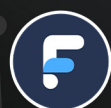


AI AGENTS THE COMPLETE CHEAT SHEET

Who each tool is for, top use cases, and starter prompts to copy and paste.



Futurepedia
SKILL LEAP AI

What Is an AI Agent?

Most people use AI like a search engine — you ask a question, it gives you an answer. That's useful, but you still have to do everything with that answer yourself.

An AI agent is different. Instead of just answering questions, it can go out and actually do things for you. It can browse websites, read and organize files, send messages, fill out forms, write code, and complete multi-step tasks — all on its own.

The simplest way to think about it: a regular AI is like a very smart advisor you can ask anything. An AI agent is more like an assistant you can actually send off to do work.

THE FOUR THINGS THAT MAKE SOMETHING AN AGENT

- ✓ **Planning** — it breaks a big goal into smaller steps and figures out the right order to do them
- ✓ **Tool use** — it can actually do things: open websites, edit files, call apps, run code
- ✓ **Autonomy** — it keeps working through a task without you having to approve every step
- ✓ **Self-correction** — if something doesn't work, it notices and tries a different approach

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

AI agents have existed as a concept for a while, but 2024 and 2025 are when they became easy for regular people to use. The AI models got good enough, and the tools got simple enough, that you no longer need to write code or understand APIs to put them to work.

The tools in this guide range from things you can start using in the next five minutes to more advanced setups that take a few hours to configure. Most people will find one or two that fit what they do right now — and that's all you need.

TOOLS COVERED IN THIS GUIDE

- 01 — ChatGPT Agent Mode
- 02 — Manus
- 03 — Claude Cowork
- 04 — OpenClaw
- 05 — Zapier
- 06 — n8n
- 07 — Claude Code

01 — ChatGPT Agent Mode

ChatGPT is the AI tool most people have already used. Agent Mode is a feature inside it that gives ChatGPT a real browser — meaning it can actually visit websites, click around, read content, and pull information together for you.

It's the easiest place to start if you want to see what an agent actually feels like. That said, every other tool in this guide is more powerful for serious tasks. Think of this as a good first experience.

BEST FOR

- ✓ People already paying for ChatGPT Plus who want to try agents without any extra setup
- ✓ Quick research tasks that involve browsing multiple websites
- ✓ Compiling information from different sources into one document

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- To work with files on your computer
- Tasks that run automatically on a schedule
- Anything more complex than web research and writing

USE CASES

- Research a topic across YouTube and Reddit — read comments, find common questions, spot gaps in existing content
- Visit a list of competitor websites and pull their pricing, features, and positioning into one comparison doc
- Pull together a quick briefing on any topic from multiple online sources
- Check availability, reviews, or product specs across multiple listing pages at once

Prompt — Content Research

Research YouTube videos and Reddit communities about [TOPIC]. Read through the content and comments. Identify: the most common questions people ask, topics no one is covering well, and what gets the most engagement. Organize everything into a single document.

Prompt — Competitor Research

Visit the websites of these companies: [LIST URLS]. For each one, find their pricing page, main product features, and any promotions or free trials. Compile all findings into a simple comparison table.

Prompt — Topic Briefing

I need to get up to speed on [TOPIC] quickly. Search recent articles, YouTube, and Reddit. Give me: a plain-language explanation of what it is, why people are talking about it, the main debates, and 5 key takeaways.

02 — Manus

Manus is an AI agent that can handle big, complex tasks from start to finish on its own. It can browse the web, create images, write code, build interactive websites, and analyze videos — all as part of a single request.

What makes Manus stand out is the Skill Creator. Once you've run a workflow and are happy with the result, Manus can package that entire process into a reusable "Skill" — a saved workflow you can run again with one click. Manus was launched in early 2025 and went viral quickly. It's beginner-friendly but genuinely powerful.

BEST FOR

- ✓ Non-technical people who want high-quality, multi-format research outputs
- ✓ Getting deep research delivered as a polished interactive report or dashboard
- ✓ Building reusable workflows — do the work once, automate it forever

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- To work directly with files on your computer
- Connections to your existing business apps like a CRM or project management tool
- Live, real-time data that updates constantly

USE CASES

- Deep research reports — point it at a topic, it searches everywhere and builds a full interactive dashboard with visuals
- Content gap analysis — find the questions no one in your niche is answering
- Infographic QA — upload an AI-generated image, get it back with every spelling and formatting error fixed
- YouTube descriptions — give it a video link, it watches the video and writes the full description with timestamps
- Competitive landscape reports — research and summarize the top players in any market

Prompt — Deep Research Dashboard

Research [TOPIC] across YouTube, Reddit, and industry blogs. Find: the top 10 audience pain points, most common unanswered questions, content gaps, and key players. Generate relevant visuals. Build an interactive dashboard I can browse.

