

T H E C O M P L E T E

# GEMINI AI

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE

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*From First Login to Power User — Everything You Need to Know*

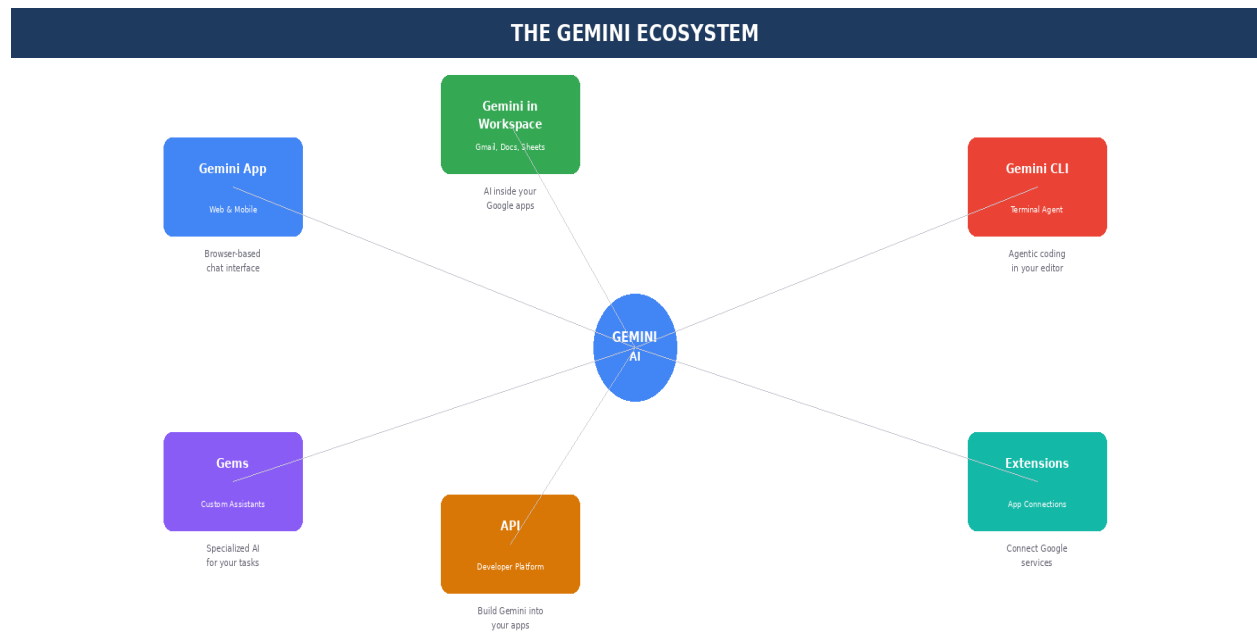
Covers: Gemini App • Gems • Extensions • Deep Research  
Canvas • Gemini Live • Gemini CLI • Models • Pricing

2026 Edition • Updated March 2026

## Chapter 1: What Is Gemini?

Gemini is Google's most capable family of AI models, powering a suite of tools designed to help you think, create, learn, and get things done. Built by Google DeepMind, Gemini represents Google's unified approach to AI — one family of models that works across text, images, audio, video, and code natively.

### The Gemini Ecosystem at a Glance



Gemini is not just a chatbot. It's an entire platform spanning the web, your phone, your desktop, Google Workspace, and even your terminal. Each access point serves a different purpose, but they all share the same underlying Gemini models.

### How to Access Gemini

**Gemini App (Web)** — The browser-based interface at [gemini.google.com](https://gemini.google.com). Sign in with your Google account and start chatting immediately. This is where most people begin.

**Gemini Mobile App** — Available on Android (as the default assistant) and iOS. Talk to Gemini on the go, use voice commands, and get help anywhere.

**Gemini in Google Workspace** — Integrated directly into Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Meet. Ask Gemini to draft emails, summarize documents, create presentations, and more — right where you work.

**Gemini CLI (Terminal)** — An open-source command-line tool for developers. Write, debug, and manage code directly from your terminal with Gemini's intelligence.

**Gemini API** — For developers building Gemini into their own applications via Google AI Studio or Vertex AI. Generous free tier available.

## Creating Your Account

1

### Go to [gemini.google.com](https://gemini.google.com)

Open your browser and navigate to [gemini.google.com](https://gemini.google.com). Click "Sign in" with your Google account.

2

### Accept the terms

Review and accept Google's Terms of Service and Gemini's specific usage policies.

3

### Choose your plan

You can start with the free tier immediately. Upgrade to Google AI Pro or AI Ultra at any time from Settings.

