

ChatGPT on your computer

Work, Codex, and local files

A short route from installing the desktop app to choosing the right mode, project, and context with confidence.

01

Install

the ChatGPT desktop app

02

Choose

Chat, Work, or Codex

03

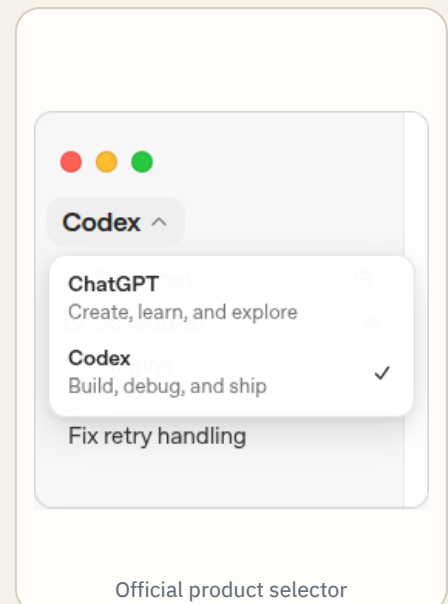
Connect

projects, folders, and tools

Install the app and sign in

One desktop app provides access to Chat, Work, and Codex. You do not need to install Codex separately for this route.

- 1** Download ChatGPT
Choose the version for your operating system.
- 2** Install and open it
Launch ChatGPT and wait for the sign-in screen.
- 3** Sign in
Use your ChatGPT account. Available modes depend on the account and workspace.
- 4** Open the selector
Choose ChatGPT for Chat or Work, or Codex for the technical workspace.



First check: after signing in, open the selector. If Work or Codex is missing, check account and workspace availability; this is not necessarily an installation failure.

Three ways to start a task

Choose by the result and the amount of technical control you need, not by file location alone.

What kind of result do you need?

CHAT



Discuss and understand

Questions, explanations,
brainstorming, short drafts

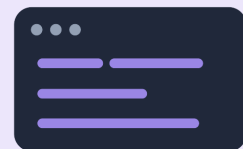
WORK



Create a finished result

Research, documents, tables,
presentations, and PDFs

CODEX



Control implementation

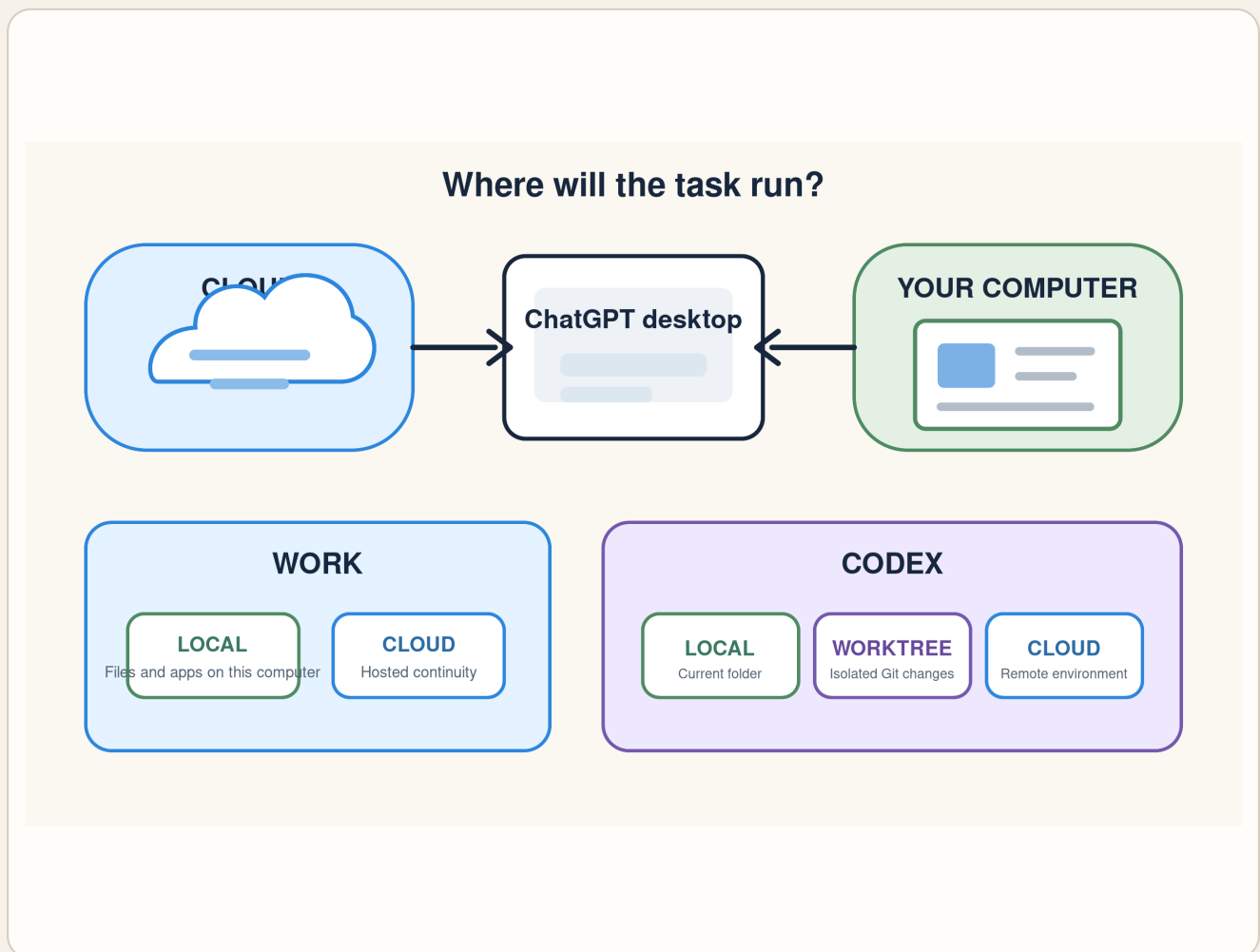
Project files, commands, tests,
Git, diffs, and review

Local files do not decide the mode: Work can use them too. Choose by outcome and level of technical control.

Local files do not decide the mode. Work can use them too. Choose Codex when commands, tests, Git, diffs, and change control matter.

Cloud and local work

Local work is available in Work as well as Codex. The important question is which files and tools the task needs and where the result should appear.



Work: Local for computer files and apps, Cloud for hosted continuity. Codex: Local for the current folder, Worktree for isolated Git changes, Cloud for a configured remote environment.

Choose the right workspace

Use the smallest workspace that gives the task the context it needs. A one-off task may not need a project at all.

CHATGPT PROJECT

Shared context

Keeps related chats, uploaded files, instructions, and connected sources together. It does not automatically provide direct access to a computer folder.

LOCAL PROJECT

Computer folders

Connects one or more folders. Chats can read and change files there. Choose Make primary for the default folder used by new chats and Codex.

Standalone chat for one self-contained request.

ChatGPT project when several chats share files or instructions.

Local project when the task needs folders on this computer.

For one continuing topic, use one project and start a separate chat for each distinct result. The shared context remains available without mixing every task into one thread.

Sustainable Materials Research Report ...
 Structural Steel Research Report x +

Review the attached building model and weekly procurement reports. Compare structural steel subcontractors by cost, lead time, and overall score, then generate a ranked shortlist and recommend the top vendor.

Worked for 2m 30s >

On it. I'll review the project documents and determine which subcontractors are best positioned to deliver the steel package. Then I'll compare pricing, schedule commitments, and historical performance to identify the strongest vendor and highlight any procurement risks before award.

Structural Steel Research Re
Spreadsheet • XLS

Excel ▼

...

Do anything. @ to use plugins

+
5.6 Medium

Structural Steel Research Report x +

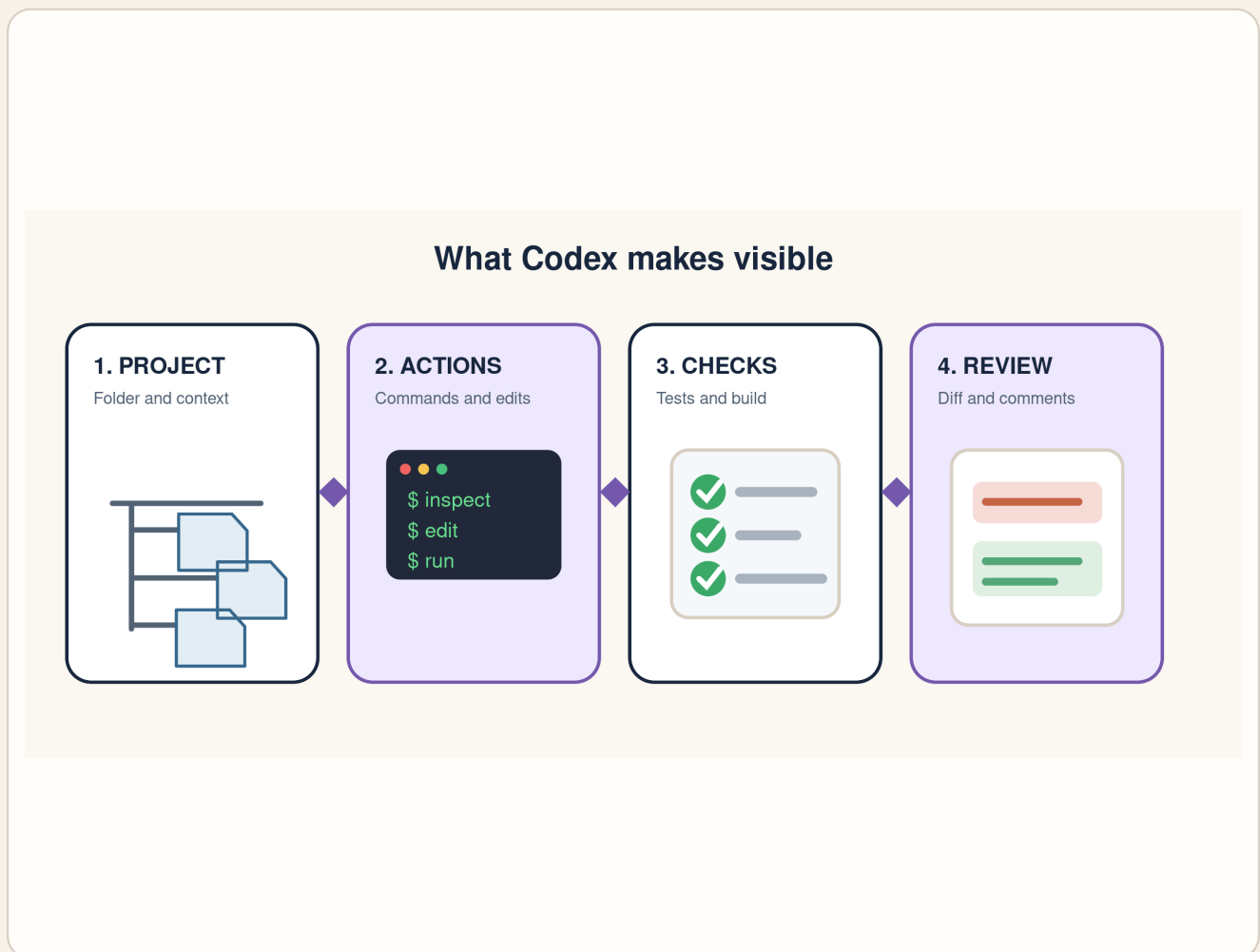
100% ▾ Summary Sales data
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	C	C	D	D	D
A1	$\frac{fx}{h}$				
1	Structural Steel Subcontractor Shortlist				
2					
3	Astra Runner FW26				
4	Rank	Subcontractor	Est. Cost (USD)	Lead Time (Weeks)	Overall Score
5	1	BlueBeam Fabrication	\$2,100,000	6	92%
6	2	GraniteSpan Group	\$1,850,000	8	86%
7	3	Vertex Steel Solutions	\$1,500,000	7	64%
8	4	ApexFrame Industries	\$1,950,000	6	78%
9	5	SummitGrid Structures	\$1,600,000	9	80%
10					
11					
12	Value	Recommendation	Procurement Gate	Primary Risk	Required Steel
13	\$2.10M	BlueBeam Fabrication	IFC Drawing Approval	Fabrication Capacity	3,250 Tons
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What Codex makes visible

