

The AI Bootcamp

2

**Open your account,
and meet the screen
you'll live in**

In this chapter you'll learn

The account, the 3 things you'll actually use, and your first real conversation

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 A LinkedIn carousel here, a YouTube tutorial there, a \$2,000 cohort course that goes out of date before the refund window closes.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 your account will be open, you'll know the 3 things on the screen worth learning on day one, and you'll have used your assistant on a real task instead of a test question.

Chapter 1 got you to a decision. This chapter turns that decision into an account you can actually use: the single biggest reason people stall here is opening the site once, feeling lost, and closing the tab. This chapter is built so that doesn't happen to you.

CONTENTS

- 2.1

Every account opens the same way
- 2.2

Sign in, and it is the same 3 steps
- 2.3

One screen, 3 things worth knowing
- 2.4

A real task, not a test question

TOPICS REQUIRED

Chapter 1. You need the assistant you picked (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot) and the one real task from your week you circled in the exercises.

AFTER THIS CHAPTER

Chapter 3 assumes your account is open and you've had one real conversation. It builds on what you noticed there, not on the theory again.

2.1 Every account opens the same way

You don't need four different guides for four different tools. Opening the door looks almost identical everywhere: the only thing that changes is what's asked of you once you knock.

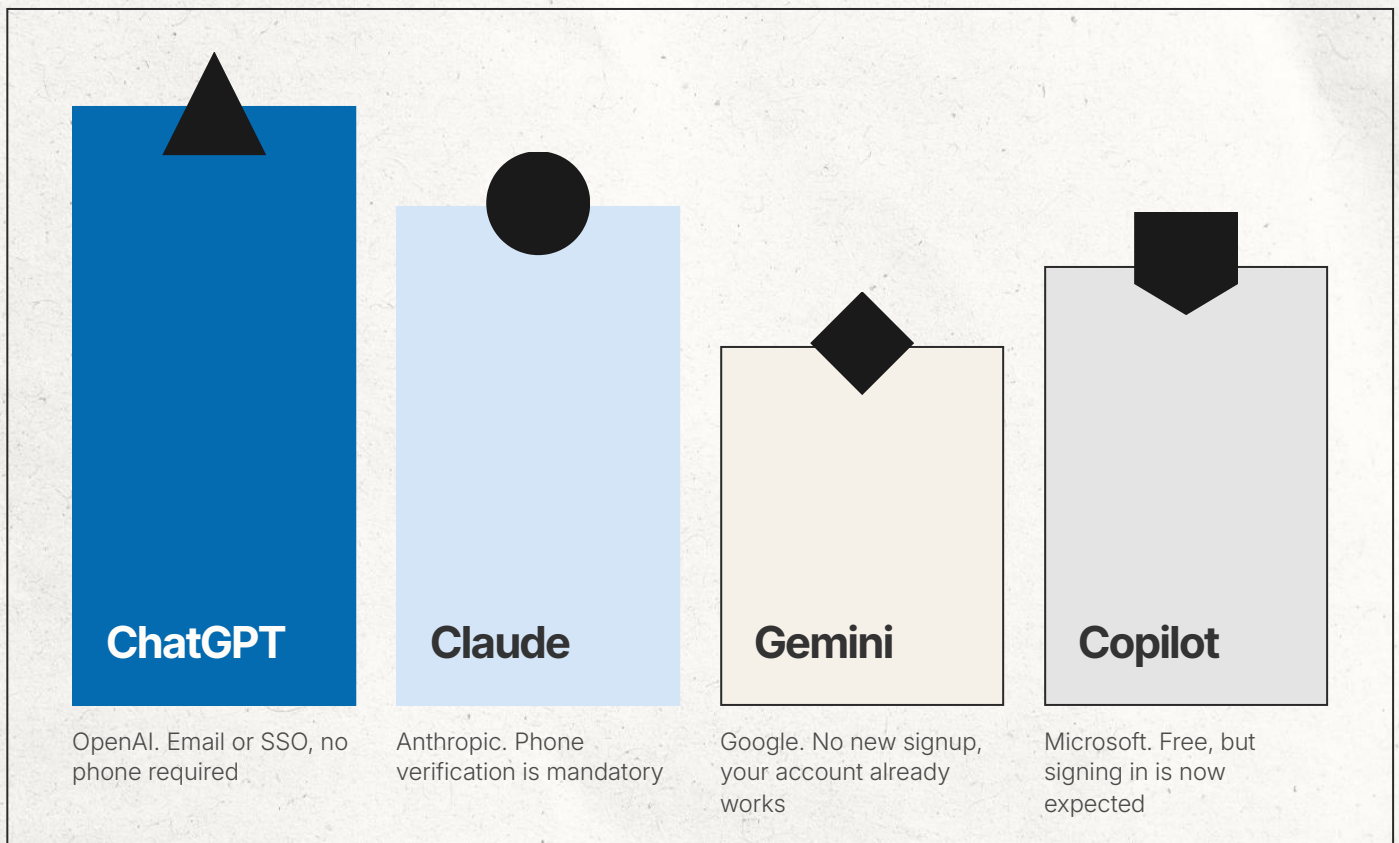


Fig 2.1 Four doors, one shape. The height differences here are about how much is asked of you before you get in, not which tool is better.

2.1

ChatGPT chatgpt.com. Email, Google, Microsoft or Apple sign-in. No phone number needed.