4

### Start chatting

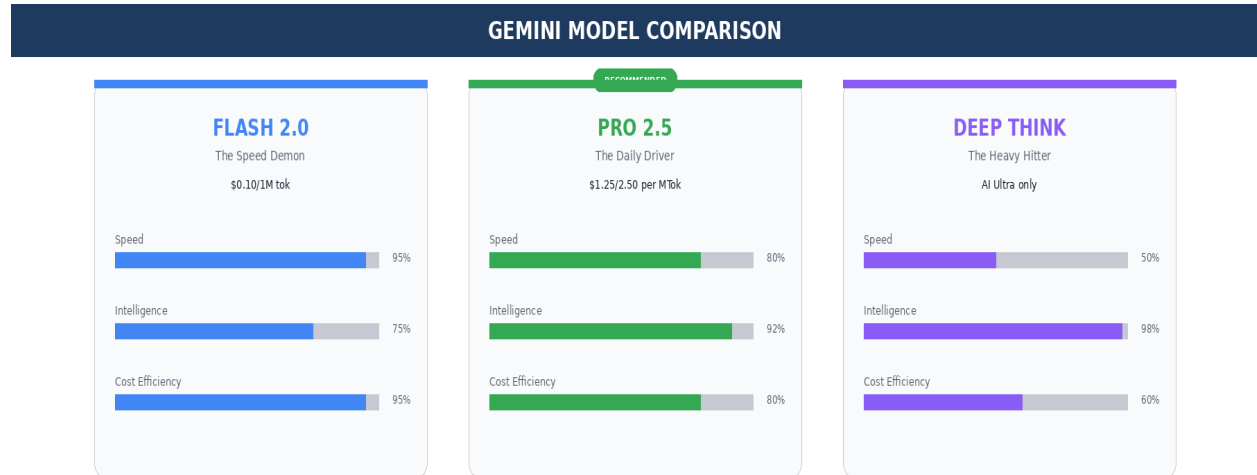
You land in the main chat interface. Type your first message or try a suggested prompt to get started.

### TIP: Your First Conversation

Try something specific: "Explain how neural networks work like I'm 12" or "Help me plan a week-long trip to Japan on a budget." Gemini excels at detailed, multi-step requests.

## Chapter 2: Understanding Gemini's Models

Gemini is a family of models, each optimized for different use cases. Understanding which model powers your experience helps you get the most out of the platform.



### Gemini 2.0 Flash — Your Everyday Workhorse

Flash is the default model for most Gemini interactions. It's fast, efficient, and handles the vast majority of tasks with ease: writing emails, answering questions, summarizing documents, and light coding. It has a 1 million token context window, meaning it can process enormous amounts of text in a single conversation.

### Gemini 2.5 Pro — The Thinking Model

Pro is Google's most intelligent model, designed for complex reasoning, advanced coding, mathematics, and deep analysis. It features built-in "thinking" capabilities that let it reason step-by-step through difficult problems. Available on AI Pro and AI Ultra plans.

### Gemini 2.5 Flash — Speed Meets Intelligence

The newest addition to the family, 2.5 Flash combines the speed of Flash models with enhanced reasoning abilities. It's a great middle ground when you need more intelligence than 2.0 Flash but faster responses than 2.5 Pro.

### Deep Think — Maximum Reasoning Power

Deep Think is an enhanced reasoning mode available within 2.5 Pro. When activated, Gemini spends significantly more time reasoning through a problem before responding. Use it for complex math proofs, intricate logic puzzles, or multi-layered analysis tasks.

#### WHEN IN DOUBT

Stick with the default model (2.0 Flash for free users, 2.5 Pro for paid users). Only switch to Deep Think mode for genuinely complex reasoning tasks.

Model	Best For	Context Window	Availability
Gemini 2.0 Flash	Everyday tasks, speed	1M tokens	Free + all plans
Gemini 2.5 Flash	Balanced speed & smarts	1M tokens	AI Pro + AI Ultra
Gemini 2.5 Pro	Complex reasoning, coding	1M tokens	AI Pro + AI Ultra
Deep Think (2.5 Pro)	Maximum reasoning	1M tokens	AI Ultra

## Chapter 3: Pricing & Plans

Gemini offers a straightforward three-tier pricing structure. The free tier is surprisingly capable, and the paid tiers unlock significantly more powerful models and features.

