Windows Basics
This workshop is a basic introduction to using the computer and Microsoft Windows. Topics include:
- using the mouse: when to right-click, left-click, double-click
- using the keyboard: Caps Lock, Num Lock, keyboard shortcuts
- basic file management: Save vs. Save As, creating folders, copying and moving files

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Working with Windows

Whenever you open a program, file, or folder, it appears on your screen in a box or frame called a window (that’s where the Windows operating system gets its name). Because windows are everywhere in Windows, it’s important to understand how to move them, change their size, or just make them go away.

Parts of a window

Although the contents of every window are different, all windows share some things in common. For one thing, windows always appear on the desktop—the main work area of your screen. In addition, most windows have the same basic parts:

- **Title bar.** Displays the name of the document and program (or the folder name if you’re working in a folder).
- **Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons.** These buttons hide the window, enlarge it to fill the whole screen, and close it, respectively (more details on these shortly).
- **Menu bar.** Contains items that you can click to make choices in a program. See Using menus, buttons, bars, and boxes.
- **Scroll bar.** Lets you scroll the contents of the window to see information that is currently out of view.
- **Borders and corners.** You can drag these with your mouse pointer to change the size of the window.

Other windows might have additional buttons, boxes, or bars. But they’ll usually have the basic parts, too.
Moving a window

To move a window, point to its title bar with the mouse pointer. Then drag the window to the location that you want. (Dragging means pointing to an item, holding down the mouse button, moving the item with the pointer, and then releasing the mouse button.)

Changing the size of a window

- To make a window fill the entire screen, click its Maximize button or double-click the window's title bar.
- To return a maximized window to its former size, click its Restore button (this appears in place of the Maximize button). Or, double-click the window's title bar.
- To resize a window (make it smaller or bigger), point to any of the window's borders or corners. When the mouse pointer changes to a two-headed arrow (see picture below), drag the border or corner to shrink or enlarge the window.
- A window that is maximized cannot be resized. You must restore it to its previous size first.
- Although most windows can be maximized and resized, there are some windows that are fixed in size, such as dialog boxes.

Hiding a window

Hiding a window is called minimizing it. If you want to get a window out of the way temporarily without closing it, minimize it.

To minimize a window, click its Minimize button. The window disappears from the desktop and is visible only as a button on the taskbar, the long horizontal bar at the bottom of your screen.

To make a minimized window appear again on the desktop, click its taskbar button. The window appears exactly as it did before you minimized it.

Closing a window

Closing a window removes it from the desktop and taskbar. If you're done with a program or document and don't need to return to it right away, close it.

To close a window, click its Close button.

Note If you close a document without saving any changes you made, a message appears that gives you the option to save your changes.
Switching between windows

If you open more than one program or document, your desktop can quickly become cluttered with windows. Keeping track of which windows you have open isn’t always easy, because some windows might partially or completely cover others.

**Using the taskbar.** The taskbar provides a way to organize all of your windows. Each window has a corresponding button on the taskbar. To switch to another window, just click its taskbar button. The window appears in front of all other windows, becoming the active window—the one you’re currently working in.

![Clicking the Calculator taskbar button brings its window to the front](image)

Clicking the Calculator taskbar button brings its window to the front

To easily identify a window, point to its taskbar button. A small picture called a thumbnail appears that shows you a miniature version of the window. This preview is especially useful if you can’t identify a window by its title alone.

![Point to a taskbar button to see a window preview](image)

Point to a taskbar button to see a window preview

If the taskbar becomes too crowded with buttons, then the buttons for the same program become grouped into a single button, as shown in the picture below. Click the button to see a menu of the items in the group, then select an item to make it the active window.

![Three Paint windows grouped into one taskbar button](image)

Three Paint windows grouped into one taskbar button

**Using ALT+TAB.** You can switch to the previous window by pressing ALT+TAB, or cycle through all open windows and the desktop by holding down ALT and repeatedly pressing TAB. Release ALT to show the selected window.

![Switching windows with ALT+TAB](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/image)

**Arranging windows automatically**

Now that you know how to move and resize windows, you can arrange them however you like on your desktop. You can also have Windows automatically arrange them in one of three ways: cascading, vertically stacked, or side by side.

![Arrange windows in a cascade (left), vertical stack (center), or side-by-side pattern (right)](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/image)

To choose one of these options, right-click an empty area of the taskbar, then click **Cascade Windows**, **Show Windows Stacked (tile windows horizontally)**, or **Show Windows Side by Side (tile windows vertically)**.

