

How to Use Claude with Affinity



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A Note Before You Begin

This guide focuses on using Claude AI together with Affinity — connecting the two through a link called MCP so Claude can work directly inside your document. That combination is powerful, and the setup is worth the effort.

But here is something worth knowing before you read a single step: most of what this guide teaches has nothing to do with Affinity.

The advice about how to talk to Claude — give context, describe what you see, ask Claude to interview you when you are stuck, take a screenshot, work one step at a time — all of that applies any time you use Claude for anything. Writing. Editing. Research. Building a website. Drafting an email. Solving a problem you cannot quite articulate. Claude works the same way whether Affinity is open or not.

If you are not ready to install Affinity yet, or if you simply want to get comfortable with Claude before adding another layer, start there. Open Claude at claude.ai, introduce yourself and your project, and start asking questions. The habits you build carry directly into the Affinity workflow when you are ready for it.

A few other software applications also support MCP connections similar to Affinity's, which means Claude can potentially work inside those programs as well. That list is growing. The same principles apply.

The tool is more useful than most people realize.

How to Use Claude with Affinity

A step-by-step introduction for first-time users

SECTION 1: WHAT THIS IS — AND WHAT IT ISN'T

Affinity is not one program. It is three:

Pixel Studio — the equivalent of Adobe Photoshop. Image editing, retouching, color correction, inpainting.

Vector Studio — the equivalent of Adobe Illustrator. Logos, vector graphics, line art.

Layout Studio — the equivalent of Adobe InDesign. Page layout, books, documents.

All three are included in a single free download, and they are deeply integrated — you can move between them without leaving your document. That integration is Affinity's greatest strength. It is also why the learning curve is steeper than most software you have encountered. There is simply a lot here.

This is where Claude comes in.

Claude is an AI assistant made by Anthropic. Think of it as a knowledgeable colleague sitting next to you at the computer — one who has read every manual, made every mistake, and has unlimited patience for questions. When Claude is connected to Affinity through a link called MCP (more on that shortly), it can do more than answer questions: it can perform certain tasks in Affinity directly, on your behalf.

When working in Affinity, at any point when you are uncertain, ask, “What do I want to do and how do I want to do it?” Ask and answer *out loud*. If you don't know, ask Claude.

That question cuts through the complexity every time. You do not need to know which tool, which panel, or which menu. You need to know what you want. Claude handles the rest.

What Claude can do for you:

- Answer “how do I do it?” for any task across all three Affinity studios
- Guide you through unfamiliar steps before you take them
- Warn you before you make a mistake that is hard to undo
- Automatically place images into your layout, saving hours of repetitive work
- Remember the details of your project from one work session to the next

What Claude cannot do:

- Use hand tools — anything that requires painting, brushing, or drawing on screen must be done by you
- Make aesthetic judgments with certainty — it can describe what it sees, but taste is yours
- Work without an internet connection
- Guarantee results on tasks it has never encountered — it will tell you when it is uncertain

Using Claude & Affinity

This guide will walk you through setting everything up, step by step, with enough explanation that you understand why you are doing each thing — not just what to click.

SECTION 2: WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU START

You will need four things:

1. Affinity — Download it free at www.affinity.serif.com/en-us/download The installer gives you all three studios — Pixel, Vector, and Layout — in one package. You will need a Canva account, free with no obligations to install Affinity. Open it at least once before proceeding so you know it's working.
2. Claude Desktop — This is a separate application, distinct from the Claude website. The website is for chatting in a browser. Claude Desktop is what connects Claude to Affinity. Download it at claude.com/download. Install it.
3. A Claude Account — When you open Claude, it will ask you to log in. Follow the prompts to set up an account. The free account has usage limits — more on that later. For now, free is fine.
4. A Project to Work On — Claude works best when it has context — meaning it knows what you are working on, what you have already done, and what your goals are. Before your first session, have a clear idea of: what your document is (a book, a brochure, a portfolio), what studio you expect to use most (probably Layout Studio for a book), and what your immediate first task is.

That is all. You do not need prior experience with Affinity, with AI, or with layout software. That is the point of this guide.

A Note on the Free Account

All accounts have limits. Claude's free account has the lowest session limits — meaning after a certain amount of back-and-forth conversation, it will pause and ask you to wait before continuing, and it will hit the limit sooner than a Pro account. This is more likely if you work during peak hours or ask Claude to do large tasks all at once. Practical ways to minimize interruptions:

- Work in shorter, focused sessions rather than long open-ended ones
- Ask specific questions rather than broad ones — “how do I resize this image frame” rather than “explain everything about image frames”
- Break large tasks into steps across multiple sessions
- Always save a Session Context script at the end of each session (covered in Section 5) so you can pick up exactly where you left off

You can see your usage by going to Settings, see page 16.

