. Identify warning signs, what the sender may want, what I should not click or send, and the safest way to verify through an official route.

Never paste passwords, codes, SSNs, bank numbers, or live links.

More Prompts to Copy

Additional templates for coding, money questions, learning, and family help.

Coding/debugging prompt

Here is what I am trying to make: [goal]. Here is the error: [error]. Here is the relevant code: [code]. Explain the likely cause in plain language, ask for missing context if needed, and suggest the smallest safe fix first.

Do not paste secrets, API keys, passwords, or private customer data.

Money/contract explanation prompt

Explain this [bill/contract/financial term] in plain language. Do not tell me what to sign or buy. Identify fees, deadlines, risks, questions to ask, and which parts need a qualified human or official source.

Use for understanding, not final decisions.

Study plan prompt

Create a 14-day beginner plan for learning [skill]. I can spend [time] per day. Include daily practice, a quick review question, and a final project that proves I can use it.

Works for digital skills and AI practice.

Family tech help prompt

Help me explain [tech task] to an older adult without making them feel behind. Give me a patient script, a checklist, privacy reminders, and what I should let them do themselves.

Use this when you are helping a parent, grandparent, or neighbor.

Prompt audit prompt

Here is my prompt: [prompt]. Improve it by adding context, constraints, output format, and verification. Explain what you changed and why.

Use this to turn weak prompts into usable ones.

11. Apply AI to Job Search and Resumes

Use Claude or ChatGPT first. Gemini is useful if the resume or notes already live in Google Docs.



Use AI to improve job materials truthfully, without inventing experience.

Step	Action
1	Paste the job post and your resume, after removing private contact details if needed.
2	Ask AI to compare truthfully. Ban invented experience.
3	Ask for improved bullets using your real work.
4	Ask for likely interview questions and practice answers.
5	Verify every credential, date, number, and claim before sending.

Copy prompt

Compare this resume to this job post. Only use experience that appears in my resume. Give me: matching skills, missing keywords I can truthfully add, improved bullets, and 10 interview questions.

Tailors your resume without inventing experience.

12. Apply AI to Research and Learning

Good AI learning is active: ask, check, practice, then summarize in your own words.



Research works best when the answer is paired with sources and a check step.

Step	Action
1	Ask for a beginner explanation before asking for a final answer.
2	Use source-backed tools for current facts.
3	Ask for source links, dates, and disagreements.
4	Open the sources and compare the answer.
5	Turn the answer into notes, flashcards, or a practice checklist.

Copy prompt

Teach me [topic] from beginner to practical use. Start with plain language, then give sources, common mistakes, a practice exercise, and a quiz with answers.

Best for active learning with practice and feedback.

13. Apply AI to Images, Photos, and Video

Image tools are powerful, but bad prompts create generic results. Control the scene and the constraints.



Step	Action
1	Describe the subject, setting, style, composition, lighting, and avoid list.
2	Avoid asking for readable text unless the tool is reliable at it.
3	Use real product/place/person references only when you have rights and consent.
4	Check hands, faces, text, logos, and factual details.
5	For public use, keep a note that AI was used if transparency is expected.

Copy prompt

Create a detailed image prompt for [goal]. Include subject, setting, style, composition, lighting, palette, constraints, and avoid list. Give me three variations for different moods.

Best for controlling image quality.

14. Use AI on Phones, Voice, Images, and Video

Use device features without granting more access than the task requires.



On phones, permissions matter as much as prompts.

Task	What to do	Best prompt or check
How do I use AI on iPhone?	Use the official app or browser version. Start with voice or text. Do not grant contacts, photos, files, or microphone permissions unless the task needs them.	Explain [task] step by step for iPhone. Tell me what permissions are optional and what I should avoid sharing.
How do I use AI on Android?	Gemini may be more integrated on Android, but ChatGPT and Claude can still work through apps or browsers. Check account and permission settings.	Help me do [task] on Android. Give steps, privacy warnings, and what settings to check first.
How do I use voice mode?	Use voice for brainstorming, practice, or accessibility. Do not speak passwords, recovery codes, banking details, or private medical/legal details.	Act as a patient practice partner. Ask me one question at a time about [topic], then summarize what I said.
Can AI edit photos?	Some tools can edit, expand, or restyle images. Check faces, hands, text, logos, ownership, consent, and whether the edited image could mislead people.	Edit this photo for [goal] without changing identity, body shape, age, race, or factual details. Tell me what changed.
Can AI make videos?	Video tools vary widely and can be expensive or inconsistent. Use AI for scripts, storyboards, captions, and short drafts before generating final video.	Create a 30-second video outline for [topic]: hook, 3 scenes, narration, on-screen text, safety note, and caption.

Permission rule

The safest mobile setup is the minimum-permission setup. Turn on only the access the task needs, then turn it off when you are done if you do not need it again.

15. Coding, Troubleshooting, Work, and Students

Common uses that need clear boundaries and careful checks.

