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WhatsApp

Free messaging and video calls with family near and far — explained in plain English

A plain-English guide to staying close

Take your time — you can't break it

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For WhatsApp on iPhone & Android · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your WhatsApp manual. **WhatsApp** is a free app for sending messages and making voice and video calls — over the internet, so it's free even to family on the other side of the world. It's how millions of families, especially those with relatives abroad, stay in daily touch. We'll walk through messaging, calling, family groups, sharing photos, and staying safe — all in plain English, one step at a time. Read it in any order; there's no test, and you can't break a thing by exploring.

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PART 1

Getting Started with WhatsApp

What WhatsApp is, why your family loves it, installing it, setting it up with your phone number, and finding your way around the screen.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book — this is for **you**. If your children or grandchildren keep saying “just get WhatsApp, Grandma, then we can send you photos” — and you'd like to, but weren't sure where to start — you've come to exactly the right place. I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this book the way I'd sit beside you at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, with nothing taken for granted. Any time I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then.

Why WhatsApp is worth it

WhatsApp is how a great many families stay close these days — especially families spread across the country or the world. With it, you can send a message or share a photo in an instant, and make **video calls completely free**, even to relatives overseas. For staying in daily touch with the people you love, it's hard to beat, and it's genuinely delightful once it clicks.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your family, a tap away — for free

The real gift of WhatsApp is closeness. Photos of the grandchildren as their day happens, a quick “thinking of you,” a face-to-face video call with family abroad — all free, all from your chair. Distance shrinks. That's what this little app is really for, and it's why it's worth learning.

You can't break it, and I'm a call away

Here's the reassuring part: **you can't break anything by tapping around and exploring.** And if you ever get stuck, you're not stuck alone — call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together, with no judgment. There's no such thing as a silly question here. So take a breath, and let's get you connected.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What WhatsApp Is

Let's start simple. **WhatsApp** is a free **app** — a little program on your phone — for sending messages and making calls to other people who also have WhatsApp. The clever part is that it works over the **internet** (your Wi-Fi or phone data) rather than your regular phone minutes or texts.

Why “over the internet” matters

Because WhatsApp uses the internet instead of the phone network, it's **free** to use — no per-message charge, no long-distance fees, no matter where the other person is. A video call to a grandchild in another country costs exactly nothing beyond your normal internet. That's the whole reason families with relatives far away adopted it.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **WhatsApp talks only to other WhatsApp users**
>
> One thing to understand: WhatsApp messages and calls go to other people who *also* have WhatsApp — it's its own little world, separate from regular texts and phone calls. Happily, it's enormously popular, so most of your family likely already has it. Anyone who doesn't can install it free in a few minutes, just as you're about to.

It works on your phone (and more)

WhatsApp lives mainly on your **smartphone** — iPhone or Android — and that's where we'll focus. You can also use it on a computer later if you like (we'll cover that), but your phone is home base. If you have a smartphone, you're all set to use it.

CHAPTER 3

Installing WhatsApp

Getting WhatsApp onto your phone takes just a few minutes. You download it from your phone's **app store** — the official place to get apps — and it's completely free.

Downloading the app

1. **On an iPhone:** open the **App Store** (a blue icon with a white “A”). **On Android:** open the **Play Store** (a colorful triangle).
2. Tap the **search** box and type **WhatsApp**.
3. Find the official one — called **“WhatsApp Messenger,”** with a green speech-bubble-and-phone icon, by Meta/WhatsApp Inc., with millions of reviews.
4. Tap **Get** or **Install**. Wait a moment while it downloads, then tap **Open**.

HEADS UP

Get the real WhatsApp — the green phone icon

There are copycat and “fake” apps with similar names. The genuine one is **“WhatsApp Messenger”** by WhatsApp Inc. (Meta), with a **green icon** showing a white telephone inside a speech bubble, and a huge number of reviews. Install only that one. If you're unsure which is the real one, I'm glad to check with you — a two-minute call saves installing the wrong thing.

CHAPTER 4

Setting It Up with Your Phone Number

The first time you open WhatsApp, it sets itself up around your **phone number** — that's your identity on WhatsApp, so friends reach you by the same number they already have for you. The setup is short and guided.

The setup steps

1. Open WhatsApp and tap **Agree and Continue**.
2. **Enter your phone number** (your mobile number) and tap Next, confirming it's correct.
3. WhatsApp **texts you a code** to make sure the number is really yours — it often reads the code automatically, or you type the six digits it sends.
4. **Add your name** (and a photo if you like) so friends see who's messaging.
5. Allow it access to your **contacts** when asked — this lets it show which of your contacts already use WhatsApp.

GOOD TO KNOW

Letting it see your contacts is how it finds your family

When WhatsApp asks to access your contacts, saying yes is what lets it automatically show you which people in your phone already have WhatsApp — so you don't have to hunt for them. It's safe and it's how the app becomes useful. Your family will simply appear in your chat list, ready to message.

FROM BILL

Setup giving you trouble? That's a quick call

Occasionally the setup code is slow to arrive, or the number entry is fiddly. Don't let it stop you — it's a two-minute fix. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll get you set up and connected to your family in no time. Getting folks onto WhatsApp to see their grandchildren's photos is one of my favorite things to help with.

CHAPTER 5

Finding Your Way Around

Once you're set up, WhatsApp opens to your **Chats** — your list of conversations. The app has just a few main areas, and once you know them, it's wonderfully simple.

The main areas

Area	What it's for
Chats	Your conversations, newest at top. Tap one to open and read/reply. Your home base.
Calls	A list of your WhatsApp voice and video calls, and where to start a new one.
The new-chat button	A pencil or speech-bubble icon to start a new conversation.
Status / Updates	Where you can share and see brief photo/video updates (optional).
Settings	A gear icon for your account, privacy, and notifications.

