

BRIAN TRIES AI — LIVE

Your Take-Home AI Guidebook

*The simple, no-overwhelm reference for everything we touched today —
plus where to go next, at your own pace.*

If the class felt like a lot, that's normal. Breathe. Turn the page.

How to use this guide

You are not behind. Half of all adults feel more worried than excited about AI — you are in very good company. The cure for that feeling isn't reading more; it's doing one small thing. This guide is here so you never have to remember everything at once.

THE ONLY TWO HABITS THAT MATTER

- **Talk to it properly** — Role, Context, Task, Format (the R-C-T-F rule from class).
- **Never accept the first answer** — push back once, and it gets dramatically better.

Everything else in this booklet is optional. Come back to it whenever you're curious, one page at a time.

The one framework: R-C-T-F (+ Constraints)

R — Role: who Claude should be. “Act as a budgeting coach...”

C — Context: your real details. “Take-home is \$6,000/month...”

T — Task: what you want. “Build me a monthly budget...”

F — Format: how you want it back. “...as a simple table.”

+ Constraints: the pro move — tell it what to leave OUT. “No jargon, and keep it under 200 words.”

Put it together: “Act as a practical budgeting coach. My take-home is \$6,000/month; rent is \$1,800. Build a monthly budget as a table, show where I'm overspending — and keep it plain: no jargon, under 200 words.”

THE 4 TRAPS TO AVOID

- **Treating it like Google** — one-line searches get generic answers.
- **Accepting the first answer** — the magic is in the 2nd and 3rd ask.
- **Being vague** — specifics in, specifics out.
- **Over-trusting it** — it can be confidently wrong; verify anything touching money, health, or facts.

The one prompt to save tonight

If you only take one prompt home, take this. Paste it at the end of anything you ask, and the AI stops guessing what you meant and starts checking with you first:

“Before you answer, ask me any questions you need so you're 100% sure you understand what I want.”

That single line is Habit #2 in action — **never accept the first answer**. It turns a one-shot reply into a short back-and-forth, which is where the good stuff always comes from. (A favorite move of AI teachers Sabrina Ramonov and Ruben Hassid — Ruben tells people to end every prompt with “don't start yet, ask me questions first.”)

Give Claude a memory: Projects

A Project is a folder with a memory. Set it up once, and every future chat inside it already knows your situation — so you never start from scratch again. Set one up in four steps:

- 1 New Project, then name it — “My Money,” “Family HQ,” “My Meals,” “My Training.”
- 2 Add one line of instruction — “You're my budgeting coach. Plain English, always show a table.”
- 3 Attach a file or two — last month's expenses, the school calendar, a photo of a statement.
- 4 Now just chat inside it. It remembers your details every time.

Tip: one Project per part of life keeps things from getting muddled.

Learn ANY new skill with AI

9 copy-paste prompts, courtesy of AI teacher [Ruben Hassid](https://ruben.substack.com) (ruben.substack.com).

This is the big one. Swap [topic] for anything you've been curious or nervous about — “our family budget,” “meal planning,” “pickleball,” “understanding Medicare.” The AI becomes your patient private tutor.

1 • THE 80/20 SHORTCUT

I want to learn [topic] in 20 hours. Build me a plan that focuses only on what matters most. Split it into 10 two-hour blocks. Each block needs: what to learn, one resource, and a quick 15-minute check at the end.

2 • THE ONE-PAGER

Compress [topic] into a single page I can review in 5 minutes. Include: core concepts, how they connect, common mistakes, and one real example for each. Make it something I'd actually print and pin on my wall.

3 • TEACH ME LIKE I'M NEW

Explain [topic] using words a 12-year-old would understand. No jargon. Use stories and comparisons from daily life. End with 3 questions — if I can't answer them, re-explain until I can.

4 • THE SKILL LADDER

Map [topic] into 5 clear levels. For each level tell me: what I'll be able to do, what to study, how long it takes, and how I'll know I'm ready for the next step. Start from 'I know nothing' to 'I could teach this.'

5 • BEGINNER MISTAKES TO SKIP

What do people waste time on when learning [topic]? Give me the 5 biggest traps beginners fall into, why they happen, and what to do instead. Save me weeks of going in circles.

