BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

A COMPLETE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Windows 11 Complete Manual

From switching it on to doing everything you want — Windows 11 explained in plain English, one step at a time

Bill's Home Tech · Complete Manuals

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Windows 11 (the 2026 Update) · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your book. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it by the computer and reach for whatever you need. Every feature in here comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow.

Part 1 — Getting Comfortable

1 A Note from Bill
2 What a Computer and Windows 11 Are
3 Turning It On and Signing In
4 The Mouse and Touchpad (The Most Important Skill)
5 The Keyboard That Matters
6 A Tour of Your Desktop
7 Sleep, Restart, and Shut Down (and When to Use Each)

Part 2 — Finding Your Way Around

8 The Start Menu (Your Launching Pad)
9 The Taskbar (The Strip Along the Bottom)
10 Search — Find Anything by Typing
11 Opening, Closing, and Sizing Windows
12 Two Windows Side by Side (Snap Layouts)
13 Switching Between Open Programs
14 Where to Change Things: Settings (and the old Control Panel)
15 Notifications & Quick Settings

Part 3 — Your Files & Folders

16 What Files and Folders Are
17 File Explorer (Your Filing Cabinet)
18 Making a Folder, and Moving, Renaming & Copying Files
19 The Recycle Bin (Delete and Un-delete)
20 USB Drives, Phones & Cameras (Getting Photos Off)
21 OneDrive — Your Files Safely in the Cloud

Part 4 — The Internet, Email & Printing

22 Getting Online (Wi-Fi & What a Browser Is)
23 Microsoft Edge (Your Web Browser)
24 Searching the Web Safely
25 Email (Reading, Writing, Replying, Attachments)
26 Downloads (Where Things Go, Opening Them Safely)
27 Printing and Scanning

Part 5 — Everyday Apps & Keeping in Touch

28 The Photos App (See, Keep & Share Your Pictures)
29 Video-Calling Your Family
30 The Microsoft Store (Getting New Apps Safely)
31 The Handy Built-In Tools
32 Writing a Document
33 Music, Video & Streaming
34 Reading & PDFs

Part 6 — Making It Easier to See, Hear & Use

35 Bigger Text Everywhere
36 Bigger Icons & a Mouse Pointer You Can Find
37 Magnifier — Zoom In on Anything
38 Let the Computer Read to You
39 Kinder Colors for Tired Eyes
40 Talk Instead of Type
41 Making the Mouse & Keyboard Easier
42 Ask Copilot — Just Ask the Computer for Help

Part 7 — Staying Safe

43 Passwords & Signing In, Made Simple
44 Microsoft Account vs Local Account
45 Windows Security (Your Free Virus Protection)
46 Scams & Fake Pop-Ups (The Most Important Pages in This Book)
47 Safe Browsing & Downloads
48 Windows Update (Keeping the Computer Healthy)
49 Backups (Never Lose Anything)
50 If Something Feels Wrong: Don't Panic, Don't Pay, Call Bill

Part 8 — Tips, Tricks, Maintenance & Quick Reference

51 Speeding Up a Slow Computer
52 Snipping Tool (Take a Picture of Your Screen)
53 Copy & Paste (and Clipboard History)
54 Phone Link (Your Phone on the Big Screen)
55 Handy Keyboard Shortcuts Worth Knowing
56 Keeping the Desktop & Files Tidy
57 Troubleshooting (When Something Goes Wrong)
58 Quick-Reference Cheat Sheets
59 Plain-English Glossary
60 Your Computer Record & Where to Learn More
61 When to Call Bill

PART 1

Getting Comfortable

The very first steps — turning it on, signing in, using the mouse and keyboard, and finding your way around the screen. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Dear reader,

I made this book for you. Not for a classroom, not for a crowd — for you, to sit right next to your computer and help you whenever you want a hand. Think of it as me pulling up a chair beside you, pointing at the screen, and walking you through things nice and slow.

Here is the most important thing I want you to hear, and I mean it: **you cannot break this computer by clicking around and exploring.** You really can't. You will not wear it out, you will not break anything, and you will not do something that can't be undone. The very worst thing that can happen is that you open something you didn't mean to — and if that happens, you just close it and open the right thing instead. That's it. That's the whole disaster.

TIP

Your two "get me out of here" buttons

Any time you feel lost or something pops up that you didn't expect, you have two easy ways to back out. (1) Press the **Esc** key in the top-left corner of the keyboard — that's short for "escape," and it usually closes whatever just appeared. (2) Click the little **X** in the top-right corner of a window to close it. Either one is perfectly safe. Nothing bad happens.

I want you to be curious. Poke at things. Open a menu just to see what's in it, then close it. That's exactly how everybody learns a computer — not by reading every word first, but by trying, seeing what happens, and trying again. There is no test at the end. There is no "right speed." **There is no rush at all.**

How to use this book

- **Read it in any order.** Start at the beginning if you like, or flip to whatever you need today. You can't fall behind in your own book.
- **Keep it right by the computer.** That's where it's meant to live. Write in it, dog-ear the pages, underline things — it's yours.
- **One small step at a time.** Every how-to in here is broken into little numbered steps. Do one, take a breath, do the next. Nobody's timing you.
- **Look for the colored boxes.** Green boxes tell you what something actually does for you. Blue boxes are handy extras. Amber boxes are gentle "careful here" notes. Red boxes warn you about scams. I'll explain them as we go.

FROM BILL

I'm a phone call away

If you ever get stuck — truly, any hour, any question, no matter how small — pick up the phone and call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There is no such thing as a silly question. I've been doing this for over 30 years, and I promise you I have heard every question there is. Helping folks like you is the whole reason I do this work.

You've got this. We're going to take it one small, calm step at a time, and before long this computer is going to feel like an old friend. I'm proud of you for diving in.

Warmly,

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Computer and Windows 11 Are

Before we touch a single button, let's clear up what these two words even mean — *computer* and *Windows 11* — because people throw them around like you're supposed to just know. You don't need to know how any of it works on the inside. You just need a simple picture in your head. Here it is.

The computer is the machine

The **computer** is the physical thing — the box, the screen, the keyboard, the mouse. It's the furniture, so to speak. By itself, a computer is just a quiet machine. It needs something to bring it to life and tell it what to do. That's where Windows comes in.

Windows 11 is the program that runs everything

Windows 11 is a *program* — a set of instructions — that runs the whole computer. It's what puts the pictures, words, and buttons up on the screen so you can see them, and it's what listens when you click the mouse or press a key. Everything you do on the computer, you do *through* Windows.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Windows is like the front desk of the whole computer**
>
> Picture a hotel. You don't go rummaging around in the kitchen or the boiler room — you walk up to the front desk and ask for what you need, and the staff takes care of the rest. Windows 11 is that front desk. You tell it what you want by clicking and typing, and it quietly handles all the complicated machinery behind the scenes. You never have to see the boiler room.

The "11" just means it's the eleventh big version of Windows that Microsoft has made over the years. Yours is **Windows 11, the 2026 Update** — a fresh, modern, friendly version. Some folks also call it "version 26H2," but that's just a fancy label for "the 2026 edition." You never have to remember that. I just mention it so that if a menu on your screen looks a hair different from a picture in this book, you'll know it's only because your computer is nice and up to date.

Desktop or laptop — which do you have?

Computers come in two main shapes, and Windows 11 works exactly the same way on both. The only real difference is how they're put together.

If it looks like this...	It's called a...	Good to know
A separate screen, a separate keyboard, and a separate mouse — usually sitting on a desk	Desktop computer	Stays in one spot; plugs into the wall for power
All one piece that folds shut like a clamshell, with the keyboard built in	Laptop	You can carry it around; it has a battery so it runs unplugged for a while

That's the whole difference. Wherever this book shows you how to do something, it works on your machine whichever shape it is. When a step is a little different on a laptop (like using the flat touchpad instead of a separate mouse), I'll point it out.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters to you

Once you understand that Windows is just the helpful "front desk," the whole computer stops feeling like a mystery box. You're not operating complicated machinery — you're asking a patient assistant to fetch things for you. That little shift in how you think about it takes a lot of the worry away.

And again — you do **not** need to understand what's happening inside. No more than you need to understand how a car engine works to drive to the store. We're just going to learn the steering wheel and the pedals. That's all you'll ever need.

CHAPTER 3

Turning It On and Signing In

Let's wake the computer up. This is the first thing you'll do every single day, so we'll go nice and slow and make it feel routine.

Step one: press the power button

Every computer has a **power button** — a single button, usually with a little circle-with-a-line symbol on it, like this: ⏻. On a desktop computer it's often on the front or top of the box. On a laptop it's usually along the top edge of the keyboard, or just above it.

1. Find the power button (look for that ⏻ circle symbol).
2. Press it once, firmly, and let go. You do not need to hold it down.
3. Wait patiently. The screen lights up and you may see the maker's name, a spinning circle, or the word "Welcome." This can take a minute or two. That's completely normal — it is not stuck.

> TIP
>
> **A slow start is normal, not a problem**
>
> The first minute after you turn it on, the computer is "waking up" — getting everything ready behind the scenes. A little spinning circle just means it's working. Give it a moment. If you ever truly think it's frozen, Chapter 7 shows you the safe way to restart it.

The lock screen: a friendly front door

After it wakes up, you'll see the **lock screen** — usually a pretty photo with the time and date on it. Think of this as the front door of your computer, and it's locked for a good reason: so that only you can get in. Nobody can walk up and poke through your things.

1. You'll see a nice background picture with the clock on it. That's the lock screen.
2. To open the door, press any key on the keyboard, or click the mouse button once, or (on a laptop) tap the touchpad. The picture slides away.
3. Now you'll see your name and a spot to sign in.

Signing in: proving it's you

Signing in just means proving to the computer that you're really you, so it opens up *your* things and nobody else's. There are a few ways to do it, and you'll use whichever one we set up together.

A PIN (a short number)

A **PIN** is a short secret number — usually four digits, like the code on a bank card. It's the quickest, easiest way to sign in, and it's what I set up for most folks.

1. Click once in the box under your name (a line will start blinking there, meaning the computer is ready for you to type).
2. Type your PIN using the number keys.
3. On most computers it signs you in the instant you finish the number. If not, press the **Enter** key to go.

A password (a secret word or phrase)

Some folks use a **password** instead — a secret word or phrase with letters and numbers. You type it the same way, then press **Enter**. As you type, the computer shows little dots instead of the real letters, so nobody peeking over your shoulder can read it. That's on purpose and it's a good thing.

Windows Hello (your fingerprint or your face)

If your computer has it, **Windows Hello** lets you sign in with your *fingerprint* or just by *looking at the screen* — no number to remember at all. Not every computer has this; it depends on whether yours has a fingerprint reader or a special camera.

- **Fingerprint:** rest the finger you set up on the little reader (often a smooth spot near the keyboard or on the power button). It recognizes you in a blink.
- **Face:** just look at the screen. The camera gently recognizes your face and lets you in. You don't press anything.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why signing in matters to you

Signing in keeps your private things private — your photos, your email, your documents. If anyone else were to use or pick up this computer, they can't get to your things without your PIN or your fingerprint. It's the simplest way to keep what's yours safe, and it takes all of two seconds.

STAY SAFE

Keep your PIN safe — but not stuck to the screen

Please don't tape your PIN or password to the computer, the screen, or the desk underneath it. That's like leaving your house key in the front-door lock. Instead, write it on a small card and keep it somewhere private that you'll remember — a wallet, a drawer, a little address book. If you ever forget it, don't panic and don't guess a dozen times — just call me and we'll sort it out together.

CHAPTER 4

The Mouse and Touchpad (The Most Important Skill)

If you learn only one thing really well from this whole book, make it this chapter. The mouse is how you "point" at things and tell the computer what you want. Everything else gets easy once your hand feels comfortable here. So we're going to go nice and slow, and I want you to practice — there's no wrong way to practice and **you cannot break a thing** by moving the mouse around.

Meet the pointer

When you slide the mouse across the desk, a little **arrow** slides across the screen to match. That arrow is called the **pointer** (or the cursor). The mouse is your hand; the pointer is your finger reaching into the screen. Move the mouse left, the pointer goes left. Move it toward you, the pointer comes down. That's the whole idea. Lift the mouse up off the desk and set it down again if you run out of room — the pointer stays put while it's in the air.

The five things a mouse does

A mouse has two buttons and a little wheel between them. Here is everything they do:

What it's called	How you do it	What it's for
Left-click	Press the LEFT button once, then let go	Choosing or pressing something — like a button
Double-click	Press the LEFT button twice, quickly	Opening something — like a photo or a program
Right-click	Press the RIGHT button once	Shows a little menu of extra options
Click-and-drag	Hold the LEFT button DOWN while you move the mouse, then let go	Moving something from one spot to another
Scroll	Roll the little wheel in the middle with your finger	Moving the page up or down to see more

Left-click — the one you'll use most

A single press of the **left** button is a **left-click**, and it's by far the most common thing you'll do. Left-clicking is how you "press" a button on the screen or choose something. Point the arrow at what you want, press the left button once, let go. Done. When someone says just "click," they always mean a left-click.

Double-click — to open things

A **double-click** is two quick left-clicks in a row, without moving the mouse in between. This is how you *open* things — like opening a folder or starting a program. The trick that trips up a lot of people is the timing: the two clicks need to be fairly quick and close together. If a double-click doesn't open the thing the first time, no harm done — just try again a touch faster.

> **TIP**
> **If double-clicking feels too fast, we can slow it down**
> The computer lets us slow down how quick those two clicks need to be, so a double-click is much easier on the hands. It's a simple setting, and we'll cover it in the part of this book on making the computer easier to use. For now, don't fight it — just call me and I'll adjust it for you in a minute.

Right-click — a menu of options

Press the **right** button once and a little **menu** pops up — a short list of things you can do with whatever you pointed at. Think of right-click as asking, "What are my choices here?" You don't have to pick anything. If the menu pops up and you don't want it, just press **Esc** or left-click on an empty space and it disappears. Completely safe to explore.

Click-and-drag — moving things

Click-and-drag is how you move something across the screen. You point at it, hold the left button *down*, and — while still holding — slide the mouse to where you want it, then let go of the button. It's just like picking something up, carrying it, and setting it down. If it goes somewhere you didn't mean, just drag it back. No harm.

The scroll wheel — moving the page

That little wheel between the two buttons is the **scroll wheel**. Roll it away from you with your finger and the page moves up; roll it toward you and the page moves down. This is how you read something longer than the screen — a webpage, a letter, a list. You're not moving the computer, just sliding the page up and down like a scroll of paper behind a window.

On a laptop: the touchpad

A laptop usually doesn't have a separate mouse. Instead it has a **touchpad** — a smooth, flat rectangle just below the keyboard. You slide your fingertip across it, and the pointer moves on screen to match. It does everything a mouse does; you just use your finger.

On the touchpad, to...	...do this
Move the pointer	Slide one fingertip across the flat pad

On the touchpad, to...	...do this
Left-click	Tap the pad once with one finger — OR press the lower-LEFT corner of the pad
Double-click	Tap twice, quickly, with one finger
Right-click	Tap with TWO fingers at once — OR press the lower-RIGHT corner of the pad
Scroll	Slide TWO fingers up or down the pad together
Click-and-drag	Press-and-hold the lower-left corner, then slide another finger to move the thing

Many laptops also have two buttons along the bottom edge of the touchpad — a left one and a right one — that work exactly like the left and right mouse buttons. Use whichever feels better to you: tapping the pad, or pressing the buttons. There's no wrong choice.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this is the skill that unlocks everything

Once your hand knows the mouse — once pointing and clicking feels natural and you're not thinking about it — every other thing on the computer becomes easy. Opening your email, looking at photos, reading the news: it's all just pointing and clicking. This one skill is the key that opens every other door, so it's worth a few minutes of happy practice.

Practice ideas (no way to do it wrong)

- Just move the pointer around the screen and watch it follow your hand. Get a feel for it.
- Point at the clock in the bottom-right corner and left-click it once to see the calendar pop up. Then click an empty spot to make it go away. You just did it — that's left-clicking.
- Right-click on an empty part of the background to see a menu appear, then press **Esc** to dismiss it. That's right-clicking, and look — nothing broke.
- Roll the scroll wheel while reading something to see the page slide up and down.

Do this for five minutes here and there. Don't try to master it in one sitting. Little bits of practice add up fast, and one day soon you'll notice your hand just *knows* what to do.

CHAPTER 5

The Keyboard That Matters

A keyboard looks like a sea of buttons, and that's enough to make anybody's eyes glaze over. Good news: for everyday computing you only need to know a *handful* of keys. We'll learn those, and you can happily ignore all the rest for now. Nobody expects you to know what every key does — I don't use most of them in a given day either.

The keys worth knowing

Here's your short, friendly list. Keep this page handy.

This key	What it does	When you'd use it
Enter	"Do it" — or starts a new line when you're typing	To send a message, confirm a choice, or start a new paragraph
Backspace	Erases the letter just to the LEFT of where you're typing	To fix a typing mistake — the most common cleanup key
Delete	Erases the letter just to the RIGHT	Another way to remove a mistake
Spacebar	Puts a space between words (the long bar at the bottom)	Every time you finish a word
The arrow keys	Move your blinking cursor up, down, left, or right	To move around in what you've typed without the mouse
Shift	HOLD it to type a CAPITAL letter or the symbol on a key	For the first letter of a name, or a sentence
Caps Lock	Locks ON capital letters until you press it again	Rarely — easy to turn on by accident (see the note below)
Ctrl	A "helper" key you hold WITH another key for a shortcut	Later on, little time-savers like Ctrl + the C key to copy
Windows key	Opens the Start menu (it has the little Windows flag on it)	A quick way to find programs and settings
Esc	"Escape" — cancels or backs out of whatever's on screen	Any time you feel stuck or something unexpected pops up

A little more about a few of them

Enter is your "go ahead" key. When you've typed something and you're ready for the computer to act on it, Enter is how you say "yes, do it." When you're writing, Enter also drops you down to a new line, just like the return lever on an old typewriter.

Backspace is your eraser, and you'll lean on it all the time. Made a typo? Press Backspace and the letter to the left vanishes. Hold it down and it keeps erasing. There is no mistake you

can type that Backspace can't quietly clean up.

Shift is a "hold-and-press" key. You *hold* Shift down and, while holding it, press a letter to make it a capital. Let go, and you're back to small letters. It also types the upper symbol on keys that have two — like holding Shift and pressing the "1" key to get an exclamation point.

HEADS UP

Everything in CAPITALS? It's just Caps Lock

If you suddenly notice EVERYTHING YOU TYPE IS COMING OUT IN CAPITALS, don't worry — you almost certainly tapped the **Caps Lock** key by accident. It's on the far left and it's easy to brush. Just press it once more to switch it back off, and you're fine. Many keyboards have a tiny light that glows when Caps Lock is on, which is a handy clue.

Ctrl (short for "Control") and the **Windows key** are "helper" keys — on their own they don't type anything. Ctrl teams up with other keys for little shortcuts we'll meet later (no need to learn any now). The Windows key, with its little four-pane flag symbol, is a fast way to open the Start menu — but you can always use the mouse for that instead, so don't feel you must.

GOOD TO KNOW

You truly don't need the rest yet

All those other keys — the F keys across the top, the number pad on the side, the odd ones like "Alt" and "Fn" — you can leave them be for now. When the day comes that you need one, I'll show you. Learning the keyboard is like learning a town: you start with the few streets you actually drive, and the rest fills in over time, all on its own.

CHAPTER 6

A Tour of Your Desktop

When you've signed in and everything settles down, the main screen you land on is called the **Desktop**. This is your home base — the place everything starts from, and the place you can always get back to. Let's walk around it together and put a name to each part, so none of it feels like a stranger.

The Desktop itself

The **Desktop** is the big background area that fills most of the screen — often a nice photo or a solid color. It's called a desktop because it works like the top of a real desk: a flat surface you keep your things on and spread your work out over.

Icons — little pictures you can open

Scattered on the Desktop you may see small pictures with words under them. Each one is an **icon** (say it "EYE-con"). An icon is like a labeled button — **double-click** one to *open* what it stands for, whether that's a program, a folder, or a document. The little picture is a hint about what's inside: an envelope for mail, a folder for a folder of files, and so on.

The Taskbar — the strip along the bottom

Along the very bottom of the screen runs a **strip** called the **Taskbar**. It's always there, no matter what you're doing, which makes it a reliable anchor. Several important things live on it, so let's name them from left to right.

The Start button

In the middle-bottom (or sometimes the far-left) of the Taskbar sits the **Start button** — it's the little **Windows logo**, a flag made of four panes. Clicking it opens the **Start menu**, which is your way into all your programs and settings. Think of the Start button as the big friendly "Where do I find...?" button. We give it a whole chapter of its own later, so don't worry about the details yet — just learn to spot it.

The clock and date

Over at the far-**right** end of the Taskbar you'll find the **time and date**, always showing. Left-click it once and a little calendar slides up — a handy way to check the day. Click an empty spot to tuck it away again.

The little icons near the clock

Just to the left of the clock sits a cluster of tiny **status icons** — little symbols that quietly tell you how the computer is doing. The three worth knowing:

- **Wi-Fi** (looks like a little fan of curved bars, or a small globe): tells you whether you're connected to the internet. When it's lit, you're online.
- **Volume** (a little speaker): controls how loud the sound is. Click it to slide the loudness up or down.
- **Battery** (on a laptop — a little battery shape): shows how much charge is left. When you plug the laptop in, a tiny lightning bolt appears to show it's filling back up.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **This is "home base" — you can always get back here**
>
> Here's the comforting part: no matter how deep you wander into the computer, the Desktop and its Taskbar are always waiting for you. If you ever feel turned around, closing your windows (remember the **X** in the top-right corner) brings you right back here to home base. You are never truly lost — home is only a click or two away.

That's the lay of the land. The **Start menu** and the **Taskbar** each have so much to offer that they get their own full chapters later in the book, where we'll really dig in. For now, you just need to be able to look at the screen and name the pieces: Desktop, icons, Taskbar, Start button, clock, and those little status icons. That's a wonderful start.

CHAPTER 7

Sleep, Restart, and Shut Down (and When to Use Each)

When you're finished using the computer — or when something's acting up — you have three ways to "power it down," and they're not the same. People mix them up all the time, so let's make it crystal clear. Here they are, plainest terms first.

Option	In plain terms	Comes back on in...
Sleep	A quick nap. The screen goes dark but everything stays just as you left it.	A second or two
Restart	Turns fully off and right back on again, by itself.	A minute or two
Shut Down	Turns the computer all the way off, like switching off a lamp.	A minute or two (you turn it back on)

Sleep — a quick nap

Sleep is for when you're stepping away for a little while — a cup of coffee, lunch, an afternoon errand — and you'll be back. The screen goes dark and the computer dozes, using almost no power, but it keeps everything exactly where you left it. Wake it with a tap of a key or the mouse, sign back in, and you're right where you were. Nothing is lost.

Restart — the magic fix

Restart turns the computer all the way off and then automatically brings it back on, all in one go. Here's the part I really want you to remember:

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Restart is the first thing to try for almost any glitch

If your computer is acting odd — something's frozen, a program won't behave, the internet seems stuck, things feel slow — **restart it before anything else.** I'm not exaggerating when I say this one trick fixes the large majority of little problems folks call me about. A restart gives the computer a clean, fresh start, like a good night's sleep clears your own head. When in doubt: restart. It's safe, and it just might save you a phone call.

Shut Down — all the way off

Shut Down turns the computer completely off, like switching off a lamp. Use it when you're done for the day (though honestly, Sleep is fine for that too), if you're going away for a good

while, or before you unplug or move a desktop computer. When it's shut down, you bring it back to life with the power button, just like in Chapter 3.

How to do each one

All three live in the same friendly spot, tucked inside the Start menu. The steps are the same for all three — you just pick a different word at the end.

1. Click the **Start button** (the Windows flag logo on the Taskbar along the bottom).
2. Look for the **power icon** — a small ■ circle-with-a-line symbol, usually near the bottom of the menu that opens.
3. Click that power icon. A short list appears: **Sleep**, **Shut down**, and **Restart**.
4. Click the one you want. That's it — the computer takes it from there.

> **TIP**
>
> **The power button is a last resort, not a light switch**
>
> For everyday powering off, always use the menu steps above — they let the computer close things up neatly first. **Don't** press and hold the physical power button to force it off, except in one situation: the computer is truly, completely frozen — nothing on screen responds to the mouse or keyboard at all, even after you've waited a good while. Only then, hold the power button down for about ten seconds to force it off, wait a moment, and press it once to turn it back on. Think of it as the emergency brake, not the parking brake.

