

LESSON 1

ChatGPT: Your First AI Partner

Set up ChatGPT, learn the one prompt formula that makes it useful, and turn lazy requests into answers you can actually use.

Duration: 75 minutes

What you'll walk away with

- Set up a free ChatGPT account at chatgpt.com.
- Know the difference between free and paid plans — free is enough for class; paid runs about \$20/month and unlocks faster answers.
- Understand why ChatGPT is the best first AI: fewer bugs, the biggest toolbox, and the easiest learning curve.
- Use the magic formula: ROLE + TASK + DETAILS.
- Turn a lazy prompt into a great one, and boss AI around: shorter, friendlier, in a table.
- Spot when AI is confidently wrong.

Run of the lesson

Part 1 · 7 min — Say your fear out loud

Everyone names their biggest AI worry. We kill it in one sentence.

Part 2 · 8 min — Get logged in

Create a free account at chatgpt.com. If you upgrade later, the paid plan is about \$20/month and gives faster answers and extra features.

Part 3 · 12 min — What ChatGPT can do

Images, files, voice, custom GPTs, and search — all in one place. It's the all-rounder that just works.

Part 4 · 10 min — What AI really is

A very fast, very well-read intern who sometimes makes things up. Ask it something you already know and catch it being wrong.

Part 5 · 13 min — The formula

ROLE (who it is) + TASK (what to do) + DETAILS (tone, length, format). Then follow-ups: 'shorter', 'friendlier', 'put it in a table'.

Part 6 · 15 min — Do it

Write a bad prompt, fix it with the formula, and run it in ChatGPT.

Part 7 · 10 min — Keep it

Save your best prompt and note where you'll use ChatGPT this week.

The prompt formula: ROLE + TASK + DETAILS

Most bad prompts are just under-explained. Give ChatGPT a role, a clear task, and a few details, and the answer becomes dramatically better. Then keep refining with follow-ups like 'shorter', 'friendlier', or 'put it in a table.'

ROLE — Who should it act like? (e.g. a friendly email coach, a patient tutor, a marketing writer)

TASK — What exactly do you want done? (e.g. write 5 headlines, summarize a doc, say no to a meeting)

DETAILS — What are the constraints? (e.g. under 80 words, playful tone, for a 10-year-old, in a table)

Weak: Write me something about my bakery.

Strong: Act as a playful marketing writer. Write 5 headline options for a neighborhood bakery. Keep each under 8 words. Make them warm and fun.

Exercise: Train ChatGPT with the formula (30 min)

1. Set up a free ChatGPT account at chatgpt.com. Free plans are enough for this class.
2. If you later want faster answers, the paid plan is about \$20/month — but only upgrade after you've used the free version for a week.
3. Copy the starter prompt below and paste it into ChatGPT.
4. Ask ChatGPT something you're an expert in. Spot where it gets something wrong.
5. Write a lazy one-liner request. Notice the boring answer.
6. Rewrite it with ROLE + TASK + DETAILS and run it again.
7. Say 'shorter', then 'friendlier', then 'put it in a table'. Save the winner.

Copy-paste prompts

Prompt: Explain what you do in one paragraph a 10-year-old would get.

Prompt: Act as a friendly email coach. Write a polite no to a meeting, under 80 words.

Prompt: Act as a marketing writer. 5 headlines for a bakery, playful, under 8 words each.

Prompt: Act as a research assistant. Summarize this document into 5 bullets and 3 open questions.

Reflection

- Where did ChatGPT get something wrong, and how did you catch it?
- Which part of the formula fixed your answer the most?
- What's one task you'll use ChatGPT for this week?

Takeaway

AI isn't magic. Structure is. Start with ChatGPT, then use ROLE + TASK + DETAILS.