**CHOOSE YOUR PLAN**

**FREE**  
**\$0**  
/month

- ✓ Gemini 2.0 Flash
- ✓ Limited Pro access
- ✓ 100 AI credits/mo
- ✓ Gemini Live
- ✓ Basic Deep Research

MOST POPULAR  
**AI PRO**  
**\$19.99**  
/month

- ✓ Full Gemini 2.5 access
- ✓ 1,000 AI credits/mo
- ✓ Deep Research
- ✓ Gems & Canvas
- ✓ Flow video gen

**AI ULTRA**  
**\$42**  
/month\*

- ✓ Gemini 2.5 Pro
- ✓ 25,000 AI credits/mo
- ✓ Deep Think mode
- ✓ Visual reports
- ✓ Max everything

### Free Tier — \$0/month

Access to Gemini 2.0 Flash with a generous daily usage limit. You get text and image generation, file uploads, Extensions for Google services, and a 1 million token context window. For many users, this is more than enough.

### Google AI Pro — \$19.99/month

Unlocks Gemini 2.5 Pro, the most intelligent model. You also get higher usage limits, priority access during peak times, Deep Research (automated multi-step research), Gems (custom AI assistants), and access to Google's latest experimental features. This is part of the Google One AI Premium plan.

### Google AI Ultra — \$249.99/month

The top tier for power users. Everything in AI Pro plus Deep Think reasoning mode, the highest usage limits, 30TB of Google One storage, and priority access to all new features. This plan is billed at \$249.99/month.

Feature	Free	AI Pro (\$19.99/mo)	AI Ultra (\$249.99/mo)
Models	2.0 Flash	2.5 Pro, 2.5 Flash, 2.0 Flash	All models + Deep Think
Context Window	1M tokens	1M tokens	1M tokens
Deep Research	Limited	Full access	Priority access
Gems	No	Yes	Yes
Google Workspace	No	Full integration	Full integration

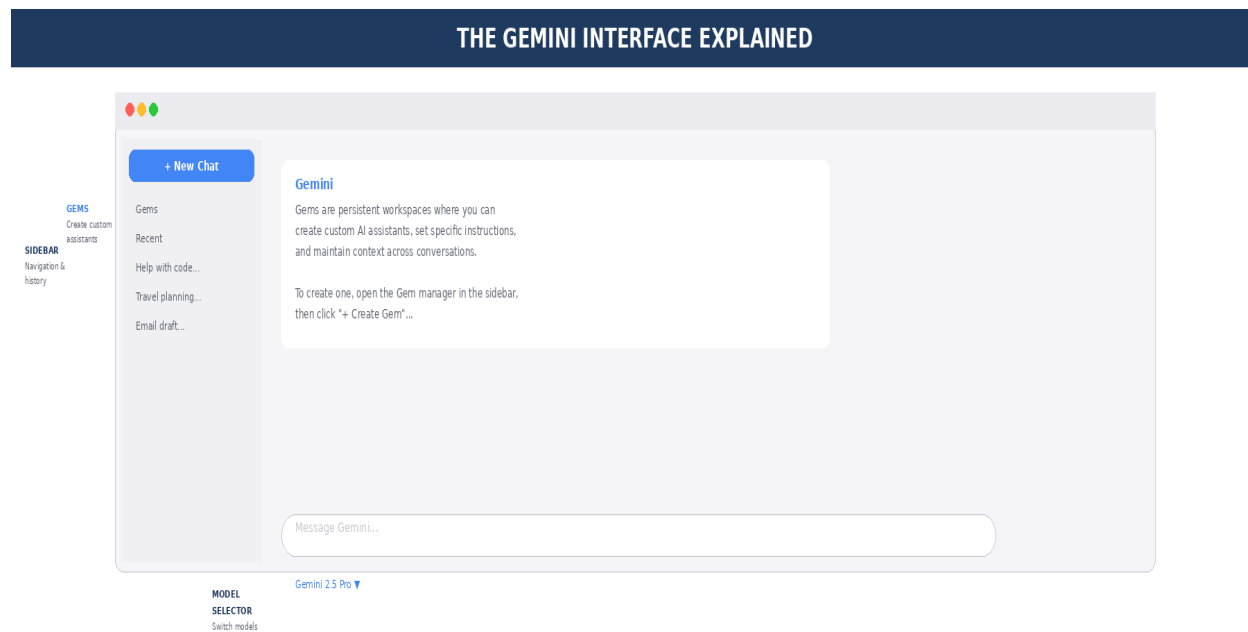
AI			
Image Generation	Basic	Enhanced	Enhanced + priority
Google One Storage	15GB	2TB	30TB

**RECOMMENDATION**

Start with the free tier to explore Gemini's capabilities. If you find yourself needing more powerful reasoning or hitting usage limits, upgrade to AI Pro. AI Ultra is best for professionals who need maximum capability and storage.

