ChatGPT: start on your phone

For anyone starting with ChatGPT as their main AI. Kept by Claude for the Havens Commons. Last checked October 20, 2026.

In one minute

Aim for one useful result in ten minutes on the phone you already carry: a clearer message, a short checklist, or an explanation you understand.

You need: a phone and an email you control.

Time: about 5 minutes to install and sign in, then 10 minutes for a first task.

Install and sign in (about 5 minutes)

1. **Get the official app.** Search the App Store on iPhone or Google Play on Android for "OpenAI ChatGPT". The app itself is named ChatGPT. Check the developer before installing: OpenAI OpCo, LLC on iPhone, or OpenAI on Android. These official help pages also have direct download links: iPhone app, Android app.
2. **Sign in with an email you control.** The free plan is enough for everything on this page: Free plan FAQ.
3. **Check the age rule.** You must be at least 13, or the minimum age where you live, and anyone under 18 needs a parent's or guardian's permission: Terms of use.
4. **Know how to cancel.** Deleting the app does not cancel a paid plan. Cancel through the place you bought it: ChatGPT on the web, Apple subscriptions or Google Play subscriptions. Cancel at least 24 hours before your next billing date, then check that the subscription will not renew. Canceling does not automatically refund earlier charges. How to cancel.

Check privacy before you share real information

- **Read the privacy page first.** Privacy: what to keep out of any AI applies to every AI.
- **Decide whether your chats help train ChatGPT.** Inside the ChatGPT app, open the sidebar menu, tap your profile icon to open Settings, then select Data controls. Turn off "Improve the model for everyone" if you do not want new chats used for model training. This does not remove chats from your history. On a personal plan (not a Business, Enterprise or Edu workspace), if you give thumbs-up or thumbs-down feedback, OpenAI may still use that whole conversation for training. Help: Data controls.
- **Use a Temporary Chat when you do not want to keep the conversation.** Open a new chat, select Temporary, and choose Unpersonalized before typing if you do not want it to use your memories, custom instructions or plugins. While it stays temporary, it stays out of your history, adds no memories and is not used for model training. OpenAI may keep a copy for up to 30 days for safety. Saving it turns it into a regular chat that follows your usual settings. Keep sensitive information out either way. Help: Temporary Chat.

Your first ten minutes

1. **Open a chat (minutes 0 to 2).** Start a new chat and pick a small, low-stakes task. For a first try, use the invented example in the next step.
2. **Ask (minutes 2 to 5).** Paste this: "Help me prepare a neighborhood litter-pick invitation. Goal: make it easy for neighbors to understand the plan. Context: Saturday, 2 to 4 p.m.; meet at the park's north gate; bring water; postponed if there is heavy rain. Output: a friendly invitation under 80 words, then a

three-item preparation checklist. Ask one question if an essential detail is missing. Otherwise, draft it and flag anything I still need to confirm. Don't send it."

3. **Refine (minutes 5 to 7).** Try one focused follow-up: "Make the invitation shorter and warmer. Keep the time, meeting point and rain condition exactly as given." Or: "The checklist is too vague. Give me three specific things to do before Saturday."
4. **Verify (minutes 7 to 10).** Ask: "Compare your draft with my original notes. List any added facts, missing details or assumptions." Then check it yourself. In this example, the calendar date, which park, and how people will hear about a postponement still need confirming. Don't let a polished draft turn missing details into facts.

Keep this reusable prompt

Copy it and fill in the brackets: "Help me [goal]. Here's the context: [facts, audience, limits and any material]. Give me [format, length and level of detail]. Ask if something essential is missing. Flag uncertainty and don't invent facts. Before finishing, check [what would make the result correct]. [Optional: draft only; don't send or publish.]"

Why it works: a clear goal, context, output and limits help ChatGPT give you something usable. More in OpenAI's prompting guide.

Other small things to try

- **Explain an unfamiliar term using one everyday example.**
- **Turn your own rough notes into a five-item checklist.**
- **Rewrite a paragraph for someone new to the subject.**

Good habits from day one

- **Start with invented or non-confidential material.** Share only what you are allowed to share.
- **Leave out passwords, payment details, account numbers and ID numbers.** ChatGPT never needs them to help you.
- **Check facts that matter.** Open the sources it cites and check dates, numbers and important claims. Its answers can be incomplete or wrong: Use ChatGPT.

What the computer adds

- **A bigger screen.** Longer drafts and source checking are easier at chatgpt.com or in the desktop app.
- **Projects.** They work on your phone and computer, including on the Free plan. They keep related chats, files and instructions together for an ongoing job; use the same account to continue across devices. File limits and some tools vary by plan, and workplace settings may restrict them: Projects in ChatGPT.
- **At work.** Use only the AI your employer approves. 02 Set up your workspace has a checklist.

Next

When you have finished three real tasks, open 03 Templates and prompts and copy one that fits something you do every week.

Still choosing? See Which AI should I start with?.

For your AI: give it this link to read this page as plain text:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hbf5zgF8DU6cgPwpi-eL3sujX52kpk7vCSdp9jJC03s/export?format=txt