DAY 04 · Part 1 · What AI Is

What does it mean for AI to 'learn' something?

Five-Minute AI Lessons · Sep 10, 2026

Training isn't a lightbulb moment — it's fixing a little, over and over

In a nutshell

1. For AI, learning isn't **understanding** the way it is for people — it's a process of nudging numbers (weights) a little at a time so they get closer to the right answer.

2. The method is simple: hide part of a sentence, have it guess the next word, then **tweak the weights slightly** by however much it was off.

3. Do this on internet text and **repeat it hundreds of billions of times**, and you get a bundle of numbers with grammar and common sense melted right in.

One picture

Training: these 4 steps, repeated

① Hide part of a sentence → ② Predict the next word → ③ Compare with the answer, measure the error → ④ Tweak the weights a tiny bit

These 4 steps, repeated hundreds of billions of times = training

Before training

"Today the weather is laptop banana..."

Lots of repeats →

After training

"Today the weather is sunny and warm."

Key idea: not 'understanding' — it's fixing by the error, over and over.

One training cycle, step by step

Human learning

Riding a bike

1. You fall over
2. You balance a little
3. You ride a bit longer
4. You ride without falling

Getting better by trial and error

One training round

Guessing the next word

1. Hide part of a sentence
2. Predict the next word
3. Measure the error
4. Tweak the weights a tiny bit

These 4 steps are one 'round' of training

All of AI training

Hundreds of billions of repeats

1. One small chunk of text
2. Repeat the same 4 steps
3. Process hundreds of billions
4. Patterns build up in weights

More repeats = more training

Swap even one step and it's not 'training' anymore — just 'recording'.

※ Real training repeats in much smaller units than whole sentences.

Quick check

Just three questions

Q1

What exactly does it mean when AI 'learns'?

① Understands meaning, like a person
② Nudges weights a bit toward the right answer
③ Saves the whole internet
④ Memorizes a fixed table of rules

Q2

(True / False) Training means making big fixes so it gets the answer exactly right in one go.

Q3

What happens if training runs just once?

① It gets smart right away
② Almost nothing changes
③ It actually gets worse
④ Training is finished

Know the why, too

Q1

② Training isn't 'understanding' — it's nudging the weights a little at a time by however much it was off, again and again.

Q2

F It only fixes a little at a time. That way it doesn't wreck what it learned from other sentences.

Q3

② One fix is tiny. That's why it takes hundreds of billions of repeats before you notice anything.

Training isn't a 'lightbulb moment' — it's 'fixing a little,' over and over.

Tomorrow: 'parameters' — just how many of those numbers are there?