AI BASICS · START HERE · 10 MIN READ

AI assistants: ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini

What the big AI assistants are, what they can do beyond chat, and how to choose one for a job.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Assistant Ace” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/ai-assistants-chatgpt-claude-gemini

Same idea, different companies

ChatGPT (made by OpenAI), Claude (made by Anthropic) and Gemini (made by Google) are AI assistants: apps where you talk to an LLM in plain language. Microsoft Copilot and Meta AI are others you may see. They all run on the web, on phones and on desktops, and most have a free tier and paid plans.

Each company releases new model versions often. The names change; the skills you learn here don't. If you can prompt one assistant well, you can use any of them.

What they can do beyond chatting

Modern assistants are toolboxes. Depending on the app and plan, you'll find:

- File and image understanding: upload a PDF, spreadsheet or photo and ask about it.
- Web search: answers with links to current sources.
- Projects: a folder that keeps instructions and files together for one piece of work.
- Memory and custom instructions: the assistant remembers preferences you choose to save.
- Creating things: documents, slides, charts, small apps and code.
- Connectors: links to your email, calendar, drive or other apps so the assistant can read or act there with your permission.
- Voice: talk instead of type.

Choosing an assistant for the job

There is no single best assistant. Try the same prompt in two of them and compare. Most builders keep one main assistant and use another for a second opinion.

Pick based on the work: where your files already live (Google users often start with Gemini, Microsoft users with Copilot), which one writes in the voice you like, which one

handles long documents or code best for you, and what your school or employer allows.

Ground rules for using any assistant

Treat an assistant like a fast, well-read intern: helpful, tireless and sometimes wrong. You stay responsible for what you send, publish or turn in.

- Don't paste passwords, API keys, card numbers or other people's private data.
- Check facts, numbers and quotes before you use them.
- Follow your school's or employer's rules about AI use, and say when AI helped.
- If you're under 18, check each app's age rules and use it with a parent or teacher's okay.

Key terms

ChatGPT
OpenAI's AI assistant app, launched in November 2022.

Claude
Anthropic's AI assistant and family of models.

Gemini
Google's AI assistant and models, also built into Gmail, Docs and other Google apps.

AI assistant
An app where you talk to an AI model in plain language to get help with tasks.

Project (in an AI assistant)
A space that keeps instructions and files together for one piece of work.

Connector
A permissioned link that lets an AI assistant read or act in another app.

Custom instructions
Preferences you save once so the assistant follows them in every chat.

Multimodal
Able to work with more than text: images, audio, video or files.

Try it: Run a two-assistant taste test

1. Write one prompt: 'Explain what a website host does to a 12-year-old in 5 sentences.'
2. Paste it into two different assistants.
3. Compare: which is clearer? Which made any mistakes?
4. Ask the weaker one to improve, telling it exactly what was unclear.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

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5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

1. Which company makes Claude?

A. Google
B. Anthropic
C. OpenAI
D. Microsoft

2. What is a connector in an AI assistant?

A. A cable or adapter that connects your laptop to a second screen
B. A saved prompt you can reuse to start every chat the same way
C. A permissioned link to another app, like your calendar
D. The paid plan that unlocks faster answers

3. Which of these should you never paste into an AI chat?

A. A paragraph you wrote for your own blog post
B. A public news article you want summarised in plain English
C. A recipe
D. Your bank password or an API key

4. The best way to choose between two assistants for a task is to:

A. Try the same prompt in both and compare the results
B. Always pick the one with the newest model name
C. Always use the most expensive plan
D. Ask a friend which is 'smartest'

5. What is a 'project' in assistants like ChatGPT or Claude?

A. A homework assignment
B. A space that keeps instructions and files together for one piece of work
C. A code repository that the assistant creates on GitHub for each new app idea
D. A website you publish

Official sites

ChatGPT: https://chatgpt.com
Claude: https://claude.ai
Gemini: https://gemini.google.com
Microsoft Copilot: https://copilot.microsoft.com

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

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1. B: Anthropic
Claude is made by Anthropic. ChatGPT is OpenAI's and Gemini is Google's.

2. C: A permissioned link to another app, like your calendar
Connectors let an assistant work with your apps, with your permission. Only connect what the task needs.

3. D: Your bank password or an API key
Secrets like passwords and API keys never go into chats, documents you share, or front-end code.

4. A: Try the same prompt in both and compare the results
Testing your real task side by side tells you more than any ranking.

5. B: A space that keeps instructions and files together for one piece of work
Projects keep context in one place so you don't re-explain it every chat.