

AI Tools for Baby Boomers: A Beginner-Friendly Guide

This guide introduces popular AI tools that are easy to use and helpful for everyday tasks. Whether you’re writing emails, planning a trip, researching a topic, or managing documents, these tools can make life simpler. Each tool is described in plain English, with details on what it’s best for, how it feels to use, and how to access it. A quick-reference table is included, followed by detailed explanations.

Quick-Reference Table: AI Tools at a Glance

AI Tool	Best For	Feels Like	Cost	How to Access
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Writing, brainstorming, learning	Chatting with a clever friend	Free; \$20/month for Plus	chat.openai.com or mobile app
Claude (Anthropic)	Summarizing, detailed explanations	Talking to a patient librarian	Free; \$20/month for Pro	claude.ai or mobile app
Gemini (Google)	Quick facts, travel planning, research	Google with more personality	Free	gemini.google.com or Google search
Microsoft Copilot	Microsoft Office tasks, document editing	A helpful coworker	Free with Microsoft account	Microsoft Edge, Word, Excel, etc.
Perplexity AI	Research, fact-checking, news	A digital research assistant	Free; \$20/month for Pro	perplexity.ai or mobile app
Grok (xAI)	General questions, real-time insights	A curious guide exploring with you	Free; limits apply	grok.com or X platform

Why Use AI Tools?

AI tools are like digital assistants that can help with writing, organizing, or finding information. Each tool has unique strengths, so you can pick the one that fits your needs. For example, some are great for writing letters, while others excel at research or working with Microsoft Office. This guide focuses on user-friendly tools for beginners, with tips to keep your privacy in mind.

Detailed Guide to Each AI Tool

1. ChatGPT (by OpenAI)

- **What It's Great For:** Writing emails, letters, or thank-you notes; brainstorming ideas (e.g., gift ideas or hobbies); planning trips or events; learning new topics in simple terms.
- **Best For:** Everyday users who want a versatile, conversational assistant.
- **Feels Like:** Chatting with a clever friend who knows a bit about everything.
- **Cost:** Free basic version; \$20/month for ChatGPT Plus (faster responses, more features).
- **How to Access:** Visit chat.openai.com or download the mobile app (iOS/Android).
- **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** ChatGPT is easy to use and great for personal tasks like drafting emails or planning family events. It's forgiving if your questions aren't perfect.
- **Tip:** Try asking, "Help me write a thank-you note for a neighbor who helped with my garden."

2. Claude (by Anthropic)

- **What It's Great For:** Summarizing long articles or books; explaining complex topics (e.g., history or science); writing with a gentle, thoughtful tone.
- **Best For:** People who want detailed, patient answers or work with long documents.
- **Feels Like:** Talking to a kind, patient librarian who takes time to explain things.
- **Cost:** Free basic version; \$20/month for Claude Pro (more features, higher limits).
- **How to Access:** Visit claude.ai or download the mobile app (iOS/Android).

- **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** Claude’s calm tone and clear explanations make it ideal for learning or summarizing information, like news or health topics (always verify health info with a doctor).
- **Tip:** Ask, “Summarize this article for me in 3 sentences,” or “Explain how the internet works in simple terms.”

3. Gemini (by Google)

- **What It’s Great For:** Finding quick facts; planning travel (e.g., destinations, weather); general research; answering specific questions.
- **Best For:** People who use Google often and want fast, current information.
- **Feels Like:** Asking Google but with a bit more personality and conversation.
- **Cost:** Free.
- **How to Access:** Visit gemini.google.com or use Google search (Gemini powers some search results).
- **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** If you’re already comfortable with Google, Gemini feels familiar and pulls in up-to-date info for planning or curiosity-driven questions.
- **Tip:** Try, “What are the top 3 places to visit in Italy this summer?”

