Claude Code for Non-Programmers: Companion Sheet

Free with the book, by Axel Verne. Checked against Anthropic's documentation in November 2026.

Links (Chapters 2 and 11)

What	Where
Claude desktop app (Mac / Windows)	https://claude.com/download
Desktop app quickstart	https://code.claude.com/docs/en/desktop-quickstart
Plans and current prices	https://claude.com/pricing
Terminal install (optional)	https://code.claude.com/docs/en/quickstart
Undo / rewind (checkpoints)	https://code.claude.com/docs/en/checkpointing
Memory and CLAUDE.md	https://code.claude.com/docs/en/memory
Permission modes	https://code.claude.com/docs/en/permission-modes

Terminal install, if you ever want it. On a Mac, paste this into the Terminal app: `curl -fsSL https://claude.ai/install.sh | bash` On Windows, paste this into PowerShell: `irm https://claude.ai/install.ps1 | iex`

The loop (Chapter 1)

Ask → Watch → Look → Adjust. Go around three or four times. That's normal.

The four-part brief (Chapter 4). Copy, fill in, paste:

> I want **[the thing]**, so that **[what it lets me do]**. It's for **[who will use it, and on what device]**. When it's done, **[describe what you'll see and be able to do]**. Don't **[touch my original files / add features I didn't ask for / use online services / …]**. If anything is unclear, ask me before you start. Before you change anything, tell me your plan in plain English and wait for me to say go.

Pocket phrases: *Ask me questions first. · Explain what you're going to do before you do it. · Show me two or three options. · Explain it like I'm smart but new to this.*

Safety (Chapter 5)

1. **Sandbox folder.** One folder per project. Copy real files in. Work on the copy.
2. **Read before you say yes.** Is it in my folder? Does it match what I asked? Is it deleting or installing anything?
3. **No secrets in the chat.** No passwords, bank logins, card numbers or codes.

Always ask "why?" before saying yes to: deleting files · anything outside your project folder · installing software · anything about passwords, keys or accounts · sending information to a website you didn't mention.

Before a big change, copy the whole project folder and put today's date in the copy's name.

Reading a plan (Chapter 6)

Check it against your brief: **Goal? Who? Done? Fences?** If it has more than about ten steps, ask for the first three only.

When it breaks (Chapter 7)

- Describe it: **what I did → what I expected → what actually happened.**
- Paste the **exact** error message, or drag in a screenshot.
- *"Before you fix it, tell me in plain English what went wrong."*
- **Two strikes rule:** if the same fix fails twice, change your approach.
- **Undo:** ask *"Undo the last change,"* or use rewind. In the terminal version that's `/rewind` (also `/undo`), or press Esc twice. You can also go back to your dated backup copy, or start a fresh session with a better brief.
- **Done check:** *"Go back through my original request, point by point, and tell me honestly whether each part is finished."*

The notebook: CLAUDE.md (Chapter 8)

Ask for one: *"Create a CLAUDE.md file for this project."* In the terminal version, `/init` writes a starter one. A starter template:

> I'm not a programmer. Explain things in plain English. Always tell me your plan before changing anything. This project is: **[one sentence]**. It's for: **[who]**. Rules: never change **[original file]**. Never add **[thing]**. Preferences: **[colors, tone, format]**. Lessons learned: **[add one each time you correct the same thing twice]**

The ten project briefs (Chapter 10)

1. **One-page site:** Make a one-page web page for **[thing]**, so people can find **[details]**. Include **[date, place, phone, what's offered]**. Single file. Easy to read on a phone.
2. **Spreadsheet cleanup:** Here's a copy of my **[spreadsheet]**. Clean it up into a new file. Make names and phone numbers consistent, remove exact duplicates, and give me a list of anything you weren't sure about.
3. **Rename files:** Rename every file in this folder to **[pattern, e.g. date taken + short description]**. Before renaming anything, show me what the first ten new names will look like.
4. **Notes into a document:** Turn all the notes in this folder into one tidy document organized by topic, with headings. Don't add information that isn't in the notes. Mark anything you couldn't read clearly.
5. **Numbers from documents:** These are PDF **[invoices/receipts]**. Make a spreadsheet with one row each: date, company, total. Then list any where you weren't confident about a number.

6. **Personal calculator:** Make a simple page where I type **[inputs]** and it shows **[answer]**. The rule is: **[explain the math in words]**.
7. **Tracker:** Make a simple page where I can add **[an entry]**, see past entries, and delete one if I made a mistake. Keep the entries saved when I close and reopen it. It's just for me, on this computer.
8. **Printable:** Make a page I can print on letter-size paper that **[does the thing]**. Clean, and fits on one page.
9. **Explain something inherited:** *(use plan mode)* Explain what everything in this folder is and what it does, in plain English. I'm not a programmer. Don't change anything.
10. **Combined tool:** Read **[folder of forms]**, make a summary spreadsheet, and make a printable **[packing list]** for each one. Plan first. Do it in small steps and stop after each one so I can check.