Alva Code · Help center

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Your first successful task

From opening Alva Code to a small, working result. No coding experience required.

1. Install and open Alva Code. On Windows, follow the installer. On macOS, open the DMG and drag Alva Code into Applications, then launch it from there.

2. Sign in to Alva Code or create an account. This signs you into Alva; connecting your AI provider is a separate step.

3. Choose one AI connection: a provider's coding tool (CLI), an API key, or a local model. Read "Choose your AI connection" if you are unsure.

4. Open a project folder. For your first experiment, create an empty folder in the folder picker and select it.

5. Select a connected provider and model in the chat panel. Start with a small task from "Example prompts".

6. Read the result, open the changed files, and ask the agent how to run or preview them. Make one follow-up change at a time.

Finishing or skipping setup does not prove that an agent is ready. Check your provider connection before sending your first task.
alva-code.com/help/en/quick-start.html

Sign in to Alva Code

Understand the difference between your Alva account and your AI provider account.

1. Use "Continue with Google", "Continue with GitHub", or your Alva email and password.

2. For a new email account, switch to "Register" and complete the form.

3. If you forgot your Alva password, use "Forgot password?" on the sign-in screen.

4. After signing in, complete setup. You will connect your AI provider separately; the Alva login does not sign you into a coding CLI.
alva-code.com/help/en/sign-in.html

Choose your AI connection

Already have an AI subscription? Start here before entering an API key.

1. Existing AI subscription: choose "AI subscription (official CLI)". A CLI is a small program installed on your computer that connects Alva to a coding provider. You do not need to learn terminal commands to use Alva's installation buttons.

2. Install the tool for your provider, then sign in to that provider. Installing Alva alone does not install or authenticate every provider's tool.

3. API key: choose this if you want to connect a provider using its developer API credentials. Treat this as a separate connection from signing into a chat subscription.

4. Local model: choose Ollama if you want to run a model on your computer. Ollama must be running and a model must be installed.

5. You only need one working connection to start. Additional providers can be configured later in Settings.

The provider determines account eligibility, available models, and usage limits. The options shown in screenshots are examples, not a guarantee for every account.
alva-code.com/help/en/connections.html

Install and sign in to a coding CLI

The missing step between an existing AI account and a usable coding agent.

1. Open Settings → CLI Tools, or select the subscription path during setup.

2. Find the tool for your provider, for example OpenAI Codex CLI or Claude Code. If it is missing, choose “Install” and wait for the result.

3. Once installed, choose “Open / sign in” or “Sign in”. Follow the provider’s instructions in the terminal or browser that opens.

4. Return to Alva. In setup, use “Check again”; in Settings, reopen CLI Tools if the status has not refreshed.

5. Check both states: “Installed” means the tool exists; “Authenticated” or “Connected” means the provider sign-in was detected.

6. Open a project and select that provider in the model picker before sending your task.

Windows and macOS may use different installers and sign-in windows. Use the action offered by Alva on your computer. If installation fails, read the reported error before retrying.
alva-code.com/help/en/cli.html

Connect an API key

Add and test a provider connection in Settings.

1. Open Settings → API Keys.

2. Paste the provider’s API key into the matching provider field and save it using the available action.

3. Use “Test” where offered and read the result. A saved key may still be invalid or lack access to the requested model.

4. Choose a model from the connected API provider in the chat panel.

5. If the request is rejected, check the provider’s error, account access, and usage settings.

Enter keys only into the provider settings. Do not paste credentials into example prompts or help questions.
alva-code.com/help/en/api.html

Use a local model with Ollama

Set up the local service and download a model before starting.

1. Open Settings → Ollama and follow the installation controls if Ollama is missing.

2. Start Ollama and refresh its status. Check that Alva can reach the configured local address.

3. Install a model from the available list. Wait until the download finishes.

4. Enable the local connection if it is marked inactive, then select an available local model.

5. Try a short question first. Larger models need more memory and may respond more slowly on your computer.
alva-code.com/help/en/ollama.html

Open a project and start a task

Give the agent a clear goal and review the result.

1. Choose “Open project” and select the folder containing your files. For a new project, start with a dedicated empty folder.

2. The file tree shows your project files; selecting a file opens it in the editor.

3. In the chat panel, choose an available provider and model. Use Chat for questions, Plan to discuss an approach, or Code to request implementation.

4. Describe the desired result and any constraints. Mention relevant filenames or attach a reference when useful.

5. After the task finishes, read the response and review changed files. Ask for the run or preview instructions if they are unclear.

Create a simple to-do page in this empty folder using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Include adding and completing tasks. Explain how I can open it.

Explain this project in plain language. Identify the starting file and how to run it. Do not change files.
alva-code.com/help/en/first-task.html

Example prompts you can adapt

Useful starting points for explanations, small changes, and debugging.

1. Copy a prompt and replace the example details with your own goal.

2. For changes, name what should change and what should stay the same.

3. For errors, include the exact message and the action that triggered it.

4. Review the response before requesting the next change.

Explain the files in this project to me as a beginner. Do not change anything yet.

Make the main page work well on phones. Keep the existing text and colors. Explain the changes.

When I click Save, I get this error: [paste error]. Find the cause, fix it, and check the affected behavior.

Create a small personal homepage with an introduction, three project cards, and contact information. Use placeholder text and explain how to preview it.
alva-code.com/help/en/prompts.html

Make the workspace comfortable

Choose your theme and adjust the interface.

1. Choose a light or dark appearance during setup.

2. To change it later, open Settings → Design.

3. Use Settings → Language to change the app language. Help is available in English and German; other interface languages use English help.

4. Screenshots in these guides show an English interface and may use a different theme from yours.
alva-code.com/help/en/appearance.html

No agent available or connection failed

Check installation, sign-in, and model selection in that order.

1. No CLI found / command not found: open CLI Tools and install the chosen provider’s tool. If you installed it outside Alva, restart Alva so it can detect the changed environment.

2. Installed but not authenticated: use the provider’s sign-in action and complete it. Signing into Alva is a separate login.

3. Signed in but requests fail: check the selected provider and model, then read the exact provider error. The account may lack model access or have reached a usage limit.

4. API key rejected: check that it belongs to the selected provider and run its test action.

5. Local model unavailable: check that Ollama is running, the connection is enabled, and a model has finished downloading.

6. Still stuck: keep the exact error and describe what you clicked. Once a working agent is available, paste the article context and your question into its chat.

This help and its search work without an agent. Copying help context does not send a message or start a task.
alva-code.com/help/en/troubleshooting.html