

DAY NINE

09 /10

Claude Design — *Claude as a making partner*

Claude does not only explain and automate — it builds. Today is about using Claude as a design and prototyping partner: turning a description into a working interface, and learning the art direction that separates a generic result from a real one.

BY THE END OF DAY 9, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS TO —

- See Claude as a building partner, not just an answerer
- Brief a design with real direction
- Avoid generic output by committing to a vision
- Use Artifacts as a creative medium
- Run the iteration loop as art direction
- Hold the line on taste, purpose, and access

01 Why today matters

ORIENTATION

For eight days Claude has been a thinker, an explainer, a coder, a connector. Today it is a maker. Describe an interface, a prototype, a visualisation — and Claude can build a working version of it, then refine it with you. The skill that matters here is not technical. It is art direction: knowing what you want well enough to ask for it, and judging what comes back.

This is the most creative day of the series, and the one where the human's role is most clearly director. Claude executes with real capability; the taste, the vision, and the judgement of "is this actually good" stay with you. Teach it as a partnership with a very clear division of labour.

PREREQUISITES

Day 2's Artifacts and Day 3's specificity are the foundation today builds on. No design background is required — but a willingness to have an opinion is.

02 Claude as a building partner

CORE CONCEPT

The shift today is from asking to making. You are not requesting information about a thing — you are collaborating on the thing itself.

THE MENTAL MODEL

A skilled collaborator who needs direction.

Picture working with a fast, capable maker who can build almost anything you describe — but who has no opinion about what you should build. They bring execution; you bring intent. A vague brief gets a competent, forgettable result. A clear, committed brief gets something with a point of view. The quality of what you make together is set by the quality of your direction.

WHAT THIS PARTNERSHIP IS GOOD FOR

- ✓ Turning an idea into a working interface or prototype you can actually use
- ✓ Making data legible — charts, visualisations, explanatory tools
- ✓ Exploring several directions quickly, before committing to one
- ✓ Building a real, usable thing — not a mockup of one

03 Artifacts as a creative medium

CORE CONCEPT

You met Artifacts on Day 2 as a place substantial work lives. In design, they become the medium itself — the canvas where Claude builds and you both see the result take shape.

3.1 Why the medium matters

Because an Artifact is a real, working thing — not a description of one — you can judge it the way you would judge the finished article. You see it, you use it, you react to it. That tight loop between making and seeing is what makes genuine iteration possible.

3.2 Working in it

Treat the Artifact as a draft you and Claude are revising together. It is not “generate and accept” — it is “make, look, react, refine.” The looking and reacting are your job, and they are where the real design happens.

KEY IDEA TO INSTALL

An Artifact is not the output you take and leave — it is the shared canvas you work on together. Design happens in the loop of making and reacting, not in a single request.

04 Briefing with real direction

CORE CONCEPT

The difference between a generic result and a striking one is almost always the brief. Claude can match a clear vision with impressive fidelity — but it cannot supply the vision. That is the part only you can bring.

- **Name the aesthetic.** “Make it look nice” gives Claude nothing to aim at. “Warm, editorial, like a printed field guide — cream paper, serif headlines, generous margins” gives it a target. Specificity is the whole game.
- **Bring references.** Point at things — “the calm of this layout,” “the density of that dashboard.” Concrete references travel further than adjectives.
- **State the purpose and the audience.** Who is this for, what should it help them do, how should it feel to use? Design without purpose is just decoration.
- **Say what to avoid.** Negative direction is direction. “Not corporate, not busy, no stock-photo gloss” rules out a whole region of generic.

“Claude can match a vision with real fidelity. It cannot invent the vision. That part is yours.”

WHERE GENERIC COMES FROM

Bland output is almost never a failure of capability — it is a brief with no point of view. Faced with no direction, Claude reaches for the safe middle. The cure is not a better tool; it is a clearer, braver brief. Commit to a vision and ask for that.

05 Iteration, taste, and judgement

CORE CONCEPT

The first version is a starting point, not a verdict. Real design lives in the refinement — and refinement is art direction, not a stream of small fixes.

5.1 Iterate like an art director

Do not just list bugs. React with intent: “this feels colder than I wanted — warm it up,” “the hierarchy is fighting me, make the headline lead.” You are steering toward a vision, and each round should move toward it, not just patch the last one.

5.2 Taste is the human’s job

Claude executes; you judge. “Is this actually good? Does it serve the person who will use it? Does it match what I set out to make?” — those questions are yours, and they do not get delegated. Capability without judgement produces things that work and do not matter.

5.3 Purpose and access

Two things keep design honest. Purpose: every choice should serve the people who will use the thing, not the maker's cleverness. Access: a design that some people cannot use is not finished. Beauty that excludes is a bug, not a style.

