

Generative AI

VS

Agentic AI

Creates content

Purpose

Takes actions & makes decisions

Responds to prompts

Autonomy

Acts independently with goals

Generates text, images, etc

Capabilities

Plans, executes, and adapts actions

Basic API access

Integration

Deep system integration

Generative AI

Definition: AI models that generate content (text, images, code, etc.) based on training data.

Examples: ChatGPT, DALL·E, Midjourney, GitHub Copilot.

Functionality: Produces outputs like essays, poems, images, or code snippets when prompted.

Nature: Passive – it responds to input but doesn't take action or plan independently.

Limitation: It doesn't autonomously pursue goals or make decisions beyond generating responses.

Agentic AI (Agent-based AI)

Definition: AI systems designed to act autonomously, make decisions, pursue goals, and interact with environments or other systems.

Examples: AutoGPT, BabyAGI, personal AI assistants that can perform tasks like booking appointments or browsing websites.

Functionality: Plans steps, reasons over tasks, interacts with tools/APIs, and can act without continuous human input.

Nature: Active – behaves like an agent that can sense, reason, and act.

Strength: Useful in automation, task management, and real-time decision-making.

Key Differences Summary

Feature	Generative AI	Agentic AI
Goal	Generate content	Achieve goals autonomously
Input Style	Prompt-based	Task-based, often open-ended
Autonomy	Low	High
Examples	ChatGPT (chat), DALL·E (image gen)	AutoGPT, AI agents
Interaction Style	Responds to prompts	Plans, reasons, and executes tasks

Comparative Overview

Feature Generative AI Agentic AI

Primary Function Content creation (text, images, code) Autonomous task execution and decision-making

User Interaction Requires specific prompts Operates based on goals with minimal input

Autonomy Level Reactive Proactive and self-directed

Examples ChatGPT, DALL·E, GitHub Copilot AutoGPT, BabyAGI, Retool Agents, Opera Neon

Use Cases Drafting content, generating images Automating workflows, multi-step task management

◆ Tool: ChatGPT

Scenario: A writer wants help crafting a product description.

Interaction:

User: "Write a fun description for a travel mug."

ChatGPT: "Sip adventure on the go! Our thermal mug keeps drinks hot for 8 hours..."

Key Point: ChatGPT responds to your prompt but does not take any action beyond that. You must manually copy the text, format it, or publish it.

Tool: AutoGPT or Retool Agents

Scenario: A startup founder asks the AI:

“Research 5 top competitors in the fintech space, summarize their offerings, and generate a report with key differences.”

What Agentic AI Does:

Searches the web.

Summarizes the data.

Organizes it into a report.

Emails the report to the founder—all without further prompts.

Key Point: It performs autonomous multi-step tasks toward a goal, not just text generation.

🧩 Analogy:

Generative AI is like a chef who cooks whatever recipe you ask for.

Agentic AI is like a catering manager who plans the menu, hires the chef, gets the ingredients, and serves the meal—without needing you to oversee everything.