Set Up a ChatGPT Project for Your Class

Explain your year once. Use it until July.

A chat on its own starts blank, so it starts with explaining: the year group, the curriculum, the topic, the format. A project holds all of that for the whole school year. Explain it once, and every chat in the project starts informed.

WHY 01

It starts informed

Outside a project, every chat begins with "I teach Year 4, we follow the National Curriculum, this term's topic is the Romans". Inside one, ChatGPT has your long-term plan, your schemes of work and your lesson plan template before you type a word.

YOU GET
Plans that fit your curriculum and your format, not a generic one.

WHY 02

It keeps school in one place

Every chat about your class sits in the project, beside the files it used. Set the project's memory to stay inside it, and your school work and your personal chats never mix.

YOU GET
Last month's plans one click away, and nothing personal leaking in.

WHY 03

It handles the 8.15am change

Supply cover. A closed hall. A pupil who can't hold a pencil this week. An observation moved to tomorrow. The project already knows the plan, so the change is one line to ask for, and the answer comes back in your format.

YOU GET
A workable plan in minutes, not a lunchtime rebuilding one.

THE ONE RULE

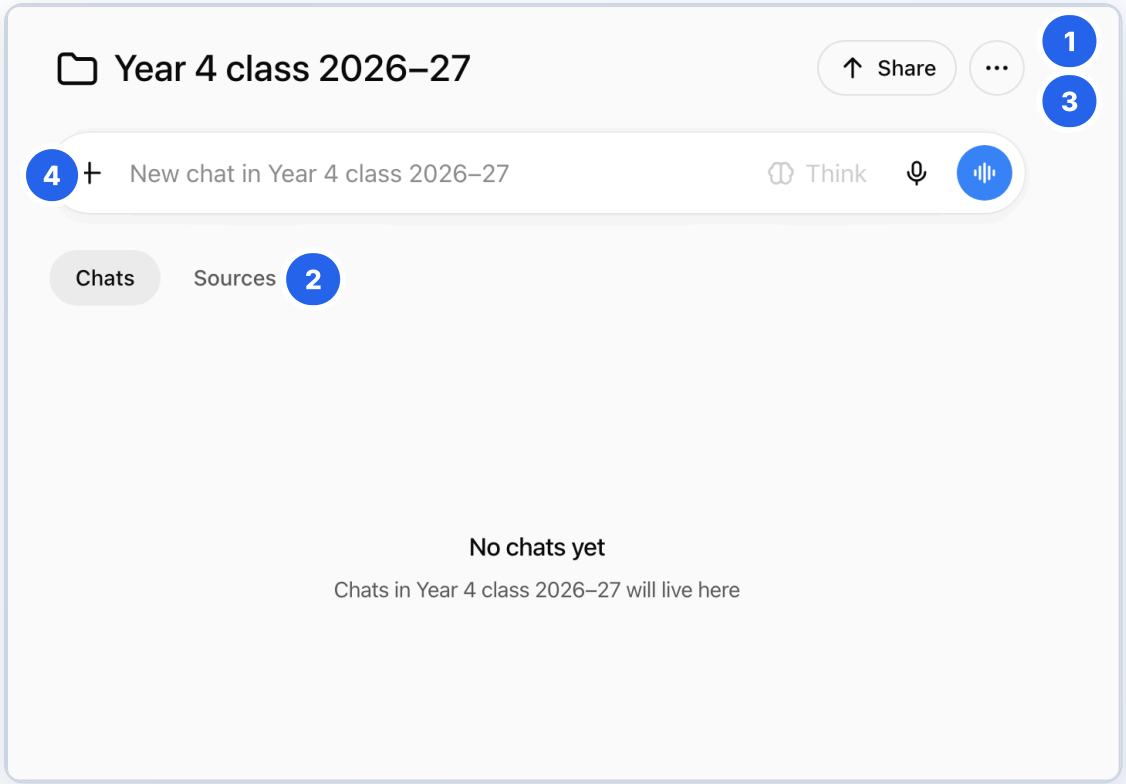
A project holds your teaching, never your pupils. No names, no personal details, nothing that could identify a child. Page 3 shows where the line sits.

Independent guide, not affiliated with or endorsed by OpenAI. Checked against the ChatGPT app and OpenAI's help centre in October 2026. Not legal advice: your school's data protection policy comes first.

