

Google AI

A Plain Language Guide

Prepared at the request of Dr. Muhsinah Morris



Choose a tool. Give it a clear job.
Check the work before you use it.

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One of four guides to ChatGPT, Google AI, Copilot, and Claude.
An independent learning guide. Not made or endorsed by Google.

QUICK PICK MATRIX

Start with your goal

Google has more than one AI tool. Start with the job you need to do. You do not need to learn them all.

I want to	Try	Example	Check
Write or plan	Gemini app	Plan a class event.	Facts and dates.
Find web facts	Search AI Mode	Compare two places.	Open the links.
Use my sources	Gemini Notebook	Make a study guide.	Read each source.
Work in a file	Gemini in Workspace	Help with a Sheet.	Access and math.
Make a picture	Create images in Gemini	Make a poster.	Words and rights.
Make a video	Gemini, Flow, or Vids	Make a short welcome.	Plan and credits.

Tool uses: [6-8, 11, 15-18, 23]. Examples are practice ideas, not promises.

Use the right kind of help

Need a quick reply? Start in Gemini.

Need answers from your own files? Try Notebook.

Already in Gmail or Docs? Look for Gemini there.

AI Mode is part of Google Search. Choose AI Mode to ask follow-up questions and find web links. Read the pages behind the answer. [23]

AI can sound sure and still be wrong. You are the last check.

APP MODEL AND PLAN

Know the names

An app is where you work. A model is the AI inside it. A tool does a job, such as making an image. A plan sets what you can use and how much.

Model name	A useful starting point	Try this job
Flash-Lite	Quick, light work.	Fix the spelling in a note.
Flash	Many everyday jobs.	Make a week plan from my notes.
Pro	Hard problems, math, and code.	Find why two totals differ.
4 Argon	Long jobs with many steps.	Turn source files into a clear slide deck.

Model roles: [1, 3]. These examples are starting tips, not a fixed ranking.

Two kinds of Pro

Google AI Pro is a paid plan. Gemini Pro is a model. They are not the same thing. A plan may include more than one model. [1, 2]

Use the menu you can see

Some model names have a number, such as 4 Argon. Numbers and access change. Work and school menus can be different. Do not assume each Google app uses the same model. [1, 3, 12]

THINKING AND DEFAULTS

Choose how much thought

Where these choices appear, they guide how much thought the model gives a job. They do not add a missing tool.

Level	Plain meaning	Practice job
Low	A quick pass.	Make this note shorter.
Medium	A balance of speed and care.	Plan meals with these rules.
High	More thought for a hard job.	Compare three plans with many limits.

Google lists Low, Medium, and High for Gemini Apps. More thought can use more of your limit. These are not ChatGPT effort labels. [1]

What is the default

With manual model choice, Google says the level is Low if you do not pick one. Your choice stays in that chat. Auto can pick both the model and level for each request. [1]

Check your own menu. This guide did not test your account. It does not promise that Auto starts on for everyone.

How to check the model

Under a reply, open More, then See response details. Look for the model used. [1]

Older guides may name Deep Think. Google now says 4 Argon is replacing it. Deep Research is a separate research tool. [5, 7]

Pick where you work

Use the version that fits your day. A bigger model does not give every device the same tools.

Where	Good for	Check first
Web browser	Work at gemini.google.com without a desktop install.	The right account and tools.
Windows app	Get quick help beside other apps.	Windows 10 or later and 8 GB RAM.
Mac app	Ask about a shared window or work with voice.	Apple Silicon, macOS 15 or later, and 8 GB RAM.
Android or iPhone	Ask on the go. Talk with Live where offered.	Your device, account, and region.

Web and mobile [30]; desktop [27–29]. RAM is your computer’s working memory. An internet link is needed.

Desktop has its own tools

On Windows, Alt + Space opens quick access. On Mac, use Option + Space. Get the real app from gemini.google/desktop. [27]

Mac can share a window with Gemini and use Speak to Window for voice work in other apps. Antigravity adds a way to build and test code. Some Mac tools are not yet on Windows. [27, 28]

Give access with care

Read the prompt before you share a screen, file, mic, or app. Close private content first. You can use basic chat without giving access to every file.

A phone is not just for reading replies. It can start supported tasks. But a tool shown on a Mac may be missing on a phone. Check the app you are using. [14, 30]

Make your first useful result

Open gemini.google.com or the Gemini app. Use the right Google account. A work or school account may have rules set by your group.

Use	What it helps you do	Try
Chat	Ask, write, and plan.	Explain this in short steps.
Canvas	Build and edit a doc, slides, or app.	Make five slides from these notes.
Deep Research	Search sources for a longer report.	Compare three choices with dated links.
Live	Talk back and forth.	Help me practice a talk.

Canvas, Deep Research, and Live: [6, 7, 26]. Features vary by account and device.

Try these four steps

1. Name the job and who it is for.
2. Add the notes or files it may use.
3. Say what the final result should be.
4. Ask for a fix, then open the final work.

“Use these notes to make a one-page class handout in Canvas. Use short words and large type. Keep all dates. Flag facts you cannot check.”

For Deep Research, review the plan before the search. Read the cited pages, not just the report. [7]

Learn from your own sources

NotebookLM is now called Gemini Notebook. It is still a separate research app. Notebooks also work in the Gemini app. [9]

I have	I can ask for	I must check
Class notes	A study guide or quiz.	The answer key.
A policy PDF	A short list of rules.	The cited section.
Several reports	What agrees and differs.	Dates and missing facts.
A long reading	An Audio Overview.	Claims in the source.

Notebook can use sources and show citations. It can make study guides, audio, and more. [8]

Start a notebook

1. Open notebook.google.com. Make a notebook.
2. Choose Add sources. Add files you may use.
3. Select the sources for this question.
4. Ask a clear question. Open its source links. [10]

“Use only these notes. Make five study questions. Put the answers below. Show the source for each answer. Say when the notes do not tell us.”

A source may be a copy or may sync with Drive. Check that it is current. A wrong source can lead to a wrong answer. [10]

Privacy differs between standalone Notebook and notebook chats inside Gemini. See page 13.

Work in apps you know

Workspace is the group of Google work apps. Gemini can help inside them when your account has access. [11]

App	Example job	Your check
Gmail	Sum up a long email thread.	Read the last reply.
Docs	Draft a handout or plan.	Keep the key facts.
Sheets	Build a table or formula.	Test the totals.
Slides	Draft slides or images.	Check words and layout.
Drive	Find themes across files.	Check which files it used.
Meet	Take meeting notes.	Check names and tasks.

Workspace features: [11, 25]. Access is not the same in every plan or app.

For teachers and school teams

Use your school-approved account. Ask your school before adding student work or names. School access, age rules, and paid add-ons differ from personal plans. [12]

Google says school-account Gemini chats and uploads are not used to improve its AI models or reviewed by human reviewers. Still follow your school rules. [12]

If a tool is missing, ask the person who manages your school or work account. A personal upgrade may not fix it.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MAKER

Make pictures and video

Need	Tool	Limit to check
A new image or edit	Create images in Gemini	Nano Banana version and image limit.
A short AI clip	Gemini video tools	Paid plan, age, and region.
Scenes and creative projects	Google Flow	Credits and model cost.
A work video with edits	Google Vids	AI access and sharing.

Images [15]; video [16]; Flow credits [17]; Vids [18].

Try an image prompt

“Make a square image for a school garden day. Show adults planting seeds. Use pink, purple, and blue. Leave blank space for our date. Do not add a logo.”

Nano Banana 2 is on the free image route. Google lists Nano Banana 2.1 with paid AI plans. Check the Create images tool. [15]

Try a video prompt

“Make a short garden welcome clip. Show seeds, hands, and plants. Use slow camera moves. Add soft nature sounds. Do not add words.”

Google now points Gemini video users to Omni, which is replacing Veo in the app. Do not assume this change applies to every Google video product. [16]

Watch the full result. Check faces, hands, words, audio, and permission to use each image or voice.

TASKS CONNECTED APPS AND SKILLS

Know when a job is done

A chat can give advice. A task can use tools and work through steps. It still needs the right access and your clear rules. [13, 14]

Try a small safe task

“Find three places for a team lunch near this address. List hours, menu links, and costs. Do not book or pay. Show what you checked.”

Where offered, choose Task below the text box. Tasks currently need a personal Pro or Ultra plan, age 18+, Keep Activity on, and Personal Intelligence on. [14]

Tasks are not offered in the European Economic Area, Nigeria, Switzerland, or the UK in the checked help page. Work and school accounts are not yet included. Check before you plan a job. [14]

Connect only what you need

Open Customize, then Connectors. Read what each app can do. Use @ to name an app in your request. Some apps differ by device and region. [13]

Save a useful way of working

Skills save instructions for repeat jobs. Google is moving Gems to skills. Check which name your app shows. [3]

Ask for proof

“What is done? Give me the file, link, or receipt. What is still open?” Open it yourself. A draft is not a sent email. A plan is not a booking.

Choose an account and plan

Choice	What to know
Free personal	Start with basic chat, images, and tools with limits.
Google AI Plus	Adds access and usage. Check the exact model list.
Google AI Pro	Adds Argon and higher access to tools.
Google AI Ultra	Higher access still has limits. Check the tier.
Work or school	Your group buys and controls its own access.

Plans [2, 4, 12]. Prices, tax, trials, credits, and features vary. Check the local checkout before paying. A paid plan is not unlimited.

