

Checkpoints: OpenAI to Z Challenge

We've set several optional progressive checkpoints & mini-rewards for you to work towards, if you'd like guidance through your journey. Feel free to approach the mission in whatever way you believe is best.

Checkpoint 1 – Familiarize yourself with the challenge and data

Review all contents of our [Starter Pack: OpenAI to Z Challenge](#)

Spin up your workspace, prove you can load the core datasets, and call an OpenAI model.

1. Download one OpenTopography LiDAR tile or one Sentinel-2 scene ID.
2. Run a single OpenAI o3/o4-mini or GPT-4.1 prompt on that data (e.g., “describe surface features in plain English”).
3. Print model version and dataset ID.

Checkpoint 1 – An early explorer

Show us you can mine and gather insights from multiple data types. Submit code that:

1. Loads two independent public sources (e.g., GEDI + TerraBrasiliis polygons)
2. Produces at least five candidate “anomaly” footprints (bbox WKT or lat/lon center + radius)
3. Logs all dataset IDs and OpenAI prompts. Verify: Automated script re-runs → same five footprints ±50 m.
4. Show us how you can use this new data in future discovery - re-prompt the model with this leverage.

Reward: \$100 in additional OpenAI credits

Checkpoint 2 – New Site Discovery

Pick your single best site discovery and back it up with evidence.

1. Create a Notebook that:
 - Detects the feature algorithmically (e.g., Hough transform, segmentation model)
 - Shows at least one historical-text cross-reference (diary snippet, oral map) via GPT extraction
 - Compares the discovery to an already known archaeological feature

Checkpoint 3 – Story & impact draft

Craft the narrative you'll present on the livestream. Create a two-page PDF explaining cultural context, hypotheses for function/age, and proposed survey effort with local partners.

Final submission

Everything above, plus any last-minute polish. Top five finalists go to the livestream vote; prizes as announced.

FAQ:

What dates do I need to know?

Challenge submissions are due no later than 9p PST on June 29th, 2025. Later submissions will not be considered or eligible for participation.

Where can I find more background on this effort?

Feel free to use all the resources available publicly. "The Lost City of Z" and many others are myths that may be false, but the cultures and history of the Amazonian region is very real. Feel free to access anything you can find whilst abiding by our terms and conditions.

Can I share my progress on social media?

Yes! Use the hashtag #OpenAltoZ on any platform to have a chance at a shout-out from an OpenAI account.

I have made some progress, who do I inform about this?

Feel free to submit anything you have made progress on as well as join our community. We understand that this challenge is difficult and may not present any right or wrong answer. We are really excited to partner with you in continuing to push the frontiers of AI to solve mysteries in the real world - please share whatever you've come up with.

Why did you decide to start this project?

Leveraging AI to solve long-lost mysteries has been a deep passion for many members of our team. Following many discussions about archaeological breakthroughs internally, we've decided to encourage all developers to think big and push the boundaries of what is possible with OpenAI o3 and our new models. Uncovering the secrets of the Amazon is a great way to encourage more efforts in the space and

Can I publish my results?

Yes. Ensure you are abiding by our Official Rules.