

M A V E R I C K A I

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CLAUDE AI IN 2026

Everything you need to know, from first login to power user, plus 50 use cases

Claude Chat, Cowork, Code, and Design explained
Opus 4.8, Sonnet 4.6, Haiku 4.5 model breakdown
Plugins, Skills, Connectors, and Scheduled Tasks
50 real use cases with exact prompts
Pricing plans and which one to pick

2026 Edition | Updated June 2026

What Is Claude in 2026

Claude is an AI assistant built by Anthropic. But calling it a chatbot undersells what it has become. In 2026, Claude is an entire platform: a web chat, a desktop agent that controls your computer, a coding tool that lives in your terminal, and a design tool that creates prototypes and slides. It spans five products, each solving different problems.

THE CLAUDE ECOSYSTEM (2026)

CLAUDE CHAT (claude.ai + mobile apps)

Browser-based chat. Write, research, analyze, brainstorm.

Projects for persistent context. Web search built in.

CLAUDE COWORK (desktop app)

Autonomous desktop agent. Reads and writes your files.

Plugins, skills, connectors, scheduled tasks.

Creates documents, spreadsheets, presentations, PDFs.

CLAUDE CODE (terminal CLI)

AI coding agent in your terminal. Writes, tests, commits.

Works directly in your codebase. VS Code extension available.

CLAUDE DESIGN (design tool)

Prompt-to-prototype. Slides, one-pagers, UI mockups.

Applies your design system automatically. Export to PPTX/Canva.

CLAUDE API (developer platform)

Build Claude into your own apps. Pay-as-you-go pricing.

Understanding the Models

Claude is not a single model. Anthropic offers a family of three, each optimized for different tasks. Knowing which to use is one of the most important things you can learn.

Model	Best For	Speed	Intelligence	Context
Opus 4.8	Deep reasoning, complex agent tasks, research	Moderate	Highest	200K tokens
Sonnet 4.6	Daily driver, writing, coding, analysis	Fast	Very High	200K tokens
Haiku 4.5	Quick tasks, classification, high-volume processing	Fastest	High	200K tokens

What Is New in Opus 4.8 (May 2026)

Opus 4.8 launched May 28, 2026, with sharper judgment, more honesty about its progress, and the ability to work independently for longer. Key improvements: agentic coding jumped from 64.3% to 69.2%, multidisciplinary reasoning went from 54.7% to 57.9%, and fast mode now runs at 2.5x speed at 3x cheaper than before. Pricing stayed the same.

TIP

Use Sonnet 4.6 for 80% of your work. It handles most tasks extremely well. Switch to Opus 4.8 when you need deep reasoning, complex multi-step analysis, or long-running agent tasks. Use Haiku 4.5 when speed matters more than depth.

Effort Control

A new feature in 2026: you can now control how much effort Claude puts into a response. A slider next to the model selector lets you choose between quick, low-effort answers and deep, thorough analysis. Low effort is great for simple questions. High effort is better for complex research and writing tasks.

Claude Design (New in 2026)

Claude Design launched April 17, 2026, as a new product from Anthropic Labs. It lets you collaborate with Claude to create polished visual work: prototypes, slides, one-pagers, pitch decks, and UI mockups. Think of it as having a designer on call 24/7.

What You Can Create

- **Interactive prototypes** from static mockups, shareable for user testing
- **Slide decks** from rough outlines, exportable to PPTX or Canva
- **Feature flows** that product managers can hand off to developers
- **One-pagers and marketing materials** with professional layouts
- **UI/UX mockups** that follow your company's design system

Design System Integration

During onboarding, Claude Design builds a design system for your team by reading your codebase and design files. Every project after that automatically uses your colors, typography, and components. You can also refine designs by commenting inline on specific elements, editing text directly, or tweaking spacing, color, and layout with live controls.

