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AN EXTENDED GUIDE · NO. 2283

Updated November 2026

Copilot in Windows — What It Can Do for You

Your Windows computer has a free AI helper built in — here's how to use it well and safely

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Copilot is Microsoft's free AI assistant built into Windows. Open it from the taskbar icon, the Copilot key on newer keyboards, or by searching Start, then type or speak your question in plain words. It explains confusing settings, writes and summarizes, answers questions, and walks you through tasks step by step.

Tell it a bit about yourself ("I'm not very technical") for gentler answers. Crucially, it can be confidently wrong — double-check anything involving money, health, deadlines, or phone numbers against a trusted source, and never type passwords or card numbers into it. It only works when you open it, and you can hide it if it's in the way.

- Open it, then just ask plainly — no commands.
- Double-check prices, health claims, and phone numbers it gives.
- Never type passwords, card, or account numbers into it.

1 The Short Version

If you use a Windows computer, you now have a helper built right in called Copilot. It is Microsoft's AI assistant, and it lives on your computer ready to answer questions, explain settings, write and summarize things for you, and help you find your way around — all in plain English, by typing or by talking. You do not have to install anything or pay anything to start using it.

This guide shows you what Copilot is, how to open it, and the everyday things it does well — along with an honest look at what it cannot do and when to double-check it. Think of it as a patient helper sitting beside you, not a replacement for your own good judgment.

- Copilot is Microsoft's AI assistant, built into Windows for free.
- You open it from the taskbar or by pressing a key, then type or speak your question.

- It explains settings, writes and summarizes, answers questions, and helps you find things.
- It can be wrong, so double-check anything important — it is a helper, not an authority.

WATCH OUT

You do not need to learn commands. Open Copilot and type or say exactly what you are trying to do, in your own words: "How do I make the text on my screen bigger?" It will walk you through it.

2 What Copilot Is — and Isn't

Copilot is a chat helper. You ask it something, it answers, and you can keep the conversation going. It can draw on general knowledge to answer questions, and on newer computers it can even help with tasks right on your screen. It is the same family of technology as ChatGPT — in fact Microsoft built Copilot partly on that technology.

What it is not: it is not a person, it is not always right, and it does not know your private files unless you specifically share them. It is a smart, fast, tireless assistant that sometimes states a wrong thing confidently. That is why this guide keeps coming back to double-checking the things that matter.

GOOD TO KNOW

Microsoft has used the name Copilot across several products — there is Copilot in Windows, Copilot in the Microsoft 365 apps like Word and Excel, and Copilot on the web. They share a name and a look. This guide is about the free Copilot built into Windows that anyone can open.

3 How to Open Copilot

There are a few ways in, and any of them works. Use whichever you can remember.

1. Look along the taskbar at the bottom of your screen for the Copilot icon and click it.
2. Or, on many newer keyboards, press the dedicated Copilot key (it has a small ribbon-like symbol).
3. Or click the Start button and type "Copilot," then open it from the results.
4. When it opens, you will see a box to type in and, usually, a microphone to speak instead.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you cannot find Copilot at all, your version of Windows may be older, or it may simply need updating. That is nothing to worry about — it is a quick thing to sort out, and a good moment to let someone check your Windows is up to date.

4 Asking Your First Question

The whole skill of using Copilot is just asking plainly. There is no syntax to learn. The more clearly you say what you want, the better the answer.

1. Click in the text box (or tap the microphone to speak).
2. Type or say your question in ordinary words, for example: "Explain how to set up a new printer in simple steps."
3. Press Enter or the send arrow.
4. Read the answer; if it is not quite right, just reply in the same box: "Make that simpler," or "I'm on Windows 11."

> **TIP**
>
> Telling Copilot a little about your situation sharpens the answer. "I'm not very technical and I'm on a laptop" will get you a gentler, more step-by-step reply than a bare question. It is happy to be told how you like things explained.

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5 Everyday Jobs Copilot Does Well

Here are the things people find most useful day to day. None of them require any special knowledge — you just ask.

- Explaining a confusing setting or message in plain words.
- Walking you step-by-step through a task, like connecting to Wi-Fi or changing your background.
- Writing a first draft of an email, a letter, or a note you can then adjust.
- Summarizing a long article or document into a few clear points.
- Answering general questions — recipes, definitions, how-to's, ideas.
- Suggesting what might be wrong when something on the computer misbehaves.

WATCH OUT

Copilot is especially good as a translator of tech-speak. When a message or a menu uses a word you do not know, copy it into Copilot and ask "What does this mean in plain English, and is it safe to click?"

6 Writing and Fixing Text With Copilot

One of the most comfortable uses is getting help with words. If a blank page or a tricky message is daunting, Copilot gives you something to start from.

1. Tell it what you need: "Write a short, friendly email canceling my Saturday appointment."
2. Read the draft; it is a starting point, not a final answer.

3. Ask for changes in plain words: "Make it warmer," "shorter," or "add that I'll reschedule next week."
4. When you are happy, copy the text and paste it into your email or document.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> You can also paste your own rough writing in and ask Copilot to tidy it: "Fix the spelling and make this clearer, but keep it sounding like me." It is a gentle editor that never makes you feel foolish for a typo.

7 Using Your Voice With Copilot

If typing is the hard part, you can talk to Copilot instead. Click the microphone in the Copilot window and simply speak your question; it listens and answers, and can read answers back to you.

- Click the microphone icon in the Copilot box and speak naturally.
- On some computers you can say "Hey Copilot" to wake it hands-free, if you turn that on.
- A clear microphone — even the one in a webcam — helps it hear you in a noisy room.