Prompt — YouTube Description

Watch this video: [URL]. Identify the natural chapter breaks. Write a full YouTube description: a 2-3 sentence summary, timestamps for each chapter with short titles, and 10-15 relevant hashtags.

Prompt — Infographic Fixer

Analyze this infographic: [ATTACH FILE]. Find every spelling error, misplaced label, and formatting problem. List everything you find, then deliver a corrected version.

03 — Claude Cowork

Claude Cowork is like having an assistant with access to your actual computer. You download the Claude desktop app, give it access to a folder, and it can read, rename, organize, create, and move files on your behalf.

Everything can be combined into one automated workflow and set to run on a schedule. A practical tip: always give it a copy of your files to work with — not the originals.

BEST FOR

- ✓ Sorting and organizing large numbers of files based on what they actually contain
- ✓ Automating work that spans your computer and cloud apps like Drive or Notion
- ✓ Recurring tasks you want to run automatically on a schedule

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- Very complex logic, custom code integrations, or extremely high volume

USE CASES

- Organize hundreds of screenshots — Claude looks at every image, creates a logical folder structure, renames and sorts them all
- Extract key info from a folder of contracts or invoices into a spreadsheet
- Watch your inbox and automatically file attachments into the right Google Drive folders
- Read your weekly notes and post a summary to Notion every Monday

Prompt — File Organization

I have [NUMBER] files at [FOLDER PATH]. Look at every file and understand what it contains. Develop a folder structure and naming convention, rename everything, and organize it into subfolders. Give me a summary of what you did.

Prompt — Weekly Summary

Every Monday, read all files in [FOLDER PATH] modified in the past 7 days. Write a summary: what was worked on, any decisions made, anything unfinished. Save as a dated file and post to [NOTION / SLACK / DRIVE].

04 — OpenClaw

OpenClaw is an open-source personal AI assistant that runs around the clock and gets smarter the longer you use it. You connect it to your email, calendar, browser, and any other tools you want. Then it works in the background — sending you briefings, drafting replies, doing research, and managing your schedule.

What makes it unique is that it learns your preferences over time. Give it feedback and it updates its own approach. Important setup note: OpenClaw needs to run on a separate server. Most people use a cheap cloud server (VPS).

BEST FOR

- ✓ Technical people who want a personal AI that improves through daily feedback
- ✓ Combining email, calendar, research, and other tools into one chat interface

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- Fast setup with no server configuration, or reliable results right away with no tuning

USE CASES

- Daily briefings from subreddits or newsletters — automatically filtered to what's relevant to you, improving each day through your feedback
- Email and calendar management from your phone — draft replies, flag urgent messages, schedule things
- On-demand research — send a person or company name, get a full brief back within the hour

Prompt — Daily Content Briefing

Research my YouTube channel: [URL]. Learn what I make and who it's for. Then monitor these subreddits daily: [LIST]. Every morning, send me a WhatsApp message with the 3-5 most relevant posts. When I give you feedback, remember it for next time.

Prompt — Morning Email Brief

Every morning at 8am, check my Gmail for important emails or messages from [CONTACTS]. Summarize each in 2 sentences. Write a draft reply for anything that needs a response today. Send it all to my WhatsApp.

05 — Zapier

Zapier has been around for years as a way to connect different apps together without writing any code. They've now added AI agents to the platform, which means it can do more than just pass information between apps — it can actually read, understand, decide, and take action.

You build your automations by describing them in plain English to an AI Copilot, and it sets things up for you. Zapier connects to over 7,000 different apps. The core idea is simple: something happens in one of your apps, and the agent automatically handles what needs to happen next.