## Chapter 4: Navigating the Interface

Gemini's interface is clean and intuitive, but there are several features that aren't immediately obvious. Let's walk through everything you need to know.



### The Chat Area

The main chat area is where you interact with Gemini. Type your message in the input box at the bottom and press Enter or click the send button. Gemini's responses appear above, and you can continue the conversation naturally.

### Key Interface Elements

**Conversation List (Left Sidebar)** — All your past conversations are saved here. Click any conversation to resume it. You can rename, pin, or delete conversations.

**Model Selector** — Switch between available models using the dropdown at the top of the chat. Your available models depend on your plan.

**Attachment Button** — Upload files (images, PDFs, documents, code files) directly into your conversation. Gemini can analyze images, read documents, and process code.

**Canvas Button** — Opens a side panel for collaborative writing and coding. Edit Gemini's output directly, ask for revisions, and iterate on content.

**Share & Export** — Share conversations via link, export to Google Docs, or copy responses to your clipboard.

## Working with Files

Gemini can process a wide variety of file types. Upload images for analysis, PDFs for summarization, spreadsheets for data analysis, or code files for debugging. You can upload multiple files in a single conversation.

**1**

### Click the attachment icon

Click the + or paperclip icon in the input area to open the file picker.

**2**

### Select your files

Choose files from your device, Google Drive, or paste an image from your clipboard. You can select multiple files at once.

**3**

### Add your prompt

Type what you want Gemini to do with the files. Be specific: "Summarize the key findings" or "Compare these two documents."

### TIP: File Handling

Gemini can handle files up to 100MB each. For best results with long documents, ask specific questions rather than just saying "summarize this."

## Chapter 5: Gems — Custom AI Assistants

Gems are one of Gemini's most powerful features. They let you create custom AI assistants with specific instructions, personality, and expertise. Think of them as specialized versions of Gemini tailored for your specific needs.

### What Are Gems?

A Gem is a custom version of Gemini with pre-configured instructions. Instead of repeating the same context every time you start a new conversation, you create a Gem once and it remembers your preferences, tone, and requirements forever.

### Creating Your First Gem

- 1 Open the Gem Manager**  
Click "Gem manager" in the left sidebar, or go to [gemini.google.com/gems](https://gemini.google.com/gems).
- 2 Click "New Gem"**  
Start creating a new custom Gem from scratch.
- 3 Write your instructions**  
Tell the Gem what it should do, how it should behave, and what expertise it should have. Be detailed and specific.
- 4 Name and save**  
Give your Gem a descriptive name and save it. It will appear in your sidebar for instant access.

### Example Gems You Can Create

Gem Name	Instructions Summary	Use Case
Email Pro	Write professional emails in my company's tone. Keep them concise. Always include a clear call to action.	Business communication
Code Reviewer	Review code for bugs, performance issues, and best practices. Use my team's style guide. Be direct and specific.	Software development
Study Buddy	Help me study for my medical exams. Quiz me using Socratic method. Track topics I struggle with.	Education
Meeting Notes	Summarize meeting transcripts into action items,	Productivity

	decisions made, and follow-ups needed. Use bullet format.	
Content Writer	Write blog posts in my brand voice. Casual but authoritative. Always include SEO-friendly headings.	Marketing

