

Take-Home Card

The one-page handout for the Practical AI class. Menus in these apps change often; this card was last checked in October 2026.

1. Lock down your settings

	Turn off training	Private one-off chat	Check memory
ChatGPT	Settings, Data Controls, "Improve the model for everyone"	Temporary Chat	Settings, Personalization
Claude	Settings, Privacy, Model Improvement	Incognito chat (ghost icon)	Settings, memory
Gemini	Google account, Gemini Apps Activity, Keep Activity	Keep Activity off	Gemini Apps Activity

Menus change. If you can't find a setting, ask the AI itself: "Where do I turn off training on my chats?"

2. Never paste in

Passwords, PINs, account or card numbers, Social Security numbers, or other people's private information. Use placeholders: "Write a letter to [LANDLORD]."

3. Ask well (R.O.L.E.S.)

Role (who it should act as), **Objective** (what you want), **Limits** (length, budget, tone), **Examples** (show what good looks like), **Specifics** (your situation, plus the actual document or photo).

4. One chat per job

Start a new chat when the topic changes, when it starts forgetting or repeating itself, or when it keeps returning to a wrong idea.

Recap and restart: "Summarize what we've figured out so far as a short recap I can paste into a new chat."

5. Let it think

For multi-step problems (math, cut lists, plans, troubleshooting), turn on the "Thinking" option or ask: "Work through this step by step before answering." Then read the steps. Neat-looking work can still be wrong, and the steps show you where.

6. Starter prompts

- **Understand something:** "Explain [topic] to a smart beginner with one everyday analogy. Then ask me 3 questions to check my understanding."
- **Improve your writing:** "Edit this for clarity. Keep my voice. Point out anything unclear: [paste]"
- **Get an honest critique:** "What are the three biggest weaknesses in this plan? [paste]"
- **Fix a problem:** "I have [problem]. My setup is [details]. I've tried [list]. What are the likely causes, most likely first?"
- **Make a decision:** "I'm choosing between [A] and [B]. Ask me 5 questions that would help me decide."

7. Stay safe

- **Verify** facts, numbers and citations. Click the sources.
- **Supervise agents.** Approve anything that sends, buys or deletes.
- **Connect only what you need** (email, calendar, files) and disconnect what you don't use.
- **Scam defense:** agree on a family code word; call back on a number you already have.
- **Safety, medical, legal, money:** use AI to prepare questions, then ask a qualified person. In the shop, tool training and the manual win.

Free places to start

- ChatGPT: chatgpt.com
- Claude: claude.ai

- Gemini: gemini.google.com
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