# Developer quickstart

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Learn how to make your first API request.

The OpenAI API provides a simple interface to state-of-the-art AI [models](https://platform.openai.com/docs/models) for natural language processing, image generation, semantic search, and speech recognition. Follow this guide to learn how to generate human-like responses to [natural language prompts](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/text-generation), [create vector embeddings](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/embeddings) for semantic search, and [generate images](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/images) from textual descriptions.

Create and export an API key

[Create an API key in the dashboard here](https://platform.openai.com/api-keys), which you’ll use to securely [access the API](https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference/authentication). Store the key in a safe location, like a [.zshrc file](https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/how-do-zsh-configuration-files-work/) or another text file on your computer. Once you’ve generated an API key, export it as an [environment variable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environment_variable) in your terminal.

macOS / Linux

Windows

Export an environment variable on macOS or Linux systems

1

export OPENAI\_API\_KEY="your\_api\_key\_here"

Make your first API request

With your OpenAI API key exported as an environment variable, you're ready to make your first API request. You can either use the [REST API](https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference) directly with the HTTP client of your choice, or use one of our [official SDKs](https://platform.openai.com/docs/libraries) as shown below.

JavaScript

Python

curl

To use the OpenAI API in server-side JavaScript environments like Node.js, Deno, or Bun, you can use the official [OpenAI SDK for TypeScript and JavaScript](https://github.com/openai/openai-node). Get started by installing the SDK using [npm](https://www.npmjs.com/) or your preferred package manager:

Install the OpenAI SDK with npm

1

npm install openai

With the OpenAI SDK installed, create a file called example.mjs and copy one of the following examples into it:

Generate text

Generate an image

Create vector embeddings

Execute the code with node example.mjs (or the equivalent command for Deno or Bun). In a few moments, you should see the output of your API request!

Next steps

Now that you've made your first OpenAI API request, you can explore the following resources:

[Chat Completions](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/text-generation)

[Learn more about generating text responses to natural language prompts](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/text-generation)

[Image Generation](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/images)

[Generate images using our DALL·E model](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/images)

[Embeddings](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/embeddings)

[Create vector representations of text, used for similarity search](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/embeddings)

[Text-to-speech](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/text-to-speech)

[Generate human-like voice recordings with our text-to-speech model](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/text-to-speech)

[Speech-to-text](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/speech-to-text)

[Create transcriptions of voice recordings with our Whisper model](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/speech-to-text)

[Moderation](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/moderation)

[Analyze and filter user-created content with our moderation model](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/moderation)

[Fine-tuning](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/fine-tuning)

[Fine-tune our models with your own data](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/fine-tuning)

[Batch](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/batch)

[Batch requests for async jobs](https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/batch)

[Full API Reference](https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference)

[View the full REST API reference for OpenAI](https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference)