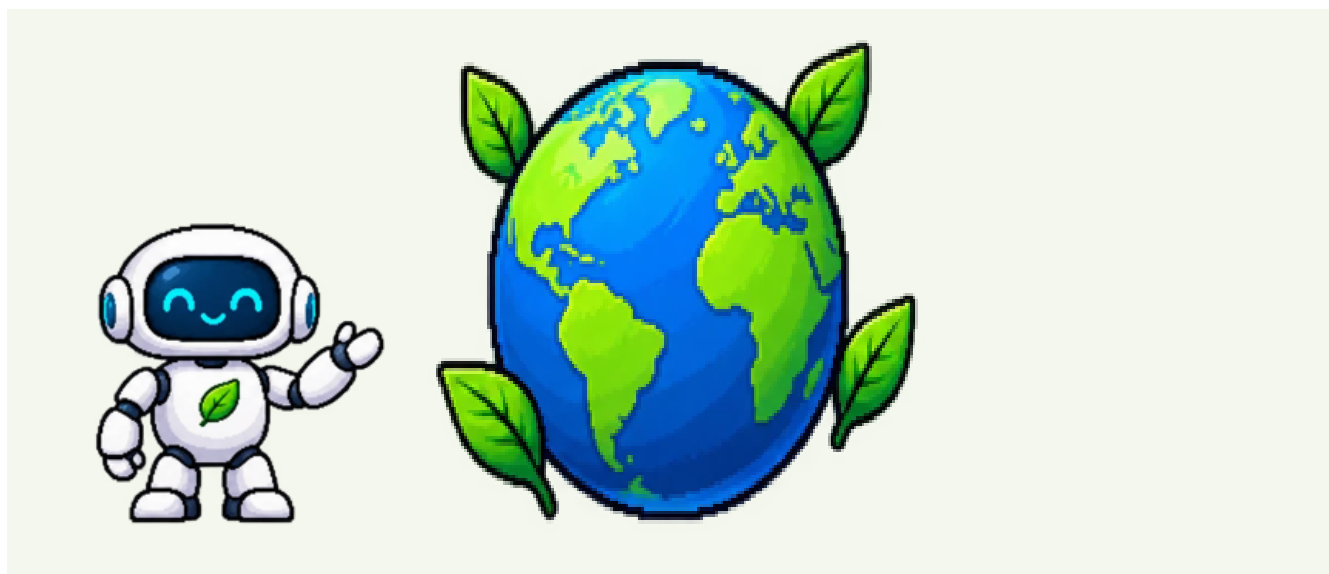


Understand AI. Use it well.

A guide to making choices, checking results and understanding your requests' impact.



ENERGY

WATER

CO₂

Inside: AI basics, prompt examples, fact-checking, privacy, thoughtful habits, environmental impact and how to use Almpronta.

Edition 1.0 · 26 September 2026

Understand before you ask

1 What generative AI does

It produces text, images, audio or video from a request. A model learns patterns during training and uses them to generate new outputs. Content can be useful and convincing without being correct. [1]

2 Choose a suitable task

Use it for a first draft, alternative ideas, an explanation or reorganizing text. Use a calculator for exact arithmetic and an official source to check a deadline. Choose the tool around the task you need to complete.

3 The decision is still yours

Before starting, ask: what do I need? How will I check the result? Who could be affected? Involve a qualified person in important decisions. Do not ask the same AI to both provide an answer and certify that it is true.

TRY IT NOW

Start with a simple, reversible task: turn non-confidential notes into an organized list. Compare the list against the original notes.

Write a clear prompt

1 Provide the relevant information

Explain the goal, audience and context. Specify length, tone, format and constraints. For a summary, provide material you are allowed to share and state whether the AI should use only that material. Leave out unnecessary personal details.

2 An example you can adapt

“Summarize the following text for a non-expert. Use 5 points and no more than 120 words. Preserve the numbers and dates in the text; do not add information. Flag anything missing. Text: [paste non-confidential material].”

3 Refine with a specific request

If the draft is almost right, request a specific edit: “Shorten the second point; leave the others unchanged.” For images or video, decide the subject, composition, style and duration before generating many variations. Clarity does not guarantee correctness.

A USEFUL HABIT

Ask for the output you need, check it and stop when it is adequate. There is no universal resource-saving percentage for a “better prompt”.



Fluent does not mean true

1 Made-up answers

AI can produce nonexistent facts, quotations or references, often called hallucinations. A confident tone can accompany an error. Another answer from the same system is not independent verification. [2]

2 A four-step check

1. Separate opinions from checkable claims.
2. Open the original source, not just its title.
3. Check the date, context, figures and quotations.
4. For important claims, compare an independent, competent source. If you cannot verify it, do not present it as certain.

