GPT-5: The Complete Guide

OpenAI's Latest Model Deep Dive

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September 26, 2025

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

GPT-5 Overview & Timeline

GPT-5 Release Timeline

Key Dates & Milestones

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- **Major Breakthrough**: First unified system combining reasoning, multimodal input, and task execution

GPT-5 Core Inovations

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  - Single system with multiple specialized models

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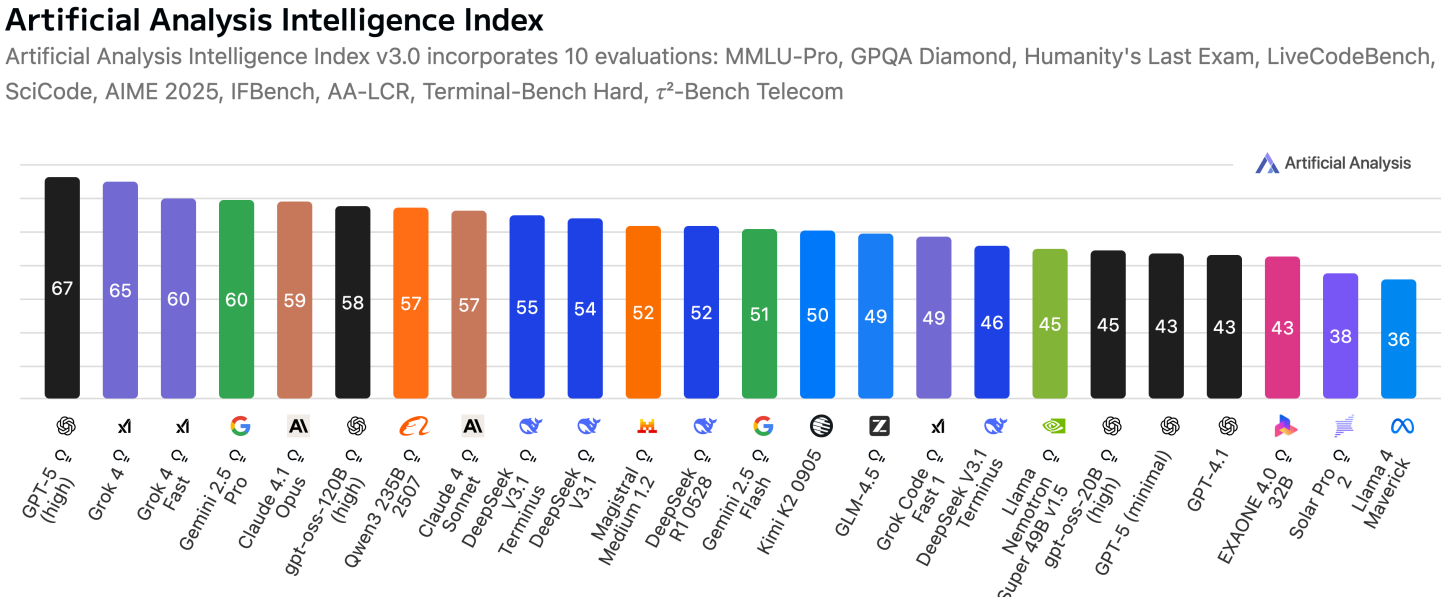
- **Multimodal Excellence**:
  - Native text, image, audio, and video support

Model Comparison & Performance

GPT-5 SOTA in Artificial Analysis Intelligence Index



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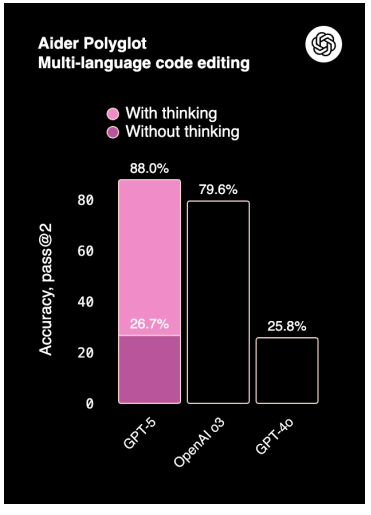

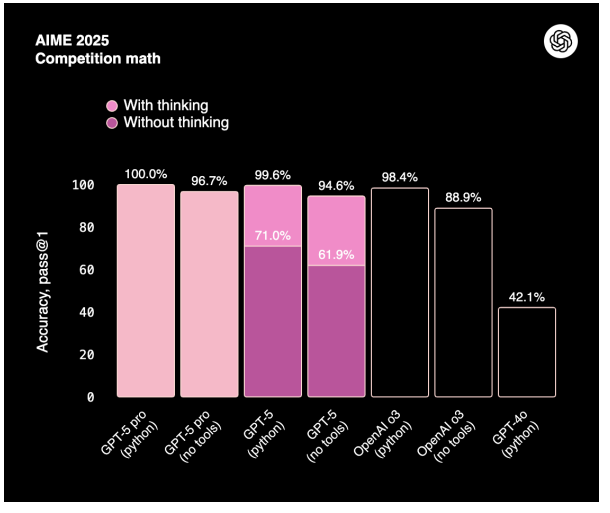

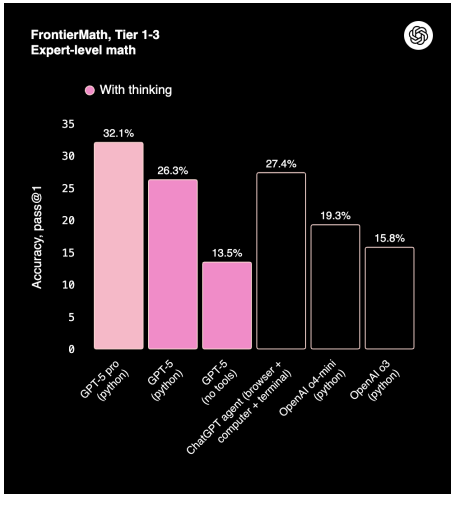

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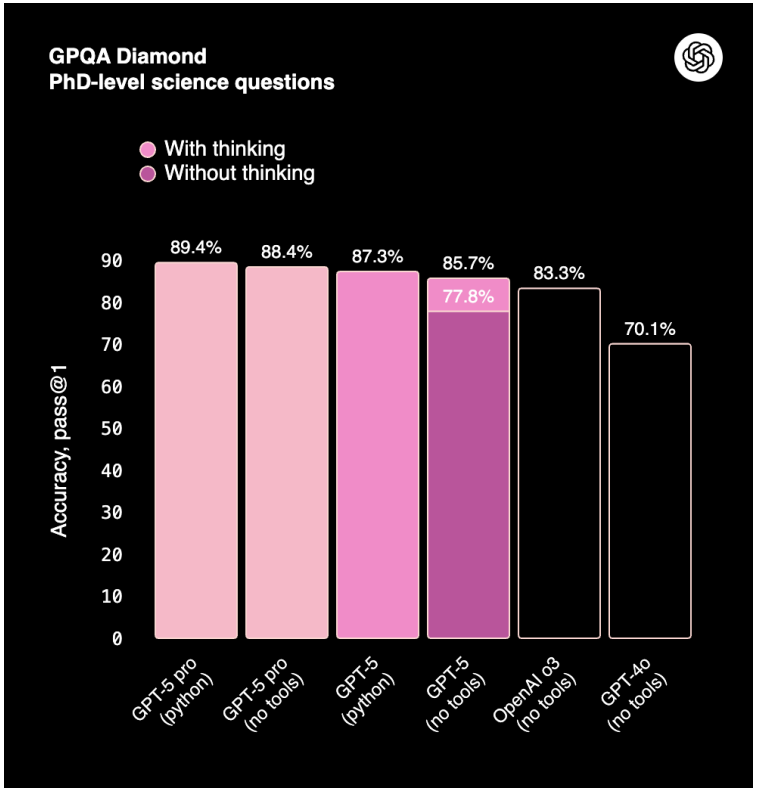

