

A PRACTICAL GUIDE · NO CODING NEEDED

AI Operator 101

For the ambitious. Be one step ahead of your industry, and learn to use AI in the work you actually do, at your job or in the business you are building.

What an AI operator actually is, how these tools really work, what Claude, ChatGPT and Gemini are each for, the corporate tasks to hand over first, and a five day plan to start.

> *For the ones who would rather be early than safe.*

A NORTH BLOOM COLLECTIVE GUIDE

Andrea Galvan

BRAND STRATEGIST & FOUNDER, NORTH BLOOM COLLECTIVE

No experience needed

Claude · ChatGPT · Gemini

A NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

I didn't plan to learn AI this way. But here we are.



Hi, I'm **Andrea**, founder of North Bloom Collective.

A while back, I lost my full time job. AI was part of the bigger shift happening at the time, and it made me realize something: the way we work was changing faster than I had prepared for.

I could either spend time worrying about what was happening or start learning how to work with it.

So I started experimenting. I learned new tools, figured things out along the way, and started taking on freelance projects.

BRAND STRATEGIST & FOUNDER
North Bloom Collective

> *What began as a way to keep up eventually turned into something bigger. Those projects became clients, those clients became opportunities, and eventually, I built North Bloom Collective.*

I'm still learning, still experimenting, and still figuring things out. But one thing I've realized is that you don't need to know everything about AI to start using it. **You just need to be willing to try.**

That's why I made this guide.

I wanted to put together something practical and beginner friendly that you can actually use, whether you're a creative, freelancer, aspiring entrepreneur, or someone who's simply curious about what's possible with AI.

No complicated jargon.	No unnecessary fluff.	Just tools, ideas, and things you can start applying right away.

This is the kind of guide I wish I had when I was starting out. So take your time with it, experiment, make mistakes, and see what works for you.

Let's get started.

Andrea Galvan
Brand Strategist and Founder, North Bloom Collective

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READ THIS BIT EVEN IF YOU SKIP THE REST

Nothing in this guide works the same way for everyone. These tools behave differently across industries, languages and kinds of work, and they change with every model update. Every output is a draft that needs your name on it before it goes anywhere. Your results will depend far more on you than on any prompt you are given, including the ones in here. That is not a disclaimer. It is the entire point, and Chapter 5 is about it.

CHAPTER 01 · THE HONEST VERSION

Most people try this once and quietly give up.

Here is how it usually goes. You open a chat, you ask it something, you get back a paragraph that is fine but not great, and you close the tab. A month later nothing has changed, and you have decided the whole thing is overhyped. I did exactly this before anything clicked, and I do not think it says anything about you.

What I eventually noticed is that the people getting real use out of these tools were not smarter than me and were not more technical than me. They just treated the tools differently. Four small habits, none of them hard.

They treat the first answer as a draft
Not the answer. A draft. They push back, three or four times, as a matter of course. I now get suspicious when the first attempt looks perfect, because it usually means I have not asked for anything difficult.

They know the context is their job
The tool has never met your manager, your client, or the unwritten rules of your industry. Everything it does not know, you supply. I used to think of that as the tool's limitation. It is actually the work, and it is the part only you can do.

They build things that stay
A brief they can paste in again. A process they can hand over. A description of how they write. Week two should be easier than week one. If every week feels like starting from scratch, you are typing, not operating. This was the thing that changed everything for me.

They check before they send
Confident and wrong is a real thing these tools do, and it is the one that gets people in trouble at work. Chapter 2 explains why it happens, and it is worth ten minutes of your time.

> *None of this is technical. It is the habit of reading the output properly before you put your name on it.*

Why I say operator and not user

A user does tasks. An operator runs the thing that does the tasks and keeps the judgement for themselves. It is the difference between being driven somewhere and knowing the route. Both get you there once. Only one of them helps you next time.

I use the word deliberately, because it sets the right expectation. Nobody becomes an operator by reading about it, me included. You become one by building one small thing that still works a week later.

CHAPTER 02 · HOW IT ACTUALLY WORKS

It is guessing the next word. That is the whole secret.

There is no maths in this chapter and no jargon. What there is, is one clear picture of what happens when you type, because almost every mistake people make with these tools comes from quietly imagining something else is going on.

Think of the predictive text on your phone. You start typing *I am running* and it offers you *late*, or *a bit behind*. It is not thinking about your morning. It has seen those words together a lot, so it guesses what usually comes next.

