

Using Artificial Intelligence

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

No experience necessary!



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Michael Miller

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As you can see in Figure 3.24, the left-hand pane displays a Library of past threads. (What ChatGPT calls “chats” and what Meta AI calls “conversations,” Perplexity calls “threads.”) You use the **Ask anything** box in the middle of the main pane to enter your prompt.

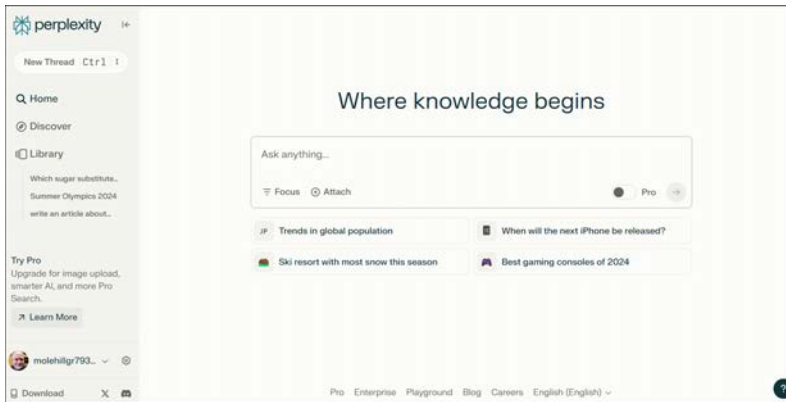


FIGURE 3.24

Perplexity's home page.

The results, shown in Figure 3.25, look quite a bit different from those from other AI tools. First off, it's not really a conversation, but rather a display of information. Second, the sources for that information are displayed above the response; click a source to go directly to that web page. Third, Perplexity displays images related to your prompt on the right side of the page. Fourth, you can also search related videos by clicking the **Search Videos** link on the right. And fifth, if you subscribe to Perplexity Pro, you can generate new images based on your prompt by clicking the **Generate Image** link.

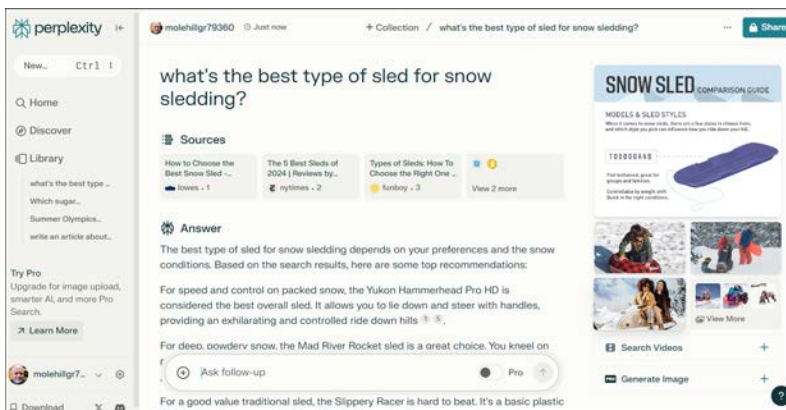


FIGURE 3.25

A research-oriented response from Perplexity.

That's a lot that's different from the other AI tools, but the differences don't end there.

If you want to drill down further, you can enter a related prompt into the **Ask follow-up** box. To start a new thread, however, you have to click the **New Thread** button in the left-hand pane. This displays a new **Ask anything** box, like the one in Figure 3.26, into which you can enter your new prompt.



FIGURE 3.26

Beginning a new thread in Perplexity.

Underneath each Perplexity response are a series of response icons, as shown in Figure 3.27. From left to right, you can **Share** the thread, **Rewrite** the response, **Copy** the response, **Edit the Query** to fine-tune the response, or click the **More** (three-dot) icon to view sources or report this particular response.



FIGURE 3.27

Responding to a thread in Perplexity.

Using Pi

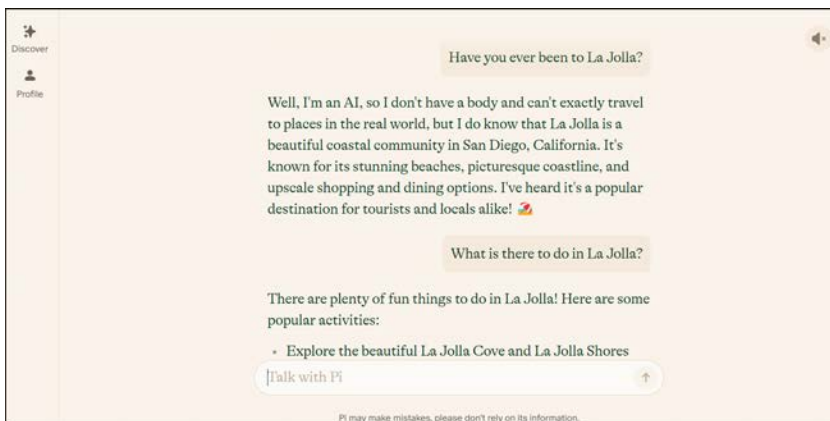
Pi is an AI tool that works more like a chatbot. When you first log into Pi, you're asked to choose a voice so that Pi can respond to you verbally, as well as via text. Pi is free to use, and you can log into it with your Apple, Facebook, or Google account, or you can create a new Pi-specific account.

