

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO AI

Understanding Artificial Intelligence Without the Technical Jargon

By Openlink Digital

Welcome

Artificial Intelligence is changing the way we work, learn and create.

You don't need to be a programmer or a technology expert to benefit from AI. In fact, millions of people are already using AI every day to write emails, summarise documents, create images, analyse spreadsheets, generate videos and automate repetitive tasks.

The challenge is that the AI world is filled with technical terminology.

Large Language Models.

Context Windows.

Tokens.

Agents.

Retrieval Augmented Generation.

Multimodal AI.

These terms can make AI feel far more complicated than it really is.

This guide explains the most important AI concepts in plain English, helping you build confidence before you begin using tools like Google Gemini, ChatGPT and NotebookLM.

Chapter 1

What Is Artificial Intelligence?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence.

Rather than simply following a list of programmed instructions, modern AI can recognise patterns, understand language, generate ideas and solve problems based on the information it has learned.

Today's AI can:

- Write reports
- Answer questions
- Translate languages
- Generate images
- Analyse documents
- Create videos
- Write computer code
- Summarise meetings
- Brainstorm business ideas

Unlike traditional software, AI doesn't simply follow fixed rules—it predicts the most useful response based on everything it has learned during training.

Think of AI as an incredibly knowledgeable assistant that can help with thousands of different tasks in seconds.

Chapter 2

What Is a Large Language Model (LLM)?

At the heart of tools like Google Gemini and ChatGPT is something called a **Large Language Model**, usually shortened to **LLM**.

A Large Language Model is an AI system trained on enormous amounts of text from books, websites, articles, research papers, public documents and many other sources.

During training, the model learns:

- Grammar

- Writing styles
- Facts
- Patterns
- Relationships between ideas
- Problem-solving techniques
- Programming languages

Importantly, an LLM doesn't "think" like a human.

Instead, it predicts the most likely next word based on everything it has learned.

Those predictions happen incredibly quickly, creating responses that often feel surprisingly natural.

Imagine This

Think of an LLM as someone who has read millions of books in every subject imaginable.

When you ask a question, it doesn't search Google.

Instead, it draws upon everything it has learned during training to generate the best possible answer.

This is why it can:

- Write poems
- Explain science
- Create recipes
- Produce marketing campaigns
- Debug code

—all using the same underlying technology.

Chapter 3

What Is a Prompt?

Every conversation with AI starts with one thing:

A prompt.

A prompt is simply the instruction you give the AI.

It can be short:

"Write an email."

Or much more detailed:

"Act as a professional copywriter. Write a persuasive email inviting previous customers to a summer sale. Keep the tone friendly and include a clear call to action."

The more context you provide, the more useful the response becomes.

Good prompts typically include:

- A role
- A task
- Background information
- The desired format
- The preferred tone

This is why experienced AI users often achieve dramatically better results—they've learned how to communicate effectively with the AI.

(In our Google Gemini Masterclass, you'll learn advanced prompting frameworks that consistently produce professional-quality results.)

Chapter 4

What Are Tokens?

One of the most misunderstood AI terms is **token**.

Many people assume a token is simply a word.

It isn't.

Before AI can understand your prompt, it breaks your text into small pieces called tokens.

A token might be:

- A whole word
- Part of a word
- A number
- A punctuation mark
- A symbol

For example:

"Artificial Intelligence is amazing."

is split into multiple tokens before the AI begins processing it.

Why does this matter?

Because AI systems have limits on how many tokens they can process at once.

That determines how much information the AI can remember during a conversation.

The good news?

As a beginner, you rarely need to think about tokens.

They're simply part of how AI works behind the scenes.

Chapter 5

Understanding the Context Window

Imagine you're having a conversation with someone.

The longer they remember what you've already discussed, the easier the conversation becomes.

AI works in a similar way.

The **context window** is the amount of information an AI can keep in mind while generating a response.

This includes:

- Previous messages

- Uploaded files
- Instructions
- Images
- Documents

A larger context window allows AI to work with:

- Entire books
- Long reports
- Research papers
- Meeting transcripts
- Large spreadsheets

This is one of the biggest advances in modern AI systems.

Chapter 6

What Is a Hallucination?

AI is incredibly powerful—but it isn't perfect.

Sometimes an AI generates information that sounds convincing but is completely incorrect.

This is known as a hallucination.

For example, an AI might:

- Invent statistics.
- Misquote a source.
- Create fake references.
- Confidently answer a question incorrectly.

This doesn't mean AI is unreliable.

It simply means you should always verify important information before using it professionally.

Think of AI as an incredibly knowledgeable assistant—not an infallible expert.

Chapter 7

What Does Multimodal Mean?

Early AI systems could only understand text.

Modern AI is very different.

Today's AI can understand multiple forms of information at once.

This is called **multimodal AI**.

Google Gemini can work with:

- Documents
- Images
- Video
- Audio
- PDFs
- Websites
- Spreadsheets
- Presentations

This allows AI to solve much more complex problems.

Instead of asking,

"Summarise this report."

you can upload the report.

Instead of describing a graph, you can upload it.

Instead of explaining a diagram, you can show it.

Multimodal AI is one of the biggest reasons AI has become so useful in everyday work.

Chapter 8

What Are AI Agents?

One of the most exciting developments in AI is the rise of **AI Agents**.

Unlike a chatbot that simply answers questions, an AI agent is designed to complete tasks on your behalf.

Imagine asking:

"Research my competitors, summarise the findings, write a marketing plan and prepare a presentation."

Rather than stopping after the first answer, an AI agent can work through multiple steps to achieve a goal.

As AI technology evolves, agents are expected to become increasingly capable of automating repetitive and time-consuming workflows.

Final Thoughts

Understanding these concepts is the first step towards using AI with confidence.

The good news is that you don't need to memorise technical terms to start benefiting from AI today. What matters most is learning how to apply these tools to real-world tasks that save time, improve productivity and help you work more effectively.

This guide has introduced the language of AI, but it's only the beginning.

In the **Openlink Digital Google Gemini Masterclass**, you'll go beyond the terminology and learn practical, step-by-step workflows using Google Gemini, Gems, NotebookLM, Canvas, Deep Research, Veo, Flow and Google AI Studio. Rather than just understanding what these technologies are, you'll learn how to use them to automate work, create better content and build AI-powered systems that deliver real results.