

No. 77

AI ASSISTANTS

Getting Started with Grok

Chat, real-time search, voice and image tools from xAI, with privacy explained, for beginners

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Chat, real-time search, voice and image tools from xAI, with privacy explained, for beginners

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this book

What this book covers, who it is for, and how to use it.

Grok is the AI assistant made by **xAI**, the artificial intelligence company founded by Elon Musk in 2023. It lives inside the social network **X** (formerly Twitter), on its own website and apps, and even in some Tesla cars. In 2026 it ranked among the ten most visited AI tools in the world.

Grok stands out for two things: it can draw on **real-time posts from X** as well as the web, and it has a more casual, less filtered personality than many assistants. That makes it handy for following what is happening right now, but it also means you need to be careful about accuracy, content and privacy.

This beginner's guide explains how to use Grok well: chatting, searching, reasoning, research reports, voice, image and video creation, the plans, privacy settings, and safe habits.

Which versions this book covers

- Grok on grok.com, the Grok apps for iPhone and Android, and inside the X app, as of late 2026.
- The **Grok 4** family of models, from Grok 4 (July 2025) to Grok 4.6 (August 2026).
- The 2026 consumer plans, from Free to SuperGrok Heavy.

Grok changes quickly, sometimes month to month. Use this book for skills and habits, and check xAI's pages for current details.

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Who this book is for

- **Beginners** who want to try Grok.
- **X users** who see Grok in their app and want to know what it can do.
- **Students, writers and professionals** who want a fast research and writing helper.

How the book is organized

- **Part I — Foundations** (Chapters 1–5): what Grok is, how it works, where to use it, plans, and your first chat.
- **Part II — Everyday use** (Chapters 6–12): prompting, real-time search, X posts as a source, thinking mode, DeepSearch, voice, and files and images.
- **Part III — Creating and staying safe** (Chapters 13–18): Grok Imagine, coding, privacy settings, content and safety, checking answers, and responsible use.
- **Part IV — Putting it to work** (Chapters 19–22): ideas by role, worked examples, fixing problems and building habits.
- **Reference**: checklists, glossary and further reading.

Callouts

TIP
Practical advice you can use straight away.

IN GROK
Details about how Grok itself does something.

WATCH OUT
Common mistakes and risks.

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KEY IDEA

The one thing to remember from a section.

A note on screens and examples

Screens are **simplified illustrations**, not copies of the real app. Names in examples are invented.

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PART I

Foundations

These chapters explain what Grok is, how it works, where you can use it, which plan suits you and how to start.

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CHAPTER 1

What Grok is

Grok is xAI's AI assistant, closely connected to the X social network.

An assistant with live information

Like other assistants, Grok answers questions, explains topics, writes, summarizes and helps with code. Its special feature is access to **live information** from the web and from public posts on X, so it can talk about events as they unfold.

Who makes it

xAI was founded in March 2023. It released Grok on X in November 2023. In February 2026 Elon Musk's rocket company **SpaceX** completed its acquisition of xAI in an all-stock deal, so Grok is now part of the SpaceX group.

A short history



Figure 1.1 Grok milestones

- **November 2023**: first Grok release for paying X users.
- **July 2025**: **Grok 4** launches, together with the $300-a-month **SuperGrok Heavy** plan.
- **February 2026**: **Grok 4.20** arrives in beta, emphasizing speed, tool use and fewer made-up answers.

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- **July–August 2026**: **Grok 4.5** and then **Grok 4.6** are released; 4.6 is also offered in coding tools such as Cursor and xAI's own Grok Build.

Personality

Grok was designed with a witty, direct style. Some people enjoy this; others find it too casual. You can ask it to be more formal or concise.

WATCH OUT

Grok has had several widely reported incidents of offensive, false or inappropriate output, and its image tools were at the centre of a deepfake controversy in early 2026. Use it with care, and check what it tells you.

KEY IDEA

Grok is strong for "what's happening now" questions, but live information is often unverified. Treat it as a starting point.

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CHAPTER 2

How Grok works

A simple picture of how Grok works helps you get better answers and spot errors.

A large language model with search

Grok is built on a **large language model**: an AI trained on huge amounts of text to predict useful responses. When needed, it **searches** the web and X and uses the results in its answer.

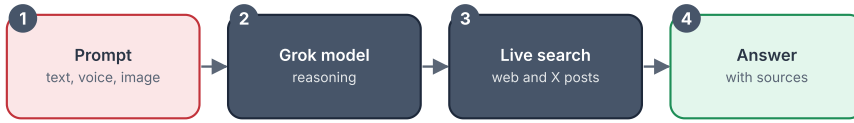


Figure 2.1 From prompt to answer

Models

xAI releases new Grok models often. In the app you usually do not choose an exact model; your plan decides which ones you can reach and how much you can use them. Higher plans get the newest models first.

Very large context

Recent Grok models can handle very long inputs, hundreds of thousands of tokens or more depending on the model, which means long documents and long conversations.

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