

CLAUDECODE

SETUP & USE CASES

How to Install Claude Code and Start Building With It

VS Code • Terminal • Desktop App
Build Websites • Create Apps • Automate Everything

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What Is Claude Code?

Claude Code is a coding assistant built by Anthropic. You tell it what you want to build in plain English and it writes the code for you. It is not autocomplete that suggests one line at a time. It is an agent that can build entire features, create full websites, write apps from scratch, fix bugs, and automate repetitive tasks.

You do not need to be an expert programmer to use it. If you can describe what you want, Claude Code can build it. It reads your project files, understands how everything connects, writes new code, runs it to make sure it works, and fixes anything that breaks. You just describe the end result.

THREE WAYS TO ACCESS IT

VS Code - Install the extension and use it right inside your code editor. Best for beginners.

Terminal - Type `claude` in your command line. Most powerful option.

Claude Desktop App - Download from claude.com/download. Use the Code tab or Cowork for background tasks.

WHO CAN USE IT

You need a Pro, Max, Team, or Enterprise subscription at claude.com. You can also use it with an Anthropic API account with credits. The free plan does not include Claude Code.

Installing Claude Code

There are a few ways to install Claude Code. The recommended method uses Anthropic's native installer, which handles everything automatically and keeps itself updated.

The Fastest Way (Recommended)

Open your terminal and run one command.

MAC / LINUX / WSL:

```
curl -fsSL https://claude.ai/install.sh | bash
```

WINDOWS (POWERSHELL):

```
irm https://claude.ai/install.ps1 | iex
```

CHECK THAT IT WORKED:

```
claude --version
```

Other Install Options

Homebrew (macOS): `brew install --cask claude-code`

WinGet (Windows): `winget install Anthropic.ClaudeCode`

npm: `npm install -g @anthropic-ai/claude-code` (needs Node.js 18+)

IMPORTANT

The native installer auto-updates itself. Homebrew and WinGet require manual updates. Never use `sudo npm install -g` as it causes permission issues.

Setting Up VS Code (Recommended for Beginners)

If you are new to coding, VS Code is the best place to start. It is a free code editor from Microsoft, and the Claude Code extension lets you chat with Claude right inside it. You can see your files, ask Claude to make changes, and review everything before accepting.

- 1** **Download VS Code (if you don't have it)**
Go to code.visualstudio.com and download the free editor for your operating system. Install and open it.
- 2** **Open the Extensions panel**
Press `Cmd+Shift+X` on Mac or `Ctrl+Shift+X` on Windows. This opens the extensions marketplace.
- 3** **Search for "Claude Code"**
Type "Claude Code" in the search bar. Look for the one published by Anthropic. Click the blue Install button.
- 4** **Open Claude Code**
Click the spark icon in the top-right of your editor, or press `Cmd+Shift+P` (Mac) / `Ctrl+Shift+P` (Windows) and type "Claude Code."
- 5** **Sign in and start building**
Sign in with your Anthropic account when prompted. Open any project folder and start asking Claude to build things.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN VS CODE

See changes before accepting them - Claude shows you exactly what it wants to change.

@-mention files - Type `@filename.js` to tell Claude which file to focus on.

Multiple tabs - Work on different tasks in parallel conversations.

Also works in Cursor and JetBrains - Same extension, same install process.

You Can Also Use the Terminal or Desktop App

Terminal

If you are comfortable with the command line, the terminal is where Claude Code is most powerful. Open your terminal, navigate to any project folder, and type:

START A SESSION:

```
cd my-project
claude
```

OR RUN A QUICK TASK:

```
claude "build me a landing page for a coffee shop"
```

Claude Desktop App

Download the app from claude.com/download. It has three tabs:

Chat - Regular conversation with Claude. No file access.

Code - Interactive coding with visual diffs and file access. Same power as the terminal but with a graphical interface. Great if you prefer clicking over typing commands.

Cowork - An autonomous agent that works in the background. Give it a task and it runs on its own, even if you close the app. Useful for longer tasks like research or document creation.

WHICH ONE SHOULD I USE?

If you are brand new, start with **VS Code**. It is the most visual and beginner-friendly. If you want speed and power, use the **terminal**. If you want a standalone app without installing a code editor, use the **desktop app**. They all use the same Claude under the hood.

10 Things You Can Build With Claude Code

You do not need to know how to code to try these. Just type the prompt exactly as shown. Claude does the rest.