**TIP: Great Gem Instructions**

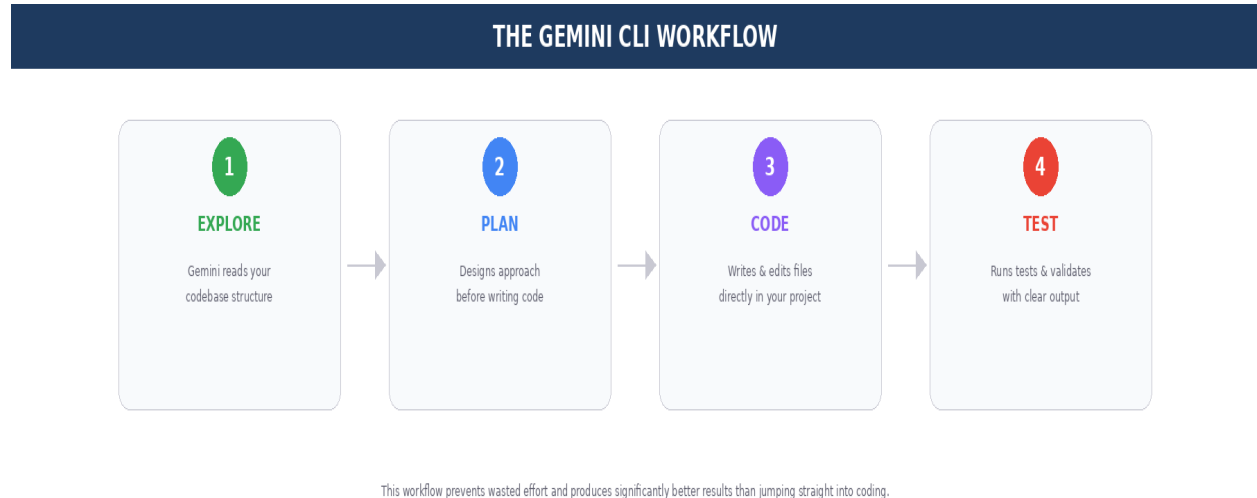
The best Gems have specific, detailed instructions. Instead of “help me write emails,” try “You are my executive assistant. Write emails in a professional but warm tone. Keep them under 150 words. Always start with context before the ask.”

## Pre-built Gems

Gemini comes with several pre-built Gems to get you started: a Learning Coach for studying, a Brainstormer for creative ideation, a Career Guide for professional advice, a Writing Editor for polishing prose, and a Coding Partner for programming help. You can use these as-is or as templates for your own custom Gems.

## Chapter 6: Gemini CLI — AI in Your Terminal

Gemini CLI is Google's open-source command-line tool that brings Gemini's intelligence directly into your terminal. If you're a developer, this is one of the most powerful ways to use Gemini.



### What Can Gemini CLI Do?

Gemini CLI operates as an agentic coding assistant. It can read and write files in your project, execute shell commands, search your codebase, and perform multi-step tasks autonomously. It uses a ReAct (Reason + Act) loop, meaning it thinks about what to do, takes an action, observes the result, and repeats until the task is complete.

### Getting Started

- 1 Install via npm**  
Open your terminal and run: `npm install -g @anthropic-ai/gemini-cli` (or use `npx` for one-off usage).
- 2 Authenticate**  
Run "gemini" in your terminal. It will open a browser window for Google OAuth authentication on first run.
- 3 Navigate to your project**  
`cd` into your project directory. Gemini CLI works best when it has context about your codebase.
- 4 Start coding**

Type natural language commands: “Add input validation to the signup form” or “Fix the failing tests in auth.test.js.”

## Key Features

**Multi-file editing** — Gemini can read, create, and modify multiple files in a single task. It understands project structure and makes coordinated changes.

**Shell command execution** — It can run build commands, tests, linters, and any shell command needed to complete your task.

**MCP support** — Model Context Protocol (MCP) allows Gemini CLI to connect to external tools and data sources, extending its capabilities.

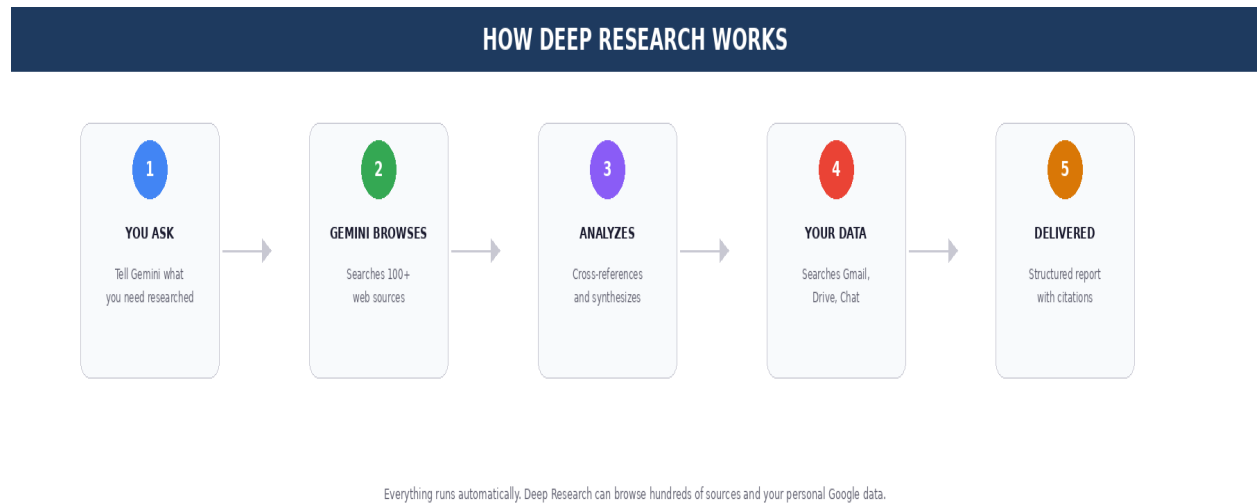
**Sandboxed execution** — Commands run in a sandboxed environment by default. You approve any file changes before they're written to disk.

### TIP: Effective CLI Usage

Give Gemini CLI context about what you're building. Start with: “This is a React e-commerce app using TypeScript and Zustand for state management. Add a shopping cart feature with quantity controls.” The more context, the better the output.

## Chapter 7: Deep Research — Automated Investigation

Deep Research is one of Gemini's standout features. It's an AI-powered research assistant that autonomously browses the web, reads multiple sources, and compiles comprehensive research reports on any topic.



### How Deep Research Works

When you activate Deep Research, Gemini creates a multi-step research plan, browses dozens of web sources, cross-references information, and produces a structured report with citations. The entire process takes 2–5 minutes and replaces hours of manual research.

- 1 Start a new conversation**  
Open Gemini and type your research question. Be as specific as possible about what you want to learn.
- 2 Activate Deep Research**  
Click the Deep Research button (or select it from the model/mode dropdown). Gemini will create a research plan.
- 3 Review the plan**  
Gemini shows you its research plan before starting. You can modify it, add focus areas, or approve it as-is.
- 4 Wait for results**  
Gemini browses the web, reads sources, and compiles findings. You'll see progress updates as it works. This typically takes 2–5 minutes.

5

**Review and export**

Read the compiled report with source citations. Export it to Google Docs for further editing or sharing.

## Best Use Cases for Deep Research

**Market analysis** — “Research the current state of the electric vehicle market in Southeast Asia, including key players, market size, and growth projections.”

**Competitive intelligence** — “Compare the top 5 project management tools for remote teams, focusing on pricing, integrations, and user reviews.”

**Academic research** — “Summarize recent research on the effects of intermittent fasting on cognitive performance, citing peer-reviewed studies.”

**Technical deep dives** — “Explain the current state of WebAssembly adoption, including performance benchmarks, major use cases, and limitations.”

**NOTE**

Deep Research is available on AI Pro and AI Ultra plans. Free users get a limited number of Deep Research queries per day.

## Chapter 8: Canvas — Collaborative Editing

Canvas is Gemini's side-by-side editing environment. Instead of just getting a response in the chat, Canvas opens a dedicated workspace where you and Gemini collaborate on documents, code, and creative content in real time.

### When to Use Canvas

Canvas is ideal for any task where you want to iterate on output. Writing a blog post? Open Canvas so you can edit paragraphs while asking Gemini to improve others. Working on code? Canvas gives you a full editor with syntax highlighting where Gemini can make targeted changes.

### How Canvas Works

- 1 Open Canvas**  
Click the Canvas icon in the chat interface, or Gemini may automatically suggest Canvas for writing/coding tasks.
- 2 Generate initial content**  
Ask Gemini to create your first draft. The content appears in the Canvas panel on the right side of your screen.
- 3 Edit collaboratively**  
You can directly edit the text in Canvas while simultaneously asking Gemini to revise specific sections, change tone, add detail, or restructure content.
- 4 Iterate and refine**  
Continue the back-and-forth: edit what you want, ask Gemini to improve the rest. Each version is saved so you can revert changes.

### Canvas vs. Regular Chat

Feature	Regular Chat	Canvas
Output location	Inline in conversation	Dedicated side panel
Direct editing	Copy-paste required	Edit in place
Version history	Scroll through chat	Built-in versioning
Best for	Quick answers, Q&A	Long-form writing, code
Collaboration style	Back-and-forth	True co-editing

**TIP: Canvas for Code**

Canvas is particularly powerful for coding. You get syntax highlighting, can select specific code blocks for Gemini to refine, and can test iterations without losing previous versions.

## Chapter 9: Extensions — Connecting Google Services

Extensions are how Gemini connects to Google’s ecosystem of services. They transform Gemini from a standalone chatbot into a hub that can access your emails, calendar, documents, maps, flights, hotels, and more.



