5 Plan-First Prompts for Claude Code

Nov 6, 2026 · @Janet Pius

Turn on plan mode

In plan mode, Claude Code reads your files and proposes a plan, but makes no edits until you approve.

- **Mid-session:** press `Shift+Tab` until the status bar shows `⏸ plan mode on`.
- **From the start:** run `claude --permission-mode plan`.
- Use it for anything that touches more than one file: a new page, a redesign, a refactor, a new feature for a client.

The 5 prompts

Paste one while plan mode is on. Swap the [brackets] for your task.

1. The scoped plan (for any new feature)

```
I want to [add a pricing section to the homepage]. Before planning, read the files that are involved and tell me which ones you'd change and why. Then give me a numbered plan with one step per file. Don't touch any file that isn't in the plan.
```

2. Ask me first (when the brief is fuzzy)

```
Before you plan [the contact page], ask me up to 5 questions about anything you'd otherwise have to guess: content, layout, behaviour on mobile, and where the form should send. Wait for my answers, then plan.
```

3. Two options (for design or architecture choices)

```
Give me two different ways to [build the image gallery]: a simple one and a more flexible one. For each, list the files touched, what's hard about it, and how long it would take to review. Recommend one and explain why in two sentences.
```

4. The risk check (before touching existing client work)

```
Plan [replacing the navbar with a mobile-friendly one]. For every step, say what could break (pages, styles, links) and how I'd test it. Put the risky steps last.
```

5. Small batches (for big jobs)

```
Split [the full site redesign] into batches that each take under 15 minutes
for me to review. Number them. We'll do batch 1 only, then stop so I can
check it in the browser before batch 2.
```

Review the plan before you approve

- [ ] Every file in the plan is one you expected. Anything surprising, ask why.
- [ ] No new packages, unless you agreed to them.
- [ ] Nothing in your "never touch" list (see your CLAUDE.md) is in the plan.
- [ ] Each step has a way to test it (a page to open, a command to run).
- [ ] Cut or reword steps you don't want, then approve.

After it builds: open the site, test on a phone, and only then move on to the next batch.

I build websites for businesses with this exact workflow. Need one? DM SITE to @bigbongzy on Instagram.

Source: Claude Code docs: Common workflows, Plan before editing