



Founders AI
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PRACTICAL AI FIELD GUIDE

The 7-Day AI Starter Kit

If I Started Learning AI in 2026, I'd Do This First

A practical first-week setup for founders, business owners, creators, and everyday people who want AI to become useful fast.

- Pick one AI assistant
- Create your AI home base
- Use better prompts
- Follow a 7-day plan
- Review outputs safely
- Build your first prompt library

Start here

Most people do not fail with AI because they picked the wrong tool.

They fail because they never build a simple system.

They try ChatGPT. Then Claude. Then Gemini. Then Perplexity. Then another tool from a YouTube video. After two weeks, they have tested ten apps, saved nothing useful, and still do not know how AI fits into their actual life or work.

This guide fixes that.

If I were starting from zero in 2026, I would not begin with 20 apps, 100 prompts, or a complicated automation stack. I would build one simple AI setup that helps me write, plan, summarize, research, organize, and save useful outputs every day.

This starter kit gives you that setup.

It is built for founders, business owners, creators, employees, students, parents, and everyday learners. You do not need to be technical. You do not need to become an AI expert. You need a practical way to use AI on real tasks.

By the end, you will have:

- One main AI assistant selected
- One place to save prompts and useful outputs
- A realistic understanding of what AI can and cannot do
- A prompt structure you can reuse
- A 7-day practice plan
- A simple way to decide whether AI is actually helping

Why AI matters now

AI is moving from novelty to normal work infrastructure. Stanford HAI reported in its 2025 AI Index that 78% of organizations reported using AI in 2024, up from 55% the year before, and noted that research increasingly shows AI can boost productivity and narrow workforce skill gaps ([Stanford HAI](#)).

That does not mean everyone is using AI well.

Most people still use AI randomly. They ask a vague question, get a decent answer, close the tab, and forget about it. That is not a system. That is a one-time interaction.

Google's AI Essentials course frames beginner AI learning around practical use cases: productivity, prompting, responsible use, and choosing the right AI tools for work needs ([Grow with Google](#)).

That is the right starting point.

You do not need to chase every new tool. You need to learn how to use AI repeatedly for the work you already do.

The beginner mistake: tool-hopping

Most beginners start with the wrong question.

They ask:

Which AI tool should I use?

That sounds logical, but it usually leads to tool-hopping.

One day they try ChatGPT. The next day they try Claude. Then Gemini. Then Perplexity. Then a random AI image tool. Then an automation tool. Then another "must-have" app.

After all of that, they still do not have:

- A saved prompt library
- A repeatable process
- A clear use case
- A way to review AI outputs
- A workflow that actually saves time

The better question is:

What do I want AI to help me do every week?

That question turns AI from a toy into a tool.

Step one: start with recurring tasks

Before picking tools, list the tasks you repeat.

Examples:

- Writing emails
- Planning your day
- Summarizing notes
- Researching products
- Comparing options
- Drafting social posts
- Rewriting messy thoughts
- Creating checklists
- Explaining hard topics
- Turning calls or notes into action items
- Building simple standard operating procedures

If you own or run a business, add:

- Customer follow-ups
- Sales scripts
- Lead research
- Offer ideas
- Hiring scorecards
- Marketing plans
- Website copy
- Training docs
- Process documentation

You are looking for tasks that repeat, take too long, or require you to stare at a blank page.

That is where AI usually helps first.

Do not start with the hardest, riskiest, most complicated task in your life. Start with low-risk tasks you can easily review.

Good beginner AI tasks are:

- Repetitive
- Low-risk
- Easy to review
- Based on information you provide
- Painful enough that saving time matters

Bad beginner AI tasks are:

- High-risk decisions
- Sensitive private data
- Exact facts without verification
- Work you cannot review
- Anything where a wrong answer could seriously harm someone

Step two: pick one main assistant

Pick one AI assistant for your first week.

Good options include:

- ChatGPT
- Claude
- Gemini
- Perplexity

Do not try to master all of them in week one.

The best beginner tool is the one you will actually open every day. Your first goal is not to find the perfect model. Your first goal is to build the habit of using AI on real tasks.

