

ChatGPT & Claude: understand the models and choose the right one

Versions, reasoning levels, recommended use cases, and key differences between OpenAI and Anthropic.

OpenAI

GPT-5.6 Sol is the main model for eligible paid plans. GPT-6 Pro, powered by GPT-6 Astra, is the latest Pro option in ChatGPT.

Anthropic

Claude Opus 5.5 and Sonnet 5.5 are the latest releases. Haiku 5.5 has been announced but is not yet available as of October 1, 2026.

Verification date: October 1, 2026. This guide deliberately distinguishes models available in consumer applications from API models and specialized-access models.

The GPT-5.6 family and GPT-6 Pro

In ChatGPT, you need to distinguish the model being used from the reasoning level. A “High” setting is therefore not a different model: it means GPT-5.6 Sol spends more time reasoning.

FLAGSHIP

GPT-5.6 Sol

The main model for eligible paid users. It handles everyday questions, coding, research, science, design, and complex knowledge work.

PRO

GPT-5.6 Sol Pro

The most capable GPT-5.6 option for difficult problems and long workflows. Best reserved for tasks where quality matters more than speed.

FAST / COST-EFFICIENT

GPT-5.6 Luna

Default model for Free and Go. The Think button also uses Luna. It prioritizes speed and cost efficiency.

BALANCED

GPT-5.6 Terra

A middle tier balancing speed, cost, and capability. It is mainly offered in Work, Codex, and the API rather than as a standard choice in regular ChatGPT.

GPT-6 Pro (Astra)

GPT-6 Pro is ChatGPT’s new Pro option and is powered by GPT-6 Astra. OpenAI lists it as available on eligible Pro, Business, and Enterprise plans. On Plus, Astra is also available in ChatGPT Work and Codex, but not necessarily as the Pro model in standard chat.

Key point: Sol / Terra / Luna are tiers within the GPT-5.6 family, while Instant / Medium / High / Extra High are reasoning levels in ChatGPT.

Instant, Medium, High, Extra High: what does the setting change?

Level	What changes	Best for
Instant	Fast response; on eligible paid plans, it uses GPT-5.6 Sol.	Emails, translation, simple explanations, everyday questions.
Medium	Standard reasoning with GPT-5.6 Sol.	Professional analysis, training preparation, everyday coding, documents.
High	Longer, deeper reasoning.	Complex debugging, architecture, multi-constraint analysis.
Extra High	The highest GPT-5.6 Sol reasoning level on plans that include it.	Very difficult problems where extra reasoning time is worth the quality gain.
Pro	This is not just a reasoning level: you select a Pro model, such as GPT-5.6 Sol Pro or GPT-6 Pro, depending on your plan.	Long workflows, advanced coding/research, and multi-step tasks.

Simplified availability: Free/Go -> GPT-5.6 Luna; Plus -> GPT-5.6 Sol with Medium/High; Pro/Business/Enterprise -> broader access including Extra High and Pro options, depending on plan rules.

Ongoing transition: OpenAI says GPT-5.5 will be retired from ChatGPT, Work, and Codex on October 14, 2026.

Available and announced Claude models

At Anthropic, Haiku, Sonnet, and Opus refer to model classes. Anthropic also offers specialized frontier models such as Fable and Mythos.

AVAILABLE - SEP. 28, 2026

Claude Sonnet 5.5

The main all-around choice: fast, less expensive than a frontier model, and very strong for well-defined tasks, debugging, and creating documents, slides, and spreadsheets. Anthropic reports more than 30% higher speed than Sonnet 5.

CURRENT FAST CLASS

Claude Haiku 4.5

The latest documented Haiku generation at the time of verification. Designed for speed and high-volume workloads. Haiku 5.5 has not yet been released.

AVAILABLE - SEP. 22, 2026

Claude Opus 5.5

The most capable Opus model for complex work requiring judgment, advanced coding, agents, and long-running tasks. Available in Claude for Pro, Max, Team, and Enterprise.

ANNOUNCED, NOT YET AVAILABLE

Claude Haiku 5.5

Anthropic says it will join the 5.5 family “in the coming weeks.” It is intended for high-volume, cost-sensitive applications.