The exact spots differ slightly between iPhone (tabs along the bottom) and Android (tabs near the top), but the pieces are the same. Tap **Chats** and you'll always come back to familiar ground.

TIP

A green badge means a new message

When a new message arrives, you'll see a little **green circle with a number** on the WhatsApp icon and beside the conversation. That's just WhatsApp telling you something new is waiting — tap the chat to read it, and the badge clears. It's the app's gentle way of saying “you've got mail.”

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A few simple parts, endless closeness

Don't let the app overwhelm you — it's really just Chats (your conversations), Calls, and a button to start something new. Learn those three and you can do everything that matters: message family, make a call, share a photo. Simplicity is the whole point, and it's well within your reach.

CHAPTER 5a

WhatsApp vs. Regular Texts and Calls

A question folks often ask: how is WhatsApp different from the regular texts and phone calls my phone already does? It's a good question, and the answer helps you know when to reach for which.

The key differences

Cost	WhatsApp is free over the internet; texts and calls may use your plan's minutes/allowance.
Distance	WhatsApp is free worldwide; regular long-distance calls can cost money.
Who you reach	WhatsApp reaches other WhatsApp users; texts/calls reach any phone.
Video calls	WhatsApp does free video; regular texting doesn't.
Groups & photos	WhatsApp handles big family groups and photos beautifully.

GOOD TO KNOW

Use each for what it's best at

There's no need to abandon regular texts and calls — keep using them for anyone not on WhatsApp, or for a quick local call. Reach for **WhatsApp** when you want free video calls, when family is far away or abroad, or for the family group and sharing photos. Most folks happily use both, each for what it does best. They live side by side on your phone without any conflict.

CHAPTER 5b

Getting Your Family Onto WhatsApp

WhatsApp only works between people who both have it — so the first happy task is making sure the family members you want to reach have it too. Usually they already do, but here's how to help anyone who doesn't.

Helping someone join

- **Check who's already on it** — once you've allowed contacts access, your family who have WhatsApp appear automatically in your chat list.
- **For anyone who doesn't:** they install it free from their phone's app store and set it up with their number, exactly as you did (Part 1).
- **Then you'll see each other** — no extra step needed; you simply find their name and start a chat.

TIP

A shared app is twice the fun — get a buddy set up

WhatsApp is most delightful when the people you talk to most are on it. If a close friend or a sibling isn't yet, it's worth gently encouraging them — then you can video-call and share photos freely. You might even set it up together, or point them to this very book. Getting a “WhatsApp buddy” going doubles the joy of it.

FROM BILL

I'm glad to help your whole family get connected

If you'd like, I can help not just you but a spouse, sibling, or friend get set up on WhatsApp too — so you're all able to call and share together. Getting a whole family connected, especially before a holiday, is one of the most rewarding things I do. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll get everyone talking.

PART 2

Sending Messages

The heart of WhatsApp: writing and reading messages, those little check marks, emojis, and voice messages you speak instead of type.

CHAPTER 6

Sending Your First Message

Let's send a message together — it's the thing you'll do most, and it's easy. A WhatsApp message is like a text, but free and with lots of lovely extras.

Writing a message

1. Tap the **new-chat** button (a pencil or speech-bubble icon).
2. Tap the name of the person you want — your contacts who have WhatsApp appear in the list.
3. A chat screen opens. Tap the **text box** at the bottom; the keyboard appears.
4. Type your message, then tap the **green send arrow** (➤) to the right of the box.
5. Your message appears in a green bubble. When they reply, their message appears on the left.

> **TIP**
>
> **The conversation stays, like a running letter**
>
> Everything you and a person say stays in your chat, newest at the bottom, so you can always scroll up to re-read what was said. It's like a never-ending letter between the two of you. You never lose the thread, and you can pick up a conversation days later right where it left off.

CHAPTER 7

Those Little Check Marks

Beside each message you send, you'll notice little **check marks** (ticks). They're WhatsApp quietly telling you how your message is doing, and they're handy once you know what they mean.

What the checks mean

You see	It means
One grey check	Sent from your phone.
Two grey checks	Delivered to their phone.
Two blue checks	They've read it.
A clock symbol	Still sending — waiting for internet.

GOOD TO KNOW

Blue checks mean “read” — but don't read too much into them

Two blue checks mean the person has *opened* your message — but not that they've had a chance to reply. People get busy. Try not to fret if you see blue checks and no answer yet; it simply means they glanced at their phone. (And if you'd rather not send read receipts yourself, you can turn blue checks off in Settings → Privacy.)

If a message won't send

A **clock symbol** that lingers means WhatsApp can't reach the internet to send — check your Wi-Fi or phone signal. The message waits safely and sends itself the moment you're back online. Nothing is lost; it's just patiently waiting.

CHAPTER 8

Emojis, Fun, and Formatting

WhatsApp messages can carry more than plain words — little pictures called **emojis**, and simple ways to add warmth and expression. These are entirely optional, but they're part of the fun.

Adding an emoji

1. While typing, tap the **smiley-face** icon by the text box.
2. A panel of little pictures appears — hearts, smiles, flowers, thumbs-up, and hundreds more.
3. Tap one to drop it into your message. Tap the keyboard icon to go back to typing.

> **TIP**
>
> **A heart or thumbs-up says a lot in a second**
>
> Emojis aren't just for the young — a simple heart ❤, a thumbs-up ■, or a smiley face is a warm, quick way to respond when you don't have words, or to add affection to a note. You can also **react** to someone's message by pressing and holding it and picking an emoji — a lovely, effortless way to say “I saw this and I love it.”

