

AI Tools Comparison

A quick-reference guide to the tools you'll use while building. All tools listed have free tiers.

VIBE CODING WORKSPACES

Your workspace is where you describe what you want and AI builds it. Pick one — they all work for every project track.

Tool	What It Does	Best For	Limitations	Cost
Replit	Browser-based IDE with built-in AI assistant and deployment	All tracks. Easiest all-in-one setup. Write, preview, and deploy in one place.	Free tier has limited compute; projects may sleep	Free tier available
Bolt.new	AI-powered app builder. Describe your app, see it built live.	All tracks. Fast prototyping. Great for visual projects.	Newer platform; fewer tutorials available	Free tier available
VS Code + AI	Desktop code editor paired with an AI chat assistant	Students who want more control. Manual file management.	Requires local setup; separate deployment step	Free

AI ASSISTANTS

Your AI assistant helps you plan, brainstorm, troubleshoot, and write build descriptions. You may already have one built into your workspace.

Tool	Strengths	Best For	Cost
ChatGPT	Strong code generation, wide knowledge, image generation with DALL-E	General purpose. Great for code + images in one tool.	Free tier available
Claude	Excellent at long, detailed responses and careful reasoning	Project planning, debugging complex issues, writing content	Free tier available
Google Gemini	Integrated with Google services, multimodal (text + images)	Students already in Google ecosystem (Sheets, Docs)	Free tier available
Microsoft Copilot	Built into Windows and Edge browser, good for web research	Quick questions and research while building	Free with Microsoft account

BONUS AI TOOLS

These tools can level up your project. You don't need all of them — pick the ones that match your project.

Category	What It Does	Use For Your Project
Image Generation	Create images from text descriptions (DALL-E, Midjourney)	Hero images, icons, illustrations, placeholder art. Always check usage rights.

Category	What It Does	Use For Your Project
Chart.js	JavaScript chart library — AI adds it to your code for you	Track 3 dashboards, any project that needs charts or data visualization.
AI Writing Tools	Generate and refine text content (bios, descriptions, copy)	Track 2 portfolios, about pages, any text-heavy content. Use your AI assistant.
Design AI	Color palettes, font pairing, background removal, layout suggestions	Polishing visual design. Ask your AI assistant for color and font recommendations.
Google Sheets	Organize data, create formulas, use as a simple database	Track 3 data projects. Also useful for planning and organizing any project content.
Automation	Connect apps: "when X happens, do Y" (Zapier, Make)	Advanced/future: notifications, form processing. Not needed for this course.

The Essential Toolkit

All you truly need to complete this course: a vibe coding workspace (Replit or Bolt) and an AI assistant. Everything else is a bonus you can add as your project grows. More tools = more complexity. Before adding a new tool, ask: "Can I achieve the same result with a tool I'm already using?" If yes, skip it.