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FREE GUIDE · 03

Make your own visuals with Claude.

Posters, social graphics and one-pagers from a written brief, in your colours, edited by clicking. The setup, the loop, and the prompt written out.

FOR OWNERS AND THE PERSON WHO DOES THE MARKETING
TWENTY MINUTES TO SET UP · SIXTY SECONDS PER VISUAL AFTER THAT

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START HERE

What this is, and what you'll have at the end of it.

Every business needs a steady supply of small visuals: a post for the Facebook page, a one-pager for the counter, a job ad, a price sheet. Most shops of 3 to 30 people have nobody whose job that is, so the visuals either don't get made or get made at 9 p.m. in whatever program was open.

In August 2026 Claude Code gained a skill called **/design**. You type a short brief and Claude comes back with several drafts side by side on a canvas you can open in your browser. You pick one, click on the parts you want changed, and export it as a PNG or a PDF. This guide walks you through it start to finish, with no design training and no programming assumed.

Nobody here is selling you software. Modus is tied to no platform or partner program; where a product is named, it's because the method needs it, and the guide says what it costs.

What you'll have when you're done

A working setup you keep

ONE FOLDER · ONE BRAND FILE · ONE PROMPT

The folder. A place on your computer Claude reads from: your logo, your colours, and the screenshots of designs you like.

The brand file. One page that tells Claude your colours, your fonts and how you talk, so every draft starts in your brand instead of the average of the internet.

The prompt. A four-part brief you fill in each time. Written out on page 10, ready to copy.

The first three visuals. A social post, a one-pager and a job ad, made by you, on page 11.

Illustration of the output shape. Yours will carry your logo, your colours and your words.

What it costs

A paid Claude plan (Pro, Max, Team or Enterprise), the free Claude desktop app, and about twenty minutes to set up. After that, a visual takes about a minute to draft and a few more to tidy.

What it isn't

A print shop or a designer. It drafts; you decide. It's also a research preview, which means the buttons may move. Where this guide says how something works, it's what Anthropic's own documentation said in September 2026.

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IF YOU ONLY READ ONE PAGE

Page 10. The prompt has four parts, and the third one, naming the design skill so it actually runs, is the part everyone skips. The rest of the guide exists to make that one page work.

A word on names. Claude Design is the web app at claude.ai/design. **/design** is the same canvas started from Claude Code, the part of the Claude desktop app that can read files on your computer. This guide uses the second one, and page 4 says why.

BEFORE YOU START

Two apps, one canvas. Which one you want depends on one thing.

Anthropic ships the same design canvas two ways. They look alike on screen. The difference is what Claude can reach while it designs.

	CLAUDE DESIGN (WEB APP)	/DESIGN IN CLAUDE CODE
Where	claude.ai/design in a browser, or the sidebar of the desktop app	The Code tab of the Claude desktop app, or the command line
What it reads	What you paste or attach into the chat	A folder on your computer: your logo, your brand file, your reference screenshots, past work
Skills	Its own built-in design system tools	Anything you've installed, including free skills written by designers (page 8)
Editing	Chat, inline comments, direct canvas editing	Click an element and change it, where saving is enabled for your account; otherwise view and export
Export	PDF, PPTX, HTML, zip, Canva and others	PNG or PDF
Plans	Pro, Max, Team, Enterprise (beta; off by default on Enterprise)	Pro, Max, Team, Enterprise, with artifacts turned on (research preview)

Sources: Anthropic, "Introducing Claude Design" (April 2026); Claude Help Center, "Get started with Claude Design" (updated August 6, 2026); Claude Code docs, "Share session output as artifacts" and "Week 34" release notes (August 2026).

So which one?

If you want to make one poster today and never think about it again, the web app is the shorter road. Open it, describe the poster, done.

This guide is about the second one, for one reason: **a folder**. When Claude works from a folder, your brand file and your reference images are already there every time. You stop re-explaining your colours, re-attaching your logo and re-describing your taste. The first visual costs twenty minutes of setup. The fortieth costs a minute. That trade is the whole point for a business that needs visuals every week.

> THE HONEST PART
>
> The Code tab was built for programmers, and it shows. There is a text box, a folder, and not much else. Nothing in this guide requires you to write code or read it. If a step asks you to type something, the exact text is printed.

SETUP · ONCE

Twenty minutes, in order.