**Dialog boxes**

A dialog box is a special type of window that asks you a question, allows you to select options to perform a task, or provides you with information. You'll often see dialog boxes when a program or Windows needs a response from you to continue.

Unlike regular windows, most dialog boxes can't be maximized, minimized, or resized. They can, however, be moved.
Using menus, buttons, bars, and boxes

Menus, buttons, scroll bars, and check boxes are examples of controls that you operate with your mouse or keyboard. These controls allow you to select commands, change settings, or work with windows. This section describes how to recognize and use controls that you’ll encounter frequently while using Windows.

Using menus

Most programs contain dozens or even hundreds of commands (actions) that you use to work the program. Many of these commands are organized under menus. Like a restaurant menu, a program menu shows you a list of choices. To keep the screen uncluttered, menus are hidden until you click their titles in the menu bar, located just underneath the title bar. For example, clicking “Image” in Paint’s menu bar displays the Image menu.

To choose one of the commands listed in a menu, click it. Sometimes a dialog box appears, in which you can select further options. If a command is unavailable and cannot be clicked, it is shown in gray, like the Crop command in the picture.

Some menu items are not commands at all. Instead, they open other menus. In the following picture, pointing to “Zoom” opens a submenu. Pointing to “Custom” in the submenu would open yet another submenu.

If you don’t see the command you want, try looking at another menu. Move your mouse pointer along the menu bar and its menus open automatically; you don’t need to click the menu bar again. To close a menu without selecting any commands, click the menu bar or any other part of the window.

Recognizing menus isn’t always easy, because not all menu controls look alike or even appear on a menu bar. So how can you spot them? When you see an arrow next to a word or picture, you’re probably looking at a menu control. Here are some examples:

- If a keyboard shortcut is available for a command, it is shown next to the command.
- You can operate menus using your keyboard instead of your mouse.
Using scroll bars

When a document, webpage, or picture exceeds the size of its window, scroll bars appear to allow you to see the information that is currently out of view. The following picture shows the parts of a scroll bar.

![Scroll Bar Diagram](image.png)

1. Scroll arrow
2. Scroll box
3. Vertical scroll bar
4. Horizontal scroll bar

To operate a scroll bar:
- Click the up or down scroll arrows to scroll the window's contents up or down in small steps. Hold down the mouse button to scroll continuously.
- Click an empty area of a scroll bar above or below the scroll box to scroll up or down one page.
- Drag a scroll box up, down, left, or right to scroll the window in that direction.

If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can use it to scroll through documents and web pages. To scroll down, roll the wheel backward (toward you). To scroll up, roll the wheel forward (away from you).

Using command buttons

A *command button* performs a command (makes something happen) when you click it. You'll most often see them in dialog boxes, which are small windows that contain options for completing a task. For example, if you close a Paint picture without saving it first, you might see a dialog box like this:

![Dialog Box](image.png)

Pressing ENTER does the same thing as clicking a command button that is selected (outlined).
Outside of dialog boxes, command buttons vary in appearance, so it's sometimes difficult to know what's a button and what isn't. For example, command buttons often appear as small icons (pictures) without any text or rectangular frame. The picture below shows a variety of command buttons:

The most reliable way to determine if something is a command button is to rest your pointer on it. If it "lights up" and becomes framed with a rectangle, you've discovered a button. Most buttons will also display some text about their function when you point to them:

If a button changes into two parts when you point to it, you've discovered a split button. Clicking the main part of the button performs a command, whereas clicking the arrow opens a menu with more options.

**Using option buttons**

*Option buttons* allow you to make one choice among two or more options. They frequently appear in dialog boxes. The picture below shows three option buttons. The “Flip vertical” option is selected.

To select an option, click one of the buttons. Only one option can be selected.

**Using check boxes**

*Check boxes* allow you to select one or more independent options. Unlike option buttons, which restrict you to one choice, check boxes allow you to choose multiple options at the same time.

- Click an empty square to select or "turn on" that option. A check mark will appear in the square, indicating that the option is selected.
- To turn off an option, clear (remove) its check mark by clicking it.
- Options that currently can't be selected or cleared are shown in gray.
Using sliders

A slider lets you adjust a setting along a range of values.

A slider along the bar shows the currently selected value. In the example shown above, the slider is positioned midway between Slow and Fast, indicating a medium pointer speed.

To operate a slider, drag the slider toward the value that you want.

