

Using AI – A Guide for Beginners

- **This Guide is intended for those folk within the general, 'non-techy', community** who are tentatively thinking about using artificial intelligence systems in their day to day lives, but are either a little afraid of the systems themselves, or are feeling they might be a intimidated by their complexity.
- This guide targets only **ChatGPT 4o**, 'omni', which is the most well-known AI system available at the time of writing. As matters move very fast in the AI domain, this may change rapidly. Keep an eye on the technology news to see how machine intelligence progresses.
- This guide also has an **audio version**, which will be made available at the following link.
<https://padlet.com/beagroves/big-ideas-2-29i8rz6pfpiut4um/wish/3024734110>
- If you would rather listen to this guide rather than read it, please download the MP3 file to your phone or computer, etc.

To begin with, it might be useful to let ChatGPT 4o give it's **own** potted guide to its capabilities. I shall append this below.

A Guide to Using ChatGPT-4 for New Users. - Strengths and Weaknesses

Welcome to ChatGPT-4! This guide will help you understand the key points of using this AI system, highlighting both its strengths and weaknesses. Whether you're new to AI or an experienced user, this overview will assist you in getting the most out of your interactions with ChatGPT-4.

Key Points of Using ChatGPT-4

1. Understanding ChatGPT-4

What is ChatGPT-4? ChatGPT-4 is a state-of-the-art language model developed by OpenAI, capable of generating human-like text based on the input it receives. It's designed to assist with a wide range of tasks, from answering questions and providing information to generating creative content.

2. Getting Started

Accessing ChatGPT-4. - You can access ChatGPT-4 through various platforms and applications that integrate OpenAI's technology, including web-based interfaces, mobile apps, and third-party integrations.

Creating an Account. - Some platforms may require you to create an account to use ChatGPT-4. Follow the platform-specific instructions for account creation and setup.

3. Interacting with ChatGPT-4

Inputting Queries. - Type your questions or prompts into the chat interface. Be clear and specific to get the most accurate and relevant responses.

Following Up. - You can ask follow-up questions or request clarifications if the initial response doesn't fully address your needs. ChatGPT-4 can maintain context within a conversation to some extent.

4. Use Cases

Information Retrieval. - Ask ChatGPT-4 to provide information on a wide range of topics, including news, historical events, scientific facts, and more.

Writing Assistance. - Use ChatGPT-4 to help draft emails, articles, essays, and other written content.

Creative Tasks. - Get assistance with creative tasks such as writing stories, poems, or generating ideas for projects.

Learning Aid. - Use ChatGPT-4 as a study companion, asking it to explain complex concepts, solve problems, or provide summaries of topics.

General Support. - ChatGPT-4 can offer advice, help with planning, or simply engage in casual conversation.

Strengths of ChatGPT-4

1. Versatility

ChatGPT-4 can handle a wide variety of tasks, making it a valuable tool for both personal and professional use.

2. Accessibility

Available on multiple platforms, ChatGPT-4 is easily accessible to users around the world.

3. Natural Language Processing

The model excels in understanding and generating human-like text, providing responses that are coherent and contextually relevant.

4. Continuous Improvement

Regular updates and improvements ensure that ChatGPT-4 remains at the forefront of AI technology, constantly enhancing its capabilities.

5. 24/7 Availability

ChatGPT-4 is available around the clock, offering assistance whenever you need it.

Weaknesses of ChatGPT-4

1. Context Limitations

While ChatGPT-4 can maintain context within a conversation to some extent, it may struggle with long, complex interactions or remembering context over extended sessions.

2. Accuracy Issues

The AI may occasionally provide incorrect or outdated information. It's important to verify critical information from reliable sources.

3. Lack of Understanding

Despite its advanced capabilities, ChatGPT-4 does not possess true understanding or consciousness. It generates responses based on patterns in data rather than genuine comprehension.

4. Bias and Sensitivity

The model can reflect biases present in its training data and may sometimes produce responses that are inappropriate or insensitive. Users should be cautious and critical of its outputs.

5. Dependence on Quality of Input

The quality of responses is highly dependent on the clarity and specificity of the input. Vague or ambiguous queries can lead to less useful answers.

Best Practices for Using ChatGPT-4

1. Be Clear and Specific

Formulate your questions and prompts clearly to get the best possible responses.

2. Verify Information

Always double-check important information provided by ChatGPT-4 with reliable sources.

3. Use Context Appropriately

Provide necessary context within each interaction, especially for more complex queries.

4. Respect the Limitations

Understand and respect the limitations of the AI. Avoid relying on it for critical decisions without additional validation.

5. Provide Feedback

If the platform allows, provide feedback on responses to help improve the system's performance.

