
The Complete Claude AI Guide

From First Login to Power User. Everything You Need to Know.

Claude.ai

Claude Code

Cowork

Projects

Skills

Connectors

Plugins

Models

Pricing

BY AI.SHELEST

2026 Edition

What Is Claude?

Claude is an AI assistant built by Anthropic. Anthropic is an AI safety company founded in 2021 by former members of OpenAI. Their entire approach starts with one idea: build AI that is honest, helpful, and harmless.

Claude is not a chatbot. It is a full ecosystem. You get Claude.ai (the web app), a Desktop App for Mac and Windows, a Mobile App for iOS and Android, Claude Code (a command line coding agent), and a full API for developers.

Think of it as your thinking partner. Not a search engine. Not a content machine. A system that reasons, follows instructions precisely, and works with you across multiple formats.

HOW CLAUDE IS DIFFERENT FROM CHATGPT

Claude was designed with safety first. It hallucinates less. It follows constraints more precisely. It is more honest about what it does not know. And it is less likely to ignore your negative instructions ("do not do X"). If you have used ChatGPT, Claude will feel calmer, more careful, and more obedient to your rules.

How to Create Your Account

1 Go to claude.ai

Open your browser and visit claude.ai. Click "Sign Up" in the top right corner.

2 Choose your sign up method

You can sign up with your email, Google account, or Apple ID. Pick whichever you prefer.

3 Verify your account

Claude requires phone verification for new accounts. This is a security measure. Enter your phone number and confirm the code.

4 Start using Claude

You are on the Free plan by default. You can start chatting immediately. Upgrade to Pro when you hit limits.

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Understanding Claude's Models

Claude is not one model. It is a family of models, each built for different jobs. Picking the right one saves you time and money.

Sonnet 4.6

This is your default. It handles 80% of everything you will ever need. Best balance of speed and intelligence. 200K token context window, which means it can process roughly 150,000 words in a single conversation. Pricing: \$3 per million input tokens, \$15 per million output tokens.

Haiku 4.5

The fastest and cheapest model. Performs at roughly 90% of Sonnet's quality for most tasks. Use it for quick lookups, simple formatting, batch processing, or anything where speed matters more than depth. Pricing: \$1 per million input tokens, \$5 per million output tokens.

Opus 4.6

The most powerful model in the family. Deep reasoning. Complex multi-step tasks. Long, nuanced writing. Code architecture. Use it when the task requires real thinking, not pattern matching. Pricing: \$5 per million input tokens, \$25 per million output tokens (67% price cut in early 2026).

EXTENDED THINKING

On paid plans, you can enable Extended Thinking mode. This lets Claude reason through problems step by step before responding. Think of it as giving Claude time to think instead of answering immediately. The output is slower but significantly better for math, logic, analysis, and complex planning.

THE SIMPLE RULE

Use Sonnet for everything. Switch to Opus when the task is deep, complex, or requires careful reasoning. Use Haiku for quick, simple stuff. You do not need to overthink this.

MODEL	BEST FOR	SPEED	INPUT / OUTPUT COST
Sonnet 4.6	Daily work, writing, analysis	Fast	\$3 / \$15 per MTok
Haiku 4.5	Quick tasks, batch jobs	Fastest	\$1 / \$5 per MTok
Opus 4.6	Deep reasoning, complex code	Slower	\$5 / \$25 per MTok

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Pricing Plans

Claude offers four plans. Here is exactly what you get with each one.

PLAN	PRICE	MODELS	KEY FEATURES
Free	\$0	Sonnet 4.6	Limited messages, 5 Projects, image analysis, basic web search
Pro	\$20/mo	Sonnet, Haiku, Opus	5x Free usage, Claude Code, Cowork, Extended Thinking, unlimited Projects with RAG
Max	\$100-200/mo	All models	5x to 20x Pro usage, priority access, early features, maximum output length
Team	\$25-30/seat	All models	Shared Projects, admin controls, SSO, higher usage limits

MY RECOMMENDATION

Pro at \$20/mo is the sweet spot for most people. You get all three models, Claude Code, Cowork, Extended Thinking, and enough usage to cover serious daily work. Free is fine for trying Claude out. Max is for heavy users who hit Pro limits regularly.

What "usage limits" mean

Claude does not give you a fixed number of messages per day. Usage depends on the model, conversation length, and features you use. Longer conversations consume more tokens. Opus consumes more than Sonnet. Extended Thinking consumes more than standard mode. When you hit your limit, Claude tells you. You can wait for it to reset or upgrade your plan.

API pricing

If you are a developer, you can access Claude through the API. Pricing is per token (pay for what you use). There are no monthly fees beyond usage. This is separate from the consumer plans above.

Navigating the Interface

Claude's interface is clean and minimal. Once you know the layout, everything is fast.

The Main Layout

Sidebar (left). Your conversation history, Projects, and starred conversations. Collapse it for more screen space.

Mode Toggle (top). Switch between Chat mode and Cowork mode. Chat is your standard conversation. Cowork is for complex tasks with sub-agents (more on this in Chapter 7).

Chat Area (center). Your conversation with Claude. Messages alternate between yours and Claude's responses. Claude's responses can include text, code blocks, tables, and Artifacts.

Input Box (bottom). Where you type your prompts. You can attach files, images, and documents here. You can also select which model to use before sending.

Keyboard Shortcuts

SHORTCUT	ACTION
Ctrl/Cmd + K	Search conversations
Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + N	New conversation
Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + S	Star current conversation
Shift + Enter	New line without sending
Enter	Send message
Ctrl/Cmd + /	Show all shortcuts

File Uploads and Image Analysis

Click the attachment icon or drag files directly into the input box. Claude can read PDFs, Word documents, spreadsheets, CSVs, code files, and plain text. It can also analyze images. Upload a screenshot, a chart, a photo of a whiteboard, or a design mockup and ask Claude to describe, analyze, or extract information from it.