Using text boxes

A text box allows you to type information, such as a search term or password. The picture below shows a dialog box containing a text box. We've entered “bear” into the text box.

A blinking vertical line called the cursor indicates where text that you type will appear. In the example, you can see the cursor after the “r” in “bear.” You can easily move the cursor by clicking the new position. For example, to add a word before “bear,” you would first move the cursor by clicking before the “b.”

If you don't see a cursor in the text box, it means the text box isn’t ready for your input. Click the box first, and then start typing.

Text boxes that require you to enter a password will usually hide your password as you type it, in case someone else is looking at your screen.

Using drop-down lists

Drop-down lists are similar to menus. Instead of clicking a command, though, you choose an option. When closed, a drop-down list shows only the currently selected option. The other available options are hidden until you click the control, as shown here.

To open a drop-down list, click it. To choose an option from the list, click the option.
Using list boxes
A list box displays a list of options that you can choose from. Unlike a drop-down list, some or all of the options are visible without having to open the list.

To choose an option from the list, click it. If the option you want isn’t visible, use the scroll bar to scroll the list up or down. If the list box has a text box above it, you can type the name or value of the option instead.

Using tabs
In some dialog boxes, options are divided into two or more tabs. Only one tab, or set of options, can be viewed at a time.

The currently selected tab appears in front of the other tabs. To switch to a different tab, click the tab.

Using your Mouse
Just as you would use your hands to interact with objects in the physical world, you can use your mouse to interact with items on your computer screen. You can move objects, open them, change them, throw them away, and perform other actions, all by pointing and clicking with your mouse.

Basic parts
A mouse typically has two buttons: a primary button (usually the left button) and a secondary button (usually the right button). The primary button is the one you will use most often. Most mice also include a scroll wheel between the buttons to help you scroll through documents and web pages more easily. On some mice, the scroll wheel can be pressed to act as a third button. Advanced mice might have additional buttons that can perform other functions.

Holding and moving the mouse
Place your mouse beside your keyboard on a clean, smooth surface, such as a mouse pad. Hold the mouse gently with your index finger resting on the primary button and your thumb resting on the side. To move the mouse, slide it slowly in any direction. Don’t twist it—keep the front of the mouse aimed away from you. As you move the mouse, a pointer (see picture) on your screen moves in the same direction. If you run out of room to move your mouse on your desk or mouse pad, just pick up the mouse and bring it back closer to you.
Pointing, clicking, and dragging

Pointing to an item on the screen means moving your mouse so the pointer appears to be touching the item. When you point to something, a small box often appears that describes the item. For example, when you point to the Recycle Bin on the desktop, a box appears with this information: "Contains the files and folders that you have deleted."

The pointer can change depending on what you’re pointing to. For example, when you point to a link in your web browser, the pointer changes from an arrow to a hand with a pointing finger.

Most mouse actions combine pointing with pressing one of the mouse buttons. There are four basic ways to use your mouse buttons: clicking, double-clicking, right-clicking, and dragging.

Clicking (single-clicking)
To click an item, point to the item on the screen, and then press and release the primary button (usually the left button).

Clicking is most often used to select an item or open a menu. This is sometimes called single-clicking or left-clicking.

Double-clicking
To double-click an item, point to the item on the screen, and then click twice quickly. If the two clicks are spaced too far apart, they might be interpreted as two individual clicks rather than as one double-click.

Double-clicking is most often used to open items on your desktop. For example, you can start a program or open a folder by double-clicking its icon on the desktop.

Right-clicking
To right-click an item, point to the item on the screen, and then press and release the secondary button (usually the right button).

Right-clicking an item usually displays a list of things you can do with the item. For example, when you right-click the Recycle Bin on your desktop, Windows displays a menu allowing you to open it, empty it, delete it, or see its properties. If you’re ever unsure of what to do with something, right-click it.

Dragging
You can move items around your screen by dragging them. To drag an object, point to the object on the screen, press and hold the primary button, move the object to a new location, and then release the primary button. Dragging (sometimes called dragging and dropping) is most often used to move files and folders to a different location and to move windows and icons around on your screen.
Using the scroll wheel

If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can use it to scroll through documents and web pages. To scroll down, roll the wheel backward (toward you). To scroll up, roll the wheel forward (away from you).

Customizing your mouse

You can change your mouse settings to suit your personal preferences. For example, you can change how fast your mouse pointer moves around the screen, or change the pointer's appearance. If you're left-handed, you can switch the primary button to be the right button. For more information, see Change mouse settings.