And remember — whichever one you pick, you haven't done anything wrong. Sleep when you want it quick, Restart when something's cranky, Shut Down when you're truly finished. You'll have the feel of it in no time, and I'm always just a phone call away if you're unsure which to reach for.

PART 2

Finding Your Way Around

The Start menu, the Taskbar, Search, and how to open, close, and arrange windows — so you always know where you are and how to get back.

CHAPTER 8

The Start Menu (Your Launching Pad)

If there is one button on your whole computer worth getting friendly with, it is this one. The **Start button** is your front door. From here you can reach every program, every setting, and every file on the machine. When you feel lost — and everybody feels lost sometimes — pressing Start is the way home.

You will find it at the very **bottom of the screen**, on the strip that runs along the bottom. It is the **Windows logo** — four little squares arranged like a tilted window pane. Depending on how your computer is set up, it sits either in the **middle** of that bottom strip or over at the **far left corner**. Both are perfectly normal; it does the same thing wherever it lives.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Two ways to open it — and one is hands-free**
>
> You can **click** the Windows logo with your mouse, or you can press the **Windows key** on your keyboard. That key also has the little four-pane logo on it, usually down near the bottom-left of the keyboard between *Ctrl* and *Alt*. Tap it once and the Start menu pops up; tap it again and the menu goes away. Nothing is committed just by opening it — you are only looking.

What you will see when it opens

A panel slides up from the bottom. Take a breath and look it over — there is no rush, and nothing here bites. From top to bottom, here is what is in front of you:

Part of the menu	What it is
Search box (top)	A box across the top that says something like *"Search for apps, settings, and documents."* Click it and start typing to find anything (that is Chapter 10 — it is a wonderful trick).
Pinned	A grid of app tiles — your **favorites**, the ones you want within easy reach. You decide what lives here.
Recommended / Recent	Below the Pinned apps: recently opened programs and files, so you can jump back into what you were just doing. (In the 2026 Update this strip may be labeled **Recent** rather than **Recommended** — same idea.)

Part of the menu	What it is
All apps	A button near the top-right of the Pinned area. Click it for the **complete alphabetical list** of every program on the computer.
Your account	Bottom-left: a little circle with your name or picture. Click it to sign out or change your account picture.
Power button	Bottom-right: the circle with a line through the top. This is how you **Sleep, Restart, or Shut down** (we covered that earlier).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything you own, one click away

Think of the Start menu as the drawer where you keep everything. You do not have to remember *where* a program is hiding or what folder it lives in. One press of the Windows key and your whole computer lays itself out in front of you, ready to go.

How to open a program

1. Click the **Start button** (the Windows logo) or press the **Windows key**.
2. If you see the program you want in the **Pinned** grid, click it once. It opens.
3. Do not see it? Click **All apps** (top-right of the pinned grid) and scroll down the alphabetical list until you find it, then click it.
4. Faster still: with the menu open, just **start typing the program's name**. Windows finds it as you type — click it when it appears at the top.

TIP

One click, not two

Inside the Start menu — and on the bottom strip too — you only ever need a **single click** to open something. The double-click habit is for files and folders on the desktop. If one click here does not seem to work, you may simply have missed the icon; try again, there is no harm done.

Making it your own: pin and unpin

"Pinning" means keeping an app in that top **Pinned** grid so it is always a single click away. Think of it like sticking a photo on the fridge with a magnet — you are putting your favorites where you can see them. You are never deleting anything by pinning or unpinning; you are only deciding what shows up front.

To pin an app (add it to your favorites)

1. Open **Start** and click **All apps** to see the full list.
2. Find the program you use often. **Right-click** it — that means click it with the *right* mouse button instead of the usual left one. A small menu appears.
3. Click **Pin to Start**. The app now shows up in your Pinned grid.

To unpin an app (tidy up the grid)

1. In the Pinned grid, **right-click** the app you want to remove.
2. Click **Unpin from Start**. It disappears from the grid — but it is still on the computer, waiting in **All apps** whenever you want it again.

> **HEADS UP**
>
> **Right-click just opens a little menu**
>
> If you have never used the right mouse button, do not worry — all it does is pop up a short list of choices for whatever you clicked on. If a menu appears that you did not want, press the **Esc** key (top-left of the keyboard) or click any empty space, and it vanishes. You cannot break anything by right-clicking.

Rearranging the 2026 Update to suit you

The 2026 Update gives you a say in how the Start menu looks. If the **Recommended / Recent** list bothers you, or you wish the menu showed *more* of your pinned favorites, you can change that:

1. Open **Start** and click the **Settings** gear (or press the **Windows key + I** together).
2. Click **Personalization** in the list down the left side.
3. Click **Start**.
4. Here you can choose a layout — **More pins** (bigger favorites area), **More recommendations**, or the even **Default** split — and flip switches on or off to **show or hide** the recently-added apps and recently-opened items.

Change one thing, then go look at your Start menu to see if you like it. If not, come back and change it again. There is no wrong answer — this is your computer, set up the way *you* find comfortable.

FROM BILL

Don't overthink the menu

You don't have to customize a single thing for the computer to work beautifully. The defaults are fine. I only mention all this so you know the knobs exist. When you're ready, pin the four or five programs you reach for most and ignore the rest — that alone makes the machine feel like yours.

CHAPTER 9

The Taskbar (The Strip Along the Bottom)

That strip running across the **very bottom of the screen** — the one the Start button sits on — is called the **Taskbar**. It is always there, no matter what program you are using, like the dashboard of a car. Once you know what each part does, you will glance down at it a hundred times a day without even thinking.

Reading it from **left to right**, here is everything on that strip:

What you see	What it does
Windows logo (Start)	Opens the Start menu — your launching pad from the last chapter.
Search box or magnifying glass	Click here and type to find anything on the computer or the web (Chapter 10).
Program icons	Little pictures for your favorite and currently-open programs — one click opens each.
Open programs	Any program that is running right now shows a small **line or glow underneath** its icon, so you can tell at a glance what is already open.
Clock & date (far right)	The time and today's date. Click it to pop open a **calendar** and your notifications.
System tray	The little cluster of icons near the clock: **Wi-Fi**, **speaker/volume**, **battery** (on a laptop), and an **up-arrow** that reveals a few hidden icons.

The underline tells you what's open

This is a small thing that clears up a lot of confusion. When a program is **running**, its icon on the taskbar gets a little **underline or a soft glow** beneath it. No underline means the program is closed. So if you ever wonder *"is my email still open somewhere?"* — just look down at the taskbar for the underline. If it's there, one click brings it right back to the front.

The system tray (the right-hand corner)

Those small icons near the clock keep an eye on the health of your computer. You do not need to fuss with them, but it helps to know what they are:

- **Wi-Fi** (looks like a little fan of curved bars, or a small globe) — tells you if you are connected to the internet. Full bars means a strong connection.
- **Speaker / volume** (a little speaker cone) — click it to make sound louder or softer.

- **Battery** (on a laptop only) — shows how much charge is left. A little plug symbol means it is charging.
- **The up-arrow** (a small ^) — click it to reveal a few extra icons Windows tucks out of the way to keep the strip tidy. Nothing in there needs your attention day to day.

TIP

Click the clock for a calendar

Click the **time and date** in the bottom-right corner and a tidy **monthly calendar** slides up, along with any reminders or notifications waiting for you. Click the clock again, or press **Esc**, to tuck it away. A quick, free way to check the date without reaching for a paper calendar.

Pin a program to the taskbar

Just like the Start menu, you can keep your most-used programs right on the taskbar for **one-click** opening — no need to open Start first. Here is how:

1. Open **Start** and find the program (in Pinned or under **All apps**).
2. **Right-click** the program.
3. Hover over **More** if you see it, then click **Pin to taskbar**.
4. The program's icon now lives on the bottom strip. Click it any time to open it.

To take one off the taskbar later, **right-click** its icon on the strip and choose **Unpin from taskbar**. As always, the program itself stays safely on the computer — you are only moving its shortcut.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your most-used programs, always one click away

Pin your web browser, your email, and maybe your photos to the taskbar, and you will never again hunt for them. They sit on the bottom strip all day long, and a single click opens each one. It is the difference between fishing a tool out of a drawer and having it hanging on the wall where you can grab it.

CHAPTER 10

Search — Find Anything by Typing

If you remember only one trick from this entire book, make it this one. It is the single most powerful thing a beginner can learn, and it turns the computer from a maze into a helpful assistant that *fetches things for you*.

The trick is simply this: **click Start (or the Search box) and start typing the name of what you want.** That's it. Windows looks everywhere — your programs, your files, your settings, even the web — and brings back matches as you type. You do not have to know where anything lives. You just have to know its name, or even part of its name.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You never have to remember where things live

This is the reason Search matters so much. The old worry — *"which folder did I put that in? where is that setting buried?"* — simply goes away. You type what you want in plain words, and the computer does the hunting. It is like having a librarian who knows exactly where every book is shelved.

How to search

1. Press the **Windows key** (or click the **Search box** on the taskbar).
2. Start **typing** — the name of a program, a document, or a setting. You do not need to click anywhere first; just type.
3. A list of results appears, with the **best match highlighted at the top**.
4. Click the one you want — or, if the top result is right, just press the **Enter** key.

Things you can type (real examples)

If you type…	Windows finds…
printer	Your printer settings — add a printer, fix a stuck one.
volume	The sound controls, to make things louder or quieter.
Mrs. Jones letter	The letter you wrote and saved by that name — the actual file.
weather	The Weather app, so you can check the forecast.
bluetooth	The setting for connecting wireless headphones or speakers.

If you type…	Windows finds…
calculator	The Calculator program, ready to open.
camera or **mail**	The Camera app, or your email — whole programs, by name.

Notice you can search for three different kinds of things with the very same box: **programs** (like Calculator), **files** you have saved (like a letter), and **settings** (like volume or Wi-Fi). One box, everything.

TIP

When in doubt, Search is always the answer

If you ever cannot find something — a program, a photo, a setting, anything at all — do not go clicking around hunting for it. Stop, press the **Windows key**, and **type what you're looking for**. Nine times out of ten it appears at the top of the list. You do not even have to spell it perfectly or type the whole word — *"calc"* is enough to find the Calculator. Search is the escape hatch that never fails you.

CHAPTER 11

Opening, Closing, and Sizing Windows

When you open a program, it appears inside a **box on the screen**. That box is called a **window** — and yes, that is exactly why the whole system is named *Windows*. Each program gets its own window. You can have several open at once, stacked like sheets of paper on a desk, and you can make each one bigger, smaller, or set it aside. Let's learn to manage them.

The three buttons in the top-right corner

Look at the **top-right corner** of any open window. You will see three small buttons in a row. These three control the whole window, and they are the same in nearly every program:

Button	What it does
Minimize (–)	The **dash**, on the left. Click it and the window tucks down to the taskbar, out of sight. **It is not gone and nothing is lost** — it is just set aside, like sliding a magazine under the coffee table. Click the program's icon on the taskbar to bring it right back.
Maximize / Restore (■)	The **square**, in the middle. Click once to make the window **fill the whole screen**. Click the same button again (it now looks like two little overlapping squares) to **shrink it back** to its smaller size.
Close (✕)	The **X**, on the right. It usually turns **red** when you point at it. This **closes the program**. Your work and files are not harmed — you can reopen the program any time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Minimize lets you set something aside without losing it

This is the one that saves beginners the most grief. If you are reading an email but want to peek at something else, **minimize** the email — don't close it. It waits patiently on the taskbar, exactly where you left off, and one click brings it back. You get a clear screen without losing your place.

HEADS UP

Closing with the X does NOT delete anything

This worries a lot of people, so let me say it plainly: clicking the red **X** only *closes* the program for now. It does not erase your files, your photos, or your emails. Everything is saved and waiting. You can reopen the program whenever you like and it all comes back. (The one exception: if you were in the middle of typing something new and hadn't saved it, the program will usually **ask** if you want to save first — just click **Save**.)

Moving a window out of the way

Every window has a **top bar** running across it — the strip along the very top, usually with the program's name on it. You can pick a window up and move it by that bar:

1. Point your mouse at the **top bar** of the window (an empty part of it, not on the three buttons).
2. Press and **hold down** the left mouse button.
3. **Drag** — move the mouse while still holding the button — and the whole window slides along with it.
4. Let go of the button where you want it to sit.

This is called **dragging**, and it is the same motion you'd use to slide a plate across a table. If a window is covering something you want to see, just drag it aside.

Making a window bigger or smaller

To resize a window by hand, point your mouse at any **edge or corner** of it. The arrow pointer changes into a **double-headed arrow**. When you see that, press and hold the left button, drag to stretch or shrink the window, then let go. Corners resize both directions at once; edges resize just one way.

TIP

A double-click on the top bar is a shortcut

Instead of hunting for the maximize button, you can **double-click** the empty part of a window's top bar to make it fill the screen. Double-click it again to shrink it back. Two taps, same result — use whichever feels easier to you.

CHAPTER 12

Two Windows Side by Side (Snap Layouts)

Here is a genuinely handy one. Say you have a **recipe** open on a web page and you want your **email** open next to it at the same time, without constantly flipping back and forth. Windows can place two programs **side by side**, each filling half the screen, with one easy motion. This is called **Snap**, because the windows snap neatly into place like puzzle pieces.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See two things at once without juggling

Instead of hiding one window to look at the other and back again, you keep **both in view**. Follow a recipe while you shop online. Read an email while you reply in another. Compare two photos. It takes the juggling out of using the computer, and it is far easier on the eyes and the patience.

The easiest way: drag to the edge

1. Grab a window by its **top bar** (press and hold the left mouse button, as you learned in Chapter 11).
2. **Drag it all the way to the left edge** of the screen until you see a faint outline appear.
3. **Let go.** The window snaps to fill the **left half** of the screen.
4. Windows then shows you your **other open windows** as small pictures on the right half. Click the one you want there, and it fills the **right half** automatically.

Now you have two programs sitting neatly side by side. Drag a window to the **right** edge instead to start on that side — it works both ways.

The other way: hover over the maximize button

There is a second route that lets you pick from several arrangements, including halves, thirds, and quarters of the screen:

1. Rest your mouse pointer **on the maximize button** (the middle square in the top-right) — don't click, just hover and wait a moment.
2. A little **menu of layouts** appears, showing different ways to split the screen.
3. Click the **spot** in the layout where you want *this* window to go.
4. Windows then offers your other windows to fill the remaining spots — click to place each one.

TIP

To undo it, just maximize or drag away

If you don't like the side-by-side arrangement, it's easy to undo. **Maximize** one of the windows (the middle square) to make it full-screen again, or simply **drag** a window away from the edge by its top bar. The snap lets go and you're back to normal. Nothing is stuck.

CHAPTER 13

Switching Between Open Programs

You will often have several things open at once — your email, a web page, maybe a document. Jumping between them is quick once you know the moves. Here are three ways; try each and keep whichever one feels most natural to your hands. They all do the same job.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Jump between email and the web instantly

No need to close one thing to look at another. With a single click or keypress you hop straight from your email to a web page to a letter and back again — everything stays open and waiting. It's the difference between flipping through papers already on your desk and fetching each one from a filing cabinet.

Way 1 — Click it on the taskbar (simplest)

Every open program has an icon on the **taskbar** with that little **underline** beneath it. Just **click the icon** of the program you want, and it jumps to the front. This is the easiest method and the one most people settle on — no keyboard needed at all.

Way 2 — Alt + Tab (the quick flip)

1. Find the **Alt** key (bottom row of the keyboard, near the space bar) and the **Tab** key (left side, above Caps Lock, marked with two arrows).
2. **Hold down Alt** and keep holding it.
3. **Tap Tab** once. A row of your open windows appears on screen.
4. Each tap of Tab (while still holding Alt) moves the highlight to the next window.
5. When the one you want is highlighted, **let go of Alt**. That window jumps to the front.

TIP

It's just like flipping through records

Hold **Alt**, tap **Tab** to flip through your open windows one by one, and release when you land on the one you want. If you overshoot, keep tapping — it loops back around. And if you panic, just let go of everything and press **Esc**; nothing changes and you're right where you started.

Way 3 — Task View (see everything at once)

Task View lays **all** your open windows out as large pictures on one screen, so you can see everything at a glance and click the one you want:

1. Click the **Task View** button on the taskbar — it looks like two overlapping rectangles, usually just to the right of the Search box. (Or press the **Windows key + Tab** together.)
2. All your open windows spread out as thumbnails.
3. **Click** the one you want to work in. Everything else stays open in the background.
4. To back out without choosing, press **Esc**.

A gentle word about "extra workspaces"

In that same Task View, you may notice an option to add a **new desktop**. These are called **virtual desktops** — think of them as **extra, empty workspaces**, like having a second clean desk in the room to spread different projects across. Some people love them; many never touch them. You do not need them at all, and I'd suggest leaving them be for now. I only mention it so that if you ever bump into one by accident, you'll know what it is and won't worry. To get rid of an extra one, open Task View, find the desktop along the top, and click the small **X** on it — your programs simply move back to your main desktop, nothing lost.

CHAPTER 14

Where to Change Things: Settings (and the old Control Panel)

Sooner or later you'll want to **change** something about the computer — make the text bigger, connect to a different Wi-Fi, turn the sound up, adjust the mouse. Nearly every one of those adjustments lives in one friendly place: **Settings**.

Opening Settings

Settings is marked with a **gear** icon — like a little cogwheel. There are two easy ways in:

- Open **Start** and click the **gear** (it sits with your pinned apps, or type *"settings"* and it pops right up).
- Or press the **Windows key + I** together — *I* as in *information*. That opens Settings straight away from anywhere.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One friendly place to adjust your computer to suit you

Settings is where you make the machine fit *you* rather than the other way around — bigger text for tired eyes, louder sound, a slower mouse, a brighter or dimmer screen. Everything that makes the computer more comfortable lives behind that one gear. There's a whole chapter later on the comfort settings I most recommend; this is just where they all live.

How Settings is laid out

When Settings opens, you'll see a **list down the left side** and details on the right. The left-hand list is the menu of topics. Click a topic on the left, and its options fill the right side. Here are the ones you'll reach for most:

Topic (down the left)	What's inside
System	Display, sound, notifications, power, and storage.
Bluetooth & devices	Printers, mouse, keyboard, wireless headphones and speakers.
Network & internet	Your Wi-Fi connection and whether you're online.
Personalization	Background picture, colors, and the Start menu layout from Chapter 8.
Accounts	Your sign-in, your picture, and your password.

Topic (down the left)	What's inside
Accessibility	Comfort helpers — larger text, a bigger pointer, read-aloud, and more.
Windows Update	Checking for and installing the updates that keep you safe.

TIP

Don't scroll — search inside Settings too

Settings has its **own search box at the top-left**. If you know what you want to change but not which topic it's under, just type it there — *"brightness," "mouse," "text size"* — and it takes you straight to it. (And remember, the main Windows Search from Chapter 10 finds settings too. When in doubt, type what you want.)

The old Control Panel (still around)

Before Settings existed, Windows kept all its adjustments in something called the **Control Panel**. Microsoft is slowly moving everything over to the newer **Settings**, but a few older corners still live in the Control Panel. You will rarely need it — Settings handles the day-to-day — but if a helper or an instruction ever points you there, here's how to find it:

1. Press the **Windows key** or click the **Search box**.
2. Type **control panel**.
3. Click **Control Panel** when it appears at the top of the results.

GOOD TO KNOW

Two tools, same goal

It's a little untidy having two places to change things, I know. Here's the simple rule: **always try Settings first** — it's the modern, friendlier one. Only reach for the Control Panel if something specifically sends you there. You won't go wrong leaning on Settings for everything else.

CHAPTER 15

Notifications & Quick Settings

The right-hand end of the taskbar hides two small, very useful panels. One lets you adjust the everyday things — Wi-Fi, volume, screen brightness — in a couple of clicks. The other collects little messages the computer wants to show you. Let's meet both; they're easy, and nothing here can harm the machine.

Quick Settings — your everyday dials

Look at the **bottom-right corner** of the screen, at the little cluster of **Wi-Fi, speaker, and battery** icons (on a desktop computer there may be no battery). **Click anywhere on that cluster** and a small panel pops up. This is **Quick Settings**.

> **WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU**
>
> **Turn Wi-Fi on, adjust volume, dim the screen — all in two clicks**
>
> The things you adjust most often are gathered in one spot, so you don't have to dig through menus. Need the screen dimmer at night? Volume up for a video call? Wi-Fi back on? It's all right here — open the panel, make the change, done. Two clicks, every time.

Inside Quick Settings you'll typically find:

- **Wi-Fi** — tap to turn it on or off, or to pick which network to join.
- **Bluetooth** — turn on wireless headphones, speakers, or a mouse.
- **Volume slider** — a bar you drag left for quieter, right for louder.
- **Brightness slider** — a bar to make the screen brighter or dimmer (on laptops and many screens).
- **Night light** — warms the screen's colors in the evening so it's gentler on the eyes.
- **Airplane mode** — switches off all wireless at once (you'll rarely need it at home).

1. **Click** the Wi-Fi / speaker / battery cluster in the bottom-right corner (or press **Windows key + A**).
2. **Click a button** to turn something on or off — it lights up when it's on.
3. **Drag a slider** for volume or brightness.
4. Click **anywhere else** on the screen, or press **Esc**, to tuck the panel away.

HEADS UP

On and off is a color, not a disaster

When a button is **colored in**, that feature is on; when it's **gray**, it's off. If you flip something and don't like it, just click it again to flip it back. The two you might toggle by accident are **Airplane mode** (which switches off Wi-Fi) and **Bluetooth** — if the internet suddenly stops, peek here and make sure Airplane mode isn't lit up.

Notifications & the calendar

Over at the very end, the **clock and date** do double duty. **Click the time and date** and a panel slides up showing a **monthly calendar** and a stack of **notifications** — the little messages Windows and your programs leave for you, like *"updates are ready"* or *"you have a new email."*

- **Read one** by clicking it — it opens whatever it's about.
- **Clear one away** by pointing at it and clicking the small **X** that appears.
- **Close the panel** by clicking the clock again or pressing **Esc**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Notifications are messages, not problems

A notification popping up doesn't mean anything is wrong. Most are just friendly heads-ups. You can read them, clear them, or ignore them entirely — they'll wait in that panel until you have a moment. Nothing bad happens if you never look.

Quieting notifications: Do Not Disturb

If the little pop-ups interrupt you when you're reading or on a call, you can hush them with a feature called **Do Not Disturb** (older computers may call it **Focus**). It doesn't delete the messages — they still gather quietly in the notification panel — it just stops them from popping up and chiming for a while.

1. **Click the clock / date** in the bottom-right to open the notifications panel.
2. Look for a **bell** icon or a **Do Not Disturb** switch near the top of the panel.
3. **Click it on** to silence the pop-ups. Click it **off** again when you want them back.

TIP

Turn it on while you read, off when you're done

Do Not Disturb is perfect for when you want quiet — reading this guide, watching a film, on a video call with the grandkids. Flip it on for a bit of peace, and remember to flip it back off afterward so you don't miss anything that matters. Nothing is lost either way.

FROM BILL

You've found your bearings

That's the whole lay of the land — Start, the taskbar, Search, your windows, and the two little panels in the corner. If you ever feel turned around, remember the three anchors: press the **Windows key** to get home, **type** what you're looking for, and press **Esc** to back out of anything. With just those three, you're never truly lost. Call me at (330) 200-8042 any time you want a hand.

PART 3

Your Files & Folders

Where your documents, photos, and downloads live — and how to find, move, rename, and keep them safe without fear of losing anything.

CHAPTER 16

What Files and Folders Are

Let me paint you a picture first, because once you have it in your head the rest of this part is easy. Everything your computer keeps for you is stored as **files**, and those files are kept tidy inside **folders**. That's the whole idea. If you've ever used a filing cabinet, you already understand how a computer stores things — you're further along than you think.

A file is one single thing

A **file** is one item — one thing you can open and look at. Think of a single sheet of paper in a drawer. On your computer, a file might be:

- A letter you typed (one document).
- A photo of your grandchildren (one picture).
- A song, or a whole piece of music (one recording).
- A tax form or a receipt somebody emailed you (one PDF).

Each of those is a separate file, with its own name, sitting on the computer waiting for you to open it. When you open a file, the computer shows you what's inside — the words of the letter, or the picture, or it plays the song. Closing it just puts it back in the drawer, unharmed. Nothing you do by *looking* at a file can damage it.

