STAYING UP-TO-DATE WITH AI

The K-Curve: Adapt or Fall Behind

Ignore AI and you will be outpaced by someone who doesn't. The farms that kept their horse-drawn plows in 1910 could not compete with tractors. That widening gap is the **K-Curve**:

- **Upward** — you adopt the tools, multiply your output, and get your evenings back.
- **Downward** — you work harder every year just to stay level, and fall behind anyway.

From Cryptic Code to Plain English

Making a computer do something complicated used to mean learning a programming language. That barrier is gone. **Plain English is the new programming language.** You brief the machine as you would brief a capable assistant — if you can instruct a person, you already have the skill.

Choosing Your AI Assistant

Free tiers are a demonstration, not the product. One paid subscription is where the real capability lives.

Assistant	What it is best at
ChatGPT	The most famous and most versatile — the safe first choice.
Google Gemini	Deeply wired into Google Search, Gmail, Docs and Android.
Claude	The most natural writing voice and the deepest reasoning.
Perplexity	A research engine — every answer arrives with its sources.

The AI Leaderboard

The title of "best AI" changes hands every few weeks, settled publicly on the **AI Leaderboard** — models ranked by blind head-to-head voting and broken out by reasoning, coding and writing. Glance at it monthly and you will always know which tool deserves your money.

Local AI (Absolute Privacy)

You can also run an AI on your own computer — no internet connection, no monthly fee. Local models are not as sharp as the cloud giants and they want a powerful machine, but they offer what no subscription can: **100% absolute privacy** for your most sensitive documents.

🎯 The Secret to Success: Never Be Vague

A vague request forces the AI to guess, and it guesses by burying you in everything it knows.

```
✗   "Write code for a calculator."

✓   "Write a Python script for a basic calculator with add, subtract,
     multiply and divide. No scientific functions. Comment every line."
```

The Context Window (Short-Term Memory)

The AI holds your conversation in a bucket called the **Context Window**. As you talk it fills, and once it is full the oldest words spill out over the top — the AI genuinely forgets what you told it at the start.

- **Start fresh.** A new chat for every new project, so it begins with an empty bucket.
- **Reinforce.** In a long conversation, restate your key instructions now and then.
- **Summarize, then restart.** Ask for a summary of what you've agreed, paste it into a new chat, and carry on with room to spare.

🧠 AI Memory (Persistent Learning)

Separate from that bucket, the major assistants keep a **persistent memory** of you across every conversation — your preferences, your style, the projects you keep returning to — and quietly get better the longer you use them. That profile is also why switching providers feels like starting over: before you move, ask your old AI to summarize everything it knows about you, and hand that file to the new one.

🎭 Give It a Role, and Give It Rules

Telling the AI exactly *who* it should be changes the answer more than almost anything else you can type. And because it has read most of the internet, fencing it in is what turns a survey of human knowledge into a usable reply.

- *Persona:* "You are a world-class travel agent with 20 years of experience. Plan me a relaxing 7-day trip to Japan."
- *Rules:* "Use only these three sources. No political commentary, no hedging, under 200 words."

🛑 Be Direct and Critical

Don't manage the AI's feelings — it hasn't got any, and the politeness costs you precision. When it gets something wrong, say so plainly: "*That is incorrect. Try again and follow my rules strictly.*" Criticism is the fastest route to a better answer.

⚡ **The 95% rule.** For anything complicated, add this and watch what happens: "*Don't begin until you are 95% confident you understand what I want. Ask me numbered questions first.*" It will interview you instead of guessing.

When AI Makes Things Up (Hallucinations)

An AI is built to predict the next likely word, not to know facts. Sometimes it invents a date, a name, a citation or a law and presents it with total confidence. That is a **hallucination**, and the cure is a permanent, healthy skepticism — plus a standing instruction: "*If you do not know the exact answer, say 'I don't know' instead of guessing.*"

Ask the AI for the Perfect Prompt

When you don't know how to ask for what you want, ask the AI to help you ask — it understands its own controls far better than you do.

- *Example:* "I want a meal plan for a diabetic. What questions should you be asking me to get the best possible result?"

> 💎 **Keep a prompt file.** The moment a prompt finally works exactly right, paste it into a plain text file and never write it again. Everyone has the same AI — almost nobody has your file. **Your perfected prompts are the gold in this gold rush.**

Guardrails and Your Privacy

Every major AI ships with corporate **guardrails** that refuse controversial or legally awkward subjects; rephrasing in plainer, more specific terms will often get you a straight answer. Privacy is the more practical concern — your chats sit on a company's servers. **Never type anything into a public AI that you would not be willing to leave on someone else's computer.**

Practical, Everyday Tools

Typing is the smallest thing these assistants do.

- **Voice conversations** — talk to it hands-free while you drive or walk, and it talks back.
- **Ask a picture** — photograph a broken appliance, a foreign menu, a receipt, a rash, a spreadsheet.
- **Analyze your documents** — hand it a 50-page manual or a contract and ask what it says, and where the hidden fees are.
- **Generate professional files** — finished Word documents, spreadsheets, slide decks, images, flyers, even songs.
- **Let it do the clicking** — browser extensions will fill the form, book the ticket and add the event to your calendar.

Deep Research (Google NotebookLM)

NotebookLM lets you upload your own library — books, articles, transcripts, PDFs — then restricts the AI to *only* those sources. That one constraint removes most hallucination risk and turns a general assistant into an expert on your material. It will draw a mind map of the collection, build a slide deck from it, and generate a genuinely listenable podcast in which two AI hosts discuss your documents.

💰 Where the Money Comes Back

A subscription costs about what one takeout dinner does. The point is not the price but what it quietly replaces — the small professional consultations most people either overpay for or skip entirely.

Where people normally pay	What to ask the AI first
💼 **Accountant**	General tax questions, and what a form is actually asking for.
🩺 **Doctor's visit**	Explain symptoms and terminology so you arrive informed.
📚 **Private tutor**	Teach any subject, at any hour, at exactly your child's level.
💻 **Web developer**	Build a working site or app from a plain-English description.
⚖️ **Lawyer**	Explain a contract, define the terms, list what to ask for.
🎨 **Design & office software**	Images, flyers, documents and spreadsheets, produced outright.

> ⚠️ **Know where the line is.** When the stakes are real — surgery, a lawsuit, an audit, a contract you are signing — hire the professional. The AI's job is to make that hour count.

💸 Then Audit What You Already Pay For

Capabilities are consolidating fast. The niche tools people subscribed to last year — the transcriber, the summarizer, the image editor, the grammar checker — are now features inside the one good assistant. Review your subscriptions twice a year and cancel everything that has quietly been absorbed.

🔮 Where Does It All End?

The workforce is separating into three groups. Which one you join is, for now, still up to you.

1. **The Manager** — mastered the tools, and now directs a digital team of fifty specialists.
2. **The Managed** — refused, and now has their schedule and output set by systems they don't understand.
3. **The Unmanageable** — the skilled physical trades no robot has come close to replacing.

🗓️ Start This Week

Nobody becomes The Manager by reading a handout. Do these four in the next seven days.

1. **Subscribe to one assistant** — just one, paid, and use it for everything for a month.
2. **Open your prompt file** — a plain text file on your desktop. Paste the first one in today.
3. **Move one real task onto it** — the weekly report, the meal plan, the email you keep putting off.
4. **Ask it to teach you** — "*What am I not thinking to ask you about my work?*"

> 📣 **The whole course is free online** — every topic here expanded, with examples and walkthroughs: https://GoJes.us/AITraining/