4. Microsoft Copilot

- **What It’s Great For:** Writing or editing in Microsoft Word; creating spreadsheets in Excel; making PowerPoint slides; organizing tasks.
- **Best For:** People who use Microsoft Office at home or work.
- **Feels Like:** A helpful coworker who knows your computer inside and out.
- **Cost:** Free with a Microsoft account; some features require Microsoft 365 subscription.
- **How to Access:** Built into Microsoft Edge browser, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and other Microsoft products.
- **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** If you use Word or Excel, Copilot is seamless and helps with tasks like formatting letters or budgeting.
- **Tip:** In Word, try asking Copilot, “Help me format this letter professionally.”

5. Perplexity AI

- **What It's Great For:** Researching topics with reliable sources; fact-checking; staying updated on news or trends.
- **Best For:** People who want accurate, sourced information they can trust.
- **Feels Like:** A digital research assistant who does the digging for you.
- **Cost:** Free basic version; \$20/month for Pro (more searches, advanced features).
- **How to Access:** Visit perplexity.ai or download the mobile app (iOS/Android).
- **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** Perplexity provides clear answers with links to sources, making it great for researching health, hobbies, or current events (verify health info with a doctor).
- **Tip:** Ask, "What are the latest gardening trends for 2025, with sources?"

6. Grok (by xAI)

- **What It's Great For:** Answering general questions; exploring topics with real-time insights; brainstorming ideas; casual conversations.
 - **Best For:** People who want a conversational AI with access to current discussions (e.g., via X platform).
 - **Feels Like:** A curious guide who explores topics with you, offering fresh perspectives.
 - **Cost:** Free with usage limits; higher limits for X Premium+ (\$40/month) or SuperGrok subscribers (pricing TBD).
 - **How to Access:** Visit grok.com or use the Grok feature on the X platform (x.com).
 - **Why Baby Boomers Might Like It:** Grok is straightforward and great for answering a wide range of questions, from practical to curious. Its real-time search can pull in recent trends or news.
 - **Tip:** Try, "What are 3 tips for planning a family vacation?" or "What's the latest news on space exploration?"
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How to Choose the Right AI Tool

To pick the best tool, ask yourself:

- **What do I need help with?** Writing (ChatGPT, Claude), research (Perplexity, Gemini, Grok), Microsoft Office tasks (Copilot), or planning (Gemini, ChatGPT)?
- **Do I want a conversational assistant or quick answers?** ChatGPT, Claude, and Grok feel like talking to someone; Gemini and Perplexity are more direct.
- **Am I already using certain tools?** If you use Google or Microsoft, try Gemini or Copilot for familiarity.
- **Do I prefer free tools?** All these tools have free versions, but paid plans offer more features.

Recommendation for Beginners: Start with **ChatGPT** or **Grok** for their ease of use and versatility. Once comfortable, try others based on your needs.

Privacy and Security Tips

AI tools are powerful, but it's important to protect your privacy:

- **Don't share sensitive information** like Social Security numbers, passwords, or financial details.
 - **Know that your inputs may be stored** by the company (check their privacy policies).
 - **Start with low-risk tasks**, like asking for recipes or travel tips.
 - **Check privacy settings** in each tool—most let you delete your conversation history.
 - **For health questions**, always verify information with a doctor, as AI may not be fully accurate.
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Try It Yourself: A Simple Test Drive

To find the tool that suits you, try asking the same question to two different tools and compare their answers. Examples:

- “What are 3 tips for planning a family vacation?”
- “Help me write a short thank-you note for a friend.”

- “Give me a simple recipe for banana bread.”

Notice which tool’s answer feels clearer, friendlier, or more helpful. This hands-on approach will help you discover your favorite.

Final Thoughts

You don’t need to use every AI tool—just pick one or two that feel right for you. These tools are here to make tasks easier, not to overwhelm you. Start small, experiment, and have fun exploring what they can do.

For more practice, try one of these tools this week. Write down what you like or don’t like about it, and share your thoughts in our next class. You’re doing great—keep exploring!
