

Cowork: Claude works for you

Delegating long tasks on your files and tools, safely

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How to use this handout

This handout gathers, in written and ordered form, everything covered in the lesson. You do not need to memorise it: it is there so you can find things again calmly, later, when the lesson is over and a question is left hanging.

GOAL

Understand what Cowork is, when to use it instead of the chat and how to hand it a real task while controlling permissions and results.

What you will be able to do

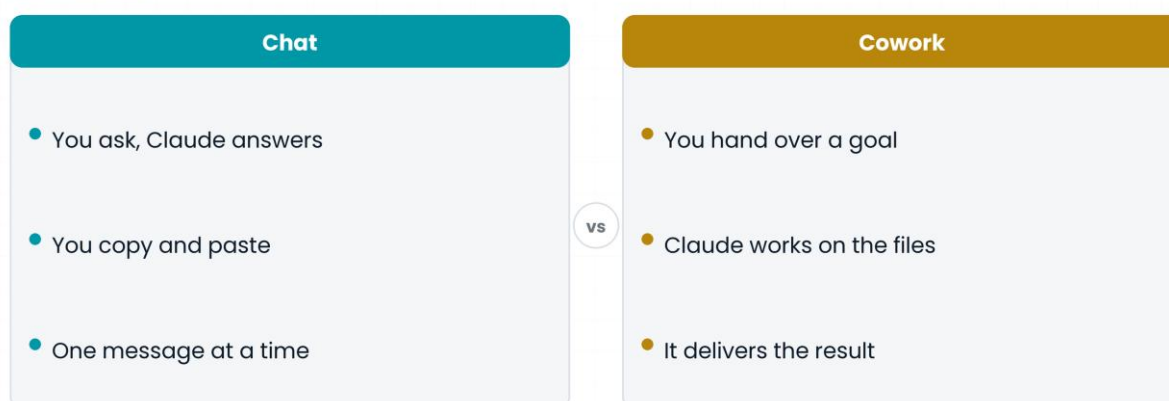
- Tell a chat request from a job to delegate to Cowork.
- Turn on Cowork and grant access to a folder.
- Write a complete assignment with goal, folder, result and constraints.
- Check the work, the permissions and the usage.

1. From an answer to finished work

The chat answers. Cowork does the work: it opens the files, processes them and hands you the result.

In chat you ask and receive a text, which you then have to copy, paste and format. With **Cowork** you describe a goal («sort this folder of invoices, extract the totals and prepare a summary sheet») and Claude carries out the steps by itself, showing you what it does.

Chat or Cowork



Chat or Cowork: who does the work?

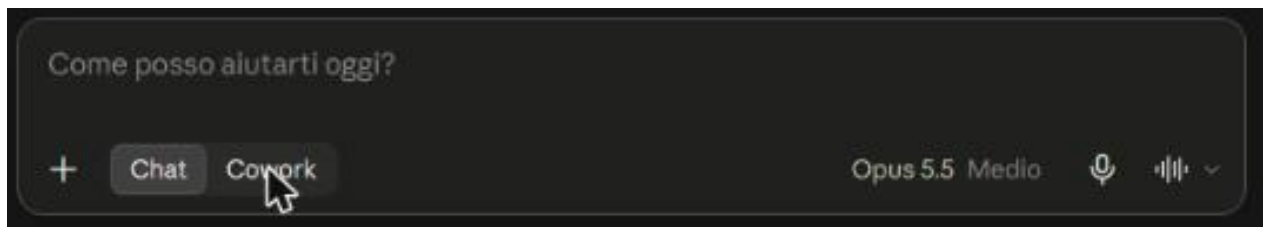
According to the official page (October 2026), Cowork works in the folders and tools you indicate, shows the steps taken, can split a large project into parallel streams, use a dedicated browser and carry out scheduled tasks even when you are not there.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Chat = a consultant you ask questions. Cowork = a collaborator you give an assignment.

2. How to turn it on

Cowork is one click away, in the same box where you write to the chat.



The Chat / Cowork selector under the writing box (Italian interface).

1. Update or install the **Claude desktop app** (Windows or macOS).
2. Sign in with a paid plan (Pro, Max, Team or Enterprise).
3. In the writing box choose **Cowork** next to Chat.
4. Describe the assignment.
5. Grant access to the **folder** that is needed, when Claude asks.



The official Cowork page (claude.com/product/cowork, Italian version).

NAMES THAT CHANGE

In the October 2026 pages Anthropic announces that «Cowork is now simply Claude» and that the feature is available for Pro and Max, with other plans coming. Names and plans are updated often: always check in your app.

3. What it can do

Think of Cowork for everything that takes several steps across different files.

Task	Concrete example
Tidying up	Rename and sort the files in a folder by customer and year
Extracting data	Read a hundred order PDFs and put the totals in an Excel sheet
Creating documents	Turn scattered notes into a Word report with an index
Researching	Collect information from several sites and prepare a summary with sources
Repeating	Prepare the weekly summary every Monday

Five jobs suited to Cowork.

3.1 Supported files

Cowork handles Word documents, PDFs, Excel sheets, PowerPoint presentations, images, code files and data such as JSON and CSV.