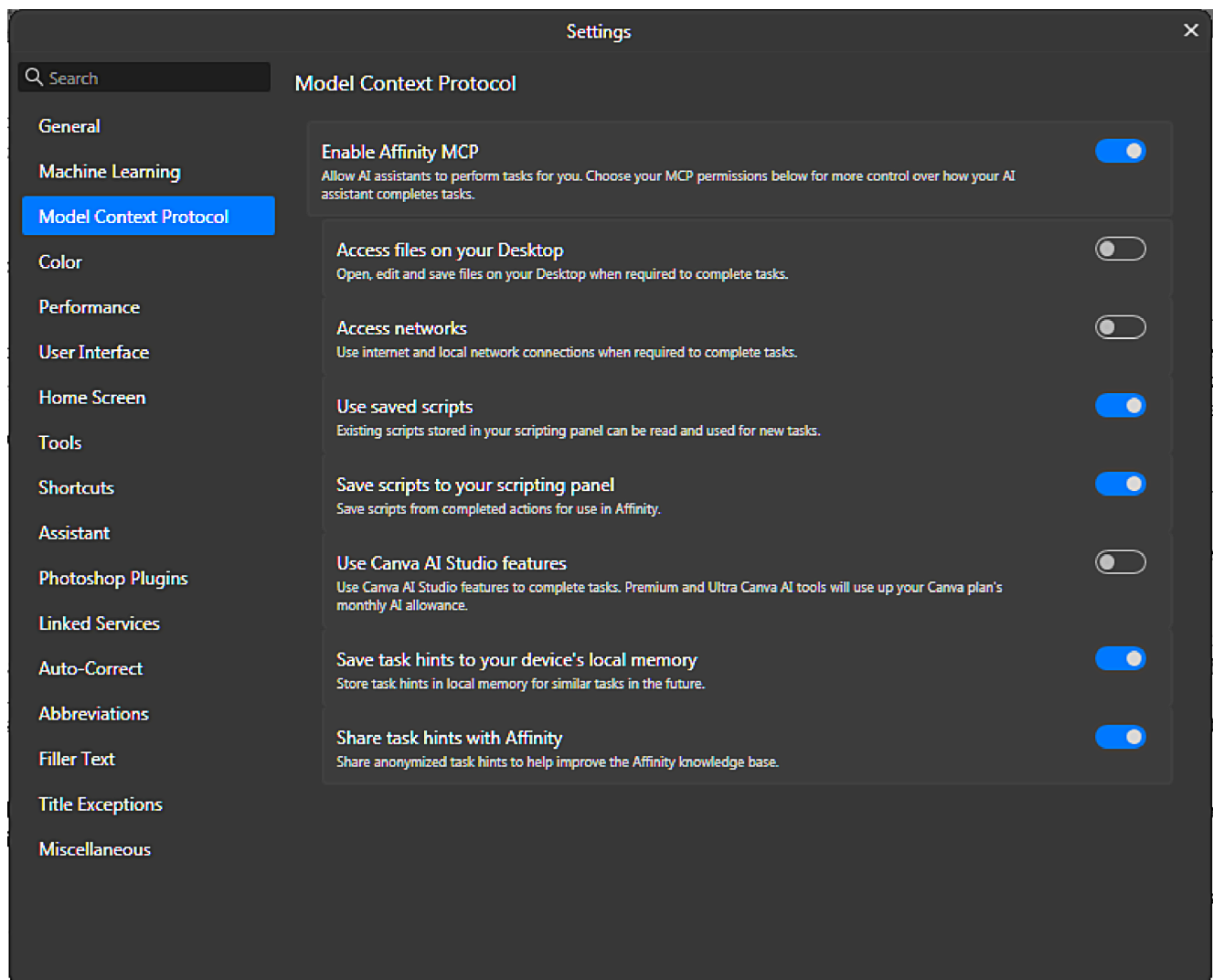
SECTION 3: CONNECTING CLAUDE TO AFFINITY

What MCP Is

By default, Claude and Affinity have no idea the other exists. MCP — Model Context Protocol — is the bridge between them. Once enabled, it allows Claude to see what is happening in your Affinity document and to perform tasks there on your behalf. Without it, Claude is just a chat window. With it, Claude becomes a working partner inside your software.

Think of MCP as giving Claude a seat at your desk.

Enabling MCP in Affinity



Open Affinity. Go to: *Edit > Settings > Model Context Protocol*
 You will see eight on/off switches. Set them as follows:

Enable Affinity MCP — YES

This is the master switch. Nothing else works without it.

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Access files on your Desktop — YES

This allows Claude to read files you have saved to your desktop — most importantly, your Session Context script (covered in Section 5). Recommended for beginners because it saves steps. If you prefer that Claude not have access to your desktop files, set this to NO — but then you will need to drag your Session Context file into the Claude input box manually each session.

Access networks — NO

Claude Desktop handles its own internet connection. Affinity does not need network access.

Use saved scripts — YES

Allows Claude to read scripts you have previously saved in Affinity's script panel. Required for session context to work.

Save scripts to your scripting panel — YES

Allows Claude to save scripts directly into Affinity. Note: this connection is occasionally fragile. If Claude reports that a save failed, use the desktop fallback described in Section 5.

Use Canva AI Studio features — NO

Canva acquired Affinity in 2024. These are Canva's own AI tools, separate from Claude. Not needed for this workflow.

Save task hints to your device's local memory — YES

Allows Claude to store small notes about your preferences and your project on your own machine. This helps Claude give better guidance over time.

Share task hints with Affinity — YES

Shares those same notes with Affinity so both applications stay in sync about your project.

Opening Claude Desktop and Connecting

Now open Claude Desktop. Each time you log in, it will ask you to verify your account by email.

At the time of this writing, the verification works like this: you will not receive a code to type in. Instead, open the email from Anthropic, click the button in it, and a browser window will open with a confirmation button. Click it. Claude Desktop will open and the connection will be established. This may change in future versions — if the process looks different when you do it, follow whatever the screen prompts say.