Conclusion

ChatGPT-4 is a powerful tool that offers a range of benefits for new users, from information retrieval and writing assistance to creative and learning support. By understanding its strengths and weaknesses, and following best practices, you can make the most out of your interactions with this advanced AI system.

A Human Being's Advice

You can gain access to ChatGPT at the following link:

<https://chatgpt.com>

- There are also **ChatGPT app's** for both Android and Apple smartphones. The Android app also includes the ability to speak to the AI by natural language, and engage in very 'human sounding' conversations, as well as using it for standard processing tasks.
- You will need to have an **account** with OpenAI so as to use their facilities. There are free and paid versions. Please note that the free version is time limited and does not give access to the latest AI tools. The paid version has far fewer limitations, and enables use of the newest AI advances. I recommend a paid account for those of you who want to use AI regularly in your work or play.
- Using ChatGPT, of any version, is as simple as telling the AI what you want. But, **BE PRECISE!** One of the known weaknesses of machine intelligence is that it **will** give you what you ask for. It will interpret your request literally, as it has a little understanding of human culture or contexts. For example, do **NOT** type...

"Write an article on the current situation in the Middle East."

- ... as this will result in a vague response with little detail or verifiable sources. A better enquiry would be...

"Please write me an article of around 4000 words, which looks at the origins of the Israel and Palestinian conflict since 1947, giving references in Harvard style from reliable sources, and with a complete bibliography."

- This is a **FAR** better query, as it limits the AI's range of research, and produces material that can be expanded and further verified.
- Another example. Do **NOT** type...

"Give me the weather forecast for today."

- But, instead type...

"Please give me the weather forecast for the area of Greenwich, London, UK, covering the next three days, and including the percentage possibility of rain."

- As you will see, **precision is very important with AI**. It gives its very best performance when asked queries which have involved some thought from the inquirer. For those used to using standard web search engines this should be familiar. What may not be familiar is how important this is with AI systems, that have often been over-hyped in the media.
- **Think of AI as an intelligent colleague who is very fast, very eager, very responsive... but knows nothing about you or the topics you are interested in.** It will learn about you, especially if you give it feedback. It especially remembers the history of topics you have asked it in the past. It will rapidly research what you want to know, but works best when it has a clear basis to work from.
- **AI has a bad habit of 'hallucinating'**. This term describes how all AI systems, when asked ambiguous questions, given vague instructions, or submitted tasks for which there is no accurate information, will produce 'fake' responses based on the best possible related data. A comical example is the well-known incident when an individual asked an AI how to stop their pizza toppings from sliding off the base, to which the AI suggested adding a thick layer of glue. Whether this is apocryphal or not, it is a suitably chastening indicator of AI unreliability in some of the more 'esoteric' of human activities.
- **ALWAYS CHECK AI RESPONSES FOR ACCURACY!**
- ChatGPT 4 has various tools and models you can use, including **creating graphics, modifying photos, writing computer code, etc.** These are available within the menus of the web page or app you are using.
- ChatGPT 4 (and its predecessors) is poor at handling text **AND** graphics together. This may improve with time. It can also **'hallucinate'** when producing photos including people. For example, creating photos where individuals have too many or two few fingers. This will no doubt improve with time, but beware of these issues for the moment.
- ChatGPT has the capacity to work with documents you upload. There is a small paper clip icon on the website interface to let you do this. For example, You can upload a document from your machine, and get the AI to produce an **easy-read summary**. Simply ask...

“Please produce a summary of the attached document, written so as to be accessible for a reading age of fourteen years. Make sure to use UK spellings throughout.”

- You can also **cross-reference two documents...**

“Please examine Document A and Document B attached, and produce a summary of the points they have in common, and where there are key differences. Produce this in bulleted list format.”

- **... compare multiple documents...**

“Please examine Document A, Document B, Document C, and Document D attached, and produce a summary of the points they have in common.”

- ...or synthesize the main points from multiple documents in different formats. To my knowledge, **ChatGPT 4o can read documents in the majority of standard formats** available to Windows, MacOS or Linux users. This includes PDF standard spreadsheets, and presentation formats.
- If you wish to **illustrate a narrative or story**, simply give ChatGPT the text (paste it into the chat box, or upload a text file) and ask it to produce a comic strip, or a series of PowerPoint slides, or a series of separate graphics.
- If you’re unsure whether ChatGPT 4o can manage a particular task, **just ask the AI**.
- **Always be polite to the AI!** You never know when the robots might take over!

To be extended as time allows.

Written and produced by Bea Groves-McDaniel in June 2024, with the assistance of ChatGPT 4o.