

## Overview

Most new users can start learning AI for free just by opening the browser they already use and talking to the assistant built into their existing ecosystem (Microsoft or Google), without installing anything new. Signing in with a free Microsoft or Google account is optional at first and mainly matters when you want your chats saved, synced across devices, or you start hitting hidden usage limits.

## How to use this article

This article is written for “newbies” who just want to try AI without breaking anything or paying money. It focuses on the three most common setups:

- Windows + Edge + Microsoft
- Windows + Chrome + Google
- macOS + Safari/Chrome + Google

Each section explains:

- What button or page to use
- Whether you need an account
- What you can do for free before worrying about anything advanced
- At the end there is a short section on when it’s worth signing up for a free account in each ecosystem.

## Windows + Edge + Microsoft: start with Copilot

If you use a Windows PC and you see the Edge browser icon on your taskbar, your easiest free AI option is Copilot in Edge. Think of it as a “super search box” built into your browser.

For a first-time user, the simplest path looks like this:

- Open Edge.
- Click the Copilot icon in the toolbar or sidebar.
- Type a question in plain language, like “Explain this web page to me in simple terms” or “Summarize what this article is saying.”

You can usually do this without creating or signing in to a Microsoft account at first. The catch is that Copilot may limit how many questions you can ask in a single session and may stop working or prompt you to sign in if you use it heavily. Your history may also be unreliable or not saved at all.

If you are comfortable making a free Microsoft account, signing in inside Edge will generally:

- Lift some of the quiet limits on how many prompts you can send.
- Let you have longer conversations.
- Save your history so you can come back to earlier chats.

Everything in this section is still about free usage; paid plans are not needed for basic “learn about AI” or “explain this to me” tasks.

## Windows + Chrome + Google: start with Gemini in the browser

If you are on Windows but live in Chrome and use Google for search, your easiest AI starting point is Gemini, Google’s chat-style assistant. You do not need to install anything.

A no-drama way to try AI for the first time:

- Open Chrome.
- Go to Google's Gemini page.
- In the chat box, ask questions like "Explain what a large language model is, in simple terms" or paste a paragraph and say "Summarize this for me."

Today, many users can try Gemini in a "guest" or unsigned mode, which means:

- You do not have to sign into a Google account to start.
- Your chats don't stick around once you close the tab.
- There may be hidden limits on how much you can use it before it nudges you to sign in.

If you already have a Google account and feel okay signing in, Gemini becomes more useful:

- It can save your conversation history.
- It can work more smoothly across your laptop and phone.
- It can integrate with the browser to help with writing and page summaries.

All of this is still within the free tier, which is usually enough for learning, basic writing help, and "explain this topic to me like I'm new."

## macOS + Safari/Chrome + Google: use Gemini

On a Mac, many people use Safari or Chrome but still rely on Google services. For those users, the simplest AI path is again Gemini in the browser. The steps are nearly identical to Windows.

For a first experiment:

- Open Safari or Chrome on your Mac.
- Go to the Gemini web page.
- Start asking questions or paste text and ask for a summary or explanation.

The nice part: because Gemini runs in the cloud, it does not care whether your Mac has an Intel processor or an Apple Silicon chip like M1, M2, M3, or M4. As long as your macOS and browser are reasonably up to date, you can use it.

Just like on Windows:

- Guest mode (no sign-in) lets you "try before you commit," but does not save history and may have stricter usage limits.
- Signing in with a Google account gives you saved chats and generally more comfortable free usage for everyday learning and writing.

For a Mac user who wants to keep things simple and free, "Gemini in the browser" is usually the least confusing setup.

## When should a new user sign up for an account?

At the very beginning, it is perfectly fine to stay signed out and just test the built-in AI in your browser. This reduces friction and lets you see whether AI even feels useful for you. However, there are three clear signs that it is time to create or use an account:

1. You keep hitting invisible limits.
  - If your AI tool stops responding after a few questions or starts pushing you to sign in, you are bumping into free guest limits.

- Creating a free Microsoft or Google account and signing into the browser usually increases how much you can do in a day.
2. You want your history saved.
    - Guest sessions often forget everything once you close the tab or the browser.
    - If you want to re-read earlier answers, pick up a conversation from another device, or build on previous chats, you will want to be signed in.
  3. You are using AI as a regular learning tool.
    - Once you move from “trying it” to “using it a few times every week,” an account makes life easier.
    - You are still in the free tier, but features like synced history, better integration with the browser, and slightly higher limits make the experience smoother.

For a newbie-friendly summary: start with the AI that is already sitting in your browser, signed out and completely free. When you find yourself bumping into limits or wishing the tool would remember what you talked about yesterday, that’s the moment to create or use a free Microsoft or Google account—still without paying for anything.