6 • THE TEACH-BACK LOOP

Explain [topic] to me simply. I'll repeat it back in my own words. Find what I missed or got wrong. Fill the gaps. Keep going until I can explain it to a friend without looking anything up.

7 • QUESTIONS THAT ACTUALLY TEST ME

Create 10 questions about [topic] that test whether I truly understand, not just memorized. Make them tricky. After I answer each one, tell me what my answer reveals about my thinking.

8 • CONNECT TO WHAT I ALREADY KNOW

I already understand [familiar topic]. Use that as my starting point to teach me [new topic]. Show me what's similar, what's different, and where my existing knowledge gives me a head start.

9 • REAL SCENARIOS, REAL PRACTICE

Give me 5 situations where I'd actually use [topic] in real life. Walk me through the first one step by step. Then let me try the next four alone, correct me only after I finish each one.

The main AI tools (your options)

You do not need all of these. Pick one — we suggest Claude — get comfortable, then peek at the others later. Every one below has a free version.

- **Claude** (claude.ai) — the one we used today. Best for writing, careful step-by-step help, and its Projects & Artifacts.
- **ChatGPT** (chatgpt.com) — the popular all-rounder; great for quick tasks and making images.
- **Google Gemini** (gemini.google.com) — lives next to Gmail, Docs, and Google Calendar; handy for a Google household.
- **Microsoft Copilot** (copilot.microsoft.com) — built into Windows and Office (Word, Excel, Outlook).
- **Perplexity** (perplexity.ai) — an AI search engine that shows its sources; great for looking things up.

Two small tricks that make it easier

Neither is required. Both make the whole thing feel lighter.

- **Talk, don't type.** Every tool above has a little microphone button — tap it and just speak, like leaving a voicemail. For most of us it's faster and far less intimidating than typing, and it understands you fine. (The tool Brian used is called Wispr Flow — he now talks to his computer far more than he types.)
- **Put it on your phone.** Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot all have free apps. Once it's in your pocket, it's there for the real moments — in the kitchen, the school pickup line, the waiting room.

10 real-life things to try this week

You don't need a project or a reason. Pick the one that made you nod, open your tool, and go. These are all real things real people use it for.

- **Plan the week's dinners.** “Give me 5 easy weeknight dinners for two, with a short grocery list. Nothing too spicy.”
- **Decode a confusing bill or letter.** Paste it in: “Explain this in plain English. Is there anything I actually need to do?”
- **Write the email you've been dreading.** “Help me write a kind but firm note about [situation]. Keep it short.”
- **Finally understand Medicare (or any insurance).** “Explain the difference between [X] and [Y] like I'm brand new to it.”
- **Plan a trip.** “Build a relaxed 3-day plan for [place] for two people who love [thing].”
- **Prep for a doctor's visit.** “Help me list good questions to ask my doctor about [topic].” Then confirm anything important with them directly.
- **Think through a tough decision.** “I'm torn between A and B. Ask me questions first, then help me weigh it.”
- **Draft the toast, note, or speech.** “Help me write a warm, slightly funny 2-minute toast for [event].”
- **Learn the thing you've been avoiding.** Grab any of Ruben's 9 prompts above and drop in your topic.
- **Tame the family calendar.** “Here's everything happening this week [list it all]. Turn it into a simple day-by-day plan.”

When you're ready for more: the next level

None of this is required to get value today. But when you're curious, here's where it goes — one step at a time. This is the “intermediate” stuff we previewed at the end of class.

- **Skills** — teach Claude a task once, then reuse it forever. Rule of thumb: if you've typed the same kind of request three times, save it as a Skill.
- **Record a Skill (on Mac, for now)** — record your screen doing a task while you narrate, and Claude turns it into a reusable skill. See it in action: youtube.com/watch?v=jbiMx17fEK0
- **Cowork** — graduate from the chat box. Give it a whole job (“clean up these files”) and it does the multi-step work, then hands you the finished result.
- **Scheduled Tasks** — set it once and it runs on its own — a daily or weekly digest built from your questions, saved to your files, and even drafted posts, all waiting for you before you sit down.
- **Automations (Make.com)** — connect your apps — calendar, email, spreadsheets, texts — so tasks finish themselves. The trick: don't memorize it. Tell Claude what you're trying to do, and it tells you what to build and which app to open.
- **Connectors** — let Claude safely read your Calendar, Gmail, and Drive so it works with your real stuff, not just what you paste in.