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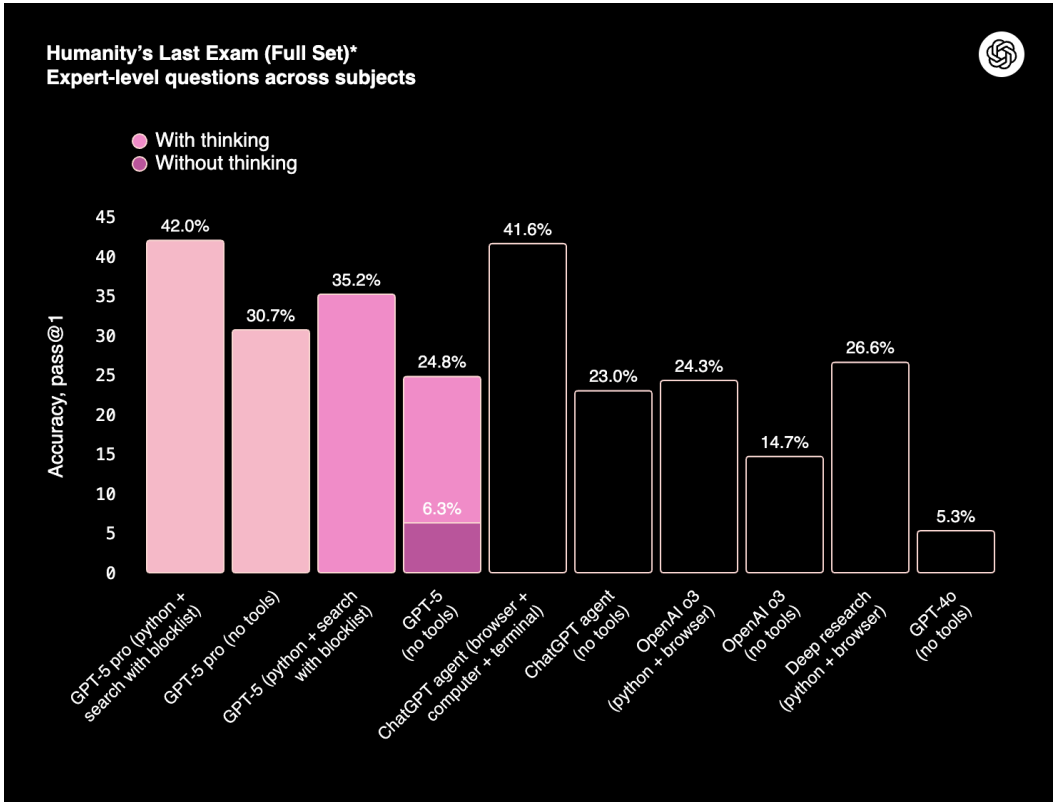

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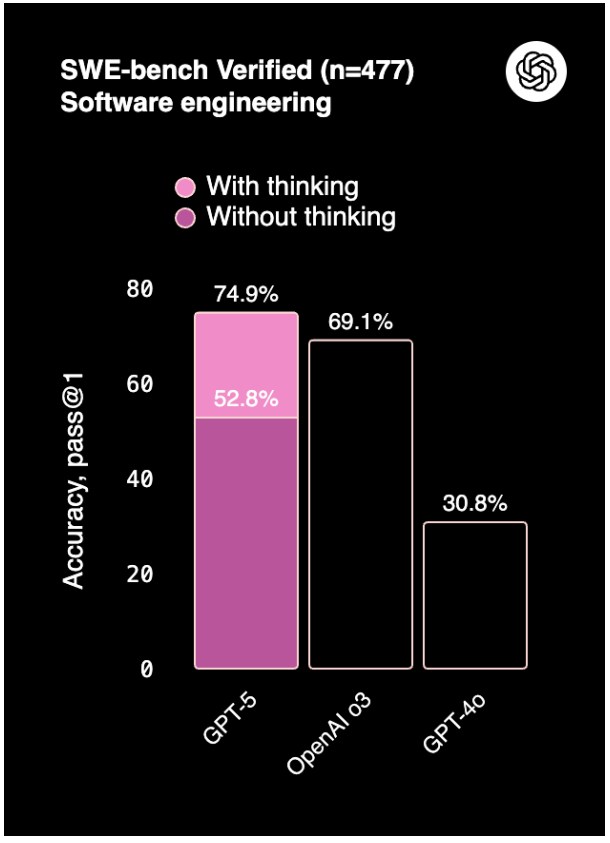

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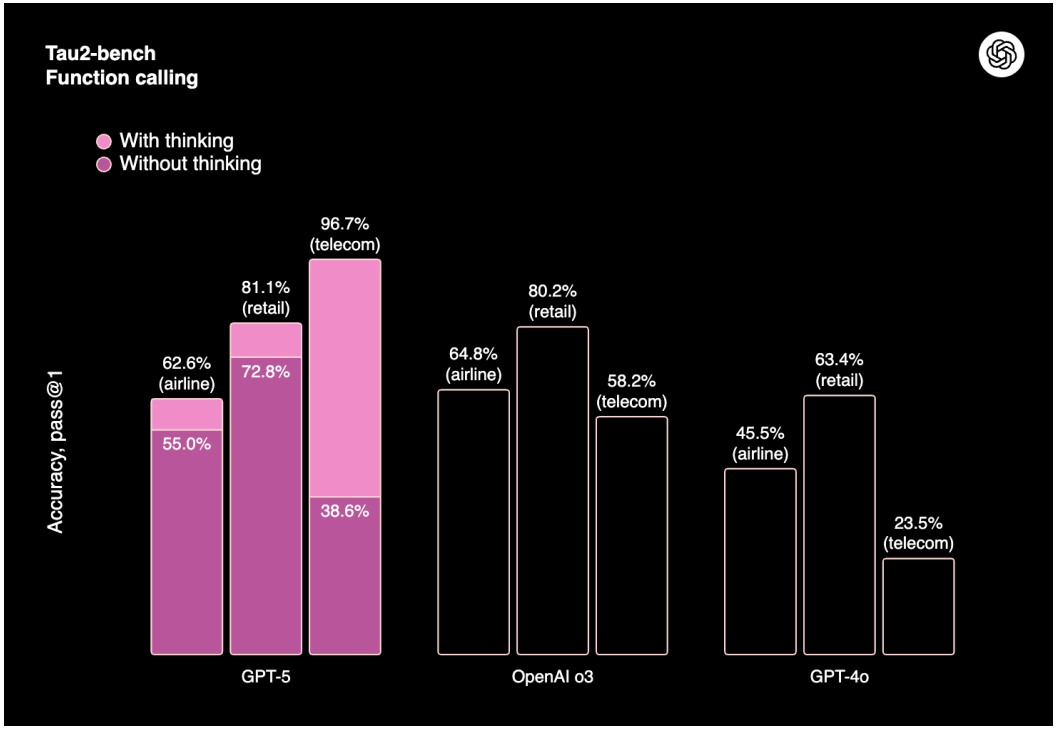