ARTIFACTS

When Claude generates code, visualizations, or structured documents, it can display them as Artifacts. These are interactive previews that appear in a side panel. You can copy, download, or iterate on them directly. Think of Artifacts as Claude's workbench for deliverables.

Projects

Projects are persistent workspaces. They let you store custom instructions and a knowledge base that carry across every conversation inside that Project. This is one of Claude's most powerful features.

Why Projects matter

Without Projects, every new conversation starts from zero. Claude does not know who you are, what you do, or how you want responses formatted. You re-explain the same context every time. Projects fix this. Set your instructions once. Every conversation in that Project follows them automatically.

How to create a Project

1 Open the sidebar

Click on "Projects" in the left sidebar. Then click "New Project."

2 Name your Project

Give it a clear name. Examples: "Content Creation," "Client Proposals," "Code Reviews," "Learning Python."

3 Add custom instructions

Click "Set custom instructions" and write the rules Claude should follow in every conversation within this Project.

4 Add knowledge files

Upload documents, guides, brand materials, or reference files. Claude will use these as context automatically.

Custom instructions example

```
// Project: Content Creation
```

```
Role: I am a content creator focused on AI and tech education.
```

Audience: 25 to 40 year olds who want to use AI at work. They are smart but not technical.

Tone: Direct, conversational, confident. Short sentences. No hype.

Rules:

- No em dashes. Use commas or dots instead.
- Do not start with "Great question!" or "Sure!"
- Do not use words like: delve, craft, landscape, unlock
- When I ask for content, give me the content. Do not explain what you are about to do.
- Keep paragraphs under 3 sentences.

RAG: For large knowledge bases

On paid plans, Projects support RAG (Retrieval Augmented Generation). This gives you 10x the knowledge capacity. Instead of cramming everything into the context window, Claude retrieves only the relevant parts of your uploaded documents for each conversation. If you work with large datasets, documentation, or reference libraries, this changes everything.

Claude Code

Claude Code is a command line AI coding agent. It lives in your terminal or VS Code and works directly with your codebase. It reads your files, understands your project structure, writes code, runs tests, and makes commits. This is not autocomplete. This is an agent that does engineering work.

How it works

The workflow follows four steps: **Explore** (Claude reads your codebase to understand the structure), **Plan** (it creates a strategy for the task), **Code** (it writes and edits files), and **Commit** (it creates clean git commits with meaningful messages).

Requirements

REQUIREMENT	DETAILS
Plan	Pro, Max, or Team subscription
OS	macOS, Linux, or Windows via WSL
Node.js	Version 18 or higher
Git	Required for codebase management

Installation via VS Code Extension

1 Open VS Code Extensions

Press Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + X to open the Extensions panel.

2 Search for "Claude Code"

Find the official Anthropic extension and click Install.

3 Authenticate

Follow the prompts to connect your Anthropic account. Claude Code will appear in your VS Code sidebar.

Installation via Terminal

1 Install globally

Run: `npm install -g @anthropic-ai/claude-code`

2 Navigate to your project

cd into your project directory.

3 Launch Claude Code

Run: `claude` and authenticate when prompted.

The CLAUDE.md File

This is a special file you put in your project root. It gives Claude Code persistent instructions about your project: coding standards, architecture decisions, testing preferences, file naming conventions. Think of it as custom instructions for your codebase. Claude reads this file automatically every time it starts.

```
// Example CLAUDE.md
```

```
Language: TypeScript with strict mode
```

```
Framework: Next.js 15, App Router
```

```
Testing: Vitest for unit tests, Playwright for E2E
```

```
Style: Use functional components. No classes.
```

```
Rules:
```

- Always add error handling
- Write tests for new functions
- Use descriptive variable names
- Keep files under 200 lines

Key Commands

COMMAND	WHAT IT DOES
<code>/help</code>	Show available commands
<code>/clear</code>	Clear conversation context
<code>/compact</code>	Compress conversation to save tokens
<code>/cost</code>	Show token usage and cost

COMMAND	WHAT IT DOES
<code>/review</code>	Review code changes
<code>/commit</code>	Create a git commit
<code>Esc</code>	Cancel current operation

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Cowork

Cowork is Claude's desktop AI assistant. Launched in January 2026, it brings Claude Code's agentic capabilities to knowledge work. Not coding. Documents, research, data analysis, file management, content creation.

How it works

You describe what you need. "Create a competitive analysis report for these 5 companies." "Organize my research notes into a structured outline." "Turn this spreadsheet into a formatted presentation."

Claude plans the work. It breaks your request into subtasks and creates a strategy.

Sub-agents execute. Claude spins up specialized agents for each subtask. One might research, another writes, another formats.

Local files are created. All output goes to your local file system. Documents, spreadsheets, presentations, whatever you asked for.

Delivered to you. You review, edit, and use the files. Everything stays on your machine.

What Cowork can do

- ✓ **Documents.** Reports, proposals, briefs, summaries, SOPs, guides.
- ✓ **Research.** Competitive analysis, market research, literature reviews.
- ✓ **File management.** Organize, rename, restructure, and clean up files and folders.
- ✓ **Data analysis.** Process CSVs, generate charts, summarize datasets.
- ✓ **Content.** Blog posts, newsletters, social media batches, email sequences.

Getting started

1 Open Claude Desktop App

Cowork runs through the Claude desktop application, not the browser.

2**Switch to Cowork mode**

Use the mode toggle at the top of the interface to switch from Chat to Cowork.

3**Describe your task**

Be specific about what you want delivered, the format, and where to save it.

4**Review and iterate**

Check the output files. Ask Claude to adjust, expand, or reformat as needed.

Scheduled tasks

You can schedule Cowork tasks to run at specific times. Set a daily research digest, a weekly status report, or an automated data cleanup. Cowork executes the task and delivers the files to your specified folder on schedule.