What a Project Holds

Four parts, each with a job

A project is a workspace in ChatGPT. Every chat you start inside it shares the same instructions and files. Choose project-only memory and what it learns stays inside it too.



The project page in ChatGPT, October 2026, drawn with a made-up class. Layouts change; the four parts don't.

1 Instructions

How ChatGPT should work in this project, set under ••• then Project settings. They apply to every chat in it.

FOR YOUR CLASS Year group, curriculum, your plan format, how you like resources laid out, and the rule on pupil data.

2 Sources

The files ChatGPT reads and works from, under the Sources tab. Free accounts hold 5 per project, Plus 25.

FOR YOUR CLASS Long-term plan, schemes of work, topic overviews, templates, policies, a needs summary by group.

3 Memory

Also under ••• then Project settings. Default shares what ChatGPT remembers with your other chats. Project-only keeps it inside this project.

FOR YOUR CLASS Project-only, so school and home stay apart.

4 Chats

Start one in the box at the top. Every chat starts with the instructions and files already in place.

FOR YOUR CLASS One chat per job: next week's plans, a cover pack, the newsletter.

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Keep Children's Data Out

Build the project so it never needs it

The DfE puts it plainly: "It is recommended that personal data is not used in generative AI tools." Under UK GDPR your school decides how pupil information is used, and children's data needs extra care. So build a project that never needs it. Plan for groups and needs. Leave the names in school systems.

NEVER GOES IN

Who a child is

- Names, initials or nicknames
- Dates of birth, addresses, photos
- **SEND, medical or safeguarding records**, pasted or uploaded
- Assessment data or reports tied to a child
- Exports from your MIS, such as SIMS, Arbor or Bromcom
- Parents' names, emails or messages

FINE TO PUT IN

What you teach

- Curriculum, long-term plans, schemes of work
- Your templates, worksheets and slides
- Staff policies on marking, behaviour, homework
- **Needs by group:** "four pupils new to English"
- Your timetable and classroom routines
- Questions and examples you've written

CHECK FIRST

The grey areas

- **Work samples with the name removed.** In a class of 30, handwriting and a story about a pet can still say who
- A personal account for school work at all
- Sharing the project with colleagues
- **Uploads stay in your Library** after a chat is deleted. Delete them there too
- Anything you'd not be comfortable showing the child's parents

ACCOUNT

Use the account your school approved. Business and Edu plans aren't used to train models by default.

PUPILS

You use the project. Your pupils don't. ChatGPT accounts under 18 need a parent's permission, and that's a school decision, not yours.

WHAT YOU SEND

Read everything before it goes out. OpenAI's terms say not to use its output to make important decisions about a person, and marking is one.

Not legal advice. Sources: DfE, Generative AI in education (12 August 2025); DfE, AI and data protection in schools (14 October 2026); OpenAI help centre, October 2026.

Create the Project

Two clicks, a name and a memory choice

STEP BY STEP
HOW

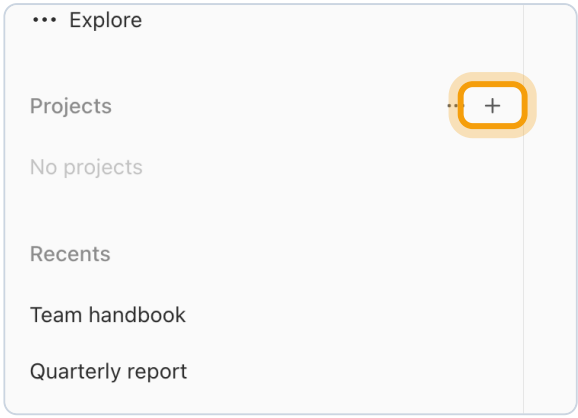
Everything on the next four pages happens once, at the start of the year. Follow the orange rings: each one marks what to click.

Before you start

1. Ask your school which AI tools you're allowed to use for work, and on which account.
2. Go to chatgpt.com in your web browser and log in, or open the ChatGPT app.
3. Gather your documents: long-term plan, schemes of work, templates. Take out any pupil names first.