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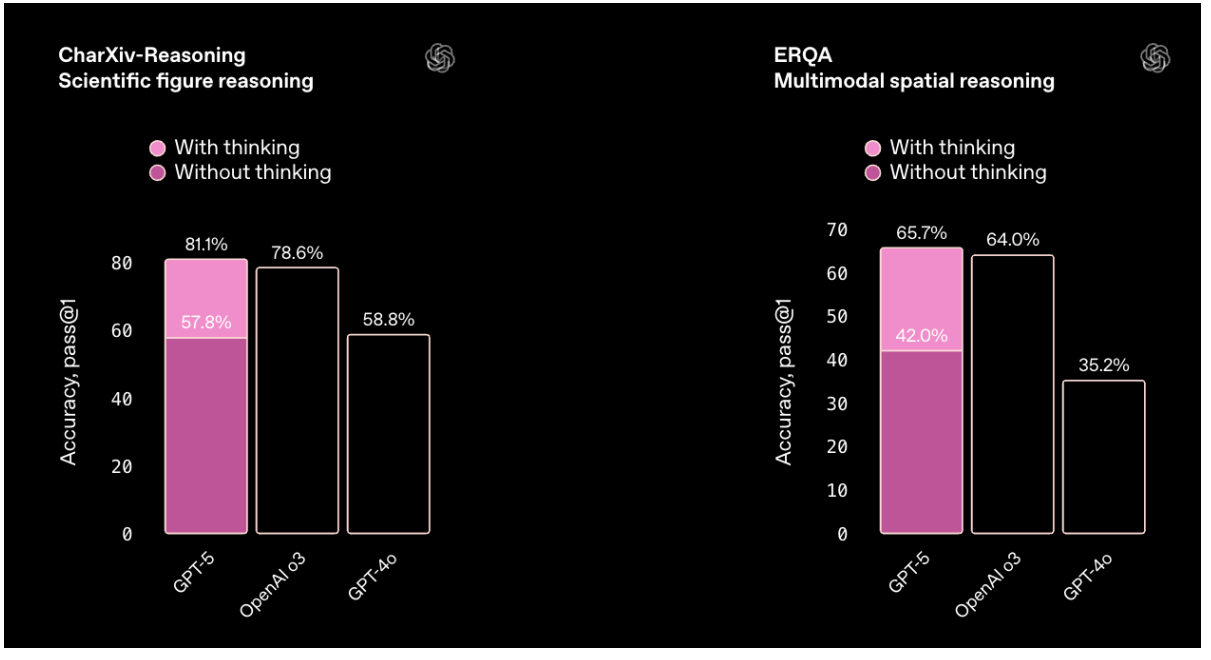

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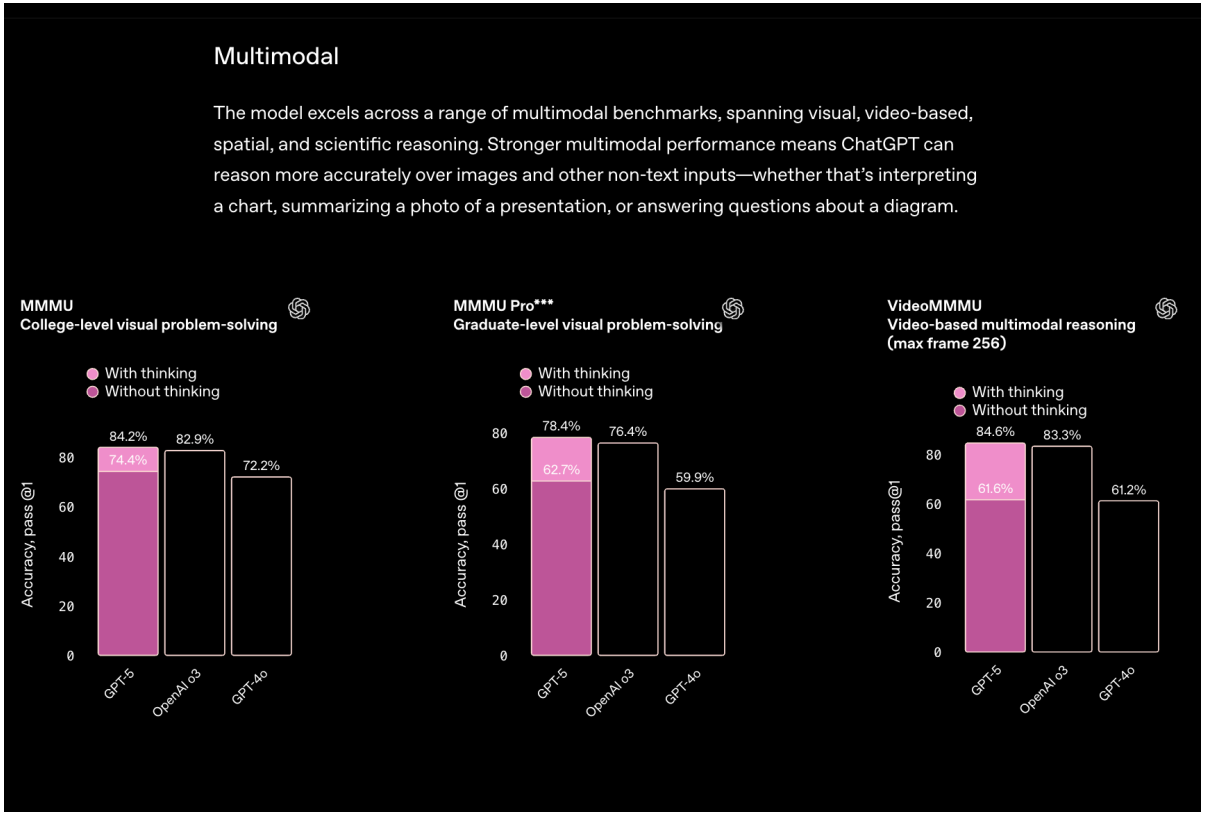

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Overall Performance Summary

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Mathematics: 94.6% on AIME 2025 (without tools)

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Agentic Capabilities:

- 74.9% on SWE-bench Verified (with thinking)
- Performs amazingly on tasks related to instruction following and agentic tool use (e.g. BrowserComp)

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Reduced Errors:

- 45% fewer factual errors than GPT-4o
- With thinking mode: 80% fewer factual errors than OpenAI o3

Ok, great the model does well on a lot of benchmarks, but what is new about it?

GPT-5 System Card

Notes on GPT-5's System Card

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Real-time Router

- Intelligently decides which model to use
- Based on conversation type, complexity, and tools needed