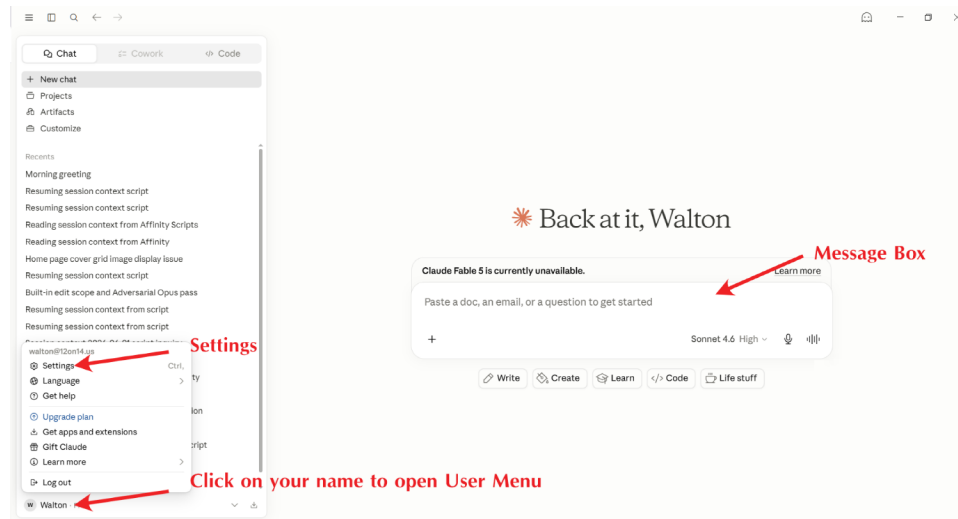
Confirming the Connection

Order matters: Affinity must be running before you open Claude Desktop. If you open Claude Desktop first, close it, open Affinity, then reopen Claude Desktop.

Once both are open, the simplest way to confirm the connection is working is to type this into Claude: “Can you see my Affinity document?”

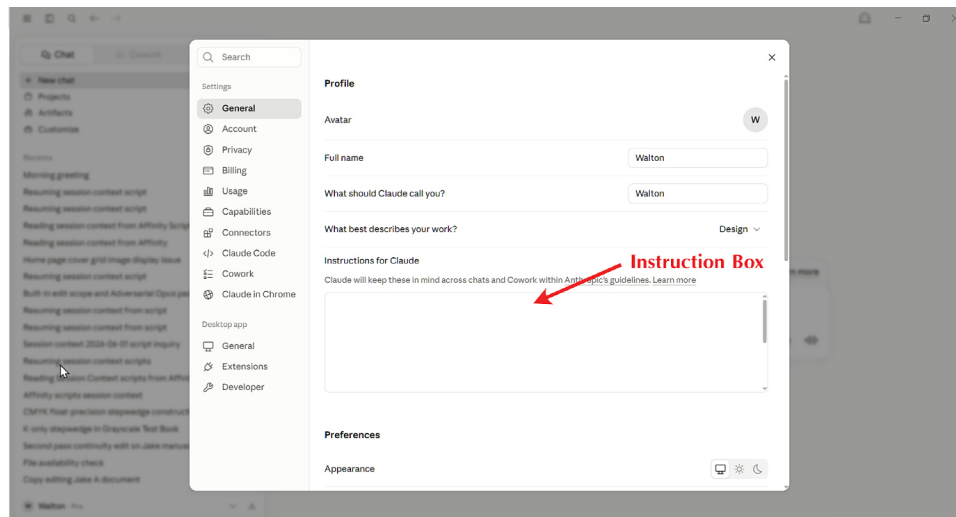
Claude will tell you plainly whether it can. If it cannot, close both applications and try again in the correct order.

SECTION 4: SETTING UP CLAUDE AND YOUR FIRST PROJECT

Adjusting Claude's Personality

The first time you use Claude Desktop, you may find it exhaustingly enthusiastic. Every response begins with affirmations, every answer ends with offers of further help, every exchange feels like customer service at its most relentless. You can fix this.

In Claude Desktop, go to: *Settings > Instructions for Claude*



This is a plain text box where you tell Claude how you want it to behave — permanently, across all your conversations. You do not need to repeat these preferences every session. Write them in plain English, as if you were briefing an assistant on their first day.

A few examples of useful instructions:

“Skip the pleasantries. No opener like ‘Great question!’ Just answer.”

“I am new to Affinity. Assume I don’t know where anything is. Always tell me exactly where to find what you're referring to — which menu, which panel, which tab.”

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“When you give me steps, number them. One step at a time.”

“If I ask you to do something that won't work, tell me why before you suggest an alternative.”

You can write as many instructions as you like. Think of it as setting the ground rules for a working relationship. Claude will follow them.

You can access the Settings panel during a chat without losing the chat. This is particularly helpful when checking your usage, see page 16.

How to Work With Claude

This is the most important section in this guide.

Claude is not a search engine. You do not type in keywords and scan the results. You talk to it — in plain English, in complete sentences, the way you would talk to a knowledgeable colleague. The more naturally you communicate, the better it works.

If you do not know what you need, say so. Literally say: “I’m not sure what I need to do next. Can you ask me some questions and help me figure it out?” Claude will interview you — asking about your project, your goals, your current situation — and help you arrive at a clear next step.

You do not have to know the answer before you ask the question.

If you are stuck, describe what you see. “I clicked on the image and now there are handles around it but I can’t move it. What’s happening?” That is enough. Claude will diagnose it.

If something Claude suggests doesn't make sense, say so. “I don’t see that menu” or “that didn’t work” are perfectly good responses. Claude will adjust.

The one habit that will improve every exchange is this: give context.

Context means the background behind your question. Not just what you want to do, but why, and what surrounds it. Compare these two questions:

“How do I resize an image?” Or: “I have a children's book page in Layout Studio. The image frame is 4 inches wide but my photo is coming in much larger and spilling outside the frame. I want the photo to fit inside the frame without distorting it. How do I do that?”

Both are asking about resizing. The second one gets a useful answer on the first try. The first one gets a generic answer that may or may not apply to your situation, followed by several more exchanges to narrow it down.

The more context you give, the fewer round trips you need. Tell Claude:

- What you are working on
- What you are trying to accomplish
- What you have already tried
- What you are seeing on your screen right now

You cannot give Claude too much context. You can easily give it too little.

