

# Cloudflare: Free from Zero to Live

Week 5: The Map // Deploy Stack

## WHAT CLOUDFLARE IS

Cloudflare is not a website builder. You cannot drag and drop there. There is no visual editor. That's exactly why it's on this map.

What Cloudflare is: infrastructure. The place where things live after they're built.

### What you get free:

- Static site hosting — HTML, CSS, and JavaScript pages, live on the internet
- DNS management — point your domain here, everything routes correctly
- SSL certificates — the https:// that browsers require, automatic
- CDN — your pages load fast for visitors anywhere in the world
- DDoS protection — Cloudflare blocks attacks before they reach you
- Workers.dev subdomain — a free URL when you don't have a custom domain yet

### What costs money (if you want it):

- Cloudflare Stream — video streaming at \$5/month
- R2 — object storage for images and files (free tier is generous; you pay at scale)
- Paid plans add enterprise features most people don't need

*"I've put my main Black Belt Bots website on there. It is awesome and it is free."*

## THE SHIFT THIS CREATES

Every drag-and-drop website builder — Wix, Squarespace, Webflow, any of them — is a translator. It takes your clicks and converts them into HTML. The problem is that translator has opinions: its own containers, its own sections, its own way of nesting things. And every month you pay for the privilege of working through their translator.

With Claude and Cloudflare:

- Claude reads any page on the internet and rebuilds it as HTML
- Claude writes clean, responsive HTML from your description
- Claude deploys it to Cloudflare via Wrangler
- You say "make the heading bigger" and it just happens

*"Instead of using a system that's in between you and the code — you can just change the code by saying: Claude, change the code to make it like this, and deploy it."*

You're not going through the translator anymore. The code talks to the code. You're the director.

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## ADDING YOUR DOMAIN

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### Step 1: Create Your Free Account

Go to [cloudflare.com](https://cloudflare.com). Sign up. It's free.

### Step 2: Add Your Domain

In your dashboard, click **Add a domain**. Type your domain name. Cloudflare scans your existing DNS records and imports them automatically.

*"Import DNS records automatically. Highly recommend this process because then mama doesn't have to touch it really."*

### Step 3: Choose the Free Plan

When prompted to choose a plan, select Free. It includes everything you need to host static sites and manage your domain.

### Step 4: Update Your Nameservers

Cloudflare will give you two nameserver addresses (like [karaoke.ns.cloudflare.com](https://karaoke.ns.cloudflare.com) and [mario.ns.cloudflare.com](https://mario.ns.cloudflare.com) — they're always funny names). Go to wherever you registered your domain and replace the existing nameservers with these two.

This is the one step that varies by registrar. Every registrar has it somewhere — usually under "Domains" or "DNS" in your account settings. If you can't find it, ask Claude with a screenshot.

Nameserver propagation can take a few minutes to a few hours. Cloudflare usually shows you as active within an hour.

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## DEPLOYING WITH WRANGLER

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### What Wrangler Is

Wrangler is Cloudflare's command-line deployment tool. You don't need to understand how it works. Claude understands it and will run it for you through the Cloudflare MCP.

When you tell Claude to deploy your page, here's what's happening behind the scenes:

1. Claude packages your HTML file(s)

2. Wrangler authenticates with your Cloudflare account
3. Wrangler uploads the files to Cloudflare's global network
4. Your page is live at a URL within seconds

### Live Demo: Hermi's Migration

In class, Hermi moved her Young Mystics Club website from Wix to Cloudflare in real time. Here's what happened and what to expect:

**What worked:** Claude read Hermi's Wix page URL, rebuilt it as HTML, deployed it via Wrangler, and the page was live. Total time: about 20 minutes including troubleshooting.

**What caused confusion:** The workers.dev subdomain needs to be activated once per Cloudflare account. It's a one-time setting buried under Account Home → Workers & Pages → the "change" button next to your subdomain. Once it's set, it's set forever.

**The SSL delay:** After deploying, the URL may show a security error for 60-90 seconds. This is normal. Cloudflare is provisioning the SSL certificate. Wait. Refresh. It appears.

**The lesson:** When something looks broken, take a screenshot and hand it to Claude. It diagnosed Hermi's subdomain issue, found the exact setting to change, and gave step-by-step instructions. You don't have to figure it out yourself.

### The Commands (For Reference)

These are what Wrangler runs. You don't type these yourself — Claude does, through the MCP. But knowing what they do helps you understand what's happening:

npx wrangler login — opens browser, asks you to authorize Cloudflare

npx wrangler deploy — packages and deploys your files

That's the whole deploy process. Two commands.

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## R2: OBJECT STORAGE

R2 is Cloudflare's storage for files — images, videos, documents, anything that isn't HTML.

When RJ's bots serve images (like when you upload a profile picture to First Draft Ninja), those images go to R2 and get served from there. The chatbot page references the R2 URL and the image appears.

**Free tier:** 10GB of storage, 1 million read operations per month. More than enough to start.

If you need to store images that your widgets or bots use, R2 is the answer. Ask Claude to help you set up an R2 bucket and wire it to whatever you're building.

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## VIDEO HOSTING

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Cloudflare does offer video streaming (Cloudflare Stream) at \$5/month. It's a real option.

For classes and course replays, RJ uses Komodo — her screen recorder — which streams directly without needing a separate upload/download step. She doesn't store replays on Cloudflare.

**Other options:**

- **YouTube** — free, but ads everywhere
- **Vimeo** — cleaner player, paid at higher tiers
- **Cloudflare Stream** — \$5/month if you want to stay in the Cloudflare ecosystem

If you're currently paying for video hosting and want to explore moving it, ask Claude to compare your current setup against these options.

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## WHAT NOT TO USE

These came up in class. Learn from the experience:

**Hostinger** — Recent 7-hour outage, no response from support after 10 days. Moving away.

**Bluehost, GoDaddy** — Not recommended. Both are now part of Newfold Digital, a conglomerate that has degraded service across their brands.

**Wix** — Not a hosting platform. No drag-and-drop. Never when you can use Claude + Cloudflare instead.

**Zapier** — Not hosting, but mentioned: expensive, confusing pricing, replaceable with N8N.

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## YOUR HOMEWORK

1. **Check if you have a Cloudflare account.** If not, create one at [cloudflare.com](https://cloudflare.com). It's free and takes five minutes.
  2. **Add your domain** (if you have one). Import DNS records automatically. Choose the free plan.
  3. **Try Wrangler once.** Build a simple one-page HTML file with Claude (or use an existing widget you've built) and ask Claude to deploy it to Cloudflare. Get comfortable with the deploy flow.
  4. **If you're on Wix or paying monthly for a builder:** take one page, have Claude read it and rebuild it as HTML, and deploy it to Cloudflare. See what happens.
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