Replying to a specific message

In a busy chat, you can reply to one particular message so it's clear what you mean: **press and hold** the message and choose **Reply** (or swipe it sideways). Your answer appears attached to theirs. Handy in a lively family group where lots is being said at once.

CHAPTER 9

Voice Messages: Speak Instead of Type

Here's a feature many older folks come to love most: the **voice message**. Instead of typing, you simply *talk*, and your spoken words are sent as a little recording the other person plays. It's natural, warm, and wonderfully easy on the fingers and eyes.

Sending a voice message

1. In a chat, find the **microphone** icon to the right of the text box.
2. **Press and hold** it and speak your message clearly.
3. **Let go** when you're done — it sends automatically.
4. To cancel before sending, slide your finger away while still holding (or tap the trash icon).

The person taps the little play button to hear you. They can listen whenever suits them — and hearing your actual voice is far warmer than text.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your voice, no typing required

If typing on a small keyboard is a struggle — and for many of us it is — voice messages are a joy. You just talk, as if leaving a friendly voicemail, and your loved ones hear *you*, with all the warmth your voice carries. It's often the feature folks end up using most. Give it a try; you can't do it wrong.

TIP

Lock the recording so you don't have to hold the button

If holding the microphone button while you talk is awkward, you can usually **slide up to lock** the recording — slide your finger upward (toward a little lock symbol) while holding, and it keeps recording hands-free until you tap to send. Then you can speak at leisure without holding anything. A small trick that makes longer voice messages comfortable.

CHAPTER 9a

Fixing a Message: Delete and Edit

Sent a message with a typo, or to the wrong chat? WhatsApp lets you fix it — you can **edit** a message or **delete** it for everyone, within a time window. A handy safety net.

Editing or deleting

1. **Press and hold** the message you want to fix.
2. Choose **Edit** to correct the wording (within about 15 minutes of sending), then send the fix.
3. Or choose **Delete**, then **Delete for Everyone** to remove it from both sides (within about two days).

GOOD TO KNOW

“Delete for Everyone” leaves a small note

When you delete a message for everyone, the other person sees a little “This message was deleted” in its place — so it's not invisible, but the content is gone. It's perfect for recalling a message sent to the wrong chat or catching an embarrassing typo before it's read. Just act reasonably quickly; the option expires after a day or two.

TIP

“Delete for me” just tidies your own view

There are two kinds of delete: **Delete for Everyone** (removes it from both sides) and **Delete for Me** (removes it only from *your* screen, leaving it on theirs). Use “for me” to tidy your own chat; use “for everyone” to truly unsend something. Knowing the difference saves confusion about what the other person can still see.

CHAPTER 9b

Finding an Old Message (Search) and Starring

As your chats grow, you'll sometimes want to find something said weeks ago — an address, a recipe, a date. WhatsApp's **search** finds it instantly, and **starring** lets you bookmark important messages.

Searching your chats

- **Tap the search icon** (magnifying glass) at the top of your Chats list.
- **Type a word** you remember — a name, a place, anything from the message.
- Matching messages appear; tap one to jump right to it in the conversation.

Starring important messages

To bookmark a message worth keeping — an address, a phone number someone sent — **press and hold** it and tap the **star**. All your starred messages gather in one place (Settings or the chat menu → Starred Messages) for easy reference later. A tidy way to keep the useful bits handy.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never lose an address or a recipe in the chatter

Between search and starring, nothing useful gets lost in a busy chat. That address your daughter sent, the recipe from a friend, the date of the reunion — star them, or search for them later, and they're right there. Your chats become a searchable keepsake, not a river that carries things away. A genuine convenience once you get the habit.

PART 3

Voice & Video Calls

The feature that makes distance disappear: free voice and video calls to anyone with WhatsApp, anywhere in the world, including the whole family at once.

CHAPTER 10

Making a Voice Call

A WhatsApp **voice call** is just like a phone call — you hear each other and talk — except it goes over the internet, so it's free no matter the distance. Perfect for a good long chat with family far away.

Placing a voice call

1. Open the **chat** with the person (or find them in the Calls tab).
2. Tap the **phone** icon at the top of the screen.
3. It rings; when they answer, talk away. Your voice travels over the internet.
4. Tap the **red button** to hang up when you're done.

GOOD TO KNOW

Free calls, any distance — but it needs internet

A WhatsApp call uses your internet (Wi-Fi or phone data), not your phone minutes — so it costs nothing even to another country. The only requirement is that both of you have a decent internet connection. On Wi-Fi at home, calls are crisp and free; that's the magic of it.

CHAPTER 11

Making a Video Call

Now the real treasure: the **video call**, where you *see* each other's faces as you talk. For grandparents and far-off grandchildren, nothing beats it — and it's just as easy as a voice call.

Placing a video call

1. Open the **chat** with the person.
2. Tap the **video-camera** icon at the top.
3. When they answer, you'll see them on screen and they'll see you. Hold the phone up comfortably so your face is in view.
4. Tap the **red button** to end the call.

TIP

Prop your phone up so your arm doesn't tire

For a long, relaxed video chat, rest your phone against something — a cup, a stand, a stack of books — angled toward your face, so you're not holding it up the whole time. Good light in front of you (a window) helps them see you clearly. Little comforts that make a video call a pleasure rather than a strain.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See their faces, feel close

There's something a phone call can't give you that a video call can: the smiles, the way the grandchildren have grown, the wave goodbye. Seeing a loved one's face, live, from across the world and for free — it genuinely shrinks the distance. For many families this one feature is the whole reason they're on WhatsApp.