When Words Aren't Enough — Use a Screenshot

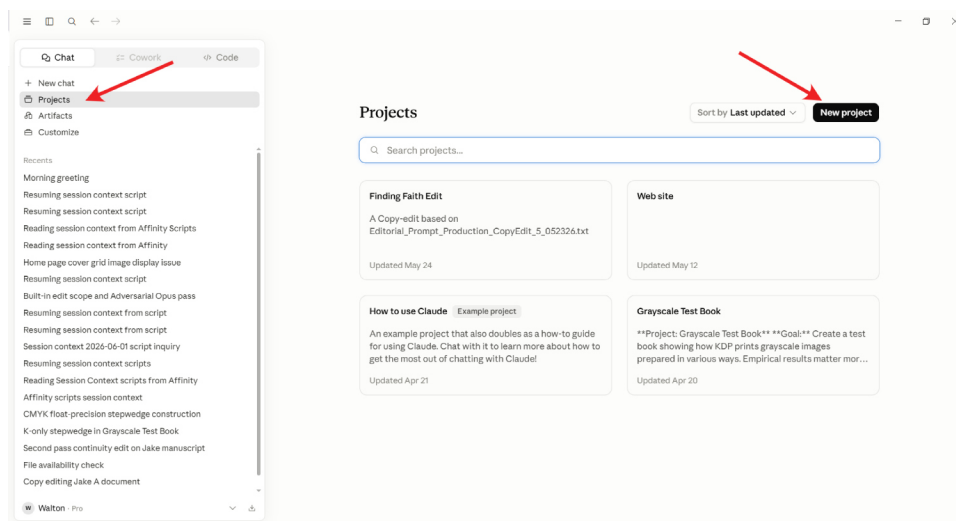
Sometimes the fastest way to solve a problem is to show Claude what you are seeing. If you are staring at something on your screen that you cannot describe, or that is not behaving the way you expect, take a screenshot and drop it into the Claude input box. Claude can look at it.

This cuts through confusion that might otherwise take ten exchanges to resolve. Instead of trying to describe something you can barely name — you take a screenshot, drop it in, and Claude tells you exactly what it is and what to do with it.

- On Windows, press Windows key + Shift + S to open the snipping tool. Draw a box around whatever you want to capture. The screenshot copies automatically to your clipboard. Click in the Claude input box and paste it with Ctrl + V.
- On Mac, press Command + Shift + 4. Draw a box around the area. The screenshot saves to your desktop. Drag it into the Claude input box, or click the paperclip icon in the input box and navigate to it.

You do not need to capture your entire screen — just the part that is giving you trouble. The more focused the screenshot, the faster Claude can respond to it.

Projects



Claude has no memory between conversations. Each time you start a new chat, Claude starts fresh — it does not remember your name, your book, what you worked on yesterday, or any decision you made last week. Left unaddressed, this means re-explaining your project from scratch every single session.

Projects solve this. A Project in Claude Desktop is a container that holds persistent context — information Claude carries into every conversation you have within that project. Think of it as a dedicated workspace for your book, separate from anything else you might use Claude for.

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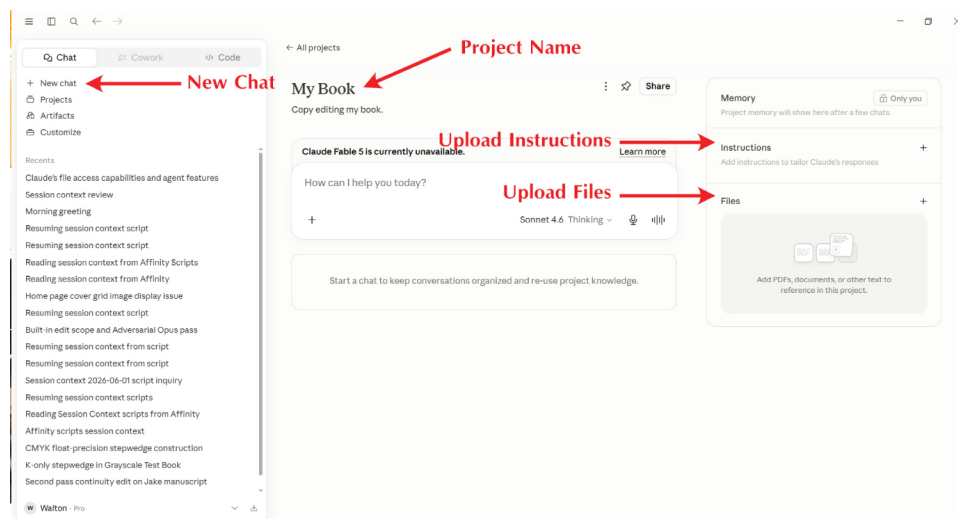
To create a Project, look for the Projects section in the left sidebar of Claude Desktop. Click New Project. Give it a name — the title of your book is fine. Do not worry about getting it perfect now. The Session Context script (Section 5) will do most of the heavy lifting.

A few things Projects do for you:

- Keep your book work separate from anything else you ask Claude
- Allow Claude to accumulate knowledge about your project over time
- Give you one place to find your full conversation history on this project

One important habit: always open your Project before you start working. Do not start a new general conversation and then mention your book — start inside the Project. This ensures Claude is in the right context before you type your first question.

Project Knowledge Files



A Project is more than a folder for conversations. It also holds files Claude reads automatically every time you start a new chat inside it. Anthropic calls these "knowledge" files. They are the most powerful feature of Projects and the most overlooked.

Anything you upload to the Project — PDFs, text files, Word documents, images — becomes part of Claude's background knowledge for every conversation in that Project. You do not have to re-attach them. You do not have to mention them. Claude just knows.

What to put there:

- Your manuscript, or the current draft of it
- Style guides, brand guidelines, or design specifications you are working to
- KDP or Ingram specs relevant to your book
- A character list, timeline, or world-building notes for fiction
- Reference images you want Claude to consult.
- This guide, if you want Claude to know exactly what workflow you are following

To add a file, open your Project and look for the section labeled Files or Project Knowledge. Click the plus icon and upload. You can add, remove, or replace files at any time. Changes apply to all future chats in the Project.

A useful habit: when you start a project, spend ten minutes gathering the documents that define it and drop them in. The first session will go faster, and every session after that will go faster still.

