

# The Founder's Guide to Claude

Everything you need to use Claude well

Made by Your AI Partner  
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## CHAPTER 1

# Welcome to Claude

Claude is built by Anthropic — a company focused on making AI that’s genuinely useful and safe. It’s not a search engine. It’s a thinking partner, writing collaborator, analyst, and strategist. Think of it as the sharpest colleague you’ve ever had.

## The Model Lineup

### Haiku 4.5 — The Speed Demon

Lightning-fast, lightweight, perfect for quick tasks. Need a subject line rewritten in three seconds? Haiku. Think of it as the incredibly fast intern who handles simple requests instantly.

Speed: Instant • Best for: Quick rewrites, simple Q&A, rapid iteration

### Sonnet 4.6 — The Workhorse

Your go-to for 80–90% of everything you do. Smart enough for complex work, fast enough that you’re not waiting around. Balanced intelligence and speed.

Speed: Fast • Best for: Writing, analysis, strategy, most daily work

### Opus 4.6 — The Heavyweight

Deep reasoning, nuanced analysis, complex multi-step projects. When the stakes are high or the problem is genuinely hard, Opus is the one you call.

Speed: Thoughtful • Best for: Complex reasoning, high-stakes analysis, large projects

## Plans

**Free**     \$0     Sonnet & Haiku. Limited messages. Great for trying it out.

**Pro**     \$20/mo     **START HERE**  
All models including Opus. Cowork, Claude Code, Research mode, web search, file creation, Google Workspace.

**Max**     \$100–200/mo     **LEVEL UP TO THIS**  
Everything in Pro with much higher usage caps and priority access. The plan for automations and serious workflows.

**Team**     \$30/user/mo     Shared Projects, admin controls, centralized billing for small teams.

*Where to find Claude: Web (claude.ai), desktop app (Mac + Windows), mobile (iOS + Android).*

*Everything syncs across devices.*

## CHAPTER 2

# Set Yourself Up Right

Most people skip setup and dive straight into asking questions. That's like hiring a new team member and never telling them about your business. Fifteen minutes of setup makes every conversation dramatically smarter.

## Your Profile & Preferences

Head to Settings › Profile. Tell Claude your industry, role, communication style, and formatting preferences. Be specific: "I run a boutique marketing agency with 12 employees, primarily serving B2B SaaS. I prefer concise, actionable responses."

## Memory

Claude remembers you across conversations. Enable it in Settings › Memory. You can view, edit, or delete memories anytime. Different Projects maintain separate memories.

## The First Conversation

Before any real work, have an intentional "get to know me" conversation. Tell Claude about your business, goals, challenges, and communication style. This single investment compounds in every future interaction.

*Spend 15 minutes on your profile and a "get to know me" conversation. It's the single highest-leverage thing you can do with Claude.*

### Starter prompt — copy & paste this:

"I want you to get to know me and my business so you can help me better over time. Ask me one important question at a time – about my company, my role, my goals, and how I like to communicate. Keep going until you have a clear picture."

## CHAPTER 3

# How to Talk to Claude

**This is the most important section.** The gap between mediocre results and extraordinary ones isn't the model. It's how you communicate.

## Context is everything

### Vague prompt:

"Write me a social media post."

Generic. No context. Claude has to guess everything.

### Specific prompt:

"I run a luxury property management company targeting high-net-worth clients. Write me an Instagram caption that positions us as the premium choice for vacation home owners. Tone: confident, sophisticated, not salesy. Keep it under 150 words."

On-brand. On-target. Ready to use.

## Four things to always include

- **Format**  
Bullet points, table, email draft, slide outline
- **Length**  
"Keep it under 200 words" or "thorough analysis"
- **Audience**  
"For my board" vs. "for my Instagram followers"
- **Tone**  
"Professional and authoritative" vs. "casual"

## Iterate, don't start over

When Claude gives you something 70% right, tell it what to fix: "Make the opening more direct and cut the second paragraph." Specific feedback is dramatically faster than starting from scratch.

## Push back

Claude isn't always right. If something feels off, say so. It responds well to constructive pushback.

## Ask Claude to ask you

Try: "Before you start, ask me 3–5 clarifying questions so you can do this well." This single sentence transforms the interaction.

*"The quality of Claude's output is directly proportional to the quality of your input."*

## CHAPTER 4

# What's In the Toolbox

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Most people use Claude for one thing: answering questions. It's like having a fire-breathing dragon and instead of asking it to fly you to a new dimension, you ask it to warm up some broccoli.

- **Web Search**

Claude searches the internet in real time for current events, competitor research, market data, and fact-checking.

- **File Creation**

Ask Claude to create Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, and PDFs. Ask for deliverables, not answers.

- **Artifacts**

When Claude builds something — a document, visualization, code — it appears in a separate panel you can view, edit, and iterate on.

- **Research Mode**

Deep investigation across multiple sources. Perfect for market research, competitive analysis, and due diligence.

- **Image Understanding**

Upload photos, screenshots, whiteboard sketches, or documents. Claude can see and analyze visual content.

- **Google Workspace**

Connect Drive, Gmail, and Calendar. Claude references your existing documents and emails directly.

- **Data Analysis**

Upload a CSV or spreadsheet and ask Claude to find patterns, create charts, or summarize insights. No technical skills needed.

*Stop asking Claude questions. Start asking Claude to build things for you. If you'd normally spend hours on it, Claude can draft it in 2 minutes.*

## CHAPTER 5

# Projects — Your Secret Weapon

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Projects are dedicated workspaces where Claude maintains specific context for a specific area of your work. Each has its own instructions, reference files, and history. It's like having a specialized assistant for each department.

