

How to personalize ChatGPT

A detailed guide to personality, characteristics, custom instructions and memory - covering Free, Go and Plus.

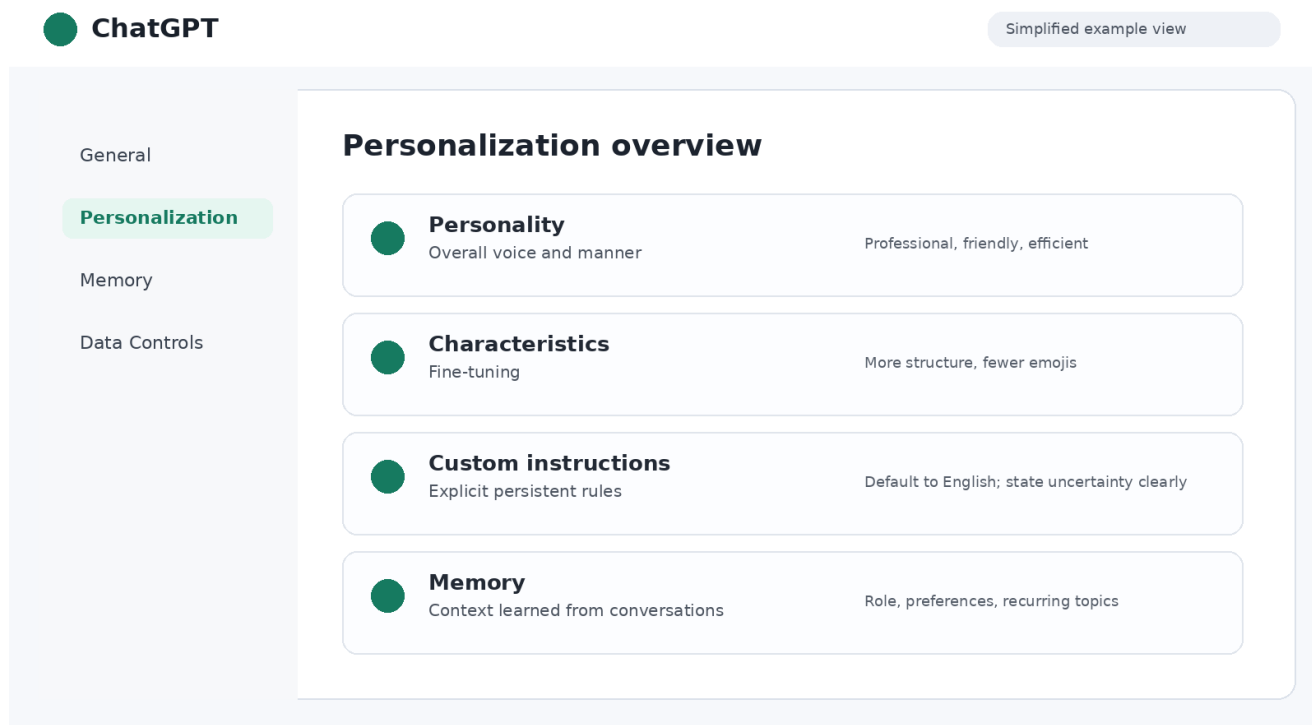


Figure 1: Simplified example view of the personalization areas.

Important note about the images: The illustrations show examples of where settings are located. They are not direct screenshots from your personal account. Labels and layout may differ depending on device, app version, country, account type, subscription and staged rollout.

As of: 6 August 2026 | English | Focus: personal consumer use

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2. Relevant consumer plans

For ordinary personal users, **Free, Go and Plus** are the relevant plans. ChatGPT Pro is a substantially more expensive heavy-use tier and is intentionally not covered in detail in this consumer guide.

Plan and price	Main scope	Personalization impact
Free EUR 0	Limited messages, uploads, images and research; suitable for trying ChatGPT.	Personality, characteristics and custom instructions are generally available. Memory and context are limited.
Go Price shown in account	Monthly subscription with more messages, uploads, images and longer conversations than Free.	Mostly the same controls as Free, but with longer memory and more capacity for regular use.
Plus US\$20/month*	Advanced models, higher limits, broader Deep Research and agent features, plus projects, tasks and custom GPTs.	Expanded memory and context. Best suited to demanding daily use and longer workflows.

Guide: Free is enough to get started. Go is the lower-cost plan for regular use. Plus is the typical high-capability consumer plan. *The final price, currency and taxes are shown at checkout in your account. Pro, Business and Enterprise plans are intentionally outside this comparison.

1. Quick start and menu path

Personalization is available on the web, desktop and mobile under Profile > Settings > Personalization. Some controls are rolled out gradually and may appear later on individual accounts.

1. Open ChatGPT and sign in.
2. Open your profile menu.
3. Select Personalization.
4. Review base style, characteristics, custom instructions and Memory separately.
5. Start a new chat after changes and test the result.

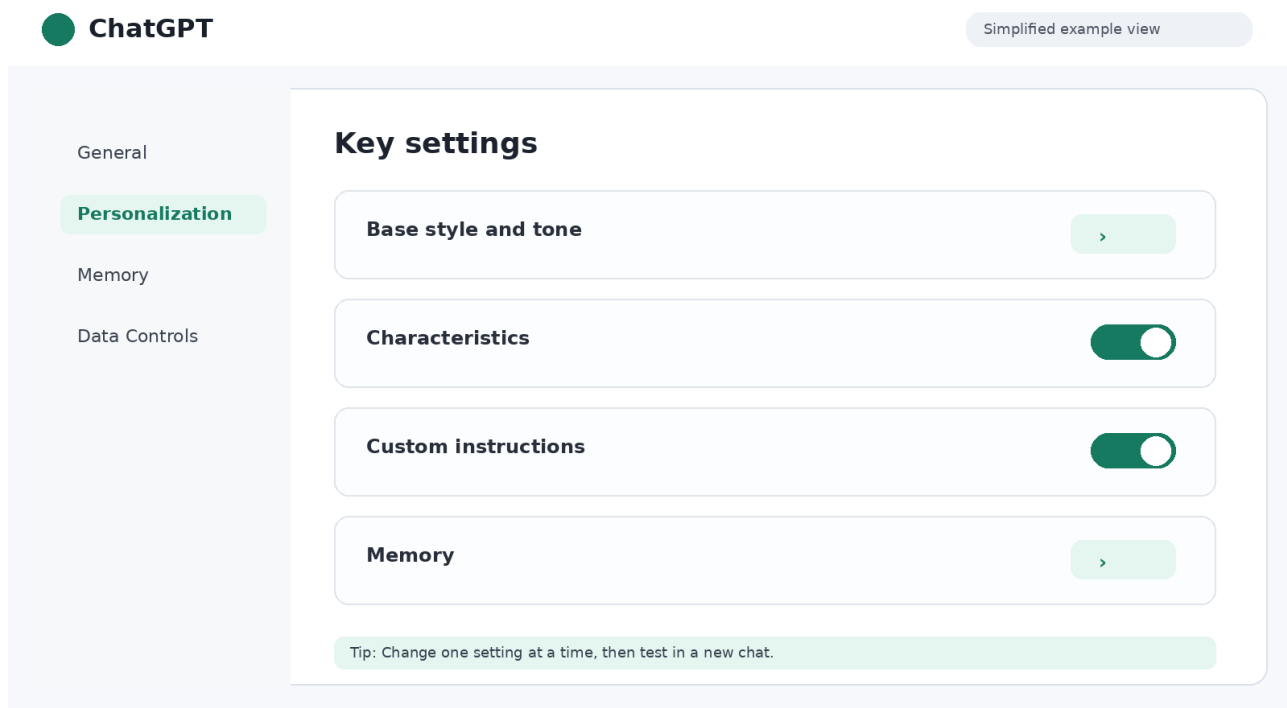


Figure 2: Simplified example view of key settings.

3. Personalization layers

Layer	Controls	Example
Personality	Overall voice and manner	Professional, friendly, efficient
Characteristics	Fine-tuning	More structure, fewer emojis
Custom instructions	Explicit persistent rules	Default to English; state uncertainty clearly
Memory	Context learned from conversations	Role, preferences, recurring topics

4. Settings in detail

Base style and personality

Personality changes how ChatGPT communicates, not its capabilities or safety rules. Professional or Efficient work well for business documentation; Default is neutral. A direct instruction in the current chat can override the base style.

- Path: Profile > Personalization > Base style and tone.
- Professional: polished, precise and workplace appropriate.
- Efficient: concise, direct and step-oriented.
- Friendly: warmer and more conversational.
- The selected style applies across chats, but the current task remains more important.

Characteristics - fine controls

Characteristics nudge individual aspects of the selected style. The controls may not yet be visible on every account. They affect presentation, not the underlying model.

- Warm: more or less supportive.
- Enthusiastic: livelier or more neutral.
- Headers and lists: more structure or more prose.
- Emojis: more frequent or almost none.
- For business guides: high structure, low emojis and slightly above-neutral warmth.

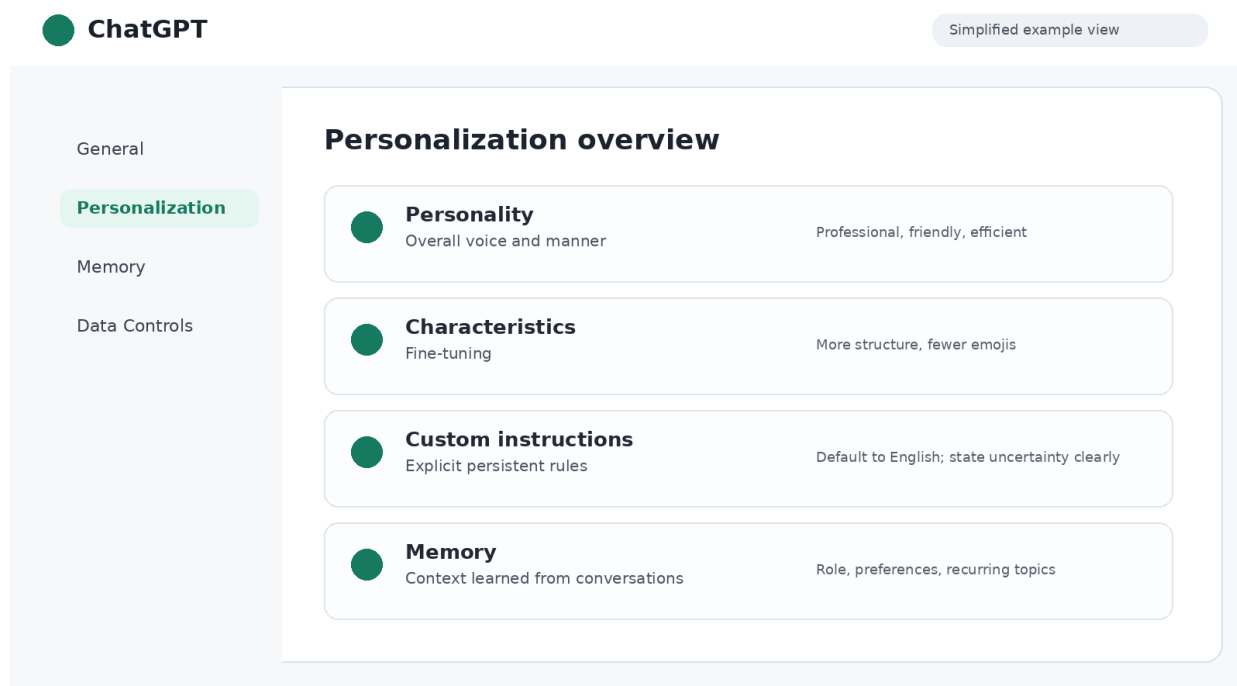


Figure 3: Personalization layers should complement each other.

4. Settings in detail - continued

Custom instructions

Use this area for stable guidance that should apply across many chats. Do not store passwords, confidential client data or short-lived project status.

- Address: "Call me Detlef and use an informal tone."
- Role: "I work in application management."
- Working style: "Be precise, critical and solution-oriented."
- Format: "Use numbered steps and exact menu paths for how-to guides."
- Language: "Reply in English by default and add German terms when useful."

Memory and past chats

Memory is separate from the visible chat history. Deleting a conversation may not remove a separately stored memory. To fully remove something, you may need to delete both the memory and the chat.

- Path: Settings > Personalization > Memory.
- Review: "What do you know about me?"
- Correct: "Remember this instead ..."
- Delete individual entries or reset Memory.
- Temporary Chat does not use or create memories.

5. Privacy, deletion and control

Personalization is useful but should be managed deliberately. Chat history, Memory, connected services and model improvement are separate areas and may need to be changed individually.

Control	Effect
Turn Memory off	ChatGPT stops using saved memories; existing entries may remain depending on the option chosen.
Temporary Chat	Does not use or create Memory and does not appear in normal history.
Delete a chat	Removes the chat but not automatically every memory derived from it.
Model improvement	Data Controls allow you to opt out of using content to improve models.

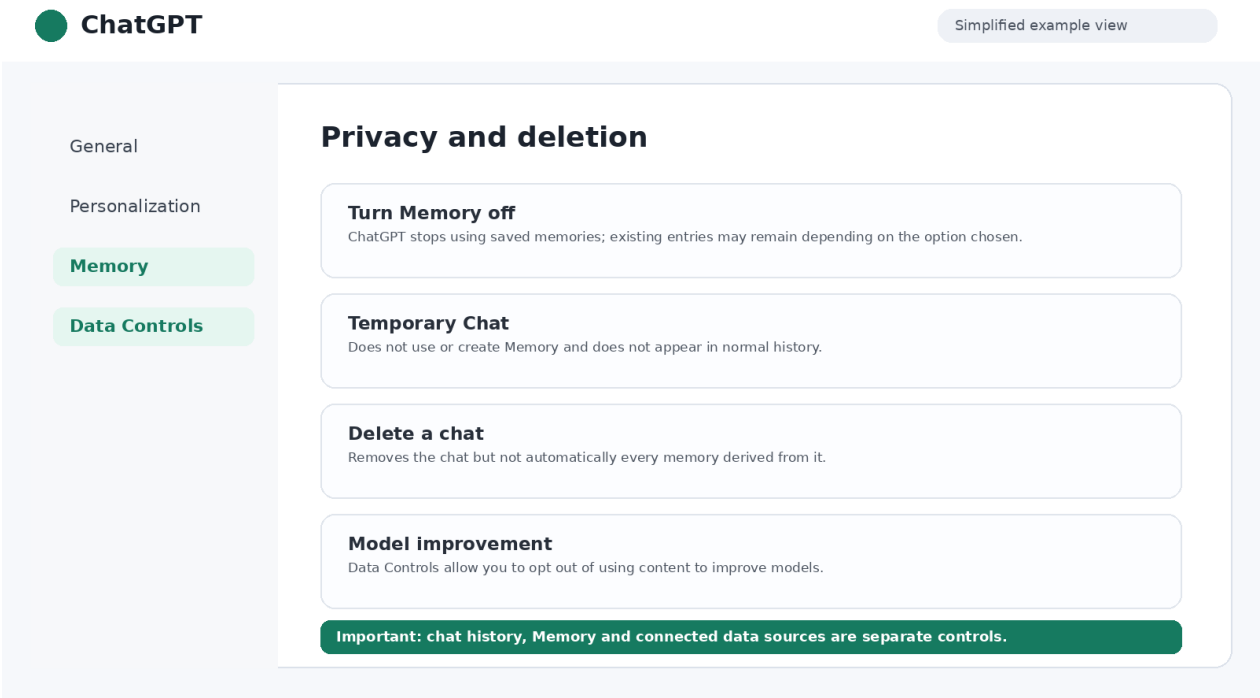


Figure 4: Simplified example view of privacy and deletion controls.

Do not store passwords, credentials, complete medical records or confidential company information as persistent personalization.

6. Recommended configuration

The following template is deliberately written so that ordinary users can understand and adapt it easily.

Reply in English by default. Address me as “Detlef” and use an informal but professional tone. Explain technical topics for ordinary users without omitting important details. Start with a brief orientation, then use clear headings, numbered steps and a compact comparison table where useful. Give exact menu paths. Clearly flag uncertainty, account-specific features and staged rollouts. Do not use emojis in factual business answers.

How to test the result

- Start a new chat.
- Ask a short factual question.
- Request a step-by-step guide.
- Ask for a comparison or table.
- Check whether language, structure and detail level match your preference.

Simplified example view

General
Personalization
Memory
Data Controls

Free or first paid tier?

Free	ChatGPT Go
Personality and base style Available, subject to rollout	Personality and base style Same as Free
Characteristics/fine controls Available, subject to rollout	Characteristics/fine controls Same as Free
Custom instructions Available	Custom instructions Available
Memory and past chats Limited	Memory and past chats Longer or broader
Messages, uploads and images Limited	Messages, uploads and images Higher limits

Personalization is not automatically a paid-only feature.

Figure 5: Paid plans usually expand capacity and tools, not automatically the basic personalization logic.

7. Troubleshooting, checklist and sources

Common problems

- Option missing: update the app, check the web version and allow for staged rollout.
- Responses look unchanged: start a new chat and check for conflicting instructions.
- ChatGPT uses outdated information: edit or delete the relevant memory.
- Too many lists: reduce the Headers & Lists characteristic.
- Personality is barely visible: direct task and formatting instructions often take priority.

Quick checklist

- Correct account type confirmed
- Relevant consumer plan checked
- Global instructions are short and non-conflicting
- Memory and chat history reviewed separately
- Connected apps/data sources selected deliberately
- Privacy and model improvement settings reviewed
- Changes tested in a new chat

Official sources

<https://chatgpt.com/pricing/>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/11989085-what-is-chatgpt-go>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/11899719-customizing-your-chatgpt-personality>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/20001038-characteristics-in-chatgpt>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/8096356-chatgpt-custom-instructions>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/8590148-memory-faq>

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/6950777-what-is-chatgpt-plus>

Plans, prices, model names and rollouts can change at short notice. The display in your own account and the current official product page are authoritative.