A folder is a labeled drawer that holds files

A **folder** doesn't contain words or pictures itself — it's a container. It's the labeled drawer, or the manila envelope, that *holds* your files so they're grouped together and easy to find. You might have a folder named **Taxes**, another named **Grandkids**, and another named **Doctor**. Open a folder and you see the files kept inside it.

And a folder can hold other folders, too. So inside your **Taxes** folder you might have smaller folders named **2024**, **2025**, and **2026** — drawers inside drawers, as deep as you like. On the screen a folder is always drawn as a small tan file-folder shape; when you see that picture, you know there are things *inside* it.

Names — and that little bit at the end

Every file has a **name** that you choose, so you can tell one from another — like *Letter to the bank* or *Christmas 2025*. Give files plain names that mean something to you; you don't have to be fancy.

You may also notice a **dot and a few letters at the very end** of some file names, like **.docx** or **.jpg** or **.pdf**. That last little bit is called the *file type*, and it's simply how Windows knows what *kind* of thing the file is — so it knows which program to open it with. You don't type it and you don't need to fuss with it. Here are the few you'll meet most:

The ending	What it means
.docx	A typed document — a letter or anything with words. Opens in a word processor.
.pdf	A finished document that looks the same for everyone — statements, forms, tickets, receipts.
.jpg or .jpeg	A photograph or picture. The usual kind that comes off a phone or camera.
.png	Another kind of picture — often screenshots or images saved from the web.
.mp3	A song or a piece of audio.

TIP

You don't have to memorize these

Nobody expects you to know every ending. If the little bit at the end ever confuses you, just ignore it — think only of the *name* you gave the file. Windows handles the rest. And if you ever rename a file, leave that ending alone; just change the part before the dot.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Folders keep your things tidy so you can always find them

The whole point of folders is this: instead of hundreds of loose files scattered about like papers dumped on a table, your things sit in neat, labeled drawers. When you want last year's tax return, you open **Taxes**, then **2025**, and there it is — in seconds, not after twenty minutes of hunting. A little tidying now saves you worry later.

That's the entire idea: files are your things, folders are the drawers that hold them. Hold onto that picture and the next chapters will feel familiar. And remember — you truly can't break anything by looking around. Let's go open the drawer.

CHAPTER 17

File Explorer (Your Filing Cabinet)

Now you need the window that lets you see all your files and folders. It's called **File Explorer** — think of it as the whole filing cabinet. Open it and you can pull out any drawer and look inside. It's one of the most useful windows on the computer, and after you've opened it a few times it'll feel like an old friend.

Opening File Explorer — two easy ways

There are two simple ways to open it, and either is fine. Use whichever you remember on the day:

1. **The folder icon on the taskbar.** Look along the strip of little pictures at the very bottom of your screen (that strip is the *taskbar*). One of them is a small yellow folder, usually looking a bit like an open box. Click it once and File Explorer opens.
2. **The keyboard shortcut.** Hold down the **Windows key** (the key near the bottom-left with the little four-pane window picture on it) and, while holding it, tap the letter **E**. Let both go. File Explorer pops open. (*E* is easy to remember — think *E* for *Explorer*.)

> TIP
>
> **If you can't spot the folder on the taskbar**
>
> Don't hunt and squint — just use the keyboard. **Windows key + E** opens File Explorer every single time, no matter what else is on the screen. Many folks find that easier than finding the little icon. Either one gets you to the same place.

What you see — the main drawers down the left

When File Explorer opens, look down the **left-hand side**. That's a list of your most important drawers — the folders Windows already made for you. Click any one and its contents appear in the big area on the right. The ones you'll use most are:

Drawer	What lives there
Documents	Where your typed letters and documents are meant to live.
Pictures	Where your photos belong — the ones off your phone or camera go here.
Downloads	A catch-all drawer where anything you save from the internet or email lands. Check here first if you saved something and can't find it.
Desktop	The main screen you see when the computer starts. Anything sitting on that screen also appears here.

Drawer	What lives there
This PC	The whole cabinet at once — every drawer, plus any USB stick or extra drive you've plugged in. A good place to start when you're not sure where something is.

If you ever feel lost, click **This PC** on the left — it's the master view, showing every storage place at once. From there you can click your way into whatever you need.

Getting around — three things that are all you need

Moving around inside the cabinet comes down to just three simple actions:

1. Open a folder — double-click it

To look inside any folder, point at it and **double-click** — two quick clicks of the left mouse button, one after the other. The folder opens and shows what's inside. The same double-click opens a file to view it. (If double-clicking feels tricky, that's very common; just aim for two clicks close together and don't rush.)

2. Go back — the back arrow

Opened the wrong folder? Look at the **top-left corner** for a **back arrow** (a left-pointing arrow, ←). Click it to step back one place, to where you just were; click again to step back further. It's the undo button for wandering — you can never get truly lost, because back always walks you home.

3. See where you are — the address bar

Along the **top** of the window is a wide strip called the **address bar**. It shows your trail of breadcrumbs — the drawers you've opened to get where you are, left to right. If it reads **This PC > Pictures > Grandkids**, that tells you at a glance you are inside the *Grandkids* folder, which is inside *Pictures*. Glance at it any time you're unsure where you've ended up.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One window shows everything you've ever saved

File Explorer is the single place that holds all your things in view. No more wondering *"where did that go?"* — open this one window, click into the right drawer, and there it is. Learn this window and you've learned how to find anything on the whole computer. That's a big one, and it's genuinely most of the battle. When you're done looking, close the window with the **X** in its top-right corner — closing it never deletes anything, it just tucks the cabinet shut.

CHAPTER 18

Making a Folder, and Moving, Renaming & Copying Files

Now you go from *looking* at your things to *tidying* them — making your own drawers, naming things clearly, and putting files where they belong. It's really just four small skills, and your mouse's **right-click** does most of the work for you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Right-click is your friend — it shows you what you can do

The regular (left) click *does* things; the **right-click** — a single click of the button on the *right* side of the mouse — *asks* things. Right-click almost anything and a little list pops up showing every action you're allowed to take with it: Open, Rename, Copy, Delete, and more. If you ever forget how to do something in this chapter, right-click the file and read the list. The answer is usually right there.

Making a new folder

Say you want a fresh drawer named **Grandkids**. Here's how, step by step:

1. Open File Explorer and click into the place you want the new folder — for photos, click **Pictures** on the left.
2. **Right-click on an empty space** in the big right-hand area (not on top of an existing file — just blank space). A little list pops up.
3. Point to **New**, and then click **Folder** in the small menu that slides out.
4. A new folder appears with its name highlighted in blue, ready for you to type. Type the name you want — **Grandkids** — and press the **Enter** key. Done.

TIP

There's also a “New” button at the top

Near the top-left of the File Explorer window there's a button that simply says **New**. Click it, then click **Folder**, and you get the same new drawer — no right-clicking needed. Use whichever feels more natural to your hand. Both do exactly the same thing.

Renaming a file or folder

Maybe a file came with a muddle of a name like *IMG_4471* and you'd rather it said *Birthday cake*. Renaming is easy and perfectly safe — you're only changing the label on the drawer, never the thing inside.

1. **Right-click the file** you want to rename. The list pops up.
2. Click **Rename**. The name turns blue and highlighted, ready to be changed.
3. Type the new name, then press **Enter**. That's it.

> **TIP**
>
> **The quick way: press F2**
>
> If you click once on a file to select it (it goes blue) and then press the **F2** key along the top row of the keyboard, the name lights up ready to type — the very same as choosing Rename. A nice shortcut once you're comfortable. And remember from Chapter 16: if there's a dot and a few letters at the end, leave that part alone and just change the name before it.

Copy versus move — the one idea to hold onto

These two words trip people up, so here's the difference, plain and simple:

- **Copy** makes a *second, identical twin* — you end up with *two*. The original stays put and a duplicate appears in the new place. Nothing is lost.
- **Move** picks the file up and *relocates* it — you still have just *one*, it simply lives somewhere new now.

If you're ever unsure which you want, **copy** is the safe bet — you can delete the spare later, and the original is never touched.

Moving a file into a folder

There are two ways. Pick whichever your hands like better.

The drag way (like sliding a paper across the desk)

1. Point at the file, press and **hold down** the left mouse button.
2. With the button still held, slide the mouse so the file drags over on top of the folder you want it in. The folder will highlight.
3. Let go of the button. The file drops into the folder. (If your hand isn't steady enough for dragging, that's fine — use the cut-and-paste way below instead.)

The cut-and-paste way (steadier, no dragging)

1. **Right-click the file** and click **Cut** (to move it) — or **Copy** (to make a twin instead).
2. Open the folder where you want it to end up.

3. **Right-click an empty space** inside that folder and click **Paste**. The file arrives.

HEADS UP

“Cut” doesn't delete — it's waiting to be pasted

When you choose Cut, the file may look faded for a moment. Don't panic — it is *not* gone. It's simply being held, ready for you to Paste it somewhere. It stays put until you paste it. If you change your mind, just don't paste, and nothing happens at all.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Organize once, and “where did I put that?” never happens again

When you make clearly named folders and tuck your files into them, you build yourself a map. Next month, when you need that insurance paper or that photo of the dog, you won't hunt — you'll know exactly which drawer to open. Ten minutes of tidying buys you years of never searching. It's one of the kindest things you can do for your future self.

CHAPTER 19

The Recycle Bin (Delete and Un-delete)

This may be the most reassuring chapter in the whole book, so I want you to relax as you read it. The number one fear I hear from folks is *"What if I delete something by accident and lose it forever?"* The answer is: in Windows, you almost certainly won't — because deleting doesn't throw a file away. It just moves it to a holding bin, and you can fish it right back out.

What "delete" really does

When you delete a file, Windows does **not** destroy it. It quietly moves the file into a special holding place called the **Recycle Bin**. Think of it exactly like the wastebasket beside your desk: when you drop a paper in, it's not gone — it's sitting right there in the basket, and you can reach in and take it back out any time you like. The file waits in the Recycle Bin, safe and whole.

> WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU
>
> **You can undo a delete — so deleting is safe**
>
> This is the freedom I want you to feel: because a deleted file goes to the Recycle Bin and not to oblivion, deleting is a *reversible* action. If you ever delete the wrong thing, you simply go to the bin and restore it. Knowing this, you can tidy up and clear away clutter without a knot in your stomach. Mistakes are fixable here.

Finding the Recycle Bin

The Recycle Bin lives right on your **Desktop** — the main screen you see when the computer starts up. Look for an icon shaped like a **little trash can or wastebasket**, usually up in the top-left corner. When it has things in it, the can looks like it has crumpled paper inside; when it's empty, the can looks empty. **Double-click** it to open it and see everything you've deleted.

Restoring something you deleted by mistake

Deleted the wrong thing? Don't worry for a second. Here's how to bring it back:

1. **Double-click the Recycle Bin** on the Desktop to open it. You'll see a list of everything you've thrown away.
2. Find the file you want back. (If there's a lot in there, the names are listed just like in any folder — scroll down and read until you spot it.)
3. **Right-click that file** and click **Restore**.

4. The file instantly hops back to **exactly where it was** before you deleted it — same folder, same name. Go open that folder and you'll find it waiting, good as new.

TIP

Restore puts it back where it came from

You don't have to remember where a restored file belongs — Windows remembers for you and sends it straight home to its original drawer. So if you restore a photo that lived in **Pictures**, that's exactly where it'll reappear. Nothing for you to track.

Emptying the bin

Over time the Recycle Bin fills up with things you really did mean to throw away, and you may want to empty it to clear the clutter — much like taking the wastebasket out to the curb. To do it: **right-click the Recycle Bin icon** on the Desktop and click **Empty Recycle Bin** (or open the bin and click the **Empty** button near the top). Windows will ask *"Are you sure?"* — click **Yes** to go ahead.

HEADS UP

Emptying the bin cannot be undone

Here is the one place to slow down and read carefully. Restoring is always possible *while a file is still in the bin*. But once you **empty** the Recycle Bin, those files are gone for good — that step is *not* reversible, the way carrying the trash to the curb means it's truly hauled away. So before you click Empty, take ten seconds to glance through what's in there and make sure there's nothing you want to keep. When in doubt, don't empty it — a full bin harms nothing, and you can always empty it later. And don't fret that the bin needs emptying often; it doesn't. A few files sitting in there won't slow anything down. I'd rather you keep things recoverable than rush.

CHAPTER 20

USB Drives, Phones & Cameras (Getting Photos Off)

So many wonderful photos get stuck on a phone or a little camera, trapped on a tiny screen. This chapter sets them free — you'll plug a device in and copy its pictures onto your computer, where you can see them properly and keep them safe.

A USB stick — the little memory drive

A **USB stick** (also called a flash drive, thumb drive, or memory stick) is a small plastic gadget, about the size of your thumb, that holds files and plugs into the computer. It's handy for carrying photos or documents between places.

1. Find a **USB port** — a small flat rectangular slot on the computer (there are usually a few; the front or side is easiest to reach).
2. Gently push the stick in. It only goes one way — if it won't slide in, turn it over and try again. *Never force it.*
3. In a moment Windows notices it. Open **File Explorer** and click **This PC** on the left — your stick shows up there as a new drive, often with a name and a letter like **(E:)**. Double-click it to see what's inside.

A phone or camera — connecting with the cable

To get photos off a phone or camera, you connect it to the computer with its charging cable — the same cable you plug into the wall, just plugged into the computer instead.

1. Take the cable that charges your phone or camera. Plug the small end into the phone (or camera) and the other end into a **USB port** on the computer.
2. Look at the **phone's own screen** — it will likely ask a question such as *“Allow this device to access photos?”* or *“USB for...?”* Tap **Allow** (or choose “Transfer photos” / “File transfer”). This is the phone making sure *you* approve — it's a good thing.
3. On the computer, open **File Explorer**, click **This PC**, and your phone or camera appears there as a new item (often by its name, like *your iPhone*). Double-click in until you find the folder of pictures — it's usually named **DCIM** (that's just the standard name cameras use for the photo folder).

TIP

If nothing happens, look at the phone — tap Allow

The single most common hang-up is that the phone is quietly waiting for you to say yes. If the computer doesn't seem to see your phone, pick the phone up, wake its screen, and look for a permission question. Tap **Allow** or **Trust**. Phones also need to be **unlocked** (past the passcode) to share their photos — so unlock it first.

Copying the photos onto your computer

Once you can see the photos on the phone or camera through File Explorer, bringing them over is just the copy skill you learned in Chapter 18:

1. Open the folder on the phone/camera where the photos are (often **DCIM**).
2. Select the photos you want. For all of them, click one photo and press **Ctrl + A** (hold the **Ctrl** key and tap **A**) to select every photo at once.
3. **Right-click** the selected photos and click **Copy**.
4. Open your **Pictures** folder (and, if you like, make a new folder inside it first — say, **Christmas 2026** — using what you learned in Chapter 18).
5. **Right-click an empty space** in that folder and click **Paste**. The photos copy across. Larger batches take a minute — a little progress bar shows it's working. Let it finish.

GOOD TO KNOW

Copying leaves the originals on the phone

Because you chose **Copy** (not Cut), your photos stay on the phone *and* get a second home on the computer. Nothing is removed from the phone. That's exactly what you want — two copies is safer than one. Only delete photos from the phone later, once you've confirmed they arrived safely on the computer.

Safely removing a USB drive

When you're finished with a USB stick, there's one polite little step before you pull it out — it makes sure Windows has finished writing and nothing gets scrambled. It takes two seconds.

1. Find the **taskbar** at the bottom of the screen and look near the clock (bottom-right) for a small **USB-plug icon**. You may need to click a little upward arrow (**^**) there to reveal hidden icons.
2. Click that USB icon, then click the line that says **Eject** (next to your drive's name).

3. Wait for a little message that says it's **safe to remove** the drive. Now gently pull the stick out. That's all.

HEADS UP

Don't yank a drive out mid-copy

The only time pulling a drive can cause trouble is if you yank it out *while files are still copying*. So let any progress bar finish, do the little Eject step above, and you'll never have a problem. If you forget the Eject step entirely, it's usually fine too — but the Eject habit is the safe one worth keeping.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Rescue the photos trapped on your phone onto the big screen

This is the payoff: all those pictures living on a phone too small to really see — the grandkids, the holidays, the garden — can now sit on your computer, big and clear and safely kept. You can look at them any time, print them, or (as the next chapter shows) back them up so they're protected forever. That's worth the little bit of fiddling.

CHAPTER 21

OneDrive — Your Files Safely in the Cloud

We'll finish this part with the thing that lets you sleep easy: a free safety net that quietly keeps a spare copy of your important files somewhere other than your computer. It's called **OneDrive**, and it comes built into Windows 11. Let me explain it in plain words, because the name sounds more technical than the idea really is.

What OneDrive is, in plain English

OneDrive is a **free locker on the internet** that belongs to you. When it's switched on, it automatically keeps a matching copy of your important folders — your **Documents**, **Pictures**, and **Desktop** — up in that locker. The internet part is what people call **"the cloud."** Don't let that word worry you: "the cloud" just means *"safely stored on big, well-guarded computers elsewhere, reachable over the internet."* It's not floating anywhere mysterious.

The magic is that it happens on its own. You go on saving files to Pictures and Documents just as you always have — and in the background, OneDrive tucks a copy up into your locker without you lifting a finger.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never lose a photo or document again

Here's why this matters so much. If your computer is ever lost, stolen, or simply stops working one day — and all computers eventually do — your files and photos are *not* lost with it, because a copy is safe in your OneDrive locker. You'd sign in on a new computer and everything would be waiting for you. For treasured family photos that can never be re-taken, this is peace of mind you can't put a price on.

How to tell OneDrive is switched on

Look down at the **taskbar**, near the clock in the bottom-right corner, for a small **cloud icon** (a little cloud shape). If you don't see it right away, click the small upward arrow (**^**) to reveal hidden icons and look there. If you see that cloud, OneDrive is present. Click it once and a little panel opens telling you how things are going — it will usually say something reassuring like **"Your files are up to date."**

The little marks on your files — cloud or checkmark

Inside your Documents and Pictures folders, OneDrive adds a tiny badge to each file so you can see its status at a glance. Two are worth knowing:

The little mark	What it's telling you
A small blue cloud	A copy is safe up in your OneDrive locker, and the file isn't taking up much room on the computer itself. It opens in a moment when you need it (as long as you have internet).
A green circle with a checkmark	The file is both safely in the locker *and* kept fully on this computer — so it opens instantly, even with no internet.

You don't need to do a thing about these marks — a cloud or a checkmark both mean the same comforting thing: *a copy is safe.* There's nothing to fix and nothing to click.

Checking that it's actually backing things up

If you'd like to see for yourself that your safety net is on, here's the gentle check:

1. Click the **cloud icon** on the taskbar (by the clock). A small panel opens.
2. Click the little **gear** or **Settings** within that panel, then look for a section called **Sync and back up** (or **Backup** / **Manage backup**).
3. You'll see your folders — **Desktop**, **Documents**, **Pictures** — each with a switch. If a folder's switch is **on** (turned toward “on” and colored), that folder is being backed up. If one you care about is off, click its switch to turn it on.
4. Close the panel. That's all — it keeps running quietly from now on.

> **TIP**
>
> **You may need to sign in once**
>
> OneDrive works through the free Microsoft account you likely set up when the computer was first started. If the cloud icon ever asks you to **sign in**, that's normal — enter that email and password once, and it'll remember you. If you're not sure of those details, jot them where you keep your passwords, or give me a call and we'll sort it out together.

One honest note about size

The free OneDrive locker holds a generous amount — plenty for your documents and a good stack of photos. But it isn't bottomless: it comes with a **size limit**, and if you have a very large photo collection you may eventually fill it. When that happens, Microsoft will let you know and offer **more room for a monthly fee**. There's no need to pay anything to start, and no rush — just know that if you ever see a *“storage full”* message, that's all it means, and it's an easy thing to sort out (or to ask me about).

STAY SAFE

Watch out for fake “storage full” messages

Because OneDrive storage is a real thing, scammers sometimes send fake emails or pop-ups screaming that your storage is full and demanding you “click here” or pay immediately. A genuine notice from Microsoft appears calmly, right there on your own computer by the cloud icon — it never arrives as an urgent email with a link to click or a phone number to call. If anything pressures or frightens you, don't click and don't call the number. Close it, and ring me instead. I'll never charge you to tell you whether something's real.

FROM BILL

This is the single best habit in the whole book

Of everything we've covered, letting OneDrive back up your photos and documents is the one I'd most want you to keep. Computers come and go, but the pictures of the people you love are irreplaceable. Let this quiet little cloud keep a spare copy, and you've protected the things that matter most — without having to think about it ever again. That's a wonderful place to end this part of your book.

PART 4

The Internet, Email & Printing

Getting online, using the web browser, sending and reading email, downloading safely, and printing — the everyday things, step by step.

CHAPTER 22

Getting Online (Wi-Fi & What a Browser Is)

Almost everything people love about a computer — email, looking things up, watching videos, seeing photos from the family — depends on one thing: being **connected to the internet**. The internet is simply the enormous worldwide network that links your computer to millions of others. When people say a computer is "online," they just mean it can reach that network. This chapter gets you connected and explains the one program you'll use to wander around out there.

What Wi-Fi actually is

Wi-Fi is how your computer reaches the internet *without any wires*. Somewhere in your home there is a small box with little blinking lights — it may be called a **router** or a **modem**, and it usually comes from your internet company (Spectrum, AT&T, or whoever you pay each month). That box brings the internet into your house and then quietly broadcasts it through the air, the same way a radio station sends out music. Your computer listens for that signal and joins it. That invisible connection is Wi-Fi.

Your Wi-Fi has a **name** (often something like "NETGEAR58" or whatever you chose) and a **password**. You only ever type that password in *once* on this computer. After that, the computer remembers it and reconnects by itself every time you turn it on. You will not have to type it again.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Wi-Fi vs. the internet — not quite the same thing**
>
> Think of it like plumbing. The **internet** is the water from the city. Your **router** is the pipe that brings it into the house. **Wi-Fi** is the faucet you turn on. If the city water is off, a perfectly good faucet still gives you nothing — which is why, once in a while, the fix for "no internet" is simply to unplug that little box for ten seconds and plug it back in.

What a "browser" is

A **browser** (sometimes called a "web browser") is the single program you use to visit websites. Every website in the world — your bank, the weather, the news, your grandchildren's photos — opens *inside* the browser. It is the window you look through to see the internet. You don't need a separate program for each website; the one browser visits them all.

Your Windows 11 computer comes with a browser already installed, called **Microsoft Edge**. That's the one we'll learn in the next chapter. For now, just hold onto the idea: **Wi-Fi gets you connected; the browser is what you look through once you are.**

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Once you're connected, the whole internet is open to you

Getting onto Wi-Fi is the single door that unlocks everything else in this part of the book. After this one-time setup, your computer is online the moment you turn it on — ready for email, searching, video calls with family, and anything else you'd like to do. You do this once and then forget about it.

How to connect to your home Wi-Fi

You'll use **Quick Settings** — a small panel of buttons that lives in the bottom-right corner of your screen, near the clock. Here's the whole thing, slowly:

1. Look at the **bottom-right corner** of the screen, just left of the time and date. You'll see a small group of little pictures — among them a symbol that looks like a **fan of curved lines** (or, if you're not connected yet, a little globe). **Click once** on that cluster of symbols.
2. A small panel pops up. This is **Quick Settings**. Find the **Wi-Fi button** (the same fan of curved lines). If it's grey or dim, click it once to turn Wi-Fi on — it should light up blue.
3. Next to the Wi-Fi button is a small **arrow (>)**. Click that arrow to see the list of nearby Wi-Fi networks. You may see several — your neighbors' networks show up too.
4. Find **your own network's name** in the list and click it once. (If you're not sure which is yours, the name and password are often printed on a sticker on the bottom or back of your router box.)
5. A box appears offering **"Connect automatically"** — leave that checked (ticked) so it remembers you — then click the **Connect** button.
6. Now it asks for the **password** (it may call it the "network security key"). Type it exactly, watching for capital letters — passwords care about big and small letters. To check what you typed, click the little **eye symbol** at the end of the box to reveal it. Then click **Next**.
7. After a few seconds it should say **"Connected, secured."** That's it — you are online. Click anywhere else on the screen to close the panel.

TIP

The signal symbol tells you at a glance

That fan of curved lines in the corner is your signal meter. More lines lit up means a stronger signal. If it ever turns into a little globe with no lines, or shows a small warning mark, the Wi-Fi has dropped — usually fixed by unplugging the router box for ten seconds and plugging it back in, then waiting a minute for its lights to settle.

