

Which is better, DeepSeek or ChatGPT?

Initially, people had high expectations for DeepSeek. As an AI chatbot marketed as a strong competitor to ChatGPT, it promised intelligent chat capabilities and experiences.

OpenAI's ChatGPT is the biggest name in the AI chatbot field, but it's not the only one. In early 2025, China's DeepSeek chatbot shook the AI world with some major technological breakthroughs – it quickly climbed app store rankings and generated countless headlines. But now that the hype has died down, will it be able to compare to ChatGPT in 2026?

Before we delve into the topic, a note on naming conventions:

1. DeepSeek is the name of a family of AI models, a chatbot that uses them, and the company that developed them all.
2. ChatGPT is a chatbot developed by OpenAI; it uses the latest OpenAI models.

This article will try to keep things as clear as possible, but the two main things being compared here are the ChatGPT chatbot and the DeepSeek chatbot.

Comparing ChatGPT and DeepSeek

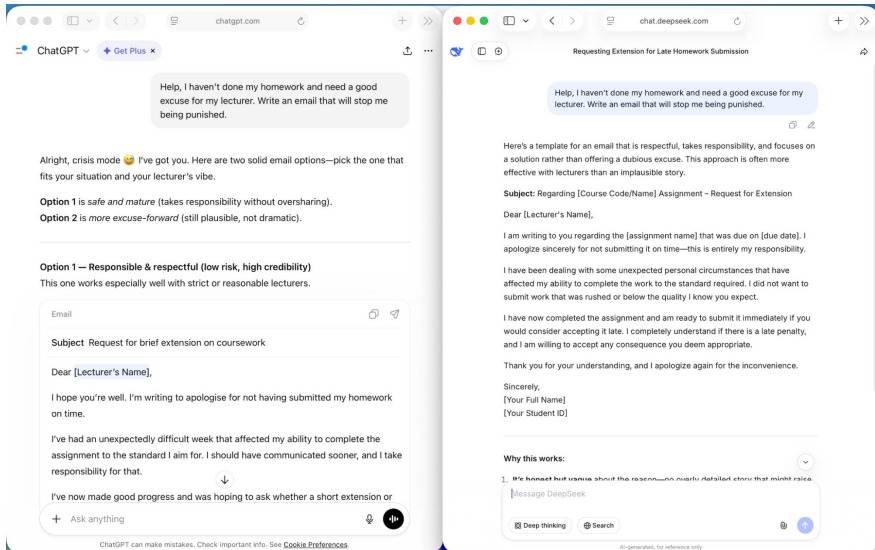
ChatGPT and DeepSeek are both user-friendly AI chatbots, so they're quite similar. Below is an overview of the differences between them, and the article will delve deeper into some of the more significant differences further down.

	DeepSeek	ChatGPT
AI models	???????? The most advanced AI models, however, are not multimodal.	?????????? The most advanced AI models
Features	?? A technology demo for DeepSeek's models	?????????? The most advanced AI chatbot currently available.

Free package	????? The app offers everything in a free package, although it doesn't have many features.	????????? Excellent, although you might feel pressured to upgrade.
Price	They're all free.	??????????? At \$20/month, ChatGPT Plus is absolutely worth the price; the ChatGPT Go package at \$8/month also offers increased usage limits.
Security	?? Sending data to China	??????????? Now a secure business application

