

The AI Bootcamp

12

Build Your Weekly AI Routine

In this chapter you'll learn

The 5 recurring uses, a weekly rhythm that survives a bad week, and the honest end of AI 101

The AI Bootcamp

THE PROBLEM

Most AI education is a pile of disconnected tips. A LinkedIn carousel here, a YouTube tutorial there, a \$2,000 cohort course that goes out of date before the refund window closes. None of it is built to be read in order, so nothing compounds. You finish twelve videos and can recite twelve facts, not perform one new skill.

THE FIX

The AI Bootcamp is built the other way. 90 skills, packed 2 to 3 per chapter, 36 chapters, 3 tracks. Every chapter states what it needs from you and what it hands to the chapter after it, so skill 47 only works because skill 12 already landed. Read it in order and by the end you are not collecting facts about AI, you are running work through it.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We built this because we kept meeting smart people who felt behind on AI for no reason other than nobody had organized the material for them.

This book does not assume you are technical, and it does not water anything down either. Every chapter earns its place: a real skill, a real exercise, a one-page companion you can flip back to in month three when you have forgotten the details but still need the answer.

If a chapter loses you, or a chapter changes how you work, I want to hear about it either way.

Kris

Editor, AI Central

Write to me at editor@thecentral.ai

THE 3 TRACKS

AI 101

Get running

Pick a tool, set it up, write a clear instruction, use it safely at work.

AI 202

Prompt properly

The framework behind every good instruction, and catching AI when it is wrong.

AI 303

Build without watching it

Connect AI to your tools, and automations that run while you are not looking.

IN THIS LESSON YOU'LL LEARN

By the end of this chapter you will have named the 5 recurring jobs you actually hand over, put them into a weekly rhythm that costs under an hour, attached each one to a moment that already happens in your week, and named the one thing you still cannot get it to do well.

Every chapter in AI 101 works in the moment you read it. The failure happens 3 weeks later, when the tab is closed and nothing in your week reminds you it exists. This chapter is about the part nobody teaches: turning 11 chapters of capability into something that runs whether or not you remember it.

CONTENTS	12.1	5 recurring uses carry almost all
	12.2	A rhythm that survives a bad week
	12.3	Attach it to work you already do
	12.4	You are competent. There is a ceiling

TOPICS REQUIRED

Chapters 1 to 11, and specifically what they left you holding: your account, the verification habit from Chapter 8, your rules about what never goes in the box from Chapter 9, your voice samples from Chapter 10, and the standing instructions you set up in Chapter 11.

AFTER THIS CHAPTER

Chapter 13 opens AI 202 and assumes you are using the assistant on real work most weeks. It takes the instruction apart, so it needs you to have enough real attempts behind you to recognise which of yours keep failing.

12.1 5 recurring uses carry almost all

Not one dramatic use. Five small ones that come round again every week. What makes them valuable is the repetition, and that is a different thing to learn than a clever prompt.

