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The model for background tasks in Claude Code: ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MOD

Claude Code

CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-3114	v2026.11.28	Mozambique · English

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RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/3114

The model for background tasks in Claude Code: ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL

Claude Code Created on **November 28, 2026** 2 min read



Besides the main model, Claude Code uses a second model for background work, which does not need a strong model. `ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL` says which one. With All in One AI, it pays to point it at a fast, cheap model.

What this variable chooses

According to the Claude Code documentation, `ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL` is the model for the `haiku` short name and for background functions. It also applies to subagents set up with `model: haiku`.

The value we recommend

```
export ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL="deepseek-ai/deepseek-v4-flash"
```

Model	Context	What for
`deepseek-ai/deepseek-v4-flash`	1,048,576 tokens	Fast and cheap, for background tasks and short questions.
`zai-org/glm-5.3-flash`	1,048,576 tokens	Light and cheap, good for simple edits.

In `settings.json`, the same variable goes under the `env` key: `"ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL": "deepseek-ai/deepseek-v4-flash"`.

If you do not set it

For background tasks, Claude Code asks for the model name it ships with. That name is not in the catalogue, because catalogue ids always have a slash. In that case, we use `moonshotai/kimi-k2.7-code` and charge its price. You end up paying for a coding model to do work a light model can do.

With the Coding Plan, stronger models spend more points per token. A light model for background tasks also saves points.

Older Claude Code versions

Older versions use `ANTHROPIC_SMALL_FAST_MODEL`, which the Claude Code documentation marks as deprecated. Check your version with `claude --version`. If you are not sure, set both to the same id:

```
export ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL="deepseek-ai/deepseek-v4-flash"
export ANTHROPIC_SMALL_FAST_MODEL="deepseek-ai/deepseek-v4-flash"
```

The other short names have similar variables: `ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_SONNET_MODEL` and `ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_OPUS_MODEL`. See **what happens when Claude Code asks for a claude-sonnet model**.

RECOMMENDED

Want to code with AI in Claude Code? Visit the Coding with AI page.

See Coding with AI →

SEE ALSO

- **Using Claude Code with All in One AI: the variables, the model and common errors**
- **Claude Code asks for a claude-sonnet model: which model answers and what you pay**
- **Saving the Claude Code setup in settings.json so you do not set the variables every time**
- **Coding Plan: which plan to choose, what it costs and how to subscribe**
- **Coding with AI in All in One AI**

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