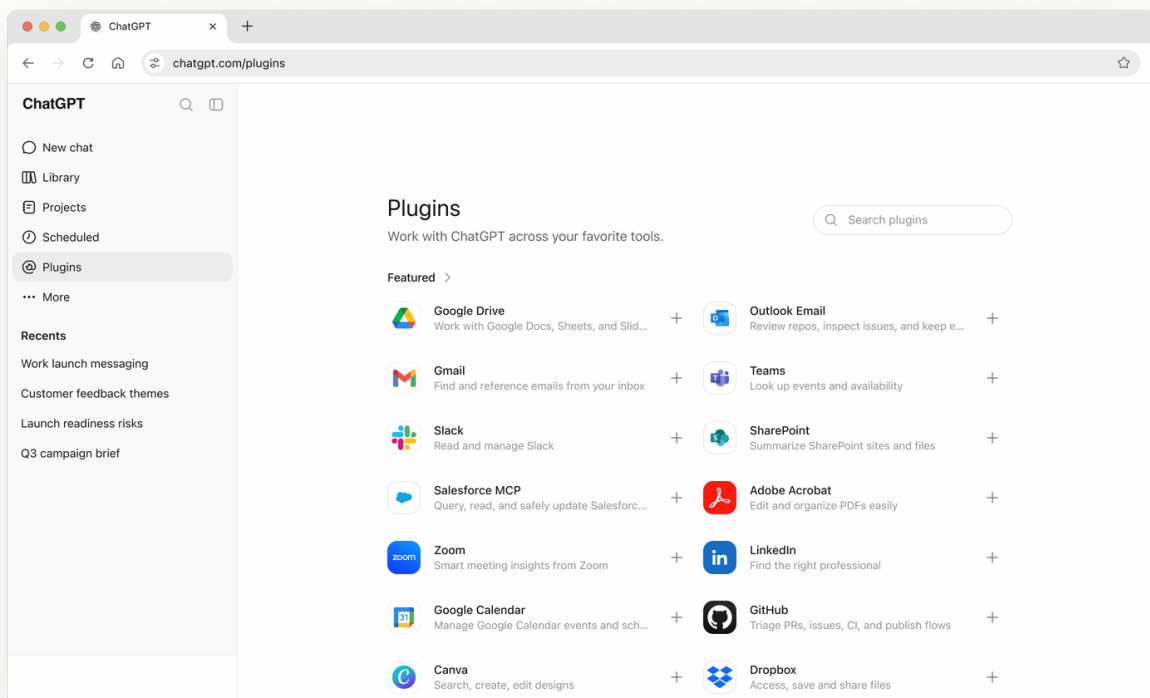
Codex shows the project folder, environment, commands, file changes, checks, diff, and review comments.



Choose Codex when the task is tied to a project folder, requires commands or tests, or needs line-by-line review of changes.

Add only the files and tools you need

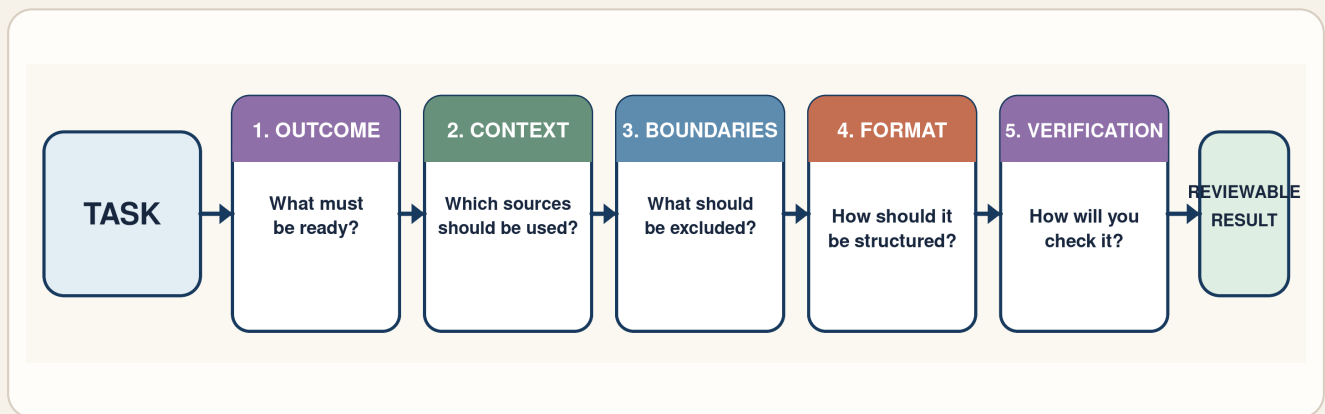
Attach a file for one chat, keep shared materials in a project, open a local folder for computer files, or install a plugin for an external service.



Available plugins depend on the account and workspace. Point to a specific plugin in the request only when the task needs it.

Describe the result, not the interface

A good request names the outcome, context, boundaries, format, and verification rule.



Example: Prepare a two-page memo from the attached documents. Do not add external facts. Start with a short summary, then a findings table. Cite the source for every finding.

A practical routing map

When several modes could complete the task, choose the simplest one that provides the required result and evidence.

What do you need to do?



A short question or discussion

CHAT



Research, document, table,
presentation, or PDF

WORK



Local files without technical change control

WORK



Codebase, commands, tests, Git, or review

CODEx



Local files with technical change control

CODEx

Recommendation: start with Work for research, analysis, and finished office deliverables. Move to Codex when you need commands, tests, Git, a diff, or review.