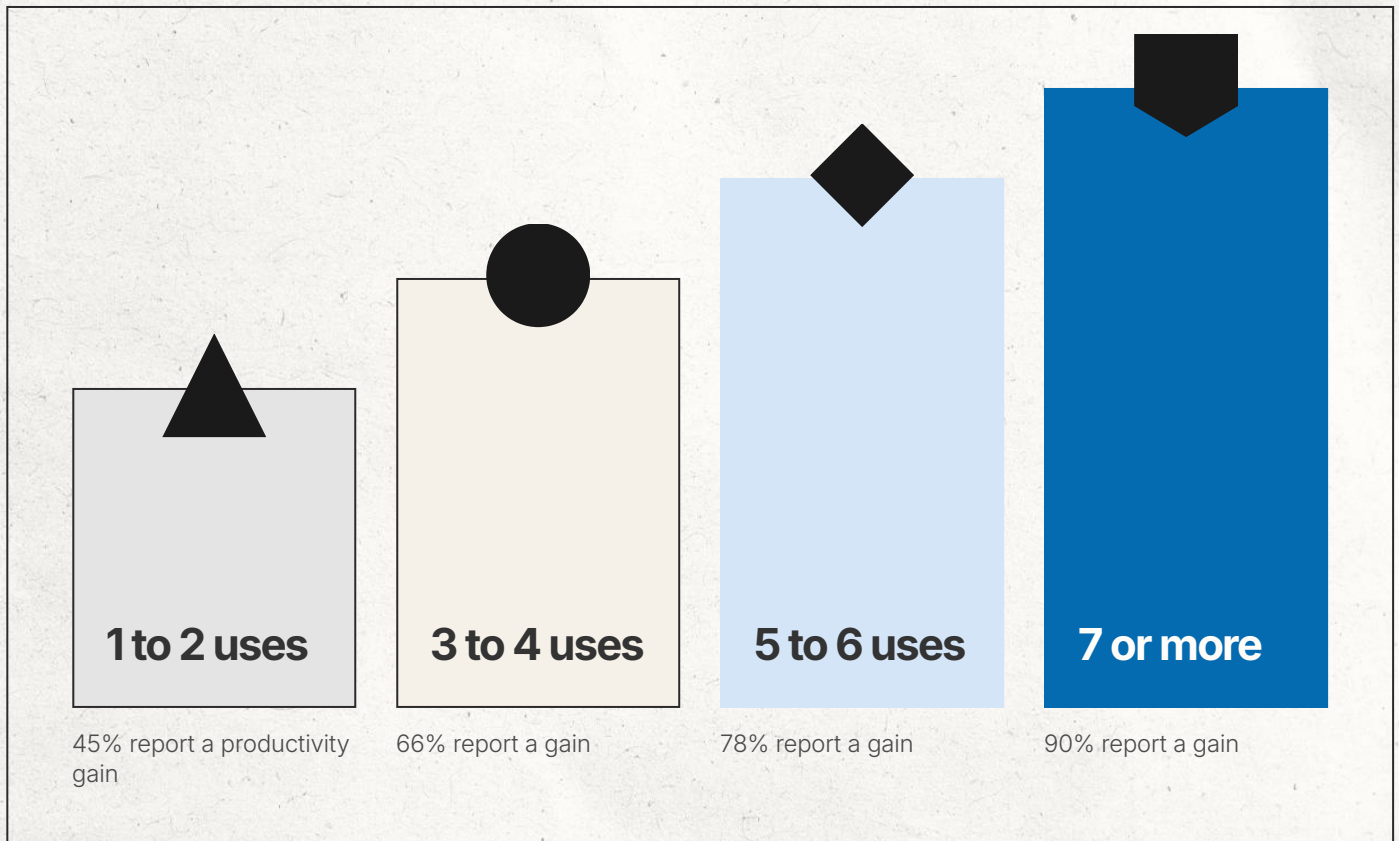


Fig 12.1 Here the bar heights are real: they are the percentages themselves, from Gallup's May 2026 survey of 22,573 employed US adults. Read it as a correlation and nothing more. It is self-reported, and it does not prove that adding a sixth use causes the gain.

12.1

The 5. Draft it, explain it, compress it, pressure-test it, tidy it up. Almost everything else is a variation on one of those.

Small and often. One ordinary use that fires 4 times a week beats a spectacular one you do in March.

Breadth, not polish. Reported gains climb with the number of different jobs you give it, not with how clever any single ask is.

You have everything you need and it is still not a habit. That is the honest position at this point in the course: the account is open, the skill is real, and the assistant sits in a tab you get round to on a good day.

The reason is not motivation, and it is not that you need more chapters. It is that a tool with a hundred possible uses and no fixed ones gets used zero times in a busy week. Nobody ever told you what the recurring uses are, so every time you open it you are starting the decision from scratch, and the decision is what costs you.

So here are 5, and they are deliberately unglamorous. Draft it: the email, the brief, the message you were about to write anyway, started for you rather than by you (Chapters 5 and 10). Explain it: the thing you half-know and need to sound informed about by 3pm (Chapter 4). Compress it: the 40-page report, the thread, the transcript, turned into what you actually have to act on (Chapter 7). Pressure-test it: the plan you are about to send, and what someone sharp would object to (Chapter 6, and Chapter 21 teaches you how to make it argue properly). Tidy it up: your own notes into something a colleague can read.

