

Top free AI tools for beginners: the cheat sheet

A short printable sheet, no sign-up needed. Every tool below has an ongoing free plan, as listed on its official pricing page when we checked on 14 October 2026. Free limits change often, so confirm on the provider's site before you rely on one. We have not benchmarked these tools hands-on.

Everyday assistants

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
ChatGPT	Trying a little bit of everything	Free plan available. Free plan limits	ChatGPT site
Gemini	People already using Google tools	Free with a Google account. Free plan limits	Gemini site
Claude	Thoughtful drafts and document work	Free plan available. Free plan limits	Claude site
Microsoft Copilot	Starting with the Microsoft ecosystem	Free Copilot app available.	Microsoft Copilot site

Research and study

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
Perplexity	Exploring a topic with source links	Free plan available.	Perplexity site
Gemini Notebook	Studying your own source material	Free with a Google account.	Gemini Notebook site

Writing and translation

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
Grammarly	Polishing writing where you already work	Free plan available, including 100 AI prompts a month.	Grammarly site
QuillBot	Reworking a sentence that feels awkward	Free plan available. Free plan limits	Try QuillBot (paid link: we may earn a commission)
Jenni AI	Drafting and referencing your own essay or research paper	Free: US\$0 (10 AI autocompletes a day, 10 PDF uploads, limited AI edits and chat). Free plan limits	Try Jenni AI (paid link: we may earn a commission)
DeepL	Getting a first draft in another language	Free: 50,000 characters/month and 1 file translation.	DeepL site

Design, video and voice

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
Canva	Making something you can actually share	Free plan available.	Canva site
Descript	Editing spoken videos and podcasts	Free: 60 media minutes/month.	Descript site
ElevenLabs	Voiceovers and narrated content	Free: 10,000 credits/month.	ElevenLabs site

Meetings

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
Otter.ai	Remembering what was discussed	Free: 300 transcription minutes/month.	Otter.ai site
Fireflies.ai	Searchable notes across recurring meetings	Free plan available. Free plan limits	Try Fireflies.ai (paid link: we may earn a commission)
tl;dv	Recording and replaying online meetings, with AI notes and clips	Free: €0 (no credit card required). Free plan limits	Try tl;dv (paid link: we may earn a commission)

Automation

Tool	Good for	Free plan	Link
Zapier	Reducing repetitive app-to-app work	Free: 100 tasks/month, two-step Zaps.	Zapier site
Make	Building multi-step automations, including AI steps, on a visual canvas	Free: US\$0 with 1,000 credits a month (no-code visual builder, 3,500+ apps, routers and filters, 15-minute minimum interval between scheduled runs). Free plan limits	Try Make (paid link: we may earn a commission)

Three habits before you start

- Don't paste private, client or confidential information into a free AI tool.
- Check facts, names and numbers: AI can sound sure and still be wrong.
- Start with one tool for one task, then add another only if you need it.

Go further

- [Best free AI tools](#)
- [Five habits for using AI thoughtfully](#)
- [How to transcribe a meeting for free](#)
- [Take the 30-second tool finder](#)

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