

# How This Program Works

Welcome. This is a **12-week, hands-on path** from "I can use a computer" to "I can deploy and operate real systems." It's built for people who are new to Linux and infrastructure — every module assumes only what the modules before it taught.

## You drive; the mentor guides

This program is **self-directed**. You read the lessons, do the assignments, and build real things on the lab. Your mentor is not a lecturer — they are there to **point you in the right direction, unblock you, and answer questions** when you're genuinely stuck. The more you try on your own first, the more you'll learn (and the better the questions you'll ask).

## How to use this material

- Work the books **top to bottom**, in order. Each is a module.
- Inside a book, study the **chapters in sequence**, then do the **Assignments** chapter at the end.
- Every lesson has a "**Check yourself**" section — if you can answer those questions, you're ready to move on.
- Every lesson has "**Dig deeper**" links and "**Search terms**" — use them when you want more than the lesson gives.

## The blocker protocol

Getting stuck is part of learning. But spinning for hours is not. The rule:

1. Re-read the lesson section that covers it.
2. Try the "Dig deeper" links / search the error message.
3. Still stuck after ~30 minutes? → Ask your mentor.  
When you ask, bring: what you tried, what you expected, what happened.

A good "I'm stuck" message is itself a skill we're teaching.

## The weekly checkpoint

Once a week you'll have a short **checkpoint** with your mentor: show your latest assignment **working**, and talk through one thing that confused you. It's not a test — it's how we catch a silent blocker early and keep you on track. Come ready to *demo*, not to present slides.

# What you'll have at the end

A portfolio of working things you built yourself: scripts in Git, containers in a registry, apps running on a real Kubernetes cluster, pipelines that deploy them, and dashboards that show them running — finished off by a **capstone** that ties every module together.

Let's begin. Open **The 12-Week Syllabus & Timeline** next.

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