

BUILD A MICRO RESEARCH PROJECT (CLAUDE + PERPLEXITY + IMAGE GEN)

45–60 MIN

Objective. Use three AI tools in a pipeline to research, synthesize, and visualize one topic you actually want to learn.

CONCEPTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Different tools, different jobs.** Perplexity grounds in current sources with citations. Claude (or ChatGPT) synthesizes long-form thinking. Image generators visualize. Don't ask one tool to do all three.
- **Grounded research first, synthesis second.** Skip the grounding step and AI will confabulate — confidently.
- **Verify at least one citation by hand.** AI search tools are not infallible; the muscle is in checking, not in trusting.
- **One-page output forces compression.** If everything matters, nothing does. Pick the three takeaways that actually shift your thinking.

SCENARIO

You want to actually learn one thing this week — something you'd be embarrassed not to know in your field, or something you've been curious about for months. Today you'll use three tools to produce a one-page reference you'd save and read again.

SOURCE MATERIAL

Pick **one** topic. Tight enough to fit on a page, broad enough to teach you something.

- A concept you keep nodding at without really understanding (e.g., *how do RAG pipelines actually work*)
- A trend you should know but don't (e.g., *what's changed in remote-work policy at major tech companies in the last 12 months*)
- A decision you're actively making (e.g., *should I move my newsletter to Beehiiv or Substack — what are real users saying*)

PROMPTS TO TRY

Step 1 — Grounded research (Perplexity):

Research [your topic]. Return:

1. The 3–5 most cited sources on this topic from the last 24 months.
2. The two main schools of thought, framed as "Camp A says X, Camp B says Y."
3. The single most contested claim, with both supporting and opposing citations.

For each, link the source. I'll verify them.

Step 2 — Synthesis (Claude):

[Context] I'm writing a one-page reference on [topic] for myself. I just gathered the research below from Perplexity.

[Specific Details] [paste the Perplexity output]

[Intent] Synthesize this into a one-page brief I can save and re-read.

[Desired Format]

- Summary: 5–8 bullets, each one sentence, ordered from most to least important.
- Key takeaways: exactly 3, framed as "I now understand that X" or "I should change Y."
- Open question: 1 sentence – the thing the research didn't settle.

[Constraints] No filler. Use the source's own terminology. Mark anything you're unsure of with [unverified].

Step 3 — Image (GPT Image / Midjourney / Nano Banana):

A single illustrative image for a one-page reference on [topic]. Visual style: [pick one – minimal line drawing / classical engraving / muted editorial illustration]. No text in the image. Aspect ratio: landscape, suitable as a top banner.

DELIVERABLE

One page (PDF, Doc, or canvas tool) containing:

1. Topic title
2. The 5–8 bullet synthesis
3. Three key takeaways
4. The supporting image
5. The one open question
6. Citations, with one of them marked “verified by me”

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- You learned something you didn't know going in. If the output mostly confirmed what you already believed, the prompts were too leading — try again.
- You caught at least one citation that didn't say what AI claimed it said. (This *will* happen. That's why we verify.)
- The three takeaways pass the “would I tell a friend this?” test.
- The page is something you'd actually open again next month.

Deliverable. *A single-page output containing a 5–8 bullet summary, an AI-generated supporting image, and three key takeaways — produced from grounded sources, not vibes.*