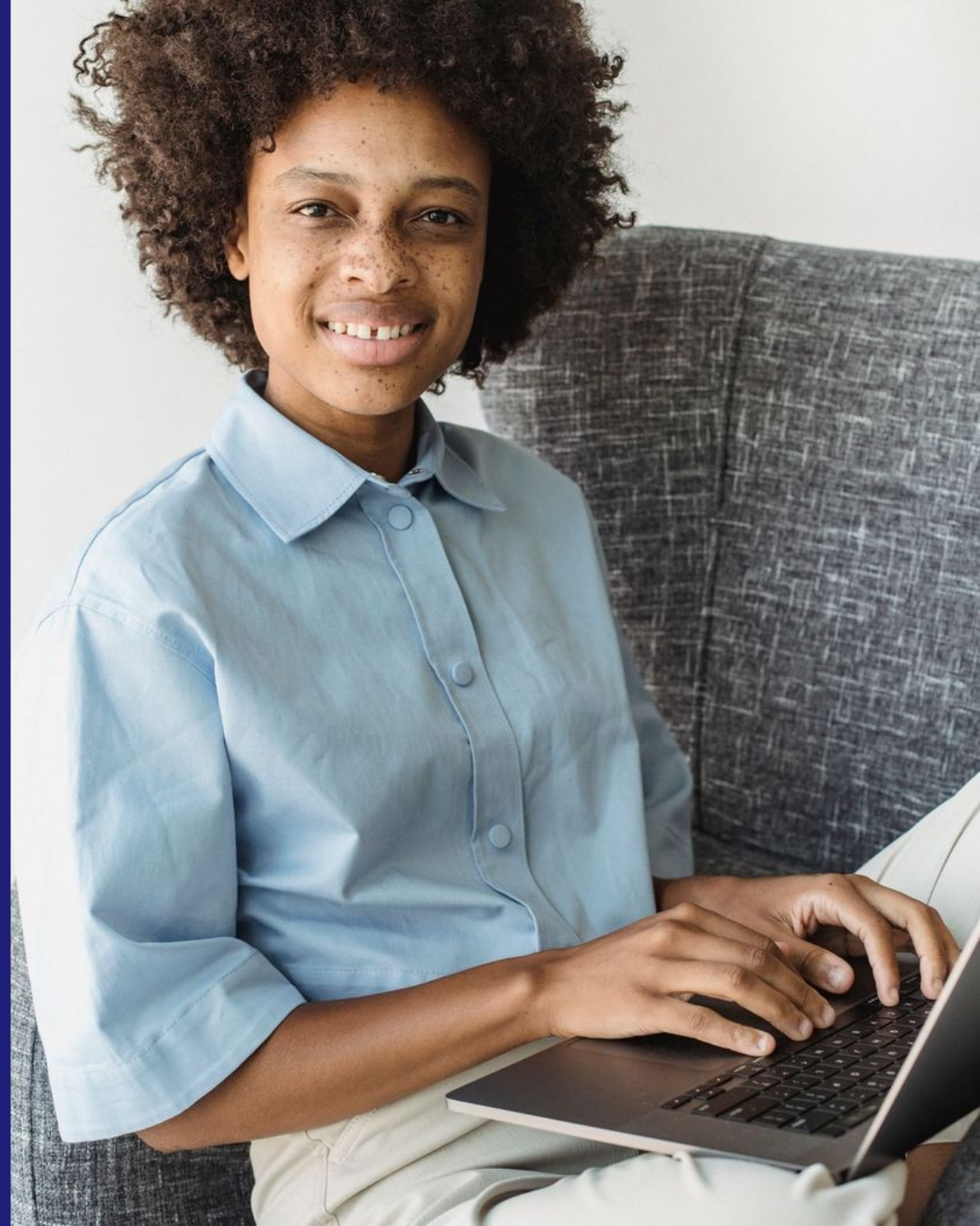


LESSON 1.1 • 1 HOUR

What is AI? How it works, what it can and cannot do

IN THIS LESSON

- What artificial intelligence really means
- How machines learn from examples
- What AI can and cannot do
- How to write a good prompt