None of those is impressive on its own. That is the point. Gallup's May 2026 survey found the most common uses across US workers are writing and editing at 51%, research at 49%, and general problem-solving at 39%: ordinary work, done slightly faster. The interesting finding is in the figure opposite. Among people who use AI at work, the share reporting a productivity gain climbs steadily with the number of DIFFERENT jobs they hand over, from 45% at one or two uses to 90% at seven or more.

It is worth being blunt about the size of the prize, because the numbers you see quoted are usually wild. In the largest careful study of this so far, 25,000 workers across 7,000 Danish workplaces in AI-exposed jobs, users reported saving about 3% of their working hours. Roughly an hour a week. That sounds like a rounding error until you notice that most of those people were doing one thing with it, occasionally, and that an hour a week is 6 working days a year you did not have.

Before you go further, decide which 5 are yours. Not the 5 that sound impressive in a meeting. The 5 that come round again.

12.2 A rhythm that survives a bad week

4 moments, under an hour in total, none of them requiring a good day. If a routine only works in a week that goes to plan, it is not a routine.

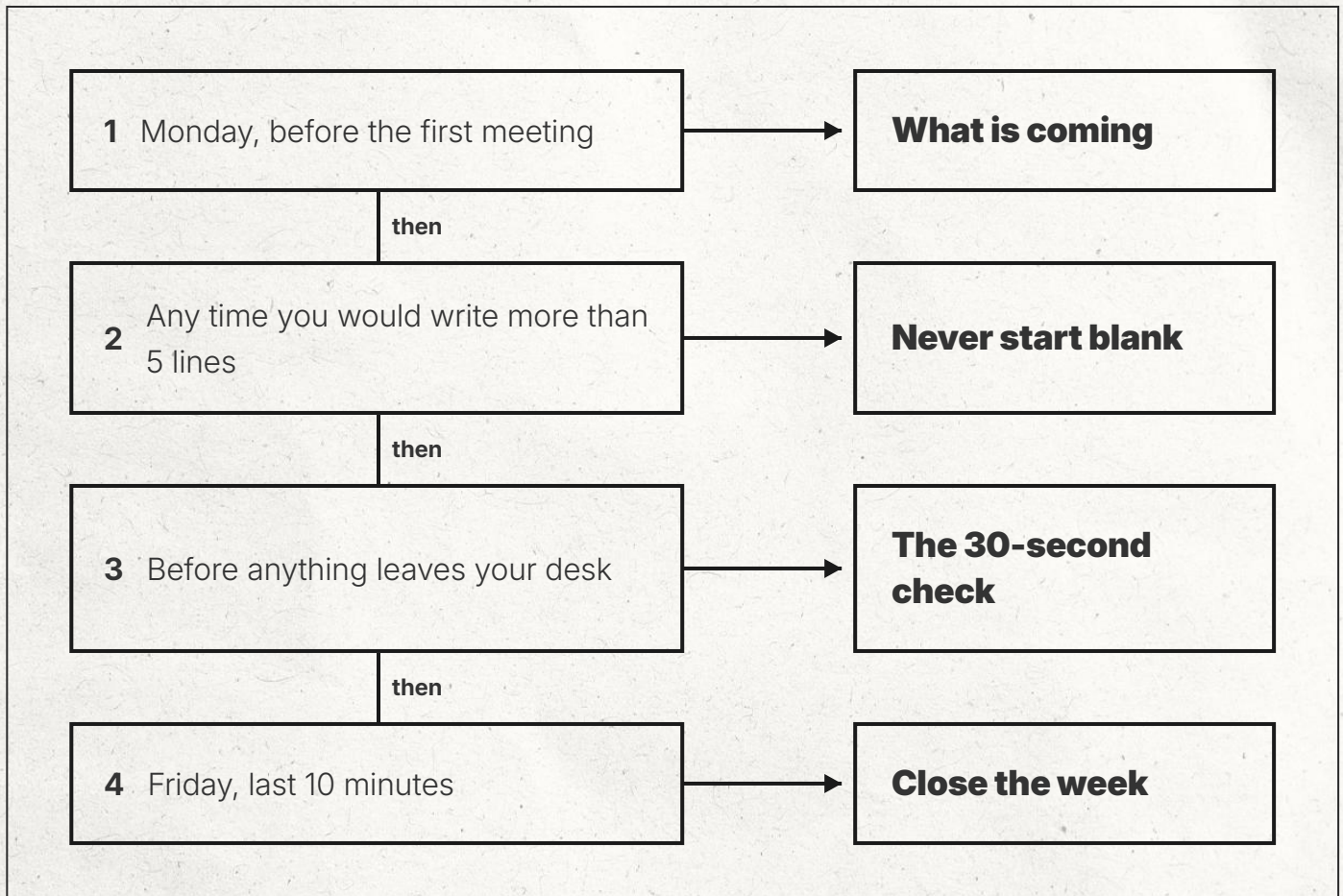


Fig 12.2 The whole rhythm, in reading order. 3 of the 4 sit inside something you already do, which is why they survive. The Friday slot is the only one you have to remember, so it is the one to drop first when the week goes wrong.

12.2

Monday, 10 minutes. What is coming this week that you are not ready for. Ask before the week decides for you.

Before you write. The one that fires most often, and the one worth building first.

Friday, 10 minutes. This week's mess into next week's list. The only slot with no natural trigger, and the first casualty.

Here is what a weekly rhythm normally looks like when somebody writes one for you: 30 minutes daily, a learning log, an experiment of the week, a Sunday review. You will do it for 9 days. Then a client calls on the Tuesday and it is gone, and the guilt that follows makes the tab harder to open, not easier.