That is the same idea, scaled up so far it stops feeling like the same idea. It read an enormous amount of writing and learned, in extraordinary detail, which words tend to follow which. Everything below follows from that one fact, so it is worth ten minutes.

It is guessing, not looking things up

There is no filing cabinet it opens. It builds the answer word by word, each one chosen because it fits what came before.

That is why it can write you a birthday poem about your accountant that has never existed in the world before. It is also why, if you ask who won a small local award in 2019, it may invent a perfectly plausible name rather than say it does not know. Same mechanism, two very different outcomes.

Which is why you never get the same answer twice

Ask for five Instagram captions, close the chat, ask again with exactly the same words, and you will get five different captions. Not better, not worse. Different.

That is not you doing it wrong and it is not broken. The guessing has a bit of randomness in it on purpose, which is what stops every answer sounding identical. There is a far more interesting reason two *people* get different results, and that is Chapter 5.

It stopped reading at some point

Everything it knows came from text up to a certain date. Ask about something from last week and it may have no idea, or worse, it may confidently fill the gap.

Most tools can search the web now to cover this, but only when that is switched on. Before you trust anything recent, check which mode you are in. It takes two seconds and it has saved me more than once.

It can sound completely sure and be completely wrong

If you remember one thing from this guide, make it this. These tools write in confident, tidy, professional sentences whether the content is right or not. There is no wobble in the voice when it is

guessing.

I have watched it produce a statistic with a decimal point in it, a named source, and a neat little case study, all of which were invented. It did not sound unsure, because it never sounds unsure.

> *How well something is written tells you nothing about whether it is true.*

THE RULE I FOLLOW

Anything with a number, a name, a date, a legal point, a medical claim or a promise to a client in it gets read by me before it goes anywhere. Every time, not when I remember to. This one habit is the difference between using AI at work and getting caught using AI at work.

It forgets you the moment you close the tab

The conversation you are in is everything it has. Open a new chat tomorrow and it has no memory of the brilliant thing you worked out together today, no idea who your client is, and no sense of how you like things written.

This is annoying for about a week and then it stops being annoying, because you learn to keep your briefs somewhere and paste them back in. That is Tuesday in Chapter 6, and it is the single habit that moves people from fiddling to operating.

It does not understand any of it the way you do

That sounds harsh and it is not meant to be. Picture a very fast assistant who has read more than anyone you know, has never worked at your company, has no stake in whether the project goes well, and will never once tell you that this bit is outside what they know.

Genuinely useful, with somebody sensible checking the work. A liability without one. You are the somebody sensible.

CHAPTER 03 · THE TOOLKIT

Three names, and a lot of noise around them.

Everybody wants to know which one is best. The honest answer is that they are more alike than the internet suggests, they change every few months, and the comparison charts you see are usually out of date by the time somebody shares them.

So treat this as a starting point rather than a league table.

ANTHROPIC

Claude

The one I use most, and the one this Academy is built around. Strongest for long careful work: writing that has to hold a brief across many steps, reading long documents, thinking something through rather than answering fast. If the output has to sound like a person wrote it, start here.

OPENAI

ChatGPT

The broadest general assistant, with the widest range of extras and the most mature image generation. A good second seat for quick work and anything visual.

GOOGLE

Gemini

Lives inside Google Workspace. If your office runs on Gmail, Docs and Sheets, it is already sitting where your work is, and being in the right place matters more day to day than any benchmark score.

What I would actually do

> *People who keep switching stay beginners in three tools instead of getting good at one.*

Pick one and stay with it for a month. Competence is the thing that pays, and competence only comes from repetition. All three have a free tier that will carry you through this entire guide, so there is nothing to buy to get started.

ON FREE PLANS AND PAID ONES

Everything here works on a free account. What free accounts have is a usage limit, so a long session can end with you being told to come back in a few hours, usually right in the middle of something. The paid tiers, Claude Pro, ChatGPT Plus and Google AI Pro among them, lift that ceiling and give you the stronger models. Our paid guides assume a paid plan, because the longer builds in them hit the free limit quickly. For this one you do not need it. Start free and upgrade the day the limit starts costing you time, not before.

BEFORE YOU PASTE ANYTHING FROM WORK

Check your employer's policy first. Plenty of companies have one now, and a quiet conversation with IT is a great deal easier than the alternative. If there is no policy at all, keep client data, personal data and anything confidential out of it until somebody senior tells you otherwise in writing. I would rather say this plainly than have you learn it the hard way.

