

Homework — Ways to use AI

Estimated time: ~40 min · No coding required · Free accounts only

Three doorway tours. You're not building anything — you're looking around, comparing, and noticing. The goal is to see with your own eyes how each access method feels different, even though the underlying AI is the same.

What you need: a browser, a free Claude.ai or ChatGPT account, and internet access. Task 3 involves reading API documentation — no account or payment required for that step. Nothing in this homework costs money.

Task 1 — A real Chat session (the front door)

Your goal: use a chat interface for something you'd actually do in real life. This is not a test of AI. It's a tour of the doorway itself.

Steps

1. Open claude.ai (or chatgpt.com if you prefer). Sign in or create a free account.
2. Pick a real task from your life — something you'd normally spend time on.

Examples:

- Draft a short, polite email declining a meeting.
- Ask it to explain a concept you've been meaning to understand (anything).
- Ask it to summarize a Wikipedia article you paste in.
- Ask for a one-week meal plan for someone who hates cooking.

3. After the first reply, **follow up at least once**. Refine, correct, ask for more detail. Notice how the AI adjusts.
4. Take a screenshot of the final exchange (optional, but useful for your notes).

Reflect — check yourself

- Did the AI answer usefully on the first try, or did you need to refine the question?

- Did the AI ever give you something wrong or overconfident? How did you notice?
- What would need to be different for Chat to be *not enough* for this task?

Task 2 — Compare three chat interfaces side by side

The same question, asked to three different chat interfaces. You'll notice that the underlying models vary, the interfaces look different, and the answers have their own character.

Steps

1. Choose a clear, factual question. Something with a definite answer works well here. Example: *"What are the three most common causes of a slow Wi-Fi connection?"*
2. Ask the exact same question (copy-paste it) in all three:
 - [Claude.ai](#)
 - [ChatGPT](#)
 - [Gemini](#)
3. For each answer, note:
 - How long was the reply?
 - Was it formatted as a list, paragraphs, or both?
 - Did the three answers agree on the facts, or did anything differ?
 - Which interface felt easiest to use?

Reflect — check yourself

- Were the answers factually consistent across all three? If not, what did you do to check?
- Did you notice any differences in tone, length, or structure?
- All three used the Chat doorway. What was the same despite the different models?

The verify habit starts here. When three AIs agree on something, that's a good sign. When they disagree, that's a prompt to check an authoritative

source. Build this habit early.

Task 3 — A window-shop tour of the API docs

You're not writing code. You're reading the API documentation as a curious visitor — noticing what it covers, how it's organized, and what kinds of things become possible through this doorway.

Steps

1. Open the Anthropic API overview: docs.anthropic.com/en/api/overview
2. Read just the overview page (no account required). Note these things:
 - What does it say you can do with the API that you can't do in Chat?
 - What is a "rate limit" and why would it matter?
 - What does a request look like? (Find the first code example.)
3. Navigate to the **Models** section. Find the list of available models.
 - How many models are available?
 - What differences are called out between them? (Speed, cost, capability?)
4. Back in your chat interface (from Task 1), ask it: *"What's the difference between using Claude via the chat website versus via the API, in plain English?"* Compare its answer to what you just read in the docs.

Reflect — check yourself

- Did the AI's explanation match what the documentation said?
- What did the API enable that Chat cannot do?
- What would you need to do before you could make your first API call? (Hint: what credential is required?)
- If you had a spreadsheet of 500 customer reviews and wanted one-line summaries, which doorway would you use? Why?

You're done. There's no submission, no grade. The point was to move from reading about four doorways to actually opening at least one of them and looking

inside. If you completed all three tasks, you've used Chat, compared three interfaces, and read the API docs like a professional. That puts you ahead of most people who "use AI."

Going further (optional)

If you're curious and want to explore beyond the tasks:

- **Try Anthropic Console:** console.anthropic.com — this is where you would generate an API key. Browse around (you don't need to create a key yet). Notice the "Workbench" tab, which lets you test API-style prompts without writing code.
- **Search for "Claude Code" or "Cursor AI":** Watch a 3-minute demo video of an agentic tool in action. Notice the difference between the agent choosing actions and a human typing in a chat.
- **Ask Chat to teach you more:** "Explain what an API endpoint is, as if I've never written code." Then ask a follow-up. Practice the conversational learning style — it's one of Chat's best features.