
ELLM

How to Ask Questions About Your Codebase

Learn how to effectively ask questions about your codebase using eLLM Code in VS Code. This guide covers how to query your project without pasting code, using file references and maintaining context for follow-up questions.

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Estimated time: 3 minutes

Difficulty: Beginner

Why you'd use this

When you join a project or return to an unfamiliar area, you want answers grounded in the actual code rather than guesses. eLLM Code reads files, searches the repository and lists folders on its own to answer a question, then cites the files and lines it used. You never paste code into the chat; you ask, and it looks.

Before you start

Permissions required:

- None. Reading and searching stay inside the open workspace.

You'll need:

- A project folder open in VS Code with the chat connected.

Steps

1. Open the chat panel.
2. Type a question in plain language, for example "How does authentication work in this project?" and press **Enter**.

3. Watch the activity lines above the reply. Each shows a tool step: reading a file, searching for a term, or listing a folder.
4. Read the answer. File references appear as `path:line` ; click one to open that location in the editor.
5. Ask a follow-up in the same conversation, for example "Where is the token validated?" The assistant keeps the earlier findings in context.
6. To ask about the file you are editing, click the  **Context** chip under the composer so the current file or selection is sent with the question. Select a block of code first if you only want that part discussed.

What you should see

A streamed answer with clickable file and line references, preceded by a short list of the files that were read. The status row shows elapsed time, approximate tokens generated and the current conversation size.

Troubleshooting

- **The answer says it could not find something that exists:** the search may have hit the step limit. Ask again naming the folder, or raise `eLLMCode.maxAgentSteps` in settings.
- **The conversation grows slow:** start a fresh conversation with the  button in the header, or run **eLLM: Clear Context**.
- **Very large files are cut off:** file content per request is capped by `eLLMCode.maxContextBytes` . The assistant reads in parts when it needs more.

Related guides

- How to Use the Command Menu and Composer Toggles
- How to Use Quick Commands from the Editor
- How to Check and Manage the Context Window