

M A V E R I C K A I

15 SECRET MODES FOR CHATGPT

THE FIVE FROM THE VIDEO, TEN MORE THAT ARE REALLY IN
THERE, AND HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN

Most people use ChatGPT one way: type a question, get an answer. It has a dozen other ways to behave sitting behind a plus button, a slider and a settings page. Here's every one, where it lives, and the exact words to build your own.

Study, incognito, genius, health and custom modes, with the real click-paths

Ten more modes hiding in the app: Work, Deep Research, Voice, Projects, Scheduled and more

Which modes are free and which need Plus or Pro

Ten ready-to-paste custom modes, tested so they trigger every time

Where a custom mode should actually live (memory versus custom instructions)

The mistakes that make modes stop working, and a one-page map

2026 Edition

ChatGPT Has Modes. Almost Nobody Uses Them.

A mode is any switch that changes how ChatGPT behaves before you type a word. Some are real buttons OpenAI built (Study, Temporary chat, the thinking picker, Health). Some are settings pages most people have never opened. And some you make yourself with one sentence and a saved memory. Fifteen of them are below, checked against OpenAI's own help center this week, with the path to each and the plan it needs.

15

modes in this guide

11

work on the free plan

1

sentence to build your own

All fifteen at a glance

Mode	Where	Plan
1. Study	Plus button, then Study (or type @study)	All plans
2. Incognito (Temporary chat)	Temporary button, top right of a new chat	All plans
3. Genius (thinking picker)	Picker in the message box or top of chat; Free uses Plus, then Think	All; deepest levels on Plus and Pro
4. Health	Sidebar, More, then Health	Free to Pro, US, 18+
5. Custom modes	One sentence plus "save this to memory"	All plans with memory on
6. Work	Chat / Work switch at the top	Plus and up
7. Deep Research	Type @Deep Research in Work	Plus and up
8. Voice	Voice button in the message box	All plans
9. Projects (private memory)	Sidebar, Projects, then project settings	All plans
10. Scheduled tasks	Sidebar, Scheduled	Plus and up
11. Personality	Settings, Personalization, Base style and tone	All plans
12. Lockdown	Settings, Security	All plans
13. Quiz	Say "quiz me on..." (or inside Study)	All plans
14. Sites	Work mode, ask to publish	Plus and Pro
15. Shopping	Ask to compare or find products	All plans

The Five From The Video

STEP 1: Study mode: it teaches instead of answering

Click the + in the message box and choose **Study** (or just type **@study**, or go to chatgpt.com/studymode). A Study chip appears in your message box. From then on ChatGPT asks you questions, explains one step at a time, checks you understood, and builds practice questions from whatever you upload: notes, PDFs, photos of a textbook. To turn it off, delete the Study chip. Works on every plan and every model.

STEP 2: Incognito mode: nothing gets saved

OpenAI calls it **Temporary chat**. Open a new chat and click the pill-shaped **Temporary** button in the top right (a toggle on mobile). Nothing in that chat goes into your history, no new memories get created, and it isn't used for training. One honest detail: OpenAI keeps unsaved temporary chats for up to 30 days for safety review, then they're gone. Off the record from your account's point of view, not a vanishing act.

STEP 3: Genius mode: turn the thinking up

The picker sits in the message box on web and at the top of the chat on mobile. It runs from **Instant** up through **Medium** and **High**, with **Extra High** and the **Pro** levels on the Pro plan. On Free and Go, click + and choose **Think**. The higher you go, the longer it reasons before answering and the better it is at hard, multi-step problems. It's also slower and eats more of your limit, so save it for the questions that matter.

STEP 4: Health mode: it can see your real body data

In the sidebar, click **More** and then **Health** (it sits between Images and GPTs). Inside, open the menu and choose **Apple Health**, then pick which categories to share: sleep, steps, heart rate, workouts. Apple Health connects from the **iPhone app only**. You can also link supported US medical portals. Health is available to Free, Go, Plus and Pro users in the US, 18 and over, on web and iOS. Health chats are never used for training, and everything deletes within 30 days if you disconnect.

HEADS UP

Health is built to support your care, not replace it. It will build a sleep plan around your actual numbers; it will not diagnose you. Treat it like a smart friend reading your Apple Watch, not a doctor.