Google's pages do not fully match on Pro model access with Plus. Check your live menu and plan page. This guide does not promise that access. [1, 2]

Three different builder tools

Workspace Studio runs repeat steps in work apps. It is different from Google AI Studio. [24]

Google AI Studio tests models and helps build apps. Its API lets code call AI. It has separate billing and data rules. It is for developers age 18+, not a consumer chat shortcut. [19, 20]

Gemini Enterprise Agent Platform is Google Cloud's next step from Vertex AI. It helps teams build and manage AI systems. Most new users do not need it. [21]

THREE REAL EXAMPLES

Use it in real life

Teacher making a lesson

Start in Notebook with approved lesson notes. Ask for a quiz. Check each answer. Then use Docs or Slides to make the class copy. Leave student names out.

Try: “Use these notes to teach plant growth. Make five short questions. Show the source and answer for each. Mark anything the notes do not cover.”

Parent planning a week

Start in Gemini. Give meal ideas, time, and a budget. Use Search for current store hours. Keep children’s private details out of the chat.

Try: “Plan five simple dinners for four people. Use these foods first. Each meal should take about 25 minutes. Make one shopping list. Mark costs as guesses.”

Small business making a flyer

Use Gemini to draft the words. Use an image tool for art. Put the final price and date in a document you can edit. Check before you share.

Try: “Draft a flyer for my weekend plant sale. Use only the facts below. Do not invent a deal. Give me a short title, body, and list of facts still needed.”

These are original practice workflows. Use only approved files and tools you have. Tool capabilities are described on pages 6–9.

Keep control and check the work

Do not paste passwords, private student records, bank details, or secrets into a chat. Share only what the job needs.

Check the right privacy rules

Personal Gemini: Keep Activity affects saved chats and model training. Temporary chats are not used to train models. Google still keeps them for 72 hours for service and safety. Some safety review can still occur. [22]

Notebook: The separate Notebook app does not use your data to train it unless you send feedback. Notebook chats inside Gemini follow Gemini's settings. Read the rules for the app you use. [8, 22]

AI Studio: Unpaid use can allow Google to use inputs and replies to improve models, with region and account exceptions. Do not use private data to test it. [20]

Before you share or act

1. Open the sources. Check names and dates.
2. Test the math. Read the whole file.
3. Get permission for images, voices, and private data.
4. Check who can open a shared link.
5. Use a trained expert for health, law, or money decisions.

Fix the right problem

Missing tool? Check the account and access.

Wrong fact? Find a trusted source.

Weak draft? Give a clear example and ask for a fix.

Usage limit? Check when it resets. [4]

Reusable prompt: "Do [job] for [reader]. Use [sources]. Follow [rules]. Give me [format]. Flag missing facts. Ask before you send, share, book, or pay."

Sources and update notes

All links were checked on 21 October 2026. Tap a title to read the source. A source number in the guide points to this list.

[1 About Gemini models](#) Models, thinking levels, Auto, and defaults.

[2 Google AI plans](#) Personal plans and access.

[3 Gemini release notes](#) 13 October and 30 September 2026 updates.

[4 Gemini limits and features](#) Usage, account, and region limits.

[5 Deep Think transition](#) Notice about the move to Argon.

[6 Create with Canvas](#) Docs, apps, slides, and edits.

[7 Deep Research](#) Plans, sources, and reports.

[8 Learn about Gemini Notebook](#) Uses, availability, and data rules.

[9 NotebookLM name change](#) Google announcement, 16 July 2026.

[10 Add Notebook sources](#) Sources, formats, and updates.

[11 AI in Google Workspace](#) Work app uses and plan differences.

[12 Gemini with a school account](#) School access and privacy.

[13 Connected Apps](#) App actions, settings, and limits.

[14 Tasks in Gemini](#) Task access and controls.

[15 Gemini image tools](#) Nano Banana and image editing.

This guide uses live Google pages, not a test of every account. Product names, plans, controls, and rollouts can change. The menu in your own account is the best check for your access.

More sources

- [16 Gemini video tools](#) Omni, Veo transition, and access.
- [17 Google Flow credits](#) Credits and generation limits.
- [18 Google Vids](#) Work video creation and editing.
- [19 Google AI Studio quickstart](#) Model tests and app building.
- [20 Gemini API terms](#) Developer use, age, and data rules.
- [21 Agent Platform overview](#) The evolution of Vertex AI.
- [22 Gemini Privacy Hub](#) Updated 19 October 2026.
- [23 AI Mode in Search](#) Web research and response checks.
- [24 Google Workspace Studio](#) Repeat work across connected apps.
- [25 Workspace learning guide](#) Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Drive.
- [26 Gemini Live](#) Live voice conversations.
- [27 Gemini for desktop](#) Windows and Mac apps and differences.
- [28 Gemini on Mac](#) Mac needs, window sharing, and voice.
- [29 Gemini on Windows](#) Windows needs and quick access.
- [30 Get started on mobile](#) Mobile app access and features.

About this guide

Prepared at the request of Dr. Muhsinah Morris. Written in plain language for adults who want a useful place to start.

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