BEST FOR

- ✓ Business users who want to automate workflows between their apps without any technical setup
- ✓ Situations where one event triggers a chain of actions across multiple tools
- ✓ Teams already using Zapier who want to add AI reasoning on top of their existing automations

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- Very complex custom logic or branching
- High-volume automation where cost per run adds up
- A self-hosted or open-source solution

USE CASES

- Add a company name to a Google Sheet → agent researches them → one-page summary saved to Drive
- New lead submits a form → agent classifies the inquiry → drafts a reply → notifies the right person in Slack
- New email arrives → agent summarizes it → routes it to the right Notion page or Slack channel
- Row appears in your content calendar → agent posts it to your social media platforms
- New contact added to CRM → agent researches them and fills in missing fields

Prompt — Research Agent (paste into Zapier Copilot)

Whenever a new row is added to [GOOGLE SHEET] with a company name in column A, trigger an agent to: search for their website, LinkedIn, and any news from the past 6 months; check whether they fit these criteria [YOUR CRITERIA]; write a one-page summary; save it to [GOOGLE DRIVE FOLDER].

Prompt — Lead Routing Agent (paste into Zapier Copilot)

When a new form submission comes in from [FORM TOOL], read the message and decide whether it's [CATEGORY A], [CATEGORY B], or [CATEGORY C]. Draft a reply using the right template, notify the correct team member in Slack, and log the submission in [CRM / GOOGLE SHEET].

06 — n8n

n8n is a workflow automation tool similar in concept to Zapier, but built for people who want full control. Instead of hiding the technical details, it shows you everything — APIs, logic, conditions, data flow — and lets you configure exactly what happens at every step.

You build workflows visually by connecting blocks on a canvas. No coding required, but you do need to be comfortable with technical concepts. n8n can be run on your own server for free, which makes it very cost-effective for high volumes. There's also a cloud version.

BEST FOR

- ✓ Technical users who are comfortable with APIs and want full control over their workflows
- ✓ Complex multi-step pipelines where different things need to happen depending on what the AI finds
- ✓ Workflows where a human needs to review and approve the output before it goes anywhere
- ✓ High-volume automation where keeping costs low matters

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- Quick, simple setup — Zapier is much faster to get started with
- Non-technical teammates to manage the automations themselves

USE CASES

- Newsletter pipeline — take a video script or research doc, run it through multiple AI writing steps, have a human review it, then send
- Content repurposing — one piece of content automatically becomes a blog post, Twitter thread, LinkedIn post, and email newsletter
- Lead enrichment — pull leads from your CRM, research each one automatically, score them with AI, and alert your sales team
- Support ticket triage — sort incoming support tickets by type, draft replies, and send complex ones to a human
- Automated weekly reports — pull data from multiple sources, have AI analyze it, and send a formatted summary

Prompt — Newsletter Writer (system prompt inside an n8n AI node)

You are a newsletter writer for [BRAND]. You'll be given a video transcript or research document. Write a newsletter from it: 400-600 words, conversational tone, open with the most surprising finding, include 3-5 key takeaways, and end with a question or CTA.

Prompt — Content Repurposing (system prompt inside an n8n AI node)

You'll be given a piece of long-form content. Create four separate outputs from it: (1) a 600-word blog post with an SEO-friendly headline, (2) a Twitter thread of 8-10 tweets that opens with a strong hook, (3) a LinkedIn post under 200 words with a personal angle, and (4) an email newsletter intro of 150 words.

07 — Claude Code

Claude Code is Anthropic's AI coding tool, and it works differently from everything else in this guide. Instead of automating tasks or browsing the web, it actually builds software. You describe what you want, and Claude writes the code, runs it, tests it, and fixes bugs — all on its own.

You don't need to read or understand the code yourself. Claude Code handles all of that. What you do need is a clear idea of what you want to build. This is the tool professional developers at major companies are increasingly using day to day.

There are two ways to use it: through the Claude desktop app (easiest, recommended for beginners) or through the terminal with an IDE like Cursor (more powerful, better for larger projects). Start with the desktop app.

BEST FOR

- ✓ Developers who want to build software faster
- ✓ Non-technical people with a clear idea of what they want to build who are willing to experiment
- ✓ Anyone who wants to build a tool they'd use themselves, instead of paying for a SaaS subscription

SKIP IF YOU NEED

- Content creation, research, or file organization — other tools in this guide do those better
- A fully finished, app-store-ready product with no iteration needed

PRO TIPS — READ THESE BEFORE YOU START

Use Plan Mode first. Before writing a single line of code, Claude will map out its full approach and ask you to confirm. Always use this — it prevents a lot of wasted effort.

Build one feature at a time. Don't ask it to build the whole thing at once. Build one piece, test it, then move on to the next. Problems are much easier to fix early.

Use the right model for the job. Claude Opus is better for complex decisions and architecture. Claude Sonnet is fine for smaller follow-ups and fixes. Sonnet is cheaper, so use it where you can.

