

# What is ChatGPT?



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[ChatGPT](#) is a natural language processing tool driven by artificial intelligence (AI) technology that allows you to have human-like conversations and much more with a chatbot. The language model can answer questions, and help you with tasks such as composing emails, essays, and code.

ChatGPT takes online writing tools such as [QuillBot](#) to the next level—or the next few levels—by leveraging the knowledge stored on the internet to respond to queries and requests.

ChatGPT was created by [OpenAI](#), an AI and research company. The company launched ChatGPT on November 30, 2022.



# How does ChatGPT work?

ChatGPT is designed to simulate human-like responses to text-based communication.

It is built on an architecture that mimics the human brain called the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) model. The GPT architecture allows ChatGPT to generate natural language text that is highly coherent and contextually appropriate.

ChatGPT uses a large database of written text, such as books, articles, and websites, that it has been pre-trained on. When a user inputs a message or question, ChatGPT uses this pre-trained knowledge to generate a response that it believes best answers the question or provides a relevant response to the message.



# How does ChatGPT learn?

ChatGPT is designed to learn from its interactions with users over time. This means that it can adjust its responses based on feedback from users and adapt to different conversational styles and contexts.

ChatGPT works by leveraging advanced machine learning algorithms to understand and respond to human language in a way that simulates natural conversation. The program does not learn in the same way that humans learn, but it can continue to improve its performance and generate more appropriate responses through fine-tuning and exposure to new data.

ChatGPT can generate responses that are appropriate for different types of conversations, including casual, formal and technical.



# What can ChatGPT not do?

ChatGPT is **not connected to the internet** and cannot answer questions about evolving events. It cannot answer the question, “Is it raining in Kapuskasing now?”

If you do, you will get this response:

*I'm sorry, as an AI language model, I don't have access to real-time weather information. However, you can check the current weather conditions and forecasts for Kapuskasing on various websites and apps like The Weather Network, AccuWeather, or Environment Canada.*

[Microsoft Bing](#) and [Google Bard](#) combine the conversational abilities of chat GPT with the ability to kind of do real life live web searches.



ChatGPT is **not a fact-checker**. There is no guarantee that the information ChatGPT provides will be correct or complete. It can generate incorrect or misleading information. It also cannot give you accurate sources for the information it accesses.

ChatGPT is **not a critical thinker**. The responses are generic and may miss unique perspectives and voices.

ChatGPT **cannot analyze responses for bias, stereotypes and discrimination**. ChatGPT is trained on data that is likely to contain the same biases and stereotypes that exist in society. This can lead to ChatGPT generating responses that are offensive, discriminatory, or harmful.



Here is what it says on the OpenAI ChatGPT site:

*Our goal is to get external feedback in order to improve our systems and make them safer.*

*While we have safeguards in place, the system may occasionally generate incorrect or misleading information and produce offensive or biased content. It is not intended to give advice.*

*Conversations may be reviewed by our AI trainers to improve our systems.*

*Please don't share any sensitive information in your conversations.*



# How can I start using ChatGPT?

You can access ChatGPT by going to [chatgpt.org](https://chatgpt.org) and clicking Open Chat. You can create 10 messages per day. If you want to use a language other than English, scroll down and choose a language before you click Open Chat.

For unlimited messages, you can create an OpenAI account by visiting [chat.openai.com](https://chat.openai.com).

- You need to enter an email address and birthdate and then confirm that email address.
- In the confirmation process, you will be asked for a mobile phone number.
- You will be sent a code to enter. Once you enter the code, a chat window will open and you can start using the program.





# How much does ChatGPT cost?

ChatGPT is currently (May 2023) free to use because it is still in its research phase. You can ask as many questions as you like.

When too many people are using the website, the server becomes overloaded and your request cannot be processed. Keep the tab open and refresh it periodically to find a time when the site becomes less busy.

A ChatGPT Plus account is available for USD \$20 per month that guarantees availability even when demand is high.



# Writing with ChatGPT

You can ask ChatGPT to write almost anything. I asked it to write a history essay about the Famous Five and generated this:

*The Famous Five, also known as the Alberta Five, were a group of women who played a pivotal role in the fight for women's rights in Canada. Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby were all instrumental in advancing women's rights in Canada, and their legacy continues to inspire women's movements around the world today. ...*

(For comparison, here is the [Wikipedia entry](#): *The women of the Famous Five included Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby. These five women represent iconic powerful movements and change within Canada, as they devoted their lives to advocacy in the 1880s, through to the 1890s. As the group first convened in Alberta, the five were initially referred to as The Alberta Five by the media. However, as a result of the group's importance to Canada as a whole, the group was eventually referred to as The Famous Five.*)



# Writing for different reading levels

I asked ChatGPT to reword the paragraph for students in Grade Five and it generated this:

*The Famous Five, also called the Alberta Five, were a group of women who helped make a big change for women's rights in Canada. Their names were Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby. Together, they worked hard to make sure women had more opportunities and rights in Canada. Their work still inspires women's groups all over the world today.*



I asked ChatGPT to reword the paragraph for students in Grade One and it generated this :

*The Famous Five, which means five really important ladies [!], helped make things better for girls and women in Canada a long time ago. Their names were Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby. They worked together to make sure that girls and women had more chances to do what they wanted and be treated the same as boys and men. People still look up to them today and try to do the same thing they did.*

You can see that you might want to make some changes and check the facts, but the basic template is very helpful for learners who need help with writing tasks and for teachers who are creating materials at different reading levels.



