Five Claude codes, and how to use each one

Here's the full list from my video, with what to type for each one and an example you can copy. None of them is a setting you switch on: you type the word with your question and send it. Four of them work in any Claude chat. The fifth, ultrathink, is built into Claude Code. You won't write any code.

What you need

- A Claude account for codes 1 to 4. The free plan is enough. Artifacts (code 3) are on the free plan too.
- For code 5, Claude Code. It comes with every paid plan (Pro, Max, Ultra, Team and Enterprise) and isn't in the free plan.

Why one word works

Anthropic's prompting page says to think of Claude as "a brilliant but new employee who lacks context on your norms and workflows." It adds: "The more precisely you explain what you want, the better the result."

Each code is a short way of saying what kind of answer you want. Claude reads the word with the rest of your message and answers that way. Under each code there's also a sentence you can add when you want even more control.

Code 1: L99

What it does: Claude stops hedging with "it depends" and gives you a straight answer.

Put it in front of your question:

```
L99. Should I raise my prices for new clients
this month?
```

I tried it, and that's what it does: one answer instead of a list of options. To make it even firmer, add a line:

```
L99. Give me one answer, not a list of
options. If it really depends, pick the case
that fits me best and tell me the reason in
two lines.

[your question]
```

Code 2: OODA

What it does: Claude analyzes your situation with a military decision framework: what to watch, what matters, what to decide and what to do.

Add it to your message:

```
OODA. A competitor just cut their prices by
20%. What should I do?
```

OODA stands for observe, orient, decide, act. It was developed by US Air Force Colonel John Boyd in the early 1970s and is used in business and law too, according to Wikipedia's page on the OODA loop. Claude knows the framework by name, so the word

is enough. To shape the answer, say what you want under each step:

```
OODA. Under each of the four steps, tell me
what you see in what I wrote, and what you
would need to know that I haven't said.

[describe your situation]
```

Code 3: artifact

What it does: Claude builds you a dashboard, or an app, right in the chat.

Put it in your message, with what you want built:

```
Artifact: a simple dashboard to track my sales
this month. Ask me what to include before
you start.
```

“Artifact” is Anthropic’s own word for what Claude builds: a design, a document, a dashboard or a small interactive tool. It opens in its own window beside your conversation, and you can change it by talking to Claude or directly in the artifact. Everything you make is saved in the **Artifacts** tab in the sidebar.

Two things from Anthropic's help center:

- Claude makes an artifact when the result is substantial, typically over 15 lines, and something you're likely to edit or reuse. A very short answer won't become one.
- Artifacts need **Cloud code execution and file creation** turned on in **Settings > Capabilities** (called **Create and edit files** in the updated Settings layout). If you don't get one, check that setting first.

Code 4: scaffold

What it does: Claude breaks any project or task down into a full action plan, with every step mapped out for you.

Put it before your project:

```
Scaffold: launch my online course in
six weeks.
```

To get more out of it, say what the plan must cover:

```
Scaffold: [your project]. The steps in order,
what each step needs before it can start, and
who or what could block it. Ask me anything
you need first.
```

Code 5: ultrathink

What it does: Claude thinks much harder before it answers. It's my favorite, and it's the one built into Claude Code itself. From Claude Code's model configuration page:

- **It works in Claude Code,** not in the regular chat.
- **It can go anywhere in your prompt.** Before your question is fine. It asks for deeper reasoning on that one turn, and your usual setting stays as it was.
- **On supported setups it raises that turn to `xhigh` effort.** There's one level above it, `max`, which you set with `/effort` (below).
- Other phrases such as "think", "think hard" and "think more" are read as ordinary words. Only

“ultrathink” is the keyword.

How to use it

1. Download the Claude desktop app from claude.ai/download, install it and sign in.
2. Click **Code** at the top of the sidebar.
3. Make a new folder to work in, for example “Ultrathink test” in your Documents.
4. In the row under the message box, choose **Local**, then click the folder control, choose **Open folder...** and pick that folder.
5. Write your prompt with the word in it, for example:

```
Ultrathink. I'm choosing between [option A]
and [option B] for [your situation]. Tell me
which one and why.
```

The page says that in the desktop app’s Code tab, in a local session, the word can raise the turn to `xhigh` effort. This needs Claude Code version 2.1.316 or later. In a terminal it needs 2.1.311 or later, and in VS Code’s chat box 2.1.316 or later. In those places the word shows in rainbow colors when it can raise the turn.

If the word isn't rainbow when you start a new turn, the page's fixes are:

- Retype it outside quotes, brackets, a path or a command, in a prompt that doesn't start with `/`.
- If you've set `CLAUDE_CODE_EFFORT_LEVEL` below `xhigh`, unset it. Or raise your own `maxEffortLevel`, or ask an organization admin to raise your organization's limit.
- Run `/model` and switch to Opus 5.5, Sonnet 5.5, Haiku 5.5, Fable 5.2 or Fable 5.1.

The word can't raise a turn on Amazon Bedrock, Google Cloud's Agent Platform or a Claude apps gateway. There, set the effort level instead (next section).

To turn the keyword off, set `CLAUDE_CODE_DISABLE_ULTRATHINK` to `1` (Claude Code 2.1.316 or later).

For a lasting change: /effort

`ultrathink` is for one turn. To change how hard Claude thinks for more than that, Claude Code has

`/effort`:

```
/effort
```

On its own it opens a slider. You can also type a level after it, for example `/effort high`. The levels are `low`, `medium`, `high`, `xhigh` and `max` on current models. Some older models skip `xhigh`.

- Press `Enter` in the slider, or type a level after `/effort`, to save the level as your default for later sessions.
- Press `s` in the slider to apply it to this session only (Claude Code 2.1.257 or later).
- `max` is the deepest level, and Claude Code applies it to the current session only.

Anthropic says higher levels spend more tokens. The default is `medium` on Fable 5.2, Opus 5.5, Sonnet 5.5 and Haiku 5.5. About `max`, the page says it “may show diminishing returns and is prone to overthinking, so test before adopting it broadly.”

What to take from the list

Code	What it is
L99	One straight answer instead of “it depends”. Any Claude chat.
OODA	Your situation through observe, orient, decide, act. Any Claude chat.
artifact	A dashboard or small app built beside the chat. Any Claude chat.
scaffold	A full action plan, step by step. Any Claude chat.
ultrathink	Deeper reasoning for one turn. Claude Code.

Written on 21 November 2026 from Claude Code’s model configuration page, Anthropic’s Claude prompting best-practices page, Claude’s help center article on artifacts, Claude’s pricing page and Wikipedia’s page on the OODA loop. Pierre tried L99 himself; the Claude Code steps were not run while writing this guide. Claude changes fast: if a menu has moved, look for the same words in the app.