So this one is 4 moments and under an hour, and 3 of them are not new time at all. Monday, before your first meeting, spend 10 minutes on what is coming: paste in your week and ask what you are walking into unprepared, what needs a decision from someone else, and what you are underestimating. Keep Chapter 9's rules in mind about what goes in the box, particularly if the calendar carries client names.

The second one is the one that earns its place, because it fires several times a week without any calendar entry at all. If you are about to write more than about 5 lines, it starts as a draft you did not write. Not because the draft is good, it usually is not, but because reacting to something mediocre is 5 times faster than facing a blank page. Your standing instructions from Chapter 11 mean you are not re-explaining who you are every time, and your voice samples from Chapter 10 mean the draft comes back closer to yours.

The third is Chapter 8's verification habit, unchanged, applied without exception to anything that leaves your desk. 30 seconds: check the numbers, check that any name or quote is real, check that the claim you are about to put your name on is one you would defend. This is the slot that protects everything else, because one confident error sent to a client will cost you the habit and possibly more.

The fourth is Friday, last 10 minutes: give it the week's notes and ask for next week's list. Give it your own material rather than asking it to guess (Chapter 7), and keep it in one running thread so the context builds rather than resets (Chapter 4).

Do not start all 4. Pick the 2 that fit the week you actually have, run those until they are automatic, and add the others in a month. 4 new habits at once is the most reliable way to end up with none.

12.3 Attach it to work you already do

The people this sticks for did not find extra time for it. They put it inside something that was already happening and let the old thing carry the new one.