L1.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:



Explain in plain words what AI is and where you meet it every day



Describe how AI learns from examples instead of hand-written rules



List what AI does well and what it cannot do



Write a clear prompt with a task, context and an example

THIS LESSON

L1.1

Duration: 1 hour

Practice: EX 1.1

Quiz: 5 questions, 70% to pass



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Key Terms

The words you will meet in L1.1, in plain language.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Software that learns patterns from data to predict, recommend or create, instead of following hand-written rules.

Model

The trained system that has 'learned' from examples and can now handle new inputs.

Generative AI

AI that creates new content, such as text, images or audio, from a prompt. ChatGPT is an example.

Prompt

The instruction or question you give an AI. Clear prompts get better answers.

Hallucination

When an AI states something false as if it were true, because it predicts likely text, not checked facts.

Training data

The examples an AI learns from. Their quality shapes how good and how fair the AI is.

What is artificial intelligence?

AI is not magic. It is a computer system that uses the data it gets to produce an output.



Predicts

Estimates what comes next: the next word you type, or next week's demand for a product.



Recommends

Suggests options: films to watch, routes to take, replies to send.



Generates

Creates new content, such as text, images or summaries, from a short prompt.

Plain-language version of OECD (2024), Updated OECD Definition of an AI System.

AI is already part of your day

You already rely on AI, often without noticing. Here is where it quietly shows up.



At home and on your phone

Voice assistants, predictive text, spam filters, map routes and bank fraud alerts are AI making fast guesses.



When you shop or stream

Online shops and streaming apps match your past choices to new suggestions.

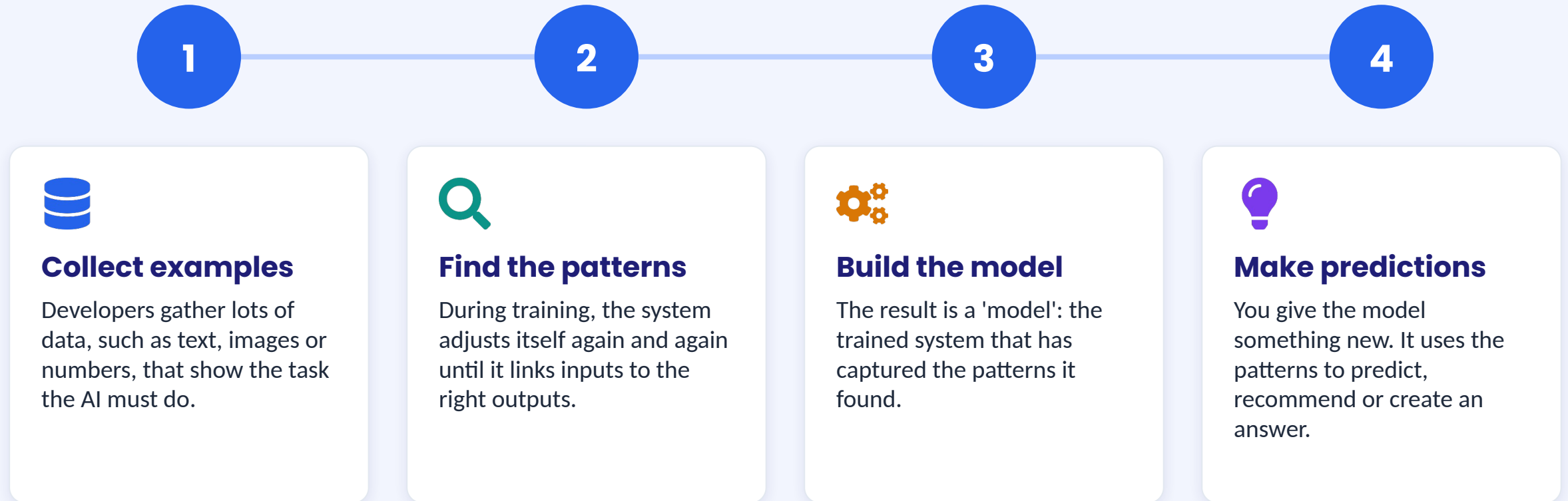


At work

Email sorting, translation, meeting transcripts and customer chatbots handle routine tasks.