CHAPTER 12

Group Calls with the Whole Family

WhatsApp can put **several people on one call at once** — voice or video — so the whole family can be together even when scattered across the map. A Sunday call with everyone on screen becomes possible.

Starting a group call

- **From a group chat:** open the family group and tap the call icon — it rings everyone.
- **From a one-on-one call:** tap the “add person” icon to bring others in.
- **From the Calls tab:** start a new call and select several people.

Everyone who answers appears on screen together. It's a lovely way to mark a birthday, a holiday, or just a weekly catch-up when the family can't all be in one room.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The whole family in one place, wherever they are

A group video call is as close as technology comes to gathering everyone around the kitchen table when they live hundreds of miles apart. Grandchildren, children, siblings — all on screen at once, laughing and talking together. For holidays and birthdays especially, it's a heartwarming thing, and WhatsApp makes it free and simple.

FROM BILL

Let's do a practice call before the big family one

If you're nervous about a first family video call — a birthday, say — we can do a practice run together first, just you and me, so you're confident with the buttons when the moment comes. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll rehearse it. Then you can relax and simply enjoy seeing everyone.

CHAPTER 13

Answering and Missing Calls

When someone calls you on WhatsApp, your phone rings much like a normal call, with WhatsApp's name shown. Answering and handling missed calls is simple.

Answering a call

- **If your phone is unlocked:** tap the **green** button to answer, or the **red** to decline.
- **If it's locked:** slide to answer, as with a regular call.
- **For a video call,** you can answer and choose to start with your camera off if you're not ready to be seen — then turn it on when you like.

Missed calls

A missed WhatsApp call appears in your **Calls** tab and as a notification, so you can see who called and tap to call them back. Nothing is lost by missing one — just tap their name to return the call when you're ready.

TIP

Not ready to be on camera? Answer with video off

If a video call comes and you'd rather not be seen just then (you're in your dressing gown, say!), you can answer with your **camera turned off** — they'll hear you but not see you until you tap the camera on. A handy bit of control, so an unexpected video call is never a reason to panic or ignore it.

CHAPTER 13a

Getting the Best Call Quality

A WhatsApp call is only as good as the internet carrying it. A few simple habits keep your calls clear and steady, so you're not fighting a frozen picture or dropped sound.

Tips for clear calls

- **Use Wi-Fi when you can** — a home Wi-Fi connection is usually steadier than phone signal for video.
- **Be near your router** or in a spot with good signal; weak Wi-Fi causes freezing (see the Mesh Wi-Fi manual).
- **Close other heavy apps** and ask others in the house not to stream video during an important call.
- **Good light on your face** (facing a window) makes you easier to see on video.

TIP

A frozen video usually means weak internet — not a broken app

If a video call keeps freezing or the sound breaks up, the culprit is nearly always the **internet connection** — yours or theirs — not WhatsApp itself. Move closer to your Wi-Fi router, or switch the video off and continue as a voice call (which needs far less internet). When the signal improves, so will the call. It's rarely anything to worry about.

GOOD TO KNOW

No video? Fall back to a voice call

If video just won't behave on a weak connection, don't give up on the call — simply turn off the camera and carry on as a **voice** call, which uses much less internet and stays clear where video struggles. You still get to talk; you just save the faces for when you've a stronger signal. A handy fallback that keeps the conversation going.

PART 4

Family Groups

Group chats are where family life happens on WhatsApp — everyone in one conversation. How they work, joining and making them, and keeping a busy group from overwhelming you.

CHAPTER 14

What a Group Chat Is

A **group chat** is a single conversation with several people in it — the whole family, say — where everyone sees everyone's messages. It's the digital equivalent of the family all talking in the same room, and it's where much of WhatsApp family life takes place.

How groups work

- **Everyone in the group sees every message** and can reply, so it's a shared conversation.
- **It has a name** (like “The Smith Family”) and shows up in your Chats list like any other conversation.
- **Photos, voice messages, and calls** all work in groups too — a photo shared in the group reaches everyone at once.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One place for the whole family

A family group is a wonderful thing: share one photo and everyone sees it, ask one question and anyone can answer, and the day's little news — a new tooth, a good report card, a nice sunset — flows to the whole family at once. It keeps everyone woven together in a way that used to take a dozen phone calls.

CHAPTER 15

Joining and Reading a Group

Usually a family member adds you to the group, or sends you an **invite link** to tap. Once you're in, reading and joining in is just like a normal chat — only with more voices.

Taking part

- **Open the group** from your Chats list to read what's been said; scroll up for earlier messages.
- **Reply** as you would any chat — your message goes to everyone.
- **See who said what** — each person's name shows above their messages, so you can follow along.
- **Reply to one message** specifically (press and hold → Reply) when a group is busy and you want to be clear.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to answer everything

A lively family group can hold a lot of chatter, and here's permission you may need: **you're not obliged to reply to every message.** Read what interests you, chime in when you've something to say, enjoy the photos, and let the rest flow by. The group is there for connection, not homework. Dip in and out as you please.

CHAPTER 16

Making Your Own Group

You can start a group yourself — for the family, a group of friends, a club, or a few folks planning something. It takes a minute, and you choose who's in it.

Creating a group

1. Tap the **new-chat** button, then choose **New Group**.
2. **Tap the people** you want to add from your contacts (those who have WhatsApp).
3. Tap **Next**, give the group a **name** (“Garden Club,” “The Grandkids”), and add a photo if you like.
4. Tap **Create**. Everyone's in, and you can send the first message.