## How to set one up

- 1 Create a new Project from the sidebar
- 2 Name it specifically — “Q1 Marketing Campaign” beats “Marketing”
- 3 Write Project Instructions with your goals, context, and format preferences
- 4 Upload reference files — brand guidelines, templates, examples

## Ideas for founders

### Content Creation

Brand voice, audience personas, content calendar

This Project is for all content creation for my business. I write for [platform]. My brand voice is [describe]. My target audience is [describe]. Help me brainstorm, draft, and refine content that sounds like me.

### Client Work

Client backgrounds, templates, communication history

This Project manages my client relationships. I work with [type of clients]. Help me draft proposals, follow-up emails, and status updates. Keep the tone professional but warm.

### Business Strategy

Business plan, financials, competitive landscape

This Project is my strategic thinking space. My business does [what] for [who]. Revenue is [range]. Help me think through decisions, analyze opportunities, and pressure-test my assumptions.

### Operations

SOPs, team roster, tool stack, processes

This Project handles internal operations. My team is [size] people. We use [tools]. Help me build SOPs, improve workflows, draft team communications, and solve process bottlenecks.

### Sales & Proposals

Templates, pricing, case studies, objection notes

This Project is my sales engine. I sell [what] at [price range] to [who]. Help me write proposals, handle objections, craft follow-ups, and refine my pitch. Tone: confident, not pushy.

## CHAPTER 6

# What Claude Can't Do

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Smart trust means understanding where Claude shines and where it doesn't.

- **Claude can be wrong**

It can generate confident-sounding information that isn't accurate. Always verify facts, figures, and legal or financial claims. The higher the stakes, the more you verify.

- **Knowledge has a cutoff**

For recent events, Claude needs to use web search. If something feels outdated, ask it to search.

- **It can't access what you haven't shared**

Claude doesn't know your email, CRM, or tools unless you've connected them or uploaded files.

- **Memory is good, not perfect**

For critical context, use Projects with reference documents rather than relying solely on memory.

- **Not a licensed professional**

For legal, medical, or financial decisions with real consequences, consult a licensed professional.

- **Long conversations can drift**

If quality dips, start fresh. Five focused conversations beat one sprawling thread.

*"Trust Claude like you'd trust a brilliant new hire — capable of amazing work, but you still review the deliverables."*

## CHAPTER 7

# 12 Phrases That Change Everything

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These are the phrases that unlock Claude's best work.

**1 “Think through this step by step.”**

Forces Claude to show its reasoning instead of jumping to conclusions. Use this on anything complex.

**2 “Ask me 5 clarifying questions before you start.”**

Makes Claude gather the right context first. Prevents the “that’s not what I meant” loop.

**3 “What am I missing?”**

Turns Claude into a strategic advisor. Surfaces blind spots after you share a plan or decision.

**4 “Be direct — tell me what’s wrong with this.”**

Gives Claude permission to be honest instead of agreeable. Unlocks critical-thinking mode.

**5 “Give me three options and explain the tradeoffs.”**

Breaks Claude out of single-answer mode. Essential when there’s no single right answer.

**6 “Write this as if you’re explaining it to [audience].”**

Instantly calibrates tone, vocabulary, and depth for any audience.

**7 “Here’s what I liked, and here’s what needs to change.”**

Teaches Claude your preferences in real time. Far more effective than “try again.”

**8 “Before you respond, tell me what you understood.”**

Catches misalignment before Claude writes 500 words in the wrong direction.

**9 “I’m going to give you context in stages. Don’t start yet.”**

For complex tasks where Claude needs the full picture before beginning.

**10 “Pretend you’re [role] with [X years] of experience.”**

Unlocks domain-specific thinking, vocabulary, and frameworks.

**11 “Summarize this conversation so I can paste it into a new chat.”**

Preserves context cleanly when conversations get long.

**12 “What would you do differently if you could start over?”**

Surfaces improvements Claude couldn’t see during the first draft.

## CHAPTER 8

# Level Up — Go Pro

You've got the fundamentals down. These are the tools that take you from using Claude well to running your business on it.

## Claude Cowork

Open the Claude desktop app, point it at a folder of files, and tell it what you need. Claude reads everything, makes a plan, and executes multi-step tasks on its own. No terminal, no technical setup.

### REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A practitioner office pointed Cowork at a folder of 50 patient intake forms and said "Audit these for completeness, flag missing fields, and rewrite the follow-up templates." Done autonomously.

## Claude Code

Describe what you want built in plain English and Claude builds it for you. No coding skills needed. Founders call this "vibe coding" — you explain the idea, Claude writes the code, tests it, and ships it.

### REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A retail franchise with 40 locations said "I need a dashboard that pulls sales, foot traffic, and inventory data from every store so leadership can spot underperformers, compare regions, and make decisions based on real numbers instead of gut feel." Claude Code built the entire reporting tool from scratch.

## MCP & Integrations

MCP (Model Context Protocol) lets Claude plug directly into the tools you already use — your CRM, project management apps, databases, and more. Instead of copy-pasting between tools, Claude reads and acts on your live data.

### REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A real estate team connected Claude to their CRM. Now they say "Pull all leads from the last 30 days who haven't received a follow-up" and Claude generates the list and drafts the emails.

Master the chat experience first. Explore Projects deeply. When you're ready, Cowork and Claude Code open up possibilities that would have required a technical team just a year ago.

***"Right now, AI is as dumb as it's ever going to be."***

**The best time to start was yesterday.**  
**The second best time is right now.**

Open Claude. Set up your profile. Create your first Project. Start building.

Steve Arneson | @stevearnesonofficial  
Built with Claude

