

Start here

This is Day Zero, the hour before the course starts. Read it once, before you touch anything. It is written to be read straight through, before a single thing is installed, and it assumes you have never opened a terminal window or built an app in your life.

1. What this is

Your purchase came as two files: this PDF, and a zip file. This PDF is the only one you read. The zip is the course folder, and it is for Claude; section 5 says where to put it, and you will never need to open it.

Two other things arrived with it. The course site, at <https://ideatoapp.loboz.com>, carries every walkthrough with pictures of the real screens. And your receipt carries a license key, a line of letters and numbers; the site's walkthrough pages ask for it once. Keep the receipt.

This is a course and a folder of files that together take you from an idea to an app on the App Store. The course is not a set of videos you watch; it is Claude, working in a window on your Mac, reading that folder and walking you through the whole thing one step at a time. This page covers the part that has to happen before Claude can start: checking that your Mac can do the work, getting Claude onto it, and putting the folder somewhere Claude can find. Nothing before section 5 needs the course folder, so the first four sections can be read, and the Mac check in section 2 done, before you decide to buy.

Claude is an AI assistant made by a company called Anthropic. You may have used it in a web browser. Anthropic also makes a **Claude app** that you install on your Mac, the same way you install any other app. Inside that app is a section called **Claude Code**: the same Claude,

pointed at one folder on your Mac, with permission to read and change the files in it. That section is the one that can build an app, and it is the one this course uses. Installing that app is most of what this page is about.

Claude does the technical work. It writes the code, runs the builds, which turn that code into a copy of the app a phone can run, talks to Apple's computers, and reads the errors when they come. You choose what the app is, and you press the buttons that only a person is allowed to press. You are never asked to figure something out on your own.

What the road costs

Money comes up twice on this page and once more a few weeks in, so here it is all at once.

WHAT	COST	WHEN
A Mac with an Apple chip (M1 or later, sold from late 2020 onward)	you already own one, or you buy one	checked in section 2, below
An iPhone to test the app on; a borrowed one is fine	you already own one, or you borrow one	from milestone 03 or 05 onward
A Claude subscription	from \$17 a month	today, in section 4
Apple Developer Program, the paid membership Apple requires before anyone can publish an app	\$99 a year	a few weeks in
Xcode, which is Apple's app-building program, plus a handful of other free tools	free	your first working session with Claude
TestFlight, which is Apple's way of putting an app on your own phone before it is public, and iCloud storage for apps that need it	free	later milestones

The \$99 is not due today; it arrives a few weeks in, at the milestone that needs it. Every tool name in that table gets explained by Claude at the moment it first matters, so there is nothing to learn from it now beyond the numbers.

Two more things to know before you spend anything. Apple reviews every app and can turn yours down, so the course carries a step-by-step recovery plan for exactly that. And this course is not affiliated with Apple or with Anthropic.

2. Can this Mac do it?

There is one hardware wall in this course, and it is here at the start on purpose.

Apple's app-building program, Xcode, now runs only on Macs that use a chip Apple designed itself. The **chip** is the part of a computer that does the thinking. Apple calls its own chips **Apple silicon**, and their names all start with the letter M: M1, M2, M3, M4, and onward. Apple started putting these into Macs in late 2020. Macs made before that used chips from a company called Intel, and current Xcode does not run on them at all.

The other piece of hardware is an iPhone to test the app on, needed from milestone 03 or 05 onward. A borrowed one does the job, since the phone is there to run the app and show you what a user sees.

How to check yours

1. Click the Apple menu, which is the small apple in the very top left corner of your screen.
2. Choose **About This Mac** from the menu that drops down.
3. Read the window that opens. Two lines in it matter.



The About This Mac window on a Mac with an Apple chip. Yours shows its own numbers. Open it full size.

A Mac that can do this course shows a line labelled **Chip**, followed by a name that begins with the word Apple, like `Apple M1` or `Apple M4 Pro`. Any of the M numbers is fine. Apple's own support pages describe the check in those words: Apple silicon Macs show an item labelled Chip with the name of the chip after it.

A Mac that cannot shows a line labelled **Processor** instead, followed by a name with the word Intel in it, something like `2.6 GHz 6-Core Intel Core i7`.

The other line to read is the **macOS** version at the top of that window. macOS is the software your whole Mac runs on. As this page was written, the App Store listed Xcode at version 26.6 and said it needs macOS 26.2 or later. Apple raises that number with almost every release, so treat this sentence as a snapshot and read the current requirement on the Xcode listing itself when you get there. If your macOS version is behind, that is usually free to fix, and Claude checks it with you in your first working session.

If your Mac falls short

Stop here.

A Mac with an Intel chip cannot build current iPhone apps, and no amount of cleverness in this course gets around it. There is no workaround to try, no setting to change, and nothing later in the course that rescues it.

You have two options.

The first is to get your money back. The course refund window is seven days, for any reason, and this is precisely the situation it exists for. Write to jeff@loboz.com, the support address, which is also on your receipt and on the course site at <https://ideatoapp.loboz.com>, say your Mac has an Intel processor, and ask for a refund.

The second is to get an able Mac. Every Mac Apple sells new today has an Apple chip in it, and so does every used one made from late 2020 onward. If you go that way, this page is waiting for you when the machine arrives, and nothing you paid for expires in the meantime.

3. You need an Apple account

An **Apple account** is the single account you use for the App Store, for iCloud, and for everything else Apple. Apple used to call it an **Apple ID**. Both names mean the same account, and both still turn up on Apple's own screens.

Most Mac owners already have one. If you have ever downloaded an app on this Mac, or set up an iPhone or an iPad, you have one.

How to tell

1. Click the Apple menu at the top left of your screen and choose **System Settings**.
2. Look at the very top of the list running down the left side of the window.

Your own name sitting at the top of that list means this Mac is signed in with an Apple account, and you are set for today. A row inviting you to sign in means this Mac has no Apple account on it yet. Click that row and follow Apple's own instructions, which take about five minutes and ask for an email address and a password you choose.

One decision is worth a moment now, because it is expensive to change later. Use the Apple account you expect to still have in five years. It ends up owning everything you publish.

Nothing else about Apple needs doing today. The rest of it, turning on the second sign-in check that Apple requires from every publisher and joining Apple's paid developer program, happens inside the course, weeks apart, with Claude explaining each screen and waiting while you click.

4. Choose a Claude plan, then install the Claude app

The plan

Claude Code needs a paid plan. Anthropic's own setup documentation states it plainly: Claude Code requires a Pro, Max, Team or Enterprise subscription, and the free Claude.ai plan does not include Claude Code access.

Prices as this page was written, read from Anthropic's own pricing page:

PLAN	PRICE	WHAT IT IS FOR
Free	\$0	Does not include Claude Code. It cannot run this course.
Pro	\$17 a month billed annually, or \$20 a month	The floor. This course runs on it.
Max	from \$100 a month	Comes in two sizes: five times Pro's usage, or twenty times.

Three notes on that table.

Pro is enough to finish this course, and plenty of people will finish on it. What Pro is not is comfortable on a long building day. Every plan comes with a usage allowance that refills on a schedule, and on a heavy afternoon Pro can run out before the day does. When that happens, Claude Code stops mid-step and tells you when the allowance comes back.

Max buys more room, and the weeks it is worth having are the weeks your app is actually being built. Those are some way off.

Today is not the day to decide. Nothing in the first two milestones is heavy. Start on whatever plan you have, see how a real building day feels, and change later if it pinches. Changing plans takes a minute and disturbs nothing on your Mac.

Two habits make a limit cheap when you hit one. Claude writes down where the session got to before it stops, every time, so a stopped session costs minutes instead of work. And a session that starts fresh in the morning gets further than one dragged through a limit at midnight.

Steps

1. Open claude.com/pricing in your web browser.
2. Read the current prices there. The table above is a snapshot and prices change.
3. Choose Pro if you have no plan yet.
4. Complete the sign-up in Anthropic's own checkout. You press the payment button. Nobody presses it for you.

Already paying for Pro or Max? Skip those four steps and carry on.

Install the app

This is ordinary Mac software. You download it, you drag it where Mac apps go, and you open it. There is nothing to type in these six steps, and every one of them is something you have done before with some other app.

5. Open claude.com/download in your web browser.
6. Click the button labelled **Download for macOS**. One button covers every Mac Apple sells; there is no version to choose.
7. Open the file your browser just downloaded. It is a **disk image**, which is a file that opens into a small window of its own rather than into an app.
8. Do what that window shows you. On a Mac this is almost always dragging the Claude icon onto the Applications folder pictured beside it. Applications is where every app on your Mac lives.
9. Open Claude from your Applications folder.
10. Sign in when the app asks, using the Claude account from the four steps above.

Your password goes into Anthropic's own sign-in screen. It never goes into a message to Claude, and you are not asked for it again after this.

Find the part that builds apps

The app has three tabs across the top, and this course lives in exactly one of them.

11. Click the tab labelled **Code**.

Chat is ordinary conversation with Claude, with no access to your files. **Cowork** hands Claude a long job to go away and do. **Code** is the one that reads and changes files on your Mac, and it is where the whole course happens. You can ignore the other two for the next several weeks.

Anthropic's own documentation is blunt about what this saves you: the desktop app includes Claude Code, and you do not need to install anything else separately. There is no command to type and no second download.

If clicking **Code** offers to upgrade you instead of opening, your paid plan has not taken effect yet. Finish the sign-up from the four steps above, then quit the app completely and open it again.

5. Where to put the course folder

What you downloaded is a **zip file**, which is one file holding a whole folder squeezed small for the trip across the internet. Your Mac unpacks it back into an ordinary folder when you double-click it.

Where that folder ends up matters more than it sounds like it should.

1. Click the Finder icon at the left end of the Dock, which is the row of app icons along the edge of your screen. **Finder** is the Mac's file browser, the app you use to look through folders.
2. Click **Downloads** in the list down the left side of the Finder window.
3. Find the course file you downloaded when you bought this. It is named `ideatoapp-kit`, and its icon looks like a folder with a zipper down it. Your Mac may hide the `.zip` on the end of the name, which is fine. The Claude installer you downloaded in section 4 is in here too, named after Claude with a different icon; that one is finished with and is not this.
4. Double-click the `.zip` file. A folder with the same name appears next to it.
5. Drag that new folder onto **Documents** in the same left-hand list.

You will not need to open that folder or read anything in it, today or later. Claude does that. If you look anyway, you will see Claude's instructions and its tools, and most of it looks like code, because it is. Nothing in there is for you to change. Section 6 is where you point Claude at the folder.

Documents is a suggestion; anywhere permanent will do. The one place to avoid is Downloads, and here is why.

This folder becomes the course's memory. After every session Claude writes into it: what you decided, what your app is called, which step you reached, and the identifiers Apple hands you along the way. That is what lets you close the lid on a Tuesday and have the next session pick up where you stopped. Downloads is the folder people clear out without looking, and some Macs are set to empty it on their own. A course folder that vanishes takes weeks of decisions with it.

Moving or renaming the folder later is fine. You point the app at wherever the folder lives when you start a session, and section 6 shows you how.

6. Start your first session

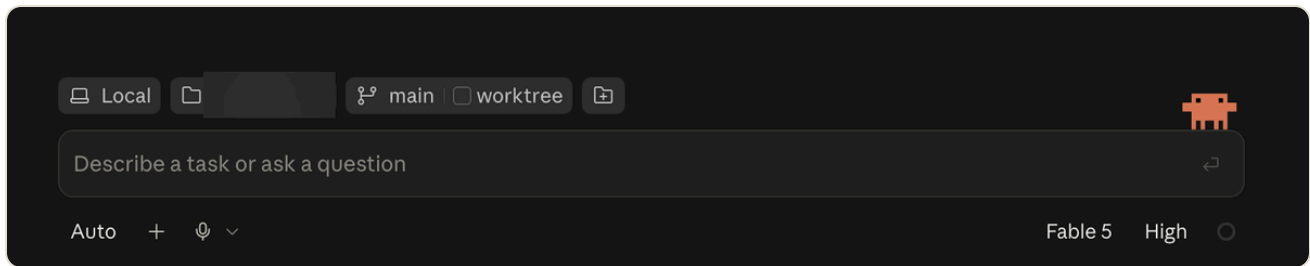
This is the last thing on this page. From here, Claude takes over.

A **session** is one continuous conversation with Claude about one folder. It keeps its own history, so the session you start now is the one you come back to next week.

1. Open Claude from your Applications folder, if it is not still open.
2. Click the **Code** tab.
3. Click **New session** in the list running down the left side of the window.
4. Choose **Local** where the app asks where this session should run.

Local means Claude works on this Mac, on the files in the folder you are about to choose. The other choices run Claude on computers elsewhere, which cannot see your course folder at all. Local is the only one this course uses.

