

Best AI Note Taking Apps 2026: Honest Roundup for Builders

We tested the top AI note taking apps of 2026 across meeting capture, search, and knowledge graphs. Here's what actually holds up in daily use.

AI note taking hit an awkward middle age in 2026. Every app claims automatic meeting notes, semantic search, and a knowledge graph. Most deliver two of those competently and fake the third. We spent six weeks running the same meetings, research sessions, and daily journals through eight tools to see which ones survive real usage instead of demo-day usage.

Ranking is by observed quality — not affiliate payout. A couple of the highest-ranked apps here pay us the least.

How we scored

Every app was graded on five dimensions: capture accuracy (transcription + speaker labels), summarization quality (do the action items match reality), search and recall, structure (can you organize notes without fighting the tool), and export/portability (can you leave). Scores are out of 10.

The roundup

1. Granola — 9.4/10

Granola won us over by doing less. It doesn't join your calls as a bot — it listens locally and merges what you typed with what was said. The output is the closest thing to "notes a smart human would have written," not a wall of transcript. Editing after the meeting feels native, and the AI summaries actually reflect the decisions instead of parroting the last thing anyone said. Weak spot: no team knowledge graph yet, and the search is basic.

Best for: Founders, consultants, and PMs who take notes during calls and want them polished, not replaced.

Pricing: Free for personal use with unlimited meetings; Pro at \$18/month adds custom templates and team folders.

2. Obsidian — 9.2/10

Obsidian is not sold as an AI app, and that is exactly why it landed this high. The core is a fast local markdown editor with genuine backlinks. The AI layer comes from community plugins (Smart Connections, Copilot, Text Generator) that you compose yourself — which means you own the graph, the files, and the model choice. If you care about a knowledge system that will outlive whichever LLM vendor is hot in 2028, this is the honest answer.

Best for: Researchers, writers, and long-term PKM builders who want AI on top of files they control.

Pricing: Free for personal use; Sync at \$5/month; Publish at \$10/month. Commercial license \$50/user/year.

3. Fathom — 9.0/10

Fathom quietly became the meeting-notes tool most sales and success teams we talked to actually keep after the trial. The transcription is excellent, the summaries are structured (action items, questions, next steps) rather than free-form prose, and the free tier is genuinely usable. CRM push to HubSpot, Salesforce, and Close is one click. It won't organize your second brain — but for "what happened on the call and what did we agree to," nothing is cleaner.

Best for: Sales, CS, and any team where the meeting IS the artifact.

Pricing: Free tier is real (unlimited recordings + summaries); Premium at \$19/user/month adds CRM sync and advanced search.

4. Mem — 8.6/10

Mem's pitch — a self-organizing notebook where AI does the tagging and linking — is finally close to the demo. The chat-with-your-notes feature is fast and returns actual passages instead of hallucinated summaries. Where it still falls short: import and export are clunky, and the app is opinionated about structure in a way that fights power users. If you want a system to reason about your notes and you don't want to build it yourself, this is where to look.

Best for: Knowledge workers who don't want to maintain a folder hierarchy.

Pricing: Mem X at \$10/month (paid annually) or \$15 monthly. Team plans at \$15/user/month.

5. Notion Ai — 8.3/10

Notion AI works because Notion is where your notes already are. The Q&A over your workspace is legitimately useful once you have a few hundred pages indexed, and the meeting-notes template with auto-summary covers the basics. The catch is the same as ever with Notion: performance degrades as workspaces grow, and the AI feels bolted on rather than built in. If your team already lives here, turning it on is a no-brainer. If not, it's not the reason to switch.

Best for: Teams already standardized on Notion.

Pricing: Notion AI add-on at \$10/user/month on top of any paid plan; included in Business and Enterprise.

6. Reflect — 8.1/10

Reflect is the cleanest daily-notes app we tested. Backlinks, a fast editor, calendar integration, and a genuinely helpful AI assistant that's grounded in your own notes rather than the open web. It leans journal-and-thinking rather than meeting-capture, and it's priced accordingly. If Obsidian is too many decisions and Mem is too opinionated, Reflect sits nicely in between.

Best for: Daily journalers, thinkers, solo operators.

Pricing: \$10/month or \$100/year. No free tier.

7. Otter — 7.6/10

Otter has been the default meeting-transcript tool for years, and the transcription is still top-tier — especially for multi-speaker calls with cross-talk. The AI summary layer is fine but noticeably behind Granola and Fathom in signal-to-noise. Where Otter still wins is integrations, mobile capture, and Zoom-native workflows for larger orgs. It's the safe pick, not the exciting one.

Best for: Larger teams that need reliable transcription at scale.

Pricing: Free (300 min/month); Pro at \$16.99/user/month; Business at \$30/user/month.

8. Supernormal — 7.4/10

Supernormal is the closest competitor to Fathom in the sales-notes bracket, with strong templates for recurring meeting types (1:1s, standups, discovery calls). The summaries are clean and the sharing model is friendly. It slipped to 8th mostly because Fathom's free tier is better and Granola's editor feels more natural. Still a solid pick if your team wants structured, template-driven meeting notes.

Best for: Teams standardizing on repeat meeting formats.

Pricing: Free tier (up to 20 meetings/month); Pro at \$19/user/month; Business at \$39/user/month.

Comparison table

App	Score	Best for	Starting price	Free tier
Granola	9.4	Founders, PMs	\$18/mo	Yes

App	Score	Best for	Starting price	Free tier
Obsidian	9.2	PKM, researchers	Free	Yes
Fathom	9.0	Sales, CS	\$19/mo	Yes
Mem	8.6	Auto-organized notes	\$10/mo	Limited
Notion Ai	8.3	Notion teams	\$10/mo add-on	No
Reflect	8.1	Daily journaling	\$10/mo	No
Otter	7.6	Enterprise transcription	\$16.99/mo	Yes
Supernormal	7.4	Templated meetings	\$19/mo	Yes

Final picks

- **Best overall for individuals:** Granola. It replaces the note-taking act itself without replacing your judgment.
- **Best for long-term knowledge:** Obsidian. Your notes outlive the vendor.
- **Best for teams that meet a lot:** Fathom. Genuinely usable free tier, clean CRM push.
- **Best if you want AI to do the organizing:** Mem.
- **Skip unless you're already there:** Notion Ai is fine, but not a reason to migrate.

The pattern across all eight: the apps that respect what you already do beat the apps that try to replace it. Pick the one that fits the workflow you actually have, not the one you wish you had.