Claude claude.ai. Email or Google sign-in, then a mandatory text-message code to a real mobile number.

Gemini gemini.google.com. Sign in with the Google account you already have. Nothing new to create.

Copilot copilot.microsoft.com. Free, no subscription, but sign in: guest access is being phased out.

You already know how to pick an assistant. This chapter is about opening the account, and here's the thing nobody tells you upfront: the four tools ask you for almost the same information, in almost the same order, through screens that look different but do the identical job.

If you picked ChatGPT: go to chatgpt.com and click sign up. You can use an email address, or sign in instantly with a Google, Microsoft or Apple account you already have. No phone number is required for a normal signup, despite what some older guides claim.

If you picked Claude: go to claude.ai. Email or Google sign-in gets you most of the way, but Claude then asks for a real mobile number and texts you a code. This step can't be skipped, and it won't accept a Google Voice number, a VoIP number, or a landline: it needs an actual mobile phone.

If you picked Gemini: there's nothing to sign up for. Go to gemini.google.com and sign in with the same Google account you already use for Gmail. That's the entire process.

If you picked Copilot: go to copilot.microsoft.com. It's free, no subscription needed, but sign in with a Microsoft, Apple or Google account: Microsoft has been steadily removing the option to use it as a guest, so don't expect that path to stay open.

Do this now, before you turn the page: open your assistant, and get yourself signed in.

2.2 Sign in, and it is the same 3 steps

Once you're through the door, the sequence is identical everywhere: open the tool, sign in, and you're looking at a blank box waiting for your first message.