How AI learns: from examples to answers

Modern AI is 'trained'. It studies examples until it can handle new cases on its own.



Key idea: more good examples usually means a more reliable AI.

The big idea: learning, not rules

Older software followed rules a person wrote. Modern AI works out the rules itself from data.

A Old way: hand-written rules

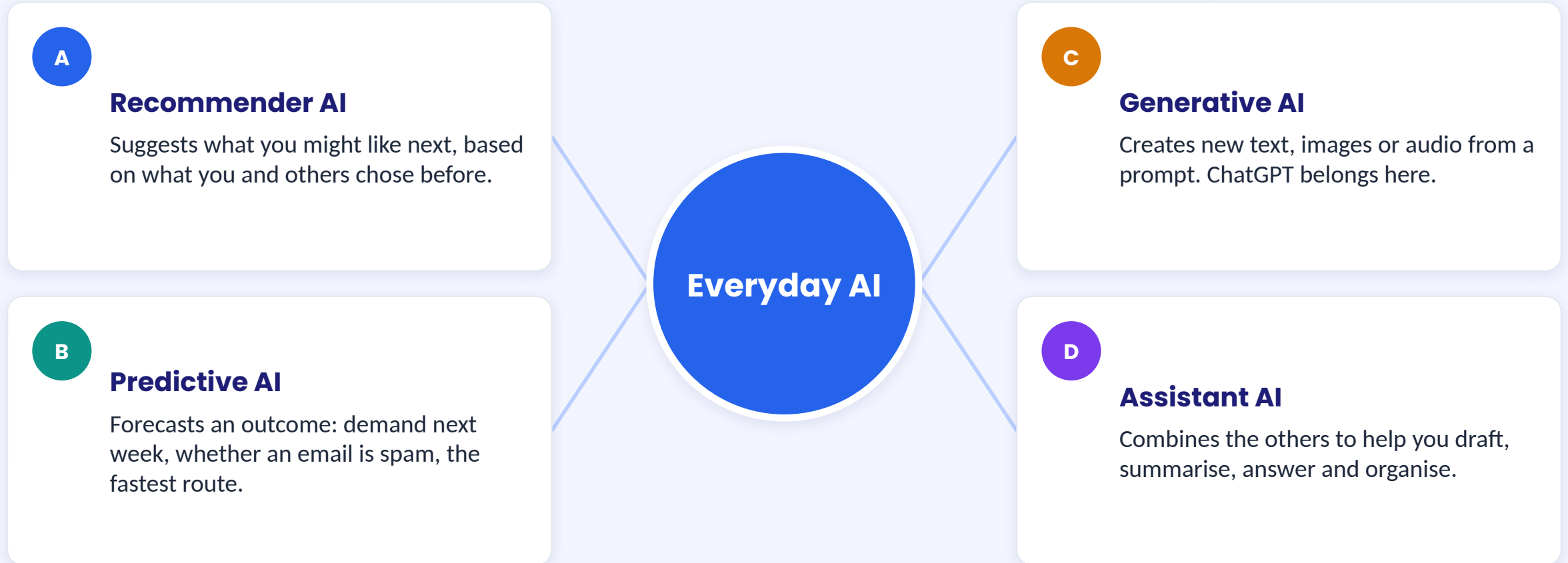
- A person had to foresee every situation
- Each situation needed its own instruction
- It broke down on messy tasks like understanding language

B New way: learning from data

- The system is shown thousands of examples
- It works out the patterns by itself
- This is why AI can now write, translate and answer questions

AI learns from human-made data, so it can copy human mistakes and bias. Always check its answers.