WHO CLAUDE DESIGN IS FOR

Founders who need pitch decks without hiring a designer. Product managers who want to sketch feature flows and hand them off to engineering. Account executives who need on-brand client presentations fast. Anyone who has ideas but not design skills.

Claude Cowork

Cowork is the feature that turns Claude from a chatbot into a desktop agent. It runs inside the Claude Desktop app (macOS and Windows), can read and write files on your computer, execute code, search the web, and complete multi-step tasks autonomously. It is available on Pro, Max, Team, and Enterprise plans.

The Power Features

Plugins

Plugins bundle skills, connectors, and slash commands into a single install that turns Claude into a specialist. The plugin marketplace launched in February 2026 and includes plugins for legal, frontend design, code review, and more. Install them from Customize > Plugins in the desktop app.

Skills

A skill is a markdown file that teaches Claude how to do one specific thing. Skills fire automatically when relevant context appears. You can also trigger them manually with slash commands (like `/review-contract` or `/compliance-check`). You can create your own custom skills for workflows specific to your job.

Connectors

Connectors link Claude to external services: Google Drive, Gmail, Slack, Salesforce, Outlook, SharePoint, OneDrive, Google Calendar, and more. Once connected, Claude can pull data from these services and act on it. Add them from Customize > Connectors.

Scheduled Tasks

Set Claude to run tasks automatically on a schedule. Daily morning briefings, weekly reports, hourly data checks. Scheduled tasks have access to your connectors, files, and skills. If your machine is off during a scheduled run, the task auto-runs when you reopen the app.

Claude Code

Claude Code is a command-line AI coding agent that lives in your terminal or VS Code. It reads your codebase, plans changes, writes code directly in your files, runs tests, and commits. Unlike chatting with Claude and copy-pasting code, Claude Code works directly in your project. Available with Pro (\$20/mo), Max (\$100-200/mo), or API key.

Pricing Plans

Plan	Price	Models	Key Features
Free	\$0/mo	Sonnet 4.6	Limited messages, 5 projects, image analysis, web search
Pro	\$20/mo	All 3 models	5x usage, Claude Code, Cowork, Design, Extended Thinking
Max 5x	\$100/mo	All 3 models	5x Pro usage, priority access, max output limits
Max 20x	\$200/mo	All 3 models	20x Pro usage, early features, highest limits
Team	\$25-30/seat	All 3 models	Shared projects, admin controls, SSO

TIP

Pro at \$20/month is the sweet spot for most people. You get all three models, Claude Code, Cowork, Design, Extended Thinking, and unlimited projects. Only upgrade to Max if you hit the daily message cap regularly.

50 Things You Can Do with Claude

Here are 50 real use cases organized by category, each with the exact prompt to get started. These range from simple chat prompts to advanced Cowork automations.

File and Computer Management

1 Organize All Your Photos and Screenshots

Have Claude sort every photo on your computer into neatly labeled folders by date, topic, and content.

Reorganize all my photos and screenshots into neatly labeled folders sorted by date, topic, and content. Rename each file based on what's actually in the image.

2 Clean Up Your Downloads Folder

Claude sorts your cluttered Downloads into organized folders and deletes junk.

Go through my Downloads folder. Sort files into Documents, Images, Videos, Installers, and Archives. Delete any duplicate files and anything older than 6 months that looks like junk.

3 Find and Remove Duplicate Files

Scan your entire computer for duplicate files wasting storage space.

Scan my Documents and Desktop folders for duplicate files. Show me what you find with file sizes, and ask before deleting anything.

4 Batch Rename Files Intelligently

Rename hundreds of files based on their content instead of random strings.

Rename all the files in this folder using a consistent format: YYYY-MM-DD_descriptive-name. Read each file to determine what it is and name it accordingly.

5 Organize Your Desktop into a Clean System

Transform a messy desktop into an organized workspace in minutes.

My desktop is a mess. Create a folder structure (Work, Personal, Finance, Projects, Archive) and sort every file on my desktop into the right folder. Leave only the 5 most recent files on the desktop.

