

GITHUB

Custom Instructions for GitHub Copilot



Agenda

Disclaimer: No agents were harmed during this presentation.

- 01 Meet your agent
- 02 Why Customize Copilot?
- 03 Ways to Customize Copilot
- 04 Custom Instructions
- 05 Prompt Files & More
- 06 Resources
- 07 Q&A



Meet your agent



AGENT ASSIGNED TO PRESENT

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Junior Software Developer @ Full Stack

Founder of Urban Uprise

Tech Enthusiasts

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Build random side projects for convenience

Why should we ?

1

No more repeats

You can save your preferences once, so you don't have to keep telling the AI the same things every time.

2

Saves time

AI will write code that fits your style and project needs, making it easier to use and understand.

3

Easy to set up

You can quickly set up instructions for different projects, so the AI always gives you the right kind of help.

3 ways to customize your copilot

Custom instructions

Provide guidelines or rules for tasks , like how to generate code, code reviews (how a task is done)

Prompt files

Reusable standalone prompts for tasks that can be run directly in your chat.

Custom chat modes

Control how the chat works. Specify tools it will make use of.

Custom instructions

Allows you to set your own rules and preferences for how the AI helps you. You can tell it what coding style to use, what technologies you prefer, what to check for in code reviews and even how to write commit messages or pull request titles, so everything matches your standards.

Types of custom instructions



.github/copilot-instructions.md

- General coding practices, preferred tech stack, project requirements
- Single markdown file
- Stored in a workspace
- Automatically included in every request



.github/.instructions.md

- Task-specific code-generation instructions (more control)
- Uses glob pattern to include instructions for specific files
- Can be multiple files
- stored in workspace or your user profile



VS Code settings

- Use this option to define instructions for tasks other than code-generation.
- Instructions can be stored in settings
- Specify instructions in VS Code user or workspace settings.

Prompt files (experimental)

Prompt files are reusable prompts for common tasks like generating code or performing a code review. You define the prompt content in a Markdown file. A prompt file is a standalone prompt that you can run directly in chat. Optionally, you can also include guidelines about how the task should be performed.

Examples & structure



.github/prompts

- Only available within the workspace and are stored in the .github/prompts folder of the workspace.
- Can be stored in the user profile

perform a security review of a REST API

```
---
mode: 'edit'
description: 'Perform a REST API security review'
---

Perform a REST API security review:

* Ensure all endpoints are protected by authentication and authorization
* Validate all user inputs and sanitize data
* Implement rate limiting and throttling
* Implement logging and monitoring for security events
```

Resources

These are some really cool resources you can check out in order to give the instructions a spin.

Customize AI responses in VS Code

<https://code.visualstudio.com/docs/copilot/copilot-customization>

4.1.chatmode.md | Instruction file by Burke Holland

<https://gist.github.com/burkeholland/a232b706994aa2f4b2ddd3d97b11f9a7>

Adding repository custom instructions for GitHub Copilot

<https://docs.github.com/en/copilot/how-tos/custom-instructions/adding-repository-custom-instructions-for-github-copilot>

Q&A

07

THANK YOU