IMPORTANT LIMITATION

Cowork does not have cross-session memory. Each task starts fresh. If you need continuity, use Projects to store your instructions and knowledge base, then reference that Project when starting a Cowork task.

Skills, Connectors, and Plugins

Skills

Skills are specialized capabilities that extend what Claude can do. Some are built in. Others you can create yourself.

SKILL	WHAT IT DOES
DOCX	Create and edit Word documents directly
XLSX	Generate spreadsheets with formulas and formatting
PPTX	Build PowerPoint presentations with layouts and visuals
PDF	Read, analyze, and extract data from PDF files
Humanizer	Rewrite AI generated text to sound more natural and human
Custom Skills	Build your own skills with specific instructions and workflows

Connectors

Connectors let Claude interact with external services. Instead of copying data in and out, Claude reads from and writes to your existing tools.

CONNECTOR	WHAT IT DOES
Google Workspace	Access Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drive, Gmail, Calendar
Microsoft 365	Access Outlook, OneDrive, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams
Slack	Read channels, send messages, summarize threads
GitHub	Access repos, issues, pull requests, code files
Business Tools	CRM, project management, and other integrations

Plugins

Plugins are bundled packages that combine Skills and Connectors into complete workflows. The Plugin Creator lets you build custom plugins for your specific needs. Enterprise plans include a marketplace for sharing plugins across teams.

THE BIG PICTURE

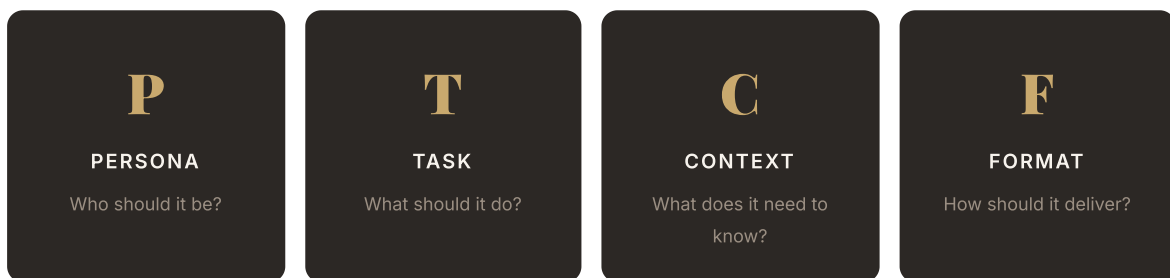
Skills give Claude new abilities. Connectors give Claude access to your tools. Plugins combine both into workflows. Together, they turn Claude from a chat interface into an integrated work system.

Prompting Claude Like a Pro

Claude follows instructions well. Better than most AI models. But it still needs structure. The better your prompt, the better your output. This is true 100% of the time.

The PTCF Framework

Persona. Task. Context. Format. Four elements. Use all four in every serious prompt.



5 Prompting Principles for Claude

1 Be Specific

"Write a blog post" is vague. "Write a 600 word blog post about remote work burnout for managers at mid-size tech companies" is specific. Specificity kills guessing.

2 Provide Context

Claude does not know your audience, your industry, your constraints, or what you have tried before. If you do not say it, Claude cannot use it. Include everything relevant.

3 Specify Format

Table, bullet list, numbered steps, JSON, markdown, script, one paragraph. If you do not tell Claude how to deliver, it picks for you. It might pick wrong.

4 Use Examples

When you want a specific style, show 2 to 3 examples. Claude is excellent at pattern matching. Showing is faster than describing.

5 Iterate

Do not rewrite your entire prompt when output is off. Identify what failed and fix that one element. "Make the tone more casual." "Expand section 3." "Remove the introduction paragraph."

Advanced Techniques

Chain of Thought. Add "Think through this step by step" to any prompt requiring reasoning. Claude will show its work instead of jumping to conclusions. Error rates drop significantly.

Role Assignment. "You are a senior tax accountant with 15 years of experience in small business taxation." This single line changes vocabulary, depth, and perspective. Without it, you get a generic assistant.

Negative Instructions. "Do not use jargon." "Do not start with 'In today's world.'" "Do not exceed 200 words." Claude follows negative instructions better than ChatGPT. Use them. They kill generic AI patterns instantly.

Structured Output. "Return your answer as a JSON object with these keys: title, summary, action_items, risks." Claude produces clean structured data when you ask for it.

"Ask me questions first." Add this one line and Claude will ask you 10 to 15 targeted questions before starting. It gathers context you forgot to include. The final output improves dramatically.

CLAUDE VS CHATGPT: PROMPTING DIFFERENCES

Claude follows constraints more precisely. If you say "under 200 words," Claude stays under 200 words. If you say "do not mention X," Claude will not mention X. ChatGPT is more likely to drift from your instructions over long conversations. Claude is more obedient. Use that to your advantage by being very specific about what you want and what you do not want.

Bad Prompts vs Good Prompts

The difference between a useless response and a great one is almost always the prompt. Here are four real examples.

BAD PROMPT

"Help me write an email."

GOOD PROMPT

"You are a senior copywriter. Write a follow up email to a client who has not responded in 2 weeks. Tone: professional but warm. Under 100 words. End with a question, not a demand."

BAD PROMPT

"Explain machine learning."

GOOD PROMPT

"Explain machine learning to a marketing manager who has never coded. Use 2 real world analogies. Keep it under 200 words. End with 3 questions I can use to test if I understood."

BAD PROMPT

"Create a marketing plan."

GOOD PROMPT

"You are a growth marketing strategist. Create a 30 day Instagram plan for a local bakery targeting 25 to 35 year old women within 10 miles. Budget: \$500/month. Include: post types, frequency, 5 content themes, and one metric to track per week."

BAD PROMPT

"Make it better."

GOOD PROMPT

"The tone is too formal. Rewrite in a conversational style, like explaining to a friend over coffee. Keep the same structure. Cut word count by 20%."