6 Create a Personal File Search Index

Build a searchable inventory of everything on your computer.

Create a spreadsheet cataloging every document in my Documents folder. Include filename, file type, size, date modified, and a one-line summary of what each file contains.

7 Back Up and Archive Old Projects

Compress and organize old project folders with clear labels.

Find all project folders in my Documents that have not been modified in over 1 year. Create a ZIP archive of each one, name it clearly, move the archives to an Archive folder, and give me a summary of what was archived.

8 Sort Email Attachments from Downloads

Separate and organize email attachments that piled up in Downloads.

Go through my Downloads folder and identify all files that look like email attachments (invoices, receipts, contracts, statements). Sort them into subfolders by type and rename them with the date and sender if possible.

Writing and Content Creation

9

Write a Complete Blog Post from an Outline

Go from bullet points to a polished 1,500-word article in minutes.

Write a 1,500-word blog post from this outline: [paste outline]. Use a conversational tone, include a hook intro, subheadings, and a strong CTA at the end.

10

Rewrite Anything in Your Brand Voice

Upload your style guide and have Claude match your exact tone.

Here is my brand style guide [upload]. Now rewrite this draft to match my brand voice exactly: [paste draft]

11

Create a Week of Social Media Content

Generate platform-specific posts for an entire week.

Create 7 days of social media content for my [business type]. Each day needs an Instagram caption, a LinkedIn post, and a Twitter/X post. Theme: [your topic]. Include hashtag suggestions.

12

Turn a Long Article into Multiple Formats

Repurpose one piece of content across every platform.

Take this article [paste/upload] and turn it into: a Twitter/X thread (10 tweets), a LinkedIn post, an email newsletter, an Instagram carousel script (8 slides), and 3 TikTok script hooks.

13

Write Professional Emails in Seconds

Draft any business email with the right tone instantly.

Write a professional email to [recipient] about [topic]. Tone: [friendly/formal/direct]. Keep it under 150 words. Include a clear ask and a soft deadline.

14

Create a Full Content Calendar

Plan a month of content mapped to your business goals.

Create a 30-day content calendar for my [business]. Include post topic, platform, content type (video/image/text), caption draft, and best posting day for each. Focus on [goal: leads/engagement/awareness]

15

Write YouTube Video Scripts

Get a complete script with hook, body, and CTA.

Write a 10-minute YouTube script about [topic]. Include a pattern-interrupt hook in the first 5 seconds, clear sections with transitions, and a CTA to subscribe. Tone: energetic but authentic.

16

Generate Newsletter Content

Write a complete email newsletter your subscribers will actually read.

Write this week's newsletter. Topic: [topic]. Format: engaging subject line, 3-sentence intro, main insight with examples, one actionable takeaway, and a PS with a soft pitch for [product/service].

17

Create Ad Copy Variations

Generate dozens of headline and description combinations for testing.

Write 10 Facebook ad variations for [product/service]. Each needs a hook headline (under 40 chars), primary text (under 125 words), and a CTA. Mix emotional, logical, and curiosity-based angles.

18

Write Product Descriptions That Sell

Turn feature lists into compelling product copy.

Write product descriptions for these 5 items [paste details]. Each should be 100 words, lead with the benefit (not the feature), include sensory language, and end with a reason to buy now.

Business and Productivity

19 Analyze a Spreadsheet and Create a Report

Upload messy data and get a polished analysis with charts.

Analyze this spreadsheet [upload CSV/XLSX]. Find the key trends, outliers, and insights. Create a summary report with the top 5 findings and export it as a formatted document.

20 Build a Competitive Analysis

Research competitors and get a structured comparison.

Research my top 5 competitors in [industry]. For each one, find their pricing, key features, target audience, strengths, and weaknesses. Create a comparison table and recommend how I should position against them.

21 Create a Business Plan Outline

Go from idea to structured plan in one conversation.

