AI FOR BUSY PROS · FREE GUIDE

The AI Starter Kit for Busy Professionals

A calm, plain-English start with AI. No jargon, no hype. Just what to do first, what to type, and how to stay safe.

aiforbusypros.netlify.app
One calm email a week: aiforbusypros.beehiiv.com

Welcome. You're not behind.

If AI feels like something everyone else figured out while you were busy doing your actual job, this kit is for you.

You don't need to learn to code. You don't need to follow AI news. You don't need ten tools. You need one assistant, a handful of good requests, and about 15 minutes a day for one week.

That's what this kit gives you:

1. **What an LLM actually is**, in plain words (page 3)
2. **Your first 10 minutes**, step by step (page 4)
3. **10 copy-paste prompts** for email, meetings, writing and research (pages 5–6)
4. **A 7-day starter plan**, 15 minutes a day (page 7)
5. **"Start here" tool picks**, one per job (page 8)
6. **Safety and privacy basics** (page 9)
7. **The one habit that matters** and what to do next (page 10)

> **How to use this kit:** read pages 3 and 4 today. Keep pages 5 and 6 open next to your AI assistant. Follow the 7-day plan one day at a time.

1. What an LLM actually is

"LLM" stands for **large language model**. It's the engine inside tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Microsoft Copilot.

Here's the plain-English version: an LLM was trained on a huge amount of text. From that, it learned the patterns of language well enough to predict what a helpful next sentence looks like. When you type a request, it writes a reply one piece at a time, based on those patterns and on whatever you've told it.

What that means for you

- **It's very good with words.** Drafting, rewriting, summarizing, explaining, brainstorming, turning messy notes into a clean list.
- **It doesn't "know" things the way a person does.** It can sound confident and still be wrong. It can even invent a fact, quote or source. People call this "hallucinating."
- **It only knows what you tell it about your situation.** It doesn't know your boss, your client, or your tone unless you explain them.
- **The more context you give, the better the answer.** This is the single most useful thing to remember.

> **A helpful way to think about it:** treat your AI assistant like a bright, fast new assistant on their first day. Brilliant at drafting, eager to help, but they need a clear brief, and you should check their work before it goes out.

The recipe for a good request

Most good prompts have four parts. You don't need all four every time, but the more you include, the better:

1. **Role:** "Act as an experienced executive assistant."
2. **Context:** who it's for, what happened, what matters.
3. **Task:** exactly what you want, such as "draft a reply" or "summarize in 5 bullets."
4. **Format:** length, tone, structure. "Under 120 words, warm but firm."

And one more trick: if you don't like the answer, **just say so**. "Shorter." "Less formal." "Give me three other options." Talking back is how you get great results.

2. Your first 10 minutes

Pick one assistant and try it right now. We suggest ChatGPT, because it's one of the most widely used and has a free version that's available to everyone.

1 Open it (1 minute)

Go to **chatgpt.com** or download the official app. Create a free account. (Prefer another? Claude, Gemini and Microsoft Copilot all have free versions too. The steps below work in all of them.)

2 Ask something easy (2 minutes)

```
Explain what you can help a busy professional with, in 5 short bullet
points. Plain English, no jargon.
```

3 Give it a real task (3 minutes)

Think of an email you've been putting off. Describe it in a sentence or two, then paste this:

```
Draft a short, polite email that [what you need to say]. The reader is [who
they are]. Keep it under 120 words and friendly but professional.
```

4 Talk back (2 minutes)

Now ask for changes: "Make it warmer." "Cut it in half." "Give me a version that's more direct." Notice how quickly it adjusts.

5 Check and use it (2 minutes)

Read the draft. Fix anything that's wrong or doesn't sound like you. Then copy it into your email and send it yourself.

> **That's it. You've used AI for real work.** Everything else is practice: the same steps, on more of your day.

> **Before you paste anything:** don't share passwords, financial account numbers, health details or confidential work information. See page 9 for the simple rules.

3. 10 copy-paste prompts

Copy one, fill in the [brackets], and paste it into your assistant. Remove anything private first.

Email

1 Reply to a tricky email

```
Here's an email I received: [paste it, with names and private details removed]. Draft a reply that [your goal, e.g. politely says no / asks for a new deadline]. Keep it under 150 words, calm and professional.
```

2 Turn bullet points into a clear email

```
Turn these notes into a clear email to [who]: [your bullet points]. Put the main ask in the first sentence. End with one clear next step.
```

3 Make it shorter and kinder

```
Rewrite this so it's half as long and sounds friendly but firm. Keep every important fact: [paste your draft]
```

Meetings

4 Prepare for a meeting

```
I have a [length] meeting with [type of person or team] about [topic]. My goal is [goal]. Give me a short agenda, 3 questions I should ask, and 2 objections I should be ready for.
```

5 Turn messy notes into a recap

```
Here are my rough meeting notes: [paste notes]. Turn them into a short recap with three sections: Decisions, Action items (who and by when), and Open questions.
```

3. 10 copy-paste prompts (continued)

Writing

6 First draft of anything

```
Act as an experienced [role, e.g. communications manager]. Write a first draft of [document] for [audience]. The key points are: [points]. Tone: [tone]. Length: about [number] words.
```

7 Get honest feedback

```
Review this draft like a sharp, kind editor. Tell me the 3 biggest ways to make it clearer and more persuasive, then show me an improved version: [paste draft]
```

8 Explain it to a non-expert

```
Rewrite this so someone outside my field can understand it in one read. Use short sentences and one everyday example: [paste text]
```

Research

9 Get up to speed fast

```
I need to understand [topic] for work. Explain it like I'm a smart beginner: what it is, why it matters, the 3 main points of debate, and the key terms I'll hear. Then tell me what I should double-check in other sources.
```

10 Summarize a long document

```
Summarize the text below in 5 bullet points, then list any numbers, dates or deadlines it mentions, and anything that needs my decision: [paste text, with private details removed]
```

> **The magic follow-up:** after any answer, try "What did I forget to ask?" or "Ask me 3 questions that would help you do this better." It often turns a decent answer into a great one.