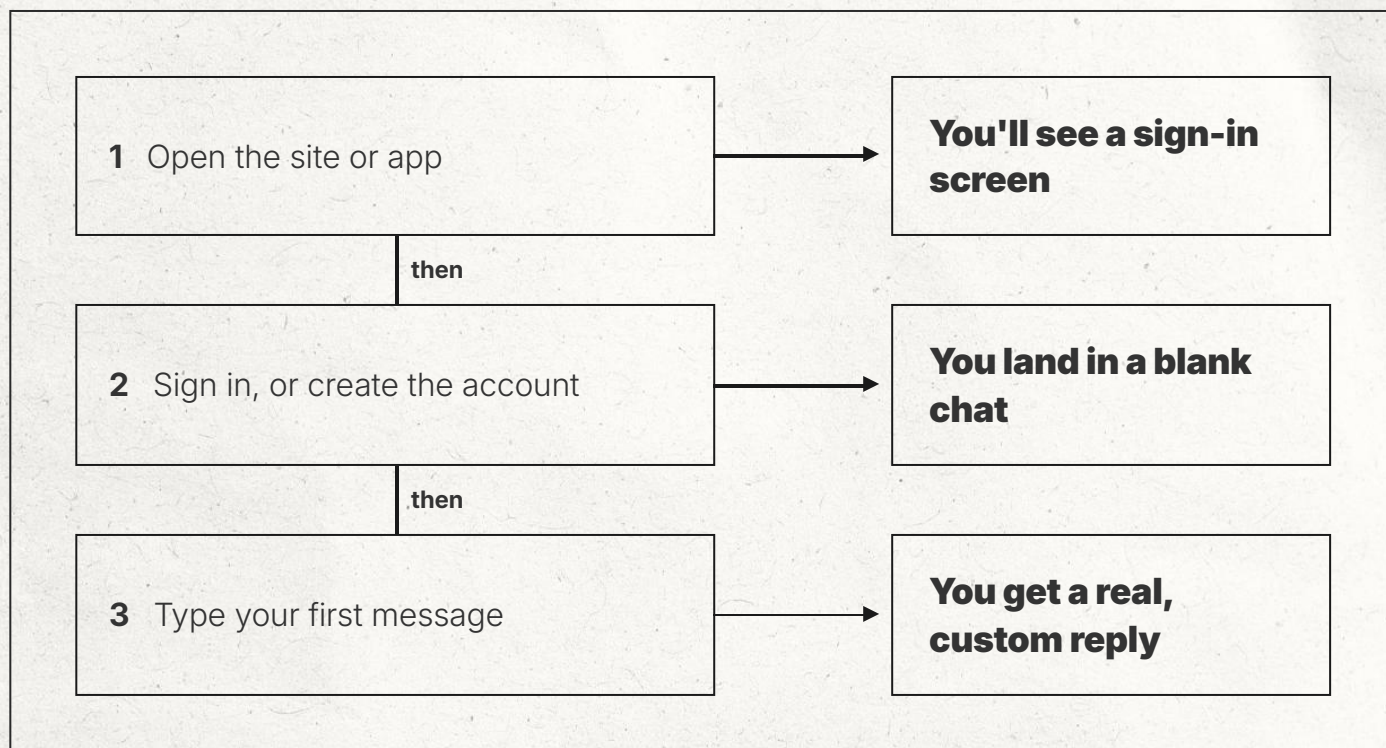


Fig 2.2 The same 3 steps, wherever you signed up. Step 3 is the only one that actually matters, the rest is just getting there.

2.2

Same shape. The order never changes: find the tool, prove it is you, then type.

Different door. ChatGPT and Claude ask for an account you create. Gemini and increasingly Copilot reuse one you already have.

One box, at the end. Every path above ends at the exact same place: an empty message box.

Once you are signed in, every one of these four tools puts you in the exact same position: looking at an empty box, waiting for you to type something.

That's not an accident, and it's worth noticing, because it means the skill you're about to build, writing a message that gets you something useful back, transfers completely if you ever switch assistants later. The button might be in a different corner. The box itself is always the same idea.

The 3 steps in the figure above are the whole ritual: open the tool, prove it is you, type. Steps one and two are about getting in the door. Step three is the only one that actually matters, and it is the one most people hesitate before doing.

Do not overthink your first message. You are not being graded. Type the way you would text a capable colleague, and see what comes back.

2.3 One screen, 3 things worth knowing

Every one of these four screens is busier than it needs to be for a first-timer. Ignore almost all of it. Three things carry the whole first week.