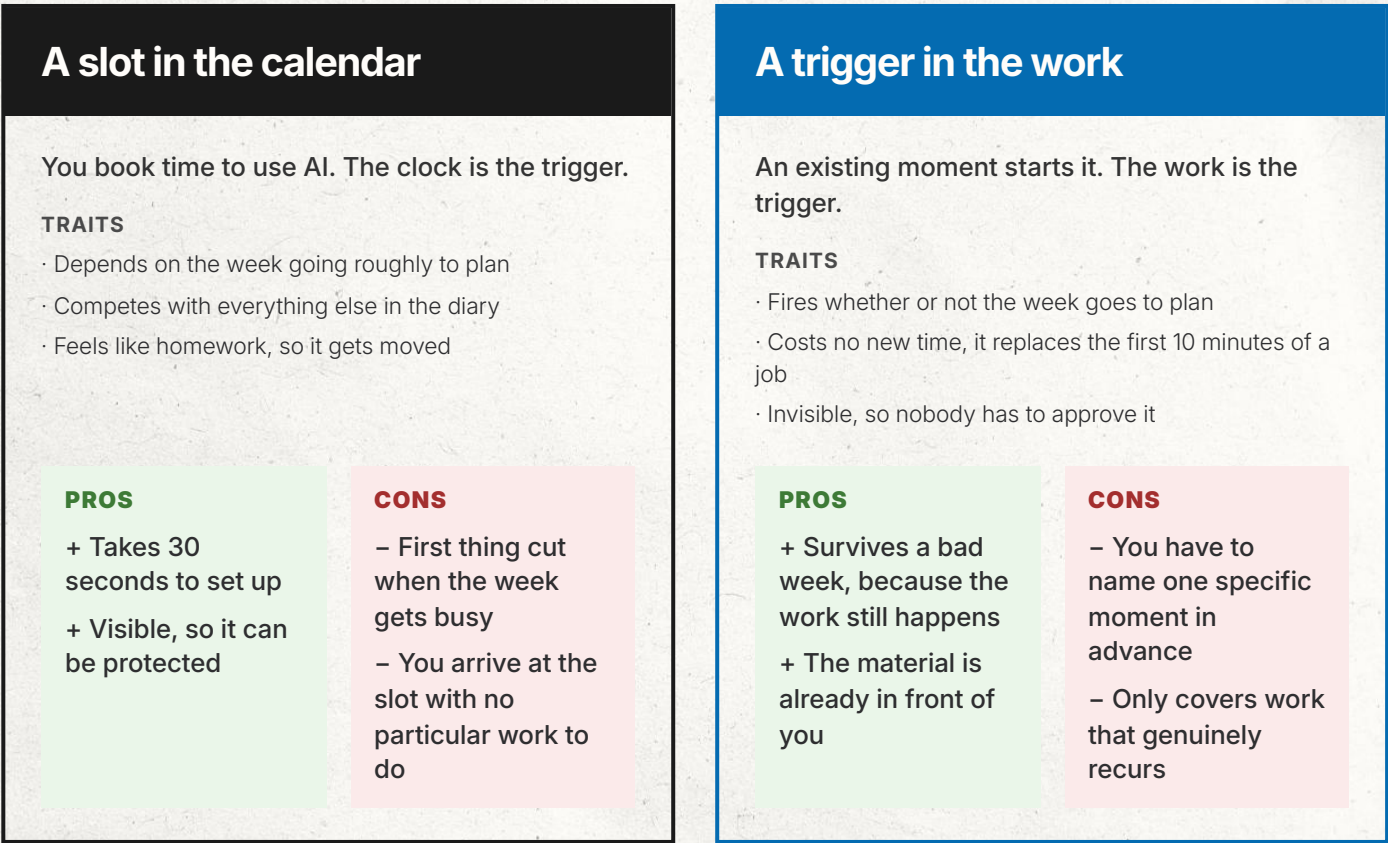


Fig 12.3 2 ways to make something regular. The right-hand card is what the evidence keeps pointing at: how well it fits the work you already do separates frequent users from everyone else more sharply than enthusiasm does.

12.3

The strongest marker. Gallup, February 2026: 88% of employees who say AI fits the systems and processes they already use are frequent users, against 55% of those who say it does not.

The barrier is habit. In the same survey of 23,717 employees, established ways of working were the most cited reason among people who do not use it: 46% of non-users and 36% of infrequent users.

Write it as if-then. When [something that already happens], I open the assistant and [do this specific job].

You already know how this fails, because you have watched it fail with something else. The gym membership, the language app, the journal. Each one was scheduled rather than attached, and a scheduled thing has to win a fight with your calendar every single time it comes round.

The workplace numbers say the same thing in a colder way. In Gallup's February 2026 survey of 23,717 US employees, 88% of the people who strongly agreed that AI fits the systems and processes they already use turned out to be frequent users. Among those who did not agree, it was 55%. And when the people who use it rarely or never were asked why, the most common answer was not fear, cost, or capability: it was that they already have a way of working, cited by 46% of non-users and 36% of infrequent users.

Read those 2 findings next to each other and the instruction writes itself. Your existing way of working is not the obstacle to get past. It is the thing to hang this on. Every use you named in 12.1 should be pinned to a moment that already exists in your week: not "I will use AI more", but "when a client email needs a real reply, I open the assistant first".