Use one assistant for:

- Drafting
- Rewriting
- Planning
- Brainstorming
- Summarizing
- Explaining
- Organizing thoughts

Use a search-capable tool or source-checking workflow when the answer depends on current facts, prices, laws, news, product details, or anything that could change.

Simple rule:

Use your main assistant for thinking and drafting. Verify facts when facts matter.

Step three: create your AI home base

Do not let useful AI outputs disappear into chat history.

Create one place where you save:

- Prompts that worked
- Useful outputs
- Reusable workflows
- Mistakes to avoid
- Examples of good answers

Use whatever is easiest:

- Google Docs
- Notion
- Apple Notes
- Google Sheets
- Obsidian
- A folder on your computer

Create four sections:

1. Prompts that worked
2. Useful outputs
3. Workflows to repeat
4. Ideas to test later

This is where AI starts compounding.

A saved prompt can be reused. A saved output can become a template. A repeated task can become a workflow. A workflow can eventually become an automation.

If you do not save anything, you start over every time.

Step four: learn one prompt framework

OpenAI describes prompt engineering as writing effective instructions so a model consistently generates content that meets your requirements, and its guidance emphasizes instructions, examples, context, and clear boundaries between prompt sections ([OpenAI](#)).

Anthropic gives similar practical advice: be clear and direct, provide context, specify output format and constraints, use examples when useful, and ask the model to self-check against criteria ([Anthropic](#)).

For beginners, use this framework:

The RCGOR prompt framework

RCGOR stands for:

1. Role
2. Context
3. Goal
4. Output format
5. Review criteria

Use it when you want a serious answer.

Copy-paste framework

You are helping me with [task or role].

Context:

[Explain the situation, audience, problem, tools, background, and anything important.]

Goal:

[Say exactly what you want the output to help you accomplish.]

Output format:

[Tell it what structure you want: checklist, table, plan, script, email, SOP, comparison, etc.]

Review criteria:

Before you finish, check whether the answer is practical, clear, specific, and realistic. If anything important is missing, ask me up to 3 clarifying questions first.

Weak prompt

Help me use AI for my business.

Strong prompt

You are helping me find practical AI use cases for a small local service business.

Context:

I run a roofing company with 6 employees. I spend too much time answering repeat customer questions, following up with leads, and rewriting the same messages.

Goal:

Help me find 5 beginner-friendly ways to use AI this week to save time.

Output format:

Create a table with the task, how AI helps, tool to use, setup steps, and risk level.

Review criteria:

Avoid anything that requires coding. Focus on tasks I can review before sending to customers.

The weak prompt makes AI guess.

The strong prompt gives AI a job, context, goal, format, and standards.

That is the difference.

Step five: Use AI where it is strongest

- Turning messy notes into a clean plan
- Drafting a first version of an email or post
- Explaining something at your current knowledge level
- Comparing options using criteria you provide
- Finding questions you forgot to ask
- Creating a checklist or SOP
- Repurposing one idea into multiple formats
- Mapping a process before you automate it

Google's AI Essentials examples include summarizing notes, analyzing dense spreadsheets, creating presentations, brainstorming ideas, researching and organizing information, and drafting email responses ([Grow with Google](#)).

Zapier's automation guidance is also useful here: before automating, outline the process step by step, identify the apps involved, mark where human intervention happens, and start with simple "when this happens, do that" workflows ([Zapier](#)).

That is the right order:

1. Use AI to understand the task.
2. Use AI to make the task easier.
3. Use AI to document the repeatable process.
4. Automate later only if the process repeats.

Do not automate chaos.

First, understand the workflow.

Then improve the workflow.

Then automate the workflow.

Step six: know what not to trust

AI can be extremely useful and still be wrong.

NIST's generative AI risk profile identifies several risks that matter for everyday users, including confabulation or hallucinations, privacy leakage, harmful bias, misinformation, and overreliance on AI systems ([NIST](#)).

Do not blindly trust AI for:

- Legal decisions
- Medical decisions
- Financial decisions
- Tax decisions
- Hiring or firing decisions
- Exact facts without sources
- Anything customer-facing without review
- Anything published under your name without review
- Anything involving private, sensitive, or confidential information

Use this rule:

AI drafts. AI organizes. AI explains. AI accelerates. You decide.

