

What they can do, as of 16 Oct 2026

Claude, ChatGPT and Gemini now take a goal and do the work. Features reach people in waves: a missing button usually means your plan, your country, a rollout on its way, or your admin.

Claude	ANTHROPIC	ChatGPT	OPENAI	Gemini	GOOGLE
■ One Claude (16 Sep 2026): Cowork merged into ordinary chat, so a question and a handed-over task start in the same conversation. “By default, Claude asks before taking an action.” ■ Desktop app: works in the folders you choose, with a built-in browser “separate from your own browser, logins, and tabs”. ■ Unwatched: long tasks carry on after you close the laptop; scheduled tasks; Dispatch (Pro and Max). ■ Claude Code is the separate place for software.		■ Work (9 Jul 2026): the agent for longer tasks and finished files, in one desktop app that “brings Chat, Work, and Codex together”. ■ Where it runs: in the cloud on web and phone; on the desktop, also your local files and apps, with your permission. ■ Unwatched: Scheduled Tasks, also started by a new Gmail or Slack message or a GitHub pull request. ■ Going away: the Atlas browser (stopped 9 Aug 2026); custom GPTs, moving to plugins.		■ Tasks in Gemini (formerly Spark): click Task below the text box. Personal accounts on Google AI Pro or Ultra, 18 or over; not in the EEA, Nigeria, Switzerland or the UK. ■ At work, Gemini mostly lives inside Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drive, Chat and Meet. Tasks are not for work or school accounts yet. ■ Browsing: your local Chrome or a remote browser in the cloud; it asks you to take over for sign-ins. ■ Antigravity, the coding agent, is in the Gemini Mac app.	

The same jobs, side by side

	CLAUDE	CHATGPT	GEMINI
Quick question	A Claude conversation	Chat	Chat
Hand over a task	The same conversation	Work	Task (personal, Pro or Ultra)
Build software	Claude Code	Codex	Antigravity
Asks before acting	Yes, by default	Approves important actions	Confirms some actions and sign-ins
Repeat on a schedule	Scheduled tasks	Scheduled Tasks, also on events	Schedules

Which model for which job

	CLAUDE	CHATGPT	GEMINI
Everyday drafts and summaries	Sonnet 5.5	GPT-6 at Medium	Flash
A careful report, a messy spreadsheet	Opus 5.5	GPT-6 at High	Pro, thinking High
Hand over a task of many steps	Opus 5.5	Work on Default, or GPT-6.1 Sol	Task with Flash or Argon
The hardest, high-stakes work	Fable 5.1 (uses limits fastest)	GPT-6 at Pro, or GPT-6 Astra in Work	Argon, thinking High

Start with the default; move up only when the answer misses something that matters. Where to pick: Claude, the model name by the send button; ChatGPT, GPT-6 in the model menu, then the Thinking slider (Work has its own picker); Gemini, the model under the chat box.

Read on claude.com/resources/articles/cowork-is-now-claude; claude.com/product/cowork; support.claude.com/en/articles/8664678; help.openai.com/en/articles/6825453, [20001275](https://help.openai.com/en/articles/20001275), [20001354](https://help.openai.com/en/articles/20001354); support.google.com/gemini/answer/18648722, [17094507](https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/17094507). Checked on the vendors’ pages on 16 Oct 2026. These products change monthly. Check the settings in your own tool.

Claude, ChatGPT or Gemini: which for what

From the makers' own pages as of 16 Oct 2026. The last column is my pick.

