Accessibility Features on Microsoft Windows

With a robust set of built-in and third-party accessibility features, Windows 10 lets you choose how to interact with your screen, express ideas, and get work done. Below are some easy-to-use features that make the PC more accessible to everyone.¹

Vision

Adjust size

- To adjust the size of text, apps, and other items, select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Display. Use the slider under Make text bigger to make just the text on your screen larger.
- Or, select an option from the drop-down menu under Make everything bigger to change the size of everything on your screen.
- To make the apps in your Start menu appear larger, right-click (or tap and hold) the app tile you want to resize, select Resize, and then choose the size that you want.

Customise mouse and cursor size

- Make your mouse more visible by changing the color and size of the mouse pointer. Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Cursor & pointer, and choose the options that work best for you.
- By adding pointer trails you can see where the mouse is moving on the screen. Select the Start button, then select Settings > Devices > Mouse > Additional mouse options. In the Mouse Properties window, select the Pointer Options tab, and then Display pointer trails.
- Windows can also show visual feedback when you touch the screen. Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Cursor & pointer and then select the toggle under Show visual feedback around the touch points when I touch the screen.

¹ The guidance in this user guide is taken from Microsoft’s Windows accessibility web site.
Magnify your screen
Magnifier enlarges part or all of your screen so you can see words and images better.

- To open Magnifier quickly, press the Windows logo key + Plus sign (+).
- When Magnifier is open, use Windows logo key + Plus sign(+) or Windows logo key + Minus sign(-) to zoom in or out. To close Magnifier, press Windows logo key + Esc.

Apply colour filters
Make photos, text, and colors easier to see by applying a colour filter to your screen. Colour filters change the colour palette on the screen and can help you distinguish between things that differ only by colour.

- To apply colour filters, select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Colour filters, and choose the options that work best for you.

- To turn on and turn off your color filters quickly, select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Colour filters, and select Allow the shortcut key to toggle filter on or off. Then press the Windows logo key + Ctrl + C.

Use Narrator for navigation
Narrator is the built-in screen reader in Windows that reads aloud what’s on your screen so you can use that information to navigate your PC.

- To start or stop Narrator, press the Windows logo key + Ctrl + Enter.
Hearing

Hear all sounds in one channel
Windows lets you convert stereo sound into a single channel so you can hear everything, even if you’re using just one headphone.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Audio, and then switch on the toggle under Turn on mono audio.

Display audio alerts visually
If you have trouble hearing audio alerts, you can have your PC display them visually.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Audio.
- Under Show audio alerts visually, choose how you want audio alerts displayed. You can choose to have the title bar of the active window, the active window, or the entire screen flash when a notification arrives, instead of relying on sound alone.

Make notifications stick around longer
By default, Windows notifications disappear five seconds after they appear. If you want more time to read them, you can increase how long they’re displayed.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Display. Then, under Show notifications for, choose the amount of time you want.

Closed captions
Windows lets you customize things like the color, size, and background of closed captions.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Closed captions, and then choose how you want captions to be displayed.

Neurodiversity

Windows offers lots of ways to minimize distractions so it’s easier to focus on tasks.

Don’t be so animated
Minimize visual distractions by turning off animations, background images, and more.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Ease of Access > Display. Then choose from the different options under Simplify and personalize Windows.

Clean up taskbar clutter
Choose which icons appear on the taskbar and reduce the number of items in view.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Personalization > Taskbar, and then, under Notification area, choose Select which icons appear on the taskbar.

System icons, like the clock and battery indicator, can also be turned on or off.

- Select the Start button, then select Settings > Personalization, and then, under Notification area, choose Turn system icons on or off.

Simplify the Start menu
Many apps use Live Tiles to show updates on what’s happening in your world, like new email, your next appointment, or the weekend weather. If these animations are distracting, turn them off.

- Press and hold (or right-click) a tile, and then select More > Turn Live Tile off.
Quiet down those notifications
Focus assist lets you to set rules that help you avoid distractions.

- To use Focus assist, select the Start button and type Focus assist settings in the search box, then choose if you want to get all notifications, priority ones only, or just alarms.

If notifications are distracting when they appear on your screen, adjust which apps display notifications and fine-tune how they appear.

- To change notification settings, select the Start button, then select Settings > System > Notifications & actions.

Read with fewer distractions
For a clean and simple layout, use Reading view in the Microsoft Edge browser address bar to bring whatever you’re reading front and center. After you open an article, the book icon will appear on the right hand side of your browser. When you select it, you’ll be in reading view.

Read with friendlier fonts
Fluent Sitka Small and Fluent Calibri are fonts that reduce visual crowding and make reading easier for people with dyslexia. To download these for you PC, visit Microsoft Downloads

Save time while you type
To see text suggestions while you type, select Start > Settings > Devices > Typing > Hardware keyboard > Show text suggestions as I type.

Use Focus assist
Focus assist allows you to avoid distracting notifications when you need to stay focused. To switch on, select the Action Center icon on the taskbar and select Focus assist to turn it on or off.

Windows and Office accessibility support
Questions about a feature? Contact our Disability Answer Desk. We have people trained to help you troubleshoot and find the right settings for you. If you’re hard of hearing, please use our ASL video line.

Chat with us
Chat with an expert 24/7. Receive answers to your questions about disability support all week long, day or night.

Call us
Available Monday to Friday from 6am to 10pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 7am to 6pm (PST).

American Sign Language
We offer American Sign Language (ASL) support by videophone from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm (PST).

Be My Eyes
A free app that connects blind and low vision people with volunteers for visual assistance through a live video call.

Find out more about all these services on Microsoft’s Disability Answer Desk web page: