To obtain an OpenAI API key, you'll need to follow these steps:

1. **Sign Up for OpenAI**:
   * If you haven't already, create an account on the [OpenAI platform](https://www.openai.com/).
2. **Access the OpenAI Playground**:
   * Once you have an account, you can access the [OpenAI Playground](https://platform.openai.com/playground). The playground is a web interface that allows you to experiment with OpenAI models without writing any code.
3. **Request API Access**:
   * OpenAI initially launched its API in a private beta, which means you had to request access. However, they have since opened it up for more users. Check the [OpenAI Pricing page](https://openai.com/pricing) for details on how to get API access and any associated costs.
4. **Retrieve Your API Key**:
   * Once you have API access, navigate to the API section in your OpenAI account dashboard. Here, you'll be able to generate and manage your API keys.
5. **Stay Updated**:
   * OpenAI's policies, pricing, and access availability can change over time. It's a good idea to stay updated by regularly checking their official website and documentation.
6. **Usage and Limitations**:
   * Once you have your API key, you can start making requests to the OpenAI API. However, be aware of the rate limits and usage costs associated with your specific API plan. Always refer to the official documentation for accurate and up-to-date information.

Remember to keep your API key confidential. Do not share it publicly or commit it directly in your code repositories. Use environment variables or secret management tools to handle API keys securely in your applications.