

PRODUCTIVITY · 14 min read · August 21, 2026

13 ChatGPT Features Most People Never Find

The five features from the video plus eight more, what each one actually does, how to turn it on, and which plans have it. Study Mode, scheduled tasks, monitoring, temporary chat, the file Library, source controls, and more.

If you're like most people, you open ChatGPT, type your question into the box, get an answer, and close it. That's the whole relationship. And that box is honestly a small corner of what's in there.

Everything in this guide is real and already sitting in your ChatGPT right now. Nothing to download, nothing to set up. Most of it is just tucked somewhere you'd never think to click.

ONE QUICK HEADS UP

Some of these work on every plan, including the free one. Others are paid only, and a couple aren't available in the UK, EU, or Switzerland yet. I've noted which is which on every single feature. So if you go looking for something and it isn't there, check that line first. It's probably not you.

GROUP 1 The Five From The Video

1. Study Mode

Turns ChatGPT into a tutor instead of an answer machine. In normal chat, asking about a topic gets you the finished answer, which is fine for work and useless for learning. Study Mode does the opposite. It asks you questions, gives hints, explains one step at a time, and checks whether you actually followed before it moves on. It builds practice quizzes as you go and adjusts based on what you keep getting wrong.

Why you'd want it: reading an explanation feels like learning and mostly isn't. Being asked about something is what makes it stick. This is the difference between ChatGPT doing your homework and ChatGPT getting you through the exam.

How to turn it on: type `@study` in the message box, or press **+** and choose Study from the menu. You can also go straight to **chatgpt.com/studymode**.

Plans: Free, Plus, Pro, and Team.

PROMPT

@study Teach me the Krebs cycle and quiz me as we go. Start with what I need to understand before any of it makes sense, and don't move on until I get it right.

THE PART THAT MAKES IT WORTH IT

Upload your own class notes, slides, or textbook chapter first, then start Study Mode. It will teach from your actual material instead of the general internet, which means it quizzes you on what your teacher is going to test you on.

2. Scheduled Tasks

ChatGPT can run something on a schedule without you being there. You write the instruction once, pick when it should run, and it goes off on its own and sends you the result. Daily, weekly, one time next Tuesday, your choice.

Why you'd want it: anything you currently do by remembering to do it. A Monday morning summary of your industry's news. A weekly check on your competitors' pricing. A reminder that arrives with the information already gathered instead of just a nudge telling you to go gather it.

How to turn it on: just ask for it in a chat. Say when you want it to run and ChatGPT sets it up. Manage everything, including pausing and deleting, under **Scheduled**.

Plans: Go, Plus, Pro, Business, and Enterprise, on web and mobile. Results reach you by push notification, email, or both.

PROMPT

```
Every Monday at 7am, search for the biggest AI news from the past week and send me a short summary with the three stories that actually matter for small business owners. Skip anything that's just a product announcement.
```

3. Conditional Monitoring

This is the smarter half of Scheduled Tasks, and the reason it's listed separately. A scheduled task runs and reports every time. A monitoring task checks quietly over and over and only interrupts you when the thing you're waiting for actually happens.

Why you'd want it: it's the difference between a daily email telling you the price didn't change and one message the moment it does. It remembers what it saw on previous runs, so it can tell what's actually new, and it can stop on its own once the condition is met.

How to turn it on: same as a scheduled task, but say what the alert condition is. The words "only tell me when" are what flips it from reporting to monitoring.

Plans: same as Scheduled Tasks.

PROMPT

Check the price of this flight once a day and only tell me when it drops below \$300. Once it does, message me right away and stop checking.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Prices are the obvious one, but the pattern works anywhere you're currently refreshing a page: a sold-out reservation opening up, a job board posting a role with your title, a permit status changing, a competitor finally publishing the thing they teased. Anything you check repeatedly and usually find unchanged is a monitoring task you haven't set up yet.

4. Temporary Chat

A conversation that leaves no trace. It doesn't read your saved memories, doesn't create new ones, and doesn't show up in your chat history.

Why you'd want it: ChatGPT gets more useful the more it knows about you, right up until the moment it doesn't. If you ask one question far outside your normal life, it can quietly color everything afterward. Temporary Chat is for the one-off question, the file you don't want influencing future answers, and anything you'd rather not have sitting in your sidebar.

How to turn it on: open the model selector at the top of a chat and switch on **Temporary chat**.

Plans: all plans.

WORTH KNOWING

Temporary chats aren't used to train the models and don't appear in your history, but OpenAI may hold them for up to 30 days for safety review. Private from your account is not the same as gone. Treat it as "keep this out of my ChatGPT," not as a secure vault.

5. Library

Every file you upload to ChatGPT, and every file it creates for you, gets saved in one place instead of being buried in whatever conversation you were having that day.

Why you'd want it: most people re-upload the same PDF five times because finding the old chat is harder than just dragging the file in again. Library makes a file a thing you own rather than something trapped in one conversation. Deleting the chat doesn't delete the file.

How to turn it on: it's already on. To reuse something, open the attachment menu in any chat and choose **Add from Library**, then pick your file. You can search and filter by file type.

Plans: Plus, Pro, and Business only. **Not available in the UK, EU, or Switzerland.**

PROMPT

Add from Library, then: Compare this year's numbers against the report I uploaded last quarter and tell me what changed.

GROUP 2 The Other Eight

6. Deep Research Source Controls

Deep Research reads across the web and writes you a real report. Source controls decide where it's allowed to read.

Why you'd want it: a research report is only as trustworthy as what it read, and the open web is full of confident nonsense. You can hand it a shortlist of sites you already trust and either tell it to weight those higher or refuse to look anywhere else. It's also faster, because it isn't wading through junk.