STEP 5: Build your own modes

Start a new chat and type one sentence: "Whenever I type BRUTAL MODE, ..." then "Save this to memory." ChatGPT confirms, and the trigger word works in future chats. Chapter 4 has ten tested modes and the one thing the video leaves out: where the rule should really live.

Ten More Modes Hiding In The App

STEP 6: Work mode: it builds instead of chats

The **Chat / Work** switch at the top of ChatGPT. Work is the mode for multi-step jobs: it researches, writes files, uses a browser, connects to Gmail and Slack, and publishes sites. If you've ever asked for a spreadsheet and gotten a paragraph, you were in Chat. Plus and up.

STEP 7: Deep Research mode: a report, not an answer

In Work, type **@Deep Research** in front of your question. It goes away for several minutes, reads dozens of sources, and comes back with a cited report. Use it for anything you'd otherwise spend an afternoon Googling. Plus and up.

STEP 8: Voice mode: talk, interrupt, keep going

The voice button in the message box. The current voice model listens and speaks at the same time, so you can cut it off mid-sentence like a person. In **Settings**, then **Voice**, turn on **Background conversations** and it keeps listening while you use other apps. Free gets the mini voice model, paid plans get the full one.

STEP 9: Private project mode: memory that stays in one box

Create a **Project** from the sidebar, open its settings (the three dots) and switch **Memory** to **Project-only**. Now everything ChatGPT learns in that project stays there and never leaks into your other chats. Perfect for health, money, a client, or anything you don't want colouring every future answer. All plans.

STEP 10: Autopilot mode: scheduled tasks

Sidebar, **Scheduled**. Tell ChatGPT to do something every morning, every Friday, or when an email arrives, and it runs without you: a news brief, a weekly report, a reminder with research attached. You can pause, edit or delete each one from the Scheduled page. Plus and up.

STEP 11: Personality mode: pick a default voice

Settings, then **Personalization**, then **Base style and tone**. Seven options: Default, Professional, Friendly, Candid, Quirky, Efficient and Cynical. Candid is the closest built-in thing to brutal mode. Efficient strips the fluff. This applies to every chat, so it's the mode you set once and forget.

STEP 12: Lockdown mode: pull the plug on the internet

Settings, then **Security**, then **Lockdown Mode**. It switches off every network-enabled capability: web browsing, Deep Research, agent actions. What's left is a model that only knows what it was trained on and what you paste. Use it when you're working with something sensitive and want zero chance of an outside call. All plans.

STEP 13: Quiz mode: test yourself on anything

Just say "Quiz me on [topic]" or "quiz me on this" with a file attached. ChatGPT builds an interactive quiz, scores you, and explains what you missed. It's built into Study mode too, but works on its own in any chat. All plans.

STEP 14: Publisher mode: ChatGPT Sites

In Work, ask ChatGPT to build something and publish it, and it hosts the result at a live URL: a landing page, a portfolio, a tool, a game. You can change the URL from the site's settings. Plus and Pro.

STEP 15: Shopping mode: it compares for you

Ask "compare the best [thing] under \$[price]" and ChatGPT returns products side by side with prices, specs and where to buy. Say what you care about (battery life, weight, no subscriptions) and it re-ranks. All plans.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Finances (sidebar, Pro plan, US): a dashboard of spending, bills, subscriptions and net worth. Codex (the third option on the desktop switch): the mode for building real software. Images, then Templates: start an image from a layout instead of a blank prompt. Library (sidebar): everything you've uploaded, searchable, with Google Drive and Dropbox connected.

TIP

Three of these stack. Work mode plus Deep Research plus a scheduled task is a research assistant that hands you a cited report every Monday morning without being asked.

Build Your Own Modes

The video's brutal mode is real and it works. I tested ten custom modes in fresh chats and tightened the wording until each triggered every time. Two rules came out of it.

Rule one: put the trigger word first, in caps, with a colon. "BRUTAL MODE: here's my idea" triggers reliably. Burying the word mid-sentence doesn't. **Rule two: numbers survive, adjectives don't.** "Under 150 words" and "exactly five bullets" get followed. "Keep it short" gets ignored by week two.