LEVEL	EXAMPLE	OUTPUT QUALITY
1. Topic only	"Tell me about marketing"	Wikipedia summary. Useless.
2. Basic task	"Write a marketing plan"	Generic template. Barely usable.
3. Task + context	"Write a plan for my bakery"	Better, but still broad.
4. PTCF complete	"You are a growth strategist. Create a 30 day Instagram plan for a bakery..."	Specific and usable.
5. PTCF + constraints	Same as 4 plus "budget \$500, no paid ads, track engagement rate"	Ready to execute.

Every prompt you write should be at least Level 4. For important work, aim for Level 5.

Real World Workflows

Features are not useful until you combine them. Here are six workflows that show how Claude's tools work together.

1. Research Report

Tools: Projects + Web Search

Create a Project called "Research." Add your background documents and set custom instructions for report formatting. Start a conversation, ask Claude to research a topic using web search, then synthesize findings into a structured report. The Project instructions ensure consistent formatting across every report.

2. Code Development

Tools: Claude Code + CLAUDE.md

Put a CLAUDE.md file in your project root with your coding standards. Launch Claude Code in your terminal. Describe the feature you want. Claude reads your codebase, plans the implementation, writes the code, runs tests, and commits. You review the diff and iterate.

3. Weekly Status Report

Tools: Cowork + Connectors + Scheduled Tasks

Connect Google Workspace and Slack. Schedule a weekly Cowork task: "Every Friday at 4pm, pull this week's completed tasks from Google Sheets, summarize Slack conversations from #team-updates, and generate a status report. Save as a DOCX in my Reports folder." It runs automatically.

4. Content Pipeline

Tools: Projects + Cowork + Skills

Create a "Content" Project with your brand voice instructions. Use Cowork to batch-create a week of content: blog posts, social captions, newsletter drafts. Use the DOCX and PPTX skills to generate polished deliverables. Everything follows your brand guidelines because they live in the Project.

5. Meeting Prep

Tools: Claude.ai + Connectors

Before a meeting, ask Claude: "Pull the agenda from my Google Calendar for tomorrow's 10am meeting. Review the attached deck. Give me 3 talking points, 2 potential objections, and one question that shows I prepared." Claude reads the calendar, analyzes the deck, and delivers a prep brief.

6. Learning

Tools: Projects + Extended Thinking

Create a "Learning Python" Project. Upload your course materials. Enable Extended Thinking. Ask Claude to explain concepts, quiz you, review your code, and track your progress. The Project remembers your level and what you have covered. Extended Thinking ensures deep, accurate explanations.

THE PATTERN

Every powerful workflow combines at least two features. Projects for context persistence. Cowork for complex multi-step tasks. Claude Code for development. Connectors for external data. Skills for output formats. Mix and match based on what you need.

Protect Yourself. AI Security Basics.

This is the chapter most AI guides skip. I work in cybersecurity. This is not optional.

1

Never put personal data in your prompts

Full name, address, phone number, bank details, passwords, social security number. If you type it, it enters the system. Claude's privacy approach is thoughtful, but no system is immune to breaches.

Instead: Use fake names and placeholder data. Replace real numbers with "\$X."
Redact documents before pasting.

2

Know what Claude remembers

As of 2026, Claude does NOT have persistent memory like ChatGPT. It does not remember you across conversations. Each conversation starts fresh. Projects store context, but only within that specific Project. This is actually a privacy advantage. Nothing leaks between conversations unless you put it there.

Know this: Your conversation history is stored on Anthropic's servers. Projects store your uploaded files. But there is no "Memory" feature accumulating details about you across sessions.

3

Your data may be used for training

This is critical. As of late 2025, Claude trains on consumer data BY DEFAULT. Free, Pro, and Max plans all have training enabled unless you turn it off yourself.

Do this now: Go to Settings > Privacy > turn off "Help improve Claude." If you leave it on, your data can be retained for up to 5 years. If you opt out, retention drops to 30 days. Business, Enterprise, and API plans have training turned OFF by default.

Security Rules 4 through 7

How to opt out of training data

1 Open Settings

Click your profile icon in the bottom left corner of Claude. Select "Settings."

2 Go to Privacy

In the Settings menu, find the "Privacy" section.

3 Turn off "Help improve Claude"

Toggle this switch OFF. This prevents your conversations from being used to train future models.

4 Confirm the change

The setting takes effect immediately. No restart needed. Do this on every account you use.

4 Be careful with file uploads

Documents, spreadsheets, PDFs, images. If they contain client data, internal documents, or personal information, you are sharing that data with the system. Business plans have stronger data protection guarantees.

Do this: Remove names, numbers, and identifiers before uploading. Use placeholders for confidential data. Check your plan's data handling policies.

5**AI can be confidently wrong**

Claude hallucinates less than ChatGPT, but it still does it. It can invent statistics, cite papers that do not exist, and sound completely confident while being wrong. This is especially dangerous for legal, medical, and financial content.

Do this: Always verify facts, sources, and recommendations independently. If Claude cites a source, open it and confirm it exists. Never use AI output as final advice for legal, medical, or financial decisions.

6**AI makes scams look more convincing**

Phishing emails, fake websites, scam messages. AI removed the grammar mistakes and broken formatting that used to make them obvious. A polished, professional sounding email is no longer proof that it is legitimate.

Do this: Be more skeptical of polished messages asking for info or urgent action. Verify through a separate channel. Do not click links in emails you were not expecting.

7**Secure your Claude account**

Your account holds conversations, files, Projects, and custom instructions. If someone gets access, they see everything.

Do this: Strong unique password. Enable two factor authentication. Never share credentials. Log out on shared devices.