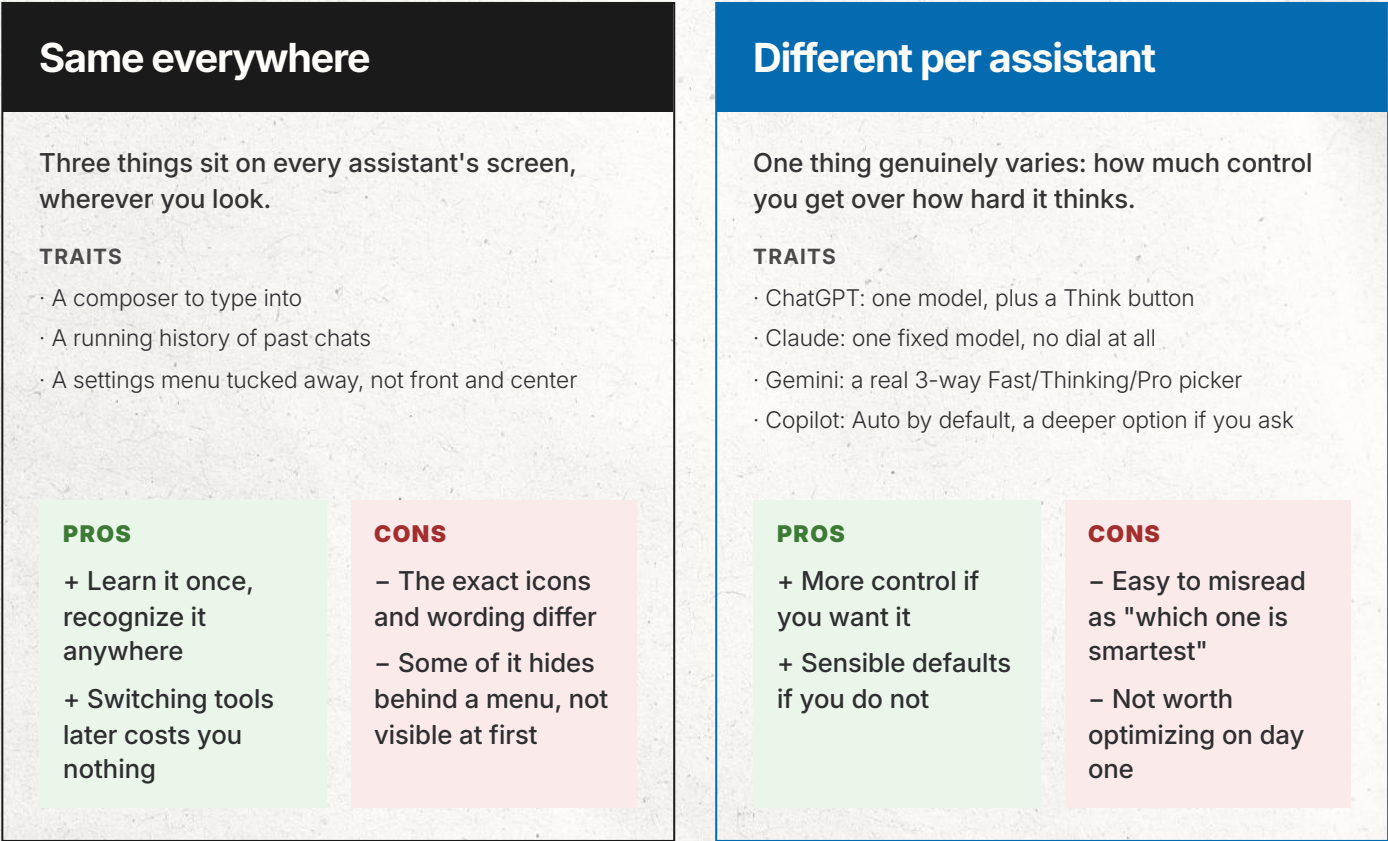


Fig 2.3 What's identical across all four assistants, and the one thing that genuinely isn't.

2.3

The composer. The box you type into. This is the whole product on day one.

History. Every past chat is saved and searchable. New chat when you change topics.

The complexity control. What it's called, and whether it exists at all, differs by assistant, see the figure.

Every one of these four screens is busier than it needs to be for someone on day one. Most of what you see, image generators, custom personas, file libraries, connected apps, can wait. Three things carry the whole first week.