Use case	What AI can do	What you still must do
Coding	Explain errors, suggest small fixes, write tests, translate code, review logic.	Never paste secrets. Test changes. Keep backups. Understand the fix before shipping.
Tech support	Walk through settings, explain error messages, create checklists.	Confirm device/app names. Avoid giving remote access to strangers.
Students	Explain concepts, quiz you, make study plans, help outline.	Do not submit AI work as your own. Follow school policy. Check the tool's minimum age and parent-consent rule for a minor.
Business owners	Draft emails, compare tools, summarize reviews, plan operations.	Verify legal, tax, HR, privacy, and customer-impact claims.
Workers	Summarize meeting notes, draft emails, prep presentations.	Follow workplace AI policy. Do not paste confidential data into unapproved tools.

Troubleshooting prompt

I am trying to fix [device/app/problem]. Ask me one question at a time until you understand the setup. Then give safe steps from least risky to most risky. Tell me when to stop and contact official support.

Keeps the AI from jumping to risky fixes.

Student learning prompt

Teach me [topic] without doing my assignment for me. Explain the concept, give an example, quiz me, then check my answer and tell me what to review.

Helps you learn it, not skip it.

16. Helping Someone Else Learn AI Safely

For people who want help without being made to feel behind.



Good AI help should keep the learner in control.

New users usually need confidence, safety, and plain-English steps more than technical jargon. The best AI help is patient, specific, and respectful. It keeps the learner in control of the device, the account, and the final decision.

Need	AI can help by	Use this prompt
Understand a new term	Explaining without jargon.	Explain [term] in plain language for someone new to technology. Use one everyday example and one thing to watch out for.
Practice a task	Creating a step-by-step script.	Walk me through [task] one step at a time. After each step, ask if I am ready for the next one.
Check a suspicious message	Listing warning signs and safe verification routes.	Analyze this message after I remove private details. Tell me if it has scam warning signs and how to verify without clicking.
Help a family member	Giving a patient helper script.	Help me teach [task] to a family member. Give me words to say, what not to take over, and privacy reminders.
Build confidence	Turning big tasks into small wins.	Create a 7-day practice plan for [skill], with one small task per day and no jargon.

Respect rule

The goal is not to make someone dependent on AI or on the helper. The goal is to help them understand the next step and keep control of their own accounts.

17. Free vs Paid: Choosing a Plan

Decide based on the work you actually repeat.

Question	Plain answer	Safer action
Can I use AI for free?	Usually yes for basic learning, drafting, and simple questions. Limits and features vary.	Try the free version first and write down what blocked you before paying.
Do I need a login?	Many useful tools require an account for history, limits, safety, or files. Some limited trials or public demos may not.	Use official websites/apps. Avoid lookalike login pages.
Is Pro worth it?	Only if you can name a recurring job it does better: longer work, more usage, file handling, images, voice, or privacy/work controls.	Do a one-week test list before subscribing. Consumer plans run about \$20 a month as of August 2026.
Which paid plan is safest?	Work/enterprise plans may offer stronger controls, but details differ.	Read the official privacy/data page for the exact account type.
How do I avoid fake AI sites?	Scammers copy tool names and buy ads.	Type the official address yourself or use the app store publisher name. Never enter payment details on a lookalike page.

Should I pay prompt

Help me decide whether to pay for [tool/plan]. My tasks are [tasks]. My budget is [budget]. Compare what the free version can do, what paid adds, what risks matter, and what I should test before paying.

Use this before buying a subscription.

Make sure it is the real one

Gemini is at gemini.google.com. gemini.com is a different company, a crypto exchange, not Google. Do not use g.co/gemini either. ChatGPT is at chatgpt.com and Claude is at claude.ai. Type the address yourself rather than reaching these tools through a search ad. App stores carry many copies. The real ones are ChatGPT by OpenAI OpCo, LLC, Claude by Anthropic PBC, and Google Gemini by Google LLC. Check the publisher name before you install, and never enter payment details on a page you reached from an ad or a link.

18. AI Safety, Privacy, Deepfakes, and Scams

Use AI without handing it private data or trusting fake media.



Pause before acting on urgent messages, payment requests, or private-data requests.

Before you paste	Safer replacement
SSN, bank/card number, tax ID, password, recovery code, API key	Do not paste. Replace with labels like [account number].
Medical, legal, financial, benefits, housing, immigration details	Ask general questions and prepare questions for qualified help.
Client, donor, student, volunteer, or employee data	Use only approved work tools and remove identifiers unless policy allows it.
Private photos, voices, faces, IDs	Check storage, training, sharing, consent, and public-use risks.
Suspicious links or urgent messages	Do not click. Verify through official websites or known phone numbers.

Deepfake response

Pause. Do not send money, gift cards, codes, private photos, or account access. Leave the message. Call the person or organization through a number you already know. If money or safety is involved, use official channels.

Does it keep what you type?

Usually yes, unless you change it. Each tool has a data-controls or training setting in your account, not in the chat window. Open it before you start. You can turn off having your conversations used to improve the tool, and it stays off until you change it. Turning it off does not make a chat private. Still leave out everything in the table above.

19. How to Check AI Answers

You do not need to become an expert. You need to know what to check.

If the answer includes	Risk	Fast check
A date, price, law, policy, schedule, feature, or rule	Could be outdated.	Open the official page and check the effective date.
A quote or statistic	Could be invented or paraphrased.	Find the original report or exact quote.
Medical, legal, financial, benefits, housing, immigration advice	Could harm rights, money, health, or safety.	Use AI for questions only. Confirm with qualified or official help.
A person, company, phone number, link, payment request	Scam risk.	Navigate separately to the official source.
A summary of a document	Could miss or distort key details.	Spot-check the original, especially numbers and obligations.

Ask AI this after any important answer

What could be wrong, outdated, biased, incomplete, or unsafe in your answer? Give me a checklist of what I should verify before relying on it.

Use the 3-source rule

- One official source
- One reputable explanation
- One human or professional check when stakes are high

20. 2026 Rules and Laws to Know

Plain-English notes, not legal advice.

Rule area	2026 status	What ordinary users should know
EU AI Act	Broadly applicable from August 2, 2026, with staged exceptions.	Transparency, literacy, governance, and risk categories matter for organizations.
Colorado AI and chatbot laws	New ADMT and chatbot safety provisions scheduled for January 1, 2027.	More rules are coming on consequential decisions, chatbot disclosures, minor safeguards, and self-harm protocols.
California AI transparency	State activity focuses on generative AI disclosure/provenance for large providers.	AI images, audio, and video increasingly need transparency signals.
NIST GenAI Profile	Voluntary risk-management guidance for generative AI.	Use it as a checklist for privacy, security, information integrity, bias, IP, and human oversight.
Workplace/school policies	Rules vary by organization.	Ask what tools are approved, what data is allowed, and whether disclosure is required.

Simple rule

If AI affects a consequential decision about a person - hiring, housing, credit, health care, education, benefits, insurance, or legal services - treat it as regulated or regulation-adjacent and check the current rule.

21. 30-Day Practice Plan

Build skill by doing, checking, and repeating.



Week	Goal	Daily practice
1	Learn the interface	Try ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini. Find source tools, uploads, memory/data controls, voice, and source links.
2	Use AI for real tasks	Draft one email, summarize one article, make one checklist, compare two options, and revise one answer.
3	Practice verification	Check five AI claims against sources. Track what was correct, outdated, or vague.
4	Build your own AI rulebook	Write what you use AI for, what you never paste, which tool fits each task, and when you verify.

Graduation test

- You can get a useful first draft
- You can improve a weak prompt
- You can spot claims to verify
- You know when not to use AI

Practice tracker

- One explanation
- One comparison
- One source-backed answer
- One private-data-safe prompt
- One prompt you improved

Appendix A: Glossary

Words you will see inside AI tools.

AI assistant - A tool you can chat with to draft, explain, summarize, compare, or create.	Source-backed browsing - A tool mode where the AI can retrieve current internet information and provide source links.
Chatbot - A conversational AI system.	Citation - A source link or reference the AI gives for a claim.
Generative AI - AI that creates text, images, audio, video, code, or other content.	Memory - A feature where selected information from past chats can affect future answers.
Model - The underlying system producing the answer.	Data controls - Settings that affect storage, training, retention, and personalization.
Prompt - The instruction or question you give the AI.	Connector - A link between AI and another app or data source.
Context window - How much information the AI can consider at once.	Agent - An AI system that can work through steps or use tools.
Hallucination - A confident answer that is wrong, unsupported, or invented.	Deepfake - AI-generated or altered media that can impersonate a person.
Grounding - Connecting an answer to sources, files, databases, or other evidence.	Provenance - Information that helps show where content came from or how it was made.

Appendix B: Sources and Further Reading

Current sources checked August 14, 2026.

OpenAI Help: Source-backed answers

OpenAI explains how ChatGPT can include source links for current information.
<https://help.openai.com/articles/9237897-chatgpt-search>

OpenAI Help: Data Controls

Individual-service content may be used to improve models depending on settings; users can opt out for new conversations.
<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/7730893-data-controls-faq>

Anthropic consumer terms/privacy update

Free/Pro/Max users have a model-training choice; retention differs depending on that choice.
<https://www.anthropic.com/news/updates-to-our-consumer-terms>

Claude Help: Source-backed answers

Claude can retrieve current information and include citations when enabled.
<https://support.anthropic.com/en/articles/10684626-enabling-and-using-web-search>

Google Workspace AI

Google states Workspace data is not used to train Gemini models or for ads targeting.
<https://workspace.google.com/solutions/ai/>

NIST GenAI Profile

NIST AI 600-1 companion resource for managing generative AI risks.
<https://www.nist.gov/publications/artificial-intelligence-risk-management-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence>

EU AI Act official page

The AI Act became broadly applicable on August 2, 2026, with staged exceptions.
<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>

Colorado Attorney General AI rulemaking

Colorado 2026 AI/chatbot rulemaking activity and January 1, 2027 effective dates for new provisions.
<https://coag.gov/ai/>

Educational use: This guide is educational information, not legal, medical, financial, or cybersecurity advice. Use AI to understand and prepare. For high-stakes decisions, verify with official sources or qualified professionals.