

# Gemini's free tier is now one model: what to do

Since 9 October, free Gemini gives you one model: Flash-Lite. Here is the plan lineup from Google's help page, the limits that now apply, and what to do if Flash-Lite is not enough.

## WHAT THIS ADDS

Most posts about this stop at "Google cut the free plan". The useful part is in the small print: every model now has a low, medium and high effort setting, and higher effort uses more of your limit. So the free plan is not just a smaller model. It is a budget, and the effort setting is how you stretch it.

## What changed on October 9

Google's help page says that starting in October 2026 model availability changes for Gemini Apps when you use a **personal** Google account. The change starts for people **without an AI subscription on October 9th**. If you pay for **AI Plus**, Google says you should get an email that tells you when the change reaches you.

After the change, people without a plan get one model in the Gemini app: **Flash-Lite**. Flash and Pro need a paid Google AI plan.

## The new lineup, plan by plan

| Plan            | US price           | Flash-Lite | Flash | Pro                  |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------|-------|----------------------|
| Without a plan  | \$0                | Yes        | No    | No                   |
| Google AI Plus  | \$4.99/month       | Yes        | Yes   | No                   |
| Google AI Pro   | \$19.99/month      | Yes        | Yes   | Yes                  |
| Google AI Ultra | from \$99.99/month | Yes        | Yes   | Yes, plus Deep Think |

Models per plan come from Google's help page. Prices are Google's US prices on its Gemini subscriptions page and can differ in other countries. Ultra also has a \$199.99/month option with higher limits.

## How the new limits work

Gemini is moving to **compute-based usage limits that refresh every 5 hours**, until you reach a **weekly limit**. Google says your usage depends on how complex your prompt is, which features you use

and how long the chat is.

These use your limit up faster: **image, video and music generation, Deep Research, the Pro model, and extended thinking and Deep Think.**

- Without a plan: standard limits
- AI Plus: 2x higher than standard
- AI Pro: 4x higher than standard
- AI Ultra: 5x or 20x higher than AI Pro, depending on the subscription

## Step 1: test your usual prompts on Flash-Lite now

Do this before the change, so you know whether the free plan still does your job.

1. Go to **gemini.google.com** and sign in.
2. At the bottom, inside the text box, click the **model name**.
3. Choose **Flash-Lite**.
4. Run the three or four prompts you use most: an email reply, a product description, a summary of a long document.

Google describes Flash-Lite as an efficient model designed for speed, ideal for everyday tasks like summarization and brainstorming. If your results are fine, you do not need to pay.

## Step 2: use low effort for quick jobs

For each model you can pick an **effort level: low, medium or high**. Google says higher effort gives more thorough answers but uses more of your limit.

- **Low:** rewrites, short replies, captions, quick summaries.
- **Medium or high:** only for the jobs that really need thinking, like a pricing plan or a long proposal.

Save image, video, Deep Research and long chats for when you need them, because they use the limit fastest. Start a new chat for a new task instead of continuing a very long one, since chat length counts too.

## Step 3: upgrade only if Flash-Lite can't keep up

If Flash-Lite is not good enough for your work, upgrade from inside Gemini:

1. Go to **gemini.google.com**.
2. At the bottom, click **Settings & help**, then **View Subscriptions**.
3. Pick the plan and follow the steps.

AI Plus brings back Flash. AI Pro brings back Pro. You can cancel any time from **Settings & help > Manage subscription**, which opens Google One.

DO THIS

Set Gemini to Flash-Lite and run your usual prompts to see what still works. Use low effort for quick jobs to stretch the limit, and only pay for AI Plus or AI Pro if Flash-Lite cannot do the work.

## What Fynl.io is

One portal a small business runs itself on, instead of five subscriptions that do not talk to each other.

- A CRM and pipeline that shows every lead and where it stopped
- A calendar clients can book straight into
- Quotes, contracts and invoices, with deposits taken up front
- A website and form builder, so the enquiry lands in the same place
- Your Gmail connected, so the whole thread sits on the contact
- Automations for the follow-up you keep forgetting to send

The AI runs on **your own Claude or ChatGPT key** — no markup on it. No SMS or phone calls yet. \$49/month per business, \$149 Agency, and we move your contacts over for you.

If you use Gemini or ChatGPT to write quotes, follow-ups and emails, Fynl.io lets you plug in your own Claude or ChatGPT key, so you pay the AI company directly with no markup, and your leads, quotes and invoices stay in one place.

## Sources

- Changes to Gemini model access and limits (Google Gemini Help) — <https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/17004136>
- Manage your Google AI plan from Gemini Apps (Google Gemini Help) — <https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/14517446>
- Google AI plans and US prices (Gemini subscriptions) — <https://gemini.google/subscriptions/>