Install Skills from the plugin marketplace. There are pre-built instruction sets for common things like user login, payments, and database setup. Use them instead of building from scratch.

Claude Code can test its own work. It can open the app it just built and click around to check if things work. Watch it do this — if something looks wrong, describe the problem and it'll fix it.

USE CASES

- Clone any app's core functionality from screenshots — describe what it does and Claude builds a working version
- Build a Chrome extension to automate something you do repeatedly in your browser
- Create an internal tool your team needs — a project tracker, a calculator, a dashboard — without waiting for a developer
- Build a web scraper to automatically collect pricing, job listings, or research data
- Build a personal dashboard that pulls information from multiple sources into one place
- Create a game, quiz, or interactive tool to share with your audience

Prompt — App Clone from Screenshots

Analyze these screenshots of [APP NAME]: [ATTACH FILES]. Identify the core functionality: what does it do, what are the main screens, what can a user actually do in it? Use Plan Mode — walk me through your approach before writing any code. Then build a working version.

Prompt — Chrome Extension

Build a Chrome extension that [DESCRIBE WHAT IT SHOULD DO — e.g. 'saves any LinkedIn profile I visit to a Google Sheet, with their name, job title, company, and URL']. It should be simple to use and have a clean popup interface.

Prompt — Internal Tool

Build a simple web-based tool for [DESCRIBE THE USE CASE — e.g. 'tracking our client projects, with columns for project name, status, due date, and notes, and a view that highlights anything overdue']. Use Plan Mode first.

Prompt — Personal Dashboard

Build me a personal dashboard that shows [DESCRIBE WHAT YOU WANT — e.g. 'my top tasks for today, the weather for my city, and one motivational quote']. It should load fast and look clean. Start with a plan.

All 7 Tools at a Glance

ChatGPT Agent Mode

Skill level: Beginner | **Setup time:** None | **Cost:** ChatGPT Plus (~\$20/mo)

The easiest starting point. Good for quick web research. No extra setup if you already have ChatGPT Plus.

Manus

Skill level: Beginner | **Setup time:** 10 minutes | **Cost:** Subscription (check manus.im)

Best for getting polished research reports and dashboards. The Skill Creator lets you save any workflow and reuse it forever.

Claude Cowork

Skill level: Low to Medium | **Setup time:** 15 minutes | **Cost:** Claude Pro (~\$20/mo)

Works directly on files on your computer. The only tool here that can touch your local files and cloud apps together.

OpenClaw

Skill level: High | **Setup time:** A few hours | **Cost:** ~\$10-20/mo for server + API costs

Runs 24/7 and learns your preferences over time. The most powerful personal assistant option, but the most work to set up.

Zapier

Skill level: Low | **Setup time:** 30 minutes | **Cost:** Free tier available; paid from ~\$20/mo

Best for connecting your business apps together. Triggers an agent when something happens in one of your tools.

n8n

Skill level: Medium to High | **Setup time:** 1-2 hours | **Cost:** Free if self-hosted; cloud from ~\$24/mo

Most powerful workflow tool. Great for complex pipelines. Free to run on your own server.

Claude Code

Skill level: Medium to High | **Setup time:** 15 min to 1 hour | **Cost:** Claude Pro (~\$20/mo)

Builds real software. Plans, writes, tests, and fixes code on its own. Start with the desktop app if you're new.

Tips That Apply to Every Tool

Improve your prompt before you run it. Paste your prompt into Claude or ChatGPT and ask it to rewrite it for the specific tool you're using. This one step makes a big difference.

Be specific about what you want. Don't just say what the task is — describe what a good result looks like, who it's for, and any important details. The more context you give, the less the agent has to guess.

Start with the simplest version of your task. Get one thing working well before adding complexity. Most people try to do too much on the first run.

Always check the output before using it. Agents can make mistakes confidently. Never send anything to another person or publish anything without reading it first.

Work in a copy of your files. When giving an agent access to documents or folders, always make a copy first. Never let it work on your only version of something.

Expect to run it more than once. The first result probably won't be perfect. That's normal. Adjust the prompt based on what came back and run it again. Most good automations take 2-3 passes.

Use the community. Every tool in this guide has active online communities where people share what works, what doesn't, and how to fix common problems. They're the fastest way to get unstuck.

You don't need all of these. Pick one tool that fits something you already want to do. Get comfortable with that one before trying another.



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