You'll need

1. About half an hour.
2. Your plans saved as Word, PDF or text files.
3. The example instructions on the next page.

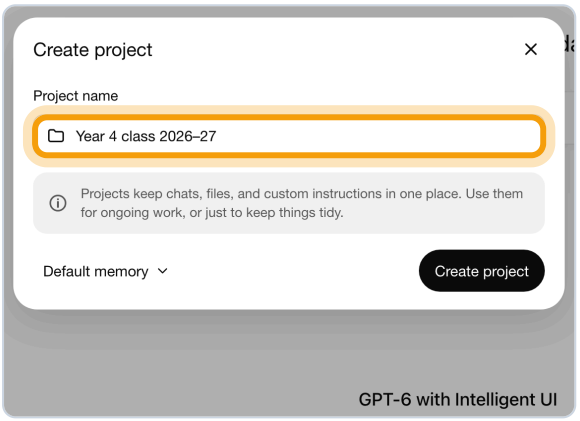


1

Click the + beside Projects

In the menu down the left-hand side, find **Projects**. Point at it and a **+** appears on the right. Click it.

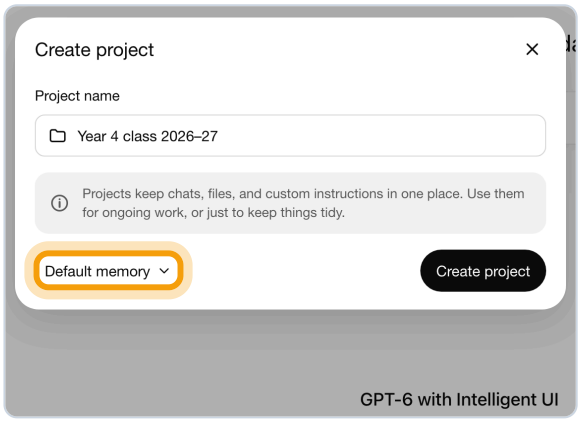
Can't see the menu? Click the small panel icon at the very top left.



2

Name it

Under **Project name**, type a name for the year, such as **Year 4 class 2026–27**.



3

Choose project-only memory

Click **Default memory** and choose **Project-only memory**. Then click **Create project**.

It keeps what ChatGPT learns here inside the project, and your personal chats out. You can change it later.

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Write the Instructions

Tell ChatGPT how you work, once

STEP BY STEP
HOW

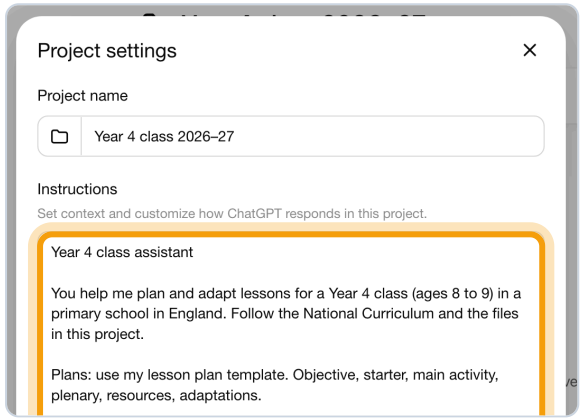
Instructions are the rules ChatGPT follows in every chat in this project. Write them once and you don't have to repeat your year group, your format or the rule on pupil data in each chat.



4

Open Project settings

On your project's page, click the ••• button beside Share, then **Project settings**.



5

Paste into Instructions

Paste the example on the right into the **Instructions** box and change it to fit your class.

Close the window, then open Project settings again to check your instructions are there. Inside this project they take the place of your general custom instructions.

EXAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

Paste, then make it yours

Year 4 class assistant

You help me plan and adapt lessons for a Year 4 class (ages 8 to 9) in a primary school in England. Follow the National Curriculum and the plans in this project.

Plans: use my lesson plan template. Objective, starter, main activity, plenary, resources, adaptations.

Resources: font size 14 or larger, a core and a stretch version where it helps, answers on a separate page.

Language: UK English, pitched for 8 and 9 year olds.

Pupil data: never ask for or use a pupil's name or personal details. Refer to groups or needs instead. If I paste anything that identifies a child, say so and don't use it.

The last line matters most. It turns the data rule from something you have to remember into something ChatGPT checks for you.

