

DAY 11 • 2026-09-21 • GUIDE

SET UP CLAUDE IN ONE SITTING

Four moves that turn Claude from a chat box into a setup that knows you and your work.

HOUR TO SET UP

1

MOVES

4

PROMPTS

3

WHAT YOU'LL HAVE WHEN YOU FINISH

A Claude that knows who you are and how you like answers, one project built around a real part of your life, and a habit for checking its work. Set aside 1 hour. A computer is easier than a phone for this.

WHAT YOU NEED

A Claude account. A free one works. Free accounts can make up to five projects. Paid plans lift that cap and let a project hold more files. Claude changes its screens often. If a button isn't where this guide says, look for these two names: "Instructions for Claude" and "Projects."

MOVE 01 / 04

TELL CLAUDE WHO YOU ARE

Without this, you explain who you are every time you open a chat. This fixes that once.

- ☐ 01 Open a new chat.
- ☐ 02 Copy Prompt 01 and paste it in.
- ☐ 03 Claude asks you questions one at a time. Answer in plain words. Short answers are fine.
- ☐ 04 When it writes your instructions, read every line and cut anything that isn't true. If it lists assumptions at the bottom, fix those first.
- ☐ 05 Click your initials in the lower left corner, then Settings. Find "Instructions for Claude." Paste the text in and save.
- ☐ 06 Test it. Open a brand new chat and ask: "What do you know about how I like my answers?" It should answer in your words. If it doesn't, the text didn't save. Go back to step 05.

PROMPT 01

I'm setting up Claude for the first time. Interview me so you can write my account-wide instructions.

Ask me one question at a time and wait for my answer before asking the next. Ask no more than 10 questions. Cover: what I do for work and outside of work, what I want AI to help me with, how I like answers (length, tone, format), what I never want (hype, filler, guessing), and anything you should always flag for me.

Then write my instructions as short plain lines I can paste into Settings under "Instructions for Claude." Keep it under 200 words. Write only what I told you. If you had to assume anything, list it at the end so I can fix it.

MOVE 02 / 04

MAKE ONE PROJECT FOR ONE LANE

A lane is one part of your life or work that has its own facts: your job, a side business, your household, a class you're taking. One project per lane. Each project stays on its own subject, so the facts don't bleed into each other.

- ☐ 07 In the left sidebar, click Projects, then New Project.
- ☐ 08 Name it after the work, not the tool. Claude can't read the name or the description, so those are for you.
- ☐ 09 Make one project today. On a free account you get five, so spend them on lanes that last, not on one-off tasks.

MOVE 03 / 04

GIVE THE PROJECT ITS INSTRUCTIONS AND ONE FILE

Instructions tell Claude how to work in this lane. A file gives it the facts, so you stop typing them.

- ☐ 10 Open a chat inside your new project.
- ☐ 11 Copy Prompt 02 and paste it in. Answer its questions.
- ☐ 12 Read what it writes and cut anything untrue. Paste it into the project's instructions box and save. If your account doesn't show an instructions box, save the text as a file and add it in the next step.
- ☐ 13 Pick the one document you explain most often in this lane: a price list, a schedule, a how-we-do-it sheet, your bio. Add it to the project's Context. That's the files area on the project's main page.

- ☐ 14 Keep private things out. No Social Security numbers, no passwords, no bank or card numbers, and nothing private about other people.

ONE THING TO KNOW

Chats inside a project don't remember each other. The only things they share are the instructions and the files. If something matters, put it in one of those two places.

PROMPT 02

This project is for one lane of my life or work. Interview me so you can write this project's instructions.

Ask me one question at a time and wait for my answer. Ask no more than 8 questions. Cover: what this lane is, who I deal with in it, the work I repeat most often, the words and terms I use, what a good result looks like, and what must never happen here.

Then write the project instructions as short plain lines, under 250 words. Include a line that says this project only discusses this lane. Write only what I told you. List anything you assumed at the end. Then tell me which single document from this lane would help you most if I uploaded it.

MOVE 04 / 04

RUN ONE REAL TASK, THEN CHECK IT

Pick something you owe somebody this week: an email, a plan, a list. Do it inside the project.

- ☐ 15 Open a new chat in the project.
- ☐ 16 Copy Prompt 03, put your task where it says, and send it.
- ☐ 17 Read the result against the list of assumptions it gives you. Fix what's wrong and ask it to redo only that part. If the same miss would happen again, fix the gap in your instructions or files, not in the chat.

Treat Claude's work as a draft until you've checked it yourself. Trust it after you check it, not before.

PROMPT 03

Here is a real task from this lane: [DESCRIBE THE TASK. SAY WHO IT IS FOR AND WHAT "DONE" LOOKS LIKE.]

Before you start, ask me anything you need that isn't in this project's instructions or files. Ask one question at a time.

Then do the task. When you finish, give me three short lists: what you assumed, what I should check before I use this, and what you would add to this project's instructions so the next task goes faster.

WHAT'S NEXT

Every prompt my own setup runs on is going into the library, one entry at a time. Add a lane when you're ready for a second project. The daily log is on Instagram at @thesideop.