# Creating templates

I asked ChatGPT to write a thank-you note for a birthday present and it generated this template:

*Dear [Name of the gift-giver],*

*I hope this note finds you well. I just wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the wonderful birthday present you gave me. Your thoughtful and generous gift was truly appreciated, and it made my special day even more memorable.*

*I was blown away by your kindness and the effort you put into selecting the perfect gift for me. [If applicable, add a specific detail about the gift that you appreciated.] It truly means a lot to me that you took the time to think of me on my birthday and put so much love and care into the present.*

*Again, thank you so much for your kindness and generosity. I feel so lucky to have you in my life and I am grateful for our friendship. I can't wait to use/enjoy my new gift!*

*Warmest regards,*

*[Your Name]*



# Writing reports

Some literacy workers are already using ChatGPT to create reports to funders, boards and community partners.

In one case, the practitioner entered the project plan bullet points and text and asked ChatGPT to convert it to a final project report narrative. ChatGPT was able to use this information to create a coherent report that needed only minor tweaking.

You also have the option to regenerate a response. In this case, the program will reword the response and that process may reduce the need for tweaking.



# Is ChatGPT good for education?

ChatGPT is prompting some educators to rethink approaches to teaching people how to write and the role of essays and independent writing in assessment.

Some feel that ChatGPT opens the door to plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors can try to ban ChatGPT or, as banning things rarely works, they can show learners how the tool can be used productively to enhance their learning and expand their ability to communicate in a variety of contexts.

As this professor says,

*The time when a person had to be a good writer to produce good writing ended in late 2022, and we need to adapt. Rather than banning students from using labor-saving and time-saving AI writing tools, we should teach students to use them ethically and productively.*



*To remain competitive throughout their careers, students need to learn how to prompt an AI writing tool to elicit worthwhile output and know how to evaluate its quality, accuracy and originality. They need to learn to compose well-organized, coherent essays involving a mix of AI-generated text and traditional writing. As professionals working into the 2060s and beyond, they will need to learn how to engage productively with AI systems, using them to both complement and enhance human creativity with the extraordinary power promised by mid-21st-century AI.*

from [How ChatGPT Can Improve Education, Not Threaten It](#)

by John Villasenor





# How can learners use ChatGPT?

ChatGPT can serve as a **brainstorming tool**. You can enter a basic question and ask ChatGPT to generate a response. The response can be discussed and the question reformulated and re-entered into ChatGPT. This process can be repeated to get a full perspective of the topic and choose a specific focus for their writing.

ChatGPT can be used as a **research tool**. Ask ChatGPT to generate an overview of a topic. Keep asking questions until you get clarity. Compare ChatGPT's responses to information from search engines and Wikipedia. Check the facts and assumptions with other sources.



ChatGPT can **summarize text**. You can ask ChatGPT to summarize a text into a certain number of words to get an overview and highlight the main ideas.

ChatGPT can be a **proofreader**. You can paste writing into ChatGPT and see what the program generates. Learners can be asked to analyze the new text for clarity or other criteria to see if ChatGPT made the writing better or worse.

These ideas come from this article from Contact North:

[Leveraging ChatGPT Instead of Banning: Five Ways Faculty Can Help Students Use ChatGPT Productively](#)



# Guides to using ChatGPT in education

## Student Guide

Contact North has developed [My Digital Companion: Making Sense of ChatGPT](#) for students to help them use this tool safely and ethically for learning.

## Teacher Guides

Tips on how to use ChatGPT in K-12 instruction from [EdTechTeacher](#):

[ChatGPT Tips Part 1: Role-Playing Activities](#)

[ChatGPT Tips Part 2: Quizzes and Tests](#)

[ChatGPT Tips Part 3: Personalized Learning](#)

[ChatGPT Tips Part 4 – Teacher Writing Assistant](#)

[ChatGPT Tips Part 5 – Example Generator](#)

More soon...



# Is ChatGPT good for creativity?

How you think about AI-generated writing will probably be similar to how you think about other ways technology has taken over repetitive and memorization tasks, but many people have concerns about the impact of AI-generated art and writing on human creativity.

Here is an excerpt from an article ([\*This 22-year-old is trying to save us from ChatGPT before it changes writing forever\*](#)) that grapples with some of these questions:

*Many of us lost our will—even our ability—to remember phone numbers when cell phones came along. By outsourcing memorization to a machine, we've become dependent on it to call our friends and family. You might say it's been for the best, and it's freed our minds to concentrate on other matters.*



*Or you might consider it a kind of de-evolution, a dumbing down of our mental abilities. Don't lose your cell phone!*

*Now humanity faces the prospect of an even greater dependence on machines. It's possible we're heading towards a world where an even larger swath of the populace loses their ability to write well. It's a world in which all of our written communication might become like a Hallmark card, written without our own creativity, personality, ideas, emotions, or idiosyncrasies. Call it the Hallmarkization of everything.*

*But at least when we give people Hallmark cards, people know we're giving them Hallmark cards. If you use ChatGPT to write your friend a congratulations or an apology, they might not even know it was written by a machine.*



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