Your AI Safety Checklist

DO THIS	NOT THIS
Use placeholder data in prompts	Paste real personal info
Turn off "Help improve Claude" in Settings	Leave defaults and hope for the best
Verify AI output before acting on it	Trust everything it says
Use strong passwords and 2FA	Reuse the same password
Remove sensitive data before uploading files	Upload raw client documents
Use Business/Enterprise for company data	Use Free/Pro plan for sensitive work
Know that each conversation is separate	Assume Claude "remembers" everything

REMEMBER

Your AI is only as safe as your habits. Turn off training. Verify facts. Protect your data. These are not suggestions. They are requirements.

50 Prompts You Can Use Today

Every prompt below follows the PTCF structure. They are ready to copy and paste into Claude. Replace the brackets with your specific details. The more specific you make them, the better they work.

Each prompt includes a short note on *why it works* so you learn the pattern, not the template.

Productivity

#1

PRODUCTIVITY

Weekly Meal Prep Planner

"You are a nutritionist who specializes in quick meal prep for busy professionals. Create a 5 day meal prep plan I can cook on Sunday in under 2 hours. Dietary needs: [specify]. Budget: [amount] per week. Include a grocery list grouped by store section. Each meal should reheat well and stay fresh for 4 days."

Why it works: Specific constraints (2 hours, reheats well, grouped grocery list) eliminate generic meal plans.

#2

PRODUCTIVITY

Travel Itinerary Builder

"Plan a [X day] trip to [destination] for [number] people. Budget: [amount] total excluding flights. Interests: [list]. We prefer [walking/driving/public transit]. Include: daily schedule with time blocks, restaurant recommendations (no tourist traps), one unexpected local experience per day, and a packing checklist for the weather during [dates]."

Why it works: "No tourist traps" and "one unexpected experience" push past generic travel lists.

#3

PRODUCTIVITY

Difficult Conversation Prep

"I need to have a difficult conversation with [relationship: boss/partner/friend/landlord] about [situation]. Help me prepare: 1) An opening line that is direct but not aggressive. 2) My 3 main points, ordered by importance. 3) Likely pushback and how to respond calmly. 4) A closing that preserves the relationship. Tone: firm but respectful."

Why it works: Structures an emotional situation into clear, actionable steps.

#4

PRODUCTIVITY

Smart Purchase Decision

"I am deciding between [Product A] and [Product B] for [use case]. My priorities in order: [list 3 priorities]. Budget: [range]. Create a comparison table with these columns: Feature, Product A, Product B, Which Wins. Then give me a one paragraph recommendation based on my priorities, not general popularity."

Why it works: "Based on my priorities, not general popularity" forces a personalized answer.

#5

PRODUCTIVITY

Morning Routine Optimizer

"I have [X minutes] between waking up and leaving for work. Current routine: [describe]. I want to add [new habit] without feeling rushed. Redesign my morning as a time blocked schedule. Identify what I can combine, shorten, or eliminate. Prioritize [energy/focus/calm]."

Why it works: Real constraints (exact minutes, specific goal) produce a usable plan instead of generic morning advice.

#6

PRODUCTIVITY

Email Response Batch

"You are a professional communications expert. I will describe 5 emails I need to respond to. For each, draft a response: professional, concise (under 80 words), matching the appropriate tone (apologetic / firm / grateful / neutral). Do not use filler phrases like 'I hope this email finds you well.' Ask me to describe each email one at a time."

Why it works: Negative instruction ("do not use filler phrases") kills the generic AI email voice.

#7

PRODUCTIVITY

Meeting Notes to Action Items

"Here are my raw meeting notes: [paste]. Extract: 1) Key decisions made (with who decided). 2) Action items with owner and deadline. 3) Open questions that still need answers. 4) A 3 sentence summary I can send to anyone who missed the meeting. Format as a clean document I can share immediately."

Why it works: "Who decided" and "open questions" capture details that standard note summaries miss.

#8

PRODUCTIVITY

Weekly Review System

"Act as my thinking partner. Ask me these questions one at a time, then compile my answers into a structured weekly review: 1) What moved forward this week? 2) What got stuck and why? 3) What did I avoid and what was I afraid of? 4) What should I do differently next week? 5) One thing I am overthinking that I should decide on now."

Why it works: "What did I avoid and what was I afraid of" goes deeper than standard productivity reviews.

Writing

#9

WRITING

Blog Post from Scratch

"You are a content strategist. Write a 700 word blog post about [topic]. Audience: [describe]. Structure: hook that creates tension (no cliches, no 'In today's...'), 3 subheadings that could stand alone as takeaways, one real world example per section, and a CTA to [action]. Tone: conversational but credible. No filler paragraphs."

Why it works: "Subheadings that could stand alone as takeaways" ensures each section adds real value.

#10

WRITING

Cold Email That Gets Replies

"Write a cold outreach email to a [role] at a [company type]. I offer [what you do] that solves [their problem]. Rules: under 90 words, personalize the first line to their specific role, end with a question (not 'let's book a call'), no buzzwords, no 'I hope this finds you well.' Write 3 variations with different angles."

Why it works: 3 variations plus strict word limits and anti-buzzword rules produce usable cold emails.

#11

WRITING

YouTube Script

"Write a script for a [X minute] YouTube video about [topic]. Structure: hook that creates a question in the viewer's mind (first 10 seconds), problem setup with relatable frustration, 3 key points with specific examples, recap, and CTA. Include suggested timestamps and B roll notes. Audience: [describe]. Write for speaking, not reading."

Why it works: "Write for speaking, not reading" changes sentence structure to match actual delivery.

#12 WRITING
Newsletter Writer

"Write this week's newsletter for my [niche] audience. Topic: [topic]. Structure: subject line (curiosity driven, under 8 words), personal opening (2 sentences, relatable), main insight with one actionable takeaway, one resource recommendation, closing question that invites replies. Total: 400 to 500 words. Tone: like a smart friend sending an email."

Why it works: "Like a smart friend sending an email" sets a specific, non-corporate tone.

