

# Understanding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

*What It Is and What It Isn't*

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# Today's Goals

- Learn what Artificial Intelligence (AI) really is — in plain language
- See examples of AI you may already use every day
- Understand what AI can and cannot do
- Learn a few key words we will use in this class
- Feel more comfortable asking questions about AI

# Warm-Up: What Comes to Mind?

**"When you hear  
'Artificial Intelligence,'  
what comes to mind?"**

# How Do You Feel About AI?



**Curious**



**Nervous**



**Unsure /  
Confused**

**All of these feelings are completely normal.**

*You are not alone — and this class is here to help.*

# What Is AI? (Simple Definition)

*"Artificial Intelligence (AI) means using computers to do tasks that usually need human thinking — like recognizing patterns, making suggestions, or creating text and images."*

- Think of AI as a fast learner that studied millions of examples — but it is still just a computer program, not a person.

# Everyday AI You Already Use



Spam filters — keep junk out of your email inbox



Voice assistants — Siri, Alexa, Google ("Hey Google!")



GPS navigation — suggests the fastest route for you



Auto-captions on TV shows and video calls



Recommendations — "You might also like..."

# Newer "Generative" AI

- Some newer AI tools can write text, answer questions, and carry on a conversation — like a chatbot
- They can also create pictures, voices, and even videos from simple written instructions
- Examples: ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot — we will try one in a later class

# Myths and Reality

Sorting fact from fiction

# Myth: One Giant AI Brain

**MYTH:** *There is one single AI that knows everything and is always listening.*

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## REALITY:

- There are thousands of different AI programs made by different companies — each does specific things
- Most AI tools only "hear" you when you directly open and use them — they are not secretly watching

# Myth: If It Sounds Confident, It Must Be Right

**MYTH:** *AI always gives correct answers because it sounds very sure of itself.*

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## REALITY:

- AI can sound confident even when it is completely wrong — this is called a "hallucination"
- Always double-check important facts (medical, legal, financial) with a trusted person or source

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## **REALITY:**

- AI only works with information you type or speak to it — it cannot read your thoughts
- It does not know your history or personal life unless you tell it directly in your message

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**MYTH:** *You have to be young and tech-savvy to use AI tools.*

## **REALITY:**

- Many AI tools are simple to use — just type a question in plain, everyday language
- People of all ages are learning to use AI, and this class will help you do exactly that

# Some Words We Will Use

We will learn these six key terms today:

**AI (Artificial  
Intelligence)**

**Chatbot**

**Prompt**

**Training Data**

**Hallucination**

**Privacy**

# Term: "AI (Artificial Intelligence)"

- Computer programs that can do tasks that normally need human thinking — like reading, writing, or making decisions
- AI is not one single thing — it is a family of many different tools and programs

**Example:** When your email automatically moves junk mail to your spam folder, that is AI at work

# Term: "Chatbot"

- A program you can have a conversation with — by typing or speaking to it
- It reads your message and writes back an answer, like texting but with a computer

**Example:** ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or the "Chat with us" button on many websites are all chatbots

# Term: "Prompt"

- A prompt is your question or instruction to the AI — whatever you type or say to it
- The clearer your prompt, the better the answer you will receive

**Example:** "Explain Medicare Part B in simple language" or "Help me write a thank-you note to my neighbor"

# Term: "Training Data"

- The huge collection of text, images, and information that an AI studied before it was released to the public
- Think of it like a student who read millions of books — the AI learned from all that material

**Example:** An AI may have "read" billions of web pages, books, and articles before you ever sent it a message

# Term: "Hallucination"

- When AI gives an answer that sounds believable but is actually wrong or made up
- The AI does not know it is wrong — it predicts words that seem to fit, even if they are not true

**Example:** An AI might invent a doctor's name, make up a law, or cite a book that does not exist — always check important facts

# Term: "Privacy"

- Privacy means protecting information about yourself — who can see it and how it can be used
- When you type something into an AI tool, that information may be saved and used by the company

**Example:** We will talk about what is safe to share with AI — and what to keep private — in an upcoming class

# Practice: Explain a Word

1

**Pick one word from the list: AI, Chatbot, Prompt, Training Data, Hallucination, or Privacy**

2

**Turn to a neighbor and explain it in your own words, as if they have never heard it before**

*Example: "A chatbot is like texting a computer — you type a question and it writes back an answer."*

# How AI Can Help Me

- Explain a confusing letter, bill, or form in simple, clear language
- Help draft or improve an email, card, or thank-you note
- Translate text into another language
- Help plan a trip, outing, or event with useful suggestions
- Brainstorm ideas for hobbies, recipes, or gifts for loved ones

# Why Some People Are Concerned

- AI can give wrong or made-up answers (hallucinations)
- Scammers use AI to create fake voices, photos, and convincing messages
- Privacy: what you type may be saved and used by the company
- It can feel overwhelming — too many new tools, too much change at once
- Job changes — some work tasks may be done by AI in the future

# A Simple Rule of Thumb

*"AI can be a helpful tool — but we must double-check important information and protect our personal details."*

**Helpful tip:** Treat AI like a knowledgeable friend — useful for ideas and explanations, but you still make the final decision.

# Reflection: AI in My Life

1

**What AI-related tools do I already use?**

*(Think: email filters, GPS, voice assistants, TV captions...)*

2

**One way AI might help me this year is...**

*(Writing, translating, planning, explaining confusing letters...)*

3

**One question or concern I still have is...**

*(There are no wrong answers — write whatever is on your mind)*

# Next Time...

- We will start actually talking to an AI assistant together
- We will practice asking questions (writing good prompts)
- **Please bring a confusing letter or document — cover any personal info. We will use AI to help explain it!**