3 People, images and stereotypes

Check for missing perspectives and repeated stereotypes. A realistic face or voice can be synthetic. Before sharing, verify the origin and context, and clearly identify reconstructions that could mislead people. [2, 3]

A CHECKING QUESTION

“What external evidence would change my mind?” If the answer is “none”, you are looking for confirmation rather than checking.

Use AI thoughtfully

1 Before you paste

Remove unnecessary names, contact details, credentials, identity documents and confidential information. At work, use approved tools and follow your organization's rules. Check the service settings: retention, sharing and data use differ between providers. [3]

2 Stay in control

Set a goal and a stopping point. Form your own idea first, then use AI to improve it. Do not replace every human conversation with a chat. If you keep generating variations without deciding, pause and return to the task criteria.

3 Before publishing or running anything

Check licenses, source material and permissions for images or voices. "AI-generated" does not automatically mean free of rights. Do not run code or commands you do not understand, and do not grant broader access than needed. [2]

A SMALL EXPERIMENT

Write your own draft, request one improvement and decide what to keep. AI should expand your options while leaving you in charge of the work.

Digital work has a physical side

1 Energy

Servers, memory, networks and cooling use electricity. Consumption depends on hardware, the model and the work requested. Training a model and using it to produce a response are different phases, called training and inference. [4]

2 Water and emissions

Some facilities use water for cooling; the amount varies with technology, climate and location. Electricity generation can also require water. Electricity-related emissions depend on the energy mix. One kWh does not have the same carbon footprint everywhere. [4, 5]

3 Compare like with like

Check the task, duration, units, date and scope. A per-query figure is not a company total; a mean is not a median. Benchmarks describe specific conditions, not a universal ranking. Efficiency per request can improve while total use grows. [5, 6]

A PRACTICAL ACTION

Use enough detail for a draft; increase quality, duration or variants when needed. Avoiding unnecessary work is a practical choice, not a quantified savings promise.



Read your footprint

1 From prompt to estimate

Paste a prompt or describe the activity in the calculator. The tool tries to recognize the task and provides an initial estimate. It does not execute that prompt on an AI service or directly measure the server you would use. Check the recognized activity.

2 Refine the context

If needed, correct the activity type, quantity, duration and other available parameters. “3 videos of 10 seconds each” describes the work better than “3 videos”. Almpronta Model v1.0 uses documented references and assumptions: its result is not a meter reading for your individual request. [7]

3 Understand and share

Read the energy, water and emissions first, then the everyday comparisons. Bottles and cups represent equivalent volumes, not containers actually consumed. Save the card with its context. Multiplication shows a cumulative scenario, not automatic monitoring.

MODEL SCOPE

In the website version covered here, the calculation concerns use: it does not add training or electricity-generation water. The carbon component derives from electricity, not a complete lifecycle inventory. Always consult Method and sources.



A compact vocabulary

Prompt

The request and material you give the system.

Token

A text unit: a word, part of a word or a symbol.

Modello / Model

The system processing the input, not the whole app.

Training

The process of training the model.

Inference

Using the model to produce a result.

Multimodale / Multimodal

Works with different data types, such as text and images.

Allucinazione / Hallucination

False or unsupported content presented as plausible.

Bias

A distortion that can make an output unfair or skewed.

GPU

A processor suited to many parallel calculations.

Wh / kWh

Energy units: 1 kWh = 1,000 Wh.

CO₂e

A unit expressing greenhouse gas effects as CO₂ equivalents.

Data center

A facility containing servers and supporting equipment.

BEFORE YOU SEND

Is my goal clear? Have I removed unnecessary data? Can I verify the result? Am I requesting only what I need? Do I understand what the estimate represents?



Sources and next steps

Numbered references in the text point to these sources. Links are clickable. The practical suggestions are Almpronta editorial guidance, not certification of individual AI services.

[1] Google Developers, Machine Learning Glossary
developers.google.com / Open source

[2] NIST, Generative AI Profile (AI 600-1, 2024)
nvlpubs.nist.gov / Open source

[3] UNESCO, Guidance for generative AI in education and research
www.unesco.org / Open source

[4] IEA, Energy and AI (2025)
www.iea.org / Open source

[5] Google, Measuring the environmental impact of AI inference (2025)
cloud.google.com / Open source

[6] Luccioni et al., Power Hungry Processing (FAccT 2024)
arxiv.org / Open source

[7] Almpronta Model v1.0, Metodo / Method 2.0.0
aimpronta.it / Open source

FROM READING TO PRACTICE

Visit aimpronta.it/en/, describe a real activity and check the recognized parameters. Read the result, refine it and save the card. Start with a useful question: “What do I actually need?”