MODE 1: BRUTAL MODE

Whenever I type BRUTAL MODE: critique the work directly. Lead with the biggest flaw. No compliments, no reassurance, no closing encouragement. Name what I'm avoiding. Respectful about me, blunt about the work. Save this to memory.

MODE 2: EXPLAIN LIKE I'M 12

Whenever I type EXPLAIN LIKE I'M 12: plain words, exactly one analogy, no technical terms, under 150 words, and end with one question to check I got it. Save this to memory.

MODE 3: DECISION MODE

Whenever I type DECISION MODE: do not list options. Ask me up to three clarifying questions in one message and stop. After I answer, pick one answer and defend it in exactly five sentences. Save this to memory.

MODE 4: RECAP

Whenever I type RECAP: summarize this conversation only, as exactly five bullets, then one line starting with "Next action:". No preamble. Save this to memory.

MODE 5: DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Whenever I type DEVIL'S ADVOCATE: argue the strongest case against my last statement in 3 to 5 numbered points, then a section titled "Actually worry about:" naming which points matter most. Save this to memory.

MODE 6: COACH MODE

Whenever I type COACH MODE: do not give advice or solutions. Ask exactly one question per message and wait. Maximum five questions. After the fifth answer, reflect back what I said in one paragraph, no recommendations. Save this to memory.

MODE 7: STEELMAN

Whenever I type STEELMAN: restate the position I'm arguing against in its strongest, most charitable form, as its best advocate would, under 150 words, then stop. Save this to memory.

MODE 8: SHRINK IT

Whenever I type SHRINK IT: rewrite whatever I paste at half the length, keeping every fact and the original tone. Output only the rewrite, no commentary. Save this to memory.

MODE 9: FIVE WHYS

Whenever I type FIVE WHYS: take the problem I just described and ask "why" five times in sequence, one per line, then name the likely root cause in one sentence. Save this to memory.

MODE 10: PLAIN ENGLISH

Whenever I type PLAIN ENGLISH: translate the jargon or contract clause I paste into everyday language in one short paragraph, then one line: "What this means for you:". Save this to memory.

WHERE THE RULE SHOULD ACTUALLY LIVE

Saved memories are short paraphrased facts, so the numbers get dropped. Put the modes in Settings, then Personalization, then Custom instructions, one line each (5,000 characters fits all ten). They're injected word for word into every chat. To check one, type the trigger alone and ask "what rule are you applying?"

Mistakes That Make Modes Stop Working

Mistake	Fix
Custom modes stored only in memory	Put the rules in custom instructions. Memory compresses; instructions don't.
Trigger word buried mid-sentence	Trigger first, caps, colon. "BRUTAL MODE: ..."
Vague rules	Numbers: "under 150 words," "exactly five bullets," "one question per message."
Two jobs in one turn	"Ask three questions, then decide" can't happen in one reply. Say "and stop."
Expecting Study mode to persist	It's a chip in the message box. New chat, add it again, or use @study.
Thinking it's private because of Temporary chat	Nothing saved to your account, but OpenAI keeps it 30 days for safety. Use Lockdown for no-internet work.
Running genius mode on everything	Slower and burns your limit. Instant for quick stuff, high levels for the hard question.
Trying Apple Health on the web	The connection is iPhone-app only. Connect there once, then use it anywhere.

The one-page map

Want to...	Use	Path
Learn something properly	Study, Quiz	Plus button, Study; or "quiz me on..."
Ask something off the record	Temporary chat, Lockdown	Temporary (top right); Settings, Security
Get the best possible answer	Thinking picker	Message box picker, slide up
Plan around your body	Health	Sidebar, More, Health; Apple Health from iPhone
Get things built, not described	Work, Sites, Scheduled	Chat/Work switch; ask to publish; Sidebar, Scheduled
Change how it talks to you	Personality, Custom modes	Settings, Personalization
Keep a topic sealed off	Project-only memory	Project settings, Memory

DO THIS TODAY

Open Settings, Personalization. Set your Base style. Paste three of the custom modes into Custom instructions. Then start a new chat, type BRUTAL MODE and your current project. You'll know in thirty seconds whether it's worth the other twelve.

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