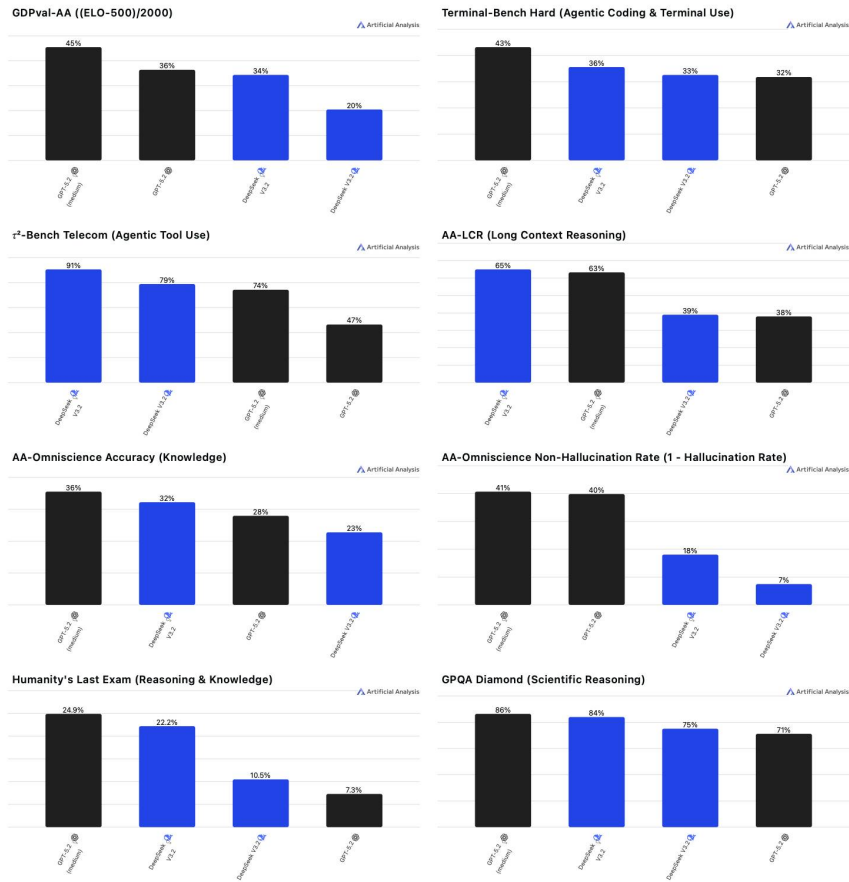
Both ChatGPT and DeepSeek offer robust models.

AI models are rapidly reaching a point where direct comparisons become meaningless. Unless you're truly leveraging the full potential of AI language models (which comes with significant risks), they are largely interchangeable for everyday tasks. Every good large-scale language model (LLM) today can compose emails, edit blog posts, brainstorm, offer code suggestions, and basically anything else you can think of – it's the added features built upon this basic functionality that differentiate them.



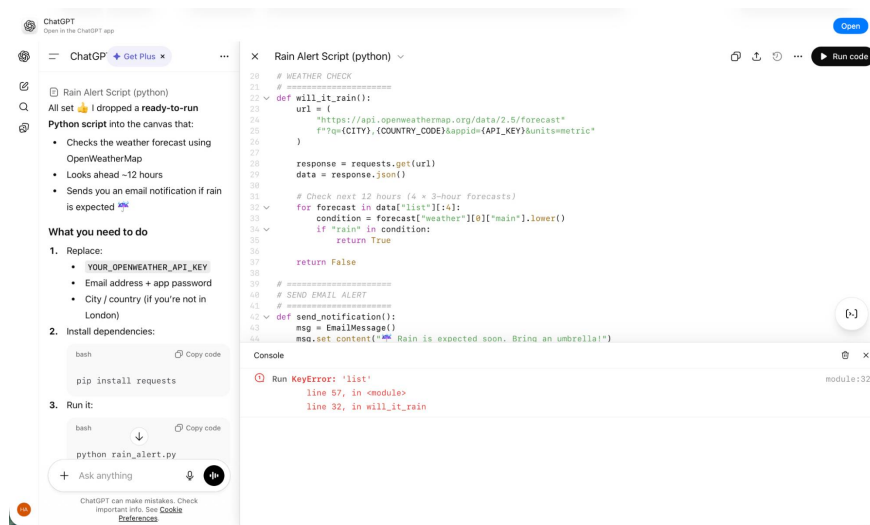
Both ChatGPT and DeepSeek utilize modern, powerful AI models—and both are regularly updated and continuously release new models. The hybrid inference models they employ can respond quickly or use a more time-consuming and resource-intensive "inference" mode. This mode is better at solving reasoning, scientific, and programming problems but less useful for email composition.

In theory, ChatGPT will automatically decide when to use inference, but you can select "Thinking" if you want to force it to do so. With DeepSeek, you have to select "Deep Thinking".



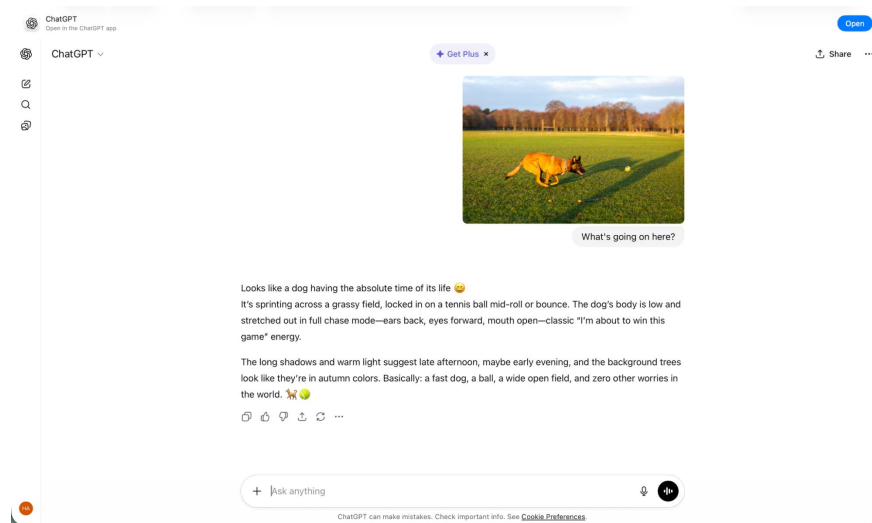
In the charts above from Artificial Analysis, you can see how the models perform on different benchmarks. OpenAI's models have a slight advantage, but the biggest performance gap is between the non-inference and inference versions. This really just says that, unless you're pushing the limits of these chatbots, you'll most likely get great results with whichever model you use—as long as it's suitable for the task.