JOB	CLAUDE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	MY PICK
Writing and documents	Clear business writing (Anthropic's claim for Opus 5.5); finished Word, PDF or Google Docs	Fast drafts in Chat; reports from Work; ChatGPT for Word, even on Free	Gemini in Gmail and Docs	Claude
Spreadsheets	Claude for Excel: cell references, formula-safe edits, overwrite warnings	Excel and Google Sheets add-ins; the Data plugin	Gemini in Sheets, on Workspace	Claude
Slides	Claude Slides on every plan; Claude for PowerPoint	Following company templates (OpenAI's claim for GPT-6 Astra)	Gemini in Slides	Claude, with ChatGPT close
Research	The web plus your connected work tools	The most control: edit the plan, limit it to named sites	Free Deep Research; Gemini Notebook for your own sources	ChatGPT; Gemini Notebook for your own files
Agents and routines	Asks first; scheduled tasks, Dispatch; Claude Code	Cloud browser; tasks started by an email or Slack message; Codex	Tasks and schedules (personal accounts); Antigravity	Claude; ChatGPT for routines started by an event
Meetings	Working from a transcript you give it	Meetings plugin (beta, Mac) and audio uploads	"Take notes for me" in Google Meet	Gemini in Google Meet, otherwise ChatGPT
Email	Gmail connector; Claude for Outlook	Gmail and Outlook Email apps	Gemini built into Gmail	Gemini in Gmail; Claude or ChatGPT for Outlook

MY RECOMMENDATION

My recommendation: Claude first, ChatGPT second, Gemini third.

My own view, for a team handing work to agents, beside the honest table above.

1 CLAUDE

The simplest start to finish, and it asks before acting by default. Anthropic reports Opus 5.5 is harder to steer with hidden instructions and less likely to take hard-to-reverse actions.

2 CHATGPT

A strong agent in Work: a cloud browser for signed-in websites, and tasks that start when an email arrives. OpenAI's tests put GPT-6 Astra ahead on computer use.

3 GEMINI

The best fit for a company on Google Workspace, with a generous free plan. But its agent tasks, custom apps and skills are for personal accounts for now.

WHERE ANOTHER WINS

Pictures and video (ChatGPT Images 2.5; Nano Banana, Gemini Omni): ChatGPT or Gemini. Meet notes and Gmail: Gemini. Routines started by an email, and research where you control the sources: ChatGPT.

THE FIRST RULE

Use the tool your company approves for company data. A preference, mine included, never beats your company's data rules.

Each company publishes tests it wins (Anthropic reports Opus 5.5 at 66.4% on Terminal-Bench 4.0, OpenAI reports GPT-6 Astra at 57.9%), so don't rank the three on vendor numbers alone. The table is the makers' own claims, read on anthropic.com/news/claude-opus-5-5; claude.com/docs/office-agents/excel.md; openai.com/index/gpt-6-astra/; help.openai.com/en/articles/20001275-support.google.com/mail/answer/13952129; support.google.com/gemini/answer/15719111. The ranking is my own view. Checked on the vendors' pages on 16 Oct 2026. These products change monthly. Check the settings in your own tool.

Connectors and MCP, in plain words

Every tool you connect is a door (book, page 4): a connector is the door to another app, signed in as you. As of 16 Oct 2026.

MCP Model Context Protocol, a shared standard for plugging AI into other software: “Think of MCP like a USB-C port for AI applications.”	MCP SERVER The other service’s doorway. It lists what an AI may do there: search files, read a message, create a record.	CONNECTOR The ready-made cable to that doorway, signed in as you. ChatGPT says app; Gemini, connected app.	PLUGIN A box that holds connectors and skills together, in Claude and ChatGPT.
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SKILL OR CONNECTOR? Anthropic: “MCP connectors give Claude access to a tool or data source, and skills teach it how to do a task.” It reaches only what your account can, and only what the connector allows.

Start to end, in each

Claude 1 Customize > Connectors, then Discover. 2 Find the service; check its Verified or Community label. 3 “Connect to Claude” (Team or Enterprise: “Request”, until an owner adds it). 4 Sign in, read the access it asks for, approve. 5 In a chat: “+” > Connectors, switch it on. 6 When it asks to use a tool: “Allow once”, until you trust it.	ChatGPT 1 Settings > Plugins, then the app or the plugin that holds it. 2 “Install plugin”, then “Connect”; sign in to the right account. 3 Review the permissions, then finish the sign-in. 4 In a chat, type @ or select “+” to pick the app. 5 While you learn: “Always ask” or “Allow read actions”.	Gemini 1 Left menu > Customize: find and connect apps (over 40, mostly US, English). 2 For Gmail, Drive, Docs and Calendar: the Google Workspace app. At work, your admin decides. 3 Mention an app with @ to make Gemini use it. 4 Remove apps you no longer use from Connected Apps.
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Before you connect anything