FROM BILL

You truly only do this once

I know typing a long password can feel fiddly. Take it slow and use that eye symbol to check yourself — there's no penalty for getting it wrong and trying again. And remember: once it says "Connected, secured," this computer is done asking forever. If you ever move or get a new router, just call me and we'll redo it together in two minutes.

HEADS UP

"Connected" but still no websites?

Once in a while the computer connects to Wi-Fi fine but the internet behind it is having a bad day. If pages won't load even though it says connected, it's almost never your computer — it's the service or the router box. Unplug the router for ten seconds, plug it back in, wait a full minute, and try again. If it's still out, your internet company is the one to call.

CHAPTER 23

Microsoft Edge (Your Web Browser)

Now that you're online, let's meet the browser — the window you look through to see the internet. On your computer it's **Microsoft Edge**, and it's already installed, so there's nothing to buy or set up. Its icon is a **blue-and-green swirl** that looks a bit like a curling wave or the letter "e." You'll find it on the taskbar — the strip of little pictures along the bottom of the screen — and in your Start menu.

Opening Edge

1. Look along the **bottom strip** of the screen (the taskbar) for the **blue-and-green swirl**. **Click it once.**
2. If you don't see it there, click the **Start button** (the four-square Windows flag at the bottom), and begin typing the word **Edge**. It will appear at the top of the list — click it.
3. A large window opens. Congratulations — you're looking at the internet.

The parts of the browser (what every button does)

Across the **top** of the Edge window is a row of controls. They look the same every day, so once you learn them you're set. Here's each one, in plain terms:

Control	What it does for you
The address bar	The long white box across the top. This is where you type **where you want to go** — either a website's name (like **bbc.com**) or simply a question you want answered. It's the most important box on the screen.
Back arrow (<)	Points left, at the far top-left. Click it to go **back** to the page you were just on. This is your undo button for the whole internet — when in doubt, click Back.
Forward arrow (>)	Points right, next to Back. Takes you **forward** again if you went back a step too far.
Refresh (a circle arrow)	A circular arrow. Click it to **reload** the page if it looks stuck, half-loaded, or out of date. Harmless to click any time.
Home button (a little house)	Click the **house** to jump straight to your chosen starting page. (We'll set that up below.)
The star (Favorites)	A star symbol at the right end of the address bar. Click it to **save** the page you're on so you can return in one click later. Saved pages are called **Favorites**.
Tabs	The little labelled pages across the very top. Each **tab** is a separate website open at the same time — like having several papers spread on the table. More on these below.

Visiting a website

1. Click once inside the **address bar** (the long box at the top). The text inside turns blue, meaning it's ready for you to type over it.
2. Type the website's name — for example **weather.com** or **bbc.com**. You don't need to type "www" or "http" or any of that; just the plain name is enough.
3. Press the **Enter** key on your keyboard (the big key on the right). The website opens.
4. To visit a different site, click the address bar again, type the new name, and press Enter.

TIP

Not sure of the exact website? Just ask instead

If you don't know a site's exact address, don't worry about guessing. Type a plain-English question into that same address bar — like **Cleveland Clinic phone number** — and press Enter. Edge turns it into a search and shows you results. We cover searching properly in the next chapter.

Tabs — several pages at once

A **tab** lets you keep more than one website open side by side, each on its own little labelled strip along the very top. You might keep the weather open on one tab while reading the news on another. To open a fresh tab, click the small **plus sign (+)** to the right of the tabs. To switch between them, click the tab you want. To close one you're finished with, click the small **X** on that tab — this closes only that one page, not the whole browser.

GOOD TO KNOW

Closing a tab is not the same as closing Edge

The small **X on a tab** shuts just that one page. The larger **X in the very top-right corner** of the window closes Edge entirely. If you accidentally close a tab you wanted, hold the **Ctrl** key and tap **Shift** and **T** together, and Edge reopens the last tab you closed.

Favorites — keeping the places you love one click away

When you find a website you'll want again — your bank, a favorite recipe site, the family photo page — save it as a **Favorite** so you never have to remember its address:

1. Go to the website you want to keep.
2. Click the **star** at the right end of the address bar.

3. A little box appears. You can leave the name as it is, or type something simpler you'll recognize. Click **Done**.
4. To return to it later, click the star-with-lines **Favorites** button near the top-right and pick it from your list.

Setting your home page

The **home page** is whatever you'd like Edge to show when you click the house button (and, if you choose, when Edge first opens). Setting it to somewhere comfortable — a search page, or the news — makes starting each session easy:

1. Click the **three dots (···)** at the very top-right of Edge. This is the "more" menu.
2. Click **Settings** near the bottom of the list that appears.
3. On the left, click **Start, home, and new tabs**.
4. Find the **Home button** section, turn it on if needed, choose **"Enter URL"**, and type the page you'd like — for example **google.com** or **bing.com**. Save it.
5. From now on, clicking the little **house** takes you straight there.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Visit any website, and keep your favorites one click away

Edge is your single door to the entire web — every site opens in this one familiar window with the same buttons every time. Once your handful of favorites are saved and your home page is set, getting to the places you care about takes one click, with no addresses to remember. The internet stops feeling like a maze and starts feeling like your own front room.

GOOD TO KNOW

Edge is fine, but you have choices

Microsoft Edge comes free with Windows and does everything in this book. If a family member sets you up on **Google Chrome** or **Mozilla Firefox** instead, don't fret — they're different brands of the very same kind of program, with the same address bar, back arrow, tabs, and star. Everything you learn here carries straight over. Pick one and stick with it so your favorites all live in one place.

CHAPTER 24

Searching the Web Safely

Here's the real magic: you don't have to *know* anything to find it. When you have a question — any question at all — you type it into the computer and it goes looking for answers across the whole internet. That's called **searching**, and the tools that do it are called **search engines**. The two famous ones are **Google** and **Bing**. Edge uses Bing by default, but Google works exactly the same way; they're interchangeable for our purposes.

How to search

1. Open Edge and click inside the **address bar** at the top (or go to **google.com** and click the search box in the middle of the page — either works).
2. Type your question in plain, ordinary words — exactly as you'd ask a person. You don't need special wording. For example: **what is the weather in Ravenna Ohio**.
3. Press the **Enter** key.
4. A **list of results** appears — a page of blue headings, each one a link to a website that might answer your question.
5. Click the blue heading that looks most useful. The website opens.
6. Didn't find what you wanted? Click the **Back arrow** (top-left) to return to the list and try a different one, or click the address bar and reword your question.

Reading the results list

A results page can look busy, but it follows a simple pattern. Each result has a **blue heading** (the clickable part), a web address beneath it, and a line or two describing what's on that page. Read those descriptions before you click — they tell you whether a result is worth your time. Click a heading to open it; click Back to come return to the list.

SCAM ALERT

The word "Ad" or "Sponsored" means someone PAID to be at the top

This is the single most important thing to learn about searching. The **first results are often advertisements** — companies pay to sit at the top, above the real answers. Look for a small word **"Ad," "Sponsored,"** or "Promoted" near the result. Those aren't the best answer to your question; they're the ones who paid the most. This matters enormously when you search for help: if you search "HP printer support" and click a paid ad, you can land on a fake "support" company that will try to charge you or take over your computer. Scroll PAST the ads to the plain results below, and when in doubt, type the company's real website name directly instead of searching for it.

SCAM ALERT

Flashy "DOWNLOAD" buttons are bait — don't trust the biggest button

On many websites you'll see large, colorful, blinking **"Download"** or **"Start Now"** buttons. The biggest, brightest button is very often a **trap** — an advertisement dressed up to look like the thing you want, and clicking it installs junk or worse. The real link is usually smaller and plainer, off to the side. Rule of thumb: **if a button is trying hard to grab your eye, be suspicious of it.** And a page can never actually know that your computer has a virus, so any result or pop-up shouting that it does is a lie. When unsure, close the page and call me — that's exactly what I'm here for.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Find the answer to practically anything

Searching turns your computer into the most patient librarian in the world — one that never tires of your questions and answers in seconds. Weather, recipes, phone numbers, store hours, how to spell a word, what year a film came out, what a medicine is for: you ask, it finds. Nothing you're curious about is out of reach anymore.

Three everyday examples to try

Looking up the weather

1. Click the address bar and type: **weather Atwater Ohio**.
2. Press **Enter**. The forecast usually appears right at the top of the results — today's temperature and the next several days — often without even opening a website.

Finding a recipe

1. Type what you're after in ordinary words: **easy banana bread recipe**.

2. Press **Enter**, then click a result with a plain heading (skip the ads at the very top). Scroll down the page with your mouse wheel or the scrollbar to read the ingredients and steps.

Getting a business's phone number

1. Type the place and what you want: **Giant Eagle Ravenna phone number**.
2. Press **Enter**. The number, address, and hours usually show in a tidy box at the top of the results — no clicking required.

TIP

Back is always safe; closing is always safe

You cannot break anything by clicking a search result. If a page looks wrong, confusing, or pushy, just click the **Back arrow** or close the tab with its **X**. No website can trap you. The only things that can cause trouble are *downloading* or *typing in your details* when you shouldn't — and we cover exactly when not to in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 25

Email (Reading, Writing, Replying, Attachments)

Email — short for "electronic mail" — is a letter you send through the computer. You type a message, click Send, and it arrives at the other person almost instantly, anywhere in the world, for free. They can write back the same way. It's how family shares news and photos, how businesses send you receipts and appointment reminders, and how you'll get in touch when a phone call isn't needed. Think of it as your mailbox that never needs a stamp and never takes a day.

Your email address

Everyone who uses email has an **email address** — your personal mailbox name. It always has an @ **symbol** (the "at" sign) in the middle, like **jane.smith@gmail.com**. The part before the @ is your name; the part after is the company that runs your mailbox (Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook, and so on). To write to someone, you need *their* full address, @ and all. It must be exact — one wrong letter and the letter doesn't arrive.

The two common ways to do email on Windows

There isn't one single "email" on a computer — there are a couple of doors to the same room. Whichever you use, the ideas below are identical:

- **The Outlook app.** Windows 11 includes an email program called **Outlook** (look for a blue envelope-and-"O" icon). You open the app and your mail is right there.
- **Webmail in the browser.** Many people instead read email *inside Edge* by going to a website — **gmail.com** for Gmail, **yahoo.com** for Yahoo, **outlook.com** for Outlook on the web. You sign in once and your mail appears on the page.

GOOD TO KNOW

Same letters either way — don't let the two doors confuse you

Whether you open the Outlook app or go to gmail.com in Edge, you are reaching the very same mailbox and the very same messages. Pick whichever one your family set you up with and stick to it. The buttons sit in slightly different spots, but every one of them has a **Reply**, a **New message**, and a way to attach a photo — the words are the same across all of them.

Reading a message

1. Open your email (the Outlook app, or your webmail site in Edge).
2. You'll see your **Inbox** — a list of messages, newest at the top. **Bold** ones are unread.
3. Each line shows **who it's from** and the **subject** (what it's about). **Click once** on a message to open and read it.
4. To go back to the list, click **Inbox** on the left, or the **Back arrow** near the top.

Reply, Reply All, and Forward — what each one means

When you've read a message, three buttons let you respond. Knowing the difference saves embarrassment:

Reply	Writes back to **just the one person** who sent it. This is the one you'll want nearly every time.
Reply All	Writes back to the sender **and everyone else** who received the same message. Only use this when the whole group genuinely needs your answer — otherwise you're writing to strangers.
Forward	**Passes the message along** to someone new who wasn't on it — handy for sharing a note or photo with another person. You add their address yourself.

How to reply

1. Open the message you want to answer.
2. Click **Reply** (usually a curved arrow, or the word "Reply," near the top or bottom of the message). The sender's address fills in automatically — you don't type it.
3. Click into the big empty writing area and **type your message**.
4. Click **Send**. Your reply is on its way.

Writing a brand-new email

1. Click **New message** (sometimes "New mail," "Compose," or a **+ pencil** symbol), usually at the top-left.
2. In the **To** box, type the full email address of the person you're writing to — carefully, with the @ and the ending (.com and so on) exactly right.
3. In the **Subject** box, type a few words saying what it's about — like **Lunch on Sunday**. This is the headline the person sees first.
4. Click into the large area below and **type your message**, just as you'd write a letter.
5. Read it over, then click **Send**. Done — it arrives in seconds.

TIP

No stamp, no rush, no undo — so glance before you Send

Email is wonderfully forgiving: it costs nothing and there's no envelope to lick. The one thing it won't do is call a message back once it's gone. So before clicking **Send**, take one breath and check the **To** address is right and you said what you meant. That half-second is the whole trick to never sending to the wrong person.

Attachments — sending and opening files

An **attachment** is a file — most often a **photo** or a document — that rides along with an email, clipped to it like a photo tucked inside a paper letter. Here's both directions:

Attaching a photo to send

1. While writing your email, look for the **paperclip** symbol and click it.
2. A window opens showing your files and folders. Click **Pictures** on the left to find your photos.
3. Click the photo you want, then click the **Open** button.
4. The photo's name appears attached to your email. Finish your message and click **Send**.

Opening an attachment someone sent you — carefully

1. Open the email. An attachment shows as a small **tile with a paperclip** or the file's name near the top or bottom.
2. FIRST, make sure you **know and trust the sender** and were expecting this. If anything feels off, stop and read the warning below.
3. If you trust it, **click the tile once** to preview it, or click **Download** then open it. A photo simply opens on screen.

SCAM ALERT

This is where the crooks come after you — read this twice

Email is the number-one way scammers try to reach older adults, so please take this to heart. **Never click a link or open an attachment from a sender you don't recognize** — and be wary even of ones that look familiar but feel off. Scammers send fake emails pretending to be your bank, Amazon, the IRS, Microsoft, or even a grandchild, all designed to frighten or rush you into clicking. Remember these ironclad rules: **your bank, the government, and real companies will NEVER email asking for your password, Social Security number, or payment to "fix" something.** A message that says your account is locked, you owe money, or you've won a prize — and demands you click *right now* — is a trap. When a message makes your heart race, that's the scammer's goal. Don't click a thing. Close it, and call me or the company using a number you already have (never the number in the email).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Keep in touch with everyone — family and businesses — free and instantly

Email means the grandchildren's photos land in your mailbox the day they're taken, not weeks later. It means receipts, appointment reminders, and letters you can keep and find again. It costs nothing, arrives in seconds, and waits patiently for you to read it whenever you like. Once it clicks, email becomes the warm, steady thread between you and the people who matter.

CHAPTER 26

Downloads (Where Things Go, Opening Them Safely)

Sometimes you'll want to **keep** something from the internet — a form from your doctor, a photo, a copy of a bill, a statement from the bank. Saving a copy from a website onto your own computer is called **downloading**. (The opposite, sending something up to the internet — like attaching a photo to email — is called *uploading*.) This chapter shows you where your downloads land, how to open them, and — most important — how to tell a safe download from a dangerous one.

Where downloads go

Here's the reassuring part: nearly everything you download goes to **one single place**, a folder called **Downloads**. You don't have to decide where things land — the computer tucks them all neatly into the same drawer every time. So if you ever think "where did that go?", the answer is almost always: the Downloads folder.

1. To find it, open **File Explorer** — the **yellow folder** icon on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen.
2. On the left-hand side, click **Downloads**.
3. There's everything you've saved, newest usually at the top. Double-click any item to open it.

The download arrow in Edge

When you do download something in the browser, Edge shows a **small downward-pointing arrow** near the top-right, and a little panel slides down showing the file and its progress. This is your quickest way to open what you just saved:

1. After you click a download link, watch the **top-right of Edge** for the panel that appears.
2. When it finishes, click the **file's name** in that panel to open it right away — no need to go hunting in folders.
3. If the panel has already slid away, click the **downward arrow** near the top-right to bring back the list of your recent downloads.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Get the documents, forms, and programs you actually want

Downloading lets you pull useful things out of the internet and onto your own computer to keep: a Medicare form to print and fill in, a warranty, a boarding pass, a recipe, a program you chose to install. Because it all lands in one Downloads folder, nothing gets lost — it's waiting right where you left it, every time.

SCAM ALERT

The golden rule: only download from places YOU went looking for

Downloading is the one web action that can actually put something harmful on your computer, so this rule protects you from nearly all of it: **only download when YOU went to a website you trust and chose to save something.** Never download because a page, a pop-up, or an email *told you to*. If you went to your bank's site to save a statement — fine. If a window jumped up saying you must download something — stop.

SCAM ALERT

"YOUR COMPUTER IS INFECTED" pop-ups are ALWAYS fake — never install them

Please burn this into memory. A window may suddenly fill your screen — often with sirens, red warnings, a loud beeping, a phone number, and the words **"Your computer is infected! Download this now!"** or "Call Microsoft support immediately!" **It is 100% a scam, every single time.** A website has no way to know anything about your computer's health — the whole thing is a theatrical lie to frighten you into installing their harmful program or calling their fake "support" line so they can take over your machine and your money. Do NOT download it. Do NOT call the number. Do NOT type anything. If you can't close the window, just hold the power button to shut the computer off, wait, and turn it back on — the pop-up will be gone. Then call me. You did nothing wrong, and there's nothing actually infected.

TIP

When unsure, don't — and ask me

If you're ever the least bit uncertain whether something is safe to download, the safe answer is always **don't**. You will never cause harm by *not* downloading something. Close the page, jot down what you were trying to do, and ring me. I would far rather answer a quick question than untangle a mess — and it's never a bother.

Opening something you downloaded

1. Click the item in Edge's download panel, OR open **File Explorer** (yellow folder) and click **Downloads**.
2. **Double-click** the file to open it. A photo opens in the Photos viewer; a document opens in its reader.
3. If Windows ever asks "Do you want to allow this app to make changes?" when opening a program you *deliberately and knowingly* downloaded from a company you trust, it's safe to click **Yes**. If you see that question and you *don't* know what triggered it, click **No** and call me.

CHAPTER 27

Printing and Scanning

For all the screen does, sometimes you just want it **on paper** — a letter to mail, a form to fill in by hand, a recipe for the kitchen, a boarding pass, a grandchild's photo for the fridge. That's what your printer is for. And going the other way — turning a paper document into a file on the computer — is called **scanning**. This chapter covers both, plus a quiet little trick ("Print to PDF") that lets you save a copy of anything without using a drop of ink.

Connecting a printer

Printers connect in one of two ways: by a **USB cable** plugged straight into the computer, or over your **Wi-Fi** (no cable — the printer joins your home network just like the computer did). The good news is that Windows 11 is very good at finding printers on its own. Most of the time you plug it in or turn it on and Windows sets it up for you. If it doesn't appear automatically, here's how to add it by hand:

1. Make sure the printer is **switched on** (and, for a Wi-Fi printer, that it's connected to the same home Wi-Fi as your computer).
2. Click the **Start button** (the Windows flag at the bottom), then click **Settings** (the little gear). Or type **Settings** and press Enter.
3. In Settings, click **Bluetooth & devices** on the left.
4. Click **Printers & scanners**.
5. Click the **Add device** button near the top. Windows searches for printers nearby.
6. When your printer's name appears in the list, click **Add device** next to it and let Windows finish. When it shows up in the printer list, you're ready.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **If it doesn't show up in the list**
>
> Occasionally Windows searches and your printer still doesn't appear. A link will offer **"The printer that I want isn't listed"** — but before going down that road, the simplest fix is usually to **turn the printer fully off and back on**, make sure a Wi-Fi printer is on the same network, and try Add device again. If it still hides, that's a good moment to call me — printer setup is one of those things that's five minutes with help and an afternoon without.

Printing a page

Once a printer is set up, printing almost anything — a web page, an email, a document — works the same way everywhere:

1. Have the thing you want on screen (the web page, email, or document open in front of you).
2. Hold down the **Ctrl** key and tap the letter **P** (for Print). This works in nearly every program. A print window opens.
3. Near the top you'll see a **Printer** box. Make sure it shows **your printer's name** — not "Save as PDF" or another option (click the box to change it if needed).
4. Check it looks right in the preview, then click the **Print** button.
5. Your page comes out of the printer. That's it.

TIP

If it won't print, check these two things first

Nine times out of ten, a page that won't print comes down to one of two simple things. First: **is the printer actually turned on, awake, and loaded with paper?** Printers nap, and a sleeping printer looks on but isn't. Turning it **off and back on** fixes a surprising amount. Second: **is the right printer selected?** In the print window, make sure the Printer box shows your real printer and not "Save as PDF" or an old printer you no longer own. Those two checks solve most printing troubles before they start.

"Print to PDF" — save a page instead of printing it

Here's a quietly useful trick. A **PDF** is a tidy digital copy of a document — a page frozen exactly as it looks, saved as a single file you can keep, email, or print later. Instead of spending paper and ink, you can "print" a web page or receipt straight into a PDF file on your computer:

1. Press **Ctrl** + **P** to open the print window, just as if you were printing on paper.
2. In the **Printer** box, click it and choose **Microsoft Print to PDF** (or "Save as PDF") instead of your real printer.
3. Click **Print** (or **Save**). It won't make any noise — instead it asks **where to save** and what to **name** the file.
4. Pick **Documents** or **Downloads**, type a name you'll recognize, and click **Save**. You now have a neat copy you can email as an attachment or open any time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Print letters, forms, boarding passes and photos — or save anything as a PDF to email

Between real printing and "Print to PDF," you've got both worlds covered. On paper: letters to mail, forms to sign, boarding passes, photos for the fridge. As a file: a receipt or confirmation saved and tidy, ready to email to the family or keep for your records — no ink, no clutter, and it never fades in a drawer.

Scanning a document

Scanning is printing in reverse: it takes a piece of paper and makes a picture or PDF of it *on the computer* — useful for sending a signed form to an office, or saving an important letter so you don't lose it. If your printer has a flat glass lid on top or a slot that pulls paper in, it can almost certainly scan. The simplest tool is the free **Windows Scan** app:

1. Click **Start**, type **Scan**, and click the **Windows Scan** app (if it's not there, it installs free from the Microsoft Store — or call me and I'll pop it on for you).
2. Lift the printer's lid and lay your paper **face-down** on the glass, lined up with the corner arrow, then close the lid. (If your printer has a feeder slot instead, place the page in that.)
3. In the Scan app, make sure your printer shows at the top, choose **PDF** or **JPEG (photo)** as the file type, and click **Scan**.
4. After a moment the scanned copy appears. Click **View** to check it, then it's saved in your **Pictures** or **Scans** folder, ready to email or keep.

Many printers also come with **their own scanning program** from the maker (HP, Canon, Epson, Brother), which does the same job — use whichever is simpler for you. Either way, the idea is the same: paper in, file out.

That's the everyday internet — online, searching, email, downloads, and paper in and out. Take it one chapter at a time, and remember the thread running through all of it: you can't break anything by looking, clicking Back, or closing a window. The only moments to slow down and think are when something asks you to download, type in your details, or send money — and whenever one of those moments feels the least bit off, that's my cue, not yours. Call me. That's what I'm here for.

PART 5

Everyday Apps & Keeping in Touch

Photos, video-calling family, installing apps, the handy built-in tools, writing documents, and music & video — the things that make a computer worth having.

CHAPTER 28

The Photos App (See, Keep & Share Your Pictures)

This may turn out to be your favourite chapter. For most of us, the real reason to have a computer is the pictures — the grandkids growing up, the holidays, the old photographs. Windows has a free program called **Photos** that gathers all of them into one place and shows them on your big, bright screen. No shoebox, no squinting at a tiny phone — just your memories, large and easy to enjoy.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

All your memories in one place, on a big screen

The Photos app puts every picture you own in one tidy window. You can flip through them like an album, make a dull one brighter, gather the best into a named album, play them as a slideshow across the whole screen, or set a favourite as the background you see every day. Nothing is thrown away and nothing is changed unless you choose to — so you can poke at it freely.

Opening Photos

1. Click the **Start** button (the Windows flag at the bottom of the screen).
2. Begin typing the word **photos**. You do not need a search box first — just start typing and Windows listens.
3. When **Photos** appears at the top of the list, click it once. The app opens.

A handy habit: to keep Photos within easy reach, right-click it in the Start menu and choose **Pin to taskbar**. Its picture-icon then sits on the strip along the bottom of the screen, one click away, every time.

Looking through your pictures

When Photos opens you will see small versions of your pictures, called *thumbnails*, laid out in a grid. The newest are usually at the top. To look closely at one:

1. Click a picture once to open it big, filling most of the window.
2. Use the **arrow keys** on your keyboard — left and right — to move to the picture before or after it. You can also click the faint arrows near the left and right edges of the screen.

