

A Practical Guide to Artificial Intelligence

AI is moving quickly from emerging technology to economic force and is projected to contribute \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030. As AI evolves across multiple layers, from the infrastructure that powers it to the applications that bring it into everyday workflows, understanding how these pieces fit together is essential for investors.

Mapping the AI Tech Stack

Infrastructure The physical and digital building blocks needed to train, run, and connect AI systems.	Examples: Semiconductors, GPUs, CPUs, networking, storage, power, cooling, datacenters.
Cloud and compute platforms Scaled platforms that provide the computing capacity, storage, data management, and access to infrastructure that companies need to build and use AI.	Examples: Hyperscalers, data warehouses, databases, model hosting, deployment environments.
Models The algorithms and systems that learn from data and generate, classify, predict, or retrieve information once trained.	Examples: Foundation models, LLMs, neural networks, recommendation systems.
Tools and enablement The software, services, and data capabilities that help companies build, deploy, secure, monitor, integrate, and improve AI systems.	Examples: Developer tools, copilots, AI agents, security, monitoring, orchestration.
Applications The AI-enabled products and workflows that end users or businesses apply to specific tasks, functions, or industries.	Examples: Productivity tools, customer service, search, coding, fraud detection, document review.

Beyond the stack

AI-related demand may also support companies outside the core technology stack. Adjacent beneficiaries include electric utilities, power generation, grid equipment, cooling systems, electrical components, construction and engineering firms, and datacenter real estate owners. The physical and digital building blocks needed to train, run, and connect AI systems.

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Source: AI's \$15 trillion prize will be won by learning, not just technology, World Economic Forum (January 19, 2026)

Common AI terms

As AI adoption continues to accelerate across industries, understanding the terminology used to describe the technology and the ecosystem that supports it can help investors evaluate potential benefits and AI risks and where AI-related opportunities may emerge across the economy and financial markets.

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Technology that enables computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.

2. Generative AI (GenAI):

The AI capability behind much of today's market attention, GenAI creates new content, such as text, images, code, audio, or video, based on a prompt.

3. Agentic AI / AI agent:

AI systems that can pursue a goal by planning steps, using tools, and completing tasks within set boundaries.

4. Copilot:

An AI assistant built into software to help users complete tasks or navigate workflows.

5. Foundation model:

A large model that can be adapted for many uses, such as drafting, summarizing, coding, or analyzing information.

6. Large language model (LLM):

A model trained on large amounts of text and used to generate language-based responses.

7. Neural network:

A model structure used in deep learning to process information through connected layers.

8. Tokens:

The pieces of text an AI model reads and generates, such as words or parts of words.

9. Compute:

The processing power needed to train and run AI models.

10. Semiconductors:

Chips and related components that provide the processing power behind AI systems.

11. Graphics processing unit (GPU):

A processor that can handle many calculations at once, making it useful for AI workloads.

12. Central processing unit (CPU):

A computer's general-purpose processor.

13. Datacenter:

A facility that houses the servers, storage, networking, power, and cooling needed for AI and cloud computing.

14. Hyperscalers:

Large cloud providers with the scale and capital to build major AI infrastructure.

15. Cloud platform:

Internet-based computing services that provide storage, software, and processing power.

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