

M A V E R I C K A I

5 HIDDEN CHATGPT SETTINGS

MOST PEOPLE NEVER TURN ON

The settings menu is where ChatGPT goes from a basic chatbot to a tool that actually knows you. Here are the five switches worth flipping today, plus the exact taps to find each one.

Turn on Memory so it remembers you between chats

Set Custom Instructions so it talks like it knows you

Wire ChatGPT into Siri on your iPhone

Connect Apps like Canva, Spotify, and Figma

Lock down Data Controls so your chats stay private

Plus 4 bonus settings the video skipped

2026 Edition

Most People Use 10% of ChatGPT

Almost everyone opens ChatGPT, types a question, gets an answer, and closes the tab. That works. But there are settings sitting one or two clicks deep that change how the whole thing behaves, and most people never touch them.

This guide walks through the five that matter most. Each one takes under a minute to set up, and you only have to do it once. I have added the exact menu path for every step, a few things the 60 second version left out, and four bonus settings at the end that are just as useful.

5

Core settings to flip

9

Total settings covered

<1 min

Setup time each

BEFORE YOU START

Menu names shift slightly between the web app, the iPhone app, and the Android app, and between Free and Plus or Pro plans. If a setting is not exactly where described, look one level up or down in the same menu. The paths below are written for the current 2026 layout.

Setting 1: Memory

Memory lets ChatGPT carry facts about you from one chat to the next. Tell it once that you run a marketing agency and prefer short replies, and it stops asking. This is the single biggest upgrade to how it feels to use day to day.

STEP 1: Open Settings

On desktop, click your profile icon in the top right, then Settings. On the phone app, tap the menu, then tap your name at the bottom.

STEP 2: Go to Personalization

In the Settings menu, open the Personalization tab. This is where the memory controls live, not under the general or data tabs.

STEP 3: Turn On Memory

Find the Memory section and toggle on "Reference saved memories." If you also see "Reference chat history," turning that on lets ChatGPT pull from your past conversations too, not just the facts it saved on purpose.

STEP 4: Save Something to Memory

Next time you tell ChatGPT something worth keeping, just say so. It will store it and pull it up in future chats.

SAY THIS IN ANY CHAT

Add this to memory: I run a marketing agency, I prefer short direct answers, and I write all my content in a casual tone.

Two Kinds of Memory

As of 2026 there are two layers, and it helps to know the difference.

Type	What it is	How to use it
Saved memories	An editable list of facts it chose to keep	Say "add this to memory" or let it save on its own
Reference chat history	Quietly recalls patterns from past chats	Toggle on and forget, no manual saving needed

TIP

Ask "What do you remember about me?" to see everything stored. To clear one item, say "Forget that I..." To wipe it all, go to Personalization, then Manage Memories, and delete entries individually or all at once.

HEADS UP

Memory carries into every new chat, which is great until it is not. If you are working on something private or one off, use a Temporary Chat instead (covered in the bonus section) so nothing gets saved.

Setting 2: Custom Instructions

Memory is what ChatGPT remembers. Custom Instructions is what you tell it up front, every single chat, automatically. This is where you set who you are and exactly how you want it to respond, so it talks like it knows you from the first message.

STEP 1: Open Personalization Again

Same path as memory. Profile icon, Settings, Personalization tab. Then click Custom Instructions.

STEP 2: Fill In the Two Boxes

There are two fields. The first asks what ChatGPT should know about you. The second asks how you want it to respond. Some versions also ask for your name, your job, and traits you want it to have. Fill in what fits.

What to put in each box

Box 1: What should ChatGPT know about you?

PASTE AND EDIT

```
I run a small e-commerce brand selling
fitness gear. My audience is men 25 to 40.
I handle marketing, email, and content
myself. I am not technical. I value speed
and plain language over jargon.
```

Box 2: How should ChatGPT respond?

PASTE AND EDIT

```
Be direct and skip the throat-clearing.
Give me the answer first, then the why.
Use short paragraphs and plain words.
No corporate buzzwords. Push back if you
think I am wrong. Always give a next step.
```

WHY THIS BEATS RETYPING IT

Without custom instructions you repeat your context in every chat or get generic answers. Set it once and every reply is shaped to you from word one. It applies across all new chats automatically.

TIP

Keep each box tight. A few clear sentences beat a wall of text. If replies drift back to generic, your instructions are probably too long or contradicting each other. Trim, do not pile on.

Setting 3: ChatGPT in Siri

On a newer iPhone you can hand Siri's harder questions straight to ChatGPT. Ask Siri something it cannot answer well, and it offers to use ChatGPT instead, then drops the answer right into your notes or screen.

WHAT YOU NEED

This runs through Apple Intelligence, so it needs a supported iPhone (iPhone 15 Pro or any iPhone 16 and newer) running a recent iOS version. If you do not see Apple Intelligence in Settings, your device does not support it yet.

STEP 1: Open iPhone Settings

This is your phone's Settings app, not ChatGPT's settings.

STEP 2: Tap Apple Intelligence & Siri

Scroll to Apple Intelligence & Siri and open it. On some iOS versions it is listed as just "Apple Intelligence."

STEP 3: Scroll to ChatGPT and Set It Up

Scroll down to the ChatGPT extension and tap it. Then sign in to your ChatGPT account so it uses your plan and settings instead of the limited anonymous version.

STEP 4: Use It

Now ask Siri anything heavier than usual. When Siri suggests ChatGPT, confirm, and the answer comes back on screen ready to copy or save.

TIP

Sign in rather than using it logged out. Signed in, you get your message limits, your model access, and your custom instructions carry over. Logged out, you are capped and generic.