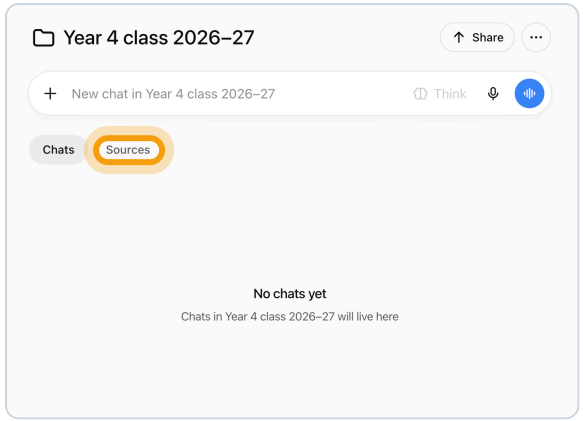
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Add Your Files and Try It

Give ChatGPT your plans to work from

STEP BY STEP
HOW

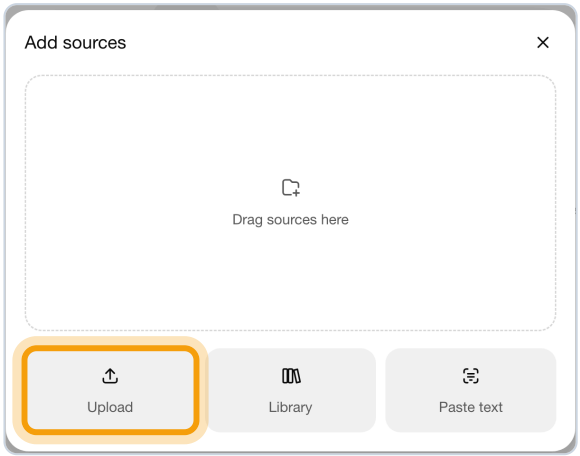
Sources are what ChatGPT reads before it answers: your plans, schemes of work and templates. Add them once and every chat in the project can use them.



6

Open Sources

Under the chat box on your project's page, click **Sources**, then click inside the dashed box that appears.



7

Add your files

A window called **Add sources** opens. Click **Upload** and pick your files, or drag them into the dashed box.

A Free account holds 5 files per project and 3 uploads a day. Plus holds 25.

Word, PDF and plain text all work.

Learning needs by group, no names

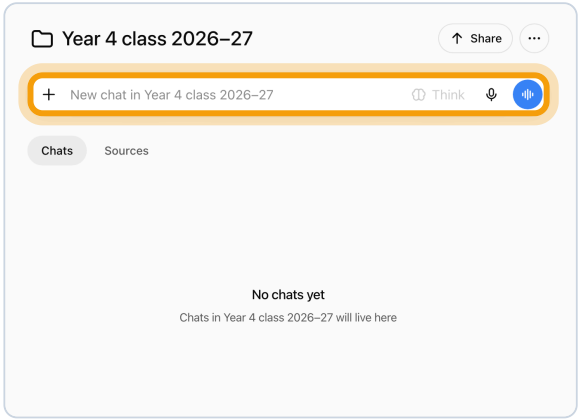
Group A, five pupils: working at greater depth in maths.
Group B, six pupils: working towards expected in reading.
Four pupils new to English.
One pupil uses a writing slope.

8

Describe needs by group

For pupils' needs, add one short document that describes groups, not children.

Enough to plan for. Never enough to say who.



9

Start your first chat

Type in the box at the top of the project page. Try: **"Plan next week's maths lessons from the scheme of work."**

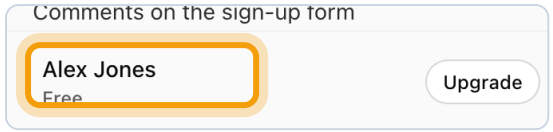
Correct what's off. If it's a rule you'll want every time, add it to the instructions.

