



FREE STARTER GUIDE • THE FIVE-MINUTE AI

AI for Your Everyday Life

A 5-Minute Starter Guide

Fourteen genuinely useful ways to use AI at home, simple prompts you can copy, and how to stay safe while you do it. No tech background needed.

Plain English

Free apps

Safety first

The Five-Minute AI

AI for your life, not your job

thefiveminuteai.com
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What AI is, in plain words

AI, short for artificial intelligence, is a name for computer programs that can do things that used to need a person: write a note, understand a question you speak out loud, recognize what's in a photo, or translate a sign.

The kind most people use today is a **chat assistant**. You type or say what you need in everyday words, and it answers. It has learned patterns from a huge amount of text, so it is very good at writing, explaining and suggesting. It is not a person, it does not "know" you unless you tell it things, and it can be confidently wrong.

Where to find it

- **Built into your phone.** Newer iPhones have Apple Intelligence and Siri AI. Many Android phones can use Google Gemini as the assistant.
- **Free apps.** ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft Copilot all have free versions for iPhone and Android.

Three things to remember

- ✓ **Check what matters.** Prices, hours, health, money and legal facts.
- ✓ **Keep private things private.** No passwords or account numbers.
- ✓ **You're in charge.** Read before you send, buy or delete.

How to use this guide

Don't try everything at once. Pick **one** idea that would save you time this week, try it for five minutes, and come back for another when you're ready. Words in **bold** are the buttons or settings to look for.

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Let it take the small jobs

These four save time almost every day.

1

Ask your phone, like you'd ask a person

Your phone's assistant can now hold a real back-and-forth conversation. On an iPhone 15 Pro or newer with iOS 27, turn on Siri AI in **Settings > Siri > Try Siri AI (Beta)**. Apple says it can find things across your messages, email, photos and notes. On Android, Google Gemini can act as your phone's assistant.

Try: "Find the email with my dentist appointment." Or: "Remind me to call Mom when I get home."

2

Plan the week's meals

Tell a chat assistant who you're feeding, your budget, and what to avoid. It will draft a plan you can tweak.

Try: "Plan five easy weeknight dinners for a family of four. About \$80 total, no nuts, one vegetarian night. Then give me a shopping list grouped by aisle."

3

Turn your fridge into tonight's dinner

ChatGPT and Gemini can look at photos. Snap the inside of your fridge or pantry and ask what you can make.

Try: "What's an easy dinner for two with what you see? Under 30 minutes, and list anything I'd need to buy."

AI can misread a label, so give suggestions a common-sense check, especially for allergies.

4

Make a plan for a messy job

Moving, a garage clear-out, a birthday party: describe the job and ask for a simple checklist with a timeline.

Try: "I'm hosting a birthday party for ten 7-year-olds in three weeks. Give me a week-by-week checklist and a simple budget."

Less stress, fewer blank pages

Good for the jobs you put off.

5

Sketch a trip in minutes

Ask for a rough day-by-day plan based on your pace, budget and interests. Use it as a starting point, then check opening hours, prices and bookings on the official websites.

Try: "Plan a relaxed three-day trip to San Diego for two adults in their 60s. Not too much walking, mid-range budget."

6

Read menus and signs in another language

In the free **Google Translate** app, **Camera** translates text you point your phone at, and **Conversation** translates a spoken back-and-forth. On iPhones with Apple Intelligence, **Live Translation** works in Messages, FaceTime and phone calls.

Download Translate before you travel, while you have good Wi-Fi.

7

Write the email you've been avoiding

A complaint, a polite "no," a note to a teacher. Describe what you want to say and the tone. Newer iPhones also have **Write with Siri**, which can draft or improve text "virtually anywhere you type."

Try: "Write a short, polite email to my landlord. The kitchen faucet has leaked for two weeks. I'd like it fixed by Friday. Friendly but firm."

8

Decode a confusing letter or bill

Paste in the text, or a photo, and ask what it means in plain English and what you need to do. **Cover up** your account number, Social Security number and address first.

Try: "Explain this letter like I'm not an expert. What is it asking me to do, and by when?"

For anything legal, medical or money-related, confirm with the sender or a professional.

Find, fix and figure things out

Your photos and your curiosity get an upgrade.

9

Find any photo by describing it

Instead of scrolling for ages, search your photos in everyday words. The **Photos** app on iPhones with Apple Intelligence and the **Google Photos** app can both search for people, things and places.

Try searching: "dog at the beach," "birthday cake," or "receipt."

10

Remove a photobomber

On iPhones with Apple Intelligence, **Clean Up** in Photos removes distracting objects. Google says **Magic Eraser** in Google Photos is free for eligible users on iPhone and Android: open a photo, tap **Edit**, then **Tools** (iPhone) or **Actions** (Android).

You can undo edits, so it's safe to experiment.

11

Get the short version of long things

Apple Intelligence can summarize long emails, group chats, notifications and web pages in Safari. With any chat app, you can paste in an article and ask for the key points.

Try: "Summarize this in five bullet points, then tell me if there's anything I need to act on."

A summary is a shortcut, not the full story. Read the original for anything important.

12

Learn something new, one step at a time

Sourdough, a card game's rules, how to reset your router. Ask for simple steps and ask follow-up questions as often as you like. It never gets impatient.

Try: "Teach me to knit a scarf. I'm a complete beginner. Give me one step at a time and wait for me to say 'next'."

A second opinion, and a patient tutor

Two of the most useful ideas, with a few important cautions.

13

Get a second opinion on a suspicious message

Got a text about a "missed delivery" or an urgent email from your "bank"? Paste the words (not your details) into a chat app and ask what the red flags are.

Try: "Does this message look like a scam? List any warning signs. Don't click anything in it."