One caveat: Project knowledge is different from the Session Context script. Knowledge files are stable — your manuscript, your specs, your style guide. The Session Context script is current — what you did yesterday, what comes next. Use both. They serve different jobs.

Screenshot: Yes, worth one. The Files / Project Knowledge panel isn't obvious to a beginner, and pointing at it with an arrow saves a lot of confusion. One screenshot of the Project page with the Files section highlighted.

Your First Conversation

Once your Project is open, introduce your work. You only need a few sentences:

“I am working on a children’s picture book. It has 32 pages. I am using Layout Studio for the page layout and Pixel Studio for image editing. I have never used Affinity before. My immediate goal is [whatever your first task is].”

From that point forward, talk to Claude the way you would talk to a patient, knowledgeable guide. Describe what you want. Describe what you see. Ask questions when something is unclear. If you are not sure where to start, ask Claude to interview you. It will.

SECTION 5: SESSION CONTEXT — PICKING UP WHERE YOU LEFT OFF

The Memory Problem

Claude has no memory between sessions. When you close a conversation and open a new one — even five minutes later — Claude does not remember your book, your decisions, your file names, or anything you discussed. Every session starts from zero.

The Session Context script is the solution. It is a summary of everything Claude needs to know about your project — captured at the end of one session and loaded at the beginning of the next. Think of it as a briefing document that you hand Claude each time it sits down at your desk.

Creating a Session Context Script

At the end of every working session, before you close anything, type this into Claude:

“Please create a Session Context script for this project summarizing what we’ve done, what decisions we've made, what files we're working with, and what comes next.” Claude will write a

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structured summary covering your project details, current status, and next steps. It is written in a format Claude can read back efficiently at the start of your next session.

You then have two options for saving it:

Option A: Save to Affinity's Script Panel

This is the most convenient option when it works. Ask Claude: “Save this as a Session Context script in Affinity's script panel.”

A few things to know:

- The Affinity script panel must be open and visible on your screen for the save to succeed. If it is closed or hidden, the save will fail silently — meaning Claude will report success but nothing will actually be there.
- Name the script with an underscore prefix and today's date, like this: `_Session Context 2026-06-12`. The underscore keeps it sorted at the top of your script list. If you save more than one in a day, add a letter suffix: `_Session Context 2026-06-12b`.
- This connection is occasionally fragile. If you ask Claude to read the script next session and it returns garbage or the wrong content, the save did not work correctly. Use Option B as your fallback.

Option B: Save to Your Desktop as a Text File

This is the more reliable option and the recommended fallback. Ask Claude: “Save the Session Context as a plain text file on my desktop.”

Claude will write the file to your desktop. Name it the same way: `_Session Context 2026-06-12.txt`.

At the start of your next session, you have two ways to load it:

- If you enabled Access files on your Desktop in the MCP settings (Section 3), simply tell Claude: “Please read my Session Context script from the desktop.” Claude will find it and read it.
- If that setting is off, drag the `.txt` file into the Claude input box, or click the paperclip icon and navigate to it. Either way, Claude will read it and be fully briefed on your project within seconds.

When to Save

Save a Session Context script:

- At the end of every session, without exception
- Any time you make an important decision mid-session — a file naming choice, a layout decision, a change of direction
- Before you try anything experimental that might go wrong

It takes Claude about thirty seconds to write one. The cost of not saving is re-explaining your entire project from scratch. Save every time.

Loading Context at the Start of a Session

Open your Project in Claude Desktop. Then, before you ask anything else, load your Session Context. Once Claude has read it, confirm with a quick:

“Do you have everything you need, or do you have questions before we start?”

Claude will either confirm it is ready or ask for any missing details. From that point, you are working in full context.

SECTION 6: A TYPICAL WORKING SESSION

The Shape of a Session

Once everything is set up, a working session with Claude and Affinity follows a predictable rhythm. The steps below describe that rhythm — not as rigid rules, but as a sequence that keeps things from going wrong. Most of the problems people encounter with this workflow come from skipping one of these steps.

Before You Open Anything

Take sixty seconds to think about what you want to accomplish today. Not a vague intention like “work on the book” — a specific goal:

- “I want to place the images for chapters three and four into the layout.”
- “I want to fix the margins on the pages that came back from the printer wrong.”
- “I want to learn how to use the inpainting brush to clean up the edges on page seven.”

You do not need a complete plan. You need a starting point. Claude will help you build from there — but it helps to arrive with a direction rather than asking Claude to invent one for you.

Opening Sequence

Order matters. Follow it every time:

1. Open Affinity first. Let it fully load.
2. Open your document in Affinity.
3. Open Claude Desktop.
4. Open your Project in Claude Desktop.
5. Load your Session Context script.

Note: On step 4, when you open your Project, you will see a list of your previous conversations in that Project. To start fresh, click New chat (usually a plus icon or button near the top). To pick up an old conversation, click its title in the list. For most working sessions you want a new chat — old conversations get long and slow, and the Session Context script is how you carry forward what matters. Use old chats only when you genuinely need to reread something specific from that session.

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If you open Claude Desktop before Affinity, the MCP connection may not establish correctly. If this happens, close Claude Desktop, confirm Affinity is running and your document is open, then reopen Claude Desktop.

Starting the Conversation

Once your Session Context is loaded, confirm Claude is ready: “Do you have everything you need, or do you have questions before we start?”

Then state your goal for the session: “Today I want to [specific goal]. Where do we start?”

Claude will either give you a first step or ask a clarifying question. Answer it. From this point the session is underway.

A few habits that keep things running smoothly:

- Work in steps, not leaps. Ask Claude for the next step, do it, confirm it worked, then ask for the step after that. Trying to execute five steps at once is how things go wrong in ways that are hard to undo.
- Report back. After each step, tell Claude what happened. “That worked” or “I did that but the image is still outside the frame” — either answer moves things forward. Silence leaves Claude with nothing to work with.