CHAPTER 04 · AT WORK

Start with whatever you most resent doing.

That is not a joke, it is the actual method. Resentment is a reliable signal that a task is repetitive, and repetitive is exactly what these tools are for. The work you dread is almost always work that starts from a blank page and then follows a shape you already know by heart.

Decks

STRUCTURE, NOT DESIGN

Give it the argument and the audience and ask for the outline. It will not design anything, and it should not. What it does is get you past the blank first slide, which is the part that actually eats the afternoon.

```
I am presenting to [who is in the room] and I want them to
[the decision you want afterwards]. My argument is [one or two
lines]. Give me a slide outline, one slide at a time, with a
title, three bullets and a speaker note for each. Flag any
slide where I am missing evidence.
```

Email

THE ONES YOU REWRITE FOUR TIMES

You know the ones. The reply you have redrafted all morning. The summary of a thread that has run to forty messages. The difficult note to somebody senior that needs to be firm without being rude. Paste the thread in, say what you want to happen, and ask for two versions at different levels of directness.

```
Here is the thread. I want [the outcome]. Write two replies:
one warm and one direct. Keep both under 120 words, no
apologising, and do not promise anything I have not said
I would do.
```

Reports and documents

FIRST DRAFTS, AND SURGERY

Drafting from notes, restructuring something that has grown messy, cutting a document that is twice the length it should be. One instruction I use constantly: *cut this by thirty percent without losing meaning, and tell me what you removed.* The second half of that sentence is the important half.

Meeting notes

FIVE MINUTES, SAVES AN HOUR

Rough notes in, decisions and action items with owners out. This is the best five minutes you will spend in this whole chapter.

```
Turn these notes into: decisions made, action items with an
owner and a date, open questions, and anything somebody
agreed to that has no owner yet. Mark anything you inferred
rather than read.
```

> *It ends the argument three weeks later about what was actually agreed.*

Research and analysis

WITH CHECKING

Summarising long material, comparing options, listing the things you might have missed. My favourite question to ask it: what is the strongest argument against what I am proposing. Then verify anything the decision actually rests on, for all the reasons in Chapter 2.

Spreadsheets and process

THE QUIET WINS

Writing the formula you half remember. Explaining what somebody else's nested formula is doing before you dare touch it. And the procedure you have never had time to write down: describe how you do the task as if you were training someone, and get a document your team can actually follow.

If your work is not office work

Everything above assumes a desk, and most work is not a desk. The same four moves still apply. Find the task that starts from a blank page, hand over the first draft, keep the judgement for yourself.

A shop or a food business
Product descriptions and menu copy. Replies to reviews, including the ones that sting. The supplier email you keep putting off. A week of captions out of one set of photos.

A service or a trade
Quotes and scopes of work from the notes you took on site. The message explaining a delay. A follow up for the clients who went quiet. Your terms, written in words a normal person understands.

Creative and freelance
Proposals, and explaining your rates without flinching. Brief and moodboard summaries. Turning one long piece into the five short ones each platform wants. The invoice chase that still sounds friendly.

Clinics, schools, nonprofits
Intake forms and information sheets in plainer language. Grant and report drafting from notes. One announcement rewritten for several reading levels. Never patient or pupil data, for the reasons in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 05 · THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

Why the same prompt gives two people different results.

You have seen the posts promising the one prompt that changes everything. You copy it, you run it, and what comes back is fine. Underwhelming. You assume you have done something wrong. You have not, and here is the honest explanation in two parts.

First, the mechanical reason

As in Chapter 2, these models are probabilistic. The same words twice will not give you identical text. Everyone runs into this, and almost everyone assumes it is their fault.

Second, the reason that actually matters

The prompt is a small part of the output. The rest is everything you bring that the person who posted it could not.

01 **Context.** Your industry, your client, your constraints, last quarter's numbers, the thing your manager said in the meeting that quietly changed the brief. None of that is in a prompt you downloaded from somebody else.

02 **Judgement.** Knowing which parts of the answer are wrong. No prompt can give you this. Your years of doing the job can, and this is the part that is genuinely hard to replace.

03 **Follow up.** The first answer is rarely the one you use. *Shorter. Less formal. You have missed the budget constraint. Try that again for somebody sceptical.* Operators do this without thinking.

04 **Taste.** Knowing what good looks like in your field. The tool holds an average of everything ever written. You hold a standard. That is not a small difference.

The better operator is not the one with the longer prompt library. It is the one who knows their own work well enough to direct somebody else through it.