TIP

A small group for a specific purpose works best

Groups are most pleasant when they have a clear purpose and aren't too large — “Book Club,” “The Immediate Family,” “Sunday Lunch Plans.” You can make as many as you like for different circles. A focused little group stays useful and friendly, while one giant catch-all group can get noisy. Start small; you can always add more people.

CHAPTER 17

Taming a Busy Group (Muting & Leaving)

A busy group can buzz your phone constantly, which is lovely until it isn't. Happily, you're in control — you can quiet a group without leaving it, or leave entirely, with no drama.

Muting notifications

Muting stops a group from buzzing and pinging you, while you still see its messages whenever you choose to open it. Open the group, tap its name at the top, and choose **Mute** (for 8 hours, a week, or always). The chatter is still there when you want it — it just stops interrupting you.

Leaving a group

If a group truly isn't for you, you can **leave** it: tap the group name, scroll down, and choose **Exit Group**. You'll stop receiving its messages. It's perfectly fine to leave a group — no one is sent a fuss about it beyond a small note that you left.

TIP

Mute, don't leave, the family group

For the family group especially, **muting** is usually the right answer rather than leaving — you stay part of the family conversation and never miss the photos, but your phone stops buzzing every few minutes. You check it on your own schedule, in peace. Muting gives you the best of both: connected, but not pestered.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You set the pace, not the group

The freedom to mute means a chatty family group is never a burden. Keep it muted, glance at it with your morning coffee, enjoy the news and pictures, and reply when you've something to say. You stay beautifully connected to everyone, entirely on your own comfortable terms. That's the way to enjoy WhatsApp for the long haul.

CHAPTER 17a

Being a Happy Group Member

Family groups run smoothest with a little gentle etiquette — nothing stuffy, just a few courtesies that keep everyone comfortable and the group pleasant for all.

Gentle group manners

- **Reply to the group for group matters,** but message someone privately for a private aside (so you don't share it with everyone).
- **Mind the early-morning and late-night messages** — others' phones may buzz; many folks mute overnight, but it's a kind thought.
- **Reactions save clutter** — a thumbs-up or heart on a message (press and hold) says “lovely!” without adding another message for everyone to read.
- **It's fine to be quiet** — no one has to comment on everything.

TIP

Use a reaction instead of ten “me too!” messages

When someone shares happy news or a photo in a big group, a tap-and-hold **reaction** (a heart or thumbs-up) lets you join the chorus of approval without adding yet another message that buzzes everyone's phone. It keeps a busy group from drowning in “so lovely!” replies while still letting you show you care. A small courtesy that keeps groups pleasant.

CHAPTER 17b

Private Chats vs. the Group

A small but important skill: knowing when you're writing to the *whole group* versus *one person*. Mixing these up is the source of most group-chat embarrassment, so let's make it clear.

Telling them apart

- **At the top of the chat,** a group shows the group's name and members; a private chat shows one person's name. Glance there before you type.
- **To message one person privately,** go to (or start) your one-on-one chat with them — not the group.
- **Within a group,** you can tap a person's name and choose “Message [name]” to reach just them.

HEADS UP

Check the name at the top before sharing something private

Before you type anything you'd only want one person to see, take a one-second glance at the **name at the top** of the chat to confirm you're in the right place. The classic slip is posting a private remark to the whole family group by mistake. That quick check — “am I in the group, or the private chat?” — saves many a red face.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Confidence in every conversation

Once you're sure which chat you're in, you can relax and enjoy both — the warm bustle of the family group and the quiet one-on-one chats with each person you love. No more worry about a message going to the wrong place. That confidence makes the whole app a pleasure rather than a worry.

PART 5

Photos, Media & Sharing

Sharing the moments of your life: sending and saving photos and videos, documents, your location, and the brief daily “Status” updates.

CHAPTER 18

Sending a Photo

Sharing photos is one of the most beloved things WhatsApp does — a picture of the garden, the grandchildren, today's lunch, sent to family in an instant. Let's do it.

Sending a photo in a chat

1. Open the chat with the person or group.
2. Tap the **paperclip** or **+** icon (near the text box), or the **camera** icon.
3. Choose **Photo & Video Library** to pick existing photos, or **Camera** to take a new one right now.
4. Tap the photo(s) you want, add a few words if you like, and tap the **green send arrow**.

> **TIP**
>
> **Take and send a photo in one motion**
>
> For a spur-of-the-moment share, tap the **camera** icon right in the chat, snap the photo, and send — all without leaving WhatsApp. It's perfect for “look at this!” moments: the first snow, a pretty flower, the cat being silly. The whole family sees it seconds after it happens.

CHAPTER 19

Saving Photos People Send You

When family sends you photos, you'll naturally want to keep the special ones. WhatsApp can save them to your phone's regular photo collection, alongside your own pictures.

Saving a photo

- **Tap the photo** in the chat to open it full-screen.
- Tap the **share** icon (a box with an up-arrow) and choose **Save** (iPhone) or the **download** icon (Android).
- It joins your Photos, where you can view, print, or share it onward anytime.

GOOD TO KNOW

WhatsApp may auto-save photos — which can fill your phone

By default WhatsApp often *automatically* saves every photo and video you receive to your phone — convenient, but it can quietly fill your storage, especially from busy groups. You can turn auto-saving off in Settings (so you save only the ones you choose). If your phone's getting full, this is often why — and an easy fix we can do together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The grandkids' photos, kept forever

Saving the photos your family sends means those precious pictures — the grandchildren growing up, the family gatherings — become part of your own collection to treasure, print for the fridge, or set as your phone's background. Just remember to **back them up** too (see the Backing Up Everything manual) so they're safe for good.