The composer is the box you type into, and on day one it is the entire product. Everything else on the screen is secondary until you have had a real back-and-forth conversation in that box.

Your chat history, in the sidebar, is the second thing worth knowing exists. Every conversation is saved and searchable, and starting a New Chat when you change topics keeps that history useful instead of turning into one enormous, confused thread, the single most common beginner mistake with any of these tools.

The third thing is what we're calling the complexity control, and it's the one place these four tools genuinely differ. ChatGPT gives free users one model and a Think button for harder questions: it is not a smarter model, just the same one working longer. Claude gives free users one fixed model, Sonnet 5, with no dial to turn at all. Gemini gives you an actual 3-way picker, Fast, Thinking and Pro, all available on the free tier, differing in speed and usage limits rather than being locked behind a paywall. Copilot defaults to Auto, which decides for you, with a manual option if you want more effort spent on a question.

None of this is worth optimizing on day one. Defaults exist because they work for most questions most of the time. Reach for the harder setting only when a plain answer clearly is not enough, that is a Chapter 6 problem, not a Chapter 2 one.

2.4 A real task, not a test question

The fastest way to actually understand what this tool is for is to stop testing it and start using it.

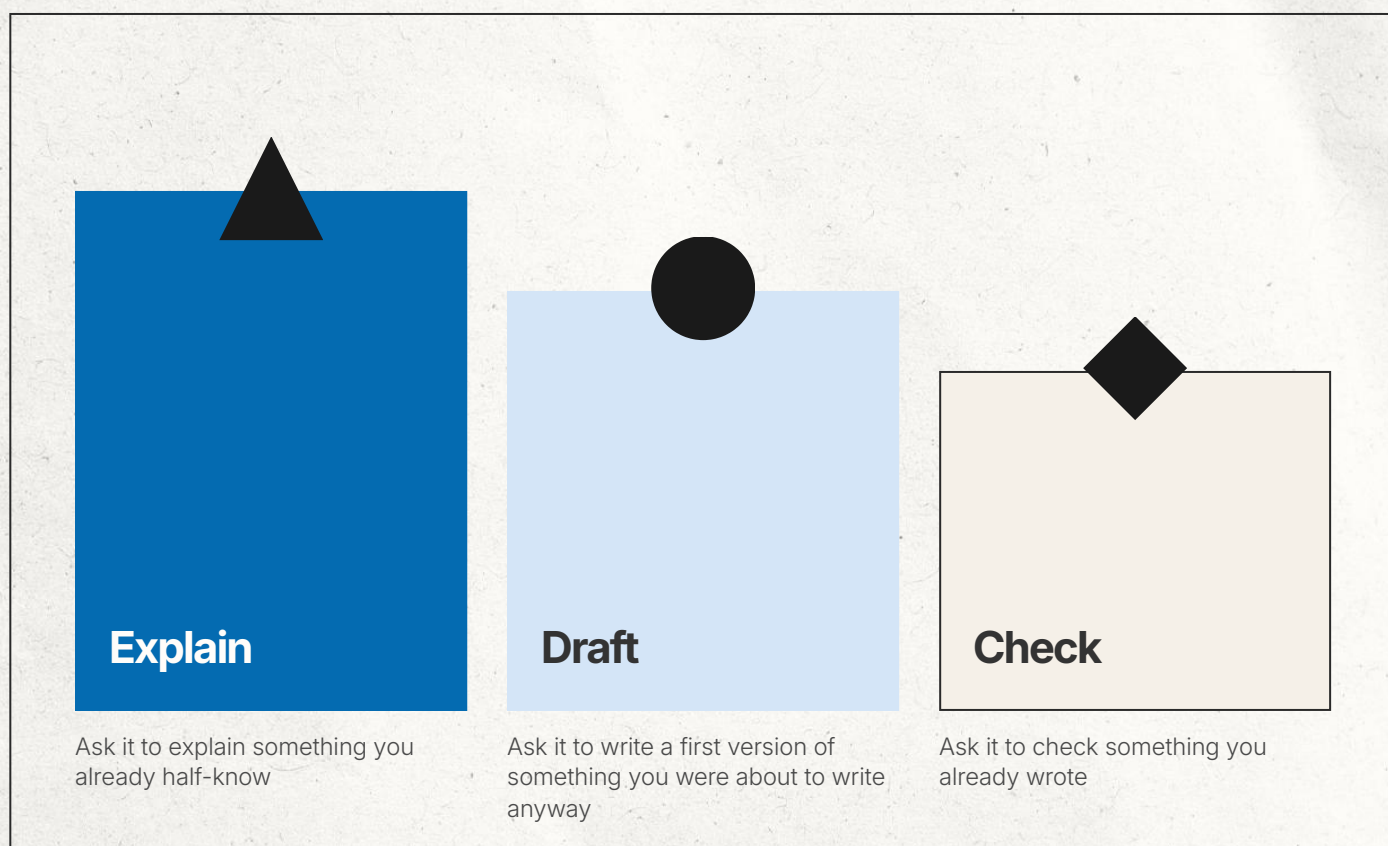


Fig 2.4 Three honest starting points. Pick whichever matches the task you circled in Chapter 1.

2.4

Use the task you circled.

Chapter 1 asked you to circle one real moment from your week. That is the task, not a test question.

Plain language is enough.

You do not need special wording. Type the way you would ask a colleague.

It won't be perfect. That is fine. Chapter 8 covers checking the answer. This chapter is only about starting.

The fastest way to actually understand what this tool is for is to stop testing it and start using it. "Write me a poem about spring" tells you nothing about whether this will help with your actual work. A real task does.