1. **Check your plan.** /design needs a Pro, Max, Team or Enterprise subscription. The free tier can't publish the canvas. On Team it's on by default; on Enterprise, an administrator has to turn on *Artifacts* in the organisation's Claude Code settings first, so ask before you spend the twenty minutes.
2. **Install the Claude desktop app.** Download it from claude.com/download for macOS or Windows and sign in with the account that holds your subscription. The app includes Claude Code; Anthropic's own words are "no terminal required" and "you don't need to install Node.js or the CLI separately." On Windows only, the Code tab needs *Git for Windows* installed once (git-scm.com); install it, then restart Claude.
3. **Make the folder.** Anywhere you like, for example `Documents/Visuals`. Inside it, create two things: an empty folder called `references`, and put your logo file there too (PNG or SVG). Page 6 adds the brand file.
4. **Open the Code tab and pick that folder.** Click *Code* at the top of the app. Choose *Local*, then *Select folder*, and point it at the folder you just made. If clicking Code asks you to upgrade, that's the plan (step 1). This is the only "technical" moment, and it's a folder picker.
5. **Make sure it's current.** /design arrived in the Claude Code releases of August 17 to 21, 2026 (version 2.1.234). The desktop app updates itself when it launches; to force it, use *Claude → Check for Updates* on a Mac or *Help → Check for Updates* on Windows, then restart. If step 6 says the command isn't recognised, this is why.
6. **Run it once, badly, on purpose.** Type `/design a thank-you card for my customers` and press Enter. Claude works for a minute, then prints a link. Your browser opens the canvas. If instead it says it can't publish, go back to step 1: it's the plan or the artifacts setting, not you.

What you'll see

A page on claude.ai with a few drafts laid out next to each other. It's private to you until you share it. Every time Claude revises, the same link updates. Type `/artifacts` any time to list every canvas you've made and reopen one.

What this first draft will be

Generic. Correct, but it could be anyone's card. That's expected: Claude knows nothing about your business yet. Pages 6 and 7 fix that, and it's most of what separates a usable visual from a demo.

About the permission prompt. Depending on the permission mode shown next to the send button, the first publish may ask whether Claude may upload the page to claude.ai to host it. Say yes; that is what makes the canvas exist. Nothing is public unless you open the canvas and click Share.

SETUP · ONCE

Your brand file.
One page Claude reads before it draws anything.

Claude Code looks for a file named `CLAUDE.md` in your folder and reads it at the start of every session. Anthropic's documentation says that when that file describes a design system, Claude ranks it above its own choices. So this is where your brand goes.

Create a plain text file in your folder, name it exactly `CLAUDE.md`, and paste in the shape below, filled in. The worksheet on page 13 helps you find the values if you've never written them down. Don't know your exact colour codes? Open your logo in any image program and use the eyedropper, or ask Claude: *"read logo.png and tell me the two main colours as hex codes."*

```
# Brand
Business: Toiture Beaulieu, residential roofing, Sherbrooke. Family-run since 2009.
Audience: homeowners 35 to 65. They want a straight answer and a firm price.

## Design system
- Colours: primary #1F3A5F (deep blue), accent #E07A1F (orange), background #F7F5F0
- Typography: DM Sans for everything. Bold headlines, regular body. No script fonts.
- Logo: logo.png in this folder. Never stretch it, never recolour it.
- Spacing: generous margins. One message per visual. Never more than 12 words in a headline.

## Voice
- Plain French, then plain English. Say the price. No exclamation marks, no "revolutionary".
- We never show competitors, never use stock photos of people who don't work here.

## References
- Screenshots I like are in /references. Design in their spirit, don't copy them.
```

The business is invented. The shape is the point: colours as codes, one font, the logo's rules, and a voice line short enough that Claude actually follows it.

Why colour codes and not names

"Blue" is a thousand blues. #1F3A5F is one. The six-character code is what every design and print tool understands, and it's what makes the fortieth visual match the first.

One font, stated once

Claude can load any font from Google Fonts. Name the one you already use on your website or invoices. If you don't have one, DM Sans or Inter are free, readable, and boring in the right way.

STEP 01

Never prompt from zero.

You can't describe taste, and you don't have to. Show it. Three screenshots of designs you like, dropped in the folder, do more than three paragraphs about "modern but warm".