UNESCO's AI competency framework emphasizes a human-centered mindset, AI ethics, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design, with progression from understanding to applying to creating ([UNESCO](#)).

That is a good model for beginners:

1. Understand what AI can and cannot do.
2. Apply it to real tasks.
3. Create repeatable systems after you have seen what works.

The 7-day AI starter plan

Do not try to master AI in a weekend.

Use it every day for one week on real tasks.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is to build useful repetitions.

Day 1: List your recurring tasks

Write down 10 tasks you do every week.

Include work tasks, business tasks, personal tasks, learning tasks, and communication tasks.

Then use this prompt:

You are helping me find practical AI use cases.

Context:

Here are tasks I do every week:

[paste your task list]

Goal:

Identify which tasks are good candidates for AI help.

Output format:

Create a table with columns for task, how AI could help, difficulty, risk level, and first prompt to try.

Review criteria:

Focus on realistic beginner use cases. Avoid anything that requires coding or complicated setup.

What to save

Save the best 3 use cases in your AI home base.

Day 2: Rewrite something

Take an email, post, note, or message and ask AI to improve it.

Use this prompt:

You are helping me rewrite a message.

Context:

Audience: [who will read it]

Goal: [what I want the message to accomplish]

Tone: clear, direct, human, not overly formal

Draft:

[paste draft]

Output format:

Give me 3 improved versions:

1. Short and direct
2. Warm and helpful
3. More persuasive

Review criteria:

Keep my meaning. Remove fluff. Do not make it sound robotic.

What to save

Save the version that sounds most like you.

Also save the prompt if it worked.

Day 3: Summarize something

Use AI to summarize a meeting note, article, transcript, document, or long email.

Use this prompt:

```
You are helping me turn long information into useful action.

Context:
I need to understand the important points quickly and know what to do next.

Input:
[paste notes, transcript, article, or document excerpt]

Output format:
Summarize this into:
1. Key points
2. Decisions made
3. Open questions
4. Action items
5. Risks or things to double-check

Review criteria:
Do not invent details. If something is unclear, label it as unclear.
```

What to save

Save the action-item format if it helps you.

This can become one of your most useful reusable prompts.

Day 4: Research something

Pick one question you would normally Google.

Use this prompt:

You are helping me research a decision.

Context:

I am trying to decide [decision].

Goal:

Help me understand the options, tradeoffs, and what I should verify before deciding.

Output format:

Give me:

1. A short explanation
2. A comparison table
3. The best option for a beginner
4. What could go wrong
5. What facts I should verify from primary sources

Review criteria:

Separate facts from assumptions. If current information is needed, tell me what to verify.

What to save

Save the comparison table format.

Also save the list of facts you need to verify.

Day 5: Plan something

Use AI to turn a goal into a step-by-step plan.

Use this prompt:

You are helping me create a practical plan.

Context:

My goal is [goal].

My current situation is [context].

My constraints are [time, budget, tools, skill level].

Goal:

Create a realistic plan I can start this week.

Output format:

Give me:

1. The first 3 actions
2. A 7-day plan
3. A 30-day plan
4. What to ignore for now
5. How I will know if it is working

Review criteria:

Make this realistic for one person. Avoid vague advice.

What to save

Save the first 3 actions.

Do not save the entire plan unless you will actually use it.

Day 6: Build one repeatable prompt

Pick a task you want to repeat and create a reusable prompt.

Use this prompt:

You are helping me create a reusable prompt.

Context:

I often need help with [repeat task].

Here is an example of what I usually start with:

[paste example]

Goal:

Create a reusable prompt template I can use every time I do this task.

Output format:

Give me:

1. The reusable prompt
2. Variables I should fill in each time
3. An example filled-out version
4. A checklist for judging the output

Review criteria:

Make the prompt easy to reuse. Do not make it overly complex.

What to save

Save the reusable prompt in your prompt library.

This is the first piece of your personal AI system.

Day 7: Review what worked

Look back at the week and decide what earned a place in your workflow.

Use this prompt:

You are helping me review my first week using AI.