### Available Extensions

Extension	What It Does	Example Prompt
Google Workspace	Access Gmail, Docs, Drive, Sheets	“Find the Q4 report in my Drive and summarize it”
Google Maps	Directions, place info, travel planning	“Find Italian restaurants near me open past 10pm”
Google Flights	Search flights, compare prices	“Find cheapest flights from NYC to Tokyo in June”
Google Hotels	Search accommodations, compare options	“Find pet-friendly hotels in Barcelona under \$150/night”
YouTube	Search and summarize video content	“Find the best tutorials on React hooks”

### Enabling Extensions

- 1 Open Settings**  
 Click your profile picture in the top right, then select “Extensions” from the menu.
- 2 Toggle extensions on**  
 Enable the extensions you want to use. Each extension requires permission to access the relevant Google service.

**3**

### **Use naturally in chat**

Just ask Gemini questions that involve those services. It automatically knows when to use an extension based on your prompt.

#### **PRIVACY NOTE**

Extensions only access your data when you explicitly ask Gemini to. Your data is not used to train models. You can disable any extension at any time from Settings.

## Chapter 10: Prompting Gemini Effectively

The quality of Gemini's responses depends heavily on how you ask. A well-crafted prompt can be the difference between a generic answer and a brilliant one. Here are the key principles for effective prompting.



### The Five Principles

#### 1. Be Specific and Detailed

Vague prompts get vague answers. Instead of “help me with my resume,” try “Rewrite the experience section of my resume for a Senior Product Manager role at a fintech company. Emphasize data-driven decision making and cross-functional leadership.”

#### 2. Provide Context

Tell Gemini who you are, what you're working on, and why. Context helps Gemini tailor its response to your exact situation. “I'm a freelance designer creating a proposal for a healthcare startup” is much better than “help me write a proposal.”

#### 3. Specify the Format

Tell Gemini exactly how you want the output. “Give me a bullet-point list,” “Write this as a professional email,” “Create a comparison table,” or “Keep it under 200 words.” Gemini follows formatting instructions well.

#### 4. Use Examples

When you want a specific style or structure, provide an example. “Write product descriptions in this style: [example].” Few-shot prompting (giving 2–3 examples) is one of the most effective techniques for consistent output.

## **5. Iterate and Refine**

Don't settle for the first response. Ask Gemini to "make it more concise," "add more technical detail," "change the tone to be more casual," or "rewrite the second paragraph." Treat it as a conversation, not a one-shot query.

### **POWER TECHNIQUE: System-Level Instructions**

Start complex tasks with a system-level context: "You are an expert financial analyst. I'm going to share quarterly earnings data. Analyze trends, flag anomalies, and present findings in a format suitable for a board presentation." This sets the stage for a productive multi-turn conversation.

## Chapter 11: Gemini Live — Voice Conversations

Gemini Live lets you have natural, free-flowing voice conversations with Gemini. Unlike traditional voice assistants that handle one command at a time, Gemini Live supports real back-and-forth dialogue — you can interrupt, change topics, and think out loud.

### Getting Started with Gemini Live

1

#### Open the Gemini app on your phone

Gemini Live is currently available on the mobile app (Android and iOS).

2

#### Tap the Live icon

Tap the waveform icon or say “Hey Google, start Gemini Live” to begin a voice session.

3

#### Start talking naturally

Speak conversationally. You can interrupt Gemini mid-sentence, ask follow-ups, or change direction. It handles natural conversation flow.

4

#### Choose your voice

Customize Gemini’s voice from multiple options in Settings. Each voice has a different personality and tone.

### Best Use Cases for Live

**Brainstorming** — Talk through ideas out loud. Gemini can riff with you, push back on weak ideas, and help develop strong ones.

**Interview prep** — Practice answering interview questions. Gemini can play the role of interviewer and give you feedback on your responses.

**Learning** — Have Gemini explain complex topics conversationally. Ask follow-up questions naturally as they come to mind.

**Hands-free assistance** — Get help while cooking, driving, or exercising. Gemini Live works entirely through voice.

#### NOTE

Gemini Live currently works with text-based knowledge. It cannot yet browse the web or access extensions during a Live session, though these features are expected to roll out in future updates.

## Chapter 12: Real-World Workflows & Power Tips

Now that you understand Gemini's features, let's put them together into practical workflows that save you real time.

### Workflow: Research to Presentation

1

#### Deep Research

Use Deep Research to investigate your topic. Export the report to Google Docs.

2

#### Refine in Canvas

Open Canvas and ask Gemini to restructure the research into presentation-friendly sections with key takeaways.

3

#### Create slides

Use Gemini in Google Slides to generate a presentation from your refined content.

4

#### Polish and practice

Use Gemini Live to rehearse your presentation. Ask it to quiz you on likely audience questions.