#13 WRITING
Rewrite for Clarity

"Rewrite the following text to be clearer and more concise. Rules: cut word count by 30%, remove jargon, break long sentences into short ones, keep the same meaning, keep my voice. Do not add new ideas. Do not make it sound more formal. Make it sharper. [paste text]"

Why it works: "Keep my voice" and "do not make it more formal" prevent the AI from overwriting your style.

#14 WRITING
Hook Generator

"Write 10 scroll stopping hooks for a reel about [topic]. Target audience: [describe]. Each hook must be under 8 words, create an open loop or emotional reaction, and avoid cliches like 'you won't believe' or 'stop scrolling.' Mix formats: questions, contradictions, number shocks, and identity call outs. Rank the top 3 for virality."

Why it works: "Avoid cliches" plus mixed formats forces originality. Ranking adds evaluation.

#15 WRITING
Caption Writer

"Write an Instagram caption for a reel about [topic]. Structure: strong opening line (no generic starts), one insight or contrast, short value section, soft CTA. Tone: [your tone]. Under 150 words. Do not use the word 'hashtags' in the text. Include exactly 5 hashtags at the end: 1 broad, 2 mid, 2 niche."

Why it works: Strict hashtag structure and "no generic starts" prevent templated captions.

#16

WRITING

Product Description

"Write a product description for [product] targeting [audience].
Structure: headline under 8 words that names the benefit (not the feature), 3 bullet points focused on what changes for the customer (not what the product does), one paragraph explaining the transformation, urgency CTA. Tone: [specify]."

Why it works: "What changes for the customer" reframes features as benefits automatically.

Business

#17 BUSINESS SWOT Analysis

"Conduct a SWOT analysis for [business]. For each quadrant, give me 5 specific points based on the context below, not generic filler. Then create a one page action plan: 2 ways to use strengths, 2 ways to fix weaknesses, 2 ways to capture opportunities, 2 ways to reduce threats. Context: [your details]."

Why it works: "Not generic filler" and required action plan push past surface level analysis.

#18 BUSINESS Competitor Teardown

"Analyze [competitor 1, 2, 3] against my business [describe]. For each: pricing model, target audience, strongest differentiator, biggest weakness, and one thing they do better than me. Then identify 2 gaps none of them fill. Format as a comparison table plus a strategy paragraph."

Why it works: "One thing they do better than me" forces honest analysis instead of flattery.

#19 BUSINESS Customer Persona Builder

"Create a detailed customer persona for [product/service]. Include: age, role, income, daily frustrations, what they Google at 11pm, objections to buying, where they spend time online, the trigger event that makes them search for a solution, and the exact sentence they would say to a friend when describing their problem."

Why it works: "What they Google at 11pm" and "exact sentence to a friend" create a real person, not a marketing abstraction.

#20

BUSINESS

Pricing Decision

"You are a pricing strategist. My product: [describe]. Costs: [details]. Target market: [describe]. Competitors charge: [ranges]. Recommend 3 pricing models with pros/cons of each. For each model, tell me: what it signals to the customer, what margin I keep, and when it stops working. Then recommend one with reasoning."

Why it works: "What it signals to the customer" adds a psychological layer most pricing prompts miss.

#21

BUSINESS

Pitch Deck Story

"Create a 10 slide pitch deck narrative for [business]. Not a slide list. A story arc: what is broken in the world, why now, what we built, proof it works, why this team, and the ask. For each slide: the headline (under 8 words), the one thing the audience should feel, and 2 to 3 supporting bullet points."

Why it works: "What the audience should feel" per slide transforms a deck from information dump to persuasion.

#22

BUSINESS

Decision Framework

"I need to decide between [Option A] and [Option B] for [context]. Before scoring, ask me 5 questions to understand my priorities. Then create a weighted decision matrix with 8 criteria based on my answers. Score each 1 to 10. Show the math. Recommend one with a clear one paragraph reasoning."

Why it works: Uses "ask me questions first" to calibrate the criteria before evaluating.

#23

BUSINESS

Meeting Prep Brief

"I have a meeting about [topic] with [who]. Goal: [what I want to achieve]. Prepare: 1) 3 talking points ordered by importance, 2) the strongest objection they will raise and my response, 3) one question that shifts the conversation in my favor, 4) a one sentence close. Tone: confident, not aggressive."

Why it works: "One question that shifts the conversation" adds strategic depth beyond generic prep.

#24

BUSINESS

Content Calendar Builder

"Create a 2 week content calendar for [niche] across Instagram and TikTok. For each post include: platform, post type (reel/carousel/story), topic, hook, and target emotion (curiosity/relief/motivation/shock). Content mix: 60% educational, 25% quick wins, 15% opinion. No two posts in a row should target the same emotion."

Why it works: Emotion targeting and content mix ratios create strategic variety instead of random posting.

Learning

#25 LEARNING
Explain Like I Am 14

"Explain [complex concept] so a 14 year old would understand it. Use 2 real world analogies, give one example I can try myself, and end with 3 questions that test whether I understood. No jargon. No academic language. If the concept has layers, reveal them one at a time."

Why it works: "Reveal layers one at a time" creates progressive understanding instead of an info dump.

#26 LEARNING
Skill Gap Diagnostic

"I want to assess my level in [skill]. Ask me 10 questions, starting easy and getting harder. After each answer, tell me if I am right or wrong and why. At the end, map my knowledge: what I know well, what I know partially, and what I am missing entirely. Then give me a focused study plan for the gaps only."

Why it works: Diagnosing gaps first means the study plan targets exactly what you need, not what you already know.

#27 LEARNING
Book Key Ideas

"Give me the key ideas from [book] by [author]. Structure: the central argument in one sentence, 5 most important concepts (each in 2 to 3 sentences), 3 things I can implement this week, and one criticism of the book's logic. Format for someone who has 5 minutes and wants to decide if the book is worth reading."

Why it works: "One criticism" and "worth reading" add evaluation instead of summarizing.