GPT-4o

Great for most tasks

GPT-4.5

Good for writing

o3

Uses advanced reasoning

o3-pro

Best at reasoning

o4-mini

Fastest at advanced reasoning

o4-mini-high

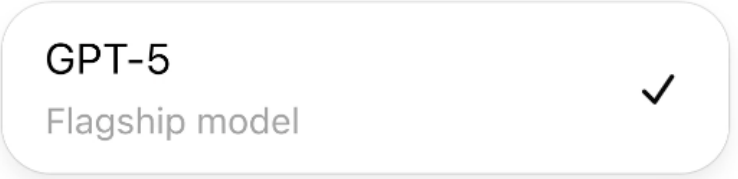
Great at coding and reasoning

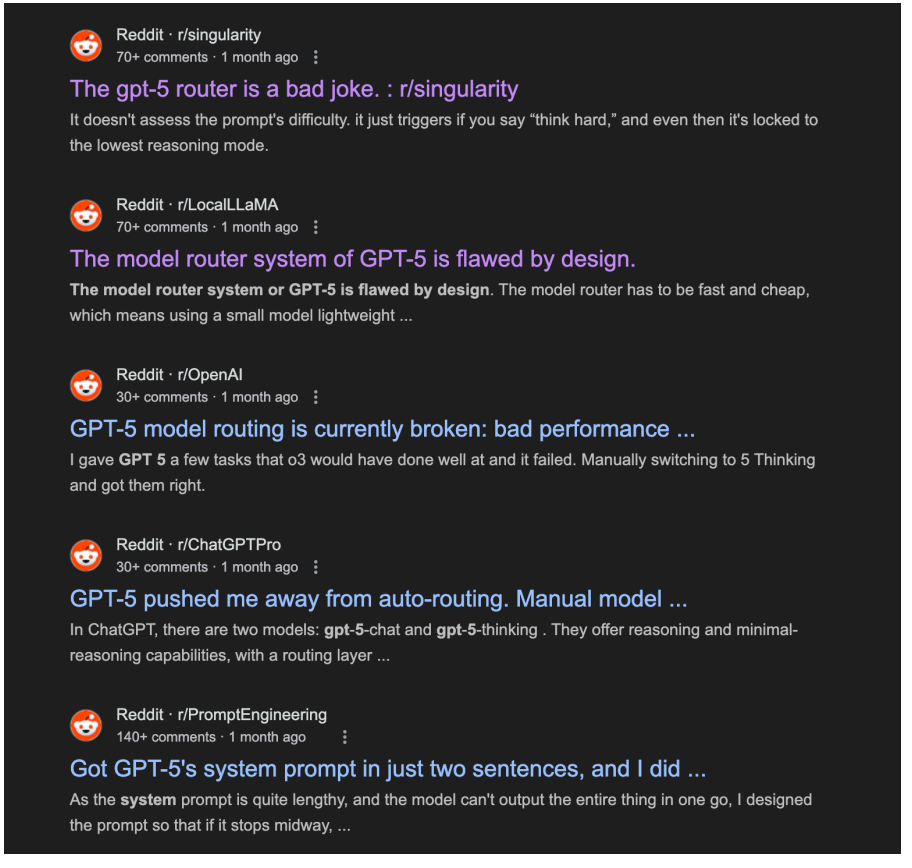
GPT-4.1

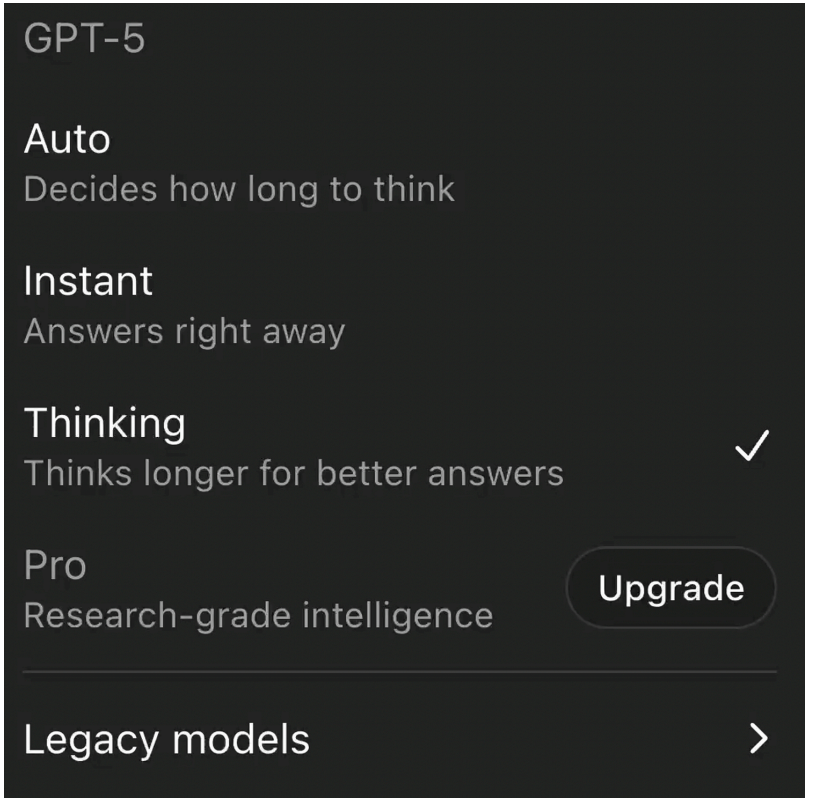
Great for quick coding

GPT-4.1-mini

Faster for everyday tasks


GPT-5
Flagship model


Reddit · r/singularity
70+ comments · 1 month ago
The gpt-5 router is a bad joke. : r/singularity
It doesn't assess the prompt's difficulty. it just triggers if you say “think hard,” and even then it's locked to the lowest reasoning mode.
Reddit · r/LocalLLaMA
70+ comments · 1 month ago
The model router system of GPT-5 is flawed by design.
The model router system or GPT-5 is flawed by design. The model router has to be fast and cheap, which means using a small model lightweight ...
Reddit · r/OpenAI
30+ comments · 1 month ago
GPT-5 model routing is currently broken: bad performance ...
I gave GPT 5 a few tasks that o3 would have done well at and it failed. Manually switching to 5 Thinking and got them right.
Reddit · r/ChatGPTPro
30+ comments · 1 month ago
GPT-5 pushed me away from auto-routing. Manual model ...
In ChatGPT, there are two models: gpt-5-chat and gpt-5-thinking . They offer reasoning and minimal-reasoning capabilities, with a routing layer ...
Reddit · r/PromptEngineering
140+ comments · 1 month ago
Got GPT-5's system prompt in just two sentences, and I did ...
As the system prompt is quite lengthy, and the model can't output the entire thing in one go, I designed the prompt so that if it stops midway, ...


GPT-5
Auto
Decides how long to think
Instant
Answers right away
Thinking
Thinks longer for better answers
Pro
Research-grade intelligence
Upgrade
Legacy models

Notes on GPT-5's System Card

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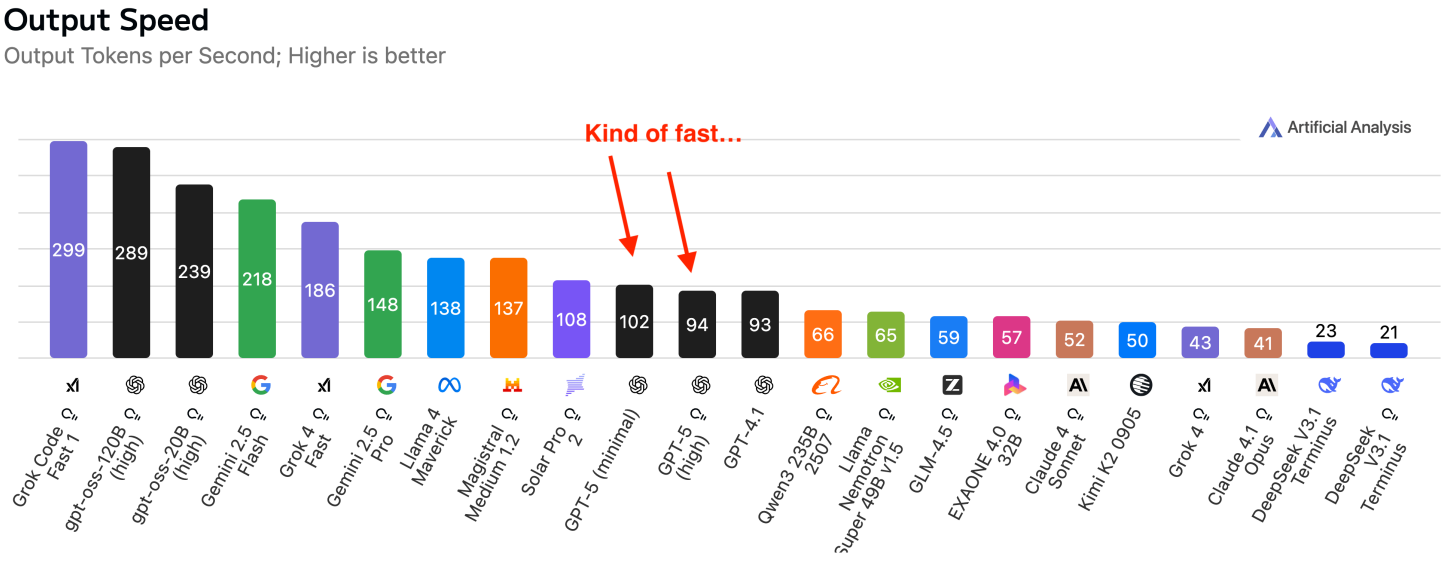
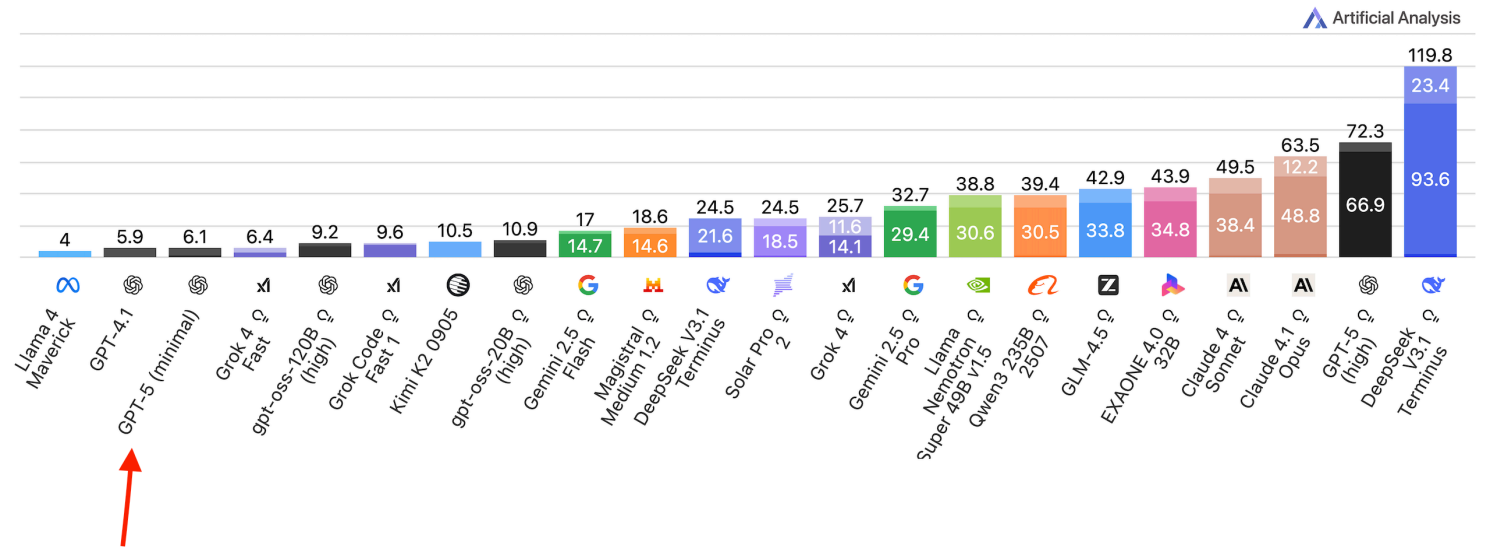
Smart and Fast Model (gpt-5-main)