Claude has seen millions of posters. Asked for one with no reference, it gives you the average of all of them, which is exactly the visual you scroll past. Given three you chose, it works in their vein, and the draft is recognisably yours before you've touched it.

Where to look, and what to save

PLACE	WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR	SEARCH
Pinterest	Posters, flyers, social posts. The widest range, the fastest to scan.	Your format plus a mood: "flyer roofing bold", "instagram post minimal price"
Land-book	Website hero sections and landing pages. If you're making a one-pager, start here.	Browse by colour or industry
Dribbble	Designer-grade layouts. Higher polish, sometimes too much.	"poster", "social media template", your trade
Your own feed	The competitor post you saved, the supplier ad you noticed. If it stopped your scroll, it works.	Screenshot it when you see it

The four rules

1. **Screenshot what stops your scroll,** not what you think is "professional". The reaction is the data.
2. **Three per brief, no more.** Ten references average out into mush. Three give Claude a direction.
3. **Name them.** `references/poster-bold-orange.png` beats `Screenshot 2026-09-04.png`. You'll reuse them, and Claude can tell them apart.
4. **Inspiration, not copying.** Another company's logo, photo or exact layout is theirs. Take the feeling, the structure, the colour balance. Page 12 has the line.

> BUILD THE LIBRARY ONCE
>
> Twenty minutes on a Sunday, twenty screenshots, sorted into `references/posters`, `references/social`, `references/one-pagers`. From then on, every brief starts with "pull from references/social" and you never repeat the hunt.

STEP 02

Arm it before you ask.

A **skill**, in Claude Code, is a written method Claude follows when you name it. Designers have written some, and they're free. This is the part the web app can't do.

Install one, once. Start with Anthropic's own.

1. **Click the + button** next to the prompt box, then *Plugins*, then *Add plugin*. A browser opens with the official Anthropic marketplace already in it. No commands to type.
2. **Find** `frontend-design` and install it for your user account, so it works in every folder. Its own description: "guidance for distinctive, intentional visual design… choices that don't read as templated defaults."
3. **Check it took.** Click + then *Plugins* again; it should be listed. If the app says to run `/reload-plugins`, type that and press Enter.

Then, in every brief

One sentence: **"Use the frontend-design skill when you create these."** Skills run when named or when Claude decides they apply; naming it removes the guess.

SKILL	WHAT IT GIVES YOU	HOW IT INSTALLS
frontend-design	Anthropic's own anti-default design guidance. The zero-friction option.	+ → Plugins → Add plugin. Free.
impeccable	The community favourite, by Paul Bakaus: 23 design commands built around stripping out AI-generated tells. Open source.	Its own catalogue: type `/plugin marketplace add pbakaus/impeccable`, then `/plugin` and install from the list. If the app says `/plugin` isn't available here, this one needs the command-line Claude Code. Free.
Your brand file	Already a skill in effect: CLAUDE.md is read every session (page 6).	Nothing to install.

Install paths per code.claude.com (Desktop application; Discover and install plugins) and impeccable.style, September 2026. If the wording moves, those pages win.

What a skill is not. Not software running in the background; a document Claude reads, which you can open and read yourself. Anthropic's warning applies to any plugin: install only from sources you trust.

STEP 03

The sixty-second loop.

The old way with any AI tool: describe, wait, get one result, describe again, wait again. The canvas replaces most of that with clicking.

1 · DESCRIBE

Type `/design` plus the brief from page 10. Plain language. Claude works for a minute and prints a link.

2 · PICK

Open the link. Several directions sit side by side on one canvas. Pick the one that's closest. Ignore the rest; don't try to merge them.

3 · TWEAK

Click the element you want changed. Where saving is enabled for your account, a properties panel opens: type, colour, size, spacing. Retype a headline in place. Save publishes a new version of the same link.

4 · EXPORT

PNG for the web and social; PDF for print or email. If you'd rather have it as a web page, tell Claude in the app: *"build the second one as a page."*

Ask for aggressive tweaks

The step most people don't know exists. Add one line to the brief: **"Add tweakable controls. I want to edit as much as possible."** Claude builds a small panel of sliders into the canvas, for the things you'd otherwise re-prompt for: paper colour, type size, accent colour, spacing. Every slider updates the visual live. Seeing beats guessing, every time.

First

Pick the one direction you like. Drop the rest. Don't ask for "a mix of two and four".

