ChatGPT Part 5: Research, Brainstorming and Fact-Checking

ChatGPT is a fast research assistant, but it is not a source of truth. It can sound completely sure and still be wrong, and a link it shows may not say what the answer claims. Four steps keep our research reliable: frame, source, explore and verify. Each step answers one simple question. In this part, Karim, head of strategy at a food distribution company, uses them to prepare a board decision.

1. Frame

Good research starts with a decision, not a topic. Before we ask ChatGPT anything, we write down what will be decided, by whom and by when. The question is: what decision is this for, and what evidence would change it? We give ChatGPT that decision, the region and period we care about, and the kinds of sources we trust. A broad request such as research this market returns a broad summary that nobody can act on.

At work: The board must decide before March whether to launch chilled delivery for restaurants, and Karim applies the Frame question: what decision is this for, and what evidence would change it? His first request is simply, research the cold chain market. ChatGPT returns a long, general overview of trends, and nothing the board can build a decision on. Then Karim states the decision, limits it to two cities, and asks for the evidence that would change it, with the best type of source for each item. ChatGPT answers with a focused research plan: demand, competitors, costs and food safety rules, each with its best source.

2. Source

A research answer is only as good as its sources. We ask ChatGPT to search the web when that is available, and to show for every claim the source, the date and whether it is the original or a summary. The question is: who published this, when, and is it the original? We can also upload documents we trust and ask ChatGPT to answer only from them. When two sources disagree, we keep both visible and look for the reason, such as a different date or sample. Then we open the links ourselves, because a source can be real and still not say what the answer claims.

At work: When Karim asks simply for sources on restaurant demand, ChatGPT lists impressive names with no dates and no quotes. Then he applies the Source question: who published this, when, and is it the original? He uploads three documents, the food safety regulation, a trade association report and last year's customer survey, and asks for a table of claim, exact quote and document. The table shows that the demand claim rests on a trade report that is two years old, while the safety rule comes straight from the regulator. Karim opens both documents, notes that the report is dated, and asks the association for newer figures.

3. Explore

Brainstorming is where ChatGPT is strongest, provided we keep ideas and findings apart. We ask for alternative explanations, objections and missing viewpoints, instead of asking it to agree

This document is a property of Asaseeyat Academy - © Copy Right Protected.

with us. The question is: what else could explain this, and what would prove each idea wrong? ChatGPT can group the ideas and suggest what evidence to look for. Until a source confirms an idea, we call it an idea, never a finding.

At work: The customer survey shows that several restaurant owners asked for chilled delivery, and Karim applies the Explore question: what else could explain this, and what would prove each idea wrong? Asked only whether customers want it, ChatGPT would probably just agree. He asks ChatGPT for four competing explanations, each with the evidence that would support or weaken it, and tells it to label every item as an idea. The answer offers real demand, one unhappy customer group, a weak current supplier and a survey that reached only the loudest voices, each with a check he can run. Karim's team now holds a research plan instead of a conclusion.

4. Verify

Verification means tracing each claim to the evidence that supports it. Confident wording is not evidence, and ChatGPT can state a wrong fact or even a reference that does not exist. The question is: does the source really say this? We paste the draft and its sources into a fresh chat, and ask ChatGPT to mark every claim as supported, partly supported or unsupported, with the quote. Then a person opens the source and decides, because the final check always stays with us. For names, numbers and quotations, this check is never optional.

At work: Karim's board brief is finished, so he asks ChatGPT: is this brief correct? It replies that the brief looks accurate and well organised, but nothing was checked. Then he applies the Verify question: does the source really say this? He pastes the brief and the three documents, and asks for every claim to be marked as supported, partly supported or unsupported, with the exact quote and a list of what the sources do not cover. ChatGPT finds that the claim about fast supplier switching is only partly supported, because the survey asked current customers alone. Karim rewrites the sentence, lists the gap as unknown, and sends the board a brief it can trust.

Conclusion

In summary, reliable research with ChatGPT follows four steps. We frame the decision, source every claim, explore competing explanations and verify before we use anything. ChatGPT speeds up the work, but responsibility for the facts stays with us. Before the brief reaches the board, the key question is simple: can we show where every claim came from?

Sources

- OpenAI Help Center: Searching the web with ChatGPT – https://help.openai.com/en/articles/9237897-searching-the-web-with-chatgpt
- OpenAI Help Center: Does ChatGPT tell the truth? – https://help.openai.com/en/articles/8313428-does-chatgpt-tell-the-truth
- OpenAI Help Center: Deep research in ChatGPT – https://help.openai.com/en/articles/10500283-deep-research-faq

- ChatGPT and OpenAI are trademarks of OpenAI. This video is independent training material and is not affiliated with OpenAI.

This document is a property of Asaseeyat Academy - © Copy Right Protected.