Tips for using your mouse safely

Holding and moving your mouse properly can help you avoid soreness or injury to your wrists, hands, and arms, particularly if you use your computer for long periods of time. Here are some tips to help you avoid problems:

- Place your mouse at elbow level. Your upper arms should fall relaxed at your sides.
- Don’t squeeze or grip your mouse tightly. Hold it lightly.
- Move the mouse by pivoting your arm at your elbow. Avoid bending your wrist up, down, or to the sides.
- Use a light touch when clicking a mouse button.
- Keep your fingers relaxed. Don’t allow them to hover just above the buttons.
- When you don’t need to use the mouse, don’t hold it.
- Take short breaks from computer use every 15 to 20 minutes.

Using your Keyboard

Whether you're writing a letter or entering numerical data, your keyboard is the main way to enter information into your computer. But did you know you can also use your keyboard to control your computer? Learning just a few simple keyboard commands (instructions to your computer) can help you work more efficiently. This article covers the basics of keyboard operation and gets you started with keyboard commands.

How the keys are organized

The keys on your keyboard can be divided into several groups based on function:

- **Typing (alphanumeric) keys.** These keys include the same letter, number, punctuation, and symbol keys found on a traditional typewriter.
- **Control keys.** These keys are used alone or in combination with other keys to perform certain actions. The most frequently used control keys are CTRL, ALT, the Windows logo key , and ESC.

• **Function keys.** The function keys are used to perform specific tasks. They are labeled as F1, F2, F3, and so on, up to F12. The functionality of these keys differs from program to program.

• **Navigation keys.** These keys are used for moving around in documents or web pages and editing text. They include the arrow keys, HOME, END, PAGE UP, PAGE DOWN, DELETE, and INSERT.

• **Numeric keypad.** The numeric keypad is handy for entering numbers quickly. The keys are grouped together in a block like a conventional calculator or adding machine.

![Keyboard diagram]

Typing text

Whenever you need to type something in a program, e-mail message, or text box, you'll see a blinking vertical line ( ). That's the **cursor**, also called the **insertion point**. It shows where the text that you type will begin. You can move the cursor by clicking in the desired location with the mouse, or by using the navigation keys (see the "Using navigation keys" section of this article).

In addition to letters, numerals, punctuation marks, and symbols, the typing keys also include SHIFT, CAPS LOCK, the TAB key, ENTER, the SPACEBAR, and BACKSPACE.

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<th>Key name</th>
<th>How to use it</th>
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<tr>
<td>SHIFT</td>
<td>Press SHIFT in combination with a letter to type an uppercase letter. Press SHIFT in combination with another key to type the symbol shown on the upper part of that key.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS LOCK</td>
<td>Press CAPS LOCK once to type all letters as uppercase. Press CAPS LOCK again to turn this function off. Your keyboard may have a light indicating whether CAPS LOCK is on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>Press the TAB key to move the cursor several spaces forward. You can also press the TAB key to move to the next text box on a form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTER</td>
<td>Press ENTER to move the cursor to the beginning of the next line. In a dialog box, press ENTER to select the highlighted button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPACEBAR</td>
<td>Press the SPACEBAR to move the cursor one space forward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using keyboard shortcuts

*Keyboard shortcuts* are ways to perform actions by using your keyboard. They're called shortcuts because they help you work faster. In fact, almost any action or command you can perform with a mouse can be performed faster using one or more keys on your keyboard.

In Help topics, a plus sign (+) between two or more keys indicates that those keys should be pressed in combination. For example, CTRL+A means to press and hold CTRL and then press A. CTRL+SHIFT+A means to press and hold CTRL and SHIFT and then press A.
**Find program shortcuts**
You can do things in most programs by using the keyboard. To see which commands have keyboard shortcuts, open a menu. The shortcuts (if available) are shown next to the menu items.

**Choose menus, commands, and options**
You can open menus and choose commands and other options using your keyboard. When you press ALT in a program with menus, one letter in each of the menu names becomes underlined. Press an underlined letter to open the corresponding menu. Press the underlined letter in a menu item to choose that command.

This trick works in dialog boxes too. Whenever you see an underlined letter attached to an option in a dialog box, it means you can press ALT plus that letter to choose that option.

