NO BS AI

CLASS MATERIALS

Skills vs. Agents

(Know which to reach for — and when)

Pilot Class // April/May 2026

Instructor: RJ // Platform: Rippily

The Goblin Mining Cave

"Agents handle dynamic.
Agents handle unknown."

-- RJ, Week 6

DO NOT LICK THE TRANSCRIPTS

DEEPER INTO THE MINE WE GO

One follows the known path. The other explores the unknown.

THE SHORT VERSION

Skills = a process you follow every time. Static. Predictable. Invoked with a */slash-command*.

Agents = a mission you assign. Dynamic. They handle inputs that change and figure out the path as they go.

Both act on your behalf. Skills are more commonly used. Agents are more powerful — and need clearer boundaries.

THE SANDWICH ANALOGY

Making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a **skill**.

There are steps. They go roughly in order. You can put the peanut butter on first or the jelly — but the path is essentially the same every time.

Sending an agent to the store to get whatever ingredients are needed for tonight's dinner, based on what's in the fridge and what's on sale, and come back with a plan — that's an **agent job**. Dynamic inputs. Unknown combinations. Judgment required.

SKILLS: WHEN TO USE THEM

Use a skill when:

- You know exactly what needs to happen, every time
- The steps don't change based on the situation
- You want to stop managing the process and just invoke it

Examples:

- */wrap-up* — end-of-session cleanup (always the same steps)
- */carry-on* — mid-session handoff (always the same 3 things)
- Processing a class transcript into resources (always the same pipeline)
- Sending a session summary to a client after a call
- Running a weekly report

- Turning meeting notes into action items

AGENTS: WHEN TO USE THEM

Use an agent when:

- Inputs vary every time
- You're combining resources from multiple places differently each session
- Something unknown might come back that needs judgment

Example — First Draft Ninja:

Every email it builds picks up:

- Your writing style (changes per project)
- Your audience profile (changes per client)
- A story (different every time)
- A call to action (different every email)

The combination is different every single time. That's a dynamic job. That needs an agent.

Other agent scenarios:

- Research tasks that pull from multiple sources
- Workflows that make decisions based on what they find
- Anything where the path depends on what comes back

HOW TO BUILD A SKILL

1. Go through a process you do repeatedly
2. Notice mid-process: "I never want to do this manually again"
3. Finish the process completely
4. Say to Claude: **"Claude, make a skill out of this"**
5. Claude will ask clarifying questions and write the skill file
6. Your new */slash-command* is live

"It is not: write out every step. It is: any time you're doing something annoying and repetitive — finish it and say: Claude, make a skill out of this."

HOW TO INVOKE A SKILL

In **Claude Code**: type / and your full skill list appears. Select or type the skill name.

In **Claude chat**: type / — a shorter list appears, but skills you've built may show up depending on how they were installed.

Trigger phrases: You can also set up a phrase that automatically fires a skill. Example: a specific phrase from your favorite show triggers your transcript processing pipeline. Every time you use that phrase, it runs.

THE AGENTS SAFETY NOTE

Agents are explorers. They want to solve problems. Give them clear missions and clear boundaries — or they'll find creative solutions to the wrong problems.

"They're so cute. They just want to do things for you that solve the problem. They need a hall monitor like nobody's business."

If you're using a third-party tool between you and Claude, that tool has its own rules on top of Claude's rules. Know what permissions you've granted — and why.

QUICK REFERENCE

	Skills	Agents
Path	Known, static	Dynamic, exploratory
Inputs	Same every time	Vary each time
Invoked by	/slash-command	Mission/prompt
Best for	Repeating processes	Combining variable sources
Supervision	Minimal	Needs clear boundaries
Examples	/wrap-up, /carry-on, /weekly-report	First Draft Ninja, research tasks