### Workflow: Email & Communication Management

1

#### Create an Email Gem

Build a Gem with your communication style, common recipients, and tone preferences.

2

#### Draft with context

Use the Google Workspace extension: "Summarize the last 5 emails from the marketing team and draft a status update reply."

3

#### Review and send

Edit the draft in Gmail with Gemini's help, then send directly from your inbox.

### Power Tips

#### TIP 1: Chain Your Tools

Use Deep Research to gather information, then feed it into a Gem for consistent formatting. Example: Research competitor pricing, then use your "Analyst" Gem to create a competitive

comparison document.

**TIP 2: Use @ to Reference Files**

In Gemini, you can use @Google Drive, @Gmail, or @Google Docs to directly reference specific files and emails in your prompts.

**TIP 3: Multi-Modal Prompts**

Upload images alongside text prompts. Take a photo of a whiteboard, upload it, and ask Gemini to “convert this diagram into a structured project plan with timelines.”

**TIP 4: Conversation Memory**

Gemini can remember context within a conversation. Build on previous messages rather than repeating context. If you're working on a long project, keep it in one conversation thread.

## Chapter 13: Troubleshooting Common Issues

Even experienced users run into issues. Here are the most common problems and how to solve them.

Problem	Likely Cause	Solution
Gemini gives generic answers	Prompt is too vague	Add specific context, role, and desired format to your prompt
Extensions not working	Not enabled in Settings	Go to Settings → Extensions and toggle them on. Re-authorize if needed.
Hit usage limit	Daily/hourly cap reached	Wait for the reset or upgrade your plan for higher limits
Gemini refuses a request	Safety filter triggered	Rephrase your request with more context about legitimate use case
Slow responses	Using a heavy model/mode	Switch from Deep Think to standard 2.5 Pro, or use 2.0 Flash for speed
Image generation issues	Content policy restriction	Adjust your prompt to avoid restricted content. Be more specific about style.
Can't find a conversation	Too many conversations	Use the search bar in the sidebar to find conversations by keyword
Gemini forgot earlier context	Context window exceeded	Start a new conversation and provide key context upfront

### Getting More Help

**Gemini Help Center** — Visit [support.google.com/gemini](https://support.google.com/gemini) for official documentation, guides, and troubleshooting articles.

**Google One Support** — AI Pro and AI Ultra subscribers get access to Google One support for billing and account issues.

**Community Forums** — The Google AI community forums are a great place to share tips, ask questions, and learn from other Gemini users.

**Gemini Updates Blog** — Follow [blog.google/technology/ai](https://blog.google/technology/ai) for the latest Gemini feature announcements and model updates.

## Chapter 14: What's Coming Next

Gemini is evolving rapidly. Google is investing heavily in AI, and new features are shipping regularly. Here's what's on the horizon and what to watch for.

### Expected Near-Term Updates

**Project Astra** — Google's vision for a universal AI agent that can see, hear, and understand the world around you through your phone's camera and sensors. Early demos show real-time visual understanding and conversational responses about what Gemini sees.

**Enhanced Gemini Live** — Upcoming updates will let Gemini Live browse the web, use extensions, and share your screen during voice conversations, making it a true hands-free assistant.

**Super Gems** — An upcoming evolution of Gems that can take actions on your behalf — booking appointments, sending emails, filling out forms — not just providing information.

**Improved Workspace Integration** — Deeper integration into Google Workspace with AI-powered workflows that span multiple apps: research in Search, draft in Docs, present in Slides, all orchestrated by Gemini.

**Gemini Robotics** — Google DeepMind is developing Gemini-powered robotics capabilities, bringing AI intelligence to physical robots for real-world tasks.

### How to Stay Updated

1

#### Follow Google AI Blog

Visit [blog.google/technology/ai](https://blog.google/technology/ai) for official announcements and feature launches.

2

#### Enable experimental features

In Gemini Settings, opt into "Labs" or experimental features to get early access to new capabilities.

3

#### Join the community

Follow AI communities on Reddit ([r/Gemini](https://www.reddit.com/r/Gemini), [r/GoogleAI](https://www.reddit.com/r/GoogleAI)), X, and YouTube for tips, tutorials, and discussions from other users.

### FINAL THOUGHT

Gemini is one of the most capable AI platforms available today, and it's getting better every month. The key to getting value from it is to actually use it — integrate it into your daily workflow, experiment with Gems, try Deep Research for your next project, and don't be afraid to push its limits. The more you use Gemini, the more you'll discover what it can do for you.