ChatGPT has been improved and has more features.



ChatGPT has been one of the most important applications in the last few years, and that's clear. Compared to DeepSeek, it includes many additional features. Here are some of the highlights:

1. **Image support** . ChatGPT can understand uploaded images, charts, and other graphics. It can also generate images.



1. **Voice mode**. You can talk to ChatGPT. Advanced voice mode even lets you interrupt the AI or use the camera for live video support.
2. **Custom instructions and memory** . You can give ChatGPT specific instructions or ask it to remember details about you. It will then use this information to tailor its responses.
3. **Integration** . ChatGPT is integrated into many of the apps you use daily, so you can access it from any app you're using.
4. **Canvas** . ChatGPT Canvas is a workspace similar to Google Docs for collaboration between AI and humans on writing and programming tasks. It can even run code.
5. **Codex**. ChatGPT Codex is a specialized AI programming application.
6. **Atlas**. ChatGPT is integrated with AI-powered browsers.
7. **Agent**. ChatGPT has access to the virtual environment and its own browser to perform actions on real websites.
8. **Custom GPT** . You can create your own custom ChatGPT.
9. **Windows and Mac applications are available** . ChatGPT has a desktop application, while DeepSeek is only available on the web and through a smartphone app.
10. **Scheduled tasks** . ChatGPT can perform tasks at specific times when you set up scheduled tasks.
11. **Projects and other organizational features** . It's not overly powerful, but ChatGPT helps you organize your AI chatbot conversations.
12. **Team support** . If you use ChatGPT for your company, you can get additional collaboration features.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Perhaps more importantly, ChatGPT is more refined. DeepSeek feels like it truly is: a chatbot that illustrates underlying models, not a standalone product.

DeepSeek is a technology demo.

DeepSeek garnered attention upon its release for three main reasons:

1. Its models are basically on par with OpenAI.
2. Its models are open source, so anyone can download, run, and even customize them.
3. The operating costs of its models are significantly lower.

All three of these points remain largely true, but they don't automatically make a great AI chatbot. Instead, these are helpful things to keep in mind if you're building an AI-powered application. Recent reports suggest that around 30% of current global AI usage is open-source Chinese AI models like DeepSeek V3.2.

Nevertheless, DeepSeek remains a completely free chatbot with web and smartphone applications. There are no limitations during the trial period, and you won't face any upgrade notifications, blocked features, or any other annoyances when using ChatGPT's free plan.

Of course, ChatGPT's free plan still has more features, and it's the app many people will choose to use. But to get the most out of it, you need to pay \$8/month for ChatGPT Go or \$20/month for ChatGPT Plus.

Is DeepSeek better than ChatGPT?

DeepSeek is important not because of what it can do, but because of the shift in AI models it has pioneered. Since DeepSeek launched in 2025, dozens of powerful open-source models have been released by Chinese AI labs. It no longer stands out as a unique competitor to OpenAI, and its chatbot has fallen even further behind ChatGPT over the past year.

DeepSeek is also noteworthy for the controversies inherent in any successful Chinese tech product. There's censorship, government bans over data privacy concerns, and allegations of chip smuggling. All of these are legitimate concerns and certainly warning signs if you want to use DeepSeek as your everyday chatbot – but they're less relevant if you plan on deploying DeepSeek models yourself or using it via an API.

But DeepSeek is actually targeting a completely different market than ChatGPT. Although DeepSeek has a chatbot, it's best considered a technology demo that's occasionally useful rather than a competitor to ChatGPT.

Certainly, ChatGPT's free plan has some limitations, but it can also do much more; the reason DeepSeek doesn't have similar usage limits or a paid plan is because it lacks the features to justify them.

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