

WEEK 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

The 12 Takeaways from Widgets Week

01. YOUR TOKENS ARE FUEL -- PICK THE RIGHT GRADE

Opus = rocket fuel (complex builds). Sonnet = premium (daily work, 75-80% of the time). Haiku = regular unleaded (brainstorming, planning, light tasks). Before every session, ask: "What fuel grade does THIS task actually need?"

02. SHORTER THREADS, MORE MILEAGE

Claude re-reads the ENTIRE conversation every exchange. 93% of tokens in long threads are just repeated context. Finish one idea, stop the thread. Ask for a handoff document. Five short threads beat one marathon thread every time.

03. THREE OPTIONS, NOT THIRTY

"Just give me three options" keeps Claude focused and your tokens low. Works for everything: layouts, approaches, names, solutions. 3 options = focused. 30 options = chaos.

04. THE THREE QUESTIONS

Before you build ANYTHING: (1) What problem does this solve? (2) Who is it for? (3) What does done look like? If you can't answer these, you're not ready to build yet. The blueprint IS the shortcut.

05. MUST-DOS ARE YOUR SAFETY NET

Every widget and bot needs a list of must-dos: "This thing MUST be able to ____." When you add new features later, test all the old must-dos too. This is regression testing -- it prevents the classic problem of fixing one thing and breaking another.

06. SCREENSHOTS ARE THE BOMB

When Claude's instructions don't match what you see on screen, take a screenshot and dump it in. Way faster than trying to describe a thousand options. Works for debugging, for website building, for anything visual.

07. DEMAND INTERFACE TESTING

"Claude says it works" does NOT mean "it works for humans." Tell Claude to test the interface before handing it back to you. Use Puppeteer for automated clicking. And always click through your own stuff -- on desktop AND on mobile.

08. MCPs ARE YOUR SUPERPOWERS

Model Context Protocol = a way for Claude to talk directly to other tools. Without MCPs: you are the tube (copy, paste, repeat, cry). With MCPs: the tube does it, you drink tea. They're free. Start with Airtable. Add one at a time.

09. YOU DON'T NEED TO LEARN EVERY PROGRAM

When Claude can reach into systems via MCPs, you no longer have to know every single thing about how a program operates. "I just gained 25 years back." Let the computers talk to each other.

10. MARKDOWN IS FOR THE MACHINE

You don't have to read markdown -- the computer does. Headings and bullets help Claude find what it needs without reading the whole document. "Hey Claude, give this to me in markdown" is all you need.

11. CLOUDFLARE IS FREE AND EASY

Free hosting. Free SSL. Good security. Deploy your widgets to Cloudflare Pages. With the Cloudflare MCP connected, Claude can deploy for you automatically. No excuses left for not shipping.

12. TRUST BUT VERIFY (ACTUALLY, JUST VERIFY)

The goblins are always excited to help, but verify everything. Watch your billing settings -- the Extra Usage toggle has been known to turn itself on. Check Settings > Usage periodically. Set a monthly spend limit. Verify, verify, verify.

HOMEWORK FOR WEEK 4

- If your widget isn't deployed yet, get it on Cloudflare
- Test it — click every button, fill every form, try to break it
- Connect your first MCP (Airtable recommended)
- Update your specs + changelog
- Bring your wins AND your breaks to lab week