Getting Started with Claude Code & Context Engineering

A Presentation for PATCA

AI-Powered Assistance

Tarek Sawyer Nassar

tareksawyernassar.com | contact@tareksawyernassar.com

Thursday, February 12th, 2026

Today You'll Learn

1. What Claude Code is and how to get started
2. The difference between vibe coding and context engineering
3. Practical techniques you can use immediately

Why This Matters

- The AI shift is happening now
- AI coding and non-coding tools are becoming essential, not optional
- The difference between struggling and succeeding is **how** you use them
- Most people are "vibe coding" - hoping AI fills in the rest
- **Context Engineering** is the professional approach

What is Claude?

Claude is Anthropic's AI Model (LLM)

The Name

Named after **Claude E. Shannon** (1916-2001)

- Father of information theory

Why Anthropic?

- Focus on AI safety and reliability
- Claude is designed to be helpful, harmless, and honest

What is Claude Code?

Anthropic's official **command-line interface** for AI-powered development

Why Command Line?

- Direct access to your files and tools
- No copy-pasting code back and forth
- Claude can read, write, and execute in your environment
- **You approve every action** - always in control (security protections)

> "The command-line is king"

Working with Claude Code

English is the New Programming Language

- You communicate with Claude in plain English (for now)
- No special syntax required - just describe what you want

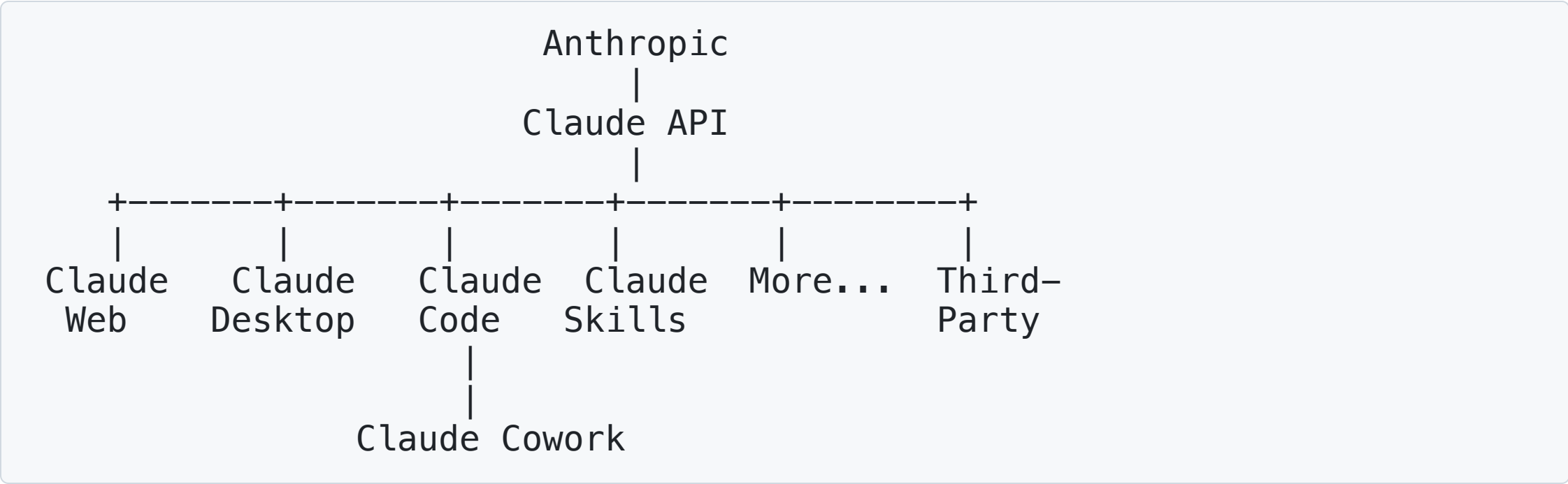
Improve Your Markdown Skills

- Claude Code uses Markdown for formatting
- Better Markdown knowledge = better communication

Not Just For Programmers

- Other Use Cases: research, organizing a book, creating documentation, managing files, automation

Claude Code in the Ecosystem



- **Claude Web/Desktop**: Chat interface
- **Claude Code**: CLI for developers (today's focus)
- **API**: Build your own applications

Installing Claude Code (fastest)

macOS (Homebrew)

```
brew install claude-code
```

Windows (winget)

```
winget install Anthropic.ClaudeCode
```

Verify & Login

```
claude --version
claude login
```

Official Page and Ways: https://code.claude.com/docs/en/setup

Claude Subscriptions

Claude Code Requires a Paid Subscription

Plan	Price	Claude Code Access
Free	$0/month	Free tier cannot use Claude Code
Pro	$20/month	Yes
Max 5x	$100/month	Yes (5x usage)
Max 20x	$200/month	Yes (20x usage)

Start with Pro ($20/month) and Haiku or Sonnet models while learning.

Demo #1: Getting Started

What We'll Cover

- Starting a Claude Code session
- Basic commands (`/help` , `/model` , `/status` , `/init`)
- Asking Claude to explore a codebase
- The "read before write" principle for existing codebases

Live demonstration

The Golden Rule for Existing Codebases

> **Read before you write**

- Use Claude to understand code first (/ `init`)
- Explore the codebase before making changes ("Analyze this project")
- Ask questions before implementing
- Make a /docs folder to keep track of reference information and to create documentation

This prevents costly mistakes and leads to better outcomes.

Recommended Rules for New Projects

> ### Plan before you build
>
> - Create a `/docs` folder for specifications
> - Create a `/prototypes` folder and start work there
> - Ask Claude Code to help you write specifications

Where Information Lives

- **CLAUDE.md**: Minimal, essential project context
- **/docs**: Detailed specifications, requirements, decisions
- **/prototypes**: Where to experiment with different prototypes
- **/prototypes/docs**: Experimental documentation

Context Engineering

The practice of intentionally structuring information so AI can effectively assist you

It's About Communication

- Clear Inputs → Clear Outputs
- Structure → Understanding

The Key Insight

Context is persistent memory.

Vibe Coding vs Context Engineering

Vibe Coding *"Just tell it what you want and hope for the best"*

- Art Form
- Good for Prototyping and Experimenting
- Relies on AI to Fill in Gaps
- Works for Simple Tasks
- Breaks Down with Complexity
- Inconsistent Results

Vibe Coding vs Context Engineering

Context Engineering *"Provide clear context, get clear results"*

- Disciplined Approach
- When You are Serious
- You Structure the Information
- Scales to Complex Projects
- Repeatable and Reliable
- Professional-Grade Outcomes

CLAUDE.md: Your Project's Memory

AI has amnesia. Every conversation starts fresh.

CLAUDE.md files provide persistent context that Claude reads automatically.

Three Levels

1. **User level** (`~/.claude/CLAUDE.md`) - Your preferences
2. **Project level** (`project/CLAUDE.md`) - Project context
3. **Local level** (`project/CLAUDE.local.md`) - Your private notes

What to Put in CLAUDE.md for Beginners

```
# Project Name

## Purpose
What this project does and why it exists

## Architecture
Key design decisions and structure

## Conventions
Coding standards, naming patterns, tools used

## Important Context
Anything Claude should always know when working here
```

This is your "briefing document" for AI in `project/CLAUDE.md`

The Power of Good Context

With CLAUDE.md (Good Engineering)	Without CLAUDE.md (Vibe Coding)
Claude already knows	Explain project every time
Follows your conventions	Inconsistent code style
Learns from past decisions	Repeated mistakes
Project-appropriate solutions	Generic solutions

Memory files save hours of frustration

Demo #2: Hello, World! and Context Engineering

What We'll Cover

- A very simple project with context engineering
- How CLAUDE.md shapes Claude's understanding
- Building features with context-aware assistance

Live demonstration

Best Practices: Do

- Start new projects with a CLAUDE.md (created by you or Claude Code)
- Start existing projects with `/init` and ask questions
- Update context as the project evolves
- Review what Claude wants to do before approving

Best Practices: Don't

- Share API keys or secrets in prompts
- Approve actions you don't understand
- Skip the "read first" step
- Be vague

Resources

Official Documentation

- **Docs**: docs.anthropic.com
- **GitHub**: github.com/anthropics/claude-code
- **Changelog**: Stay updated on new features

Community

- Anthropic Discord
- GitHub Discussions

Today's Slides

tareksawyernassar.com/slides/claude-code-context-engineering-2026-02-12.pdf

Free Installation Help

Struggling to get started?

I'm offering **free 20-minute sessions** to help you:

- Install Claude Code on your machine
- Set up your first CLAUDE.md
- Answer your questions

How to Schedule

Email: contact@tareksawyernassar.com

Subject: "Claude Code Installation Help"

Summary

1. **Claude Code** — a powerful CLI tool for AI-assisted work, coding and beyond
2. **Context Engineering** — clear inputs lead to clear outputs (not vibe coding)
3. **Practical techniques** — CLAUDE.md, /docs, and memory files you can use immediately

Thank You

Tarek Sawyer Nassar

contact@tareksawyernassar.com

tareksawyernassar.com

Questions? (10 minutes)