3. To go back to the grid of all your pictures, click the **back arrow** at the top-left, or press the **Esc** key (top-left of the keyboard — it means “escape”, or “get me out of here”).

GOOD TO KNOW

Where do these pictures come from?

Photos shows whatever is in your **Pictures** folder, plus — if you use it — anything saved in your OneDrive, Microsoft's free online storage. That is why pictures taken on a phone can appear here automatically if the phone is set to back up to the same account. We will set that up together if you like.

Getting pictures off a phone, camera, or memory stick

This is called **importing** — just a fancy word for “copying pictures onto the computer.” The steps are nearly the same whether it is a phone, a digital camera, or a little USB memory stick.

1. Plug the phone, camera, or memory stick into the computer using its cable or by pushing the stick into one of the slots on the side or back.
2. If it is a phone, look at the phone's own screen. It may ask “Allow access to photos?” or “Trust this computer?” — tap **Allow** or **Trust**. The computer cannot see the pictures until the phone says yes.
3. In the Photos app, look at the top-right and click the **Import** button (its icon looks like a little box with a downward arrow).
4. Choose the device in the short list that appears. Photos will go and find the new pictures.
5. You will see all the pictures with a tick in the corner of each. Leave them all ticked to bring them all over, or click a tick to skip any you do not want.
6. Click **Import** (or **Add**). When it finishes, the pictures are safely copied onto your computer and will show up in the grid.
7. Now it is safe to unplug the phone, camera, or stick.

TIP

Importing copies — it never empties your phone

Importing makes a *copy* on the computer. Your original pictures stay on the phone or camera, untouched. You cannot lose anything by importing, so never be afraid to try it.

Simple edits — tidying up a picture

Sometimes a picture is a little crooked, or too dark, or has too much empty space around the edges. Photos has gentle tools to fix that. Open any picture, then click the **Edit** button near the top (a pencil icon, sometimes labelled *Edit image*). A row of tools appears. Here is what the main ones do.

- **Crop** — trims off the edges, like using scissors. Handy for cutting out a cluttered background so the person you care about fills the frame.
- **Rotate** — spins the picture a quarter-turn. Perfect when a photo comes in sideways or upside-down.
- **Brightness / Adjust** (sometimes called *Enhance*) — a slider you drag to make a dark picture lighter or a washed-out one richer. There is often an automatic "fix it for me" button too.
- **Retouch / Repair** — lets you brush over a small blemish, a dust spot, or an unwanted mark and have it quietly disappear. It is the modern replacement for the old red-eye fix, and it tidies up far more than just eyes.

1. Click **Edit**, then click the tool you want (for example, **Crop**).
2. Drag the little handles or slider until it looks right. The picture updates as you move.
3. When you are happy, click **Save a copy** (safest — it keeps the original *and* the new version) or **Save** to replace the old one.
4. Changed your mind partway? Click **Cancel** and nothing is altered.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> **"Save a copy" is your safety net**
>
> Whenever you edit, choose **Save a copy** if it is offered. That way your untouched original is still there if you decide you preferred it. You truly cannot ruin a photo this way. (A note on red-eye: older Photos had a button named *Red-eye*; the 2026 redesign folded that job into the Retouch / Repair brush above, so reach for Retouch if an old guide sends you hunting for it.)

Making an album

An **album** is simply a named group of pictures you have chosen — "Summer at the Lake," say, or "The Grandchildren." The pictures stay where they are; the album is just a tidy way to gather the ones that belong together.

1. In Photos, look down the left-hand side and click **Albums**.
2. Click **New album** (or the **+** button).

3. Click each picture you want to include — a tick appears on each one you choose.
4. Click **Create** (or **Done**), then give the album a name you will recognise and press Enter.

Playing a slideshow

A slideshow shows your pictures one after another, filling the whole screen — lovely for sharing with a visitor over a cup of tea.

1. Open any picture, or open an album.
2. Click the **three dots** (…) at the top-right — that little button means "more things I can do."
3. Choose **Slideshow**. The pictures begin to advance on their own, full-screen.
4. To stop, press the **Esc** key (top-left of the keyboard).

Setting a favourite as your desktop background

The **desktop** is the main screen you see when nothing else is open. You can put a cherished photo there so it greets you every time.

1. Open the picture you love in Photos.
2. Click the **three dots** (…) at the top-right.
3. Choose **Set as**, then **Set as background**.
4. That is it — close Photos and look at your desktop. There it is.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **This is the part worth the whole machine**
>
> Of everything in this book, this chapter is the one I most hope you play with. Bring a few pictures over, flip through them big on the screen, and stick your favourite one on the desktop. If anything here feels fiddly, that is exactly the sort of thing I am happy to sit beside you and set up once — after that it just works. — Bill

CHAPTER 29

Video-Calling Your Family

A **video call** is a telephone call where you can also *see* the person — their face on your screen, your face on theirs, both of you talking as if across the kitchen table. It travels over the internet, which means that once you are set up it costs **nothing at all**, no matter how far away the other person is. Grandchildren three states away, a cousin overseas — same price as next door: free.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See your grandkids' faces any time, from your kitchen, for free

A video call turns “I miss them” into “there they are.” You can watch a grandchild show off a drawing, see how someone really looks when they say they are fine, and share an ordinary Tuesday evening together. It uses the internet you already pay for, so there is no extra charge and no limit on how long you talk.

The hardest part of video calling is not the call — it is choosing *which* app. The simplest rule: **use whatever your family already uses.** Ask them the name, and that is your answer. Here are the common ones in plain terms.

App	In plain terms — and what it needs
Teams / Microsoft chat	Already built into Windows 11. Good if family also uses it. Both people need a free Microsoft account (you likely have one already).
Zoom	Very popular for group calls and clubs. The other person usually sends you a link; you click it and the call opens. Free account for calls up to 40 minutes.
Facebook Messenger	Good if you and your family are on Facebook. Call straight from a person's name in Messenger. Works on the computer in a web browser.
WhatsApp	Extremely common, especially with family abroad. Easiest on a phone, but also works on the computer. Both people need the free WhatsApp app and a phone number.
Google Meet	Free with any Gmail / Google account. Works right in the web browser — nothing to install. The other person sends a link you click.
FaceTime	What Apple families use. It now reaches a Windows computer through a web link an iPhone owner sends you — so you are not shut out of an “all-iPhone” family.

GOOD TO KNOW

They are all more alike than they look

Do not be put off by the different names. Every one of these works the same way underneath: a camera, a microphone, and three big buttons. Learn one and you have very nearly learned them all.

What actually happens on a video call

Here is the whole thing, start to finish, so there are no surprises:

- Someone either **calls you** (your computer rings or chimes) or **sends you a link** — a line of blue underlined text, often by email or text message — and you click it at the agreed time.
- A window opens and your computer may ask “Allow this app to use your camera and microphone?” — click **Allow** or **Yes**. This is normal and necessary; without it they cannot see or hear you.
- Your **camera** (the little lens above your screen) and **microphone** switch on. You will see yourself in a small box — that is just so you can check your hair; the other person sees you in the big picture.
- Along the bottom are the **three big buttons** you need: **Mute** (a microphone — click it to silence yourself, click again to speak), **Camera on/off** (a little camera — click to hide your picture), and the **red button** to **hang up** and end the call.

TIP

Red always means goodbye

On every single one of these apps, the **red** button ends the call — just like hanging up a phone. If you are ever lost or flustered, the red button gets you out, cleanly, every time. Nothing breaks.

Answering a call

1. When a call comes in, a box pops up — often with the caller's name and a chime.
2. Click the **green** button (or **Accept** / **Join**) to answer.
3. If it asks to use your camera and microphone, click **Allow**.
4. Say hello — you are on the call. When you are done chatting, click the **red** button to hang up.

Starting a call yourself

1. Open the app your family uses (for example, Messenger or Teams).
2. Find the person's name in your list of contacts and click it.
3. Click the **video camera** icon near their name. The app rings their device.
4. Wait a few seconds for them to answer, then talk away. Red button ends it.

FROM BILL

Practise with someone who loves you

The only trick to video calls is doing the first one or two with someone patient. Ask a grandchild or your daughter to ring you at a set time just to practise — no reason needed. After two tries it stops feeling like technology and starts feeling like family. It really is easier than it looks, and I am glad to be on the other end of a test call myself if that helps you get started. — Bill

CHAPTER 30

The Microsoft Store (Getting New Apps Safely)

An **app** (short for “application”) is just another word for a program — a tool that does a job, like Photos or a calculator. When you want a *new* one, there is a safe, official shop built right into Windows called the **Microsoft Store**. Think of it as the one trustworthy shop in town: everything on its shelves has been checked by Microsoft before it is allowed in.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Add new programs with no worry about viruses

Getting an app from the Microsoft Store is like buying from a reputable shop rather than a stranger on the street corner. Microsoft checks each app for nasties before listing it, installs it cleanly, and keeps it updated for you. You get the program you wanted and nothing you didn't — no viruses smuggled in.

Opening the Store

1. Click **Start** and type **store**.
2. Click **Microsoft Store** when it appears (its icon is a little shopping bag).

Finding and installing an app

1. At the top of the Store window there is a **search box** with a little magnifying glass. Click it and type what you are after — for example **Zoom**, or **Kindle**, or just **card games**.
2. Press **Enter**. A list of matching apps appears, each with a name, a picture, and star ratings from other people.
3. Click the one you want to read more about it.
4. Click the big **Get** button (or **Install**). Free apps say *Get*; a few cost money and show a price instead.
5. Wait while it downloads and installs — a little bar shows the progress. When it finishes, the button changes to **Open**.
6. Click **Open** to start using it right away. From now on it also lives in your Start menu, so you can find it any time by typing its name.

TIP

Free means free here

If an app says **Get** (not a price), it is free and will not quietly start charging you. If it ever *does* ask for a card number, stop and ask me first — in the Store that is rare and always clearly marked before you commit.

SCAM ALERT

Stick to the Store, and be wary of “download now” buttons on websites

The number-one way computers get infected is downloading programs from random websites — especially after clicking a flashy “Free Download!” or “Your PC needs this update!” button in an advert. Those are often traps. When you want a new program, come to the Microsoft Store **first**. If it is not in the Store and a website is pushing you to download something, that is exactly the moment to pause and ring me before clicking. A real company never rushes you.

CHAPTER 31

The Handy Built-In Tools

Windows comes with a drawer full of small, genuinely useful tools — already installed, nothing to buy. You open any of them the same easy way: click **Start**, type the tool's name, and click it when it appears. Here is the tour. Try the ones that sound useful; ignore the rest with a clear conscience.

Calculator

A full calculator on your screen — add up a bill, split a cost, or work out a tip without hunting for the one in the kitchen drawer. Type **calculator** to open it.

Clock

Sets **alarms** and kitchen-style **timers**, and shows the time in other cities if family lives far away. Grand for “remind me in 20 minutes to take the roast out.” Type **clock**.

Weather

Today's forecast and the week ahead for Atwater or anywhere you choose — handy before heading out. Type **weather**.

Maps

Look up an address, see a map, and get driving directions, all without leaving your chair. Type **maps**.

Notepad

A plain, no-frills place to jot a quick note, a phone number, or a shopping list and save it. Nothing fancy, which is exactly its charm. Type **notepad**.

Sticky Notes

Little yellow digital Post-it notes you can leave stuck on the desktop — perfect for a reminder you want to *see* every time, like “Call Dory 5pm.” Type **sticky notes**.

Snipping Tool

Takes a picture of whatever is on your screen so you can save or send it — wonderful for showing me exactly what an error message says. We cover this properly later on. Type **snipping tool**.

Voice Recorder

Records your voice — a memo to yourself, or a note you would rather speak than type. Later called *Sound Recorder* in some versions; both names find it. Type **voice recorder**.

Here they all are in one place, so you can glance back later:

Tool	What it is for
Calculator	Add up bills, split costs, work out tips.
Clock	Alarms, kitchen timers, and times in other cities.
Weather	Today's forecast and the week ahead.
Maps	Look up addresses and get driving directions.
Notepad	A quick, plain place to jot and save a note or list.
Sticky Notes	Yellow reminder notes stuck on the desktop.
Snipping Tool	Takes a picture of your screen to save or send.
Voice Recorder	Records a spoken memo or note.

TIP

The one trick that opens all of them

You never have to hunt through menus. **Click Start, type the name, press Enter.** That single habit opens every tool in this chapter — and nearly everything else on the computer besides.

CHAPTER 32

Writing a Document

Sooner or later you will want to *write* something properly — a letter to the bank, a list for the family, a note to keep. The computer is a marvellous typewriter that never runs out of paper and lets you fix mistakes before anyone sees them. Let us sort out which tool to use.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Write letters, lists, and notes — and keep them forever

Once something is typed and saved, it is yours to keep, change, reprint, or email, for as long as you like. No retyping, no correction fluid, no lost scraps of paper. Fix a typo, make the words bigger, print a fresh copy whenever you need one.

Which tool should I use?

- **For a quick, plain note** — use **Notepad** (from the last chapter). No bold, no big headings, just words. Fast and simple.
- **For a proper letter** you want to look nice — with bold, bigger text, maybe a heading — use a *word processor*. The main choices are below.

GOOD TO KNOW

A note about WordPad — it is gone now

For many years Windows included a middle option called **WordPad**. Microsoft removed it from Windows 11, so your computer no longer has it. If an older guide tells you to use WordPad, do not go looking — use Notepad for plain notes, or one of the letter-writing tools below for anything fancier.

For a letter that looks smart, here are the three common choices:

Tool	In plain terms
Microsoft Word	The best-known one. Powerful and polished. It costs money (a yearly subscription), so use it only if it is already on your computer — look for a blue **W** icon.
Google Docs	Completely free. It runs in your web browser (Edge) — nothing to install. You just need a free Google account. It saves your work automatically as you type.
LibreOffice Writer	Completely free to download and install (from its official website). Works very much like Microsoft Word and lives on your computer, no internet needed to use it.

TIP

If you are not sure, Google Docs is the gentle start

It is free, there is nothing to install, and it saves your work by itself so you can never forget to. We can set it up together in a few minutes. Once you are comfortable, the others work almost identically.

Writing and saving a letter — step by step

These steps use the same ideas in every word processor; the buttons sit in slightly different places but do the same jobs.

1. Open your writing program (for example, click **Start**, type **Word**, and open it — or open Google Docs in the browser).
2. Choose **Blank document** to start with a clean, empty page.
3. Click anywhere on the white page and simply **type**, exactly as on a typewriter. Press **Enter** to start a new line, and the space bar for spaces. Do not worry about running off the edge — the words wrap to the next line on their own.
4. Made a mistake? Press **Backspace** (top-right of the keyboard) to rub out the last letters, then carry on typing.
5. **To make words bigger or bold:** first *select* the words by clicking just before the first one and dragging across them so they turn blue (highlighted). Then click the **B** button for bold, or pick a larger number in the little size box, usually near the top.
6. **To save your letter:** hold the **Ctrl** key and tap the **S** key (remember: S for Save). A box appears asking for a name.
7. Type a name you will recognise, like **Letter to the bank**. Notice it offers to put it in your **Documents** folder — that is the right home for it, so leave that as it is and click **Save**.
8. That's it. Your letter is kept safely in **Documents**. You can close the program and come back to it another day — it will be waiting.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where did it go? Into “Documents”

Letters and written work live in a folder called **Documents** — one of the labelled drawers in File Explorer (the folder-with-a-clip icon on the taskbar). To find a letter later, open File Explorer, click **Documents**, and there it is. Pictures go in **Pictures**; writing goes in **Documents**.

Printing your letter

1. With your letter open, hold **Ctrl** and tap **P** (P for Print).
2. A preview shows how it will look on paper. Check your printer's name is shown, and how many copies you want.
3. Click the **Print** button. Listen for the printer to whir into life.

> **TIP**
>
> **Save first, then print**
>
> Get into the habit of saving (Ctrl + S) before you print. That way, if the printer plays up, your words are already safe and you lose nothing.

CHAPTER 33

Music, Video & Streaming

Your computer is also a radio, a record player, and a television set rolled into one. It can play music and films you keep on the machine, and — through the internet — a near-endless supply of songs, old shows, and video clips, much of it free.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your favourite music and shows, right on the computer

Put on an album while you potter about, watch a documentary, or look up that song you have been humming all week. Some of it costs nothing (YouTube), some needs a subscription you may already have (Netflix and the like) — either way, it all plays on the one machine in front of you.

Playing music or video you already have

If you have music or video files on the computer — perhaps imported from an old CD or sent by a relative — Windows plays them with a program called **Media Player**.

1. Click **Start**, type **media player**, and open it; or simply find the music or video file in File Explorer and **double-click** it.
2. It begins to play. Along the bottom are familiar controls: **play/pause** (the triangle, or two bars), and **skip** buttons to jump forward or back.

Watching YouTube — free video

YouTube is an enormous free website full of videos — how-to guides, music, old television clips, church services, cooking, gardening, you name it. You watch it in your web browser; there is nothing to buy or install.

1. Open **Edge** (the blue-and-green swirl on the taskbar).
2. Click the address bar at the very top and type **youtube.com**, then press **Enter**.
3. Click the **search box** at the top of YouTube and type what you want — for example **Frank Sinatra My Way** — then press **Enter**.
4. A list of videos appears, each with a small picture. Click the one you want.
5. It starts playing. Click the picture once to **pause**, click again to carry on.

TIP

The full-screen button makes it big

Look in the bottom-right corner of the video for a small square icon — that is **full screen**. Click it and the video fills your whole screen, like a proper television. Press the **Esc** key (top-left of the keyboard) to shrink it back again.

Streaming services — Netflix and the like

Streaming just means watching something over the internet instead of from a disc. Services like **Netflix**, **Disney+**, or **Prime Video** work the same way as YouTube — you open their website in Edge (type its address, such as **netflix.com**) and sign in with that service's email and password — but they charge a monthly fee for their films and shows. If a family member already pays for one, they can often add you. Once you are in, browse or search, click a show, and it plays, full-screen button and all, just like YouTube.

Turning the volume up and down

- On the computer: click the little **speaker** icon at the bottom-right of the screen, near the clock, and drag the slider that appears left (quieter) or right (louder).
- Many keyboards also have **volume keys** along the top — look for a speaker with sound-waves, or **+** and **–** speaker symbols.
- Each video usually has its *own* little speaker control too, so check there if the sound seems low even when the computer's volume is up.

CHAPTER 34

Reading & PDFs

Sooner or later a document will arrive in a form called a **PDF**. It is worth knowing what that is, because so much of modern life comes this way — bank statements, bills, government forms, instruction booklets, even this very manual you are reading.

What is a PDF?

A **PDF** is a kind of document that looks *exactly the same everywhere* — on your screen, on mine, and on paper. The letters, pictures, and layout never shift about. That is why banks and offices like it: a form looks the same for everyone. You can spot one by its name ending in **.pdf**, or by its red page-with-a-corner icon.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Read and fill out forms without printing them

A PDF lets you read a statement or booklet on your big screen, zoom in until the print is comfortable, and even fill in a form right on the screen and send it back — often with no need to print anything, find a pen, or hunt for a stamp.

Opening a PDF

On Windows 11, PDFs open in **Edge**, your web browser — which doubles neatly as a PDF reader. You do not need any special program.

1. Find the PDF — perhaps attached to an email, or saved in your **Downloads** or **Documents** folder.
2. **Double-click** it. Edge opens and shows the document straight away.

Reading, zooming, and printing

- **Scroll** down the pages by rolling the little wheel on top of the mouse, or by dragging the grey bar down the right-hand edge.
- **Zoom in** to make the print bigger: look for the **+** and **–** buttons along the top of the document (or hold **Ctrl** and tap **+** to enlarge, **–** to shrink). Nothing is changed — only how big it looks.
- **Print it** by holding **Ctrl** and tapping **P**, then clicking **Print** — exactly as with a letter.

Filling in a PDF form on the screen

Many PDF forms can be filled in without printing them at all. Here is how to tell, and how to do it:

1. Open the PDF in Edge as above.
2. Click where you think an answer should go — a box, or the blank space after a question like “Name:”. If a flashing line (the cursor) appears, the form is fillable. Just **type** your answer.
3. Press the **Tab** key, or click the next box, to move along. Fill in each one the same way.
4. For tick-boxes, click the little box and a tick or an X appears.
5. When finished, **save** your filled-in copy: hold **Ctrl** and tap **S**, choose a name and the **Documents** folder, and click **Save**. You can then print it, or attach it to an email and send it back.

HEADS UP

If the form will not let you type

Some older PDF forms are “flat” — they were never built to be typed into, so clicking does nothing. That is not you doing anything wrong. In that case, simply print it (Ctrl + P) and fill it in by hand with a pen, the old reliable way.

FROM BILL

Keep this manual as a PDF too

This very guide is a PDF, which means you can keep it on the computer, search it, and zoom in whenever the print feels small — the very tricks you just learned. Open it in Edge any time, and make it as large on the screen as you like. — Bill

PART 6

Making It Easier to See, Hear & Use

The settings that change everything for comfort — bigger text, zoom, read-aloud, kinder colors, and talking to your computer. Set these up and the whole machine gets friendlier.

This is the part of the book I most wanted you to have. Everything in here is about making the computer **comfortable** — easier on your eyes, easier on your ears, easier on your hands. If the text has ever felt too small, the mouse pointer too easy to lose, or typing too fiddly, the fixes are all right here, and they are all simple.

FROM BILL

These aren't “special” settings — they're comfort settings

There is nothing medical or embarrassing about any of this. Microsoft put these in for everyone, and everyone should use whatever helps them. I turn several of them on for myself. Think of it like adjusting the seat and mirrors in a car before you drive — you set the machine up to fit *you*, not the other way around.

One more promise before we start: **every single change in this part is easy to undo.** If you try something and don't like it, you slide the slider back or flip the switch off, and you're exactly where you were. Nothing here can harm the computer. So please experiment — you really cannot break it.

One door opens almost everything here

Most of these comfort settings live in the same place: **Settings** → **Accessibility**. “Accessibility” is just Microsoft's word for “make it easier to use.” Here's how to get there, and it's the same every time:

1. Click the **Start** button (the Windows flag at the bottom of the screen).
2. Click the **gear icon** ■ labeled **Settings**.
3. In the list down the left side, click **Accessibility**.

> **TIP**
>
> **The two-key shortcut that jumps straight there**
>
> Hold down the **Windows key** (the one with the little flag, near the bottom-left of the keyboard) and tap the letter **U**. That opens the Accessibility settings in one step. If you ever forget it, the Start → Settings → Accessibility route always works.

Keep that path in mind — I'll point you back to **Settings** → **Accessibility** again and again. If Microsoft ever renames one of the sub-headings slightly in a future update, don't worry: the words will still describe what the setting does, so look for the one that sounds right.

CHAPTER 35

Bigger Text Everywhere

If you find yourself leaning in toward the screen or reaching for reading glasses more than you'd like, this is the very first thing to try. Windows can make **all** the writing on the screen bigger — in your email, on web pages, in menus, everywhere — with one slider.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

No more squinting or leaning in

Turn this up and reading becomes comfortable in every program at once. Emails, web pages, button labels, the little words in menus — all of it grows to a size that's easy on your eyes. You set it one time and the whole computer remembers.

Making all the text bigger

1. Open **Settings** → **Accessibility** (Start → the gear → Accessibility, or just **Windows key + U**).
2. Click **Text size** near the top.
3. You'll see a line of sample text and a **slider**. Drag the slider to the right with your mouse, and watch the sample text grow. (To drag: press and hold the left mouse button on the little circle, move the mouse, then let go.)
4. When the **preview** text looks comfortable, click the **Apply** button.
5. Wait a couple of seconds — the whole screen will adjust itself. That's it.

The text size goes up quite a long way (all the way to more than double the normal size), so don't be shy. Pick whatever is genuinely easy to read, not just “a little better.”

TIP

An even bigger change: make everything bigger together

Text size grows the *writing*. If you'd also like the *buttons, icons, and boxes* to grow along with it, go to **Settings** → **System** → **Display** and look for **Scale**. Nudging that from 100% up to 125% or 150% makes the whole picture larger — wonderful on a big screen or a TV. Text size and Scale work together, so you can use both.

GOOD TO KNOW

If one program still looks small

A few older programs don't follow the Text size setting perfectly. That's not something you did wrong — it's the program being old-fashioned. In most of those, you can hold the **Ctrl** key and roll the mouse wheel to zoom that window in. And web pages in Edge zoom the same way: **Ctrl** and the **Plus** key makes a page bigger, **Ctrl** and **Minus** smaller.