CHAPTER 20

Sharing Videos, Documents & Location

Beyond photos, WhatsApp shares all sorts of things — videos, documents, and even where you are. The same **paperclip / +** button is your gateway to all of it.

What else you can share

You can share	How
Videos	Send home videos like photos — tap the paperclip, choose from your library.
Documents	Share a PDF, a form, a flyer — choose “Document” from the attach menu.
Location	Show family where you are — handy when meeting up. Choose “Location.”
Contacts	Share someone's phone number from your contacts with another person.

TIP

“Live location” lets family see you reach somewhere safely

WhatsApp can share your **live location** for a set time — so family can see on a map that you've arrived safely at an appointment or a trip, then it stops automatically. It's a reassuring feature for both sides, entirely under your control (you choose when and for how long). A nice bit of peace of mind for family who worry.

STAY SAFE

Share your location only with people you trust

Location sharing is lovely with family, but share it only with people you genuinely trust, and for as long as needed. Never send your location to a stranger or someone who contacted you unexpectedly. Used thoughtfully with loved ones, it's reassuring; just keep it within your trusted circle.

CHAPTER 21

Status: Little Daily Updates

Status is a gentle feature for sharing a photo, video, or line of text with all your contacts at once, which quietly disappears after 24 hours. Think of it as a little “here's my day” note — optional, but some folks enjoy it.

How Status works

- **Post one:** go to the **Status** (or Updates) area, tap to add a photo or a few words.
- **Who sees it:** your contacts who have WhatsApp — and only them; you can limit it further in settings.
- **It vanishes** after 24 hours, so it's a light, no-pressure share.
- **See others':** tap a contact's status to view their recent update.

GOOD TO KNOW

Status is optional — skip it if it's not your thing

Status is a pleasant extra, not a must. Plenty of people happily use WhatsApp for years without ever posting one. If it appeals — sharing a daily photo with the family, say — enjoy it; if it feels like one more thing to think about, simply ignore it. WhatsApp works wonderfully whether or not you ever touch Status.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Share your day without sending a message to everyone

Status is a soft way to stay present in your family's day — a photo of your morning walk, a line about the weather — that they can glance at if they like, with no obligation to reply. It's connection without pressure, and it disappears on its own. A quiet, friendly way to feel part of each other's lives.

PART 6

Privacy & Staying Safe

What “end-to-end encryption” means for your messages, the privacy settings worth knowing, blocking nuisances, and the scams that reach people on WhatsApp.

CHAPTER 22

Are My Messages Private?

A fair and common question: is what I say on WhatsApp private? The reassuring answer is that WhatsApp is actually one of the more private ways to message, thanks to something called **end-to-end encryption**.

What encryption means, plainly

End-to-end encryption means your messages and calls are scrambled so that only you and the person you're talking to can read or hear them — not even WhatsApp itself can. It's as if your letter travels in a locked box only the recipient can open. For your everyday chats with family, this is genuine, strong privacy, working automatically with nothing for you to set up.

GOOD TO KNOW

Privacy comes built in — nothing to turn on

You don't have to do anything to get this protection — every WhatsApp message and call is encrypted automatically. So your family conversations stay between you and your family. That said, encryption protects the message *in transit*; the real-world risks are someone seeing your unlocked phone, or a scammer tricking you — which the rest of this part covers.

CHAPTER 23

Privacy Settings Worth Knowing

WhatsApp gives you simple controls over who sees what about you. A quick look at these lets you set things the way you're comfortable.

The settings to review

Find these in **Settings** → **Privacy**:

Setting	What it controls
Last Seen / Online	Whether others see when you were last on WhatsApp. Can be limited.
Profile Photo	Who can see your picture — everyone, contacts only, or nobody.
Read Receipts (blue checks)	Turn off if you'd rather others not see when you've read their message.
Groups	Control who can add you to groups — limit to your contacts.
Blocked Contacts	Your list of blocked numbers (next chapter).

TIP

"Who can add me to groups" is worth limiting

One privacy setting genuinely worth changing: under Groups, set **"Who can add me"** to **"My Contacts."** This stops strangers from pulling you into random (and sometimes scammy) groups — only people you know can add you. A small change that cuts down on unwanted noise and keeps the riff-raff out. I'm glad to help you set it.

CHAPTER 24

Blocking and Reporting

If someone bothers you on WhatsApp — a nuisance, a stranger, a suspected scammer — you can **block** them so they can't message or call you, and **report** them to WhatsApp. Simple and effective.

Blocking someone

1. Open the chat with the person, tap their **name** at the top.
2. Scroll down and tap **Block** (and **Report** if it's a scam or abuse).
3. They can no longer call or message you, and they aren't told they've been blocked.

STAY SAFE

Block first, ask questions never — with strangers

If a message comes from a number you don't know, especially one that's odd, flattering, or pushy, you don't owe them a reply — just **block and report**. Blocking a stranger is always the safe choice, and you can unblock later if it turns out to be someone genuine (it rarely is). Trust your instincts; a stranger on WhatsApp gets no benefit of the doubt.

CHAPTER 25

Scams on WhatsApp

Because so many people use WhatsApp, scammers try their luck here too. The good news: they use the same old tricks you may know from phone and email, so they're easy to spot once you know the patterns. (The Scams manual in this series covers all of this in depth.)

Common WhatsApp scams

- **“Hi Mum/Dad, I've lost my phone”** — a message from an unknown number pretending to be your child, needing money urgently. A classic family-emergency scam.
- **A stranger strikes up a friendly chat** — “wrong number” that turns warm, leading toward romance or an “investment.”
- **“You've won” or a job offer** out of the blue, with a link or a request for details or a fee.
- **A “code” request** — someone asks you to share a verification code texted to you (this is them trying to steal your account).

