

MODEL SELECTION

GPT-6 Astra: choose more reasoning when the work gets hard

Learning objective

Recognize when a task requires Astra's higher level of reasoning, judgment, computer use, or professional-work capability instead of using a standard model by default.

Why this matters

Not every task needs the most capable model.

Using Astra for a quick rewrite, simple meeting recap, or routine email can use more of your available AI capacity without improving the result enough to justify it. OpenAI notes that Astra can use your Work or Codex allowance faster than GPT-5.6 Sol. [Learn about Astra usage](#)

The goal is to recognize an Astra moment: a task where the work becomes difficult enough that stronger reasoning, context handling, or computer use can materially improve the outcome.

What Astra is, and what it is not

CHOOSE	WHAT IT IS	USE IT WHEN
Chat	A fast conversational experience	You need an answer, idea, quick draft, or explanation.
Work	An agent experience for multi-step work and finished deliverables	You need AI to research, analyze, use approved tools, and produce work for review.
GPT-6 Astra	A higher-capability AI model	The task needs deeper reasoning, better judgment, complex computer use, or a stronger professional-quality result.

Work is the way the job gets done. Astra is the level of intelligence used to do the hardest parts of that job.

Astra can be selected in Work when available, and can also be used in other supported experiences, including Chat and Codex, depending on your plan and workspace access.

[OpenAI's Work and Codex guide](#)

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION

Astra may be better at computer use, but it does not give itself access to your files, browser, connected apps, or desktop tools.

The experience you use, such as Work or Codex, and your workspace permissions determine what tools are available. You still control access, approvals, and final decisions.

The Astra moment

Consider Astra when the task includes one or more of these conditions:

- **Conflicting information:** You need to compare sources that do not fully agree.

- **High ambiguity:** The correct path is unclear and the AI must identify what matters.
- **Many connected variables:** Several files, requirements, audiences, risks, or dependencies affect the result.
- **Complex computer use:** The task requires reliable navigation across software, websites, or business systems.
- **Professional judgment:** You need a well-supported recommendation, not just a summary.
- **High-value deliverable:** The output must turn substantial context into a polished report, spreadsheet, presentation, analysis, or application.
- **Changing direction:** New requirements may appear while the task is underway.

OpenAI positions Astra for advanced computer and browser use, professional work, stronger template adherence, complex reasoning, and staying oriented as a task changes. [Read the GPT-6 Astra announcement](#)

When a standard model is enough

Use a standard model for routine, clear, low-complexity work.

TASK	BEST STARTING CHOICE
Turn one meeting transcript into an action list	Standard model
Draft a routine follow-up email	Standard model
Rewrite approved copy in a clearer tone	Standard model
Summarize one document	Standard model
Place known content into an existing template	Standard model

When Astra is worth selecting

TASK	WHY ASTRA IS A STRONGER FIT
Review six months of project notes, budgets, customer feedback, and delivery data to explain delays and recommend recovery options	It must connect evidence, identify gaps, weigh trade-offs, and form a defensible recommendation.
Analyze several campaign datasets with unclear attribution and build an executive recommendation	It needs judgment across conflicting inputs, not only a report.
Navigate a complicated business system to research records, update approved fields, and document exceptions	It requires more capable computer use within approved permissions.
Create a leadership presentation from research, source files, brand standards, and multiple stakeholder requirements	It must select relevant context and produce a polished, structured artifact.

How to choose Astra, step by step

1. Choose the work experience first

Ask: do I need a quick answer, or do I need a multi-step workflow completed?

- Choose Chat for quick help.
- Choose Work when the task involves research, tools, files, multiple steps, or a finished deliverable.

2. Check the difficulty of the task

Ask: could a standard model complete this accurately with clear inputs and simple instructions? If yes, start with the standard model.

Then ask: does the task require deep reasoning, judgment between competing options, complex computer use, or a high-value deliverable? If yes, select Astra when it is available.

3. Give Astra a clear decision boundary

Astra performs best when it knows what outcome matters, what sources it may use, and where it must stop for you.

EXAMPLE INSTRUCTION

Review the attached performance data, customer feedback, and project updates. Identify the three most likely causes of the decline in renewal rate. Separate verified evidence from assumptions. Compare three response options, including benefits, risks, and dependencies. Create a two-page leadership recommendation. Do not change any records or contact customers. Ask for my approval before recommending a budget decision.

4. Review the result before it is used

Astra can help carry difficult work further, but the human still owns the decision.

THE HUMAN PART: REVIEW CHECKPOINT

AI can draft, organize, analyze, and structure the first version. A human must review:

- facts, numbers, and sources
- assumptions and missing information
- actions taken in tools or systems
- permissions and approvals
- risks and trade-offs
- final recommendations
- names, dates, claims, and audience fit

A polished result is not proof that every conclusion is correct.