4. Your 7-day starter plan

About 15 minutes a day. One small win each day. By day 7 you'll have a habit, not just a free account.

Day	Do this	Why it matters
Day 1	Do the "first 10 minutes" on page 4.	You learn that it's fast, easy and fixable when it's wrong.
Day 2	Use prompts 1–3 on two real emails.	Email is where most people get their first hour back.
Day 3	Use prompt 4 before one meeting and prompt 5 after it.	Better meetings, and a recap that takes two minutes instead of twenty.
Day 4	Draft one document with prompt 6, then improve it with prompt 7.	You see AI as a first-draft partner, not a replacement for your judgment.
Day 5	Use prompt 9 to learn about a topic you've been meaning to understand. Check two facts elsewhere.	You practice the most important skill: trust, but verify.
Day 6	Write a short "about me" note: your role, your audience, your preferred tone. Paste it at the start of a chat and compare the results.	Context is everything. Many assistants let you save this in settings (look for "custom instructions," "personalization" or "preferences").
Day 7	Review your week. Which task saved the most time? Write down your 3 favorite prompts.	Your personal prompt list becomes your toolkit.

Missed a day? No problem. Just pick up where you left off. The goal is a habit, not a streak.

Keep a "prompt notebook"

Every time a prompt works well, save it in a note on your phone or computer. After a month you'll have your own playbook, made for your job.

5. "Start here" tool picks

You don't need many tools. Start with **one general assistant**. Add a second tool only when you have a clear job for it.

Job	Start here	Why, and good alternatives
Everything (your first tool)	**ChatGPT**	One of the most widely used general assistants, with a free version for everyone. Alternatives: Claude, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot (all have free versions).
Long documents and careful writing	**Claude**	A thoughtful assistant that handles long text and tone well. Free plan available.
Research with sources	**Perplexity**	An AI search tool that shows clickable citations, so you can check where answers came from. Free plan available.
Questions about your own files	**Gemini Notebook** (formerly NotebookLM)	Upload your own documents and ask questions; answers are based on the sources you provide.
Meeting notes	**Otter.ai** or **Fathom**	Record, transcribe and summarize video calls. Both have free plans. Always tell people you're recording.
If you live in Microsoft 365	**Microsoft Copilot**	A free version is available; deeper features inside Word, Excel and Outlook come with eligible Microsoft 365 plans.
If you live in Google	**Google Gemini**	The Gemini app has a free plan; Gemini inside Gmail and Docs comes with paid Google AI plans or eligible Workspace plans.

Plans and features change often. Always check the official site before you pay for anything. Using a work account? Use the tools your employer has approved. See the full directory with 3–5 trusted picks per task at aiforbusypros.netlify.app/directory.html.

6. Safety and privacy basics

AI is safe to use when you follow a few simple rules. Think of it like email: useful every day, but you wouldn't send your bank password in one.

Never paste these

- Passwords, PINs, security codes or account numbers
- Social Security, passport or other ID numbers
- Other people's health, financial or personal information
- Confidential work material your employer hasn't approved for AI tools

Five simple habits

1. **Remove names and details.** "Client A" and "a large invoice" work just as well as the real thing for most drafts.
2. **Check facts before you use them.** AI can state wrong things confidently. Verify numbers, names, dates, quotes and anything legal, medical or financial with a trusted source or a professional.
3. **You're the editor.** Read everything before you send it. Your name is on it, not the AI's.
4. **Follow your workplace rules.** Many employers have an AI policy or approved tools. When in doubt, ask.
5. **Know your privacy settings.** Spend two minutes in your assistant's settings (see below).

Your privacy settings, in two minutes

ChatGPT: In *Settings → Data controls*, you can turn off *"Improve the model for everyone"* so your new chats aren't used to train OpenAI's models. You can also start a *Temporary chat*: these don't appear in your history and aren't used to improve the models (OpenAI says they may be kept for up to 30 days for safety).

Claude: On personal plans, Anthropic lets you opt out of having your chats used for model training in your privacy settings. Claude also offers incognito chats.

Everything else: look for words like "privacy," "data controls," "training" or "history" in settings.

Settings names and menus change from time to time. These details were checked against the official help pages in October 2026.

7. The one habit that matters

Keep experimenting, a little, every day.

The people who get the most out of AI aren't the most technical. They're the ones who try it on one more task each week. Before you start something tedious, ask: *"Could AI do a first draft of this?"* Often the answer is yes.

Your next steps

1. **Finish the 7-day plan** on page 7.
2. **Save your favorite prompts** in a notebook.
3. **Pick one more task** each week to hand to AI: a report, an agenda, a tough conversation you want to practice.
4. **Explore one tool at a time** from the directory. Ignore the rest.
5. **Later, try your first automation.** Once you're comfortable, tools like Zapier can run small repetitive tasks on their own. We'll walk you through it in the newsletter.

Want one calm step a week?

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Tool directory and guides: **aiforbusypros.netlify.app**

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