If something goes wrong, stop. Do not try to fix it by clicking around. Describe exactly what happened and ask Claude what to do. Random clicking in unfamiliar software turns small problems into large ones.

Save your Affinity document regularly. Claude cannot save your document for you — that is your job. Ctrl + S on Windows, Command + S on Mac. Do it after any change you would not want to repeat.

If you get a result you like, note it. Tell Claude: “That worked well. Please note that for the Session Context.” Claude will remember it for the end-of-session summary.

Claude gets slow or responds oddly

Sometimes, especially with long chats, Claude will slow down, lose focus, even sound stupid. If that happens:

- Create and save a Session Context
- Copy and save anything you do not want to lose
- Start a new conversation
- Upload the Session Context

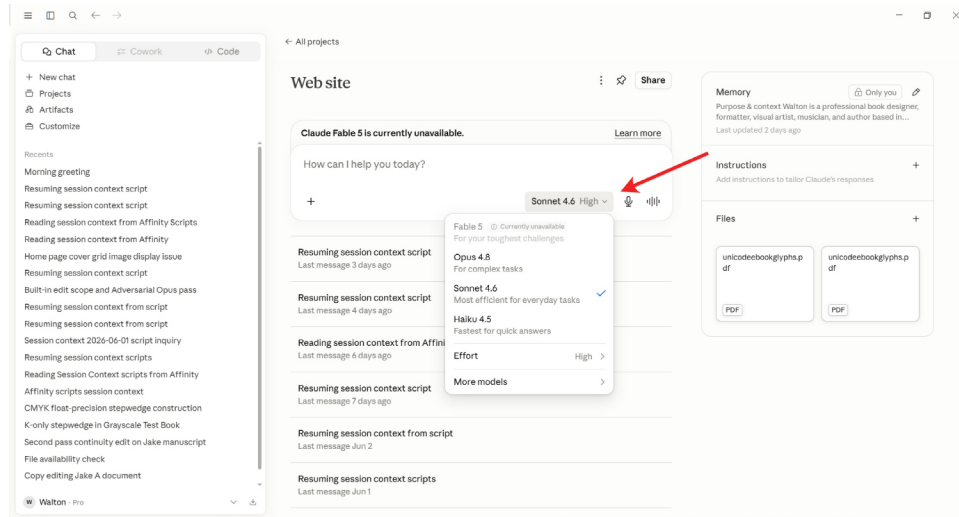
When the Session Stalls

Sometimes you will hit a wall — something is not working, or you are not sure what to try next. Before frustration sets in:

- Take a screenshot and show Claude what you are seeing
- Ask Claude to explain what might be causing the problem before suggesting a fix
- If you have tried something multiple times and it keeps failing, say so: “I’ve tried this three times and it's not working. Can we approach it differently?”

Claude will not run out of patience. You are allowed to ask the same question multiple ways until the answer makes sense.

Using Different Models



Claude has four models, Haiku, Sonnet, Opus, and as of this writing, Fable 5. Sonnet is the default. Each model has greater and greater reasoning and analytical skills, and with each increase, the usage cost goes up too. For basic copy editing (see “Editing with AI—Using Claude & ChatGPT” 12on14.us) Haiku missed a lot. Sonnet was good, even for identifying problems during the Adversarial Editorial Pass. However, switching to Opus to work on identified scenes gave noticeably better feedback. Arguably working entirely in Opus might produce slightly better results across the board, although your own results may vary. Burning through the limits of a session in an hour won’t make Opus your default model.

That choice and how much it consumes is related to the kind of work it’s doing. If you’re curious, experiment. You can change models within the same Chat.

Ending the Session

Before you close anything:

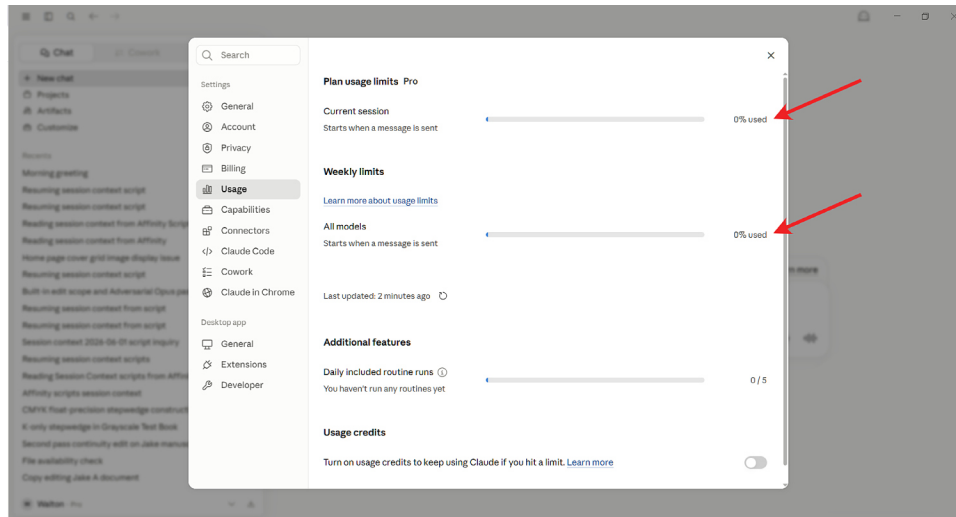
1. Save your Affinity document one final time.
2. Ask Claude to create a Session Context script: "Please write a Session Context script summarizing today's session — what we did, what decisions we made, what files we worked with, and what comes next."
3. Save the script — to Affinity's script panel, to your desktop, or both.
4. Confirm the save worked by asking Claude to read it back. If it reads correctly, you are done.

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If something is missing, ask Claude to add it before closing.

The thirty seconds this takes is insurance against starting next session from scratch.

