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WhatsApp Cloud API: getting started with Meta

Cloud API & Chatbots

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WhatsApp Cloud API: getting started with Meta

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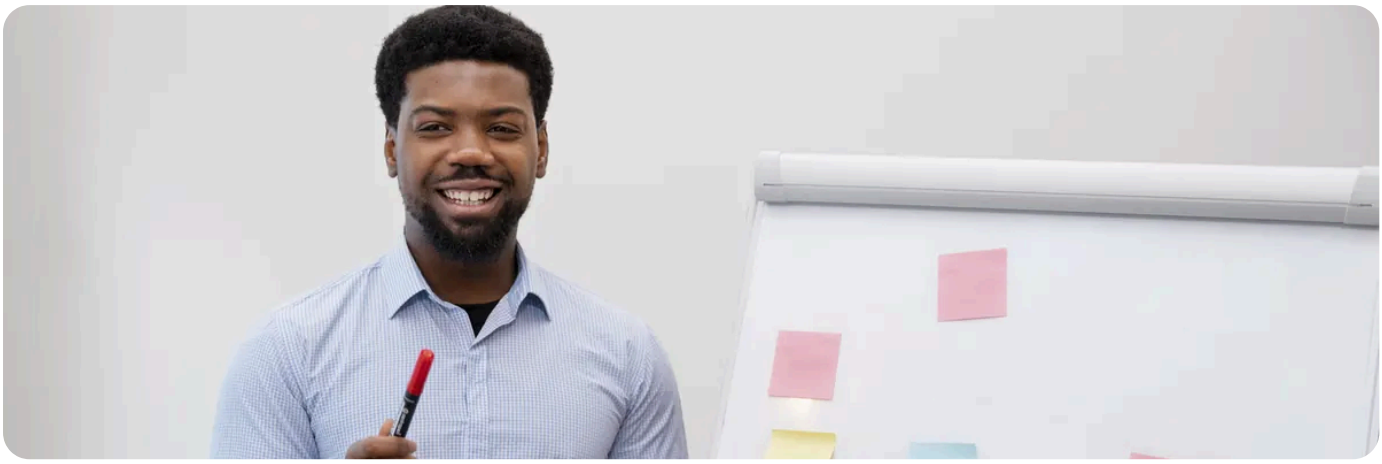

The **WhatsApp Cloud API** is the official interface Meta offers businesses for sending and receiving messages from a program. To start you need six things, in the order you will meet them: a **developer account**, an **app**, a **number**, a **token**, a **verified webhook** and **approved message templates**. The screens and requirements are Meta's and they change; this article is the map, and **Meta's documentation** is the terrain.

The six pieces

Piece	What it is	Where beginners trip
Developer account	Your way into Meta's developer platform, tied to a personal account.	Using a personal account that later leaves the company.
App	The Meta object that stands for your integration. A business-type app with the WhatsApp product added.	Choosing the wrong app type.
Number	The phone number the messages go out from. Meta offers a test number to experiment with.	Jumping straight to the number already on your phone. See **choosing the number**.
Token	The credential your program identifies itself with. There is a temporary one, for testing, and a permanent one, for production, according to the documentation.	Putting the temporary one in production and watching everything stop when it expires.
Verified webhook	Your address, where Meta sends incoming messages. It has to pass a check. See **webhooks from Meta**.	An address with no valid HTTPS, or one that does not return what Meta expects.
Approved templates	Standard messages Meta reviews. Required to write first. See **templates and the 24-hour window**.	Writing a vague template and seeing it rejected.

Step by step

1. **Create the developer account** on Meta's platform and tie it to the Meta business account that will own the integration. If you do not have one, create it. Meta may ask for **business verification** at certain stages; read what it requires at the time.

2. **Create the app**, business type, and add the WhatsApp product. The app dashboard now has a setup section with the test number and the temporary token.

3. **Send a test message** from the dashboard to a recipient you registered as allowed. It is the fastest way to see everything working before writing a line of code.

4. **Configure the webhook** to receive replies. You need a public address with HTTPS. You can host it on a VPS of yours, in an n8n workflow or on another service.

5. **Add your real number** when you are ready, and ask for the permanent token.

6. **Create the templates** you need and wait for approval before counting on them.

! **The token is a password.**
Whoever has it sends messages in your company's name. Keep it out of public code, screenshots and help requests. Store it as a secret, in an environment variable (see **environment variables and secrets**).

And Evolution API?

The Cloud API lives on Meta's servers: **you need neither Docker nor a VPS** to use it. You only need somewhere for the webhook. If you already run Evolution API you can use it as a layer on top of the Cloud API, instead of Baileys. See **what Evolution API is**.

Commercial terms, conversation categories and limits are Meta's and they change, so they are not given here. For an overview of what weighs on the decision, see **the Cloud API: advantages, disadvantages and who it is for**.

We are not a Meta partner, and this article does not replace Meta's documentation. What we give you is the server, if you need one for the webhook: see the VPS plans. Setting up the app, the number and the templates is down to you and Meta.

RECOMMENDED

Need a server with HTTPS for the webhook? Have a look at the VPS plans.

See VPS servers →

SEE ALSO

- Templates and the 24-hour window →
- Webhooks from Meta: verifying and receiving →
- Choosing the number for a WhatsApp API →
- VPS servers →

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