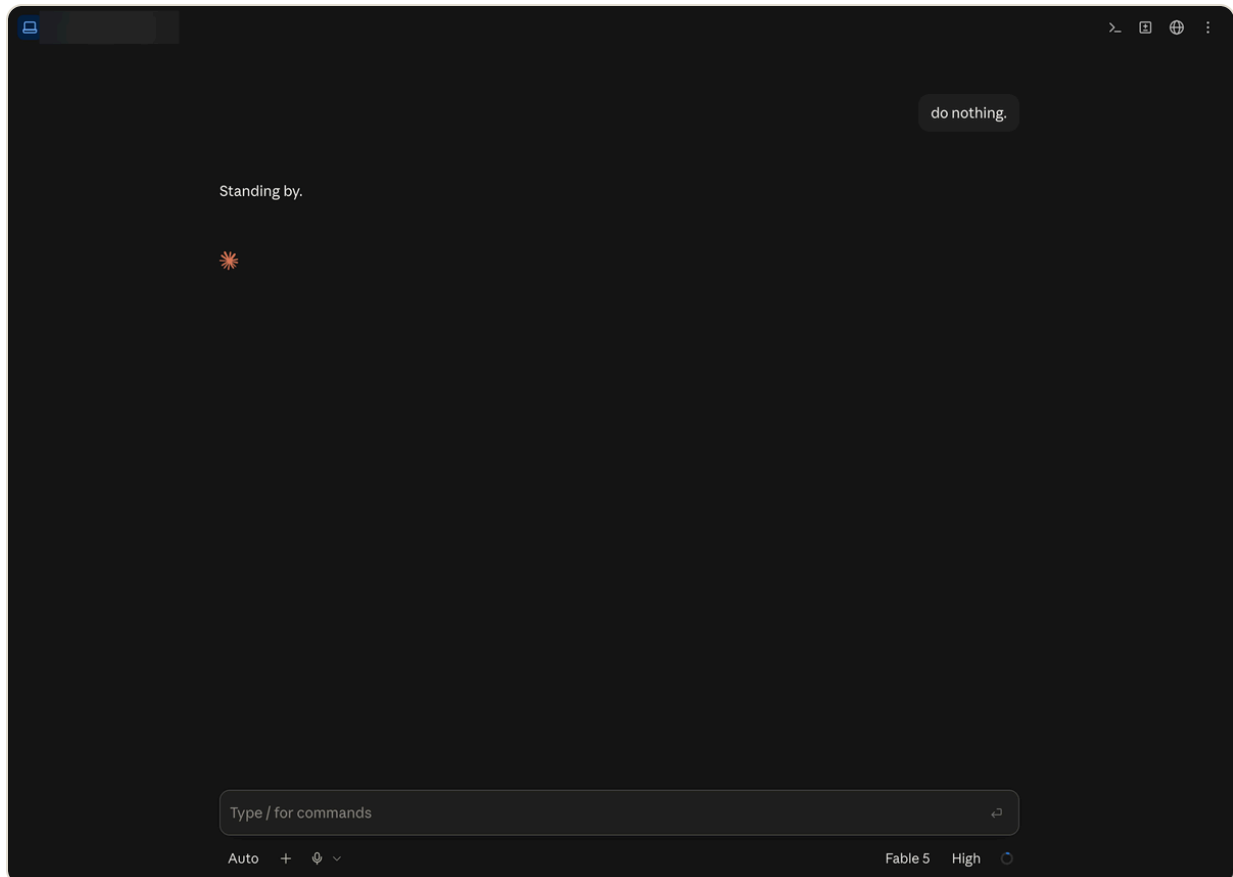
5. Click **Select folder**.
6. Choose the course folder you moved in section 5, and confirm.



The box where a new session starts: Local chosen, with the folder control beside it. Open it full size.

7. Read the folder name the app now shows for this session, and check it is the course folder you just chose.

Claude may ask a question or two before it starts, about trusting the files in this folder and about what it is allowed to do. Saying yes to the folder you unzipped yourself is the right answer, and Claude explains anything else it asks before it asks it.



A session open on a course folder: its name sits at the top, and the box where you type sits at the bottom. Open it full size.

8. Type or paste this sentence into the box at the bottom, then press Return:

Read START-HERE.md and begin my course.

That is Day Zero finished.

7. What happens next

Claude runs the course from that sentence onward: it asks your name and what you want to build, explains every step in plain words before it takes it, does the technical work itself, and stops to tell you exactly which button to press whenever a step needs a person. Sessions run an hour or two, spread over weeks, with Apple's own waiting times worked around rather than sat through.

Stopping is safe at any point. Claude writes down where you got to before a session ends, so closing the window costs you nothing. To come back: open Claude, click the **Code** tab, click your course session in the list down the left side, and type `continue my course`.