TEACHING SHORTCUT

Frame the whole day as the relationship between a director and a brilliant crew. The crew can build anything. The film is only as good as the direction. Claude is the crew; the learner is the director — and directors have opinions.

LAB 09 ~45 MIN

Direct something real into being

Each learner designs and builds one real, usable thing as an Artifact — with a committed brief and at least two rounds of art-directed iteration.

1. **Pick something real** you actually want — a tool, a visualisation, a small interface. Real beats hypothetical.
2. **Write a committed brief.** Name the aesthetic, bring a reference or two, state purpose and audience, say what to avoid. Be brave, not safe.
3. **Build the first version** as an Artifact. Treat it as a draft, not a delivery.
4. **Art-direct two rounds.** React with intent each time — steer toward the vision, do not just fix. Notice how the brief's clarity shows up in how well iteration works.
5. **Judge it honestly.** Is it good? Does it serve its user? Can everyone use it? Name one thing you would direct next.

a real, usable Artifact the learner directed — and a felt understanding that the quality came from their brief and their judgement, not from the tool alone.

TEACHING NOTES

How to teach Day 9 well**OPEN WITH THIS**

Run the same request two ways on one screen: once with “make me a nice dashboard,” once with a committed, specific brief. Let the room see the gap. That gap is the entire day — and it is made of direction, not capability.

PACE & EMPHASIS

Sections 04 (briefing) and 05 (iteration and taste) are the heart — most of the hour lives there. Sections 02–03 set up the partnership quickly. Push learners to be brave in their briefs; timidity is the most common failure, and it produces the most generic results.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What is something you have wanted to build but assumed you could not?
- Describe an aesthetic you love specifically enough that someone else could aim at it.
- Where in your work has “looks good” quietly skipped past “is good and usable for everyone”?

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS TO PRE-EMPT

“If the result is generic, the tool is limited.”

Almost always it is the brief with no point of view. Generic in, generic out.

“Iteration means listing what is broken.”

Iteration is art direction — reacting with intent and steering toward a vision, not patching.

“Claude has design taste, so I can defer to it.”

Claude executes; judgement of good, useful, and accessible stays with the human director.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 30 MINUTES Teach the committed brief (04) and iteration-as-art-direction plus taste (05). Do Lab steps 2–4 on one real example, as a group, with the room supplying the direction. The director-and-crew framing carries the rest.

Day 9 Cheat Sheet

Making partner	Claude builds, not just answers. It brings execution; you bring intent.
Artifacts as medium	The shared canvas where Claude builds and you both see it take shape — a draft you revise together.
Make, look, react, refine	Design lives in the loop, not in a single request. The looking and reacting are your job.
Committed brief	Name the aesthetic, bring references, state purpose and audience, say what to avoid.
Specificity is the game	“Make it nice” gives nothing to aim at. A vivid, specific vision gives a target.
Where generic comes from	A brief with no point of view. The cure is a braver brief, not a better tool.
Iterate like a director	React with intent and steer toward the vision — do not just list what is broken.
Taste is yours	Claude executes; “is this good, useful, accessible?” stays with the human.
Purpose & access	Every choice serves the user; a design some people cannot use is not finished.

Check for understanding

Five questions. Learners should be able to answer all five before Day 10.

1. What is the division of labour between the human and Claude in a design partnership?
2. Why is an Artifact described as a medium rather than just an output?
3. Name three things a committed brief includes — and where generic results come from.
4. What does it mean to iterate “like an art director” rather than listing fixes?
5. Which judgements stay with the human, and why can’t they be delegated?

Answer notes — 1) Claude brings execution and can build what is described; the human brings intent, vision, taste, and judgement. 2) It is a real working thing you can see, use and react to — the tight make-and-see loop is where genuine iteration happens. 3) Any three: named aesthetic, references, purpose and audience, what to avoid; generic output comes from a brief with no point of view. 4) Reacting with intent and steering each round toward a vision, rather than patching the last version’s bugs. 5) “Is this good, does it serve its user, is it accessible, does it match the intent” — capability without judgement produces things that work but don’t matter, and only the human holds the vision.

Day 9 in five lines

- Claude is a making partner — it brings execution; you bring intent, vision, and taste.
- Artifacts are the creative medium: a shared canvas you make on, look at, react to, and refine together.
- A committed, specific brief is the difference between a generic result and a real one.
- Iterate like an art director — react with intent and steer toward a vision, don't just patch.
- Judgement of good, useful, and accessible stays with the human and cannot be delegated.

TOMORROW — DAY 10 → **Bringing It Together — the whole map, the capstone, and becoming the teacher**

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