CHAPTER 36

Bigger Icons & a Mouse Pointer You Can Find

Two small frustrations trip up almost everyone at the start: the little icons on the desktop are hard to read, and the mouse pointer — that small white arrow — vanishes into the screen when you're looking for it. Both are easy to fix, and the fixes make a surprisingly big difference every single day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never lose the pointer on the screen again

Make the icons bigger and you can actually read their names. Make the pointer bigger and a bright color and your eyes will snap right to it — no more sweeping the mouse in circles hunting for where it went. Less hunting, less frustration, more doing.

Making the desktop icons bigger

The **desktop** is the screen you see with your background picture and the little shortcut icons on it. To make those icons larger:

1. Move the pointer to an empty spot on the desktop (not on top of an icon).
2. **Right-click** (press the right-hand mouse button once). A small menu appears.
3. Point to **View** at the top of that menu.
4. Click **Large icons**.

TIP

The quick way, right on the desktop

Click once on any empty part of the desktop, then hold the **Ctrl** key and roll the mouse wheel up to grow the icons or down to shrink them. Roll slowly — you'll see them change size as you go, so you can stop exactly where they look right.

A mouse pointer you can actually see

1. Open **Settings** → **Accessibility**.
2. Click **Mouse pointer and touch**.
3. Use the **Size** slider to make the pointer bigger — drag it to the right until the arrow is nice and large.

4. Under **Mouse pointer style**, choose a **color**. I usually pick the **custom color** option and set it to a bright green or yellow — something that jumps out against both light and dark screens.

You don't need to click any “Apply” button for this one — it changes right away, and the computer keeps it from now on. If green isn't to your taste, try any color you like; there's no wrong answer.

A thicker blinking cursor in your writing

When you type, a thin blinking line shows where the next letter will go. That line is called the **text cursor**, and it can be hard to spot. To make it thicker:

1. In **Settings** → **Accessibility**, click **Text cursor**.
2. Turn on the **text cursor indicator** if you'd like a colored marker above and below the line, and/or use the **thickness** slider to fatten the blinking line itself.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **These three work beautifully together**
>
> Bigger icons, a big bright pointer, and a thick cursor are a lovely trio. Set all three and the screen stops playing hide-and-seek with you. It's one of the first things I set up for folks, and nearly everyone says afterward, “Why didn't I do that years ago?”

CHAPTER 37

Magnifier — Zoom In on Anything

Sometimes you don't need everything bigger all the time — you just need to zoom in on *this one thing* right now: tiny print on a form, a phone number, the fine detail in a photo. That's exactly what the **Magnifier** is for. It's like holding a magnifying glass up to any part of the screen, and it's built right in.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Instantly enlarge small text, a photo, or a form

With two keys you blow up whatever's on the screen to as large as you need, read it in comfort, then shrink back to normal. No setup, nothing to install — it's always ready the moment something's too small to read.

The three keys that do it all

Magnifier runs on the **Windows key** plus three simple keys. You don't have to memorize them all at once — just the first one gets you started:

To do this	Press this
Turn it ON / zoom in	Hold **Windows key** and tap the **Plus (+)** key
Zoom in more	Press **Windows key** and **+** again (each tap zooms in further)
Zoom back out	Hold **Windows key** and tap the **Minus (–)** key
Turn it OFF	Hold **Windows key** and tap **Esc** (top-left corner of the keyboard)

So the whole thing is really just: **Windows and +** to zoom in, **Windows and** – to zoom out, **Windows and Esc** when you're done. Once Magnifier is on, move the mouse toward any edge of the screen and the view slides over to follow you, so you can read across a whole page.

Three ways it can show the zoom

When Magnifier is on, a little toolbar appears with a **Views** choice. You can pick whichever feels most natural — there's no wrong one:

- **Full screen** — the whole screen is magnified. Simple and the usual choice.
- **Lens** — a magnifying “bubble” follows your pointer, like a real magnifying glass gliding over the page, while the rest stays normal size.

- **Docked** — a magnified strip sits along the top of the screen; whatever your pointer touches shows up enlarged up there.

TIP

If the keys feel like too much to remember

You can also turn Magnifier on from **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Magnifier** with a simple on/off switch, and set it there. But honestly, **Windows and +** is worth learning — it's the fastest comfort trick in this whole book, and it'll become second nature within a week.

CHAPTER 38

Let the Computer Read to You

Your eyes get tired — everyone's do. The computer can take over and **read out loud** to you: a news article, a long email, a web page you'd rather listen to than read. There are two ways to do this. One is the easy everyday one, and one is the powerful full-featured one. Let me show you both, easiest first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Rest your eyes and just listen

Have articles, emails, and web pages read aloud in a clear voice while you sit back. Perfect when your eyes are tired, the print is small, or you simply prefer to listen. The voices in the 2026 Update are noticeably more natural and pleasant than they used to be.

The easy one: “Read aloud” in Edge (start here)

Edge is the blue-and-green swirl icon you use for the internet. It can read any web page to you, and this is the gentlest place to begin:

1. Open a web page in **Edge** — a news story, a recipe, anything.
2. **Right-click** on an empty part of the page (press the right mouse button once).
3. Click **Read aloud** in the menu that appears.
4. The computer starts reading, and a little control bar appears at the top with **Pause** and **skip** buttons. Click **Voice options** there if you'd like to pick a different voice or slow the reading down.

To stop, click the **X** on that little bar, or just close the page. That's the whole thing — it's genuinely that simple, and it's the one I'd reach for day to day.

The powerful one: Narrator (reads the whole computer)

Narrator is a bigger tool. Instead of just a web page, it reads *everything* on the screen aloud — menus, buttons, what you're typing — and describes what you're pointing at. It's built for people who can't see the screen well at all, so it talks a great deal. To try it:

1. Hold the **Windows key** and the **Ctrl** key together, then tap **Enter**. Narrator starts talking. (You can also switch it on in **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Narrator**.)
2. The same three keys — **Windows + Ctrl + Enter** — turn it back off.

TIP

Which one should you use?

For everyday “just read me this page,” use **Edge's Read aloud** — it's the easy, friendly one. **Narrator** is powerful but chatty, and it takes some getting used to; think of it as there for the day you might really need it. If you turn Narrator on by accident and it won't stop talking, just press **Windows + Ctrl + Enter** again to switch it off. No harm done.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many apps can read aloud too

This isn't only Edge. Your email, the Word program, and many reading apps have their own “Read aloud” button, often with a little speaker or play symbol. Once you know to look for it, you'll start spotting it everywhere.

CHAPTER 39

Kinder Colors for Tired Eyes

A bright white screen can feel harsh — like staring at a lightbulb — especially in the evening. Windows gives you several gentle ways to soften it. You don't need all of them; pick the ones that feel good to *your* eyes. As always, each one flips off again just as easily.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A screen that's gentle, day or night

Cut the glare, warm the picture when the sun goes down, and boost the contrast or adjust colors if that helps you read. The result is a screen that's easier to look at for long stretches — and easier on your sleep in the evening.

Dark mode — white text on a dark background

Dark mode flips the bright white backgrounds to a deep dark color with light text on top. Many people find it far easier on the eyes, particularly at night.

1. Open **Settings** → **Personalization** → **Colors**.
2. Find **Choose your mode** and pick **Dark**. (Pick **Light** again any time to go back.)

Night Light — warms the screen in the evening

Night Light gently adds a warm, amber tint as the day goes on. It takes the cold blue glare off the screen, which is softer on the eyes and kinder to your sleep.

1. Open **Settings** → **System** → **Display**.
2. Turn on **Night light**. Click into its settings to slide the **strength** warmer or cooler, and to have it come on automatically each evening.

TIP

The one-click way to toggle Night Light

Click the little cluster of icons at the **bottom-right** of the screen (near the clock) — that's **Quick Settings**. A **Night light** button is usually right there, so you can tap it on or off whenever you like without digging through menus.

Contrast themes & Color filters — for low vision or color blindness

Two more tools live back in **Settings** → **Accessibility** for when you need stronger help:

- **Contrast themes** — high-contrast color schemes (for example, bright yellow text on solid black) that make everything stand out sharply. Find them under **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Contrast themes**, pick one, and click **Apply**.
- **Color filters** — these adjust the colors for color blindness, or switch the screen to shades of grey. Find them under **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Color filters** and flip the switch, then choose the filter that suits you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Mix and match — it's all reversible

There's no single “right” combination. Some folks love dark mode all day; others only want Night Light in the evening. Try one for a few days, keep what helps, switch off what doesn't. Every one of these goes straight back to normal with the same switch or button you used to turn it on.

CHAPTER 40

Talk Instead of Type

If typing is slow going, or your hands don't cooperate like they used to, here's a small miracle: you can simply **talk**, and the computer writes down what you say. It's genuinely good now — the 2026 Update sharpened it up — and it costs nothing to try. Speak at a normal pace, as if you were leaving a voicemail.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Write emails and search the web by just talking

Dictate an email to your family, fill in a search box, jot a note — all out loud, no typing. If typing is slow or uncomfortable, this can hand you back the whole computer. It's one of my favorite things to show people, because the first time it works, their face lights up.

Voice typing — the easy place to start

Voice typing types your words into any box where you'd normally type — an email, a search bar, a document. Here's all there is to it:

1. Click into the box where you want the words to go, so the cursor is blinking there (an email you're writing, the search bar, and so on).
2. Hold the **Windows key** and tap the letter **H**. A little microphone panel pops up.
3. **Start speaking normally.** Your words appear in the box as you talk. Say “period,” “comma,” or “new line” for punctuation.
4. When you're finished, click the microphone button to stop, or press **Windows + H** again.

TIP

The first time, it may fetch a small download

On the very first use, Windows might take a moment to get its speech helper ready — that's normal, just let it finish. After that it's instant. It understands plain, everyday speech well; you don't need to talk like a robot. If a word comes out wrong, just backspace and say it again.

Voice Access — running the whole computer by voice

Voice typing writes words. **Voice Access** goes further — it lets you *operate* the computer out loud: “open Edge,” “click Send,” “scroll down.” It's a bigger tool, and worth knowing exists:

1. Open **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Speech**.
2. Turn on **Voice access**. The first time, follow the short setup — when it asks, click **Yes, continue**, and let it download its voice helper.
3. From then on you can speak commands to control the screen. A bar at the top shows it's listening.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Start small**
>
> Voice typing (Windows + H) is the gentle one — learn that first and get comfortable dictating a sentence or two. Voice Access is powerful but has more commands to learn, so save it for when you want to go further. And when I'm out at your place, I'm happy to sit with you and practice a few lines until it feels easy.

CHAPTER 41

Making the Mouse & Keyboard Easier

The mouse and keyboard come set up for average hands moving at average speed — and that setup can fight you. If double-clicking feels like a race you keep losing, or a key you barely touched types three letters, these settings quietly fix it. The first one is the one I change most often for folks, so let's start there.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The computer stops fighting shaky or slow hands

Slow the double-click so a relaxed, unhurried double-click still works. Stop holding down two keys at once. Have the computer ignore an accidental key-bounce. These settings bend the machine to fit your hands, instead of asking your hands to keep up with the machine.

Slow down the double-click speed (the big one)

A “double-click” is two quick clicks in a row. By default Windows wants them *very* close together, and if your second click is a beat late, it doesn't count — which is maddening. You can tell Windows to wait longer, so a calm, unhurried double-click works every time:

1. Open **Settings** → **Accessibility**, then click **Mouse** (or **Mouse pointer and touch** and look for additional mouse settings).
2. Open the **additional / more mouse settings** link — this brings up the classic Mouse box.
3. On the **Buttons** tab, find the **Double-click speed** slider and drag it toward **Slow**.
4. Test it on the little folder picture beside the slider — double-click it at *your* natural pace until it opens reliably. Then click **OK**.

This one change ends a huge amount of frustration. If double-clicking has been hit-or-miss for you, move that slider and the hit rate jumps to near perfect.

Sticky Keys — no more holding two keys at once

Some shortcuts ask you to hold one key *while* pressing another (like holding Ctrl and tapping C). If holding two keys together is awkward, **Sticky Keys** lets you press them *one at a time* instead. Turn it on in **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Keyboard** → **Sticky keys**.

Filter Keys — ignore accidental repeats

If a trembly or slow finger makes keys repeat (“tthhiiss”) or register taps you didn't mean, **Filter Keys** tells Windows to ignore those brief, accidental presses. It's in the same place:

Settings → **Accessibility** → **Keyboard** → **Filter keys**.

Mouse Keys — move the pointer with the number pad

If the mouse itself is hard to steer, **Mouse Keys** lets you nudge the pointer around using the number keys on the right-hand number pad instead. It's also under **Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Mouse**.

TIP

Don't feel you must set all of these

Most people only ever need the double-click fix. The others are there for specific troubles — turn one on only if it solves a problem you actually have. And like everything in this part, each is a simple on/off switch, so trying one costs you nothing. If any of them don't suit you, flip them back off and carry on.

CHAPTER 42

Ask Copilot — Just Ask the Computer for Help

Here's something genuinely new and rather wonderful. Windows 11 now has a built-in helper called **Copilot** — a little assistant you can ask questions in plain English, right on your own screen. You don't need special wording. You can ask it exactly the way you'd ask me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A patient helper built into the computer

Copilot never sighs, never rushes you, and never makes you feel foolish for asking. Stuck on how to do something? Ask it. Want help wording a nice email to your granddaughter? Ask it. It answers in plain language, right there on the screen, as many times as you need — at two in the morning or two in the afternoon.

Opening Copilot

In the 2026 Update, Copilot is available on ordinary PCs like yours, not just fancy new ones. There are two easy ways in — use whichever you spot first:

- Look along the **taskbar** (the strip at the bottom of the screen) for the **Copilot** icon — a little coloured ribbon shape — and click it.
- If your keyboard has a dedicated **Copilot key** (newer keyboards do; it has that same ribbon symbol), just press it.

A panel opens at the side with a box that says something like **“Ask me anything.”**

Asking a question

1. Click in the **“Ask me anything”** box.
2. **Type your question in plain words** — or click the little microphone and *say* it. For example: *“How do I make the text bigger?”* or *“Help me write a birthday email to my granddaughter.”*
3. Press **Enter** (or stop speaking), and read the answer it gives you.
4. If the answer isn't quite what you meant, just tell it so in the next box — *“shorter, please”* or *“explain that more simply.”* You can go back and forth like a conversation.

STAY SAFE

Be smart about what you trust it with

Copilot is marvelous for **explaining** things and **drafting** writing — that's where it shines. But it isn't always right, so for anything that matters — a medical question, a money decision, a legal matter — treat its answer as a helpful starting point and double-check it with a real person or an official source.

SCAM ALERT

Never give it passwords or money details

Do **not** type passwords, bank or card numbers, or your Social Security number into Copilot (or into any chat box). A genuine helper will never need those. If anything on the screen ever pressures you to hand over money or personal details, stop and call me first — (330) 200-8042. That's exactly what I'm here for.

FROM BILL

You've got this

That's the heart of it. Set up the two or three comforts that help you most — bigger text, a pointer you can find, maybe Night Light in the evening — and the whole computer turns friendlier. Nothing here is permanent, nothing here can break, and there's no rush. Take it one setting at a time, and when you want a hand, I'm one phone call away.

PART 7

Staying Safe

Passwords, your built-in virus protection, keeping Windows updated, backing up — and the big one: spotting and shutting down scams. Read this part twice.

CHAPTER 43

Passwords & Signing In, Made Simple

Let's start gently. A password is just a secret word or phrase that proves the computer (or an account) is really *you* and not someone else. That's its whole job. It isn't there to trip you up — it's a locked front door, and you're the one with the key. In this chapter I'll show you the easy ways Windows 11 lets you sign in, and a calm, sensible way to keep track of your passwords without turning it into a chore.

Your PIN — the easy way to sign in

A **PIN** (it stands for Personal Identification Number) is a short number — usually four to six digits — that you type to unlock this computer. It works just like the code on a bank card or a phone. You pick it, it's easy to remember, and you'll be signed in in a couple of seconds.

Now, a fair question: "If it's just a short number, isn't that *less* safe than a long password?" It's a smart thing to ask, and the answer is a happy surprise — **no, it's actually safer** for signing in. Your PIN only works on *this one computer*. It is never sent across the internet, and it's useless to anyone who doesn't have your actual laptop in front of them. So you get the convenience of a short number *and* better security.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A short number, big peace of mind

You sign in fast with something easy to remember, and because the PIN never leaves your computer, there's nothing out there for a scammer to steal or guess from afar. Easy for you, useless to everyone else — exactly how it should be.

Windows Hello — signing in with your fingerprint or face

Windows Hello is the friendly name for signing in with your **fingerprint** or your **face** instead of typing anything at all. If your computer has the little fingerprint reader (often a small square on the keyboard or the power button) or a special camera, you can set this up and simply touch the reader or look at the screen to unlock.

It's genuinely secure — the computer stores a mathematical pattern of your finger or face, *not* a photo, and like your PIN it stays locked inside this machine. Not every computer has the hardware for it, and that's perfectly fine. If yours doesn't, your PIN does the same job beautifully. When I visit, I can check what your machine supports and set it up with you if you'd like.

One thing worth knowing: even when you sign in with a PIN or fingerprint, your account still *has* a password underneath — Windows just doesn't ask for it every day. You'll only need that longer password once in a while (say, after a big update), so it's worth having it written down safely, which is exactly what we'll cover next.

The real passwords that matter: email and bank

Signing in to the computer is the easy part. The passwords that truly deserve care are the ones for your **important online accounts** — your **email** first and foremost, then your **bank**, and anywhere that holds your money or personal information. These are the doors worth a strong lock.

Two simple rules cover almost everything:

- **Make each important password strong.** "Strong" just means long and not obvious. A short phrase you can picture works wonderfully — something like *PurpleKettle-RiverRoad-88* — far harder to crack than a single word, yet easy to remember. Avoid birthdays, your name, your street, or the word "password."
- **Don't use the same password everywhere.** If you reuse one password and just one site gets broken into, crooks can try that same password on your email and your bank. Keeping the important ones *different* means one problem stays one problem — it can't spread.

STAY SAFE

Your email password is the master key — guard it most

Think about it: if someone gets into your email, they can click "forgot my password" on your other accounts and have the reset codes mailed right to them. So your email password should be strong, unique, and never shared with anyone. Protect the email, and you've protected a great deal else at the same time.

Two calm ways to keep track — pick whichever suits you

Nobody can remember a different strong password for every account, and you shouldn't try. Here are the two sensible approaches. Either is fine — this is about what feels comfortable to *you*.

Option 1 — A paper notebook kept somewhere safe

There is nothing old-fashioned or wrong about writing passwords in a little notebook — a crook in another country cannot reach through the internet and read your paper. Just keep it **somewhere private** (a drawer or filing cabinet), **never** tape a password to the computer or under the keyboard, and note what each password is *for* so you're not guessing later.

Option 2 — A password manager (a locked vault app)

A **password manager** is an app whose only job is to remember your passwords for you, inside a locked vault. You memorize *one* strong password — the key to the vault — and the app safely holds all the rest, filling them in for you when you visit a site. It's a wonderful tool but one more thing to learn, so there's no rush. If you'd like to try one, I'll help you choose a reputable one and set it up together. Until then, the notebook serves you perfectly well.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Strong, unique passwords — without the headache

Whichever option you pick, the payoff is the same: every important account gets its own strong lock, and you never have to hold all those passwords in your head. The notebook or the vault does the remembering. You just keep the one key safe.

How to set or change your PIN

If you'd ever like to create a PIN or change the one you have, here are the slow, simple steps:

1. Click the **Start** button (the Windows flag), then click **Settings** (the little gear). If you don't see it, type "Settings" into the search box and click it there.
2. In the list on the left, click **Accounts**.
3. Click **Sign-in options**.
4. Click **PIN (Windows Hello)**, then **Change PIN** (or **Set up** if you don't have one yet).
5. Windows will ask you to confirm it's you — type your account password if it asks.
6. Type the **new PIN** you want, then type it a **second time** to confirm. Pick something you'll remember but that isn't a birthday or "1234".
7. Click **OK**. That's it — you'll use the new PIN next time you sign in.

CHAPTER 44

Microsoft Account vs Local Account

This chapter clears up something that confuses a lot of people — and then I'll tell you plainly why it matters for *you*, which is really about one thing: being able to get back in if you ever forget a password. There are two kinds of account you can use to sign in to a Windows computer. Let's take them one at a time, in plain words.

A Microsoft account — an email and password that unlocks the extras

A **Microsoft account** is simply an email address and password that you register with Microsoft (the company that makes Windows). It's free. Once your computer is signed in with one, a handful of genuinely useful things switch on:

- **OneDrive backup** — your Documents, Pictures, and Desktop can be automatically copied to Microsoft's safe storage online. If the computer is ever lost or breaks, those files are still there. (We cover this properly in Chapter 49.)
- **The Microsoft Store** — the safe place to get apps, which needs this account to work.
- **Syncing** — your settings and preferences can follow you if you ever get a new computer, so it feels familiar from the start.
- **Password recovery** — and this is the big one, so it gets its own section below.

A local account — just for this one computer

A **local account** is the simpler, older style. It's a username and password that live *only on this one computer* and aren't connected to Microsoft online. It works fine for signing in and using the machine. The trade-off is that it doesn't bring the extras above — no automatic OneDrive backup, and, importantly, no easy way to recover a forgotten password.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **The key difference in one sentence**
>
> A Microsoft account is connected to the internet and can help you get back in and back up your files; a local account lives only on this machine and can't. Both let you use the computer — the difference is the safety net.

Why this matters for you: getting back in if you forget

Here's the real reason I'm telling you any of this. Imagine you forget your sign-in password one morning — it happens to everyone, it's nothing to be ashamed of.

- With a **Microsoft account**, you can reset your password yourself from any phone or another computer: you go to Microsoft's website, prove it's you (usually with a code sent to your email or phone), choose a new password, and you're back in. Calm and simple.
- With a **local account**, there's no such rescue. If the password is truly lost, getting back in can be difficult — sometimes it means wiping the computer and starting fresh, which can cost you your files if they weren't backed up.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A Microsoft account is your safety net

With a Microsoft account, a forgotten password is a five-minute hiccup, not a disaster — and your photos and documents are quietly backed up at the same time. If the computer is ever lost, stolen, or simply gives out, your memories and important files are recoverable. That's the whole point.

Which one do you have? Let's not guess

Most Windows 11 computers set up in recent years use a **Microsoft account**, so there's a good chance that's what you already have — but I never want you guessing about something this important. There's a quick place to check:

1. Open **Settings** (the gear icon from the Start menu).
2. Click **Accounts** on the left.
3. Look at the top, under **Your info**. If you see an email address listed under your name, you're signed in with a **Microsoft account**. If it just says "Local account," then that's what you have.

FROM BILL

Let's check this one together

This is a perfect little thing for us to look at next time I'm over — it takes two minutes. If you're on a local account, I can help you switch to a free Microsoft account so you get that safety net, or we can leave it as-is if you prefer. Either way, you'll know exactly where you stand. Don't worry about it on your own — just make a note to ask me.

CHAPTER 45

Windows Security (Your Free Virus Protection)

Good news first, because it's genuinely good: your computer already comes with solid virus protection, built right in, switched on, and watching over things every single day. It's called **Windows Security**, and the engine inside it is **Microsoft Defender**. You don't have to install it, turn it on, or remember to run it. It's already doing its job.

A quick definition so it's not scary: a **virus** (people also say "**malware**," which just means "bad software") is a harmful program that sneaks onto a computer to cause trouble. **Antivirus** is the guard that watches for those bad programs and blocks them. Windows Security *is* your antivirus, always on duty.

> **WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU**
>
> **Real, free, always-on protection — one less thing to buy**
>
> Windows Security is genuine, capable antivirus that Microsoft keeps up to date automatically, standing guard in the background without you lifting a finger. The benefit is twofold: you're protected around the clock, *and* you needn't spend a penny on extra antivirus. If anyone pressures you to buy "premium protection" or renew a subscription, say no — you're already covered, and a second antivirus can actually cause conflicts and slow the computer down.

How to open Windows Security

You won't need to open it often, but it's nice to know how to look in on it:

1. Click the **Start** button, or click the search box on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen.
2. Type the words **Windows Security**.
3. Click **Windows Security** in the results. The app opens.

What the green checkmarks mean

When Windows Security opens, you'll see a tidy list with little icons beside each item. Here's how to read them at a glance, no technical knowledge needed:

- **Green circle with a white checkmark** — all is well. This is what you want to see, and most of the time it's exactly what you'll see.
- **Yellow triangle** — a gentle "you might want to look at this" note. It's a suggestion, not an emergency; often one click sorts it out.

- **Red circle** — something needs attention. It's uncommon. If you see red and aren't sure what to do, that's a fine moment to call me.

TIP

Green across the board? Close it and carry on

If everything shows green checkmarks, you're all set — just close the window. No action needed. The protection works whether you look or not.

Running a quick scan (a simple check-up)

A **scan** is the computer searching itself for anything harmful — like a quick health check-up. You usually don't need to, but running one yourself does no harm and can be reassuring if something ever feels off. Here's how:

1. Open **Windows Security** (type it into the search box and click it, as above).
2. Click **Virus & threat protection** — it's usually the first item, often at the top left.
3. Under the heading **Current threats**, click **Quick scan**.
4. Wait a minute or two while it works — a quick scan checks the spots where trouble usually hides, so it's fast, often under two minutes.
5. When it finishes, you'll almost always see **"No current threats."** That's the all-clear — you can close the window.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you ever want a deeper look

Just under Quick scan there's a link called **Scan options**, where a **Full scan** checks every corner of the computer — slower but thorough. You'll rarely need it. If a quick scan ever turns something up, don't panic — follow the on-screen buttons to remove it, and give me a call so we can make sure it's fully cleared.

SCAM ALERT

Fake "YOUR PC IS INFECTED" pop-ups are LIES

This is important. If a pop-up ever fills your screen screaming that your computer is infected and you must **call a phone number right now** — maybe with alarms or a robotic voice — it is **100% a scam**. The *real* Windows Security **never** shows a phone number, **never** tells you to call anyone, and **never** uses scary countdowns. So any message demanding a phone call is fake, full stop. Do not call the number. Chapter 46 shows you exactly how to shut one of these down — your computer is fine.

CHAPTER 46

Scams & Fake Pop-Ups (The Most Important Pages in This Book)

If you read nothing else in this whole book twice, make it this chapter. Everything else is about enjoying your computer. This chapter is about protecting *you* — your savings, your accounts, your peace of mind. I'm going to be completely straight with you, calmly and without trying to frighten you, because the plain truth is the best protection there is.

Here is the single most useful fact in these pages: **scammers do not break into computers with clever technology. They trick the *person*.** Their whole game is to get you frightened, rushed, or confused so you hand over money or access before you've had time to think. That's it. Which means the defense isn't technical at all — it's simply **slowing down** and knowing what their tricks look like. You can learn every one of them, and you're about to.

STAY SAFE

The feeling is the warning sign

Almost every scam creates the same feeling: sudden **fear** or **urgency**. "Act now." "Your account will be closed." "You'll be arrested." "Don't tell anyone." Honest companies and real government offices do **not** operate that way. So let that rushed, anxious feeling become your personal alarm bell. When you feel it, that is precisely the moment to **stop** and do nothing until you've talked to someone you trust.

1. Tech-support scams (the fake "Microsoft" warning)

What it looks like: A pop-up suddenly covers your screen, or the phone rings, and it claims to be *"Microsoft," "Apple," "Windows Support,"* or *"your internet company."* It says your computer is infected or hacked, and that you must **call a number** or let a technician **"remote in"** (take control of your screen from afar) to fix it. There may be alarms, a stern voice, or a warning that won't close.

The truth, plainly:

- **Microsoft never calls you.** Neither does Apple, nor your internet company, out of the blue to warn you of a virus. They simply don't work that way. A call or pop-up like this is a scam every single time.
- **Never call the number** shown in a pop-up. The person who answers is the scammer.

- **Never let a stranger control your computer.** "Remote in" means handing them the keys — once they're in, they can dig through your files, your email, and your bank. No legitimate help ever arrives this way.
- **Never give out passwords or codes** to someone who called or messaged you.

SCAM ALERT

That scary full-screen warning is just a web page — close it

Here's the reassuring part. A terrifying full-screen "virus" warning is almost always nothing but a **web page** designed to look scary — like a poster, not a real alarm. Your computer is **not** actually harmed. To make it vanish: press and hold the keys **Ctrl + Alt + Delete** together, choose **Task Manager**, click your web browser in the list, and click **End task** to close it. If that feels like a lot, simpler still: **restart the computer** (hold the power button for about ten seconds until it shuts off, wait, and turn it back on). When it comes back, the scary page is gone and your computer is perfectly fine. Then don't reopen that website.

2. Phishing — fake emails and texts that fish for you

Phishing (said "fishing," and that's exactly the idea — they're fishing for your information) is a fake email or text message dressed up to look like it's from a company you trust.

What it looks like: A message that appears to come from *your bank*, *Amazon*, *the IRS* (taxes), *the post office or a delivery company*, *Netflix*, or even a *utility company*. It creates a worry and asks you to **click a link** to "verify your account," "confirm a payment," "track a package," or "avoid being charged." The link leads to a fake page built to capture your password or card number the moment you type it.

What to do:

- **Don't click the link,** and don't open attachments you weren't expecting.
- **Go to the company yourself** instead — type their address into your browser, or use the app or a bookmark you already trust. If your bank really needs you, you'll see it when you log in the normal way.
- **Or call the number on your real statement** or the back of your card — never the number printed in the suspicious message.
- **Look for the tell-tale signs:** odd spelling and grammar, a greeting like "Dear Customer" instead of your name, a sender's email address that's gibberish or doesn't match the company, and that familiar push to "act immediately."

STAY SAFE

When in doubt, go around the message

You never have to use the link or number a message gives you. Reaching the company through their official website or your statement means that even a perfect-looking fake can't fool you — because you're the one choosing the door. This one habit stops the great majority of phishing cold.

3. Refund, gift-card, "you won," romance, and grandchild scams

These come in many costumes, but underneath they're all the same trick: getting you to **send money in a way that can't be traced or taken back**. Once you know the shapes they take, they lose their power.

- **Refund / overpayment scams:** "We accidentally refunded you too much — please pay back the difference." They fake a deposit, then ask you to send real money back. Don't.
- **Gift-card demands:** Anyone — a "company," the "government," a "caller" — who tells you to pay by buying **gift cards** (Apple, Google Play, Amazon, Target) and reading them the numbers is **always** a scammer. No real business or agency is ever paid in gift cards. Ever.
- **"You've won!" scams:** A prize, a lottery, a sweepstakes you don't remember entering — but first you must pay a "fee" or "taxes" to claim it. Real prizes never ask you to pay to receive them.
- **Romance scams:** A warm new friend or sweetheart met online, who you never meet in person, who eventually needs money for an emergency, a plane ticket, or a business deal. The affection is bait.
- **Grandchild / family-emergency scams:** A frantic call or message — "Grandpa, it's me, I'm in trouble, I've been in an accident / arrested, I need money right away, and *please don't tell Mom and Dad.*" The voice may even sound right (scammers can now fake voices). It plays on love and panic.

SCAM ALERT

The universal red flags — memorize these

No matter the story, it is a scam if anyone asks you to pay with **gift cards**, a **wire transfer**, **cryptocurrency** ("Bitcoin"), a **money-transfer app**, or by mailing **cash** — or if they insist on **secrecy** ("don't tell anyone"). Those payment types exist precisely because the money can't be recovered once it's gone. **No exceptions, no matter how real or urgent it sounds.** For the grandchild call especially: hang up, then phone your grandchild or another family member directly on the number you already have. You'll almost always find they're safe at home.

The golden rules — your whole defense on one card

If every page above blurred together, these six rules alone would keep you safe nearly all of the time. I'd love for you to keep this list right by the computer.

STAY SAFE

Six golden rules for scams

1. Slow down. Urgency is the scammer's only real weapon — refuse to be rushed. Nothing genuine falls apart because you took an hour to think.
2. Never pay with gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency. That request alone proves it's a scam.
3. Never give remote access to your computer to anyone who contacted you first.
4. Never give out passwords, PINs, or codes over the phone or by clicking a link in a message.
5. Hang up and check with a person you trust — a family member, or me. Call them on a number you already know, not one you were just given.
6. It is never rude to say no and hang up. A real company will understand completely. A scammer was never owed your politeness in the first place.

FROM BILL

You can always just ask me — that's what I'm for

Please hear this clearly: you will **never** annoy me, waste my time, or look foolish by calling to ask "is this real?" That question is the smartest thing you can do, and answering it is exactly the job I'm proud to have. When something feels off, don't wrestle with it alone — pick up the phone and call me at **(330) 200-8042**. We'll sort it out together, every time.

CHAPTER 47

Safe Browsing & Downloads

The internet is a wonderful place, and the vast majority of it is perfectly safe — enjoy it freely. This short chapter is just about recognizing the handful of places trouble likes to hide, so you can stroll right past them.

Telling a safe website from a shady one

A **website address** (the line of text at the very top of your browser, like *www.yourbank.com*) tells you more than you might think. Here's what to glance at:

- **The little padlock.** To the left of the address you'll usually see a small **padlock** icon, and the address starts with **https** (the "s" stands for "secure"). This means your connection to that site is private. It's a good sign — *but* read the next point, because it's not the whole story.
- **The spelling of the address is what matters most.** Scammers register look-alike addresses with tiny changes — *amaz0n.com* (a zero instead of an o), *paypa1.com* (a one instead of an L), or *bankofamerica-secure.net*. A padlock just means the *fake* site is also encrypted. So always read the main part of the address slowly and make sure it's spelled exactly right.
- **Be extra careful on pages that ask for a password or payment.** That's where spelling the address correctly matters most. When unsure, close the page and reach the company the way you know — a bookmark, the app, or typing the address yourself.

Flashy buttons and fake warnings

Some websites, especially free ones, are cluttered with bright buttons designed to fool you into clicking the wrong thing. A few you'll learn to ignore entirely:

- Big green **"Download"** or **"Play"** buttons that aren't the thing you actually came for — these are usually ads in disguise, trying to install something unwanted.
- Alarming banners: **"Your computer is slow — fix it now!"**, **"You have 3 viruses!"**, or **"Your flash player is out of date — update now!"** These are *never* true and *never* from your computer. They're bait. (Remember from Chapter 45: real warnings never shout at you from a web page.)
- Pop-ups claiming **"You're our 1,000,000th visitor — claim your prize!"** Just close them.

TIP

When unsure, click the X — or close the whole browser

You are never obligated to click anything a web page pushes at you. To dismiss a pop-up, click the small **X** in its corner. If there's no clear X, or it keeps nagging, simply close the entire browser window (its own X in the top-right corner) and reopen it fresh. Nothing bad happens from closing a web page — when in doubt, close it out.

Installing programs the safe way

Installing (also called "downloading an app" or "a program") means adding new software to your computer. This is the one moment to be a little choosy about *where* it comes from, because a bad program can only get on your machine if something lets it in. The rule is simple:

- **The Microsoft Store** is the safest place of all. Everything in it has been checked by Microsoft. Open it from the Start menu, search for what you want, and click Get. When in doubt, look there first.
- **Official websites of makers you know** are fine too — for example, getting the Chrome browser straight from Google's own site, or Zoom from Zoom's own site. Reach them by typing the address or using a trusted search result, not by clicking an ad.
- **Avoid** "free download" sites that bundle lots of other programs, anything a pop-up urges you to install, and attachments in unexpected emails.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Enjoy the whole web without inviting trouble

None of this means tiptoeing around the internet. It means a few easy habits — read the address, ignore the shouting buttons, install only from the Store or makers you know — become second nature, and then you're free to browse, shop, read, and watch to your heart's content. Safe habits aren't a cage; they're what lets you relax and enjoy it all.

SCAM ALERT

If a download pushes you to "call support" — stop

One more reminder: if something you installed, or a website, suddenly throws up a number and tells you to **call for support** about a problem you didn't know you had, treat it exactly like the pop-ups in Chapter 46. Close it, don't call, and if you're unsure, call *me* instead at (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 48

Windows Update (Keeping the Computer Healthy)

You've probably heard the phrase "the computer is updating" and maybe found it a touch mysterious or even worrying. Let me put your mind completely at ease: **updates are a good thing**, they're free, and they're one of the quiet ways your computer looks after itself. This chapter explains them in plain English so you'll never wonder again.

What updates actually are

A **Windows update** is a free improvement that Microsoft sends to your computer over the internet. Think of it like a mechanic who stops by now and then to tighten a few bolts and swap in a better part — at no charge. Updates come in two flavors, both helpful:

- **Fixes and improvements:** they repair little problems and make things run more smoothly.
- **Security patches:** this is the important one. When clever criminals discover a new way to sneak into computers, Microsoft closes that door with an update. Keeping updated means keeping those doors shut.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Updates quietly fix problems and close the doors scammers use

Every update makes your computer a little safer and a little smoother, without you doing a thing. That's the benefit: fewer glitches, and the very gaps that crooks try to crawl through get sealed up automatically. Letting updates happen is one of the kindest things you can do for your computer — and for yourself.

The best part: it's mostly automatic

Here's the relief — you generally **don't have to do anything**. Windows 11 checks for updates on its own and installs them quietly in the background. Now and then, to finish the job, it needs to **restart** the computer. When that time comes, Windows **warns you first** and lets you pick a convenient moment — it will not yank the rug out from under you mid-sentence.

TIP

Save your work when it asks to restart

When you see a note that the computer needs to restart to finish updating, just **save whatever you're working on first** (a letter, a photo you were editing), then let it go ahead — or choose "restart tonight" and leave the computer on. It'll do its work while you sleep and be fresh in the morning. The restart itself is normal and safe; a few minutes later you're right back to normal.

How to check for updates yourself

You rarely need to, since it's automatic — but if you ever want to make sure you're current, or I ask you to check, here's the simple path:

1. Open **Settings** (the gear icon from the Start menu).
2. Click **Windows Update** — it's usually at the bottom of the list on the left.
3. Click the button that says **Check for updates**.
4. If it finds any, it will download and install them on its own. You might see "You're up to date" with a green checkmark — that means there's nothing to do, which is great news.
5. If it says a **restart is needed**, save your work and click **Restart now** (or schedule it for later).

SCAM ALERT

Real updates come through Settings — NOT from a web page

This is the one thing to hold onto, because scammers love to imitate updates. A **genuine** Windows update *only* arrives quietly through the **Settings** screen you just saw — never as a flashing pop-up on a website, never as an email attachment, never with a phone number. So if a web page or email ever shouts **"Update now!"** or **"Your Windows is out of date — click here!"**, that is a **fake** trying to trick you into installing something harmful. Close it and ignore it. When you want the real thing, you go to Settings yourself — the real update never comes chasing you.

CHAPTER 49

Backups (Never Lose Anything)

A **backup** is simply a *second copy* of your important things — your photos, your documents, your letters — kept somewhere separate, so that if anything ever happens to the computer, those precious files are still safe and sound. Computers are machines, and machines can be lost, stolen, spilled on, or simply wear out one day. A backup means that when they do, your memories don't go with them. This is one of the most comforting things in the whole book.

OneDrive — your automatic safety net in the sky

We met **OneDrive** earlier, and here's why it's worth a second look: when it's switched on, it **automatically** keeps a copy of your **Documents**, your **Pictures**, and your **Desktop** in Microsoft's secure storage online (people call this "the cloud" — it just means safely stored on the internet, not on your machine). You don't press a button or remember to do it. Save a photo on your computer, and a copy quietly tucks itself away online, all on its own.

So if your computer were lost or stopped working tomorrow, you could sign in on a new one with your Microsoft account and find your files waiting for you, right where they were.

> WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU
>
> **Lost, stolen, or broken — your photos and files are still safe**
>
> With OneDrive running, the computer becomes just the *window* you look through, not the only place your memories live. If the machine ever fails or goes missing, your pictures and documents aren't gone — they're safe online, ready to come back the moment you sign in again. For peace of mind, it's hard to beat.

How to confirm OneDrive backup is on

Let's make sure your safety net is actually up. Two easy ways — either one tells you what you need:

The quick way — the little cloud icon

1. Look at the bottom-right corner of your screen, near the clock. You're looking for a small **cloud** icon. (You may need to click the little **^** arrow there to reveal hidden icons.)
2. Click the **cloud**. A small panel opens showing OneDrive's status.
3. A message like **"Your files are synced"** or **"Up to date"** with a green check means your backup is working. Lovely — nothing more to do.

4. For more detail, click the little **gear** in that panel, choose **Settings**, then the **Backup** tab to see which folders (Desktop, Documents, Pictures) are being backed up. You want them switched on.

If you'd rather, you can also check through **Settings**, then **Accounts**, then **Windows backup**, and make sure the folders you care about — Desktop, Documents, Pictures — are turned **on**.

FROM BILL

Let me confirm your backup is really running

This is another perfect two-minute job for one of my visits. I'll make sure OneDrive is on and actually backing up the folders that matter, so you never have to wonder. Backups are one of those things worth getting right once and then forgetting about — let's get it right together.

A second copy on a USB drive, for extra peace of mind

OneDrive is excellent, and for most people it's plenty. But if you'd like a belt-and-suspenders feeling of safety — especially for irreplaceable things like family photos — it's nice to keep an **occasional copy on a USB drive** as well.

A **USB drive** (also called a flash drive, thumb drive, or memory stick) is a small gadget, about the size of a thumb, that plugs into a slot on your computer and stores files. The idea is simple: every so often, copy your favorite photos and documents onto it, then unplug it and keep it in a drawer — a physical copy, entirely separate from both the computer and the internet. Plug it in, open your **Pictures** or **Documents** folder, copy the files over, then **Eject** it before pulling it out. We can walk through the copying together.

TIP

Two copies beats one — and both beats worrying

You don't need to do this often — a few times a year is plenty for most folks. Between OneDrive working automatically and an occasional USB copy in the drawer, your important files have two separate homes. If one ever lets you down, the other is there. That's real peace of mind, and it's yours for very little effort.

CHAPTER 50

If Something Feels Wrong: Don't Panic, Don't Pay, Call Bill

This last page is the one to tape inside a cupboard door or keep right beside the computer. It's short on purpose. If anything ever feels wrong, frightening, or just "off" — a strange message, a pushy caller, a screen you don't recognize — you don't need to remember this whole book. You only need these three rules, in order.

The three rules

1. **Don't panic.** Take a breath. A scary message on a screen is almost *never* real damage — it's nearly always just a web page or a phone caller trying to frighten you into acting fast. Your computer and your money are fine in this moment. Fear is the trick; calm is your shield.
2. **Don't pay anyone, don't give remote access, and don't read out any codes.** No matter what the message or the voice says, do not buy gift cards, send money, type in a payment, let anyone control your screen, or read out a password, PIN, or verification code. The instant someone asks for any of those, you've confirmed it's a scam. Stop right there.
3. **Disconnect if unsure, then call someone you trust.** If a page won't close or a call won't end, it's perfectly fine to *close the browser*, *restart the computer*, or even *unplug the internet box* and *hang up the phone*. Then call a person you trust — a family member, or me — on a number you already know. We'll figure out together whether it was anything at all. Almost always, it was nothing.

"This is probably a scam" — the quick checklist

If you can answer "yes" to even **one** of these, treat it as a scam and go straight to the three rules above:

- Does it make you feel **frightened or rushed** — "act now," "account closing," "last warning"?
- Did it **contact you first**, out of the blue — a call, a pop-up, an unexpected email or text?
- Does it ask you to **pay with gift cards, a wire transfer, or cryptocurrency**?
- Does it want to **remote in** or control your computer?
- Does it ask for a **password, PIN, bank detail, or a code** it's sending you?
- Does it show a **phone number to call** about a computer problem?

- Does it ask you to keep it a **secret** from your family?
- Does it claim to be **Microsoft, Apple, the bank, the IRS, or a delivery company** — and press you to click or call?

STAY SAFE

You are allowed to just walk away

Here's a freeing thought: you can close any page, hang up any call, and ignore any message, at any time, for any reason — and you owe no one an explanation. There is no rule of politeness that requires you to stay on the line with a stranger. Walking away costs you nothing and protects you completely. When in doubt, that's always a safe choice.

FROM BILL

The standing offer — call me, every time

I mean this with my whole heart: **you will never bother me by calling to ask "is this real?"** That phone call is *exactly* what I'm here for — there is no such thing as a silly question, and I would far rather hear from you before anything happens than after. So keep my number where you can see it, and use it the moment something feels off. No apology needed, no hurry, no judgment — just call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll handle it together. That's a promise.

You've done a wonderful thing by reading this far. Being a little bit cautious and knowing who to call is all it takes — and you now know both. I'm proud of you.

— Bill

PART 8

Tips, Tricks, Maintenance & Quick Reference

Speeding things up, handy shortcuts, fixing common hiccups, cheat sheets, a plain-English glossary, and how to reach Bill.

CHAPTER 51

Speeding Up a Slow Computer

When a computer starts to feel slow — pages dragging, the spinning circle showing up too often — don't think it's "going bad" or that you did something wrong. A slow computer is almost always an easy, free fix. You don't need to buy anything or pay a stranger online. Here are the safe fixes in order, easiest first. Try them top to bottom and stop as soon as things feel better.

Fix 1: Restart it (this fixes most things)

I keep coming back to this because it truly is the magic cure. When a computer runs for days on end, little odds and ends pile up and gum up the works, and a restart sweeps them all away for a clean, fresh start.

1. Click the **Start button** (the Windows flag on the Taskbar).
2. Click the **power icon** (the small ■ circle-with-a-line symbol).
3. Click **Restart**, and let it do its thing for a minute or two.

Nine times out of ten that alone wakes a sluggish computer right up. If you've not restarted in a week, do this first before going any further.

Fix 2: Close programs you're not using

A computer is like your own two hands — it can only juggle so much at once. A dozen things open means each one is quietly using the computer's energy even when you're not looking at it, so closing the ones you're done with frees that energy back up.

- Click the little **X** in the top-right corner of a window to close it. Do that for anything you're finished with.
- Not sure what's open? Look at the **Taskbar** along the bottom. Programs that are running often have a tiny line or dot under their icon. Point at one and a little preview pops up; you can close it right from there by clicking the **X** on the preview.

Fix 3: Too many browser tabs

This is the sneaky one. Remember from Part 3 that each webpage sits in its own **tab** along the top of the browser. It's easy to end up with fifteen or twenty open without realizing, and every one uses the computer's energy to stay ready — a very common reason a computer bogs down. The fix is simple and safe: close the tabs you're done with by clicking the little **X** on each, and keep the two or three you want. You're not losing those websites — you can

visit them again anytime. You're just tidying up.

Fix 4: Free up some space

A computer keeps everything — photos, documents, programs — on an inside shelf called its **storage**. When that shelf gets close to full, the whole machine slows down, the way a stuffed closet makes it hard to find anything. Windows has a tidy-up helper built right in:

1. Click **Start**, open **Settings** (the gear), click **System**, then **Storage**.
2. You'll see a bar showing how full your storage is, with a breakdown of what's taking up room.
3. Turn on **Storage Sense** — a switch that lets Windows automatically clear harmless junk (temporary files, emptied trash) for you now and then, all on its own.
4. For a one-time cleanup, search **Disk Cleanup** from Start, open it, let it tick the safe boxes, and click **OK**. It removes only leftover scraps — never your real files.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Storage Sense only clears the junk drawer, never your keepsakes**
>
> Put your mind at ease: these cleanup tools are built by Microsoft and they're careful. They sweep out *temporary scraps* — the digital equivalent of coffee rings and scratch paper — plus whatever's already in your Recycle Bin. They never touch your photos, documents, email, or programs. It's safe to let Storage Sense run.

Fix 5: Turn off programs that start by themselves

Some programs sneak onto the list of things that launch the moment you turn the computer on — even ones you rarely use — and a long startup list makes the computer sluggish every time it wakes up. You can switch off the ones you don't need; it's perfectly safe, and it doesn't delete the program, just stops it jumping up at the start.

1. Click **Start**, open **Settings**, click **Apps**, then **Startup**.
2. You'll see a list of programs, each with an on/off switch, labeled "High," "Medium," or "Low" impact.
3. If you recognize one you don't need at startup, click its switch to **Off**. When in doubt, leave it be — or jot the name down and ask me.

Fix 6: Make sure Windows is up to date

An up-to-date Windows runs its smoothest and safest. Updates quietly fix slowdowns and patch up security holes. Click **Start** → **Settings** → **Windows Update**, then click **Check for**

updates. If it finds any, let them install (it may ask to restart — that's fine). We covered this in detail back in Part 5, so flip there if you'd like a refresher.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A snappier computer without spending a dime

Here's the happy truth: the six fixes above cost nothing but a few minutes, and together they cure the large majority of "my computer got slow" complaints I hear — no new parts, no paid programs, no service call. A restart, a little tidying, a check for updates, and the computer usually feels years younger. Keep this chapter handy and run through it whenever things drag.