That sentence shape is not a stylistic preference. Naming the when and the where in advance, rather than only the goal, is one of the better-replicated findings in behavioural science: a 2006 meta-analysis across 94 separate tests found a medium-to-large effect on whether people actually did the thing they intended. The mechanism is unremarkable. You are removing the moment of deciding, which is the moment you lose.

Give it longer than you want to. The most cited study of everyday habit formation found it took a median of 66 days for a new behaviour to feel automatic, with individuals ranging from 18 days to 254. So a fortnight of this feeling effortful is not a sign it is not working, and a missed week is not a verdict on you. It is what week 3 looks like.

Write one if-then sentence before you turn the page. One, not five. The second is much easier to write once the first has fired a few times.

12.4 You are competent. There is a ceiling

This is the end of AI 101, and the honest place to say what you can and cannot do. Both halves matter. The first is earned. The second is what Chapter 13 exists for.

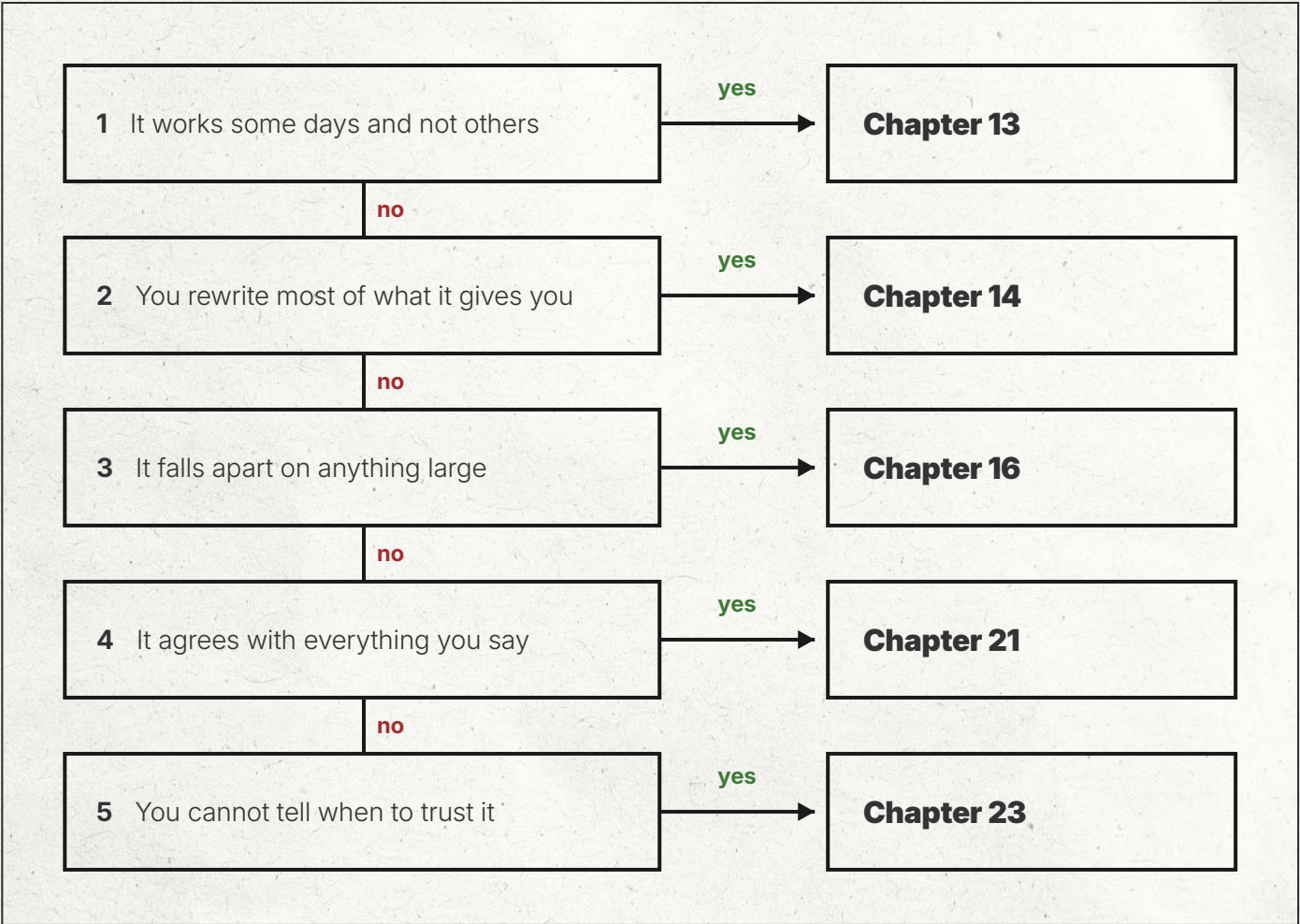


Fig 12.4 Read down until a line describes you. AI 202 is 12 chapters, but the one that will pay you back fastest is the one on that line. Start there and read the rest around it.

12.4

What you can do. Ask, follow up, instruct, attach your own material, check the answer, keep it safe at work, and sound like yourself.

What you cannot yet. Get that quality reliably, from a cold start, on a job you have never handed over before.

The difference. AI 101 was about the conversation. AI 202 is about the instruction as a thing you can inspect, reuse and repair.

Take the win first, because it is real and you will skip past it otherwise. You can pick a tool and open it, hand over the right kind of task, hold a conversation instead of firing one-line requests, write an instruction it can follow, ask it to think harder when the question deserves it, work from your documents rather than its memory, catch it when it is wrong, keep confidential material out of it, make it sound like you, and stop repeating yourself. That is 11 chapters and it is a working competence, not a tour.

It also puts you in a small group. Gallup's May 2026 wave found 52% of US workers use AI in their role at all, 30% a few times a week or more, and 15% daily. Pew, surveying US adults in February 2026, found 49% had ever used a chatbot, and among those who had not, 55% gave "I do not know how to use them" as part of the reason. You have left that group. The bar is low, and clearing it still counts.

Now the ceiling, in the terms you will actually notice it. The same request gets you something excellent on Monday and something flat on Thursday, and you cannot say what changed. You get a decent draft and then spend 20 minutes making it yours, every time, in the same 3 ways. You give it something big and it gives you back something shallow. It calls your plan strong and you have no way of knowing whether that is a judgement or just politeness.