1. Build a Personal Website from Scratch

Tell Claude what kind of site you want and it will create every file you need. HTML, CSS, JavaScript, images, navigation, mobile responsive layout. The whole thing.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Build me a personal portfolio website.
Include a homepage with my name and bio, an About
page, a Projects page with 4 placeholder cards,
and a Contact page with a form. Make it look
modern and clean. Use dark mode. Make sure it
looks good on phones too."
```

2. Create a Full Web App with a Database

Claude can build entire applications, not just static pages. It will set up the frontend, backend, database, authentication, and connect everything together.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Create a simple to-do list app using
React for the frontend and a local SQLite
database. Users should be able to add tasks,
mark them complete, delete them, and filter by
status. Add some nice animations when tasks
are completed."
```

3. Build a Landing Page for Your Business

Need a professional landing page fast? Describe your business and Claude builds it. Hero section, features, testimonials, pricing, and a call-to-action. Ready to deploy.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Build a landing page for my online tutoring business called BrightMind. Include a hero section with a headline and signup button, a section showing 3 features with icons, a testimonials section with 3 fake reviews, a pricing table with 3 tiers, and a footer. Make it professional and colorful."
```

4. Automate Boring File Tasks

Claude can write scripts that rename hundreds of files, sort them into folders, convert formats, extract data from spreadsheets, or clean up messy data. Tasks that would take you hours get done in seconds.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Write a Python script that goes through a folder of photos, reads the date each photo was taken from the metadata, and organizes them into subfolders by year and month. Like Photos/2025/March/. Run it on my Downloads folder."
```

5. Create a Chrome Extension

Always wanted to build a browser extension but didn't know where to start? Just describe what you want it to do. Claude creates the manifest file, the popup, the background script, and all the styling.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Build a Chrome extension that lets me
save any highlighted text on a webpage to a
list. When I click the extension icon it should
show all my saved highlights with the URL they
came from. Add a button to copy all highlights
to clipboard and a button to clear the list."
```

6. Build a Mobile App

Claude can scaffold a React Native or Flutter app from a simple description. Screens, navigation, components, and styling. You describe the app, it writes the code.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Create a React Native app for tracking
daily habits. It should have a home screen that
shows today's habits with checkboxes, a screen
to add new habits, and a stats screen that shows
a weekly streak calendar. Use a clean minimal
design with soft colors."
```

7. Turn a Design or Screenshot Into Code

Have a screenshot of a website you like? Or a Figma mockup? Drop it into Claude and ask it to recreate the design in code. It reads images and builds pixel-accurate replicas.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Look at this screenshot I'm sharing.
Recreate this exact design as a responsive HTML
page. Match the layout, colors, fonts, and
spacing as closely as possible. Make all the
buttons and links functional."
```

8. Automate Emails and Notifications

Build scripts that send automated emails, Slack messages, or text notifications. Set up alerts for price drops, weather changes, or anything else you want to monitor.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Write a Python script that checks a
list of URLs every morning and sends me an
email summary of which ones are down or
returning errors. Use smtplib for email.
Include instructions for setting it up with
Gmail."
```

9. Create an API or Backend Service

Need a backend for your app? Claude can build REST APIs, connect to databases, add authentication, and set up deployment. Describe your endpoints and it writes the whole server.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "Build a REST API using Node.js and Express for a simple blog. It should have endpoints to create, read, update, and delete blog posts. Store posts in a SQLite database. Add basic input validation and error handling. Include a README with setup instructions."
```

10. Fix Bugs and Errors You Don't Understand

Got a confusing error message? Paste it in. Claude traces the problem through your code, explains what went wrong in plain English, and fixes it for you. No more Googling stack traces for hours.

COPY THIS PROMPT:

```
claude "I'm getting this error when I try to run my app: [paste your error message here]. Explain what is going wrong in simple terms and fix it for me."
```

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A DEVELOPER

These prompts work even if you have never written a line of code. Claude Code handles the technical details. You just describe what you want in plain English. Start with use case #1 (build a personal website) and see what happens. You will be surprised how far a single prompt can take you.

Essential Commands Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. These are the commands you will use most.

Command	What It Does
<code>claude</code>	Start a session in your current project folder
<code>claude "task"</code>	Run a quick one-time task
<code>claude --continue</code>	Pick up where you left off last time
<code>claude --resume</code>	Choose from a list of past sessions
<code>claude --version</code>	Check which version you have installed
<code>/help</code>	See all available commands (type inside a session)
<code>/compact</code>	Save memory when a conversation gets long

PRO TIP: CLAUDE.md

Create a file called CLAUDE.md in your project folder. Write instructions like "always use TypeScript" or "use Tailwind CSS for styling" and Claude will follow them automatically every session. Think of it as a settings file for your AI assistant.

Install it, try one prompt, see what happens. That is the fastest way to learn.