

If it can finish a job on its own, how much can you hand it? — Handing over a whole task

Five-Minute AI Lessons · Oct 11, 2026

If you can undo it, hand it off; if you can't, look at it yourself.

In a nutshell

- 1 There's really only one rule for what you can hand off and what you can't — **can you undo it if it goes wrong?**
- 2 An AI that you give just a goal, and that then searches, opens files and tries again when it fails, all on its own, is called an **agent**. That's where it parts ways with a chatbot that answers once and is done.
- 3 But agents often miss things people find easy. So even when you hand a job off, the trick is to leave **a last step where a person looks it over.**

Easy for people, hard for AI — the first tests in 2023

People · everyday errand questions



AI agent · same questions



People · on real websites



AI agent · same tasks



Things people finish in a few minutes, AI finished only one or two times out of ten. Get just one step wrong in the middle and the whole thing goes off track.

Key idea: taking many steps on its own is much harder than giving one answer

Can you hand this whole job off?

Hand it off

When this one fits

- ✓ Renaming 30 photos for a presentation...
- ✓ Skimming ten book reports you wrote a...
- ✓ AI solves 20 math problems, and at th...

I check it myself

When this one fits

- ✓ Sending money from your club's accoun...
- ✓ Pasting what AI researched straight i...
- ✓ You fell out with a friend, and you p...

The rule

How to choose

- ✓ If the rule is clear and you can undo...
- ✓ If money, something you hand in, or s...

Here are six situations. Think about just one thing — if it goes wrong, can you undo it or not?

Try it yourself in the web lesson · next-token.net/en/learn/day-35/

Just three questions

Q1

How is an agent different from a regular chatbot?

- ① It talks more nicely
- ② It works without the internet
- ③ It uses tools on its own to take many steps
- ④ It can draw pictures too

Q2

What decides whether you can hand a job off?

- ① How long the job is
- ② How many words it has
- ③ How fast the AI is
- ④ Whether you can undo it if it goes wrong

Q3

What about sending money from an account?

- ① A person checks it
- ② Hand it all over
- ③ Have AI do it twice
- ④ Fix it later

Know the why, too

Q1

③

A chatbot is done once you ask and it answers. An agent just takes a goal and keeps searching, acting and retrying on its own. That's why people talk about "handing over the w...

Q2

④

It's not length or speed — it's whether you can undo it. You can undo file names; you can't undo money you've sent or a report you've handed in.

Q3

①

Having it do the job twice doesn't make it safe. For things you can't undo, put in a step where a person looks right before it happens.

**If you can undo it, hand it off;
if you can't, look at it yourself.**



Tomorrow: Protecting your information — that wraps up what AI can do. Starting tomorrow: what to watch out for.