Create a detailed business plan outline for [business idea]. Include executive summary, market analysis, competitive landscape, revenue model, marketing strategy, financial projections framework, and milestones for the first 12 months.

22 Automate Morning Briefings

Set up a daily summary that runs every morning at 7am.

Every morning, check my Gmail for important emails, check my Google Calendar for today's meetings, and give me a briefing with: urgent emails that need replies, today's schedule, and a prioritized to-do list.

23 Review and Summarize Contracts

Get plain-English explanations of legal documents.

Review this contract [upload]. Explain every section in plain English. Flag anything that could hurt me. List the 5 most important things I should negotiate before signing.

24 Create Pitch Decks from Scratch

Go from an idea to a presentation-ready slide deck.

Create a 12-slide pitch deck for [company/product]. Include: problem, solution, market size, business model, traction, team, competition, financials, ask. Make it investor-ready.

25 Set Up Auto-Drafted Email Replies

Have Claude draft responses to all your emails every morning.

Every morning at 8am, scan my inbox for all unread emails. For each one, draft a reply that matches my communication style. Triage them by urgency: respond now, respond today, or can wait.

26 Build a Customer Onboarding Sequence

Create the entire flow from signup to active user.

Design a 7-email onboarding sequence for new customers of [product]. Each email needs a subject line, body copy, CTA, and the trigger/timing. Focus on getting them to [key activation metric].

27 Create Standard Operating Procedures

Document your processes so anyone can follow them.

Create a detailed SOP document for [process]. Include step-by-step instructions, decision trees for edge cases, screenshots placeholder notes, and a checklist summary. Format it as a professional Word doc.

28

Weekly Performance Report

Auto-generate a report pulling from your connected tools.

Pull my social media analytics, email campaign metrics, and website traffic data from this week. Create a weekly performance report comparing to last week with percentage changes and recommendations.

Learning and Research

29 Get a Personal Tutor on Any Subject

Have Claude teach you anything at your level, step by step.

Teach me [subject] from scratch. Start at beginner level. After each concept, give me a quick quiz to check understanding before moving on. Adjust difficulty based on my answers.

30 Summarize an Entire Book in 5 Minutes

Get key takeaways without reading 300 pages.

Summarize [book title] by [author]. Give me the core thesis, top 5 insights, most important quotes, and 3 action items I can apply immediately. Keep it under 1,000 words.

31 Research Any Topic in Depth

Get a comprehensive research brief with sources.

Research [topic] thoroughly. Include current state, key players, recent developments, different perspectives, data/statistics, and your assessment of where things are headed. Cite your sources.

32 Prepare for a Job Interview

Get tailored mock interview questions and coaching.

I am interviewing for [role] at [company]. Give me 15 likely interview questions, suggest strong answers using the STAR method based on my resume [upload], and list 5 questions I should ask them.

33 Learn a New Language with Conversation Practice

Have real conversations with corrections and explanations.

Let's practice conversational [language]. Start at [beginner/intermediate/advanced]. Have a natural conversation with me. After each of my responses, correct any errors, explain why, then continue the conversation.

34 Create Study Flashcards from Notes

Turn messy lecture notes into organized study materials.

Turn these lecture notes [upload/paste] into a set of 50 flashcards. Front: question or term. Back: concise answer. Organize by topic. Export as a formatted document I can print and cut out.

35 Explain Complex Topics Simply

Understand anything by having it broken down to basics.

Explain [complex topic] to me like I am 12 years old. Use analogies from everyday life. Then gradually increase the complexity until I understand it at a college level. Check my understanding along the way.

36 Write a Literature Review

Synthesize multiple sources into a structured academic review.

Write a literature review on [research topic]. Organize by theme rather than by source. Identify gaps in existing research, conflicting findings, and areas that need further study. Academic tone, proper citations format.