A Note on Sessions That Expire



If Claude stops responding mid-session, or tells you it has reached its usage limit, do not panic. Your Affinity document is unaffected. Save the document, wait for the session to reset, then start a new conversation in your Project and load your most recent Session Context script. You will lose nothing except the tail end of the conversation — which is exactly what the script is there to preserve. See Problem 5 on page 19 for step-by-step solution.

Remember, you can check your usage any time, without leaving or breaking the chat.

SECTION 7: WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Things Will Go Wrong

This is not a flaw in the workflow. It is the nature of learning new software, working with AI, and combining two complex tools that are still evolving. The goal of this section is not to prevent problems — some are unavoidable — but to keep them from becoming catastrophes.

Most problems fall into one of five categories.

Problem 1: Claude and Affinity Are Not Connected

You ask Claude something about your document and it responds as if it has no idea Affinity exists. Or you ask “Can you see my Affinity document?” and Claude says no.

What to do:

1. Check that Affinity is actually open and that a document is open inside it — not just the Affinity welcome screen.

2. Close Claude Desktop.
3. Reopen Claude Desktop.
4. Ask again.

If it still fails:

5. Close both applications completely.
6. Open Affinity first. Wait for it to fully load. Open your document.
7. Then open Claude Desktop.

If it still fails after that, go back to *Edit > Settings > Model Context Protocol* in Affinity and confirm the master switch — Enable Affinity MCP — is still set to YES. Settings occasionally reset after an update.

Problem 2: Claude's Instructions Don't Match What You See

Claude tells you to go to a menu or panel that does not exist where Claude says it is — or does not exist at all.

This happens for two reasons. First, Claude's knowledge has a cutoff date, and Affinity updates its interface periodically. Second, Claude may be describing the correct location but using slightly different terminology than what appears on your screen.

What to do:

- Take a screenshot of what you are actually seeing and show it to Claude.
- Say: "I don't see that. Here is what my screen looks like."
- Claude will reorient based on what you show it.

If Claude gives you a series of steps and one of them produces an unexpected result, stop at that step. Do not continue. Show Claude a screenshot and describe what happened. Continuing past a wrong step compounds the problem.

Problem 3: Something in Affinity Went Wrong and You Don't Know What

Your document looks different than it did a moment ago. Something moved, disappeared, changed color, or behaved in a way you did not intend.

Try Ctrl + Z (Windows) or Command + Z (Mac) to undo. Affinity has a deep undo history — you can step back through multiple actions. Keep pressing until things look right again.

Ctrl or Cmd Z (Undo) should be a baked-in reflex. Each time you key in Ctrl or Cmd Z, Affinity moves back a step. Undo has a twin Ctrl or Cmd Shift Z (redo).

If you are not sure how far back to go, or if undo does not seem to be fixing it, take a screenshot and ask Claude: "Something went wrong. Here is what I'm seeing. I don't know what I did. What happened and how do I fix it?"

This is exactly the kind of problem Claude is good at diagnosing from a screenshot.

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Problem 4: The Session Context Script Didn't Save Correctly

You start a new session, load your context script, and something is missing — or Claude returns the wrong content entirely.

The Affinity script panel save is fragile. If you are not certain your script saved correctly, always keep the desktop .txt file as your backup. The two-save habit — script panel and desktop — means a failed panel save is an inconvenience, not a loss.

If you discover mid-session that your context is incomplete, do not guess at the missing details. Tell Claude what you do remember and ask it to work with what you have. Then at the end of that session, write a fresh context script that fills in the gaps.

Problem 5: Claude Hits Its Session Limit

Mid-session, Claude stops responding or tells you it has reached its usage limit.

Your Affinity document is fine. Save it immediately with Ctrl or Cmd S.

Then wait. All accounts reset after a period of time — usually a few hours. Paid accounts have higher limits and reset faster.

When you return:

1. Open a new conversation in your Project.
2. Load your most recent Session Context script.
3. Tell Claude briefly where you were: "We were in the middle of placing images on pages 12 through 18. Page 14 was giving us trouble with the bleed."
4. Continue.

If session limits are interrupting your work frequently, consider these habits:

- Ask Claude for one step at a time rather than a full procedure — shorter exchanges use less of your session.
- Do the mechanical work in Affinity between exchanges rather than narrating every click to Claude.
- Save a context script at the first sign of a slowdown, before the session expires — not after.

A General Principle

When something goes wrong, the best response is to stop, describe what happened, show Claude a screenshot if possible, and ask for a diagnosis before attempting a fix.

Claude is not going to judge you for the mistake. It has seen every mistake. Tell it exactly what happened and it will tell you exactly what to do next.

SECTION 8: THE LIMITS OF WHAT CLAUDE CAN DO

Claude is genuinely useful. It can save you hours, prevent mistakes, and walk you through tasks that would otherwise require weeks of self-study. But it has real limits, and understanding them before you hit them will save you frustration.

The limits fall into three categories:

- things Claude cannot do because they require a human hand,
- things it cannot do reliably because they require human judgment, and
- things it cannot do because they are outside the MCP connection entirely.

Hand Tools: What Requires You

Any tool that works by painting, brushing, drawing, or dragging on your screen cannot be operated by Claude. Claude can tell you exactly how to use it — which tool to select, what settings to use, how large to make your brush, how to approach the edge — but the hand that moves the mouse is yours.

In Affinity this includes:

The Inpainting Brush — used to blend edges, remove unwanted elements, and repair areas of an image. Claude can coach you through it step by step, but it cannot paint for you.

The Clone Brush and Healing Brush — same principle. Claude describes, you execute.

The Selection Tools — drawing a freehand selection around an irregular shape requires human judgment and a steady hand. Claude can suggest which selection tool to use and how to refine the result, but the initial selection is yours.

Any painting or drawing tool — in Pixel Studio or Vector Studio.