Kinds of AI you will meet



Generative AI and chatbots

Tools like ChatGPT are 'generative'. Here is the simple idea behind them.



They predict the next word

A chatbot writes by guessing the most likely next word again and again, learned from huge amounts of text.



They sound fluent and human

They learned from human writing, so their answers read naturally, even when they are wrong.



They do not truly understand

They match patterns in language. They do not 'know' facts the way a person does.



Tools, not oracles

Used well, they save hours of drafting and explaining, as long as you check the result.

A chatbot predicts a likely answer. Likely is not the same as correct.

What AI can and cannot do

AI is powerful, but it is a tool with real limits.



What AI does well

- Spot patterns in huge amounts of data in seconds
- Draft text, translate and summarise documents
- Answer common questions and automate repetitive tasks
- Work around the clock without getting tired



What AI cannot do

- Truly understand meaning, context or your intentions
- Guarantee its answers are correct
- Replace human judgement, ethics and empathy
- Know anything it was never trained on

Rule of thumb: AI drafts, a human decides. Always check important outputs.

AI can be confidently wrong

HALLUCINATIONS

AI can state false information as if it were true. This is called a 'hallucination'.

It predicts likely-sounding text and does not check facts. Verify facts, dates and numbers with a trusted source.



How to write a good prompt

A 'prompt' is what you ask the AI. Better prompts get better answers.

1



Be specific

Say what you want, for whom, and how long. 'Write a 5-line friendly reply to a customer asking for a refund' beats 'write a reply'.

2



Give context

Add the background the AI needs: your role, the audience, the tone and any facts it must include.

3



Show an example

Paste a sample of the style or format you want. Examples guide the AI better than adjectives.

4



Refine step by step

Treat it as a conversation. Ask for changes like 'shorter' or 'more formal' until it fits.

If the answer misses, do not restart. Tell the AI what to fix.

Smart habits when using AI

Use AI as a helpful assistant, not an authority you never question.



Verify before you trust

Check facts, figures and names against a reliable source before you use them.



Protect private information

Never paste passwords, customer data or confidential files into public AI tools.



Keep your judgement

AI drafts and suggests. You make the final decision and you are responsible for it.



Give it feedback

Tell the AI what to improve. Going back and forth is normal and gives a better result.

Free tools to try: ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and DeepL Translate.

Check Your Understanding

Try answering these in your own words before moving on.



In one sentence, how would you explain what AI is to a friend who has never heard of it?



Why can an AI chatbot sound completely confident and still be wrong?



Name two tasks AI does well and one important thing it cannot do.



What is one habit you will use every time you rely on an AI answer?



Learning Resources

Want to go further? These are free and trusted.



Elements of AI: free online course for beginners

<https://www.elementsofai.com/>



OECD (2024): Explanatory memorandum on the updated OECD definition of an AI system

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/explanatory-memorandum-on-the-updated-oecd-definition-of-an-ai-system_623da898-en.html



L1.1 Key Takeaways

Before the next lesson, hold on to these five points.



AI is software that learns patterns from examples. It is a tool, not magic.



It predicts, recommends and generates, but it does not truly understand.



AI can be fluent and confident yet wrong, so always check important outputs.



Clear, specific prompts with context and examples get far better results.



You stay in charge: AI drafts and suggests, a human decides and is responsible.



Now Put It Into Practice

Head to the Re-AI learning platform to finish this lesson.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Build a better prompt

On the platform · about 10 minutes



HANDS-ON EXERCISE EX 1.1

Map AI in your world

1 hour · Tools: Google Search, ChatGPT
(free, or Google Gemini / Microsoft
Copilot)



LESSON QUIZ

5 multiple-choice questions

70% to pass · unlimited retakes



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