

Your Guide to ChatGPT



As the Ultimate Thinking Tool

by Robert Middleton

Are you new to ChatGPT and wondering how to get the most out of it? This report explores how to utilize ChatGPT as the Ultimate Thinking Tool.

Soon after starting my business in 1984, I bought a Mac Plus computer. And what I could do with that little machine blew my mind – word processing, page layout, database management, graphics, and bookkeeping. It enabled me to make my ideas real and helped my business take off.

Other than increasingly powerful software, the next big leap in computing power was Google. Need to find something, anything? No problem! And for 25 years we've relied on Google for finding information and ideas on every topic under the sun.

And now, with the rise of AI, the most prominent current autobot is ChatGPT which takes computing to new heights. It leapfrogs past Google to provide in-depth answers and ideas about anything you can think about.

Personal computers made our work easier and faster, Google made searching for information easier and faster, and now ChatGPT makes thinking easier and faster.

That's why I call ChatGPT the Ultimate Thinking Tool.

In this report, I outline a number of ways you can use ChatGPT as a thinking tool for your work, your business, and your life.

First of all, ChatGPT is disarmingly simple. You just ask a question or enter a prompt and in seconds it generates in-depth, coherent answers.

Below is a summary of some of the ways you can use ChatGPT as a thinking tool to generate ideas, conduct research, and explore an endless array of topics.

Brainstorming New Possibilities:

Ever sit around a conference table and brainstorm ideas with a team or with fellow employees? It sure beats trying to come up with ideas on your own. But it can also be slow and cumbersome.

To brainstorm with ChatGPT all you need to do is start a conversation by typing in a topic, question, or problem you want to brainstorm.

Best to start with open-ended questions such as: “What are all the possibilities for improving X?” or “How could we approach Y issue?”

ChatGPT will immediately generate a number of ideas, many of them quite good.

But that’s only getting started. GPT becomes a thinking tool when we engage with the answers generated and then go deeper.

You can do this by yourself at your computer, of course, but you could also do it in a group setting.

You start with a question and generate a number of ideas. Then you ask the group to comment on the ideas and pick a few for further exploration.

For each of those ideas, you would ask GPT questions to help tease out the ideas. You might ask questions or prompts like: “What are the pros and cons of that idea? How can we turn that idea into a step-by-step plan? Create a timeline for implementing that plan.”

And what would have taken hours can be generated in minutes, often with more depth and nuance than if you came up with the ideas yourself.

Literally every aspect of the ideas generated and the plans that follow can be explored in more depth until you have action steps outlined and ready to take action on.

And because you are generating so many ideas in such an organized way so quickly, you rarely feel bogged down or stuck. If someone (or even you) brings up an objection to an idea, you can explore the pros and cons of that objection.

Because GPT is so adept at generating ideas, it frees your mind or the group mind of your team to start thinking more creatively and productively.

Research Assistance:

ChatGPT has access to a vast well of research on thousands of topics. If it's been written about – just about anywhere – information about that topic is in the GPT database and is instantly accessible.

So, you don't need to start at square one. You can simply tap into the existing research on virtually any topic and summarize the most important key points or findings.

This is especially useful to access recent developments or trends related to your research area. In addition, you can ask for recommendations on books, articles, or academic papers relevant to your research.

As you can imagine, ChatGPT has the potential to speed up research, avoid redundancies, and get to workable solutions much faster.

There's a lot of talk about how ChatGPT will take away jobs. But another possible scenario is that GPT generates more and better ideas with the same human resources leading to superior outcomes.

Writing Projects of All Kinds:

I've written one article for my email newsletter each week for 25 years. When I started to use GPT, I was like a kid in a candy shop. I'd think up an idea for an article and ask for an overview. And pow, in only a few seconds a complete article would appear before my eyes.

But I believe, for the most part, you don't want ChatGPT to write complete articles for you. No, you want to use it as a thinking tool to help you write better articles.

It's like having a virtual assistant sitting next to you, feeding you ideas and organizing your outlines.

In fact, that's how I wrote this report. I asked ChatGPT the following: "What are all the ways ChatGPT can be used as a thinking tool to generate ideas for writing, research or just thinking about a wide variety of topics? And what is the best approach to using ChatGPT this way?"

And in a few seconds I had a complete outline I could work from.

The truth is, I've never had more fun writing, because I don't get bogged down in the laborious work of research and writing an initial draft.

And to make it even easier, you can specify the genre, tone or style you want GPT to use when it writes something for you.

I once asked GPT to write a poem about self-employed professionals using the writing style of Shakespeare. Not all the meters were perfect, but with a little tweaking I came up with something that was perfect for my purpose.

So, if you have a few creative ideas but feel stuck in developing them, GPT is there to help you every step of the way.