What one person built with AI

Everything in this class, Brian learned in the margins of a full-time job. He also used AI to build an entire business from scratch — FamilyPilot — with no engineers, no co-founder, and no agency:

- The company, the EIN, and the trademark filing.
- The brand, the logo, and the website (live, with a real sign-up form).
- 18+ automations that run the service, plus the telecom compliance behind the texts.
- The marketing, the social content, and even a live-action brand video.

One founder. Roughly 215 AI working sessions. A few months. The point isn't that you need to build a company. It's that if AI can help with all of that, it can absolutely help with your budget, your week, and tonight's dinner. You're earlier than you think — and more capable than you feel.

Free places to learn more

Real courses, real certificates, zero dollars, no technical background required. Even 15 minutes counts.

- **Google AI Essentials** (grow.google/ai) — 5 short courses, about 15 hours total, zero experience needed. Prompting + productivity. Free; optional certificate.
- **Anthropic Academy** (anthropic.com/learn) — from the makers of Claude. 13 free self-paced courses. Start with “AI Fluency” or “Claude 101.” Free certificate.
- **Indiana University — GenAI 101** (kelley.iu.edu/learnAI) — a real university course, free to anyone, no tech background. 8 modules, free IU badge. Over 114,000 enrolled.
- **DeepLearning.AI Short Courses** (deeplearning.ai/short-courses) — free 1–2 hour courses from Andrew Ng, built with Anthropic, Google & OpenAI. Bite-sized.
- **Grow with Google workshops** (grow.google) — free live “Make AI Work for You” sessions, often hosted through local chambers of commerce.
- **Senior Planet from AARP** (seniorplanet.org) — free, live, friendly online classes made for older adults — AI basics and how to spot AI-powered scams.
- **OpenAI Academy** (academy.openai.com) — free beginner sessions, including plain-language “Intro to AI” classes, from the makers of ChatGPT.

AI experts worth following

Friendly, non-condescending voices Brian actually reads. Start with the first two or three — you don't need all of them.

- **Ruben Hassid** (ruben.substack.com) — short, practical Claude tips. The 9 prompts in this guide are his style.
- **Sabrina Ramonov** (sabrina.dev) — beginner-first frameworks; one of Brian's favorites.
- **Allie K. Miller** (alliekmiller.com) — approachable “here's the easiest way” takes.
- **Jeff Su** (jeffsu.org) — calm, practical productivity workflows; great if you use Google.
- **Frank Andrade** (artificialcorner.com) — no hype, “just the work people will actually pay for.”
- **Nate Herk** (nateherk.com) — AI automation, taught plainly (also on YouTube).
- **Ethan Mollick** (oneusefulthing.org) — the most readable researcher on what AI can really do.
- **Charlie Hills** (charliehills.substack.com) — clear infographics and decision trees for picking tools.
- **Matt Wolfe** (futuretools.io) — if you'd rather watch than read — friendly weekly YouTube videos on what's new and worth trying.
- **The Rundown AI** (therundown.ai) — a free daily email that catches you up on AI in about 5 minutes. Current, without the firehose.

This is a starting point — Brian tracks these and many more every week.

The one safety rule

Share the shape of your life, not the identifiers.

- **OK:** “My take-home is \$6,000 a month.” “Two kids, soccer on Tuesdays.”
- **Never paste:** account or card numbers, Social Security numbers, passwords, or full medical records.

Simple test: don't type anything you wouldn't write on a postcard. And remember — Claude has no access to your bank or accounts. It only knows what you type.

Keep going with Brian

- **Brian Tries AI** (briantriesai.substack.com) — a free weekly newsletter where Brian tries this stuff so you don't have to. Honest, useful, and funny.
- **FamilyPilot** (familypilot.co) — the AI that quietly turns your family's chaos into a calendar while you sleep.

YOUR NEXT 3 STEPS

- 1 Pick **ONE** tool (we suggest Claude) and use it for one real task this week.
- 2 Use one of Ruben's prompts to start learning one thing you've been curious about.
- 3 Sign up for one free course above. Fifteen minutes counts.

You're the boss. It's the intern. Go put it to work.