Go back to the moment you circled in Chapter 1's exercises: something you explained to a colleague, something you wrote from scratch, or something you looked up. That's your first real message, not a test question.

You do not need special wording, a framework, or a magic phrase. Type it the way you would ask a capable colleague who has five minutes and no context on what you are doing. Chapter 5 covers how to ask better questions, for now, plain language is enough to start.

Whatever comes back will not be perfect, and that is fine. Chapter 8 is entirely about catching what is wrong before you rely on it. Your only job in this chapter is to have one real conversation, and see what it is actually like.

READING ENDS HERE

Everything before was reading. Everything after is doing.

3 exercises, About 10 minutes and one real decision that opens Chapter 3.

Do these before Chapter 3

3 exercises. About 10 minutes

Open your assistant and get to a blank chat screen. Write the exact web address (or app name) you used, so you can find it again fast.

Find these two things on your screen and note where they are.

WHERE YOU TYPE	WHERE YOUR HISTORY LIVES
-----------------------	---------------------------------

Now have the real conversation. Take the task you circled in Chapter 1 and type it in, in your own words. Write one sentence about what came back.

Chapter 2 on one page

THE 3 THINGS

The composer, your chat history, and the complexity control (Think button, model picker, or Auto, depending on your assistant)

SIGN-IN SPECIFICS

ChatGPT: no phone needed · Claude: phone verification required · Gemini: your Google account already works · Copilot: free, sign in

NEW CHAT, NEW TOPIC

Keep one thread per topic so your history stays useful

YOUR FIRST MESSAGE

A real task from your week, not a test question

NEEDED BEFORE CHAPTER 3

One real conversation, already had

BRING TO CHAPTER 3

Your open account and the conversation you just had. Chapter 3 picks up from what you noticed, not from the theory again.

BOTTOM LINE

Your account is open, you know the 3 things that matter on the screen, and you've used it on something real.

NEXT CHAPTER

Ask it something that actually pays off this week

Chapter 3 takes the habit you just started and points it at real work: which everyday tasks are worth handing over now, and which ones you should still do yourself.

