

How to Be Better Than Most in GenAI

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Core LLM Building Blocks

1. **Transformer Architecture** → Core design (encoder-only like BERT, decoder-only like GPT/Claude/Gemini etc [autoregressive], encoder-decoder like T5)
2. **Tokenization** → Break text into tokens and map them to numbers
3. **Embedding Spaces** → Map tokens into a semantic space where closer vectors mean similar meaning
4. **Positional Encoding** → Adds sequence order information to token embeddings
5. **Attention** → Highlights the most relevant tokens in context
6. **Self-Attention** → Each token attends to every other token for context
7. **Cross-Attention** → Connect encoder and decoder (in encoder-decoder models)
8. **Multi-Head Attention** → Several attention heads capture different patterns in parallel
9. **Feed-Forward Networks** → Nonlinear layers that transform representations between attention blocks
10. **Residual Connections** → Shortcut links that preserve signals and help gradient flow
11. **Layer Normalization** → Normalizes activations to stabilize and speed up training
12. **Output Projection (LM Head)** → Final linear layer mapping hidden states into logits
13. **Logits** → Raw prediction scores for each token before probabilities
14. **Softmax** → Turns logits into a probability distribution
15. **Sampling from Probabilities** → Chooses the next token based on probability weights
16. **RoPE** → Rotary Positional Encoding, adds relative position info for longer sequences
17. **ALiBi / Relative Positional Encoding** → Alternative to RoPE for long contexts
18. **Linear / Performer Attention** → Efficient attention variants for very long sequences
19. **Grouped Query Attention (GQA)** → Reduces memory use by sharing keys/values across heads
20. **Multi-Head Latent Attention** → Extends attention into hidden spaces for richer context
21. **SwiGLU/Gelu Activations** → Smooth nonlinear functions that improve expressiveness
22. **RMSNorm** → Root-mean-square normalization, a lighter alternative to LayerNorm

Advanced Architectures

1. **Diffusion Models** → Generate images/video by learning to reverse noise process (DALL-E, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion)
 2. **VAEs (Variational Autoencoders)** → Probabilistic generative models with latent spaces
 3. **GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks)** → Generator vs discriminator training for realistic outputs
 4. **State Space Models (Mamba/SSMs)** → Efficient alternatives to transformers for long sequences
 5. **Autoregressive Models** → Generate sequences one token at a time (GPT family, Claude, Gemini etc)
 6. **Flow-Based Models** → Invertible neural networks for exact likelihood estimation
 7. **Hybrid Architectures** → Combine multiple approaches (transformer + CNN, etc.)
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Training & Tuning

1. **Pretraining** → Build general world knowledge from large datasets
2. **Mixed Precision Training** → Speed up training with lower-precision arithmetic
3. **Sharded / Distributed Training** → Scale across multiple GPUs/nodes
4. **Continual / Lifelong Learning** → Update models without forgetting old knowledge
5. **Self-Instruction / Self-Play** → AI generates its own training examples
6. **Fine-Tuning** → Adapt the model for specific domains or tasks
7. **Supervised Fine-Tuning (SFT)** → Train on curated input-output pairs
8. **LoRA** → Parameter-efficient adapters for cheap fine-tuning
9. **QLoRA** → LoRA + quantization, enabling fine-tuning of huge models on modest hardware
10. **PEFT** → Family of methods (e.g., LoRA, QLoRA, adapters) updating only small parts of the model
11. **Instruction Tuning** → Teach models to follow natural language instructions
12. **RLHF** → Align model outputs with human preferences via feedback
13. **Constitutional AI** → AI-written principles for safer alignment
14. **DPO / PPO / GRPO** → Optimization algorithms for preference alignment
15. **Distillation** → Transfer knowledge from a large model into a smaller one
16. **Gradient Descent & Backpropagation** → Core optimization mechanics

17. **Loss Functions** → Cross-entropy loss, perplexity, etc. that guide learning
 18. **Learning Rate Scheduling** → Adjust training speed for stability
 19. **Batch Size & Gradient Accumulation** → Control efficiency and memory use
 20. **Scaling Laws** → Predictable links between size, data, and performance
 21. **Mixture-of-Experts Fine-Tuning** → Activate only subsets of parameters for efficiency
 22. **Preference Optimization (IPO, KTO, etc.)** → Newer RLHF alternatives without full RL
 23. **Curriculum Learning** → Strategic ordering of training data for better convergence
 24. **Meta-Learning** → Learning to learn quickly from few examples
 25. **Transfer Learning** → Leveraging pre-trained models for new tasks
 26. **Domain Adaptation** → Adapting models across different domains
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Generation Controls

