WHATISCHATGPT.CO.UK / PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

ChatGPT Plugins and GPTs: What's Available

What happened to the original Plugins feature, how it differs from custom GPTs, and what to check before using a GPT today.

The short answer

The original ChatGPT Plugins beta is retired. It is not available as the old Plugin Store and plug-in selection experience. Custom GPTs are a different feature: purpose-configured versions of ChatGPT that people can browse and use when they have access. OpenAI has announced a planned retirement of custom GPTs too, so check your account's current notice rather than assuming today's access will continue indefinitely.

A naming trap to avoid

Information checked: 20 October 2026. OpenAI product labels, eligibility and rollout can change. The current Help Centre and in-product notices are the source of truth for your account.

01 / THE TERMS

Three names, different products

Legacy ChatGPT Plugins

The 2023 Plugins beta connected ChatGPT to third-party services using a distinct plug-in selection experience. It has been retired. If an older guide tells you to install a beta plugin or pick one from the old Plugin Store, its steps are no longer current.

Today's Plugins directory

OpenAI's current Help Centre describes a Plugins directory for skills, connected apps and reusable workflows. A plugin may bundle more than one element; using a connected app can require authorisation. This is a newer product, not a return of the original beta. Access and features depend on plan, workspace, role, region and where you use ChatGPT.

Custom GPTs

A custom GPT is ChatGPT configured for a particular purpose. It may combine specific instructions, uploaded knowledge files and capabilities such as web search or image generation. Some GPTs connect to apps or external APIs. GPTs are used inside ChatGPT; they are not the same as legacy Plugins or an assistant built into an outside service with the API.

> **Quick test: “Plugin Store” in an old guide usually signals the retired beta. For current details, check the page date and follow official OpenAI Help Centre links.**

02 / FINDING AND ACCESS

Where to look, and why your view may differ

Finding GPTs

Open Explore GPTs in ChatGPT or visit the official page at chatgpt.com/gpts. You can also open a direct link or a GPT shared in your workspace. Sign in to start a conversation, even if a public GPT page is visible before sign-in. Read its description and starters before trying it. On the web, you can use an @ mention in an existing conversation; on mobile, open the GPT from its menu or sidebar.

Access depends on the account

OpenAI's current guidance distinguishes using a GPT from creating or publishing one:

- Use: signed-in users can use GPTs they can access, such as public GPTs, direct shares or GPTs enabled by workspace settings.
- Create or publish: OpenAI says this is unavailable on personal Free, Go, Plus and Pro accounts. Business, Enterprise and Edu workspace access depends on settings and permissions.
- If something is missing, check the right account and workspace first. Rollouts, region, device and workspace controls can change what appears.

Planned change: custom GPT retirement

Checked on 20 October 2026, OpenAI's retirement FAQ schedules custom GPT retirement for 11 December 2026, with a later date for affected Enterprise workspaces granted an approved deferral. Existing GPTs remain usable until the applicable date, subject to current access and workspace permissions. Migration to plugins is being rolled out, and may not yet be available to every account. Check the notice in the account or workspace where the GPT was created. A replacement does not automatically inherit the original sharing or custom actions, so test access and integrations before switching.

03 / PRIVACY AND EVALUATION

Privacy, trust and a sensible test

Know what may be shared

OpenAI says GPT builders cannot view individual conversations users have with their GPTs. This does not mean connected services have no access to information. When a GPT uses an app or external API, relevant parts of your input may be sent to that third party. OpenAI says it does not audit or control how those services use or store data. Avoid sharing passwords, payment details, confidential work information or sensitive personal data unless you have checked the provider and your organisation's rules.

Review your data controls

For consumer plans, use of conversations to improve OpenAI's models depends on your data settings. OpenAI's Help Centre says Business, Enterprise and Edu data is not used for training by default. Model-training settings are separate from a third-party app's own data practices. Check Settings, Data controls and any workplace policy before sharing information.

A quick evaluation checklist

- Inspect who made it, what it is for, its description and any privacy policy. Popularity or a badge is a prompt to investigate, not a guarantee of safety or accuracy.
- Try a low-risk, familiar task, then an edge case. Verify important claims using reliable sources, and check whether the answer matches the GPT's stated purpose.
- Before an external action, read what the app will access or change. Review approval prompts and verify the result yourself.

Official OpenAI sources

GPTs in ChatGPT
Creating and editing GPTs
Sharing and publishing GPTs
Custom GPT retirement and migration FAQ
Plugins in ChatGPT and Codex
Data controls in ChatGPT

All sources are OpenAI Help Centre pages. Checked 20 October 2026. Confirm current details in your account.