Think of it as onboarding, not instructing

Here is the way I explain this to clients. When somebody new joins your team, you do not hand them one sentence and expect good work back. You tell them who the client is and what they are like. You explain why the last approach did not work. You show them two or three examples of what good looks like here. You mention the thing nobody writes down, the preference your boss has never actually said out loud but everybody works around. Then you read their first attempt and tell them what to fix.

Nobody calls that a prompt. We call it training someone, and we accept that it takes a few weeks.

It is the same with AI, with one difference in your favour and one against. In your favour: it learns in minutes rather than months. Against you: it forgets all of it the moment you close the chat, which is exactly why you write the brief down instead of explaining yourself again every morning.

> *When the answer disappoints you, the question is almost never what is the magic prompt. It is what would a new person have needed to know that I did not tell them.*

Usually the answer is one of four things: who it is for, what the constraint is, an example of what good looks like, or the story of how you got here and why it matters. Give it those and the quality changes in front of you. That is what people mean when they say you have to train AI. Not a setting, not a trick. The same patient explaining you would give a person you had just hired.

So what should you do instead

Stop collecting prompts. Start writing down context. The most valuable thing you can build in your first week is not a clever instruction, it is a description of your own work that you can paste in every single time. That is Tuesday in the next chapter, and it is the exercise I would fight to keep if I could only keep one.

CHAPTER 06 · THE PLAN

Five days, and a deliberately small finish line.

The goal of this week is not transformation. It is one working thing you can keep, and an honest read on where these tools help *you* specifically, which will not be the same as where they help anyone else. About an hour a day. You can do this around a job.

Monday

AUDIT

Write down everything you did last week. Then mark each one: only you could have done this, or anyone with the right brief could have. The second list is your material for the rest of the week. Most people are a little startled by how long it is. I was.

Tuesday

VOICE

Collect five things you have written that sound like you. Emails count. The long message explaining your work to a friend counts. Paste them in and ask for a *description*, not an imitation:

```
Here are five things I have written. Describe how I write: sentence
length, rhythm, words I reach for, words I avoid, how I open, how I
close, how formal I am, and what I never do. Give me the description
as a brief another writer could follow. Do not write anything in my
voice yet.
```

Read what comes back and correct it. It will get two things wrong, and fixing those two things is the entire value of the exercise. Save the corrected version somewhere you can find it again, because every draft from now on starts with it.

Wednesday

ONE PROCESS

Take the most repetitive thing from Monday's second list and write out how you do it, step by step, as if you were training somebody starting on Monday. That document is a process, and most of us have never written one down. Hand it over with your voice brief and see what comes back.

```
Here is my voice brief, and here is how I do [the task],
written out step by step. Follow the process exactly and
write it in my voice. Where my steps are unclear, ask me
instead of guessing.
```

Thursday

SOMETHING REAL

Use both on something that actually matters but is low stakes. A status update. A set of meeting notes. Something nobody will mind being a first attempt. Resist the urge to pick the most important thing on your desk, because you want to learn, not to gamble.

Friday

REVIEW

Three questions, written down: what was faster, what was worse, and what still needed you. Write them down properly rather than thinking about them in the shower.

> *That answer is about your job, not somebody's demo. It is worth more than any course.*

By Friday you will have

- [ ] A voice brief that keeps working every week after this one
- [ ] One written process you did not have before
- [ ] One real piece of work done a different way
- [ ] A clear sense of where this helps you and where it does not

That is further than most people get in a month of watching videos about it.

CHAPTER 07 · AFTER WEEK ONE

This was narrow on purpose.

Nothing here was held back for a paid version. What it does not cover is depth: the prompt libraries I run day to day, how to build an assistant that holds a whole client rather than a single task, and the business side if you decide to take this further than your own desk. That is what North Bloom Academy is for.

$12.99	**Claude 101 for Business Owners** Operations and admin: emails, offers, SOPs, customer replies. 45 prompts.	Vol. 01
$12.99	**Claude 101 for Marketers** Research, hooks, scripts and reporting, written for content work.	Vol. 02
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If this was useful, the most helpful thing you can do is send it to one person at work who is quietly worried about all of this. That is how most people find us, and it matters more than any advert.

Grow with *Bloom.*

North Bloom Collective is an independent creative and technology company founded by Andrea Galvan. We build brands, digital experiences and intelligent solutions for a changing world, and we teach the people behind them to put AI to work.

Strategy · Creative · Digital · Technology

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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