

Claude Instructions: set it once, *never explain yourself again.*

The exact settings that make every Claude conversation already sound like you.

 **New to Claude?** Download the app and create an account first, then come back to this guide.

What are Claude Instructions?

Think of it like writing a memo to a new assistant on their first day. You tell them: here's who I am, here's how I communicate, here's what I never want you to do, here's what I always want you to remember. They read it once, and every interaction after that is already calibrated to you.

Claude reads your instructions at the start of every conversation. You don't have to repeat yourself. Ever.

1 Open your Claude settings

Go to claude.ai on your browser or open the app → click your initials in the bottom left corner → click **Settings**, then **Profile** → look for the field that says "What preferences should Claude consider in responses?" That's your instructions box.

2 Understand what to put in there

Your instructions should cover five things:

1. Who you are

Name, job, location, what you do, who you do it for.

2. How you communicate

Your tone, your voice, words you use naturally. Also: the things you never say.

3. Your rules

Format preferences, things Claude should never do, safety rules (e.g. always draft, never send live).

4. Your context or projects

If you run more than one brand or persona, spell out the rules so Claude doesn't cross-wire them.

5. Your memory anchors

Things always true about you that you'd otherwise repeat — working hours, tools, preferences.

3 Use Kaitlyn's instructions as your template

Here's what's actually in my Claude settings, rules I use every day:

- ✓ Never use em dashes — comma, period, or new sentence instead
- ✓ No bullet points in casual responses — prose only unless structure is genuinely needed
- ✓ No hedging language — no "I think," "in my opinion," "it's worth noting"
- ✓ Never say "here is" or "here's" before explaining something
- ✓ Scripts always in plain prose, never in code blocks
- ✓ Minimal edits when something is approved — no restructuring unless I ask

4 Write yours

Copy this template, fill it in, paste it into your settings:

Who I am: [Your name. What you do. Who you serve. Where you're based.]

How I communicate: [Your tone. Your voice. Words/phrases you use naturally.]

Things I never want you to say or do: [Pet peeves. Format no-nos.]

My projects or roles: [Multiple brands or contexts – spell out the rules.]

Things to always remember about me: [Working hours, tools, preferences.]

5 Save and test it

Start a brand new conversation → ask Claude something simple you'd normally explain context for → see if the response already reflects your setup.

Your instructions are a living document. The more you use Claude, the more you'll notice things to add.

A prompt, if you're stuck

You don't need prompts for this one, the instructions do the work. But if you're stuck writing yours, hand Claude this:

"Help me write my Claude custom instructions. I am [name]. I work as [job]. I manage [describe your roles/contexts]. My communication style is [describe your tone]. I never want Claude to [list your rules]. Things Claude should always remember about me: [list your context anchors]. Format these as clear, direct instructions in plain prose."

BONUS

The 7 rules that make Claude push back instead of agree with you

Most people write instructions to make Claude nicer. Do the opposite.

- 1. Never start with agreement.** The first sentence has to challenge an assumption or ask a question that exposes a gap, not open with "great point."
- 2. Rate confidence on claims.** Tag things [Certain], [Likely], or [Guessing]. If most of an answer is guessing, say that up front.
- 3. Kill the flattery phrases for good.** No "great question," "you're absolutely right," "absolutely," "definitely."
- 4. Disagree with structure.** "I disagree because [reason]. Here's what I'd do instead: [alternative]. The risk in your approach is [downside]."
- 5. Give the uncomfortable answer first.** If there's a truth you don't want to hear, it goes in the first line.
- 6. No warm-up paragraphs.** Skip "there are several ways to look at this," start with the most useful thing it can say.
- 7. If you push back, it shouldn't fold.** It holds its position unless you give it genuinely new information.

Why this works: without these rules, AI defaults to agreeing with you, because agreeing tests well. With them, you actually get told when you're wrong, which is the entire point of asking in the first place.