BRING WITH YOU

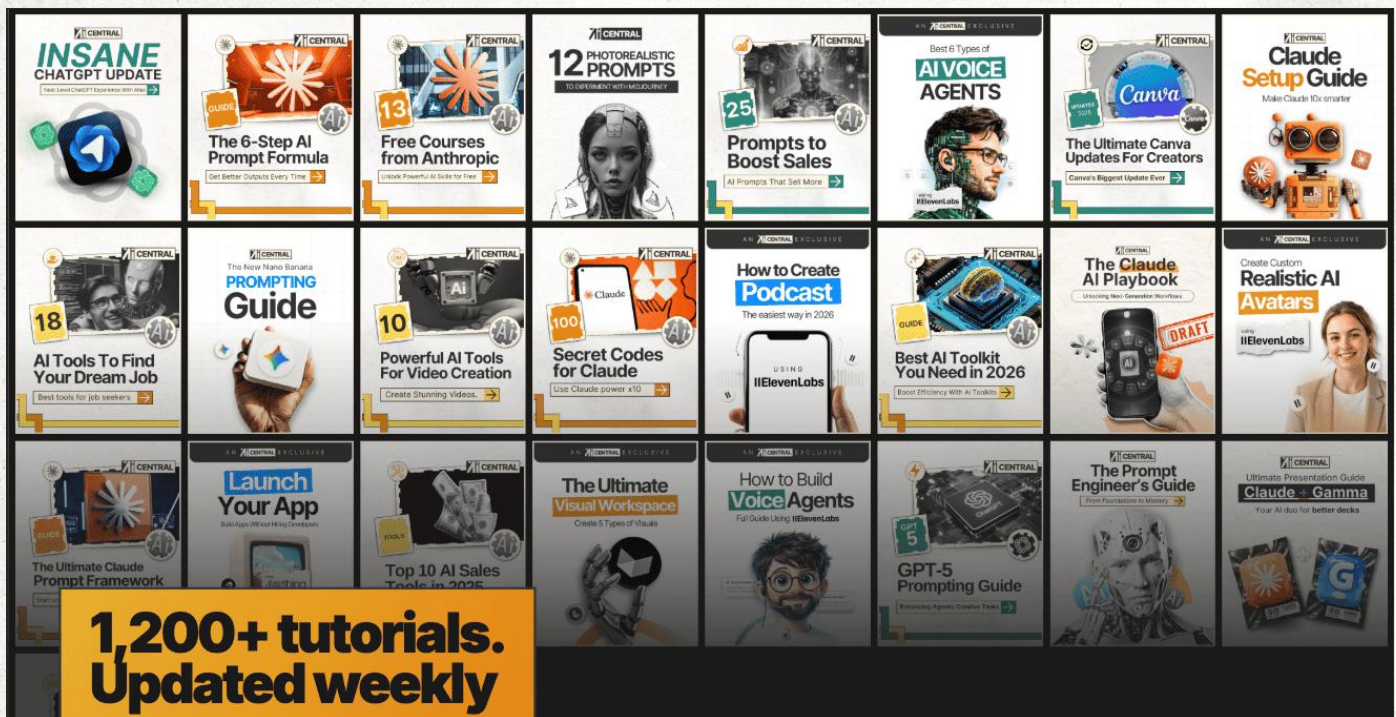
- ☐ Your signed-in account from this chapter
- ☐ One more real task from your work this week

GO FURTHER

The Ultimate AI Library

Every guide, prompt pack and playbook AI Central has published, in one place. The reference shelf this course keeps pointing you to.

explore the library



WHO MAKES THIS



AI Central Media is a London-based editorial team. Our flagship publication covers practical AI for senior professionals, and 100+ AI companies, SaaS platforms and growth teams have advertised with us since 2023.

100+

AI companies, SaaS platforms, education brands and growth teams have advertised with us since 2023

613K

Accounts reached every month, across the 7 channels we operate

151

Countries our readers are in, plus all 50 US states

PROUD PARTNER OF

GAMMA

IIElevenLabs

guidde.

 Outskill

 **Luma AI**

HubSpot

 **attio**

S Synthflow

 Notion

 **Replit**

We turn attention into pipeline.

visit thecentral.ai

