

AI at Work Academy

Your First AI Agent in 30 Minutes

Build a real agent that reads your project files
and drafts a morning briefing.
No code. No terminal.

A free guide by AI at Work Academy

What is an AI agent, really?

Before you build one, it helps to know the difference between three things people call "AI": a prompt, a workflow, and an agent.

PROMPT

You ask, it answers

"Summarize this document." You give Claude a task and Claude does that one task, right now, in the chat.

WORKFLOW

You run, it does steps

A saved sequence of steps you trigger. Same inputs, same path every time. Useful but not smart.

AGENT

It reads, decides, and drafts

You give it a goal and access to some files. It looks around, picks what matters, and produces a tailored result.

The agent you're about to build

A **Morning Focus Agent**. Every time you open Claude and say "run it," the agent reads the most recent files in one of your project folders, figures out what's actually going on, and drafts a short briefing with your top priorities, risks, and next actions for the day.

What makes this an agent (and not just a prompt)

- ✓ It reads files you didn't paste in — it picks what to look at.
- ✓ It decides what's important based on dates and content, not a fixed template.
- ✓ It produces a different briefing each day, because your work changed.
- ✓ You only have to say "run it" — not re-explain what to do every time.

The promise of this guide

In the next 25 minutes of reading and doing, you'll have a working agent drafting a real briefing from real files. Not a toy example — your actual project folder.

What you need

Three things. If you already have a Claude Pro or Max account, you're basically ready.

- 1 Claude Desktop (with Pro or Max)**
Install the Claude Desktop app from claude.ai/download and sign in with a Pro or Max account. The agent you're building runs inside Claude Desktop — not the browser.
- 2 A project folder in Google Drive**
Pick one folder that you actually open most mornings. A client engagement, a product you own, a campaign you run. It should contain the kind of files you'd want a summary of: notes, docs, meeting recaps, status updates. **5–15 files is perfect.**
- 3 10 minutes of focus**
The build takes about 25 minutes total. You'll be clicking and pasting, not writing code. Grab a coffee and keep this guide open on one side, Claude Desktop on the other.



No Google Drive? No problem.

The same pattern works with OneDrive, Dropbox, Notion, or any other file connector Claude supports. Pick the one where your project notes actually live. Everything else in this guide stays exactly the same.

Connect Google Drive

A "connector" is how Claude gets read-access to your files. You click a button, sign in with Google, and you're done. Claude can now see the folders you allow.

- 1 **Open Claude Desktop** and start a new conversation.
- 2 Click the **plus (+) icon** in the message box and choose **Connect apps**.
- 3 Find **Google Drive** in the list and click **Connect**. A Google sign-in window opens.
- 4 Sign in with the account that owns your project folder and click **Allow** when Google asks for access.
- 5 Back in Claude, make sure **Google Drive** is toggled on for this conversation.

Quick sanity check

Paste this into Claude to confirm the connector works:

PASTE INTO CLAUDE

```
List the 5 most recently modified files in my Google Drive folder called "[your folder name]". Just the names and dates.
```

If Claude returns the list, you're good. If it says it can't see the folder, check that the connector is toggled on in the conversation and that you signed in with the right Google account.



Your files stay yours

Claude only reads files when you ask it to, and only from the folders you connect. You can disconnect at any time from the same menu.

Teach Claude to be your agent

This is the part that turns Claude into an agent. You give it a set of instructions once, and it will follow them every time you say "run it." Paste the whole block below into Claude Desktop, exactly as it is. Replace the bracketed parts with your own folder and role.

PASTE INTO CLAUDE

You are my Morning Focus Agent.

Your job: every time I say "run the briefing," do this.