1. **Entropy** → Measures uncertainty, higher entropy = more diverse but less predictable outputs
 2. **Temperature** → Controls randomness; higher = creative, lower = precise
 3. **Top-k / Top-p** → Sampling filters, Higher = safer, looser = more diverse
 4. **Repetition Penalty** → Discourages loops; too strong may block valid words
 5. **Beam Search** → Finds higher-probability outputs, safer but less creative
 6. **Stop Sequences** → Force model to end at defined markers, too strict may cut off early
 7. **Context Window** → Defines memory size, longer = more context, but costly
 8. **Chain-of-Thought** → Stepwise reasoning, improves logic but can slow generation
 9. **Speculative Decoding** → Drafts with a smaller model, faster but may need corrections
 10. **Contrastive Decoding** → Balances fluency vs factuality
 11. **Medusa / Speculative Multi-Path Decoding** → Multi-hypothesis generation for speed + accuracy
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Knowledge & Retrieval

1. **RAG** → Combine LLMs with external knowledge sources for up-to-date answers
2. **Vector Databases** → Store embeddings and perform fast similarity search
3. **In-Context Learning** → Model adapts using examples provided in the prompt

4. **Knowledge Graphs** → Represent facts as structured entities and relationships
 5. **Semantic Search** → Retrieve information based on meaning, not exact keywords
 6. **Few-Shot Learning** → Learn from a small number of examples
 7. **Zero-Shot Learning** → Generalize to new tasks without any examples
 8. **Hybrid Search** → Combine semantic, keyword, and graph-based retrieval
 9. **Retrieval Augmentation via Loops** → Iteratively refine queries to improve results
 10. **Reranker** → Re-rank retrieved results to prioritize the most relevant content
 11. **Dense Passage Retrieval (DPR)** → Embedding-based retrieval for large corpora
 12. **Sparse Retrieval / BM25** → Keyword-based retrieval for efficiency and baseline
 13. **Feedback-Augmented Retrieval** → Use human or model feedback to improve relevance
 14. **Chain-of-Retrieval** → Multi-step retrieval pipelines for complex queries
 15. **Retriever-Generator Loops** → Iterative retrieval + generation for difficult queries
 16. **Hybrid Dense-Sparse Retrieval** → Combine semantic + keyword retrieval for better accuracy
 17. **Multi-hop Reasoning** → Retrieve multiple connected facts to answer complex queries
 18. **Embedding Updates / Incremental Indexing** → Keep retrieval database fresh efficiently
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Efficiency & Scaling

1. **Quantization** → Compress model size and memory usage with minimal accuracy loss
2. **Sparse Models / MoE** → Activate only relevant experts to save compute
3. **Model Parallelism** → Distribute large models across multiple devices
4. **Data Parallelism** → Process multiple batches simultaneously for faster training
5. **Gradient Checkpointing** → Save memory by recomputing intermediate activations on demand
6. **KV Caching** → Cache key-value pairs to accelerate inference
7. **Latency vs. Cost Tradeoff** → Larger models = slower & costlier, smaller = faster & lighter
8. **Model Serving** → Efficient deployment using batching and request queuing
9. **Edge Deployment** → Run models on local or mobile devices with limited resources
10. **Mixed Precision Training** → Use FP16/BF16 to speed up training and reduce memory

11. **Sharded / Distributed Training** → Split model parameters across devices for massive models
 12. **Pipeline Parallelism** → Overlap sequential layer computation across devices for speed
 13. **Activation & Parameter Offloading** → Move parts of model to CPU to save GPU memory
 14. **Sparse Attention** → Compute attention only for relevant tokens, reducing cost
 15. **Memory-Mapped Checkpoints** → Load large models efficiently without full RAM usage
 16. **Elastic / Dynamic Batching** → Adjust batch size dynamically to optimize throughput
 17. **Inference Optimization** → Operator fusion, kernel tuning, and caching for faster runtime
 18. **Quantization-Aware Training (QAT)** → Fine-tune models with quantization to retain accuracy
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Data & Preprocessing

1. **Data Cleaning & Filtering** → Ensure high-quality, relevant, and consistent training data
 2. **Tokenizer Training** → Build vocabularies using BPE, SentencePiece, or Unigram models
 3. **Data Deduplication** → Remove repeated or near-duplicate examples to improve learning
 4. **Data Mixing & Curriculum Learning** → Present data strategically for better convergence
 5. **Data Augmentation** → Expand dataset with synthetic or modified examples
 6. **Synthetic Data Generation** → AI-generated data to fill gaps or rare cases
 7. **Balanced Sampling** → Ensure diverse representation across domains/classes
 8. **Data Quality Assessment** → Measuring and ensuring training data meets standards
 9. **Active Learning** → Strategically selecting the most informative data for labeling
 10. **Data Versioning** → Track changes and maintain reproducibility in datasets
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Evaluation & Benchmarks

