

What AI Is / What It Isn't

A plain-English reference card to keep close by.

✓ AI IS

- Software that takes input and produces output
- A generative tool trained on enormous amounts of text
- A very fast, well-read assistant for words and ideas
- A pattern-matching system that generates likely responses
- A useful tool with real, knowable limitations
- Something you can learn to use well in a short time

✗ AI IS NOT

- A search engine — it doesn't look things up
- A person — it has no opinions, feelings, or intent
- Magic — it's a tool, not an oracle
- Always right — it can be confidently wrong
- Omniscient — it has a training cutoff date
- A replacement for your judgment

THE ONE IDEA THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

AI is a very sophisticated autocomplete. It generates a response that fits the pattern of what a good answer looks like — based on patterns it learned from an enormous amount of human writing. It does not look things up. It does not know what it does not know. **That is the key to using it well.**

AI IS GOOD AT

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| Drafting | First drafts of emails, plans, summaries — it handles the blank page. |
| Rewriting | Takes what you wrote and makes it cleaner, clearer, more precise. |
| Summarising | Turns long documents, articles, or notes into the key points. |
| Explaining | Translates technical, legal, or complex language into plain English. |
| Brainstorming | Generates options quickly — ideas, phrasings, questions, approaches. |
| Organising | Turns scattered notes and messy thoughts into clear structures. |