SCAM ALERT

Never share your WhatsApp verification code — with anyone

This is the big one: if anyone asks you to tell them a **6-digit code** WhatsApp texted you — even a “friend” who says they sent it by mistake — **never share it.** That code is the key to your account, and sharing it lets a scammer take it over. WhatsApp and real friends never need your code. If asked, you're being scammed; ignore and block.

FROM BILL

“Hi Mum, new number”? Call your child the old way first

The “I've lost my phone, this is my new number, I need money” message is a cruel and common scam. If you ever get one, **don't send anything** — call your child or grandchild on the number you already have for them to check. It's almost always a scammer wearing a loved one's name. And any time a WhatsApp message gives you pause, call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll look together.

CHAPTER 26

Locking Down Your Account

A couple of settings make your WhatsApp account much harder for anyone to steal or misuse. They take a few minutes and are well worth it.

The protections to turn on

- **Two-step verification** — adds a PIN that's required to set up your account on a new phone, so a thief with your number still can't take it. Settings → Account → Two-step verification.
- **Silence unknown callers** — stops WhatsApp ringing for numbers you don't know. Settings → Privacy → Calls.
- **A screen lock** on your phone generally — so if it's lost, no one reads your chats.

STAY SAFE

Two-step verification is the lock worth setting

Turning on **two-step verification** is the single best thing you can do to protect your WhatsApp account — it means even if a scammer somehow got your text code, they'd also need your private PIN, which only you know. Choose a PIN you'll remember (and WhatsApp can email a reset if you forget). It's a few minutes for real peace of mind; I'm happy to set it up with you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A safe account you can enjoy freely

With two-step verification on, unknown callers silenced, and a lock on your phone, your WhatsApp is genuinely well protected — and that security is what lets you relax and enjoy it. You can chat, call, and share with family freely, knowing the door is locked to the troublemakers. A little setup, a lot of confidence.

CHAPTER 26a

Disappearing Messages and Chat Lock

WhatsApp offers a couple of extra privacy touches you may run across — messages that vanish on their own, and a lock on individual chats. Neither is required, but it's good to know what they are so they don't puzzle you.

Disappearing messages

You can set a chat so new messages **automatically delete** themselves after a set time (24 hours, 7 days, 90 days). It's for conversations you'd rather not keep around. If you notice messages vanishing in a chat, someone turned this on — it's a feature, not a glitch. You can turn it off in that chat's settings if you'd prefer to keep everything.

Chat Lock

Chat Lock hides a particular conversation behind your phone's fingerprint or face unlock, tucking it into a locked folder. It's useful if you share your phone and want certain chats private. Press and hold a chat and look for **Lock chat**. Entirely optional — most folks never need it.

GOOD TO KNOW

These are optional extras — ignore them if you like

Disappearing messages and chat lock are nice-to-haves for particular situations, not something you must use. Your everyday WhatsApp is private and simple without ever touching them. Learn they exist so you're not confused if you meet them, and use them only if a real need comes up. No pressure at all.

CHAPTER 26b

Keeping Calm About Privacy

Some folks hesitate over WhatsApp worrying about privacy — “can people see my number? read my messages?” Let's settle those worries plainly so you can use it with an easy mind.

The honest reassurances

- **Your messages are encrypted** — only you and the recipient can read them, not even WhatsApp.
- **Only your contacts and people you message** interact with you; you control who can add you to groups and see your details.
- **You can block anyone** who bothers you, instantly and silently.
- **The real risk is scams, not the app** — and you now know how to spot those (Part 6).

STAY SAFE

The app is private — stay alert to the people, not the technology

Here's the balanced truth: WhatsApp itself is a genuinely private, secure app, so you needn't fear the technology. What to stay alert to is the same thing as anywhere — *people* trying to trick you: a stranger's message, a “share your code” request, a “new number” plea for money. Trust the app; keep your wits about the humans. Do that and you're safe and sound.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Private, secure, and finally at ease

Put the worries to rest: your family chats are locked tight, you control who reaches you, and you can block any nuisance in two taps. With a little scam-awareness, there's nothing to fear and everything to enjoy. Use WhatsApp with a light heart — it's one of the safer corners of the digital world, and it exists to bring you closer to the people you love.

PART 7

Settings, Problems & Handy Extras

Taming notifications, keeping WhatsApp from filling your phone, backing up your chats, moving to a new phone, and using WhatsApp on a computer.

CHAPTER 27

Notifications — Just Right

WhatsApp notifications — the sounds and banners when a message arrives — can be a joy or a nuisance depending on how busy your chats are. You're in control of how much it interrupts you.

Adjusting notifications

- **Mute busy groups** individually (Part 4) so only your one-on-one chats ping you.
- **In your phone's Settings** → **Notifications** → **WhatsApp,** turn sounds, banners, or badges up or down.
- **Use Do Not Disturb** or a bedtime setting on your phone so WhatsApp stays quiet overnight.

TIP

Quiet the groups, keep the personal chats

A nice balance many folks settle on: **mute the chatty family groups** (checking them when you like), but leave notifications **on for one-on-one chats**, so a personal message from a loved one still reaches you promptly. That way the important, direct messages get through while the group buzz doesn't pester you. Set it this way and WhatsApp serves you, not the other way round.

CHAPTER 28

Keeping WhatsApp From Filling Your Phone

Over time, all those photos and videos from busy chats can eat up your phone's storage. A little housekeeping keeps things tidy without losing anything you care about.