Every one of those is the same underlying gap. So far you have been having conversations, and a conversation is not repeatable. What you cannot yet do is treat the instruction as an object: state a role, supply the context, name the task, fix the format, set the limits, and get the same standard of result on Thursday that you got on Monday. That is what Chapter 13 opens, and the 11 chapters after it turn it into a system.

You could stop here. You would be ahead of most of the people you work with, and the 5 uses from 12.1 would keep paying for themselves. What you would be trading away is reliability, and reliability is the thing that lets you hand over work that matters rather than work you can afford to have go wrong.

So write the sentence. One line naming the thing you still cannot get it to do well, in your own work, in your own words. Read Chapter 13 against that sentence rather than in the abstract, and the framework will land as a fix instead of a diagram.

READING ENDS HERE

Everything before was reading. Everything after is doing.

3 exercises, About 15 minutes and one real decision that opens Chapter 13.

Do these before Chapter 13

3 exercises. About 15 minutes

Write the 5 recurring jobs you would hand over if the habit were already built. Then circle the 3 you will start with this month.

Put your own week on paper. Write what actually goes in each slot, in your work, not in general.

MONDAY, 10 MINUTES	BEFORE YOU WRITE	FRIDAY, 10 MINUTES

Two sentences. First, your if-then: when [something that already happens], I open the assistant and [do this]. Second, the one thing you still cannot get it to do well. That second sentence is what you read Chapter 13 against.

Chapter 12 on one page

THE 5 RECURRING USES

Draft it · explain it · compress it · pressure-test it · tidy it up. Almost everything else is a variation on one of these

THE WEEK

Monday, 10 minutes on what is coming · a draft any time you would write more than 5 lines · a 30-second check before anything leaves your desk · Friday, 10 minutes turning the week into next week

THE ATTACH RULE

Never book time to use AI. Name a moment that already happens and put the use inside it: when X happens, I open the assistant and do Y

BREADTH BEATS POLISH

Reported gains climb with the number of different jobs handed over: 45% at 1 to 2 uses, 90% at 7 or more (Gallup, May 2026). Add a use before you perfect one

NEEDED BEFORE CHAPTER 13

Your 5 uses written down, and one sentence naming what you still cannot get it to do well

BRING TO CHAPTER 13

Your 5 uses and your if-then sentence, plus the one thing you still cannot get it to do well. Chapter 13 reads far better against a real failure than against a blank page.