Then

Turn the dials: paper, type, accent. Small moves. You're tuning, not redesigning.

Always

Content changes by prompt ("shorten the headline"). Style changes by slider. Mixing them up is where the time goes.

IF THE CANVAS IS VIEW-ONLY

Saving from the canvas is enabled per account and may not be on for yours yet. You still have the loop: export the PNG, and make changes by telling Claude in the app what to move. It republishes to the same link. Slower than clicking, still faster than a designer's inbox.

STEAL THIS

The exact prompt. Four inputs, every time.

Type this in the Code tab, after `/design`. Change the words in the first and second parts; keep the third and fourth as they are.

```
> /design a Facebook post announcing our fall roof-inspection special.

1 · FORMAT. One square image, 1080 by 1080. Headline, one line of detail, the price, our logo. French. Give me three different directions with clearly different layouts, not three shades of the same one.

2 · REFERENCE. I put three screenshots in /references/social. Do one direction pulling from each. Their spirit, not a copy.

3 · SKILLS. Use the frontend-design skill when you create these (and impeccable, if it's installed). Read CLAUDE.md first and follow the brand section.

4 · CONTROLS. Add tweakable controls for paper colour, accent colour, type size and spacing. I want to edit as much as possible.
```

INPUT	WHAT IT DOES	WHAT GOES WRONG WITHOUT IT
1 · Format	What you're making, in plain words: the thing, the size, what must be on it, the language.	You get a poster when you needed a post, or a beautiful layout with no price on it.
2 · Reference	Points Claude at your screenshots (page 7) and asks for one direction per reference.	The average of the internet. Correct and forgettable.
3 · Skills	Names the design skill so it actually runs, and sends Claude to your brand file first.	Skills sit unused. Your colours become "a nice blue".
4 · Controls	Asks for the slider panel so style changes are a drag, not a re-prompt.	Every small change costs a minute of waiting and a paragraph of describing.

WHY "THREE DIRECTIONS, CLEARLY DIFFERENT"

Left alone, Claude tends to give you three variations of one idea. Asking for different layouts, and one per reference, forces the spread. You're choosing between directions on the canvas, not between fonts. Fonts are what the sliders are for.

YOUR FIRST HOUR

Three briefs to start with.

In the order most shops need them. Each is the first input of the prompt on page 10; parts 2 to 4 stay the same. Put the real words of your business in.

A · The social post

```
/design a Facebook post for our page. Square, 1080 by 1080. One sentence a homeowner would stop for, our logo, no price this time. The subject: we book fall gutter cleaning in September so the calendar isn't full in October. Three directions, clearly different layouts, in French.
```

Why first: it's the smallest, you post one a week, and the loop gets fast on it.

B · The one-pager

```
/design a one-page flyer for the counter and the truck, letter size, portrait. What we do (four services, one line each), the area we cover, the phone number big, the logo, and one line about being family-run since 2009. Print-friendly: no full-bleed dark backgrounds. Three directions.
```

Why second: the flyer you hand out is the one visual most businesses never update. Export the PDF and take it to the print shop; ask them for a proof before a full run.

C · The job ad

```
/design a job posting graphic for Facebook and Indeed, 1200 by 628 landscape. Role: roofer, 3 years experience, full-time, Sherbrooke. Say the pay range, the schedule, and that we pay for the safety training. Our logo, our colours, no stock photo of a smiling stranger. Three directions.
```

Why third: the job ad with the pay range on it gets applicants; the one with "competitive salary" gets ignored. The visual is the easy part; put the number in.

After each one: export, then save the winning canvas link in a note called *visuals log* with the date and what it was for. Next month you'll want to make the same post again with new dates, and "update the September gutter post with October dates" is a five-second brief when Claude can find the original.

THE HONEST PART

What it can't do, and the rules.

What it can't do

- **Print production.** The PDF is RGB, screen colours. A print shop may need CMYK, bleed and crop marks. Ask them; most will convert a clean PDF for a small fee, and always get a proof.
- **Your photos, from nothing.** It can lay out a photo you give it. It can't take one of your crew. A phone photo in good light beats any generated image of "a roofer".
- **Spelling you didn't check.** AI-drafted text on a visual is still text. Read every word before it goes out, in both languages. A typo on a flyer lives for a year.
- **Stay still.** It's a research preview. Buttons will move, the export options may change, and a feature that works today may be renamed next month. The method survives; the screenshots don't.