AI can miss things. The real check is always to contact the company yourself, using a number or website you already know is right, never one in the message.

14

Help with homework, the right way

A chat assistant can explain a tricky idea in different ways, make practice questions, or check that your child understands, like a patient tutor. The goal is learning, not getting the answers done for them.

Try (together): "My daughter is in 6th grade and stuck on fractions. Don't give her the answers. Explain how to add $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ step by step, then give her three practice problems."

Before kids use AI: what parents should know

- **Check the age rules.** OpenAI says ChatGPT isn't meant for children under 13, and teens 13 to 18 need a parent's permission. Gemini's mobile app is for 13 and up, and under-13s need a parent's approval on their account. Apple says Siri AI isn't available to users under 13.
- **Sit with younger children.** OpenAI advises that for children under 13, any use in learning should be done by an adult.
- **Check the school's rules.** Many schools have their own policies on AI for homework.
- **Facts can be wrong.** AI can invent dates, quotes and sources. Teach kids to check with a textbook or a trusted website.
- **Use parental controls.** ChatGPT lets a parent link to a teen's account to manage some settings. OpenAI says this does not let parents read the teen's conversations.

Ten prompts to copy

A "prompt" is just what you type or say to the AI. The best ones say **who it's for, what you want, the details that matter**, and **how you'd like the answer**.

DINNER TONIGHT

"Suggest three dinners I can make in 20 minutes with eggs, spinach, rice and cheese."

FIX-IT HELP

"My dishwasher shows error E24. What does that usually mean, and what's safe to check myself?"

BUDGET SHOPPING

"Make a grocery list for a week of breakfasts and lunches for two adults, about \$50."

GIFT IDEAS

"Gift ideas under \$30 for my dad, 70, who loves gardening and crosswords."

TRICKY MESSAGE

"Help me say no to hosting Thanksgiving this year, kindly, in three sentences."

HEALTH QUESTIONS TO ASK

"I have a doctor's appointment about knee pain. What questions should I ask?"

PLAIN ENGLISH

"Explain what a 'deductible' is like I'm 12, with an example."

MAKE IT SHORTER

"Rewrite this so it's half as long and friendlier:
[paste text]"

WEEKEND PLAN

"Give me five free or cheap things to do with kids this weekend on a rainy day."

SCAM CHECK

"What are the warning signs in this message?
[paste text, without your details]"

Three tricks that make any answer better

- **Ask for a follow-up.** "Make it simpler," "Give me two more options," or "What did you assume?"
- **Tell it your situation.** Your budget, who's involved, and what you've already tried.
- **Ask it to check itself.** "What could be wrong with this answer?" helps catch mistakes.

Scams and privacy

The same technology that helps you also helps scammers. A few habits keep you a step ahead.

AI scams: what the FBI and FTC say

Scammers can copy a loved one's voice from a short clip posted online, then call in a panic asking for money. AI also helps them write messages with perfect spelling, so neat writing is no longer a sign that a message is real.

- ✓ **Don't trust the voice.** Hang up and call back on a number you know is theirs.
- ✓ **Set up a family safe word.** The FBI recommends a secret word or phrase to confirm who's calling.
- ✓ **Watch for the big red flags:** urgency, "keep it secret," and payment by gift card, wire transfer, cryptocurrency or payment app.
- ✓ **Bank calling?** Hang up, look up the bank's real number yourself, and call it.
- ✓ **Report scams** at ReportFraud.ftc.gov, and internet crime to the FBI at ic3.gov.

Never type into an AI app

- ✗ Passwords or PIN codes
- ✗ Full bank or card numbers
- ✗ Your Social Security number
- ✗ Anything you'd hate a stranger to read

Cover these up before you share a photo of a bill or letter.

Privacy settings worth a look

ChatGPT: Settings > Data controls, turn off **Improve the model for everyone** to keep new chats out of training. A

Temporary chat stays out of your history. OpenAI may keep it up to 30 days for safety.

Gemini: Google says human reviewers may read some chats. Turn off **Keep Activity** to stop future chats being reviewed to improve Google's services.

iPhone: Apple walks you through privacy settings when you turn on Siri AI.

When not to rely on AI

AI is a helpful assistant, not an expert you can trust blindly. It can sound sure and still be wrong.

Use it for

- ✓ First drafts and ideas
- ✓ Explaining things in simpler words
- ✓ Lists, plans and checklists
- ✓ Questions to ask a professional

Double-check, or ask a person

- ✗ Medical symptoms or medicine doses
- ✗ Legal, tax or money decisions
- ✗ Anything urgent or dangerous
- ✗ Facts, dates, prices and opening hours

In an emergency, call 911, not a chatbot.

Your first week, five minutes a day

1. **Day 1:** Open a free AI app (or your phone's assistant) and ask it to explain something you've always wondered about.
2. **Day 2:** Plan tomorrow's dinner with the fridge-photo trick (use 3).
3. **Day 3:** Search your photos by describing one (use 9).
4. **Day 4:** Let it draft a message you've been putting off (use 7).
5. **Day 5:** Agree on a family safe word (page 8). This one matters most.
6. **Day 6:** Check one privacy setting in the app you use (page 8).
7. **Day 7:** Pick your favorite use, and make it a habit.

KEEP GOING

One useful AI tip, every morning

The Five-Minute AI is a free daily email that explains AI news and tips in plain English, for your life, not your job. It lands at 6am Eastern, takes about five minutes, and always ends with one small thing to try.

No tech background needed. Unsubscribe in one click, any time.

thefiveminuteai.com

Already a reader? Thank you. Forward this guide to someone who'd find it useful, and hit reply on any briefing to tell us what you'd like AI help with. Questions or corrections: thefiveminuteai@gmail.com.

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