#28

LEARNING

4 Week Study Plan

"Create a 4 week study plan for [subject]. I have [X hours per week]. Current level: [describe]. Include: weekly objectives, specific free resources (not 'watch YouTube'), practice exercises, and a mini project by week 4 that proves I learned the skill. If a resource requires paid access, flag it and suggest a free alternative."

Why it works: "Not 'watch YouTube'" and "flag paid resources" produce an actually usable study plan.

#29

LEARNING

Teach Me by Asking

"I want to understand [topic]. Do not explain it to me. Instead, teach me using the Socratic method: ask questions that lead me to figure out the concept myself. Start simple and get harder. If I am wrong, do not give the answer immediately. Give me a hint and let me try again. Be patient but do not let me stay confused for more than 2 attempts."

Why it works: Active learning through questions builds deeper understanding than passive reading.

#30

LEARNING

Debate Both Sides

"I want to understand [topic/issue] from both sides. Present the strongest argument FOR and the strongest argument AGAINST. Use real evidence and examples for each. Do not tell me which side is right. After both arguments, give me 3 questions that would help me form my own informed opinion."

Why it works: Balanced presentation plus self-directed questions build critical thinking, not bias.

Health and Wellness

#31 HEALTH Workout Program

"Design a 4 week workout program. Goal: [specify]. I can train [X days/week] for [X minutes]. Equipment: [list or 'none']. Include: warm up, exercises with sets and reps, rest periods, and how to progress each week. Format each day as a clear list I can follow at the gym without re-reading. No exercises I would need to Google."

Why it works: "No exercises I would need to Google" ensures accessibility for all fitness levels.

#32 HEALTH Sleep Audit

"My current sleep situation: [describe habits, schedule, problems]. Give me 5 changes ranked by likely impact. For each: what to do, why it works (one sentence, science based), and how to start tonight. Do not suggest buying products. Focus on behavior changes only."

Why it works: "Do not suggest products" and "start tonight" keep advice actionable and free.

#33 HEALTH Stress Reset Plan

"I am stressed about [situation]. Help me: 1) Identify which parts of this are in my control and which are not. 2) Reframe my 3 biggest worries more realistically. 3) Give me 3 things I can do in the next 30 minutes to feel calmer. 4) One thing I can do this week to reduce the source of stress. Practical, not motivational."

Why it works: Separating controllable from uncontrollable immediately reduces mental load.

#34

HEALTH

Habit Builder

"Help me build the habit of [habit]. Create a 30 day plan using this structure: Week 1, the absolute smallest version of the habit (under 2 minutes). Week 2, slightly expand. Week 3, add consistency. Week 4, full version. For each week, include: the daily action, when to do it (tied to an existing habit), and what to do when I miss a day."

Why it works: "What to do when I miss a day" addresses the number one reason habits fail.

#35

HEALTH

Quick Grocery Plan

"I need a grocery list for the week. Household: [number of people]. Dietary needs: [specify]. Budget: [amount]. Create a list grouped by store section (produce, dairy, protein, pantry, frozen). Include estimated cost per section. Prioritize meals that share ingredients to reduce waste."

Why it works: "Share ingredients to reduce waste" is a real constraint that produces smarter shopping lists.

#36

HEALTH

Energy Audit

"Here is my typical day: [describe schedule, meals, sleep, work patterns]. Identify: 1) When my energy is highest and lowest. 2) What is likely causing each dip. 3) Three changes I can make this week to have more consistent energy throughout the day. Be specific about timing. No generic advice like 'drink more water.'"

Why it works: "No generic advice" and specific timing produce a personalized energy plan.

Creative

#37

CREATIVE

Brand Voice Definer

"Help me define my brand voice for [platform]. Before you start, ask me 10 questions about my personality, values, and what I want my audience to feel. Then create a Brand Voice Guide with: 3 voice pillars, a 'I say / I never say' comparison table, 5 example sentences in my voice, and tone shifts for different content types (educational, promotional, personal)."

Why it works: Uses the "ask me questions first" technique to gather real context before building the guide.

#38

CREATIVE

Reel Script Writer

"Write a 25 second reel script about [topic]. Structure: hook (2 seconds, create tension), proof or example (8 seconds), insight (8 seconds), contrast or correction (5 seconds), close with a save/share trigger (2 seconds). Write for spoken delivery, not reading. Short punchy sentences. No filler words."

Why it works: Second by second timing forces tight, deliverable scripts instead of essay style content.

#39

CREATIVE

Carousel Outline

"Create a 7 slide carousel outline about [topic]. Slide 1: hook headline (max 6 words, create curiosity). Slides 2 to 6: one clear point per slide with a supporting example or proof. Slide 7: summary plus CTA. Each slide should have max 25 words. Write for visual scanning, not reading."

Why it works: Word limits per slide force concise, scannable content designed for how people consume carousels.

#40

CREATIVE

Viral Topic Finder

"You are a content strategist specializing in [niche]. Generate 15 content ideas that have high share potential. Each idea must include: a working title, the target emotion, and why someone would share it (to look smart, to help a friend, to start a debate, to save for later). Do not suggest obvious topics everyone in this niche already covers."

Why it works: Share motivation analysis and "not obvious topics" push past generic content ideas.

#41

CREATIVE

Repurpose Engine

"I have this piece of content: [paste or describe]. Repurpose it into 5 different formats: 1) a Twitter/X thread (max 7 tweets), 2) a LinkedIn post (hook, story, insight, CTA), 3) an Instagram carousel outline (7 slides), 4) a 25 second reel script, 5) a newsletter paragraph. Keep the core message but adapt the structure and tone for each platform."

Why it works: One idea becomes five pieces of content, each adapted to platform-specific formats.

#42

CREATIVE

Story Framework

"Help me turn this experience into a compelling story: [describe what happened]. Structure it using: the setup (where I was, what I believed), the conflict (what went wrong or surprised me), the insight (what I learned), and the takeaway (why this matters to my audience of [describe]). Keep it under 300 words. Make it feel real, not polished."

