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Developer quickstart

The OpenAI API provides a simple interface to state-of-the-art AI [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](#), [create vector embeddings](#) for semantic search, and [generate images](#) from textual descriptions.

Create and export an API key

Create an API key in the [dashboard here](#), which you'll use to securely [access the API](#). Store the key in a safe location, like a [.zshrc file](#) or another text file on your computer. Once you've generated an API key, export it as an [environment variable](#) in your terminal.

MacOS / Linux

```
Export an environment variable on *nix systems
export OPENAI_API_KEY="your_api_key_here"
```

Windows

```
setx 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](#) directly with the HTTP client of your choice, or use one of our [official SDKs](#) as shown below.

JavaScript

```
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

```
import OpenAI from "openai";
const openai = new OpenAI();

const completion = await openai.chat.completions.create({
  model: "gpt-4o-mini",
  messages: [
    { role: "system", content: "You are a helpful assistant." },
    {
      role: "user",
      content: "Write a haiku about recursion in programming.",
    },
  ],
});

console.log(completion.choices[0].message);
```

Generate An Image

```
import OpenAI from "openai";
const openai = new OpenAI();

const image = await openai.images.generate({ prompt: "A cute baby sea otter" });

console.log(image.data[0].url);
```

Create Vector Embeddings

```
import OpenAI from "openai";  
const openai = new OpenAI();  
  
const embedding = await openai.embeddings.create({  
  model: "text-embedding-3-large",  
  input: "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog",  
});  
  
console.log(embedding);
```

Python

```
pip install openai
```

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

Generate Text

```
from openai import OpenAI
client = OpenAI()

completion = client.chat.completions.create(
    model="gpt-4o-mini",
    messages=[
        {"role": "system", "content": "You are a helpful assistant."},
        {
            "role": "user",
            "content": "Write a haiku about recursion in programming."
        }
    ]
)

print(completion.choices[0].message)
```

Generate An Image

```
from openai import OpenAI
client = OpenAI()

response = client.images.generate(
    prompt="A cute baby sea otter",
    n=2,
    size="1024x1024"
)
```

```
print(response.data[0].url)
```

Create Vector Embeddings

```
from openai import OpenAI
client = OpenAI()

response = client.embeddings.create(
    model="text-embedding-3-large",
    input="The food was delicious and the waiter..."
)

print(response)
```

Execute the code with `python example.py`. In a few moments, you should see the output of your API request!

Curl

Generate Text

```
curl "https://api.openai.com/v1/chat/completions" \
-H "Content-Type: application/json" \
-H "Authorization: Bearer $OPENAI_API_KEY" \
-d '{
  "model": "gpt-4o-mini",
  "messages": [
    {
      "role": "system",
      "content": "You are a helpful assistant."
    },
    {
      "role": "user",
      "content": "Write a haiku that explains the concept of recursion."
    }
  ]
}'
```

Generate An Image

```
curl "https://api.openai.com/v1/images/generations" \
-H "Content-Type: application/json" \
-H "Authorization: Bearer $OPENAI_API_KEY" \
-d '{
  "prompt": "A cute baby sea otter",
  "n": 2,
  "size": "1024x1024"
}'
```

Create Vector Embeddings

```
curl "https://api.openai.com/v1/embeddings" \  
-H "Content-Type: application/json" \  
-H "Authorization: Bearer $OPENAI_API_KEY" \  
-d '{  
  "input": "The food was delicious and the waiter...",  
  "model": "text-embedding-3-large"  
}
```