Fable 5.1 and Mythos 5.1

Fable 5.1 is a highly advanced general frontier model for coding, knowledge work, and research. Mythos 5.1 uses the same underlying model with safeguards designed for verified-access programs, including cybersecurity and life sciences. Mythos is therefore not a consumer model you select in Claude like Sonnet or Opus.

COMPARISON

OpenAI vs Anthropic: how to understand the lineups

Need	OpenAI / ChatGPT	Anthropic / Claude
Fast / everyday	GPT-5.6 Sol in Instant mode (paid) or GPT-5.6 Luna (Free/Go).	Claude Sonnet 5.5 for most tasks; Haiku for very fast/high-volume use cases when offered.
Demanding professional work	GPT-5.6 Sol in Medium or High.	Claude Sonnet 5.5.
Complex code / agents	GPT-5.6 Sol High / Extra High, Sol Pro, or GPT-6 Pro depending on access.	Claude Opus 5.5; Sonnet 5.5 remains highly relevant when the problem is well-defined.
Documents / slides / spreadsheets	GPT-5.6 Sol, especially through ChatGPT Work for file- and tool-based workflows.	Anthropic explicitly positions Sonnet 5.5 for producing polished documents, slides, and spreadsheets.
Research / open-ended problems	GPT-5.6 Sol High/Extra High or a Pro model.	Opus 5.5; Fable 5.1 for certain advanced frontier workflows.

Important: these pairings do not mean that two models are technically equivalent. Each provider optimizes reasoning, cost, speed, tools, and product experience differently.

Which model should you use for each task?

1. Simple question, translation, email, summary

Practical choice: ChatGPT: Instant. Claude: Sonnet 5.5.

Do not use maximum reasoning for a short task.

2. Prepare a training course, report, or detailed plan

Practical choice: ChatGPT: GPT-5.6 Sol Medium/High. Claude: Sonnet 5.5.

Very good quality/speed balance for professional work.

3. Major debugging or software architecture

Practical choice: ChatGPT: GPT-5.6 Sol High/Extra High or Pro. Claude: Opus 5.5.

Depth and robustness become the main priority.

4. Agent or long workflow using multiple tools

Practical choice: ChatGPT: Pro model / Work depending on access. Claude: Opus 5.5.

These scenarios benefit more from models optimized for long tasks and agents.

5. High volume or API cost is the priority

Practical choice: OpenAI: Luna/Terra depending on product. Anthropic: Haiku class; Haiku 5.5 is announced but not yet available.

Choose primarily based on cost per task, latency, and minimum acceptable quality.

Releases that explain the current lineup

Date	Company	Event
June 26, 2026	OpenAI	Preview of GPT-5.6 Sol, Terra, and Luna.
Summer 2026	OpenAI	GPT-5.6 becomes available across ChatGPT, Work, Codex, and the API depending on plan.
Sep. 1, 2026	Anthropic	Claude Fable 5.1 and Mythos 5.1.
Sep. 22, 2026	Anthropic	Claude Opus 5.5.
Sep. 28, 2026	Anthropic	Claude Sonnet 5.5; Haiku 5.5 announced for the coming weeks.
Oct. 2026	OpenAI	GPT-6 Pro, powered by GPT-6 Astra, becomes available on eligible plans.
Oct. 14, 2026	OpenAI	Planned retirement of GPT-5.5 from ChatGPT, Work, and Codex.

Model catalogs change quickly, so the verification date matters whenever you reuse this guide for training or presentations.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

References used

All version and availability information above was verified using official OpenAI and Anthropic pages.

OpenAI Help Center - GPT-5.6 and GPT-6 Pro in ChatGPT
<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/20001354-gpt-56-in-chatgpt>

OpenAI - GPT-5.6 launch
<https://openai.com/index/gpt-5-6/>

OpenAI - Product release notes
<https://openai.com/products/release-notes/>

Anthropic - Claude Sonnet 5.5
<https://www.anthropic.com/claude-sonnet-5-5>

Anthropic - Claude Opus 5.5
<https://www.anthropic.com/claude-opus-5-5>

Anthropic - Claude Fable 5.1 and Mythos 5.1
<https://www.anthropic.com/claude-fable-and-mythos-5-1>

Anthropic - Model system cards
<https://www.anthropic.com/system-cards>

Note: this guide describes the model lineups as of October 1, 2026. Plans, usage limits, pricing, and model selectors may change independently of the models themselves.