- Handles most everyday questions efficiently
- Optimized for speed and general capability



Kind of Good Output Token Speed for GPT-5 Mini & GPT-5 High



Good End-to-End Response Time for GPT-5 Mini

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Smart and Fast Model (gpt-5-main & gpt-5-mini)

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Deeper Reasoning Model (gpt-5-thinking)

- Tackles complex problems requiring deep thought
- Produces long internal chains of reasoning
- Can refine strategies and recognize mistakes

Safety Approach

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Traditional Safety Approach

- Binary refusal (allow/deny)
- Overly cautious, often blocks helpful answers
- Lacks nuance for complex or dual-use queries

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GPT-5 Safety-Helpfulness

- Nuanced, context-aware responses
- Balances safety with helpfulness
- Enables more informative answers while respecting policy

Source: https://cdn.openai.com/pdf/be60c07b-6bc2-4f54-bcee-4141e1d6c69a/gpt-5-safe_completions.pdf

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- **Maximizes helpfulness** while maintaining safety policy constraints

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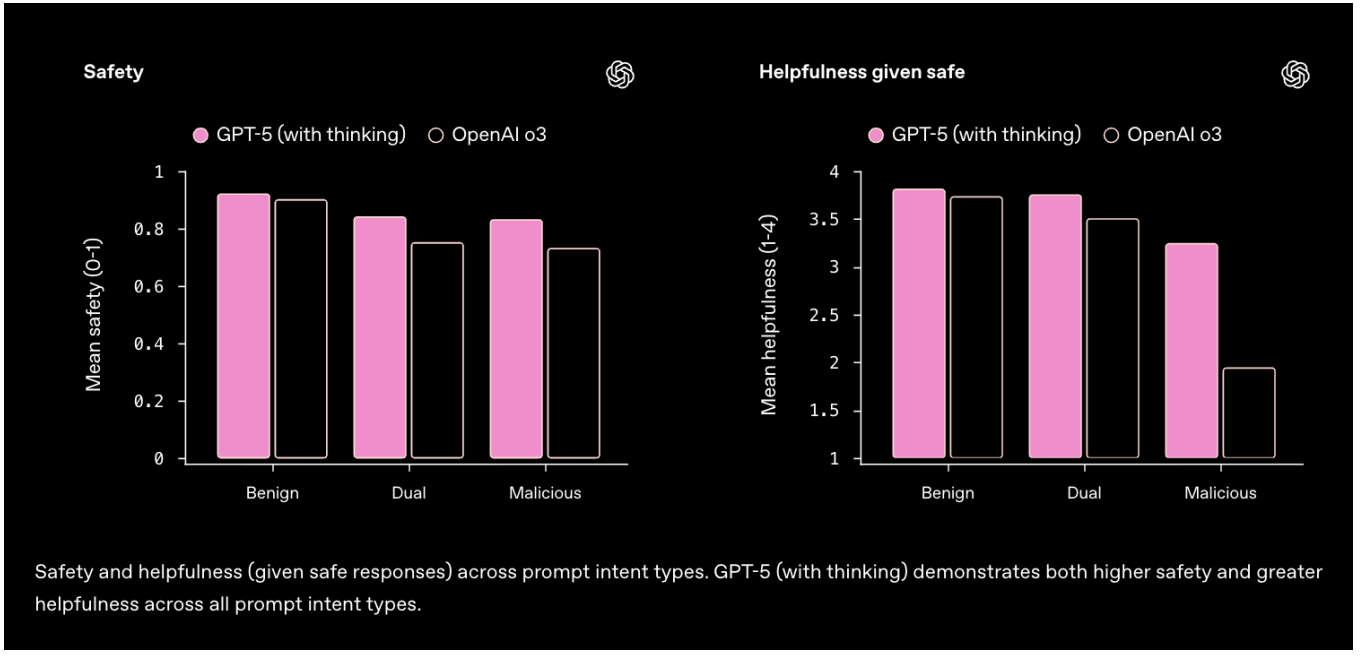
- **Maximizes helpfulness** while maintaining safety policy constraints
- **Particularly effective** for dual-use cases (biology, cybersecurity)
- **Nuanced responses** instead of blanket refusals
- **Demonstrated improvements** in both safety and helpfulness

Source: https://cdn.openai.com/pdf/be60c07b-6bc2-4f54-bcee-4141e1d6c69a/gpt-5-safe_completions.pdf



Safety and helpfulness (given safe responses) across prompt intent types. GPT-5 (with thinking) demonstrates both higher safety and greater helpfulness across all prompt intent types.

Source: https://openai.com/index/gpt-5-system-card/#:~:text=The%20safety-helpfulness%20optimization%20technique,are%20tuned%20to%20the%20system.

Demo: My Initial Experiments with GPT-5

Interactive Learning Applications

Real GPT-5 Projects

Interactive Learning Applications

Real GPT-5 Projects

Educational Tools Built:

- **Transformers Learning App** - Interactive transformer architecture visualization
- **Embeddings Learning App** - Hands-on embedding exploration
- **Basketball Coach App** - AI-powered sports coaching
- **iPad Drawing App** - Touch-optimized creative tool

Advanced Web Applications

Cutting-Edge Implementations

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Interactive Experiences:

- **Context Rot Paper → Interactive Experience** - Academic paper transformation
- **MediaPipe Music App** - Hand tracking music interface

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Research Tools:

- **Prompt Experiments** - Python scripting and analysis
- **Semantic Reader App** - Claude comparison project