Context:

Here are the AI tasks I tried this week:

[paste list]

Goal:

Help me decide which AI uses are worth keeping.

Output format:

Create a table with:

1. Task
2. Time saved
3. Output quality
4. Risk level
5. Keep, improve, or stop
6. Next experiment

Review criteria:

Be honest. Do not call something useful just because AI was involved.

What to save

Save:

- Your top 3 prompts
- Your top 3 use cases
- One workflow to improve next week

How to tell if AI is actually helping

AI is helping if it does one or more of these:

- Saves time
- Improves clarity
- Helps you start faster
- Helps you think through options
- Reduces repetitive work
- Creates a reusable asset
- Helps you make a better decision

AI is not helping if:

- You spend more time fixing the answer than doing the task yourself
- You cannot trust the output
- You keep switching tools without building habits
- You use it only for novelty
- You never save anything reusable

The goal is not to use AI for everything.

The goal is to use AI where it creates leverage.

Worksheets and tools

Use the next section as your working kit.

You can copy it into a doc, print it, or save it in your AI home base.

Tool 1: 7-Day AI Setup Checklist

Day 1: Find your use cases

- ☐ List 10 tasks you do every week.
- ☐ Circle the tasks that involve writing, planning, summarizing, researching, organizing, or repeating information.
- ☐ Pick 3 tasks to test with AI this week.

Day 2: Pick your main assistant

- ☐ Choose one main assistant for the week.
- ☐ Use it for daily tasks instead of testing multiple tools.
- ☐ Create a note called "AI Starter Kit."

Day 3: Create your AI home base

- ☐ Create sections for prompts, outputs, workflows, and ideas.
- ☐ Save your first useful prompt.
- ☐ Save your first useful output.

Day 4: Learn the prompt framework

- ☐ Use Role, Context, Goal, Output format, and Review criteria.
- ☐ Rewrite one weak prompt using the framework.
- ☐ Save the improved version.

Day 5: Use AI on one real task

- ☐ Pick one task you actually need to complete.
- ☐ Use AI to draft, plan, summarize, or compare.
- ☐ Review the output before using it.

Day 6: Build one reusable prompt

- ☐ Pick a task you repeat.
- ☐ Turn your prompt into a template.
- ☐ Add fill-in-the-blank variables.

Day 7: Review your week

- ☐ List what worked.
 - ☐ List what wasted time.
 - ☐ Keep 3 prompts.
 - ☐ Pick one workflow to improve next week.
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Tool 2: AI Use-Case Finder Worksheet

Use this worksheet to find your best first AI use cases.

Task	How often do I do it?	Could AI help draft, summarize, plan, research, compare, or organize?	Risk level	First prompt to try
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	
			Low / Medium / High	

Best tasks to start with

- Repetitive
- Low-risk
- Easy to review
- Based on information you provide
- Annoying enough that saving time matters

Tasks to avoid at first

- High-risk decisions
- Sensitive private data
- Exact facts without verification
- Anything you cannot personally review
- Anything where a wrong answer could create serious harm

Tool 3: Prompt Framework Cheat Sheet

Use this structure when you want a better AI answer.

You are helping me with [task or role].

Context:

[Situation, audience, tools, background, constraints]

Goal:

[What I want to accomplish]

Output format:

[Checklist, table, plan, script, email, SOP, comparison, etc.]

Review criteria:

Before you finish, check for clarity, accuracy, usefulness, and missing context. If needed, ask up to 3 clarifying questions.

Fill-in-the-blank version

You are helping me with:

[task]

Here is the situation:

[context]

I want to accomplish:

[goal]

Please format the answer as:

[format]

Before you finish:

Check whether the answer is practical, clear, specific, and realistic.

Tool 4: 12 Starter Prompts

Prompt 1: Find my best AI use cases

You are helping me find practical AI use cases.

Context:

Here are tasks I do every week:

[paste list]

Goal:

Identify which tasks are good candidates for AI help.

Output format:

Create a table with task, AI use case, difficulty, risk level, and first prompt to try.

Review criteria:

Focus on realistic beginner use cases. Avoid complicated setup.

Prompt 2: Rewrite this clearly

You are helping me improve a piece of writing.

