

ChatGPT Cheat Sheet for Beginners

A practical starting point for asking questions, checking answers, and using ChatGPT thoughtfully. Published by What Is ChatGPT, an independent plain English guide. Not affiliated with OpenAI.

First 10 things to try

1. Explain [topic] in plain English.
2. Give me a simple example of [topic].
3. Summarise this text in five bullet points.
4. Make this message clearer and more polite.
5. Compare [option A] and [option B] in a table.
6. Ask me questions to help plan [task].
7. Turn these notes into an action list.
8. Show the steps for solving [problem].
9. Suggest three ways to improve this draft.
10. Check this text for spelling and unclear parts.

12 useful terms, part one

Prompt: the instruction or question you give ChatGPT.

Chat: a conversation made up of your messages and replies.

Model: the AI system that creates a reply from patterns in information.

Hallucination: a confident sounding answer that is wrong or made up.

Context: information that helps shape a reply in the current conversation.

Custom instructions: preferences you provide to guide replies.

Use it with care

12 useful terms, part two

Output: the text or other response ChatGPT produces.

Follow up: a new question that builds on an earlier reply.

Source: the original place where information came from.

Citation: a note that points to a source for a claim.

Bias: a one sided pattern that can affect how information is presented.

Data: facts or details used to form or check an answer.

What ChatGPT is good at and not good at

Good at

- Explaining ideas in different ways
- Drafting, rewriting, and summarising text
- Brainstorming ideas and organising notes

Not good at

- Knowing every fact or always being right
- Replacing expert help or your own judgement
- Knowing what you mean unless you explain it

What not to paste into ChatGPT

- Passwords
- Bank details
- Other people's private information
- Confidential work documents

How to check an answer

1. Ask ChatGPT for sources.
2. Check that the sources exist.
3. Compare the claim with a trusted site.
4. Check numbers and dates.
5. Ask what it assumed.

Features and limits change, so see help.openai.com for the latest.