AI BASICS: What It Is, How It Works, and How to Start Using It

Overall Course Design Philosophy

✅ *Conversational, not technical*
✅ *Real-life relevance over abstract theory*
✅ *Encourage curiosity, shared stories, and humor*
✅ *Empower seniors to help each other explore AI together*

Suggested Session Structure and Content Ideas

💡 **Each session combines:**

- **Brief Presentation/Demonstration** (10–15 min, simple visuals encouraged)

- **Group Discussion/Reflections** (sharing fears, questions, experiences)

- **Hands-On Activity or Demo** (live AI interaction—volunteers or screen share)

- **Peer-Led Wrap-Up** (participants summarize what stood out)

Learning Objectives & Session Content Suggestions

Session 1: "What is AI? Let's Demystify the Buzzwords"

Objectives:
✅ Understand AI in plain language—what it is and isn't
✅ Recognize where AI already appears in daily life
✅ Begin to share personal hopes or concerns about AI

Content Ideas:

- Simple explanation: AI as "smart helpers that learn patterns"

- Real-life examples: smart speakers, YouTube suggestions, auto-correct

- Icebreaker: "Where have you *accidentally* used AI?"

- Quick myth-busting: AI isn't reading your mind (yet!)

- Media clip: short news or YouTube piece introducing AI trends

Session 2: "Peek Behind the Curtain—How AI Actually Works"

Objectives:

✅ Get familiar with basic AI types (chatbots, image generators, voice assistants)

✅ See how AI models "learn" using data

✅ Discuss practical limits and risks—using relatable examples

Content Ideas:

- Show examples: ChatGPT, image generators (Leonardo, Canva), Alexa/Siri

- Simple metaphor: AI learns like we teach a child patterns, but faster

- Short group activity: Guess which example was human vs. AI-created

- Honest chat: "What excites you? What worries you?"

- Media option: Video snippet showing AI in action

Session 3: "AI in Everyday Life—Your New Digital Helper"

Objectives:

✅ Discover simple ways AI can save time or spark creativity

✅ Try real-world prompts for daily tasks

✅ Share peer success stories or challenges using AI

Content Ideas:

- Demonstrate: AI writing emails, summarizing articles, creating recipes

- Group brainstorm: "Where could AI help in *your* day?"

- Hands-on: Craft a friendly AI prompt together (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.)

- Encourage: Volunteers share their first AI experience (or concerns)

Session 4: "Exploring the Future—Staying Curious and Safe with AI"

Objectives:

✅ Reflect on AI's role in the future of society and aging

✅ Discuss safety, scams, and misinformation

✅ Build confidence to keep experimenting and learning

Content Ideas:

- Reassure: You don't need to "master" AI—small steps matter

- Quick safety tips: AI scams, fake images, unreliable info

- Group vision: "How could AI improve life as we age?"

- Peer-led wrap-up: Each person shares one insight or next step

- Optional: Provide simple resources or demo links for continued learning

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Creative Engagement Ideas for Seniors

✔ **Story Circles:** Encourage short, informal sharing—"When tech amazed or frustrated me"

✔ **"Human vs. AI" Game:** Guess who created a text, image, or answer

✔ **Show & Tell:** Participants share AI-generated recipes, emails, or images in later sessions

✔ **Humor & Honesty:** Normalize laughing at tech confusion—it builds confidence

✔ **Peer Support Pairing:** Buddies check in between sessions to explore AI together

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Tone & Accessibility Considerations

- Keep language simple, analogies relatable (gardening, learning to drive, etc.)

- Normalize curiosity and uncertainty—this is for beginners!

- Emphasize empowerment: "You've seen decades of change—you've got this."

- Make it visual: use large text, simple slides, live demos with slow pacing