Context:

Audience: [audience]

Goal: [goal]

Tone: clear, human, direct

Draft:

[paste draft]

Output format:

Give me one improved version and a short list of what changed.

Review criteria:

Keep my meaning. Remove fluff. Do not make it sound fake or robotic.

Prompt 3: Summarize this into action items

You are helping me turn information into action.

Input:

[paste notes, email, transcript, or document]

Output format:

Give me:

1. Summary
2. Key decisions
3. Open questions
4. Action items
5. Risks or follow-ups

Review criteria:

Do not invent details. Mark anything unclear.

Prompt 4: Explain this like I am new

You are helping me understand a new topic.

Topic:

[topic]

Context:

I am a beginner and want practical understanding, not jargon.

Output format:

Explain:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. A simple example
4. Common mistakes
5. What I should learn next

Prompt 5: Help me make a decision

You are helping me make a decision.

Decision:

[decision]

Options:

[option 1, option 2, option 3]

Criteria:

[cost, time, risk, ease, upside, etc.]

Output format:

Create a comparison table, then recommend the best option for my situation.

Review criteria:

Separate facts from assumptions. Tell me what I should verify.

Prompt 6: Turn this into a checklist

You are helping me turn a process into a checklist.

Process:
[describe process]

Output format:
Create a step-by-step checklist that a beginner could follow.

Review criteria:
Make each step specific and action-oriented.

Prompt 7: Build me a 7-day plan

You are helping me create a short action plan.

Goal:
[goal]

Constraints:
[time, budget, tools, skill level]

Output format:
Give me a 7-day plan with one main action per day.

Review criteria:
Make it realistic. Include what to ignore for now.

Prompt 8: Create content from one idea

You are helping me repurpose one idea.

Idea:
[idea]

Audience:
[audience]

Output format:
Turn this into:

1. A YouTube title
2. A short video hook
3. A LinkedIn post
4. A tweet/X post
5. An email subject line

Review criteria:
Keep the message useful, specific, and non-clickbait.

Prompt 9: Improve this prompt

You are helping me improve a prompt.

Prompt:
[paste prompt]

Goal:
Make this prompt more specific and more likely to produce a useful answer.

Output format:
Give me:

1. Improved prompt
2. What changed
3. Why it should work better

Prompt 10: Turn notes into an SOP

You are helping me create a standard operating procedure.

Notes:
[paste notes]

Output format:
Create an SOP with:

1. Purpose
2. Tools needed
3. Step-by-step process
4. Quality checklist

Prompt 11: Check this for risk

You are helping me review an AI-generated answer before I use it.

Output to review:
[paste AI output]

Context:
I plan to use this for [use case].

Output format:
Tell me:
1. What looks useful
2. What may be wrong
3. What needs verification
4. What could be risky
5. How to improve it

Prompt 12: Build my prompt library

You are helping me organize my AI prompts.

Context:
Here are prompts or tasks I use often:
[paste list]

Output format:
Organize them into categories, name each prompt, and suggest which ones should become reusable templates.

Tool 5: AI Output Review Checklist

Before using an AI output, ask:

- ☐ Is this accurate?
- ☐ Do I need sources?
- ☐ Is anything made up or unverifiable?
- ☐ Is the tone appropriate?
- ☐ Is this specific enough to use?
- ☐ Did it follow my instructions?
- ☐ Does it include private or sensitive information?
- ☐ Could this harm someone if wrong?
- ☐ Should a human expert review this?

— Adapted from

Tool 6: Personal Prompt Library Template

Use this table to start saving prompts that work.

Prompt name	Task	When to use it	Prompt	Example output	Notes

Suggested categories

- Writing
- Planning
- Research
- Learning
- Summarizing
- Business
- Personal productivity
- Content creation
- Automation ideas

Final rule

For the first 30 days, do not chase every new AI tool.

Instead:

1. Pick one assistant.
2. Save useful prompts.
3. Use AI on real recurring tasks.
4. Review outputs before using them.
5. Turn repeated wins into workflows.

That is how AI becomes useful.

AI does not become valuable because you tried more tools.

AI becomes valuable when it becomes part of how you think, work, learn, and build.