> **TIP**
>
> There is a whole companion guide, "Talk to AI Instead of Typing," if speaking rather than typing sounds appealing. Many people find voice far more comfortable than wrestling with a keyboard.

8 Copilot and Your Files and Screen

On newer computers, Copilot can offer to help with what is on your screen or even take some actions for you. This can be genuinely handy, but it is worth understanding so nothing surprises you.

By default, Copilot does not rummage through your personal files. If it offers to look at something on your screen or open an app, it is asking permission, and you can always say no. Treat those offers the way you would treat a helper asking "may I?" — fine when you understand it, decline when you do not.

WATCH OUT

If Copilot ever offers to change a setting, delete something, or make a purchase, pause. Read what it proposes, and only agree if you fully understand it. You are always allowed to say "no" or just close the window — nothing happens without your go-ahead.

9 When Copilot Gets It Wrong

This is the most important chapter, so read it twice. Copilot, like all AI, can be confidently wrong. It may invent a menu that does not exist on your version of Windows, state a fact that is out of date, or give a phone number that is not real. It is not lying — it genuinely does not always know the difference — which is exactly why you check.

- For anything that costs money, affects your health, or involves a deadline, confirm it with a trusted source.
- If it names a specific setting and you cannot find it, the setting may be worded differently — ask it to describe where to look instead.
- Never call a phone number or visit a website Copilot gives you for a company without confirming it on the company's own official page.
- If an answer feels off, it probably is — ask "Are you sure? Where does that come from?"

WATCH OUT

Be especially careful with phone numbers and support contacts. Scammers plant fake "support" numbers online, and an AI can repeat one without knowing. Always get a company's real number from your bill, the back of your card, or their official website — never from a chatbot alone.

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10 What Never to Type Into Copilot

Copilot is a tool from a company, and what you type may be processed on their computers. So treat it like a conversation that is not fully private, and keep certain things out of it entirely.

- Passwords and PINs.
- Full Social Security, Medicare, or bank account numbers.
- Credit or debit card numbers.
- Anything you would not be comfortable a company's staff could, in principle, see.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can ask Copilot how to do something involving these — "how do I reset a password safely?" — without ever typing the actual secret. The how-to is fine; the secret itself stays with you. A companion guide covers exactly what to keep private.

11 Keeping Copilot From Getting in the Way

Some people love having Copilot right there; others find it one more thing on an already busy screen. Either way, you are in charge of how present it is.

- If the Copilot icon on the taskbar bothers you, it can be hidden in the taskbar settings.
- If a Copilot key on the keyboard keeps getting pressed by accident, its behavior can be changed in Settings.
- You can simply ignore it — it does nothing until you open it.

> **TIP**
> There is no harm in leaving Copilot alone until the day you need it. It is not watching or waiting; it only works when you open it and ask. Keep it in your back pocket for the next time something on the computer confuses you.

12 Copilot on Your Phone, Too

Copilot is not only on your Windows computer — there is a free Copilot app for both iPhone and Android, signed in with the same Microsoft account. That means the helper you got comfortable with on the computer is in your pocket when you are out and about.

1. Install the Copilot app from the App Store or Play Store.
2. Sign in with your Microsoft account (the same one you use on the computer, if you have one).
3. Type or tap the microphone to speak, exactly as you do on the computer.
4. Use it on the go for quick questions, directions help, or drafting a message.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Having the same helper on both your computer and your phone means you only learn it once. The questions you ask, and the way you refine the answers, work identically in both places — there is nothing new to figure out on the phone.

13 A Week of Small Ways to Use It

The surest way to get comfortable with Copilot is to give it a real job each day for a week. Here is a gentle menu — pick one a day and you will know your way around it by the weekend.

- Monday: "Explain, simply, what a VPN is and whether I need one."
- Tuesday: "Help me write a short note to my insurance company about a billing question."

- Wednesday: paste a confusing error message and ask "What does this mean, and is it safe?"
- Thursday: "Summarize this long article into five plain points" (paste the article).
- Friday: "Suggest an easy weekend project for the garden in Ohio in this season."
- Saturday: ask it by voice instead of typing, just to feel the difference.

> **TIP**
>
> Keep whatever works for you and quietly drop the rest. The goal is not to use Copilot for everything — it is to have one more reliable helper for the moments a computer or a question has you stuck.

14 When to Call Bill

Copilot is friendly and free, and most people can start using it the moment someone points out where it lives. But Windows versions differ, the feature sometimes needs an update to appear, and knowing which of Copilot's answers to trust takes a little guidance at first. That is exactly the kind of thing worth a visit.

I come to you, make sure your Windows is current so Copilot is there and working, show you how to open it and ask good questions on your own machine, and go over the double-checking habits that keep you safe. If you would rather it were tucked out of the way, I will set that up too. The goal is a helper that works the way you want — no pressure to use it more than suits you.

- Copilot is missing or will not open, and you want it set up.
- You are unsure which of its answers you can trust, and want the habit shown.
- It keeps popping up or the Copilot key keeps getting pressed by accident.
- You want to practice using it on real tasks until it feels natural.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the computer. Ask Copilot in plain words — no commands to learn.

I want to…	Do this…
Open Copilot	Click the Copilot icon on the taskbar, press the Copilot key, or search Start for it
Ask a question	Type or speak plainly: "Explain this setting in simple steps"
Get a draft written	"Write a short, friendly email canceling Saturday" then "make it warmer"
Understand tech-speak	Paste the confusing message and ask "What does this mean, is it safe?"
Stay safe	Double-check prices, health, phone numbers; never type passwords or card numbers
Tuck it away	Hide the taskbar icon in taskbar settings — it only works when you open it
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

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GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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