3.2 Connectors and browser

With **connectors** (chapter 7) Cowork can read services such as Google Drive. With the **dedicated browser** it opens sites in a panel separate from yours, so it does not touch your personal sessions.

A WELL-WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

«In the folder **Invoices 2026** there are the suppliers' PDFs. Create an Excel sheet with date, supplier and total, in date order. Do not delete or move anything. Show me the plan before you start.»

4. Control, permissions and usage

The more autonomous Claude is, the more it matters to decide where it can put its hands.

4.1 Permissions

- Claude accesses **only** the folders and tools you grant.
- Deletions require your **approval**.
- You can ask it to show a **plan** before acting.
- Cowork runs in an isolated environment (a virtual machine), with the network controlled by a list of allowed sites.

4.2 Settings

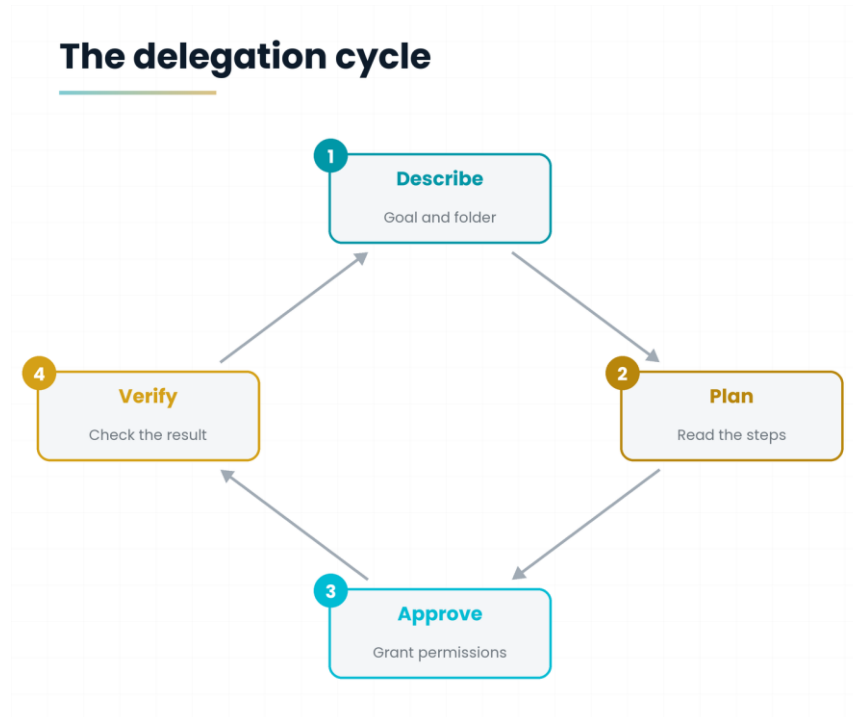
In Settings, in the **Cowork** section, you find among others: **Require trusted devices** (verifies every new computer before it connects remotely), **Only on your computer** (tasks stay on that computer and stop if you close the app) and **Preferred browser**.

GOOD PRACTICE

Grant specific folders, not the whole disk. Work on a **copy** of important files. Do not leave passwords or sensitive data in folders shared with Claude.

4.3 Usage

Tasks of this kind use much more of your usage limit than a simple chat, because Claude coordinates several steps and several tools. If you work heavily with Cowork you may consider a higher plan (chapter 8).



The delegation cycle: describe, check the plan, approve, verify.

Hands-on exercise

Twenty minutes for a first assignment to Cowork on a test folder.

1. Create on your computer a folder «CoworkTest» with 5-10 arbitrary files (notes, public PDFs, images).
2. Open the Claude desktop app and choose Cowork in the writing box.
3. Write: «In the CoworkTest folder list the files in a table with name, type and size and propose a new folder scheme. Do not move anything. Show me the plan first.»
4. Grant access only to that folder.
5. Read the plan, approve it and check the result; then ask it to apply the scheme on a copy.

WATCH OUT

Did you grant only the test folder?

Did you ask for the plan before execution?

Did you work on a copy of the files?

Questions that come up in class

Are Cowork and Claude Code the same thing?

No. Cowork is designed for office work on files and documents; Claude Code is designed for people who develop software (chapter 4).

Can I use it with the free plan?

No: it requires a paid plan. At the October 2026 check it is included in Pro and Max, and also available for Team and Enterprise.

Can it delete my files?

Only with your approval. In any case, work on copies of important files.

Does it keep working if I turn off the computer?

It depends on the setting: with «Only on your computer» tasks stop when the app closes or the PC goes to sleep.

Can I use it from my phone?

Yes, on web and mobile devices the feature is available in beta, according to the official page.

Glossary

Term	What it means
Connector	A link between Claude and an external service such as Google Drive.
Cowork	A mode where Claude carries out tasks on files and tools you grant it.
Granted folder	The only folder Claude can access in an assignment.
Virtual machine	An isolated environment where Claude runs tasks without touching the rest of the computer.

Further reading

Anthropic, Claude Cowork product page (claude.com/product/cowork) - accessed 3 October 2026

Anthropic, Help Center: Get started with Cowork (support.claude.com) - permissions and requirements

claude.ai interface, Settings, Cowork section - October 2026

WATCH OUT

Features and plans verified on 3 October 2026: Cowork is evolving quickly and its name itself may change.