Why it works: "Feel real, not polished" prevents the over-edited, generic storytelling AI defaults to.

Career

#43 CAREER **Interview Prep**

"I am interviewing for [position] at [company type]. Act as the hiring manager. Give me: 8 likely questions (mix behavioral and technical), the STAR framework answer structure for each, 2 questions I should ask that show strategic thinking (not generic ones from Google), and 1 red flag to watch for in how they answer my questions."

Why it works: "Not generic ones from Google" and "red flag to watch for" make this interview prep, not interview templates.

#44 CAREER **Resume Bullet Rewriter**

"Rewrite these resume bullet points using the formula: [What I did] + [Measurable result] + [How I did it]. Make each specific, quantified, and achievement focused. If a bullet has no measurable result, flag it and suggest what metric I should add. Current bullets: [paste]. Role context: [describe]."

Why it works: Flagging bullets without metrics teaches you to think in results, not tasks.

#45 CAREER **Salary Negotiation Prep**

"Help me negotiate salary. Role: [title]. Experience: [years]. Current offer: [amount]. Market rate: [range]. Write: opening statement (confident, not desperate), 3 value points with evidence, responses to 'that's our final offer' and 'we don't have budget,' and a graceful line for if I need to walk away."

Why it works: Specific pushback responses ("that's our final offer") prepare you for real objections.

#46

CAREER

Performance Review

"Write my self assessment for a performance review. Role: [describe]. Wins this quarter: [list]. Areas I struggled: [list]. Rules: highlight wins with specific metrics, be honest about struggles without self sabotaging, propose 2 development goals that align with where the company is heading. Professional tone, not overly humble."

Why it works: "Not overly humble" corrects the common mistake of underselling accomplishments.

#47

CAREER

Career Pivot Roadmap

"I am a [current role] pivoting to [target role]. Identify: my transferable skills, the 3 biggest skill gaps, 2 realistic transition paths (with trade offs of each), a 90 day action plan with weekly milestones, and 3 companies known for hiring career changers in [target field]. Be realistic, not motivational."

Why it works: "Be realistic, not motivational" prevents generic encouragement and produces honest planning.

Finance

#48

FINANCE

Monthly Budget Builder

"My after tax income: [amount]. Fixed expenses: [list with amounts]. Create a monthly budget that allocates savings, investments, and discretionary spending. Show me: where my money currently goes, where it should go, and the 2 biggest areas where I am likely overspending compared to recommended benchmarks. Format as a clean table."

Why it works: Comparing against benchmarks gives you an objective view, not a reshuffled version of your current spending.

#49

FINANCE

Side Income Evaluator

"I am considering [side income idea]. Evaluate honestly: startup cost, time to first dollar, realistic monthly income after 6 months, scalability, skills I need, and market saturation. I have [X hours/week] and [X budget]. If this idea scores poorly, suggest 2 better alternatives for my specific situation. Do not sugarcoat."

Why it works: "Do not sugarcoat" and "realistic after 6 months" prevent the optimistic bias AI defaults to.

#50

FINANCE

Subscription Audit

"Here are my monthly subscriptions: [list with prices]. For each one, tell me: am I likely getting enough value to justify the cost? Is there a free alternative? What would I lose if I cancelled? Then rank them from 'definitely keep' to 'cancel today.' Calculate my total monthly and yearly subscription spend."

Why it works: Ranking and "what would I lose" makes cancellation decisions easier than looking at everything equally.

HOW TO USE THESE PROMPTS

These are starting points, not magic spells. Replace every bracket with your real details. The more specific you make them, the better they work. If the output is not right, do not start over. Identify which element failed and fix that one thing.

Tips, Tricks, and Hidden Features

- 1 Star important conversations.** Use Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + S to star conversations you want to find again. They appear at the top of your sidebar. Do not let good conversations get buried in your history.
- 2 Use image analysis for everything.** Screenshot an error message, a design mockup, a chart, a whiteboard, or a receipt. Claude can read, describe, and analyze images. This is faster than typing what you see.
- 3 Artifacts are your workbench.** When Claude generates code, HTML, SVG, or React components, it shows them as interactive previews. You can edit, copy, and iterate without leaving the conversation.
- 4 Upload multiple files at once.** Drag a batch of files into the input box. Claude reads them all and can cross reference between them. Upload your resume and a job posting. Upload three competing proposals. Upload a spreadsheet and a brief.
- 5 Translation goes both ways.** Claude handles dozens of languages. Translate documents, write content in another language, or have Claude respond in one language while you type in another. Specify: "Respond in Spanish. I will write in English."
- 6 Use Projects for different contexts.** Create separate Projects for work, side projects, learning, and personal tasks. Each Project has its own instructions and knowledge base. This keeps your contexts clean and your outputs consistent.
- 7 Use Cowork for complex multi-step tasks.** If your task has more than 3 steps, or involves creating multiple files, switch to Cowork mode. Chat is for conversations. Cowork is for deliverables.
- 8 Extended Thinking for hard problems.** Enable Extended Thinking when you need Claude to reason carefully. Math, logic puzzles, code debugging, strategic analysis. The response takes longer but the accuracy improves significantly.
- 9 Ctrl/Cmd + K to search.** Your conversation history is searchable. Find that prompt you wrote 3 weeks ago without scrolling through hundreds of chats.
- 10 Use negative instructions aggressively.** Claude follows them better than any other model. "Do not use the word 'leverage.'" "Do not start any sentence with 'It's

important to note." "Do not exceed 150 words." These constraints produce cleaner output instantly.

THE MINDSET SHIFT

Claude is not a search engine you ask questions to. It is a thinking partner you work with. The more you treat it like a capable colleague (clear instructions, specific context, defined deliverables), the better your results. Stop asking and start briefing.

This is your system now. Not a collection of tips.

You know the models. You know the tools. You know the structure. You know how to protect yourself.

Now use it. Build something.

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