Manual type adjustments — Claude can tell you, for example, what kerning value to enter, but it cannot drag type on the canvas.

Aesthetic Judgment: What Claude Cannot Decide for You

Claude can describe. It can compare. It can tell you whether two colors are high-contrast or low-contrast, whether a font is a serif or a sans-serif, whether an image is cropped tightly or loosely. It can tell you what choices other designers have made in similar situations, and it can explain the reasoning behind those choices.

What it cannot do is tell you what looks right. But it may have an opinion.

If you show Claude two versions of a page and ask which is better, it will give you an answer — but that answer is a pattern match against design conventions, not genuine aesthetic perception. It may be useful as a second opinion. It is not a substitute for your own eye.

The practical implication: use Claude to execute your vision, not to replace it. When you know what you want, Claude is excellent at helping you get there. When you do not know what you want, Claude can show you options and explain tradeoffs — but the final call belongs to you.

If you are genuinely uncertain about an aesthetic decision, the most useful thing to ask is not “which is better?” but “what is the difference between these two, and what does each one

communicate?” That answer is something Claude can give you reliably.

The MCP Connection: What It Can and Cannot Reach¹

The MCP connection gives Claude access to your open Affinity document. It can place images, create frames, set dimensions, apply settings, run scripts, and read what is currently in your document. That covers a large and useful range of tasks.

What it cannot reach:

Files you have not told it about. Claude does not browse your hard drive looking for assets. You need to tell it where things are — file names, folder locations, paths. The more specific you are, the better.

Other applications. Claude can see Affinity and, if enabled, your desktop. It cannot see your email, your browser, your file manager, or any other program running on your computer.

Your printer or output devices. Claude can help you set up a file correctly for print, but it cannot send a file to your printer or verify that your printer settings match your document settings.

The internet on your behalf. Claude can answer questions from its own knowledge, but it cannot look something up for you mid-session the way you can open a browser tab. If you need current information — a specific KDP specification, for example — you will need to look it up and paste the relevant details into the conversation.

Undo. If Claude makes a change to your document through MCP and the result is wrong, you undo it the same way you would undo anything else: Ctrl + Z on Windows, Command + Z on Mac. Claude cannot undo its own actions automatically.

When You Need a Human Professional

Claude is a guide, not a replacement for expertise. There are situations where the right answer is to hire someone:

Complex color correction for commercial print — if your book has critical color matching requirements, a professional color workflow and a human eye are not optional.

Cover design — Claude can help you execute a cover in Affinity, but if you do not have a strong visual concept to start with, a professional book cover designer will produce better results than an AI-assisted first-timer.

Legal questions about your content — copyright, permissions, contracts. Claude can give you general information but cannot give you legal advice.

KDP disputes or account issues — Claude can help you understand KDP's guidelines and prepare your files correctly, but it cannot intervene with Amazon on your behalf.

Knowing when to bring in a professional is itself a useful skill. Claude will tell you when a question is outside what it can reliably answer.

The Honest Summary

Claude is a knowledgeable, patient, tireless guide. It is not a magic button. The combination of Claude's knowledge and your hands, your eyes, and your judgment is considerably more capable

¹ Claude has broader capabilities in other product configurations.

than either alone. That is the actual promise of this workflow — not that the computer does everything, but that you are never working alone.

SECTION 9: NEXT STEPS AND QUICK REFERENCE

You Are Ready to Start

If you have read this far and followed the setup steps, you have everything you need. Affinity is installed. Claude Desktop is connected. You know how to start a session, how to ask for help, how to save your context, and what to do when things go wrong.

The only thing left is to begin.

The first session will be the most uncertain. That is normal. By the third session the rhythm will feel familiar. By the tenth you will not think about it — you will simply work.

Where to Get More Help

Affinity's own resources:

Affinity's official tutorials are at www.affinity.studio/resources — video walkthroughs for all three studios, organized by task. When Claude describes something you cannot visualize, a two-minute tutorial video often fills the gap faster than words.

For KDP-specific book formatting questions:

The KDP Community Forum at www.kdpcommunity.com has a large population of self-publishing authors and formatters. Search before posting — most common questions have been answered many times.

KDP's own help pages at [KDP Help Center Home](#) are authoritative on specifications, but written for a general audience. If something is unclear, ask Claude to explain it in plain terms.

For this workflow specifically:

The 12on14.us resources page has downloadable guides including this one, along with other reference material for book formatting and design.

If you are stuck on something specific to Affinity and Claude together, describe the problem as precisely as you can — what you were trying to do, what you did, what happened — and Claude will work through it with you.

Quick Reference: Key Habits

Every session — before you start:

- Open Affinity first
- Open your document

Using Claude & Affinity

- Open Claude Desktop
- Open your Project
- Load your Session Context script
- Confirm Claude is ready before you ask your first question

During every session:

- Define a specific goal before you begin
- Work one step at a time
- Report back after each step
- Save your Affinity document frequently — Ctrl+S / Command+S
- Take a screenshot when words fail you
- Stop and ask Claude if something goes wrong — do not click around hoping it fixes itself

Every session — before you close:

- Save your Affinity document one final time
- Ask Claude to write a Session Context script
- Save it to your desktop as a .txt file
- Verify it saved correctly by asking Claude to read it back

When you are stuck:

- Take a screenshot and show Claude
- Ask Claude to interview you if you are not sure what you need
- Ask for a diagnosis before attempting a fix
- Remember: you cannot give Claude too much context

A Final Note

Learning new software is frustrating. There will be sessions where nothing goes right, where the same problem defeats you three times in a row, where you wonder whether the tool is worth the trouble.

It is worth the trouble. Affinity is professional software that produces professional results, and it is free. Claude is a guide that will not lose patience with you, will not charge you by the hour, and will not make you feel foolish for asking the same question twice.

The combination of the two is genuinely powerful. Not because the computer does the work — but because you always have someone to ask.