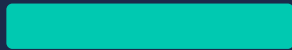


LEVERAGE NINE — FREE GUIDE

AI for Beginners: The Free Tools You **Actually** Need



A short, honest guide to the free AI tools worth using in 2026 — and exactly what to use each one for.

LEVERAGE NINE

See your options. Decide for yourself.

BEFORE YOU START

You Don't Need **20** AI Tools

If you've searched "best AI tools" recently, you've probably found the same problem everyone else does: a hundred overlapping lists, most of them recommending tools that are either paid, discontinued, or just not that good. It's overwhelming — and overwhelm is usually where people quit before they even start.

This guide skips the noise. It's six tools — one per task — chosen because they're genuinely free, genuinely useful, and simple enough to start using in the next five minutes. We've done the comparing so you don't have to.

THE STACK

- 1 Writing & brainstorming** — ChatGPT
- 2 Research & fact-checking** — Perplexity
- 3 Images** — Bing Image Creator
- 4 Video editing** — CapCut
- 5 Voice & narration** — ElevenLabs
- 6 Organizing your ideas** — NotebookLM

Start Here: **Thinking** Tools

ChatGPT

BEST ALL-ROUNDER

The easiest starting point for almost anything: writing, brainstorming, planning, quick coding help, and everyday questions. No learning curve — you just type like you're talking to a person.

USE IT FOR

First drafts, outlines, brainstorming, explaining anything simply.

WATCH FOR

Free tier has usage limits that reset daily — don't paste huge documents.

Perplexity

BEST FOR FACT-CHECKING

Unlike a normal chatbot, every answer comes with clickable sources. If you need to know something is actually true — not just plausible-sounding — this is the one to use.

USE IT FOR

Research before you write, checking current facts, competitor research.

WATCH FOR

Still double-check anything you'll publish or rely on financially.

Make It **Look Good**

Bing Image Creator

BEST FREE IMAGE GENERATOR

Powered by DALL-E 3 under the hood, with one of the most generous free daily limits available. Type what you want in plain English — no prompt-engineering skills required.

USE IT FOR

Social graphics, blog headers, quick concept visuals.

WATCH FOR

Daily generation caps — plan ahead if you need a batch.

CapCut

BEST FREE VIDEO EDITOR

A genuinely full-featured video editor, not a stripped-down trial. Auto-captions, background removal, AI effects, and a huge library of templates and music — on desktop, mobile, or web.

USE IT FOR

Short-form video, faceless content, quick social edits.

WATCH FOR

Some premium templates/effects sit behind a paid tier — the free core is still strong.

The **Finishing** Tools

ElevenLabs

BEST FREE AI VOICE

The most natural-sounding AI narration available for free. If you've ever heard an AI voiceover on YouTube that sounded surprisingly human, there's a good chance this is what made it.

USE IT FOR

Video narration, faceless content, accessibility (text-to-speech).

WATCH FOR

Free-tier audio requires public attribution — check current terms before commercial use.

NotebookLM

BEST FOR MESSY NOTES

Upload your notes, articles, or research and it turns the mess into a structured summary you can actually use — instead of forty open browser tabs.

USE IT FOR

Research synthesis, study notes, turning ideas into an outline.

WATCH FOR

Best for organizing what you already have — not for generating new ideas from scratch.

That's the **whole** stack.

Six free tools, one job each. No subscriptions, no overwhelm — just enough to start actually creating instead of researching for another week.

LOOKING AHEAD

Once you're ready to go beyond these free tools and turn this into a real side hustle, we'll show you what we personally use to automate and scale it — keep an eye on your inbox.

Leverage Nine — See your options. Decide for yourself.
This guide may reference tools we have an affiliate relationship with in future emails; recommendations here reflect our own evaluation.