You access Pi at www.pi.ai. As you can see in Figure 3.28, its interface is quite spartan. The panel on the left really doesn't serve much purpose, and all you see is the **Talk with Pi** box at the bottom. You can turn on or off Pi's voice responses by clicking the speaker icon at the top-right corner of the screen.

**FIGURE 3.28**

Pi's home page.

As you can see in Figure 3.29, a Pi conversation looks a lot like a typical text message thread. Your messages appear in a darker shaded box, followed by Pi's responses.

**FIGURE 3.29**

A conversational thread with Pi AI.

That's not to say you can't use Pi for more heavy lifting. Like the other generative AI tools, Pi can compose letters, write stories, provide information, and do pretty much everything the other generative AI tools can do. It just does it in the form of a conversation (or what Pi calls a "thread"), which some people might find more friendly than some of the other AI tools.

Using Poe

The final AI tool I'm sharing is called Poe. Poe is actually an AI aggregator that provides access to a variety of AI tools in a single hub. Through Poe, you can get responses from OpenAI's GPT-4 and DALL-E, Google's Gemini, Meta's Llama, Anthropic's Claude, Stability AI's StableDiffusion, and more. Not all of these AI tools (what Poe calls "bots") are available with the free version of Poe, however; to get full access to all available tools, you need to subscribe for \$19.99 per month.

All these options make Poe a little less user-friendly than some of the other AI tools, which you can see from its interface. When you access Poe's home page, at www.poe.com, and log in with your Apple, Google, or Poe account, you see the screen shown in Figure 3.30. A lot of options appear in the left panel, of which you may use some or none, as well as a **Start a new chat** box in the main pane.

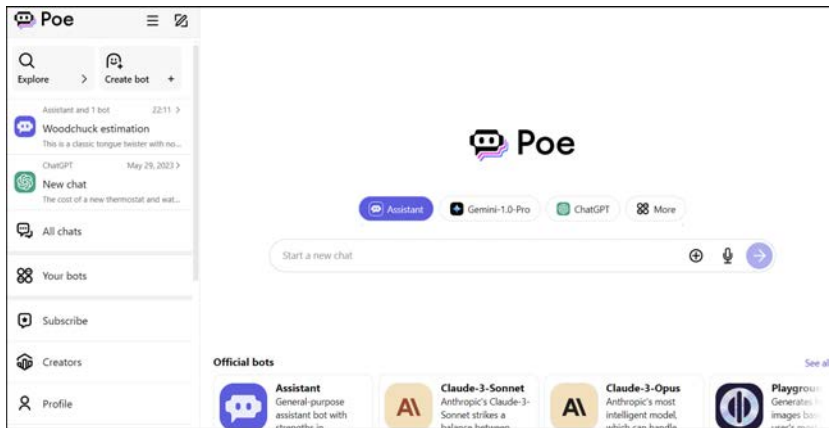
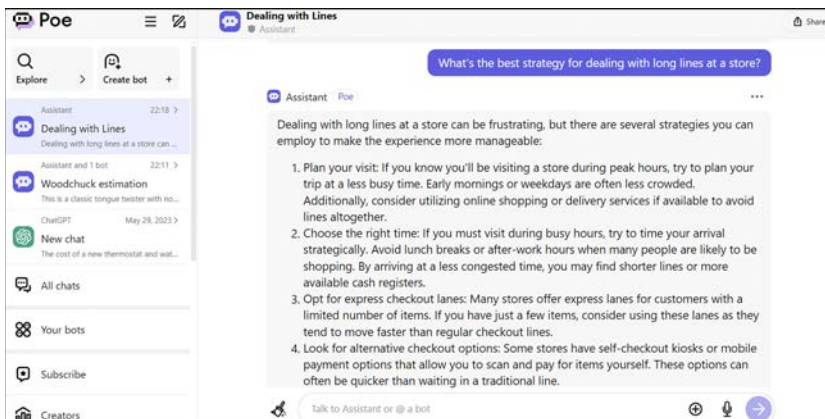