How to turn it on: in the prompt window, choose **Sites**, then **Manage sites**. Add the domains you want. Pick whether to prioritize them or restrict research to only them.

PROMPT

Research this using only the sites I've added, plus the PDF I uploaded. If something can't be verified in those sources, say so instead of filling the gap.

7. Reasoning Levels

You can tell ChatGPT how hard to think before it answers.

Why you'd want it: the default is a compromise. Simple questions get slower answers than they need, and genuinely hard ones get less thought than they deserve. Turning it down makes quick lookups fast. Turning it up meaningfully improves anything involving multiple steps, careful comparison, or a plan you're going to act on.

How to turn it on: set your default in settings, or change it mid-conversation. Options run roughly Light, Standard, Extended, and Heavy, and which ones you see depends on your plan.

Plans: Plus, Business, and Pro. Higher levels use more of your usage allowance.

WHEN TO ACTUALLY REACH FOR IT

Turn it up when a wrong answer would cost you something: a contract you're reviewing, a decision between real options, math you're going to rely on. Leave it low for looking something up, rewriting a sentence, or drafting an email. Most people never touch this and pay for it in both directions.

8. Memory Sources

ChatGPT's memory is two separate systems, and you can control them independently.

Saved memories are specific facts it has written down about you. **Chat history reference** is it drawing on your past conversations more loosely.

Why you'd want it: when ChatGPT starts answering as if it knows things about you that you don't remember telling it, this is why. Splitting the two lets you keep the useful part and switch off the vague part. Someone who wants it to remember their business but not drag in every unrelated conversation can have exactly that.

How to turn it on: Settings → Personalization → Memory. Toggle each layer separately. You can view, edit, and delete individual saved memories.

Plans: saved memories on all plans, chat history reference on Plus and Pro.

DO THIS ONCE

Open your saved memories and actually read them. Most people have never looked. You'll usually find several that are outdated or were never true, quietly shaping every answer you get. Delete those and the quality jumps immediately.

9. Plugins

Reusable bundles of capability you install once. A plugin can add new skills, connect an outside service, or both, and everything you install becomes available in new chats.

Why you'd want it: it's the difference between explaining your workflow every time and having it built in. This is also now the main directory for finding what ChatGPT can do, so it's worth browsing even if you install nothing.

How to turn it on: open the **Plugins** tab, browse, and install. Some will ask you to connect an outside account first.

Plans: available in Chat and Work across web, desktop, and mobile.

THE MISTAKE EVERYONE MAKES

Installing a plugin does not add it to the conversation you're already in. Start a new chat after installing or it will look broken and you'll assume it doesn't work.

10. @ App Access

Pull an outside app directly into a conversation by typing @ and its name.

Why you'd want it: it removes the copy-paste round trip between ChatGPT and the tool you were going to use anyway. You stay in one place and the app does its part inline. Launch partners include Canva, Spotify, Figma, Zillow, Expedia, Booking.com, and Coursera.

How to turn it on: type @ followed by the app name, or add it from the + tools menu.

PROMPT

@Canva Make me five Instagram post designs from the outline above. Keep the fonts and colors consistent across all five.

11. Shared Projects

A project is a folder holding chats, files, and custom instructions on one topic. Sharing it lets other people work inside it with you.

Why you'd want it: everyone in the project gets answers informed by the same files and the same instructions, so you stop getting five different versions of the truth. Useful for a team, a family planning something, a study group, or a client you're collaborating with. You control whether each person can just chat in it or actually edit it.

How to turn it on: create a project, then invite people and choose **Can chat** or **Can edit** for each.

Plans: all plans, including Free and Go.

12. ChatGPT Work

Not a chat. You give it an outcome and it goes and produces the finished thing, working across your connected apps and files, breaking the job into steps, and staying on it for hours if that's what it takes.

Why you'd want it: regular ChatGPT hands you a draft you then have to assemble into something. Work hands you the spreadsheet, the deck, the document, or the site. It's the difference between asking for help with a task and handing off the task.

How to turn it on: available as its own mode in ChatGPT.

Plans: paid plans except Free and Go.

13. Sites

Describe a website and ChatGPT builds it, hosts it, and gives you a link to share. No hosting account, no deployment, no code.

Why you'd want it: it collapses the gap between "I need a page for this" and having one. A booking page, a menu, a simple calculator, a tracker for something you're running, a one-page site for a side project. You can keep talking to it to change things after it's live.

How to turn it on: on the web, go to **More → Sites**, or straight to **chatgpt.com/sites**.

Plans: public beta on Plus, Pro, Business, Enterprise, and Edu, with usage limits during beta. **Not available in the UK, EU, or Switzerland.**

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Say you run a small service business and you keep texting people the same three things: what you offer, what it costs, and how to book. That's a Sites page. Describe it in a sentence, get a link back, and put the link in your bio. When your prices change you tell ChatGPT and the page updates.

The takeaway

Thirteen is a lot, so don't try to learn all of them at once.

It helps to think about them in three buckets. Some change how ChatGPT works with you, like Study Mode, Reasoning Levels, and Temporary Chat. Some let it keep working after you leave, like Scheduled Tasks, Conditional Monitoring, and ChatGPT Work. And the rest connect ChatGPT to the things you already use, like Library, Plugins, @ App Access, Shared Projects, Sites, Memory Sources, and Deep Research Source Controls.

Pick one this week. Just one. Use it a few times until it starts to feel natural, then add another.

That's where people tend to get stuck with AI. They see everything it does, try to learn it all at once, and end up going right back to the few things they already know.

You don't need all thirteen right now. Start with the one that saves you the most time or solves a problem you already have.

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