BEGINNER · 8 min read · October 31, 2026 · By Kelly Stratton

The Best Claude Skills for Beginners, and How to Add Them

Get more out of Claude in a few clicks: the five skills I'd hand any beginner, what each one does for you, how to add it in under a minute, and a prompt to paste so you see it working today.

Everyone tells you to install Claude skills, and nobody tells you which ones. Here are the five I'd hand anyone just starting out, in the order to add them. Each one makes Claude better at something you already do, and each takes about a minute to add. By the end of this page you'll have Claude writing in your voice, checking its own advice, pointing you to free lessons, dressing your slides, and building new skills for you on request.

> THE FIVE, AT A GLANCE
>
> **1. Skill Creator** builds skills for you. **2. Humanizer** makes AI writing sound like you. **3. Academy Guide** points you to the free lesson that teaches what you asked. **4. Discernment Nudge** adds questions to check before you act on advice. **5. Theme Factory** makes your slides and docs match.

PART 1 What Is a Claude Skill?

A skill is a page of instructions Claude keeps on hand for one kind of job. Think of it as a recipe card you hand Claude once. Without it, you'd type the same long prompt every time: "check my draft for these ten things, keep my facts, don't add claims." With the skill added, you say "humanize this," and Claude pulls the card and follows it.

Three things worth knowing:

- **Claude decides when to use a skill.** Every skill has a short description of the jobs it's for. When your request fits, Claude reaches for it on its own. You can also name it to be sure: "Use Humanizer on this."
- **Skills are free and run on the free plan.** Claude runs them with its code tool, so Code execution needs to be on. You'll find that in Settings, under Capabilities.
- **A skill is only as trustworthy as who wrote it.** Four of these five come from Anthropic, the company that makes Claude. Humanizer comes from an independent developer and is used by tens of thousands of people. I'd add skills from sources like these, and skip ones you can't trace.

PART 2 How Do You Add a Skill to Claude?

There are two ways, and both take about a minute. Do this on the web or in the desktop app.

If the skill is in Claude's list (Skill Creator and Theme Factory are):

1. Open Claude and click Settings.
2. Under Customize, click Skills.
3. Type the skill's name in the search box.
4. Click Add. Or click Try in chat to test it before you add it.

If it isn't in the list (Humanizer, Academy Guide, and Discernment Nudge may not be):

1. Click the download button in that skill's section below. You get a small ZIP file.
2. In Claude, open Settings, then Skills.
3. Click Add at the top right and choose to upload a skill.
4. Pick the ZIP you downloaded. Leave it zipped.

> ADD THEM ONE AT A TIME
>
> Add one skill, use it for a day or two, then add the next. You'll learn what each one does, and you'll notice right away if one isn't earning its place.

PART 3 The 5 Best Claude Skills for Beginners

1. Skill Creator, from Anthropic

What it does for you. You don’t need to know how skills work. Tell Claude something you do every week, and it interviews you, writes the skill, and tests it. Next time, that job is one word instead of a whole prompt.

Why it’s first. Every other skill on this list is a recipe someone else wrote. This one writes recipes for your life: your weekly to-do list, your client follow-up email, your meal plan in the format you like. It turns Claude from a tool you prompt into a tool that already knows how you work.

How to add it. Search **skill-creator** in your Skills list and click Add.

Paste this to try it:

PROMPT

```
I want a skill for something I do every Monday: I paste my messy notes from the week and turn them into a to-do list grouped by Home, Work, and Errands, with the three most important items at the top. Ask me what you need to know, then build the skill.
```

Claude will ask a few questions, like what your notes usually look like and how you want the list to read. Answer them, and the skill is yours. Next Monday you paste your notes and type “weekly to-do.”

2. Humanizer, by blader

What it does for you. Wikipedia keeps a public list of the signs that AI wrote something: the words it overuses, the sentence shapes, the tidy wrap-ups. This skill checks your draft against that list and fixes what it finds, without changing what you said.

Why you want it. If you use AI for emails, posts, or bios, people can tell. This takes the AI sound out while keeping your facts and your length.

How to add it. Search **humanizer** in your Skills list. If it isn't there, download it here, then upload it in Settings under Skills.

Download the Humanizer skill

Paste this to try it:

PROMPT

```
Use Humanizer on the draft below. Keep every fact and keep it about the same length. Then show me a two-line note on what you changed.

[paste your draft]
```

Try it on the last email AI helped you write. The before and after will show you exactly what the AI tells were.

3. Academy Guide, from Anthropic

What it does for you. Ask Claude how to do something in Claude, and it points you to the free Claude Academy lesson that teaches it, so you learn the whole thing instead of getting one answer and coming back tomorrow with the next question.

Why you want it. Claude Academy is Anthropic's free course library, and most people never find it. This skill brings the right lesson to you, inside the chat, at the moment you need it.