The rules

RULE	WHY
No customer data in a brief	A visual never needs a client's name, address or invoice. If a testimonial goes on a flyer, get written permission first and use the words they approved.
References inspire, they aren't copied	Another business's logo, photos and exact layout are theirs. Take the structure and the feeling. If someone could mistake your flyer for theirs, you went too far.
Your logo is a file, not a description	Put the real file in the folder and tell Claude never to redraw it. A "similar" logo is a different logo, and it's the one thing on the page that has to be exact.
Fonts you're allowed to use	Google Fonts are free for commercial use. A font that came with a paid program may not be licensed for a flyer you print 500 of. When in doubt, name a Google font in your brand file.
Loi 96, if you're in Quebec	Public signage and commercial publications have French-language rules. Make the French version first, and make it the one that's at least as prominent. Then the English.
Say what's AI when it matters	A layout doesn't need a label. A generated image of a "customer" or a "job site" does, or better, don't use one. Trust is the asset; a fake photo spends it.

WORKSHEET

Your brand file, on paper first.

Fill this in by hand, then type it into `CLAUDE.md` using the shape on page 6. Twenty minutes. If a line is hard, that's the line worth doing.

Business, in one sentence (what, for whom, where, since when)

The customer, in one sentence (who they are, what they want from you)

Primary colour (hex code)

Font (one; a Google font if unsure)

Accent colour (hex code)

Logo file name

Background (hex code)

Logo rules (never stretch, never recolour, minimum size)

How we talk (three lines: language, tone, one thing we never say)

What we never show (competitors, stock people, prices without conditions, and so on)

Three references I've saved, and what I like about each

1

2

3

CHECKLIST

Before it goes out.

Ninety seconds, every visual, every time. Print this page and keep it by the screen.

	CHECK	WHAT "YES" LOOKS LIKE
☐	**Every word read aloud**, in each language it's in	No typo, no missing accent, the phone number dialled once to be sure
☐	**One message**	A stranger can say what it's about in five words
☐	**The logo is the real file**, not redrawn, not stretched	Side by side with the original, identical
☐	**Colours match the brand file**	Eyedropper on the export reads your hex codes
☐	**Right size for where it's going**	1080×1080 or 1080×1350 for a feed post; 1200×628 for a link or job ad; Letter for print
☐	**Readable on a phone**	Sent to your own phone, the headline reads without zooming
☐	**The price has its conditions**, or there's no price	"From", "until", "taxes extra" where they apply
☐	**Nothing borrowed**	No one else's logo, photo or exact layout; no client's name without permission
☐	**French version exists** and is at least as prominent (Quebec)	Both files exported; French posted first
☐	**Logged**	Canvas link, date and purpose in the visuals log, so next month's update is a five-second brief

THE ONE THAT CATCHES THE MOST

Reading it aloud. Eyes skip; the voice doesn't. Most of the errors we've seen on printed flyers would have been caught by the person who made it, reading it once out loud before sending it.

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WHERE THIS CAME FROM

Sources, and what's next.

Everything this guide says about how the tools behave comes from the makers' own documentation, read in September 2026: Anthropic's announcement of Claude Design (April 17, 2026); the Claude Help Center article "Get started with Claude Design" (updated August 6, 2026); the Claude Code documentation pages "Share session output as artifacts", "Get started with the desktop app", "Desktop application", "Discover and install prebuilt plugins" and the Week 34 release notes (August 17 to 21, 2026), which introduced /design; the frontend-design skill's own description in Anthropic's official plugin catalogue; and impeccable.style for that skill's install steps. A research preview changes; when a step here disagrees with what's on your screen, the documentation wins.

Modus is an operations and AI consulting firm for founder-led businesses of 3 to 30 people, tied to no platform or partner program. This guide is free because the method isn't the hard part; doing it every week is, and that's a different conversation.

If you want the next step

- **Guide 01, Choose your AI without guessing.** If you haven't picked a plan yet, or you're not sure whose account this should be on.
- **Guide 02, Keep up in 5 minutes a week.** The news brief that tells you when a tool like this changes, before your competitors notice.
- **The AI 100 series** at modusai.ca/en/ai-course: the business file AI reads from before it does anything for you, one piece a week.



Rather have us do it?

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1 877 654-1877