BOTTOM LINE

You have a weekly rhythm attached to work you already do, and you can name what you still cannot do well.

NEXT CHAPTER

The 5 Parts of a Prompt That Works

Chapter 13 opens AI 202 by taking the instruction apart: role, context, task, format, constraints. The same parts in the same order, so a result that worked on Monday works again on Thursday, on a job you have never given it before.

BRING WITH YOU

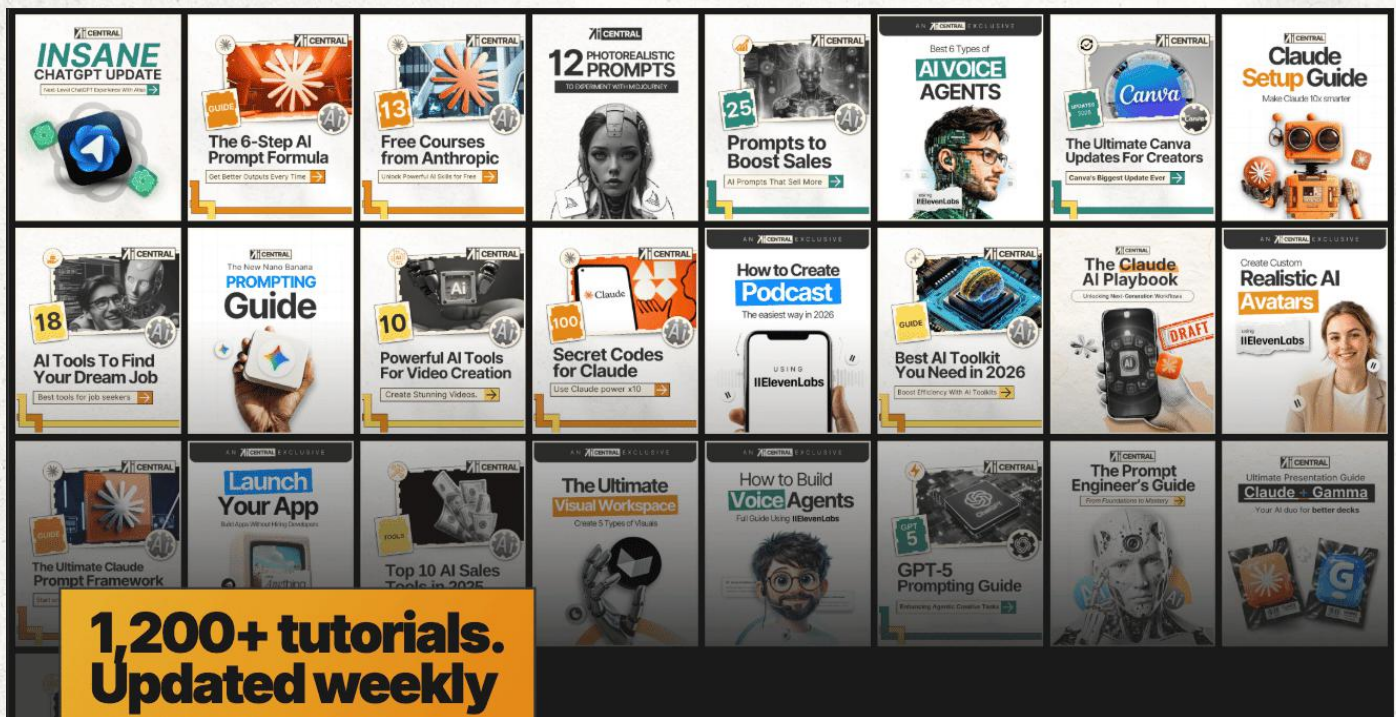
- ☐ Your 5 recurring uses from this chapter
- ☐ The one thing you still cannot get it to do well

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