☐ Is it allowed? Use what your company approves.	☐ Who made it? Prefer the official or verified one.	☐ What can it change? Read the access screen first.
☐ Start careful. Needs approval, or Always ask.	☐ The right account. Work data, work account.	☐ Only what it needs. Off in chats that don’t need it.
☐ Hidden instructions. Outside pages can steer it.	☐ Where data goes. Each service keeps its own terms.	☐ Disconnect when done. An unused connector is an open door.

YOUR OWN MCP LINK: FOR WHOEVER RUNS YOUR TOOLS
Claude: Add, then Custom > Web (Free: one). **ChatGPT:** Developer mode (beta), Plus and up. **Gemini:** a custom app (US, personal accounts, English). **Note:** custom connectors “aren’t verified” (Anthropic), and Google “does not control, monitor, or secure third-party MCP servers”.

Read on modelcontextprotocol.io/docs/getting-started/intro; claude.com/docs/extend/overview, [connectors/openai.com/overview](https://connectors.openai.com/overview); help.openai.com/en/articles/11487775; developers.openai.com/plugins/build/skills.md; support.google.com/gemini/answer/17209137. Checked on the vendors’ pages on 16 Oct 2026. These products change monthly. Check the settings in your own tool.

Where the brakes are, as of 16 Oct 2026

The settings that decide your level. Set them to ask first while your team learns. The three brake cards take you through each assistant in 15 minutes.

The four levels, matched to each assistant's own settings

LEVEL	CLAUDE, EACH CONNECTOR TOOL	CHATGPT, EACH APP	GEMINI, CONNECTED APPS
1 Read	Write tools Blocked	Always ask	Read-only questions
2 Draft	Write tools Blocked; it saves drafts in the folders you chose	Always ask	Ask for drafts; write actions still need your confirmation
3 Ask first	Needs approval; in the chat, Allow once	Allow read actions	Built in: an app's write actions always need your confirmation
4 Alone	Always allow, on one tool, for one proven task	Allow low-risk actions, or Allow all actions, on one app, for one proven task	Not offered: write actions always ask

The setting names are the vendors'; matching them to the four levels is ours. While your team learns, nothing above level 3, and never Allow all actions.

Claude

ANTHROPIC

- **The task:** "By default, Claude asks before taking an action." You can let it keep working and check in only when something needs a closer look: that is level 4.
- **Connectors:** each tool Always allow, Needs approval or Blocked; in a chat, Allow once or Always allow.
- **Memory:** on by default for Free, Pro and Max; on Team and Enterprise an owner enables it and each person opts in.

ChatGPT

OPENAI

- **The task:** in Work you follow progress, answer questions and "approve important actions".
- **Apps:** Always ask, Allow read actions, Allow low-risk actions, Allow all actions.
- **Websites:** the cloud browser pauses for your sign-in or confirmation, through a secure form the model cannot see.

Gemini

GOOGLE

- **The task:** some actions need your confirmation, and for sign-ins it asks you to take over.
- **Apps:** write actions always need your confirmation.
- **Work accounts:** the admin controls these features; chat history is kept 18 months by default.

IN ALL THREE

You type passwords into the site yourself, never into the chat. Connect your work account for work data. Switch off what the task doesn't need, and disconnect when you're done.

Read on claude.com/resources/articles/cowork-is-now-claude; support.claude.com/en/articles/11817273, [11724452](https://support.claude.com/en/articles/11724452); claude.com/docs/connectors/overview; help.openai.com/en/articles/20001275, [11487775](https://help.openai.com/en/articles/11487775), [20001280](https://help.openai.com/en/articles/20001280); support.google.com/gemini/answer/17094507, [17209137](https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/17209137), [14620100](https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/14620100). Checked on the vendors' pages on 16 Oct 2026. These products change monthly. Check the settings in your own tool.