And the more you use it, the easier it is to come up with the next question or prompt.

Concept Clarification:

I love exploring abstract ideas in the domains of philosophy, psychology, and spirituality. I've ready widely in these fields over the years and now use chat GPT to explore them in more depth.

GPT can explain complex concepts, terms, and theories in simple language. You can use your existing knowledge to come up with questions where you want to expand your understanding.

I especially like to compare things from disciplines. For instance, you could ask: "How is marketing similar to agriculture and how can I apply those similarities to attract better clients?" Well, in about 10 seconds it generated a pretty amazing little article on the topic. Try it yourself!

I often think about the differences and commonalities between different religions and spiritual practices, so I once asked GPT:

“Relate a conversation between Jesus and Mohamed and have them share the similarities and differences between their teachings.”

The resulting conversation was amazingly eye-opening! Try it.

Or choose two or more world renown experts in a given discipline, ask a question and then initiate a conversation on this topic amongst these experts. For instance:

“Generate a conversation between Albert Einstein, Lao Tzu, and Friedrich Nietzsche about the purpose of life and how to live one's life to the fullest. Open with a comment from Einstein and continue the conversation. Make sure each participant listens to and responds to each other and ultimately come to some agreement.”

You can also request analogies and metaphors or stories from history to help explain complex and abstract concepts to make them more accessible and relatable.

Problem Solving:

Sometimes we're just stuck with a problem that we've tried to solve without much success. Pose that question to GPT and ask for possible solutions or strategies.

To make it more interesting, ask GPT to answer in the voice and perspective of a historical figure. If it's a relationship problem, ask Carl Rogers to answer you. If it's a marketing problem, ask David Ogilvy. If you don't know of an expert, well, of course, ask GPT!

It's also very valuable to engage in a dialog.

Ask a question and when GPT answers, ask a follow-up question. This can go on back and forth for some time. I've found that by the end of the conversation I have a whole new perspective on this problem.

Yes, it can be a little like talking to a therapist or coach.

Another way to approach this is to ask a question and then ask GPT to only answer back to you with a question that makes you think more deeply. This can go on for several rounds until you get more clarity.

Idea Expansion:

You have an idea about something in your business or your life.

You might even have clear goals and a plan.

So, present GPT with your ideas and ask for their take on it. What is good or bad about it? What could be added or subtracted from it?

I also appreciate answers that come with concrete examples, stories or aphorisms. Just ask for them. Ask and ye shall receive. Here's one:

"I've just retired and I want to keep busy but not spend my time on shallow pursuits that would waste my mind and my time. Answer with a few haikus from a Zen Monk."

In stillness I find,
Purpose beyond passing days,
Mind's depth explored.

Garden's ancient grace,
Tending life with mindful care,
Soul's purpose renewed.

Teaching wisdom's path,
Sharing knowledge, guiding hearts,
Legacy of love.

Not bad, right?!

Debating and Critical Thinking:

There are a lot of hot topics that are difficult to have with friends:

Religion, politics, science, artificial intelligence, etc.

Well, don't be afraid. Ask tough questions. If you don't like the answers, keep pressing until you come to understand the validity of opposing views.

You will find GPT to be smart, patient, and kind. It will challenge you but it won't make you wrong. Unlike a debate with a friend, it won't invalidate you, put you down, or tell you you're an idiot!

Let's say there's an idea for a controversial proposal you want to communicate to someone. Well, use GPT to make your argument for you. And then take the opposing view and have GPT argue against you.

When you really understand the arguments of your opposition, you can master the ideas that will acknowledge them and then show their weaknesses.

This would be a great approach for politicians in writing speeches that not only put forth their own ideas, but demonstrated their understanding of their political opponents' positions.

This will sharpen your own critical thinking and help you remember that there are usually many perspectives to every important issue.

Want More?

Then give GPT this prompt: “Give me a list of bullet points of ways ChatGPT can increase my critical thinking and ability to succeed and thrive in this world.”

This prompt generated 20 ideas of how to use GPT to accomplish that aim. Copy and paste into GPT and see what you get.

In Summary:

ChatGPT is the Ultimate Thinking Tool. All you need to do is use it. If you don't have an account yet, just go to chat.openai.com. It's free, it's simple. Plus, all your questions and answers will be saved.

Some final advice directly from ChatGPT:

The best approach to using ChatGPT as a thinking tool is to be clear and specific in your queries. Start with a concise introduction of your topic or problem, and follow up with focused questions. Be prepared to iterate and refine your queries based on the responses you receive.

Additionally, critically evaluate the information and ideas generated by ChatGPT, and cross-reference them with other sources when conducting research or making decisions. ChatGPT can be a valuable tool, but it's most effective when used in conjunction with human judgment and expertise.

Happy Chatting... and Thinking!

Cheers, Robert