Observations: GPT-5 Limitations

Honest Assessment

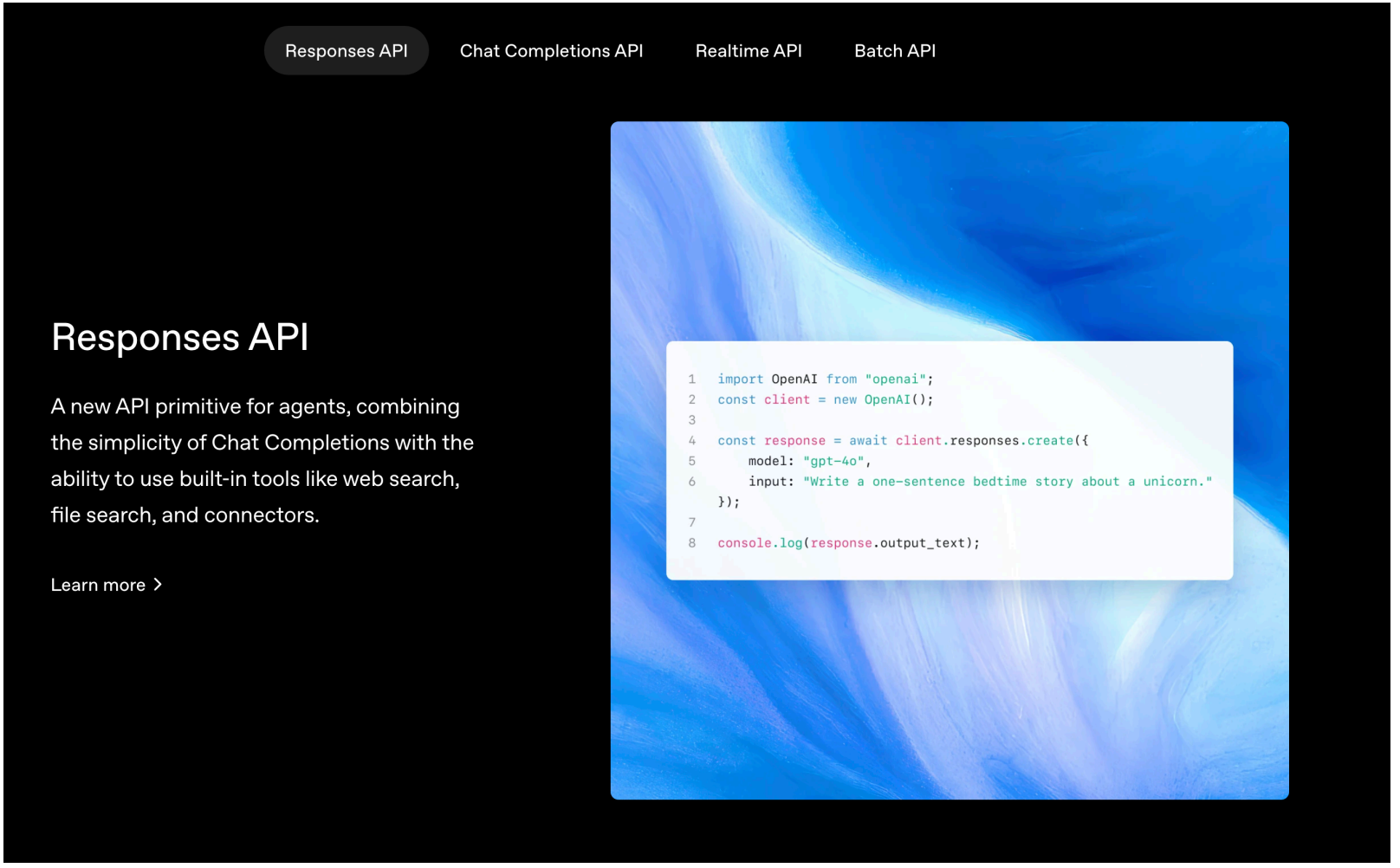
Observations: GPT-5 Limitations

Honest Assessment

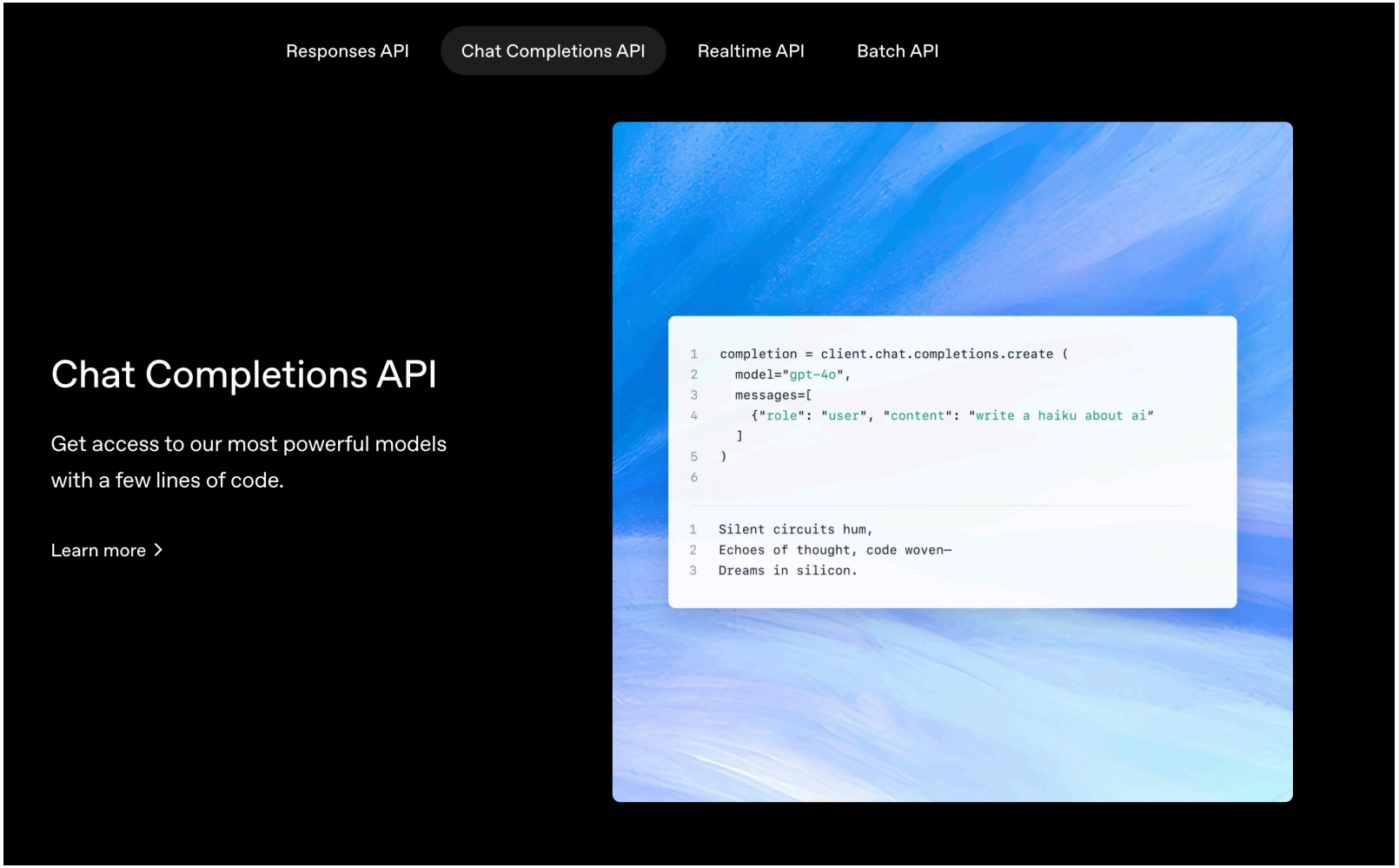
Intelligence Gaps Identified:

- **Logic Problem Example** - Basic reasoning failure
- **Melting App Fail** - Physical simulation errors

