

AI FIELD GUIDE

Essential Tools for Reporting, Research, Verification and Storytelling



The Best Tool for the Job










Smarter Prompting



Better Reporting

WHICH AI TOOL SHOULD I USE?

	1  ChatGPT	2  Claude	3  Perplexity	4  Gemini
BEST FOR	All-around AI assistant for everyday work, content creation and learning.	Deep thinking, long documents, high-quality writing and complex reasoning.	Real-time search, news and fact-based answers with citations.	Research, large datasets, Google ecosystem and multimodal content (video, docs, images).
 USE CASES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing content (emails, posts) • Learning new topics • Brainstorming story angles • Productivity workflows • AI agents & automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy documents • Produces detailed summaries and analysis • Long-form writing • Deep analysis • Decision-making • Good for seeing various sides of arguments and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking news & updates • Research with citations • Quick fact-checking • Market & data insights • Competitive research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze long PDFs/videos • Work with Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Gmail • Data-heavy tasks • Multimodal projects
 STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-around versatility • Strong memory & personalization • Imagines well • Balances speed and quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent reasoning • Handles large context well • Clean, high-quality outputs • Strong with nuanced tasks • Performs best with specific outcome prompts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time information • Cited sources • Transparent and often most accurate • Good for research because it cites sources with links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Google integration • Handles large files • Strong multimodal capabilities • Good for data analysis
 LIMITATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make mistakes • Fact-check is essential • Data cut-off in free version 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller ecosystem • Less integrations • Shorter memory in free tier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less creative • Not ideal for long-form writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional system instability under heavy loads • Inconsistent on subjective creative tasks

PROMPTS JOURNALISTS SHOULD KNOW

FORMAT FIRST

Try:
Respond only in bullet points, maximum five.
or
Give the answer as a three-column table.

THE EXPLAINER

Try:
Explain this as if I know the basics but have never gone deep. Start with why it matters. Use a real example.

HEADLINE COACH

Try:
Suggest five compelling, accurate, SEO-friendly headlines for this story.

FACT CHECKER

Try:
Verify this source. Assess credibility, cross-check key claims, and identify anything that cannot be independently verified.

INTERVIEW PREP

Try:
Generate ten tough but fair interview questions and explain why each matters.

BIAS CHECK

Try:
What assumptions might I be making in this story? What perspectives are missing?



THE BEST PROMPTS SHAPE OUTCOME, STYLE, CONTEXT, FORMAT, SOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS.

TOP FREE GOOGLE AI TOOLS



Gemini Live
Live AI chats with screen sharing.



Veo 3
Generate video from text prompts.



Google AI Studio
Test & compare AI models.



Firebase Studio
Build and launch apps with AI.



Nano Banana
Edit & refine AI images.



Gemini in Sheets
Formulas & insights in spreadsheets.



Gems in Gemini
Build custom AI assistants.

DATA & RESEARCH TOOLS



Prompt Improver
AI agent for prompt engineering that rewrites prompts to produce more specific, detailed, and useful results.



Visualping
Monitors web pages for content updates and sends alerts. Free Visualping Journalist Plan available for reporters.



Violation Tracker
The first wide-ranging database on corporate misconduct. Produced by the Corporate Research Project of Good Jobs.



ScamSearch.io/
Search by profile picture, email, username, pseudonym, phone number, crypto address or website.



BillTrack50
AI-powered resource for finding and tracking legislation in the U.S. Free with paid upgrades. Built by Stanford's Big Local News.

VISUALIZATION & CHARTS



AI Graph Maker
Turn your data into custom bar charts, line charts, flowcharts, pie charts and scatter plots with AI effortlessly.



AI Infographic Generator
Turn blog posts, articles, and PDFs into engaging infographics. Generate visuals quickly and easily from your data.



VizChart: AI FlowChart Maker
Create professional flowcharts instantly.



Flourish
Turn spreadsheets into visualizations, maps, interactive charts, etc.



Eraser Build
AI diagrams and docs from simple text prompts.



MyLens
Turns your ideas and content into effective visuals that are interactive, editable and ready to present. Upload PDFs, web pages, documents and more.

★ JOURNALIST FAVORITE ★



NotebookLM

A personalized AI by Google. Upload your documents, PDFs, and notes to generate cited summaries, answer questions, and build an interactive study guide for your research.

- ✓ Upload source records
- ✓ Build timelines
- ✓ Upload interview transcripts
- ✓ Find patterns
- ✓ Upload annual reports
- ✓ Generate briefings
- ✓ Upload meeting minutes
- ✓ Ask questions

AUDIO & TRANSCRIPTION



Otter.ai

Transcribes and adds video interviews in real time while syncing transcripts to the recording. Free tier provides up to 300 minutes per month.

AI FAKE DETECTION



TextGuard AI
Detects fake images, video, text (free).



Hiya
A Chrome extension that can assist with deepfake voice detection.



AI or Not
A great web tool for quickly authenticating if an image, video, or audio file is real or AI-generated.



FotoForensics
Uses Error Level Analysis (ELA) to spot hidden edits and AI-generated alterations in images.



Hive Moderation
Specializes in AI content moderation and has models capable of recognizing AI-generated images, text, and audio.

WRITING & EDITING



QuillBot Paraphraser

Paraphrases any text while retaining tone and style. Includes grammar checker, plagiarism checker and summarizer.



Hemingway App

Free AI tool that grades your writing for readability, etc.



Hemingway Editor Plus

Make your writing clear and concise with AI.



Verify AI outputs before publishing. Separate facts from assertions.



Disclose AI use per your newsroom's policy and follow editorial guidelines.



Never fabricate quotes, sources or events.



Use AI to enhance human judgment—not replace critical thinking.



Protect sources and confidential information.



Respect copyright and intellectual property.



Stay informed. AI evolves fast—keep learning.

AL TOMPKINS

Custom Journalism Training
• Teaching • Coaching



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