FIGURE 3.30

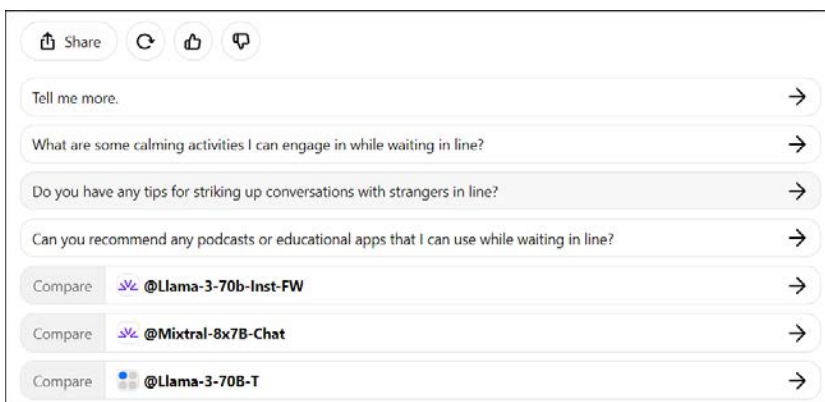
Poe's home page—lots of options!

To start, select the AI tool you want to use for your query. You can choose from Assistant (Poe's own AI tool and the default), Gemini-1.0-Pro (from Google), or ChatGTP. Click the **More** button to choose from additional tools (again, not all available in the free version).

Once you've selected your AI tool, enter your prompt into the **Start a new chat** box and press Enter. As you can see in Figure 3.31, the response looks like what you'd find with other AI tools—until you scroll down to the bottom of the response. There, as shown in Figure 3.32, you have the option of comparing this initial response with responses from other AI tools. Click a tool to see its response.

**FIGURE 3.31**

The response to a prompt in Poe.

**FIGURE 3.32**

Comparing Poe's initial response to another generative AI tool.

This cross-tool functionality makes Poe a great choice if you're not sure which AI generator is best for you or if you just want to compare how the different AI tools respond to a given prompt. It has a slightly longer learning curve, which may not make it the ideal daily driver for AI needs. Still, it's an interesting approach to generative AI today.

Which Generative AI Tool Is the Best for You?

With multiple all-purpose AI tools available (and more coming online seemingly daily), how do you choose which one to use?

Answering the question of which is the best AI tool is an impossible task. Each tool is trained on a slightly different data set, and each employs slightly different algorithms. That means you won't get the exact same results from each tool.

As a comparison, I asked some questions of three of the most popular generative AI tools, each using its own unique AI model: ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Meta AI. Let's see how they compare.

First, I asked each tool to tell me the best way to reheat leftover pizza. ChatGPT got right to it and recommended a single approach (the oven method), as shown in Figure 3.33. Gemini presented several different methods in a conversational style, as shown in Figure 3.34. Meta AI also presented several different methods but offered step-by-step instructions, as you can see in Figure 3.35.

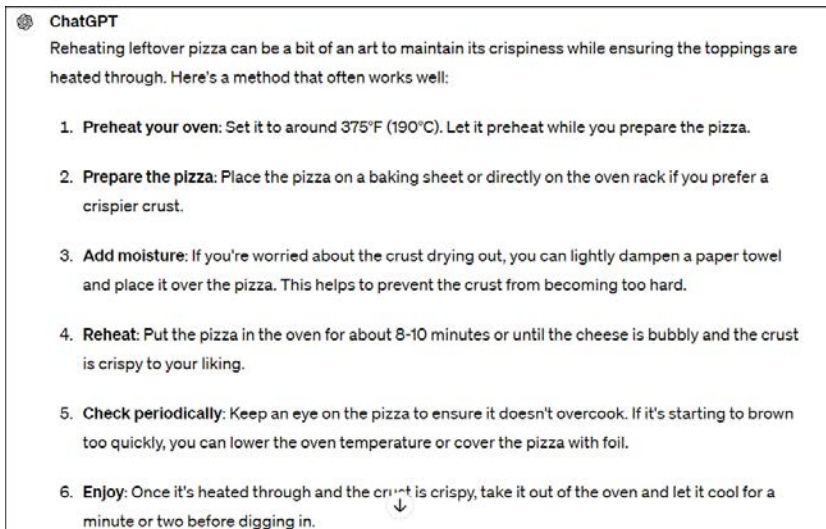


FIGURE 3.33

ChatGPT's pizza reheating advice.