1. Look at my Google Drive folder called "[your folder name]".
2. Read the 5 to 8 most recently modified files in that folder. Skip anything that's clearly a template, an empty file, or a duplicate.
3. Understand what's happening across those files. Pay attention to: decisions, deadlines, open questions, risks, and anything marked blocker or urgent.
4. Draft a short briefing with exactly these 4 sections:
 - Context (2 sentences max – what's actually going on this week)
 - Top 3 priorities for today (ranked, one line each, with why)
 - Risks or open questions I should not forget
 - Suggested first action (one specific thing I should do right now)
5. Keep it tight. The whole briefing should fit on one screen.
6. Write it in plain language. No fluff, no "as an AI" disclaimers.

Context about me: I am a [your role] working on [what the folder is about].

My mornings are short, so the briefing needs to be scannable in 60 seconds.

When I say "run the briefing," go do the whole thing and return the briefing. Don't ask me to confirm the files first – just pick the best ones and go.

Ready?

What's happening here

You just gave Claude a role (the agent), a goal (the briefing), a tool (your Drive folder), and a trigger ("run the briefing"). That's the whole recipe. From now on, Claude will behave like a small employee who knows what to do and where to look.

Run your agent

Claude should have replied "Ready." Now give it the trigger and watch it work.

PASTE INTO CLAUDE

```
run the briefing
```

Claude will fetch the files from your Drive folder, read them, and draft your briefing in about 30 seconds. It'll look something like this:

WHAT YOU'LL SEE

Morning Focus — Tuesday

Context. The Q2 launch is on track but the design review slipped to Friday. The client flagged concerns about the onboarding copy in Monday's call.

Top 3 priorities for today

1. **Rewrite onboarding copy** — client flagged it twice, it's blocking sign-off.
2. **Confirm design review time** with Sam before EOD so Friday doesn't slip again.
3. **Review the analytics doc** — decisions are waiting on the numbers in there.

Risks / open questions. Legal review hasn't confirmed the new disclaimer. Vendor invoice #214 is still unpaid.

First action. Open the onboarding doc and fix the two paragraphs the client circled. That unblocks everything else.



Save it to your Desktop

Want to keep a record? Add this line after the briefing appears:

"Save that briefing as a markdown file to my Desktop with today's date in the filename." Claude will write the file for you.



You just built an AI agent.

A real one. It reads your files, decides what matters, and produces a tailored result. Say "run the briefing" again tomorrow — the output will be different, because your work changed.

Tune the agent to your work

The instructions you pasted are a starting point. Here are small tweaks that make the agent noticeably better for your specific role.



Pin file types

Tell the agent to always check your meeting-notes doc and your roadmap doc first, by name. It'll stop guessing and start with the source of truth.



Match your voice

Add: "Write it the way I would — direct, no corporate speak, use contractions." The briefings will start to sound like your own thinking.



Teach it what's urgent

Add: "Anything tagged PO, blocker, or client-facing is automatically a top priority." The agent will stop burying critical items.



Add a day-of-week twist

Add: "On Mondays, give me a week-ahead view. On Fridays, give me a weekly recap instead." Same agent, two modes.

A few ideas for your next agent

- ✓ **Weekly client recap agent** — reads the client folder, drafts the update email.
- ✓ **Research scan agent** — reads a "reading list" folder and summarises what you've saved.
- ✓ **Decision log agent** — scans notes and pulls out every decision made this week.
- ✓ **Risk radar agent** — flags things in your notes that sound like trouble.

You've done the hard part.

The leap from "AI answers my questions" to "AI runs a small job for me" is the biggest mindset shift in all of this. You just made it. Everything else is variations on what you already built.

AI at Work Academy

Want to take this all the way?

This guide got you to a working agent you trigger by hand. The course teaches you how to take the next steps most people never figure out on their own:

- ✓ Schedule your agent to run automatically every morning
- ✓ Pull from Gmail, Calendar, and Slack at the same time
- ✓ Deliver briefings to your team, not just yourself
- ✓ Build tools and full production agents with Claude Code
- ✓ Hand your agent more autonomy — safely

Start Module 1 free → workacademyai.com