

AIVISTA ACADEMY

Baby Steps With AI

AI made simple. One step at a time.

MODULE 1

What AI Is, and Why It Matters Now

Getting past the fear and the buzzwords

STUDENT WORKBOOK

NAME

DATE

babystepswithai.com · gripent@babystepswithai.com

What you'll be able to do

- Explain what AI actually does, in plain English, without using a single buzzword.
- Name three things AI is good at and three things it is bad at.
- Describe why the gap between people who use AI and people who don't is widening.
- Identify one task in your own week that AI could help with.

THE BIG IDEA

AI is not a robot brain that knows everything. It is a very good guesser that has read an enormous amount of writing. Once you understand that one sentence, everything else in this course makes sense.

BY THE END OF THIS MODULE

You can explain in your own words what AI is, what it is not, and why learning it now is worth your time.

Let's start with what you already believe

Before we define anything, take stock of what you already think. Most people come in carrying one of three feelings: this is going to take my job, this is too complicated for me, or this is a fad and it will pass.

All three feelings are reasonable. None of them are the whole picture. And you do not have to resolve them today. You only have to be willing to try one thing.

Here is the promise of this course: by the end, you will not be an expert. You will be a user. That is a much lower bar, and it is the bar that actually changes your week.

REMEMBER THIS

You are not behind. You are early. Most people have still never used one of these tools for anything real.

What AI actually is

The tools we are talking about in this course are called large language models. Forget the name. Here is what they do.

Imagine someone read an enormous amount of writing - books, articles, manuals, conversations, instructions. Now imagine you give that person the first half of a sentence and ask them to finish it. They would be very good at it, because they have seen how sentences like that usually go.

That is the whole trick. The AI takes what you wrote and predicts what should come next, word by word, based on patterns it learned from all that reading. When you ask it to write an email, it is predicting what a good email in response to your request would look like.

This sounds too simple to be useful. It is not. Predicting the next word well enough, over and over, produces work that is genuinely helpful: summaries, drafts, explanations, plans, rewrites, and answers.

REMEMBER THIS

Plain English definition: AI is a tool that reads what you wrote and writes back what it predicts would be most helpful.

What AI is not

It is not conscious. It does not want anything. It is not plotting.

It does not know today's news unless it looks it up. Its knowledge came from training, and training has an end date.

It is not a search engine. A search engine finds pages. AI writes an answer. Those are different jobs, and they fail in different ways.

It is not always right. This is the single most important thing in this module. AI can state something completely false in a confident, well-written sentence. People in the field call this a hallucination. You will learn to check its work, the same way you would check the work of a fast, eager, brand-new assistant.

REMEMBER THIS

Rule for the whole course: trust AI with the first draft. Never trust it with the final fact.

Three things AI is very good at

Starting. A blank page is the hardest part of most tasks. AI will always give you something to react to, and reacting is far easier than creating.

Shrinking. Long article, long email chain, long document - AI will pull the important parts out in seconds.

Rewording. Same message, different tone. Too harsh becomes professional. Too long becomes short. Too technical becomes plain.

Three things AI is bad at

Facts it cannot verify. Names, dates, numbers, quotes, legal details, prices. Check every one.

Knowing your situation. It does not know your customers, your budget, or your history unless you tell it. The more you tell it, the better it gets.

Judgment that carries real risk. Medical, legal, and financial decisions belong to qualified humans. AI can help you prepare questions. It should not make the call.

Why now

Two things changed recently. First, these tools stopped requiring any technical skill - you type in plain English, like sending a text message. Second, they got good enough that the time they save is real and noticeable, not a novelty.

That combination is what creates the gap. A small number of people have made these tools part of their daily routine, and they are quietly finishing the same work in a fraction of the time. Everyone else has heard of AI and never actually used it for anything that mattered.

You are not competing with the technology. You are competing with the person who learned to use it. That person was a beginner not long ago.

REMEMBER THIS

The skill that matters is not technical. It is knowing how to ask for what you want.

Words worth knowing

You will hear these. Now you can use them.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
AI (artificial intelligence)	A broad word for software that does tasks we used to think required a person.
Large language model	The specific kind of AI in this course. It works with words - reading them and writing them.
Prompt	What you type in. Your instruction, question, or request.
Response	What the AI writes back.
Hallucination	When AI states something false with total confidence. The reason you always check facts.
Training data	The enormous pile of writing the AI learned patterns from, before you ever met it.
Chatbot	The back-and-forth format most AI tools use. You type, it answers, you reply.

Your turn

Write in this book. The people who write things down are the people who still use this in six months.

Exercise 1.1 - Say it in your own words

5 MINUTES

1. Without looking back at the lesson, write one or two sentences explaining what AI is. Write it the way you would explain it to a friend who has never heard of it.
2. There is no wrong answer. The point is to own the idea, not to repeat mine.

Exercise 1.2 - Name your fear

5 MINUTES

1. What is the one thing about AI that worries you most? Write it down plainly.
2. Then write one sentence about what would have to be true for that worry to shrink.

Exercise 1.3 - Find your first task

10 MINUTES

1. Think about last week. Write down three tasks that involved words - writing something, reading something long, explaining something, or planning something.
2. Circle the one that annoyed you most. That is the task we will use in Module 2.

Check yourself

Tick each one honestly. Anything unticked is the thing to go back to.

- ☐ I can explain what AI does without using the word 'algorithm'.
- ☐ I can name three things AI is good at.
- ☐ I can name three things AI is bad at.
- ☐ I know why I have to check facts myself.
- ☐ I have picked one real task to try in the next module.

Before the next module

- Tell one person what you learned today. Explaining it out loud locks it in.
- Keep the task you circled in Exercise 1.3 somewhere you will find it.
- Do not sign up for anything yet. Module 2 walks you through it step by step.

Stuck on anything?

Email gripent@babystepswithai.com and say exactly where you got stuck. Nobody gets left behind in this course.

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