HEADS UP

Siri only routes to ChatGPT when it decides the question needs it, or when you say "ask ChatGPT" directly. If you want ChatGPT every time, start your request with "Ask ChatGPT to..."

Setting 4: Apps & Connectors

ChatGPT can plug into other apps so you never leave the chat to get work done. Connect Canva and it designs inside ChatGPT. Connect your calendar or drive and it reads from them. There are well over 100 of these now.

STEP 1: Open the Sidebar

In the ChatGPT web app, look at the left sidebar. You will see an Apps or Connectors entry. Click it. On the phone app it lives under Settings, then Connected apps or Apps.

STEP 2: Browse and Connect

You will see a directory of available apps. Click one, then Connect, and approve the permissions it asks for. That is it, it is now usable in chat.

STEP 3: Call the App Inside a Chat

Once connected, mention the app in your prompt and ChatGPT routes the request to it.

EXAMPLE PROMPTS

Canva

Make me 3 Instagram post designs for a summer sale, bright colors, bold text.

Spotify

Build a 30-minute focus playlist with no lyrics and add it to my library.

Apps worth connecting first

App	What it does in ChatGPT	Best for
Canva	Generates and edits designs	Social posts, graphics
Spotify	Builds and saves playlists	Focus, mood playlists
Figma	Works with design files	Product and UI work
Photoshop	Edits and adjusts images	Photo cleanup
Booking & travel	Searches and plans trips	Itineraries

HEADS UP

Connecting an app grants ChatGPT permission to act in it. Only connect apps you trust, read what each one asks for, and disconnect anything you stop using from the same Apps menu.

Setting 5: Data Controls

By default, ChatGPT can use your conversations to help train its models. If you would rather your chats stay out of that, this is the switch. It takes ten seconds and applies to your whole account.

STEP 1: Open Settings, Then Data Controls

Profile icon, Settings, then the Data Controls tab. Same Settings menu as the other steps, different tab.

STEP 2: Turn Off "Improve the Model for Everyone"

At the top you will see "Improve the model for everyone." Toggle it off. From that point on, your new conversations will not be used to train the models.

WHAT THIS DOES AND DOES NOT DO

Off means new chats are not used for training. It does not delete your history or stop ChatGPT from working normally. The setting syncs across all your devices, so flipping it on the web flips it on your phone too.

While you are in Data Controls

This tab has a few other things worth a look while you are here.

Control	What it does
Improve the model for everyone	Off keeps your chats out of training
Shared links	Manage any chat links you have shared
Archived chats	Hide chats from the sidebar without deleting
Export data	Download a copy of everything you have
Delete account	Permanently remove your account and data

TIP

Turning off training does not cost you anything in quality. Your replies are exactly as good. There is no downside to flipping this off if privacy matters to you at all.

4 Bonus Settings the Video Skipped

The five above are the headliners. These four are just as useful and live in the same menus, so flip them while you are in there.

Temporary Chat

A chat that saves nothing. No memory, no history, gone when you close it. Start one from the model menu at the top of a new chat. Use it for anything private or one off you do not want shaping future answers.

Manage Memories Cleanup

Under Personalization, Manage Memories, you can see and delete every fact ChatGPT has saved. Old or wrong memories quietly drag down answer quality, so clear them out every month or so.

Custom GPTs and Projects

Projects let you group chats and give them their own instructions and files. Set one up per client or topic so each keeps its own context without bleeding into the rest. Look for Projects in the sidebar.

Voice and Advanced Voice Mode

In Settings under Voice you can pick a voice and turn on the hands free conversation mode. It is genuinely useful for thinking out loud while walking or driving, not just a gimmick.

DO THIS NOW

Open ChatGPT, go to Personalization, and turn on Memory plus fill in both Custom Instructions boxes. Those two alone change how every future chat feels. The rest you can knock out in the same sitting.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

A few things trip people up after they turn these on. Skip them.

HEADS UP

Writing a novel in Custom Instructions. Long, conflicting instructions make answers worse, not better. A few clear sentences per box is the sweet spot.

HEADS UP

Letting memory fill with junk. Every "add this to memory" sticks around. If you save throwaway details, they crowd out the useful ones. Save deliberately and clean up monthly.

HEADS UP

Forgetting Temporary Chat exists. People paste sensitive info into a normal chat with memory on. Use a Temporary Chat for anything you would not want repeated back later.

HEADS UP

Connecting every app at once. Each connection is a permission you granted. Connect what you will actually use, and disconnect the rest.

HEADS UP

Assuming the menu path never changes. OpenAI moves things between updates. If a setting is not exactly where this guide says, it is usually one tab over in the same Settings menu.

Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

Every setting in this guide and exactly where to find it. Bookmark this page.

Setting	Where to find it	What it does
Memory	Settings > Personalization > Memory	Remembers facts across chats
Custom Instructions	Settings > Personalization > Custom Instructions	Sets who you are and how it replies
ChatGPT in Siri	iPhone Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri > ChatGPT	Routes hard Siri questions to ChatGPT
Apps & Connectors	ChatGPT sidebar > Apps	Connects Canva, Spotify, and 100+ more
Data Controls	Settings > Data Controls	Turn off training on your chats
Temporary Chat	Model menu at top of a new chat	Chat that saves nothing
Manage Memories	Settings > Personalization > Manage Memories	View and delete saved memories
Projects	ChatGPT sidebar > Projects	Group chats with their own context
Voice Mode	Settings > Voice	Hands free spoken conversation

YOUR 5-MINUTE SETUP

Turn on Memory. Fill both Custom Instructions boxes. Turn off model training. Connect one app you will actually use. Set up ChatGPT in Siri if you have an iPhone. Done. You are now using ChatGPT the way it was built to be used.

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Stop using ChatGPT out of the box. Set it up once, use it like a pro.