How to add it. Search **academy** in your Skills list. If it isn't there, download it here, then upload it in Settings under Skills.

Download the Academy Guide skill

Paste this to try it:

```
PROMPT

I want to set up a Project in Claude for my small business so it remembers my details every time. How do I do that, and is there a lesson I should take?
```

You'll get the steps, and a link to the free lesson that covers Projects start to finish.

4. Discernment Nudge, from Anthropic

What it does for you. When Claude gives you advice, a plan, a quote, or a draft you might act on, it adds two or three short questions at the end: the facts to check, the thing it assumed, the detail it didn't have. It's the friend who asks "are you sure about that number?" before you send it.

Why you want it. Claude sounds confident even when it's guessing. This skill makes it show you where to look twice, once per conversation, only on the answers that matter.

How to add it. Download it here, then upload it in Settings under Skills. It wasn't in Claude's list when I checked.

Download the Discernment Nudge skill

Paste this to try it:

```
PROMPT

I run a mobile dog grooming business and I'm thinking about raising my prices by $10 in
January. Give me your honest advice on whether to do it and how to tell my clients.
```

Read the advice, then read the questions under it. Those are the things to check before you decide, and they’re usually the ones you’d have skipped.

5. Theme Factory, from Anthropic

What it does for you. Pick one of ten ready-made looks, each with its own colors and fonts, and the slides, documents, and one-page sites you make with Claude all match. No more guessing at colors or ending up with the same blue-and-purple page everyone else gets.

Why you want it. A matching look is what makes something feel finished. This gives you one in a sentence.

How to add it. Search **theme-factory** in your Skills list and click Add.

Paste this to try it:

```
PROMPT

Make me a one-page flyer for a Saturday bake sale: "Fresh Pie Today," 9 to noon, Maple Street.
Show me the theme choices first, and I'll pick one.
```

Claude shows you the ten themes by name, like Ocean Depths, Golden Hour, and Modern Minimalist. Pick one, and it builds the flyer in that look. Say “same theme” next time and your sign, your menu, and your post all match.

PART 4 How Do You Know a Skill Is Working?

The first time, name it: “Use Humanizer on this,” “use Theme Factory for this flyer.” Claude pulls the skill and follows it, and you’ll often see it say so. After that, you can drop the name. When your request fits, Claude uses the skill on its own.

If nothing seems different, open Settings, click Skills, and check two things: the skill is switched on, and Code execution is on under Capabilities. If it still isn’t working, start a new chat. Skills are picked up when a conversation starts.

> THE TELL THAT A SKILL ISN'T LOADED
>
> Claude answers like it always has and never mentions the skill. Name it once in your prompt. If it still ignores it, the skill isn't on.

FAQ Questions People Ask About Claude Skills

Straight answers

What are Claude skills?
A skill is a set of written instructions Claude keeps on hand for one kind of job, like making your writing sound human or styling your slides. Once you add it, Claude uses it on its own when your request fits, so you don't have to explain the job every time.

How do I add a skill to Claude?
Open Claude, go to Settings, and click Skills. Type the skill's name in the search box and click Add. If it isn't in the list, download it as a file, then click Add at the top of the Skills page and upload the file without unzipping it.

How do I install Claude skills from GitHub?
Many skills live on GitHub, where people share code. In the Claude app you add them as a ZIP file: download the skill's folder as a ZIP, open Settings, click Skills, then Add, and upload it. For three of the five in this guide, the ZIP is ready to download in that skill's section.

Are Claude skills free?
Yes. Every skill in this guide is free, and skills work on Claude's free and paid plans. Claude runs skills with its code tool, so Code execution needs to be on in Settings, under Capabilities.

What are the best Claude skills for beginners?
Start with Skill Creator, which builds skills for you, Humanizer for writing that sounds like you, Academy Guide for free lessons, Discernment Nudge for questions to check before you act on advice, and Theme Factory for slides and docs that match.

Can I make my own Claude skill?
Yes, and you don't need to know how skills work. Add Skill Creator, then tell Claude something you do every week and ask it to turn that into a skill. It asks a few questions, writes the skill, and you can use it from then on.

How do I know a Claude skill is working?
Ask for the kind of job the skill is for and name it once, like "use Humanizer on this." After that, Claude uses it on its own when your request fits. If nothing changes, open Settings, click Skills, and check the skill is switched on.

SOURCES Where This Comes From

- Anthropic's skills: github.com/anthropics/skills (Skill Creator, Academy Guide, Discernment Nudge, Theme Factory; Apache 2.0 license). The downloads on this page are the original files, unchanged, with their licenses included.
- Humanizer by blader: github.com/blader/humanizer (MIT license), built on Wikipedia's Signs of AI writing.
- Claude Help Center, Using skills in Claude.

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