First 30 Days with AI

A friendly four-week plan for busy people, by David Hanscom · AI speaker and educator · davidhanscom.com

AI is a tool for empowering people, not replacing them. This plan helps you get comfortable, get useful, and stay in the driver's seat.

How this works

- **Time needed:** about 15 minutes, three times a week.
- **Tools:** any major AI assistant works (Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, or Copilot). Pick one and stick with it for the month.
- **No technical background required.** If you can write an email, you can do this.
- **Rule of the month:** use real tasks from your real work. Practice on things that matter to you.

Each week has a goal, three short sessions, a prompt to paste, and a win to celebrate.

Week 1: Get comfortable

Goal: Make AI feel like an ordinary tool.

Session 1: Say hello. Open your chosen assistant and have a casual conversation. Ask it what it can help with. Notice that it answers in plain language.

Session 2: Three tiny tasks. Ask it to do three small things from your week: summarize a long email, suggest five subject lines, or rewrite a sentence more simply.

Session 3: Ask it to teach you. Pick a topic from your industry and ask for a plain-English explanation.

Prompt to paste

```
I'm new to using AI. I work as a [your role] in [your industry].
Give me five ways you could save me time this week, using examples
from my kind of work. Keep each one to a single sentence.
```

Win to celebrate: You finished three real tasks with AI's help.

Week 2: Learn to prompt

Goal: Get better results by giving clearer instructions.

Session 1: Meet Role, Task, Guidelines. Take one task from last week and rewrite your request using three parts: who the AI should be, what you need, and the rules to follow. (The *AI Prompting 101 Cheat Sheet* in this repo has a template.)

Session 2: Practice iterating. Take a first draft and improve it with follow-ups: "shorter," "warmer," "give me three versions."

Session 3: Write your background paragraph. Draft five or six sentences about who you are, who you serve, and how you like to sound. Save it somewhere handy.

Prompt to paste

```
Role: You are a [role that fits your task].
Task: [Describe what you need, with the key details].
Guidelines: Keep it [length], in a [tone] tone. Avoid [anything you dislike].
Before you answer, ask me any questions you need to do this well.
```

Win to celebrate: You got a draft you would actually use, in two or three rounds.

Week 3: Save real time

Goal: Aim AI at the tasks that eat your hours.

Session 1: Make a list. Write down five repeating tasks (replies, summaries, proposals, social posts, meeting notes). Circle the two that annoy you most.

Session 2: Try it on task one. Use the three-part prompt and your background paragraph. Time yourself and compare with how long it usually takes.

Session 3: Try it on task two. Repeat, then note what worked and what needed fixing.

Prompt to paste

```
Here are my notes from today's meeting: [paste notes].
Turn them into: (1) a three-sentence summary, (2) a list of action
items with owners, and (3) a short, friendly follow-up email.
Flag anything that seems unclear or missing.
```

Win to celebrate: You saved at least 30 minutes this week and can say where.

Week 4: Make it stick

Goal: Turn what worked into habits you can keep.

Session 1: Build your prompt library. Collect your three best prompts in one document. Give each a clear name.

Session 2: Set your guardrails. Decide what you will never paste into an AI tool (client financials, passwords, private personal details) and what you will always check by hand (names, numbers, claims).

Session 3: Share it. Show one colleague, friend, or team member your best prompt. Teaching it locks it in.

Prompt to paste

```
Here are three prompts I use often: [paste them].
Help me turn each into a reusable template with [brackets] for the parts
that change. Keep each template under 100 words.
```

Win to celebrate: You have a small, personal toolkit and a habit you trust.

Day 30 reflection

Write a few honest sentences answering each question:

1. What is one task I now do faster or better?
2. What surprised me, in a good way or a frustrating way?
3. Where did I need to step in and correct the AI?
4. What will I try next month?

Keep going

- Revisit your prompt library every few weeks and trim what you no longer use.
- Try one new use each month.
- Keep the human touch front and center. The warmth, the judgment, and the relationships are yours.

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