Personal and Life Management

37 Plan an Entire Trip from Scratch

Get a day-by-day itinerary with flights, hotels, and activities.

Plan a 7-day trip to [destination] for [number] people. Budget: \$[X]. Include flights, hotel recommendations, daily itinerary with times, restaurant suggestions, and a packing list. Factor in travel time between locations.

38 Create a Personalized Fitness Plan

Get a workout and nutrition program based on your goals.

Create a 12-week fitness plan for me. Goal: [lose weight/build muscle/general fitness]. I can work out [X] day per week for [X] minutes. Equipment: [gym/home/bodyweight only]. Include warm-up, main workout, and cool-down for each day.

39 Build a Monthly Budget from Bank Statements

Upload your transactions and get a categorized budget.

Analyze this bank statement [upload CSV]. Categorize every transaction (housing, food, transport, entertainment, subscriptions, etc.). Show me where my money is going and suggest specific areas to cut. Create a budget template for next month.

40 Write a Resume Tailored to a Specific Job

Optimize your resume for a specific job posting.

Here is my current resume [upload] and here is the job posting [paste]. Rewrite my resume to match this specific role. Mirror their language, highlight relevant experience, and ensure it passes ATS screening. Score the new version out of 100.

41 Meal Prep for the Week

Get a full meal plan with grocery list and prep schedule.

Create a 7-day meal plan for [dietary preference]. Budget: \$[X] per week for [X] people. Include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and 2 snacks. Give me a consolidated grocery list and a Sunday meal prep schedule to batch-cook as much as possible.

42 Negotiate a Better Salary

Get a complete negotiation strategy with scripts.

I have a job offer for [role] at [company] for \$[X]. I want \$[Y]. Give me a negotiation strategy including: market data to support my ask, an email counter-offer, a phone script for the call, and fallback positions if they cannot meet my number.

43 Get Help with Taxes and Deductions

Find deductions you are probably missing.

I am a [job type/freelancer/business owner]. Walk me through every tax deduction I might be eligible for. Ask me questions about my situation to identify ones I may be missing. Create a checklist of documents I need to gather before filing.

Coding and Technical

44

Build a Full Web App from a Description

Go from idea to working application with Claude Code.

Build a [type] web app using React and Node.js. Features: [list]. Include user authentication, a dashboard, and a database. Set up the project structure, write all the code, and run the tests.

45

Debug Your Code with Explanations

Find and fix bugs while learning what went wrong.

This code is broken: [paste code]. Find every bug, explain what is causing each one, fix them, and show me the corrected version with comments explaining each change.

46

Convert Code Between Languages

Translate an entire codebase from one language to another.

Convert this Python script to JavaScript/TypeScript [paste code]. Keep the same logic and functionality. Add type annotations. Include comments where the translation required different patterns.

47

Write Tests for Existing Code

Generate comprehensive test coverage automatically.

Write unit tests for this code [paste/upload]. Cover edge cases, error handling, and happy paths. Use [Jest/Pytest/your framework]. Aim for at least 90% coverage. Include comments explaining what each test validates.

48

Create API Documentation

Generate professional docs from your codebase.

Read my API codebase [upload or point to files] and generate complete API documentation. Include endpoints, request/response formats, authentication, error codes, and example requests with curl commands.

49

Set Up CI/CD Pipeline

Configure automated deployment from scratch.

Set up a CI/CD pipeline for my [framework] project using GitHub Actions. Include: linting, testing, building, and deployment to [Vercel/AWS/your platform]. Add staging and production environments.

50

Build a Chrome Extension

Create a working browser extension from a description.

Build a Chrome extension that [describe functionality]. Include a popup UI, background script, content script if needed, and proper manifest.json. Package it so I can install it locally for testing.

Start Using Claude Today

You now have 50 real use cases with exact prompts. Pick one, open Claude, paste it in, and see what happens. That first result will show you why Claude is different.

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Drop "CLAUDE" in the comments for this full guide.