1. **Perplexity** → Measures how well a model predicts text (core LM metric)
2. **BLEU / ROUGE / BERTScore** → Compare generated text to reference quality
3. **Benchmark Suites** → Standardized tests like MMLU, HellaSwag, BIG-bench for model evaluation
4. **Human Evaluation** → Collect human judgments for accuracy, coherence, and safety
5. **Factuality / Truthfulness Metrics** → Specialized evaluation for hallucination-prone outputs

6. **Consistency / Contradiction Metrics** → Check if model outputs are logically consistent across queries
 7. **Bias & Fairness Metrics** → Quantify demographic or cultural biases in outputs
 8. **Adversarial Robustness** → Test resilience to malicious or tricky prompts
 9. **Knowledge Probing** → Evaluate stored factual knowledge (e.g., LAMA, TruthfulQA)
 10. **Efficiency & Cost Metrics** → Measure latency, throughput, memory, and compute requirements
 11. **Explainability / Interpretability Evaluation** → Assess clarity and transparency of model reasoning
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Extensions

1. **Multimodality** → Combine text, images, audio, and video for richer understanding
 2. **Agents** → LLMs that plan, reason, and take actions autonomously
 3. **Agentic AI** → LLMs with autonomous decision-making, memory, and goal-oriented behaviour
 4. **Multi-Agent Systems** → Teams of LLMs with specialized roles for complex tasks
 5. **Tool Use / Function Calling** → LLMs interact with APIs, databases, and external tools
 6. **Prompt Engineering** → Design inputs to guide models toward better outputs
 7. **Few-Shot & One-Shot Learning** → Adapt from minimal examples for quick generalization
 8. **Auto-Prompting / Self-Instruction** → Models generate their own prompts to improve learning
 9. **Chain of Thought (CoT)** → Break problems into step-by-step reasoning
 10. **ReAct** → Combine reasoning with tool use and actions
 11. **Self-Consistency** → Compare multiple reasoning paths → pick best answer
 12. **Tree of Thoughts (ToT)** → Explore many reasoning branches before deciding
 13. **Reflexion** → Model critiques, learns, and refines its own answers
 14. **Memory** → Agents recall past interactions for long-term context
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Production & MLOps

1. **Model Versioning & Lineage** → Track model evolution and dependencies
2. **A/B Testing for Models** → Compare model performance in production environments

3. **Model Monitoring & Drift Detection** → Ensure continued performance over time
 4. **Continuous Learning** → Updating models with new data without full retraining
 5. **Model Registry** → Centralized storage and management of model artifacts
 6. **Feature Stores** → Manage and serve features for model inference
 7. **Model Serving Infrastructure** → Scalable deployment and serving systems
 8. **Experiment Tracking** → Log and compare training runs and hyperparameters
 9. **Data Pipelines** → Automated data processing and validation workflows
 10. **Model Governance** → Policies and processes for responsible model deployment
 11. **Rollback Strategies** → Safe deployment and quick recovery from model issues
 12. **Performance Monitoring** → Track model accuracy, latency, and resource usage
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Safety & Limits

1. **Hallucination** → Fluent but incorrect or nonsensical outputs
2. **Alignment** → Ensure model behaviour is safe, ethical, and policy-compliant
3. **Guardrails** → Rule-based or learned filters to prevent harmful outputs
4. **Bias & Fairness** → Detect and mitigate demographic or cultural prejudices
5. **Privacy & Data Leakage** → Protect sensitive information during training and inference
6. **Adversarial Attacks** → Malicious inputs designed to mislead or exploit the model
7. **Interpretability** → Understand how and why the model makes decisions
8. **Calibration / Uncertainty Estimation** → Avoid overconfident wrong predictions
9. **Red-Teaming** → Stress-test models for safety, robustness, and alignment
10. **Robustness Evaluation** → Test model resilience against noise, domain shifts, and edge cases
11. **Mechanistic Interpretability** → Understanding model internals and how features are computed
12. **Watermarking** → Methods to detect AI-generated content
13. **Model Editing** → Updating specific knowledge without full retraining
14. **Constitutional AI** → Training models to follow ethical principles and safety guidelines
15. **Jailbreaking Prevention** → Protecting against attempts to bypass safety measures