Freeing up space

- **Turn off auto-saving** of incoming photos/videos (Settings → Chats → turn off “Save to Camera Roll/Photos”) so only the ones you choose are kept.
- **Use WhatsApp's storage tool** (Settings → Storage and Data → Manage Storage) to find and clear large items and forwarded clips you don't need.
- **Delete old media** from groups you were just passing through.

GOOD TO KNOW

Clearing WhatsApp media doesn't delete your saved photos

A reassurance before you tidy: the photos you've **saved** to your phone's Photos are separate and safe — clearing WhatsApp's own stored media only removes the copies sitting inside the app's chats, not the ones you deliberately saved. So you can free up space confidently. (And back up your saved photos — see the Backing Up Everything manual.)

CHAPTER 29

Backing Up and Moving to a New Phone

Your WhatsApp chats and their photos can be **backed up** so you don't lose them, and so they come across when you get a new phone. Worth setting up once.

Turning on chat backup

- **On iPhone:** Settings → Chats → Chat Backup → turn on, saving to iCloud.
- **On Android:** Settings → Chats → Chat Backup → turn on, saving to Google Drive.
- Set it to back up automatically (daily or weekly) over Wi-Fi, and it looks after itself.

Moving to a new phone

On a new phone, install WhatsApp, verify your same phone number, and when prompted, **restore from the backup** — your chats and photos reappear. (Moving between an iPhone and an Android is a bit more involved; that's a good one to do together.)

FROM BILL

New phone with WhatsApp? Let's move it over cleanly

Getting WhatsApp — with all its precious family chats and photos — safely onto a new phone is a common thing folks worry about, and it's very doable, especially with a hand. If you've a new phone coming, call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make sure your conversations and pictures come across intact, with nothing lost.

CHAPTER 30

WhatsApp on a Computer

If you'd like to use WhatsApp on a **computer** — handy for typing longer messages with a real keyboard — you can, and it mirrors your phone's WhatsApp.

Setting it up

1. On the computer, open a web browser and go to **web.whatsapp.com** (or install the WhatsApp desktop app).
2. A square **QR code** appears on the screen.
3. On your phone, open WhatsApp → Settings → **Linked Devices** → **Link a Device**, and point your phone's camera at the code on the computer.
4. Your chats appear on the computer, kept in step with your phone.

TIP

The computer is just a window — your phone stays in charge

WhatsApp on a computer is a convenience, not a separate account — it simply shows the same chats as your phone, so you can type comfortably on a keyboard. Your phone remains home base. It's optional and entirely up to you; many folks never need it, but it's lovely for longer messages if you have a computer handy.

STAY SAFE

Only link WhatsApp Web on your own computer

Link WhatsApp to a computer only on a machine that's **yours** and private — never a public or shared one — and be wary if anyone asks you to scan a WhatsApp QR code for them, as that can be a trick to hijack your account. On your own home computer, it's perfectly safe. When in doubt, don't scan, and give me a call.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand helps — and a one-page cheat-sheet to keep handy.

CHAPTER 31

When to Call Bill

This book is here so you can use WhatsApp confidently and stay close to your family. But part of being truly helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you worry. Here's when I'd pick up the phone.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like help **installing and setting up WhatsApp** for the first time.
- You want to do a **practice video call** before a big family one.
- You'd like to turn on **two-step verification** and the privacy settings.
- You're **moving WhatsApp to a new phone** and don't want to lose your chats and photos.
- A message gives you that **“this doesn't feel right”** twinge — especially about money or a “new number.”
- Your phone's filling up and you'd like help tidying WhatsApp's photos.

Things you can handle yourself

Sending messages and voice messages, making voice and video calls, sharing photos, taking part in family groups, muting a busy group, and blocking a nuisance — these are all yours now. Use this book as your refresher, and remember you can't break a thing by exploring.

FROM BILL

How I like to help

I'm Bill, and I've spent 30+ years helping folks feel at home with their technology, right here in Portage County, Ohio. I don't rush, I don't talk down to anyone, and there's no such thing as a silly question at my table. Getting folks onto WhatsApp to see their grandchildren's faces is honestly one of the happiest parts of my work. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**.

Thank you for learning this — it's going to bring you closer to the people you love. You've got messaging, calling, family groups, sharing photos, and staying safe all under your belt now. Keep this book handy, take your time, and don't be a stranger.

— Bill

CHAPTER 32

Your WhatsApp Cheat-Sheet

Keep this handy. The everyday moves, all in one place.

The everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Send a message	Open a chat, tap the text box, type, tap the green arrow.
Send a voice message	Press and hold the microphone; speak; let go to send.
Make a voice call	Open the chat, tap the phone icon.
Make a video call	Open the chat, tap the video-camera icon.
Send a photo	Tap the paperclip / camera; pick or take a photo; send.
Save a photo	Tap the photo, then Share/Save (iPhone) or Download (Android).
Mute a busy group	Tap the group name at the top → Mute.
Block a nuisance	Tap their name at the top → Block (and Report).

The safety rules

- **Never share a 6-digit verification code** with anyone — ever.
- A **"new number, I need money"** message is a scam — call your real family to check.
- **Block and report** strangers; don't reply.
- Turn on **two-step verification** and **silence unknown callers**.
- When something feels off — **stop and ask.**

Keep these handy

My details	
My phone number (for WhatsApp)	_____
My two-step PIN is kept	_____
My main family group	_____
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WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Closer to the people you love

Look what you can do now: message and call family for free anywhere in the world, see the grandchildren's faces, share your day's photos, join the family group, and keep yourself safe doing it. Distance just got a lot smaller. Be proud, keep this book close, and enjoy staying close to the people who matter most.

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