**Useful shortcuts**
The following table lists some of the most useful keyboard shortcuts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press this</th>
<th>To do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows logo key</td>
<td>Open the Start menu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALT+TAB</td>
<td>Switch between open programs or windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALT+F4</td>
<td>Close the active item, or exit the active program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+S</td>
<td>Save the current file or document (works in most programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+C</td>
<td>Copy the selected item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+X</td>
<td>Cut the selected item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+V</td>
<td>Paste the selected item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+Z</td>
<td>Undo an action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+A</td>
<td>Select all items in a document or window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Display Help for a program or Windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows logo key +F1</td>
<td>Display Windows Help and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>Cancel the current task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application key</td>
<td>Open a menu of commands related to a selection in a program. Equivalent to right-clicking the selection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using navigation keys

The navigation keys allow you to move the cursor, move around in documents and web pages, and edit text. The following table lists some common functions of these keys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press this</th>
<th>To do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEFT ARROW, RIGHT ARROW, UP ARROW, or DOWN ARROW</td>
<td>Move the cursor or selection one space or line in the direction of the arrow, or scroll a webpage in the direction of the arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>Move the cursor to the beginning of a line or move to the top of a webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END</td>
<td>Move the cursor to the end of a line or move to the bottom of a webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+HOME</td>
<td>Move to the top of a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRL+END</td>
<td>Move to the bottom of a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGE UP</td>
<td>Move the cursor or page up one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGE DOWN</td>
<td>Move the cursor or page down one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELETE</td>
<td>Delete the character after the cursor, or the selected text; in Windows, delete the selected item and move it to the Recycle Bin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSERT</td>
<td>Turn Insert mode off or on. When Insert mode is on, text that you type is inserted at the cursor. When Insert mode is off, text that you type replaces existing characters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the numeric keypad

The numeric keypad arranges the numerals 0 through 9, the arithmetic operators + (addition), - (subtraction), * (multiplication), and / (division), and the decimal point as they would appear on a calculator or adding machine. These characters are duplicated elsewhere on the keyboard, of course, but the keypad arrangement allows you to rapidly enter numerical data or mathematical operations with one hand.

To use the numeric keypad to enter numbers, press NUM LOCK. Most keyboards have a light that indicates whether NUM LOCK is on or off. When NUM LOCK is off, the numeric keypad functions as a second set of navigation keys (these functions are printed on the keys next to the numerals or symbols).
Three odd keys

So far, we’ve discussed almost every key you’re likely to use. But for the truly inquisitive, let’s explore the three most mysterious keys on the keyboard: PRINT SCREEN, SCROLL LOCK, and PAUSE/BREAK.

PRINT SCREEN (or PRT SCN)

A long time ago, this key actually did what it says—it sent the current screen of text to your printer. Nowadays, pressing PRINT SCREEN captures an image of your entire screen (a “screen shot”) and copies it to the Clipboard in your computer’s memory. From there you can paste it (CTRL+V) into Microsoft Paint or another program and, if you want, print it from that program.

*Tip* - Press ALT+PRINT SCREEN to capture an image of just the active window, instead of the entire screen.

SCROLL LOCK (or SCR LK)

In most programs, pressing SCROLL LOCK has no effect. In a few programs, pressing SCROLL LOCK changes the behavior of the arrow keys and the PAGE UP and PAGE DOWN keys; pressing these keys causes the document to scroll without changing the position of the cursor or selection. Your keyboard might have a light indicating whether SCROLL LOCK is on.

PAUSE/BREAK

This key is rarely used. In some older programs, pressing this key pauses the program or, in combination with CTRL, stops it from running.

Other keys

Some modern keyboards come with “hot keys” or buttons that give you quick, one-press access to programs, files, or commands. Other models have volume controls, scroll wheels, zoom wheels, and other gadgets. For details about these features, check the information that came with your keyboard or computer, or go to the manufacturer’s website.

Tips for using your keyboard safely

Using your keyboard properly can help avoid soreness or injury to your wrists, hands, and arms, particularly if you use your computer for long periods of time. Here are some tips to help you avoid problems:

- Place your keyboard at elbow level. Your upper arms should be relaxed at your sides.
- Center your keyboard in front of you. If your keyboard has a numeric keypad, you can use the spacebar as the centering point.
- Type with your hands and wrists floating above the keyboard, so that you can use your whole arm to reach for distant keys instead of stretching your fingers.
- Avoid resting your palms or wrists on any type of surface while typing. If your keyboard has a palm rest, use it only during breaks from typing.
- While typing, use a light touch and keep your wrists straight.
- When you’re not typing, relax your arms and hands.
- Take short breaks from computer use every 15 to 20 minutes.