

Terminology Collision Glossary



Eight Words That Mean Different Things Per Tab

Claude Cowork Online Course | Module 1 Companion

The Claude ecosystem reuses common words across surfaces with incompatible meanings. This glossary maps each term across Chat, Cowork, Code, and the API. None of these sync across surfaces.

Term	Chat	Cowork	Code	API / Console <i>For reference only; not covered in this course.</i>
Core Concepts				
Project CRITICAL	Cloud workspace: instructions + uploaded files (auto-searchable knowledge base) + conversations. Shareable on Team/Enterprise.	Local workspace: a folder on your hard drive + scoped instructions + scheduled tasks + project memory. No cloud sync. No sharing.	Implicit: the directory you launched Code from. Tracked by git repo root. Not a formal UI concept.	API Console "Workspaces" group API keys, members, and spend limits. Some docs call them "projects."
Memory	Auto-generated summaries of past conversations, updated roughly every 24 hours. Scoped per Chat Project. Incognito chats opt out.	Project-scoped only (since March 2026). Standalone sessions without a Project have zero persistence between sessions.	Two layers: CLAUDE.md (manually written, loaded every session) + auto-memory at ~/.claude/projects/<project>/memory/MEMORY.md (first 200 lines loaded).	No native memory. State management is the developer's responsibility via conversation history in API calls.
Artifacts	Rendered previews in a side panel: HTML, React, SVG, Mermaid diagrams. Shareable via link. Sandboxed iframe.	Real files on your disk: .docx, .xlsx, .pptx, .pdf. Written to your mounted folder. Also "Live Artifacts" (persistent interactive dashboards).	Not a concept. Code writes files directly to disk. No side panel, no rendering layer.	Not a concept. API returns text/tool-use blocks. File creation is the developer's responsibility.
Instructions	Two instruction locations: Profile Preferences (account-wide), Project Instructions (per project). Plus a Styles selector (per-conversation tone toggle). Set via UI.	Three locations: Global (account-wide), Folder (per working directory), Project (per Cowork project). Set via UI.	Five-tier hierarchy: Managed policies, CLI flags, .claude/settings.local.json, .claude/settings.json, ~/.claude/settings.json. Plus CLAUDE.md files at user/project/local levels.	System prompt parameter on every Messages API call. No persistence between calls.
Architecture & Structure				
Workspace	Team/Enterprise organizational unit. Groups users, conversations, and billing. Admin-managed.	Used colloquially for Cowork Projects in marketing copy. Not a formal UI concept distinct from "Project."	Internal session path component: ~/Library/Application Support/Claude/local-agent-mode-sessions/<account>/<workspace>/	Sub-organizational container in API Console. Groups API keys, members, spend limits, rate limits. Up to 100 per org.
Session	A conversation (chat thread). Persistent in the cloud. Searchable via memory.	A VM-backed working session. Ephemeral: the VM is wiped after each session. Each gets a random name (e.g., "zealous-bold-ramanujan"). Only the mounted folder persists.	A named CLI session. Can have multiple parallel sessions via git worktrees. Persistent session state in ~/.claude/projects/.	A single Messages API call or a series of calls with manually managed conversation history. No server-side session concept.
Extensions & Capabilities				
Tool	Web search, code execution, image generation (SVG), file creation via Skills. All server-side.	Plugin/Skill/MCP-mediated capabilities. Run inside the sandbox VM. Also "Computer Use" (screen interaction via screenshots, research preview).	~25 built-in tools: Read, Write, Edit, Bash, Glob, Grep, Task, WebFetch, WebSearch, etc. Run natively with full system access.	Tool-use blocks in the Messages API. Developer defines tools via JSON schema. Claude returns structured tool_use responses.
Agent	No formal agent concept. "Research" mode runs multi-step queries but is not called an agent.	Cowork itself is the agent. Can spawn sub-tasks. "Dispatch" routes tasks from your phone to your desktop. ¹ Scheduled tasks run autonomously.	Sub-agents: .claude/agents/*.md. Built-ins: Explore, Plan, general-purpose. Agent Teams share tasks. /batch spawns 5-30 parallel isolated agents.	Agent SDK for building custom agents. "Managed Agents" (April 8, 2026) for cloud-hosted long-running agents. ²

Sources

¹ Dispatch: Anthropic Help Center, support.claude.com/en/articles/13947068. Dispatch is a mobile-to-desktop bridge inside Cowork, not a Chat feature. Work runs in Cowork or Code on your desktop.

² Managed Agents: Anthropic Engineering Blog, anthropic.com/engineering/managed-agents; API docs at platform.claude.com/docs/en/managed-agents/overview. Public beta since April 8, 2026.

The cardinal rule: If you set something up in one tab, do not expect it to follow you to another tab. No terminology, no context, no instructions, no memory syncs across Chat, Cowork, and Code.