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Check Your Settings

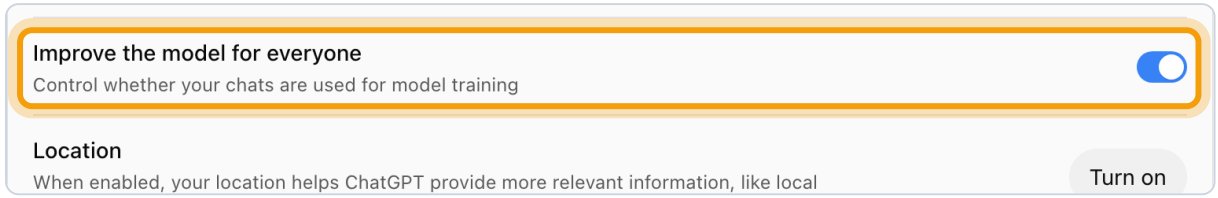
Five minutes, once

Two settings decide what happens to your chats: whether they train OpenAI's models, and what ChatGPT keeps in memory about you.



10 Open Settings

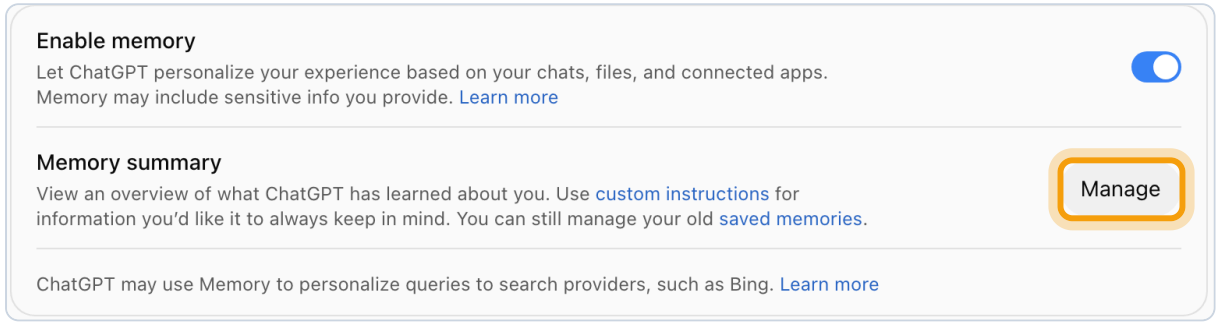
Click **your name** at the bottom left of the screen, then **Settings**.



11 Turn off training

Click **Data controls**. Switch **Improve the model for everyone** off (grey). Your chats then aren't used to train OpenAI's models.

A thumbs up or down on a reply can still send that chat for training. Business and Edu accounts aren't trained on by default.



12 Check what it remembers

Click **Personalization**, then **Manage** beside Memory summary. Delete anything about a pupil.

Deleting a chat doesn't delete a memory made from it. Delete both.

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Use It All Year

When the plan changes at 8.15am

Because the project already holds the plan, a change needs one line. Each of these would take a long paragraph in a blank chat. Inside the project, this is all you type.

SUPPLY COVER

You're off tomorrow

> *Make a cover pack for Thursday from this week's plans: the timetable, three lessons a non-specialist can teach, and the sheets to print.*

Comes back in your plan template, with your routines in the cover notes.

THE HALL'S CLOSED

PE in a classroom

> *No hall this afternoon. Give me three 20-minute PE activities for a classroom with desks, linked to our current unit.*

It knows the unit from the scheme of work.

ONE PUPIL, ONE WEEK

Same thinking, another way

> *One pupil can't hold a pencil this week. Adapt today's writing task so they can do the same thinking by speaking or with pictures.*

The need, never the name.

TWO LEVELS

One text, every reader

> *Rewrite the Hadrian's Wall reading text as a core and a stretch version, with the same five questions for both.*

Ask for it laid out ready to print.

OBSERVATION MOVED

It's tomorrow now

> *My observation is tomorrow, maths, period 2. Tighten the lesson: one clear objective, a hinge question, adaptations for Group B.*

Group B is already described in your needs file.

PARENTS

The newsletter

> *Draft the October newsletter from what we've covered this half term. Warm, short, no pupil names.*

Read it before it goes out. The DfE is clear: what you send is your responsibility.

KEEP IT CURRENT

Ten minutes a half term

Start of each term
Add the new topic overviews. Remove last term's, so old plans don't creep back in.

Each half term
Check Settings, Personalization, Memory summary. Delete what's out of date or shouldn't be there.

When you correct the same thing twice
Move it into the instructions.

End of the year
Start a new project for the new class. Copy the instructions across, then update them.

Explain once. Adapt all year.

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