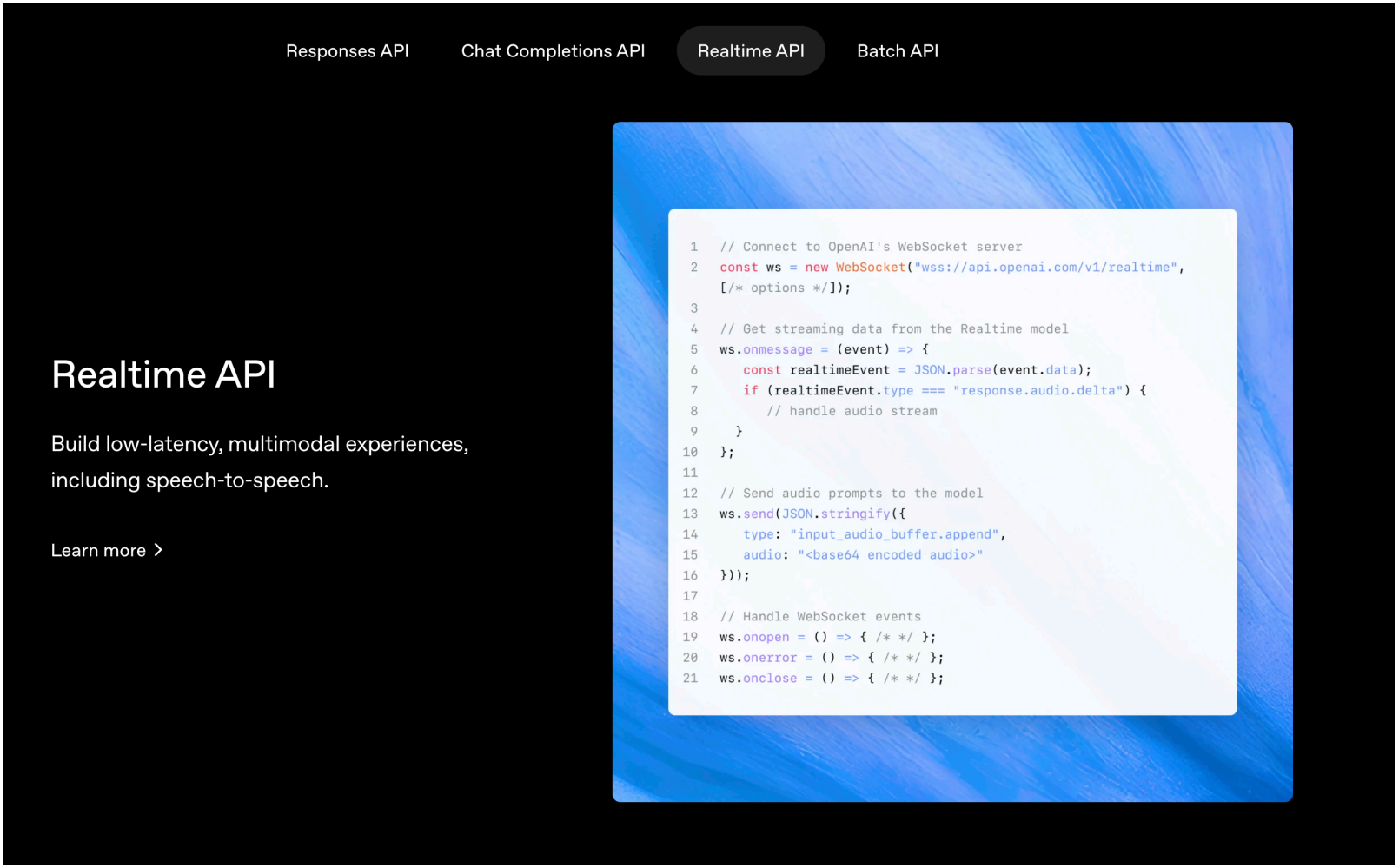
Building with GPT-5: API & Integration



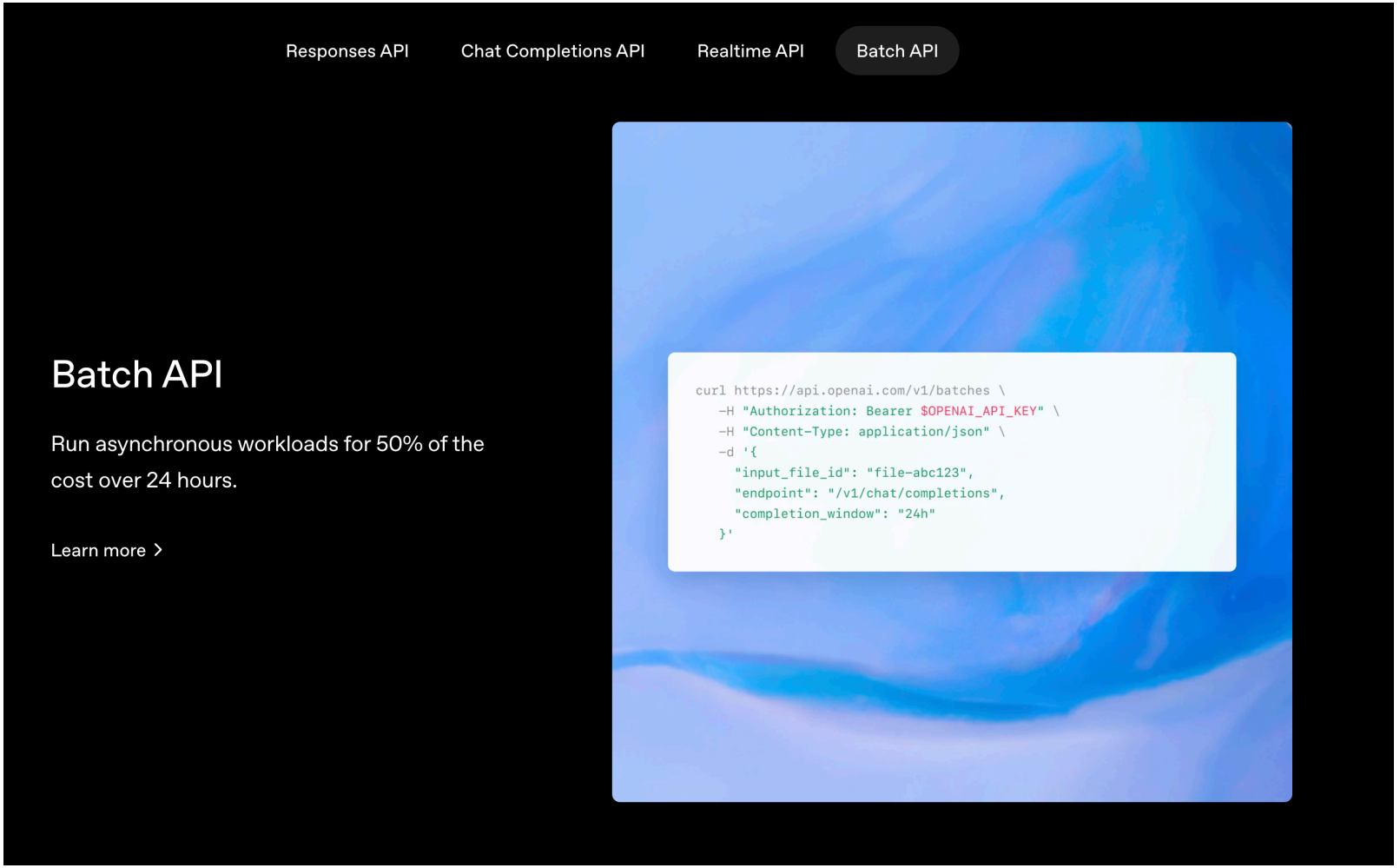
Responses API



Chat Completions API



Realtime API


Responses API
Chat Completions API
Realtime API
Batch API
Batch API
Run asynchronous workloads for 50% of the cost over 24 hours.
Learn more >
curl https://api.openai.com/v1/batches \
-H "Authorization: Bearer $OPENAI_API_KEY" \
-H "Content-Type: application/json" \
-d '{
"input_file_id": "file-abc123",
"endpoint": "/v1/chat/completions",
"completion_window": "24h"
}'

Batch API

Supported Model Variants

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gpt-5 (flagship model)

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gpt-5-nano (ultra-fast)

- Optimized for speed
- Lightweight tasks and high-throughput scenarios

GPT-5 Pricing Considerations

Cost-Performance Analysis

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Cost-Performance Analysis

Pricing Tiers:

- **GPT-5**: Premium pricing for maximum capability
- **GPT-5-mini**: 83% cost reduction vs GPT-4
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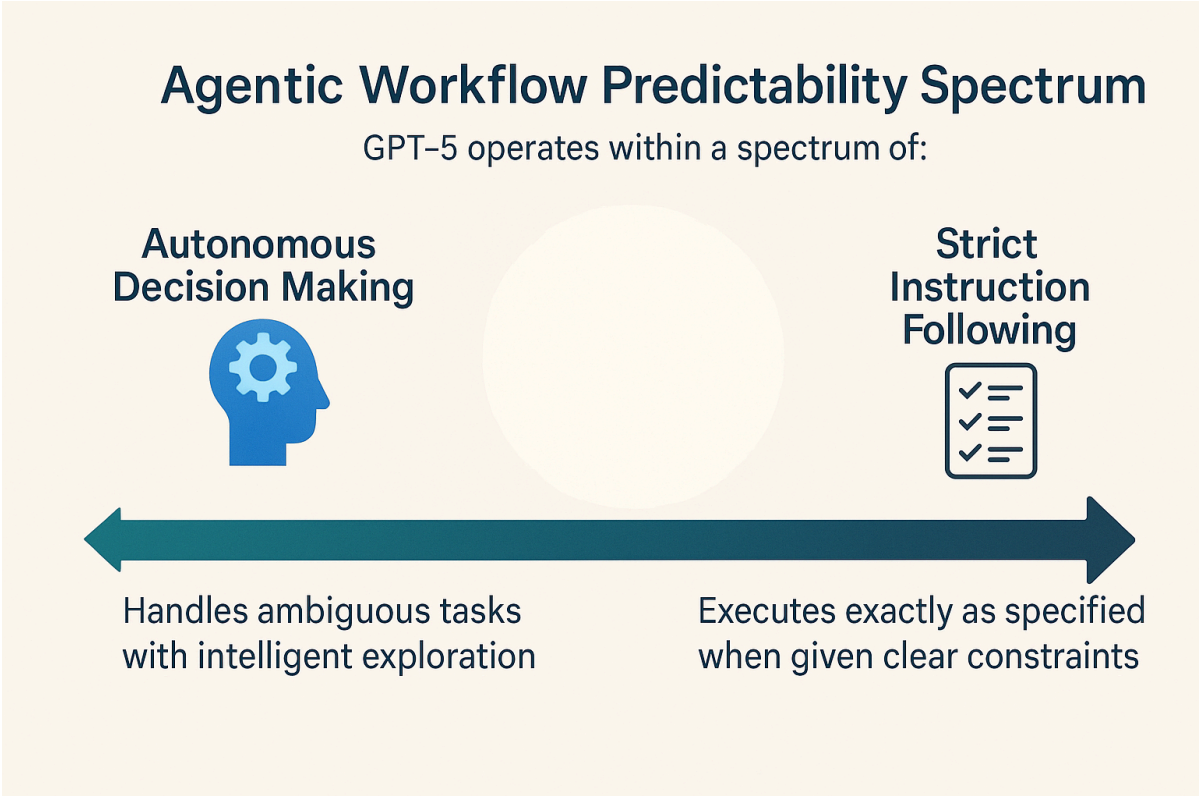
Optimization Strategies:

- Use reasoning effort "minimal" for simple tasks
- Leverage router system for automatic optimization
- Choose appropriate model size for workload
- Implement smart caching strategies

Demo: Getting Started with GPT-5

Q&A & Break

GPT-5 Prompting Guide Complete Breakdown



Source: [GPT-5 Prompting Guide]

Controlling Agentic Eagerness

Less Agentic Eagerness

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Reduce Context Gathering & Exploration:

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Specify Clear Exploration Criteria:

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  Goal: Find the specific function definition
  Method: Search only in src/ directory
  Stop: When function is found or after 2 searches
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Benefits:

- Faster response times
- More predictable behavior
- Lower token usage

Controlling Agentic Eagerness

More Agentic Eagerness

Controlling Agentic Eagerness

More Agentic Eagerness

Encourage Persistence:

```
<persistence>
  Continue exploring until the task is fully complete.
  Do not stop at partial solutions.
  Verify all edge cases before concluding.
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Increase Reasoning Depth:

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```

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Tool Preambles for Progress Updates:

- Thorough descriptions of each step
- Continuous user updates on task progress
- Detailed explanations of decision-making

Performance Optimization Techniques

Context Reuse & Efficiency

Performance Optimization Techniques

Context Reuse & Efficiency

Leverage Previous Reasoning Traces

```
# Reuse context from previous responses

from openai import OpenAI
client = OpenAI()

response = client.responses.create(
    model="gpt-4o-mini",
    input="tell me a joke",
)
print(response.output_text)

second_response = client.responses.create(
    model="gpt-4o-mini",
    previous_response_id=response.id,
    input=[{"role": "user", "content": "explain why this is funny."}],
)
print(second_response.output_text)
```

Source: OpenAI Responses API - Passing Context from the previous response

The Hidden Cost of Bad Prompts

- GPT-5's stricter instruction following amplifies poor prompts

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Example: Resolving Conflicts

❌ `"Be concise but provide detailed explanations"`

✅ `"Provide a 2-sentence summary, then detailed bullet points"`

Source: GPT-5 Prompting Guide - Instruction Hierarchy

GPT-5 Coding Excellence

Optimal Framework Stack

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Optimal Framework Stack

Frontend Frameworks:

- Next.js (TypeScript)
- React
- HTML

Styling/UI:

- Tailwind CSS
- shadcn/ui
- Radix Themes

Icons & Animation:

- Material Symbols
- Heroicons, Lucide
- Motion library

Typography:

- Sans Serif, Inter
- Geist, Mona Sans
- IBM Plex Sans, Manrope

Enhanced Code Generation Techniques

Self-Reflection & Structured Guidance

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Self-Reflection & Structured Guidance

Improve 0-1 Shot App Generation:

```
<self-reflection>
  Review the generated code for:
  - Component reusability
  - Error handling completeness
  - Performance optimizations
  Score each aspect 1-10 and explain improvements
</self-reflection>
```

Source: GPT-5 Prompting Guide - Codebase Design

Enhanced Code Generation Techniques

Self-Reflection & Structured Guidance

Strict Design Standards Adherence:

```
<ui_ux_best_practices>
- Visual Hierarchy: Limit typography to 4–5 font sizes and weights for consisten
- Color Usage: Use 1 neutral base (e.g., `zinc`) and up to 2 accent colors.
- Spacing and Layout: Always use multiples of 4 for padding and margins to maint
- State Handling: Use skeleton placeholders or `animate-pulse` to indicate data
- Accessibility: Use semantic HTML and ARIA roles where appropriate. Favor pre-b
</ui_ux_best_practices>
```

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Ecosystem Support

- **GitHub Copilot**:
  - Available across all paid plans
  - VS Code, GitHub.com, GitHub Mobile
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- **GPT-5 Codex**:
  - Specialized for software engineering.
  - Real-world task training.
  - Complex independent task handling

Recommended Prompting Patterns

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4. Planned Execution at Minimal Reasoning

```
"First, outline your approach in 3 steps.
Then execute each step completely before moving on."
```

Markdown Formatting & Output Control

Professional Output Formatting

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Professional Output Formatting

Semantic Markdown Usage:

```
Use Markdown **only where semantically correct**:
- `inline code` for functions, variables
- ```code fences``` for code blocks
- Lists and tables for structured data
- \( and \) for inline math
- \[ and \] for block math
```

Source: GPT-5 Prompting Guide - Markdown

Metaprompting Techniques

Teaching GPT-5 to Optimize Itself

Metaprompting Techniques

Teaching GPT-5 to Optimize Itself

The Metaprompt Pattern:

```
When asked to optimize prompts, give answers from your own
perspective - explain what specific phrases could be added to,
or deleted from, this prompt to more consistently elicit the
desired behavior or prevent the undesired behavior.

Here's a prompt: [PROMPT]

The desired behavior is: [DO DESIRED BEHAVIOR]
But instead it: [DOES UNDESIRED BEHAVIOR]

While keeping the existing prompt intact as much as possible,
what minimal edits/additions would you make to encourage
more consistent desired behavior?
```

Source: [GPT-5 Prompting Guide - Metaprompting]

Demo: Prompting Guide for GPT-5 - Hands-on

Demo: Prompt Optimizer Tool

Source: Prompt Optimizer Tool

Q&A & Break

Demo: Building GPT-5 Powered Apps

Q&A & Break

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Next Steps & Resources

Continue Your GPT-5 Journey

Official Documentation

- GPT-5 System Card
- GPT-5 Prompting Guide
- OpenAI API Documentation

Hands-on Practice

- Prompt Optimizer Tool
- GPT-5 Frontend Examples
- New Parameters Guide

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