8. Where to get help

Inside a session, ask Claude. This is the fastest help there is, and it is included in what you paid for. "I do not understand" and "explain that again more slowly" are complete, sensible instructions. So is "I am looking at a screen that does not match what you described", which is the single most useful sentence in the whole course, because companies move their buttons and Claude can work from what you actually see.

The course site, at <https://ideatoapp.loboz.com>, carries the same steps with pictures of every screen, plus a guide to every error this course has met before, written as the message on the screen, what it means, and what fixes it. Those pages ask for the license key from your receipt, so have it to hand before you go looking. Its address is on your receipt and in the email that delivered your download.

A human answers email. Write to jeff@loboz.com, which is also on your receipt and on the course site. Say what you were doing, what you saw on screen, and which step you were on. That is enough to get a useful answer back.

Refunds are the same address, within seven days of buying. Try the email first if you are stuck rather than disappointed; most stuck moments have a two-line answer.

Appendix: prefer a terminal?

Nothing in this appendix is required. If sections 4 and 6 worked, you are finished and this page has nothing left for you. Skip it.

Claude Code also comes as a typing-only version that runs in a window called a terminal, and some people who have used one before would rather work that way. This appendix is the whole route, in place of sections 4 and 6. The rest of the course does not change: the same course folder, the same first sentence, the same guidebook.

A **terminal** is a window where you type one line of text, press Return, and the Mac does what the line says. It comes with every Mac and the app is called **Terminal**. A terminal window sitting open is as harmless as it looks. It does nothing at all until a line is typed and Return is pressed, and everything below is printed for you to copy.

Open a terminal window

1. Press the Command key and the Space bar together. A search box opens in the middle of the screen.
2. Type `Terminal`.
3. Press Return.

A window opens with a short line of text and a blinking block or bar after it. That line is called the **prompt**. It usually shows your Mac's name and the folder the window is pointed at, and it means the terminal is ready for you to type. Every time this appendix says "type this and press Return", it means at that prompt.

One quirk to know now, because it surprises everyone: you cannot click on the text in this window to move the cursor. Use the arrow keys.

Install the typing-only Claude Code

4. Copy this line exactly:

```
curl -fsSL https://claude.ai/install.sh | bash
```

5. Click into the Terminal window, then paste by pressing Command and V together.
6. Press Return.

That line downloads Anthropic's installer from `claude.ai` and runs it. Text scrolls past while it works. When it finishes it prints `Claude Code successfully installed!`.

The install asks for no password. It puts Claude Code inside your own home folder, which you already own, so macOS has nothing to ask your permission for. Later in the course one tool does ask for your Mac password, and Claude explains that one when it arrives.

7. Type `claude --version` and press Return.

The answer is a version number followed by `(Claude Code)`, something like `2.1.211 (Claude Code)`. Your number will differ, since Anthropic ships this often. Seeing a number and those two words is the whole test.

If instead it says `command not found: claude`, the installer printed the exact repair line at the end of its own output, under the heading `Setup notes`, and running that line is the fix, in this order:

- Scroll up in the Terminal window until you find the line under `Setup notes`.
- Copy it.
- Paste it at the prompt.
- Press Return.
- Close the Terminal window.
- Open a new one, with steps 1 to 3 above.
- Type `claude --version` and press Return again.

Start the first session from a terminal

8. Type `cd` and include the space after it. Do not press Return yet.

`cd` is short for "change directory". Directory is the old word for folder, so that line means "work in this folder", and the next step fills in which folder.

9. Drag your course folder from the Finder window onto the Terminal window and let go. The folder's location writes itself in, right after what you typed.

10. Press Return. The prompt comes back, now showing the course folder's name.

11. Type `claude` and press Return.

12. A browser window opens and asks you to sign in to your Claude account. Sign in there.

Your password goes into Anthropic's own sign-in page in the browser. It never goes into the Terminal window, and it never goes into a message to Claude. Your Mac remembers the sign-in, so you do this once and never again.

13. Go back to the Terminal window. Claude greets you there.

14. Type or paste this sentence, then press Return:

Read START-HERE.md and begin my course.

To come back later on this route: open Terminal, type `cd` with the space, drag the course folder on, press Return, type `cClaude`, press Return, and say `continue my course`.

Last verified: 2026-08-29. Prices, version numbers and screens change. Anywhere a screen does not match this page, trust what the step is trying to accomplish and tell Claude what you actually see.