HEADS UP

Ignore every "Speed up your PC!" ad — those are the real slowdown

You'll see pop-ups shouting "Your PC is slow — click here to speed it up!" or "347 errors found — fix now!" **Do not click them.** They're almost always scams, and the "cleaner" programs they push often make the computer slower and nag you for money. Everything your computer needs to run fast is already built in — it's all in this chapter. We cover these tricks in Part 7; when in doubt, close the ad and give me a call.

CHAPTER 52

Snipping Tool (Take a Picture of Your Screen)

Here's a little trick that will make your life — and mine — so much easier. Your computer can take a **picture of whatever's on its own screen**, called a *screenshot* (or "snip"). It's like snapping a photo of the screen with a camera, except the computer does it perfectly, in a half-second. The tool that does this is the **Snipping Tool**.

The quick way: three keys at once

The fastest way doesn't even need you to open anything. You press three keys together:

1. Hold down the **Windows key** and the **Shift** key, and — while still holding both — tap the **S** key. (People write this as **Windows key + Shift + S**.)
2. The screen dims a little and your pointer turns into a small crosshair, like a plus sign. Don't worry — nothing is wrong; it's just waiting for you.
3. Point at one corner of the thing you want a picture of, hold the left mouse button down, drag a box around it, and let go. You just took the picture.
4. That picture is now copied and ready. You can **paste** it into an email or a document with **Ctrl + V** (we cover copy and paste in the very next chapter).

The full way: the Snipping Tool app (to save or mark it up)

If you'd rather save the picture as a file, or draw on it to point something out, open the **Snipping Tool** app itself:

1. Click **Start**, type "Snipping Tool," and press **Enter** to open it.
2. Click **New** to start a snip, then drag your box the same way as above.
3. The picture opens in a little window where you can draw on it with a pen, circle something, or add a note.
4. To keep it, click the **save** icon (a little floppy-disk shape) and give it a name. It'll land in your Pictures folder by default.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

When something goes wrong, show me instead of describing it

This is my favorite reason to teach you this one. When an error message or a confusing screen pops up and you can't quite describe it over the phone, just snap a picture of it and email it to me. Then I see *exactly* what you see — the whole screen, word for word — and I can tell you right away what's going on. It saves us both a lot of back-and-forth, and it often turns a long guessing game into a two-minute answer. A picture really is worth a thousand words here.

TIP

There's a shortcut button for it too

If three keys at once feels fiddly, add a Snipping Tool button to your Taskbar so it's one click away: search for "Snipping Tool," right-click its icon, and choose **Pin to taskbar**. Or just call me and I'll set it up — it takes a moment.

CHAPTER 53

Copy & Paste (and Clipboard History)

Copy and paste feels like a little magic once it clicks, and you'll use it every day. It lets you grab a piece of text, a photo, or a whole file and drop a copy somewhere else, without retyping a thing. Let's learn it slowly and surely.

Step 1: Select what you want (highlight it)

Before you can copy something, you have to tell the computer *which* part you mean. That's called **selecting**, and when text is selected it turns a shaded blue color so you can see exactly what you've got. There are two easy ways:

- **Click and drag:** point just before the first word, hold the left mouse button down, slide across the words you want, and let go. They turn blue — that means they're selected.
- **Double-click a word:** a quick double-click on a single word selects just that one word. (A triple-click often grabs a whole paragraph.)

Step 2: Copy it (Ctrl + C)

With your text selected and blue, **copy** it by holding the **Ctrl** key and tapping the **C** key — think "**C** for Copy." Nothing obvious happens on screen, and that trips people up — but trust me, the computer just tucked an invisible copy away, ready for you. Your original stays right where it was, untouched.

Step 3: Paste it (Ctrl + V)

Now click wherever you want the copy to go — a blank email, a document, a search box — so the blinking cursor is there. Then **paste** by holding **Ctrl** and tapping **V**. Your copied text appears, right there. That's the whole trick: **Ctrl + C** to copy, move to the new spot, **Ctrl + V** to paste.

GOOD TO KNOW

What about "cut"? That's Ctrl + X

Cut is copy's close cousin. Instead of leaving the original in place, **cut** lifts it out and moves it — like picking words up and setting them down elsewhere. You select the text, press **Ctrl + X** ("**X** like scissors") to cut it, then **Ctrl + V** to paste it where you want. Use copy when you want the thing in two places; use cut when you want to move it.

It works for photos and files too

The very same trick moves more than words. Click once on a **photo** or a **file** to select it, press **Ctrl + C** to copy it, go to the folder or email where you want it, and press **Ctrl + V** to drop a copy there. One skill, so many uses.

Clipboard history: find things you copied earlier

Normally the computer only remembers the *last* thing you copied. But Windows has a handy memory called **Clipboard history** that can hold the last several things, so you can reach back for something you copied a few minutes ago.

1. Hold the **Windows key** and tap the **V** key (**Windows key + V**).
2. The first time, it may ask to "Turn on" Clipboard history — click **Turn on**. It's safe.
3. A little panel appears showing the recent things you've copied. Click any one of them to paste it right where your cursor is.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Move text and pictures in a second, instead of retyping

Think of how often you want the same words or picture in two places — an address you need to paste into a form, a phone number a friend sent you, a photo you want in an email. Copy and paste does it instantly and perfectly, with no typos and no fuss. It's one of the biggest time-savers on the whole computer, and it's the same two keystrokes everywhere you go.

TIP

A gentle practice to make it stick

Open a blank email to yourself, type your name, double-click to select it, press **Ctrl + C**, then click the next line and press **Ctrl + V** a few times. Watch your name appear again and again. Silly? A little — but your hands will remember it. Then close the email without sending.

CHAPTER 54

Phone Link (Your Phone on the Big Screen)

If you have a cellphone, here's a lovely feature that brings it and your computer together. It's called **Phone Link**, and once set up, bits of your phone show up right on the computer's big, easy-to-read screen — you can read and send texts, see your photos, and get calls and notifications, all without picking the phone up.

What Phone Link lets you do

- **Texts:** read the text messages on your phone and type replies using the computer's full-size keyboard.
- **Photos:** see recent photos from your phone on the big screen (and copy them onto the computer).
- **Calls:** see who's calling and even answer or make a call through the computer.
- **Notifications:** the little alerts your phone shows (a new message, a reminder) pop up on the computer too, so you don't miss them.

Setting it up (the gentle overview)

Setup is a short pairing dance between computer and phone — you do it once, then they remember each other. Here's the shape of it; it's a fine one to do together on the phone with me.

1. On the computer, click **Start**, type "Phone Link," and press **Enter** to open it.
2. It asks what kind of phone you have — an **Android** or an **iPhone**. Click yours.
3. It shows a square pattern (a "QR code") on the computer screen and asks you to scan it with your phone's camera, which sends the phone to the right app to install.
4. Follow the simple prompts on both the phone and the computer to let them connect (this usually includes turning on Bluetooth and tapping "Allow" a few times).
5. Once they shake hands, you're done — your texts and photos start appearing on the computer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Type with a real keyboard; see photos on the big screen

If squinting at a small phone screen and thumb-typing on tiny keys wears you out, Phone Link is a gift. You get to use the computer's big screen and full keyboard for your texting, and your phone photos show up large enough to actually enjoy. Everything stays in sync — a text you send from the computer is a real text from your phone, same as always.

TIP

Works with both Android and iPhone (features vary a little)

Phone Link plays nicely with both Android phones and iPhones. On Android it does the most — including showing your photos on the computer. On an iPhone it's a touch more limited (mainly texts, calls, and notifications), which is Apple's doing, not yours. Either way you get your messages on the big screen. If you're not sure which phone you have or how to set it up, that's a perfect thing to call me about — we'll do it together in a few minutes.

CHAPTER 55

Handy Keyboard Shortcuts Worth Knowing

A **keyboard shortcut** is just a quick key combination that does a job for you — a little bit faster than hunting for it with the mouse. You absolutely do not need to memorize these, and nothing here is required. But a handful of them are such genuine time-savers that they're worth knowing about. The way you read one like "Ctrl + C" is: hold the first key down, tap the second key, let go of both.

Shortcut	What it does (plain English)
Ctrl + C	**Copy** the thing you've selected
Ctrl + V	**Paste** what you copied
Ctrl + X	**Cut** (move) the thing you've selected
Ctrl + Z	**Undo** — takes back your last action. The magic "oops" fix!
Ctrl + A	**Select all** — highlights everything at once
Ctrl + P	**Print** whatever you're looking at
Ctrl + F	**Find** a word on the page you're reading
Ctrl + plus (+)	**Zoom in** — makes things bigger
Ctrl + minus (–)	**Zoom out** — makes things smaller
Windows key	Opens the **Start** menu
Windows + E	Opens your **files** (File Explorer)
Windows + D	Shows the **Desktop** (tucks all windows away)
Windows + L	**Locks** the computer (the front door) when you step away
Alt + Tab	**Switch** between the programs you have open
Windows + Shift + S	Take a **screenshot** (a picture of the screen)

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A few of these will save you real time

You don't need all fifteen. If you learn just three — **Ctrl + C**, **Ctrl + V**, and **Ctrl + Z** — you've got copy, paste, and undo, which cover an awful lot of daily computing. Everything else here is a bonus you can pick up whenever you feel like it.

The one I'd tattoo on your hand: Ctrl + Z, the undo button

If you remember a single shortcut from this entire book, make it **Ctrl + Z**. It is the **undo** command — it takes back the very last thing you did, as if it never happened. Deleted something by accident? Ctrl + Z. Typed over something you meant to keep? Ctrl + Z. Moved a paragraph to the wrong spot? Ctrl + Z. You can even press it several times to step back through the last few things, one at a time.

This is the great safety net of computing. It's the reason I can honestly promise you that you *can't* break anything by trying — because so many "uh-oh" moments vanish the instant you press those two keys. Hold **Ctrl**, tap **Z**, breathe easy. Oops, undone.

CHAPTER 56

Keeping the Desktop & Files Tidy

A tidy computer is a calm computer, and a calm computer is far less intimidating. You needn't be fussy, but a few simple habits keep your screen uncluttered and let you put your hands on anything in seconds — no more sinking "where did I put that?" feeling.

Don't let the Desktop get cluttered

It's tempting to drop everything onto the Desktop because it's right there, but a Desktop crammed with dozens of icons gets hard to look at. Think of it like your kitchen counter: nice to keep a few things on, but you don't store the whole pantry there. Keep just a handful of most-used icons.

Use the Documents and Pictures folders

Windows gives you ready-made folders with obvious names — **Documents** for letters and files, **Pictures** for photos, **Downloads** for things you grab off the internet. Save your things into these homes instead of leaving them loose on the Desktop. It's like having labeled drawers instead of one big junk pile. You open your files with **File Explorer** (the little folder icon on the Taskbar, or press **Windows + E**).

A simple folder scheme that just works

Inside those folders, you can make your own folders to keep things grouped. Don't overthink it — a simple scheme beats a fancy one you won't keep up. Two easy approaches, and you can mix them:

- **By year:** a folder called "2026," another called "2027," and so on. Great for photos and anything you think of by "when."
- **By topic:** folders like "Taxes," "Medical," "Grandkids," "Recipes." Great for things you think of by "what."

To make a new folder: open File Explorer, go to where you want it, right-click an empty spot, and choose **New** → **Folder**. Type a name, press **Enter**. Now you can drag files into it.

Pin your favorites so they're always one click away

The programs and folders you use most can be **pinned** to the Start menu or the Taskbar, so they're always right there waiting. Find the program (search for it in Start), **right-click** its icon, and choose **Pin to Start** or **Pin to taskbar**. From then on, it's a single click away — no more hunting.

Sort files to find them fast

When you're looking at a folder full of files in File Explorer, you can reorder them to find things quickly. Click the **Sort** button near the top (or right-click an empty spot and choose **Sort by**), then pick **Name** to put them in A-to-Z order, or **Date** to put the newest on top. Sorting by date is a lifesaver when you just want "the thing I saved yesterday."

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Find anything in seconds, and a calmer screen to boot

A little tidiness pays you back every single day. When your things live in sensible, labeled homes, you stop losing them — and you stop that anxious feeling of not knowing where anything is. An uncluttered Desktop is also just easier on the eyes and the nerves. Ten minutes of tidying now saves you a hundred little frustrations later.

TIP

And remember, the search box finds things for you

Even if your filing isn't perfect, you're not stuck. Click **Start** and just type part of the name of what you're looking for — a file, a photo, a program — and Windows hunts it down for you. So tidiness helps, but the search box is always there as a backstop. You really can't lose things for good.

CHAPTER 57

Troubleshooting (When Something Goes Wrong)

Something goes sideways now and then — it happens to everyone, me included. The key is not to panic and not to assume you broke it. Most hiccups have a simple, safe fix you can do yourself in a minute or two. Here are the common ones, each with its plain fix — keep this page marked.

A program froze (it won't respond)

- First, just **wait a moment** — thirty seconds or so. Often the computer is only thinking and comes back on its own.
- If it's truly stuck, press **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to open the **Task Manager** (a list of what's running), click the frozen program, then click **End task**. That closes the stuck one and leaves everything else alone.
- Still cranky? **Restart** the whole computer (Chapter 51) — that clears almost any freeze.

The computer won't turn on

- Check the **power**: is the cable firmly in the wall and the computer? Is the outlet working (try a lamp)? On a laptop, is the **charger** plugged in — the battery may just be flat? And is the screen itself on (a monitor has its own power button and cable)?
- If it still shows nothing, **hold the power button about 10 seconds** to force it fully off, wait a few seconds, then press it once to turn it on.
- No luck? Don't wrestle with it — give me a call and we'll figure it out.

No internet

- Check the **Wi-Fi icon** near the clock (bottom-right): if it looks faded or has a warning mark, you've lost the connection.
- The classic fix: **restart your router** (the little box from your internet company). Unplug it, count slowly to thirty, plug it back in, and give it two full minutes to wake up. This cures most internet troubles. Then **restart the computer** too, so it reconnects fresh.
- Still down everywhere in the house? It may be an outage on the internet company's end — not your doing at all.

The printer won't print

- **Turn the printer off and back on** — just like the computer, this fixes most printer sulks.
- Make sure the **right printer is selected** in the print window (it's easy to accidentally pick a wrong one from the list).

- Check the obvious: is there **paper** in the tray, and does it have **ink** or toner? Is the printer's own little screen showing an error?
- Make sure the printer is **on and connected** (to Wi-Fi or by its cable).

You forgot your PIN or password

- Don't guess a dozen times in a panic — too many wrong tries can lock you out for a while.
- On the sign-in screen, look for **I forgot my PIN** or **Reset password** and follow the steps; a Microsoft account can send a reset to your email or phone.
- Honestly, this is a **great time to just call me** — we set up your sign-in together, and I can walk you back in calmly, no lockout drama.

The screen is too small or too large

- Everything tiny and hard to read, or suddenly huge and cut off? These are quick fixes, all in **Part 6** (making the computer easier to use).
- Quick ones: **Ctrl + plus** / **Ctrl + minus** zoom a webpage in and out, and Settings → System → Display makes *everything* bigger.

A scary pop-up appeared

- A pop-up warning your computer is "infected," with alarms or a phone number to call, is **almost certainly a scam**, not a real problem (covered fully in **Part 7**). Do **not** call the number or click anything inside it.
- Close the browser (the **X** in the corner). If it won't close, use **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** → **End task** on the browser, or restart the computer.
- Then take a breath and, if unsure, **call me** — never a number the pop-up gave you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Most problems have a simple, safe fix you can do yourself

Notice something about that list: nearly every fix is one of three calm, harmless things — wait a moment, turn it off and back on, or restart. You don't need to be a technician, just to not panic and run through the simple steps. And for the handful of times they don't do it, I'm one phone call away — that's exactly what I'm here for.

CHAPTER 58

Quick-Reference Cheat Sheets

This chapter is pure quick-reference — no long explanations, just the handiest things gathered in one spot so you can flip here and find an answer fast. You might even dog-ear this page.

The most useful keyboard shortcuts

Hold the first key, tap the second, let go of both.

Shortcut	What it does
Ctrl + C	Copy
Ctrl + V	Paste
Ctrl + X	Cut (move)
Ctrl + Z	Undo — the "oops" fix
Ctrl + A	Select all
Ctrl + P	Print
Ctrl + F	Find a word on the page
Ctrl + plus / minus	Zoom in / zoom out
Windows key	Open the Start menu
Windows + E	Open your files
Windows + D	Show the Desktop
Windows + L	Lock the computer
Alt + Tab	Switch between open programs
Windows + Shift + S	Take a screenshot

"I want to... → do this"

I want to...	...do this
Open a program	Click **Start**, type its name, press **Enter**
Find a file or photo	Click **Start**, type part of its name; or open **File Explorer** (Windows + E)
Get online	Click the browser (Edge) on the Taskbar, type what you want in the bar at the top
Print something	Press **Ctrl + P**, check the printer is right, click **Print**

I want to...	...do this
Make text bigger	On a webpage: **Ctrl + plus**. Everywhere: Settings → System → Display
Take a screenshot	Press **Windows + Shift + S**, drag a box around what you want
Undo a mistake	Press **Ctrl + Z**
Close a window	Click the **X** in its top-right corner
Get help	Click **Start**, type a question for **Copilot** — or call Bill

Scam red flags — a cut-out-and-keep card

SCAM ALERT

STOP and call Bill if anyone — by phone, email, pop-up, or text — asks for:

• **Gift cards** as payment (Apple, Google Play, Amazon, any card from a drugstore rack) — no real company, agency, or person is ever paid this way.
• **Remote access** to your computer (letting a stranger "connect in" or install something so they can "fix" it).
• Your **passwords, PIN, or banking details** — no legitimate company will ever ask you for these.
• **Secrecy** — "don't tell anyone," "don't hang up," "this is confidential." Real help never needs you to keep secrets.
• You to **"act now"** — any urgent threat or countdown ("your account will be closed," "you'll be arrested") is pressure, and pressure is the scam.

Any one of these is a bright red flag. Don't argue, don't pay, don't click. Hang up or close it, and call Bill at **(330) 200-8042**. (Full details in Part 7.)

CHAPTER 59

Plain-English Glossary

Here, in one place, are the computer words you'll bump into, each explained in a single plain sentence — no jargon dressed up as more jargon. When a word in this book or on your screen leaves you scratching your head, flip here. No need to read it straight through; just look things up as you go.

Word	What it means
Windows	The main program that runs your whole computer and puts everything on the screen; yours is Windows 11.
Desktop	The main background screen you land on after signing in — your "home base."
Taskbar	The strip along the very bottom of the screen that's always there.
Start menu	The menu that opens when you click the Windows flag — your way into programs and settings.
Icon	A small picture that stands for a program, folder, or file; click or double-click it to open it.
App / program	A tool that does one job — email, web browsing, writing. "App" and "program" mean the same thing.
Window	A framed box on screen that holds one program or document; you can have several open at once.
Click	Pressing the left mouse button once to choose or press something.
Double-click	Two quick left-clicks in a row, used to open things.
Right-click	Pressing the right mouse button once to pop up a little menu of options.
Drag	Holding the left button down while you move the mouse, to move something across the screen.
Scroll	Rolling the mouse wheel (or sliding two fingers on a touchpad) to move a page up or down.
File	A single saved item — one letter, one photo, one song.
Folder	A container that holds files, like a labeled folder in a filing cabinet.
File Explorer	The program (a folder icon) you use to browse your files and folders.
Recycle Bin	Where deleted files wait; you can fish them back out until you empty it.
Browser	The program you use to visit websites and get on the internet.

Word	What it means
Edge	The browser that comes built into Windows 11 (its icon is a blue-and-green swirl).
Website	A place on the internet you visit, like a shop, a newspaper, or your bank.
Address bar	The long box at the top of the browser where you type a website's name or a search.
Tab	One open webpage inside the browser; you can have several side by side along the top.
Favorite / bookmark	A saved shortcut to a website so you can return to it with one click.
Download	To copy something from the internet onto your computer (a photo, a document).
Email	Electronic mail — letters you send and receive over the internet, instantly and for free.
Attachment	A file (like a photo or document) clipped to an email and sent along with it.
Wi-Fi	The wireless signal that connects your computer to the internet, with no cable.
OneDrive / cloud	A safe storage space on the internet where your files can be kept and backed up.
Account	Your personal sign-in for a service, so your things stay yours and private.
Password / PIN	Your secret word or short number that proves it's really you signing in.
Windows Hello	Signing in with your fingerprint or face instead of typing a number.
Update	A free improvement Microsoft sends to keep Windows running well and safely.
Windows Security / Defender	The built-in guard that protects your computer from viruses and threats, free of charge.
Antivirus	A program that watches for and blocks harmful software; Windows has one built in.
Scam / phishing	A trick designed to fool you into giving up money, passwords, or access — covered in Part 7.
Copilot	The built-in helper you can ask questions in plain words, right on your computer.
Accessibility	Settings that make the computer easier to see, hear, and use — covered in Part 6.
Settings	The control room (a gear icon) where you adjust how the computer looks and works.
Shortcut	A quick way to do something — either an icon that jumps to a program, or a key combination.

Word	What it means
USB	The common slot (and plug) for connecting a printer, a thumb drive, or a phone cable.

CHAPTER 60

Your Computer Record & Where to Learn More

Let's make this book even more useful by turning it into *your* personal record. Fill in the blanks below in pen — it'll save you (and me) a lot of time when a question comes up. Keep this page private, since it holds a few personal details, and keep the book itself somewhere safe.

My computer at a glance

(Fill in the blanks — write right on the line.)

Detail	Write it here
My computer (make / model)	_____
Windows version	Windows 11 (the 2026 Update)
My Microsoft account email	_____
My Wi-Fi network name	_____
My Wi-Fi password is kept	_____
My PIN is kept	_____
My email address	_____
Printer (make / model)	_____
Is OneDrive turned on?	_____ yes / _____ no
Bill's number	(330) 200-8042

STAY SAFE

A gentle word about those blanks

This page is handy to fill in, but it does hold a couple of sensitive details — so keep this book somewhere private, not out where a visitor or a repair person would see it. And please don't write your full banking passwords here or anywhere in the book. If you'd rather not write your PIN down at all, don't — just leave that line blank. We can always sort it out by phone.

Where to learn more

This book covers everything you need, but if you ever catch the bug and want to explore further, here are good, trustworthy, *free* places to learn — and the two I'd reach for first:

- **Ask Copilot, and ask Bill — first.** Your built-in helper (Part 5) answers questions in plain words any time, and I'm a phone call away at **(330) 200-8042**. Start here.
- **Microsoft's own support site — support.microsoft.com.** The official help straight from the makers of Windows, free and reliable.
- **GCFGlobal.org.** Free, friendly, senior-paced lessons on computers and the internet, written in plain English — a lovely place to practice.
- **Your local library.** Many libraries offer free computer classes and patient one-on-one help; the Portage County libraries are a wonderful resource.
- **YouTube how-to videos.** For almost any "how do I..." question, someone has made a short video showing it step by step. Search for exactly what you want to do.

TIP

Trust the source, not the loudest result

When you go looking for help online, stick with names you recognize — Microsoft, your library, GCFGlobal — and steer clear of any site or video that wants you to download a "fixer" program or call a phone number for "support." The good help is free and never asks for that. When in doubt, close it and ask me instead.

CHAPTER 61

When to Call Bill

Well — you've reached the back of the book. If you've read even a handful of these chapters, you know more than you think you do, and I'm genuinely proud of you for diving in. Before I let you go, I want to leave you with the most important page of all, and it's the simplest one: when in doubt, call me.

FROM BILL

The standing offer — I mean it

No question is too small. Not one. If you're unsure which button to press, if a word on the screen confused you, if you just want someone to sit on the phone while you try something — **call me**. And this one especially: if anything ever makes you wonder "is this a scam?" — a pop-up, a call, an email, a text — that is *exactly* the kind of call I want from you. I would a hundred times rather answer a "turned out to be nothing" call than hear afterward that something went wrong. My number is **(330) 200-8042**. Keep it by the computer, and never feel you're bothering me — helping you is the whole reason I do this work.

What I can do over the phone — and what calls for a visit

A great many things we can sort out right over the telephone, together, in a few minutes. Some things are easier if I come by. Here's the rough idea, so you know what to expect:

Usually a phone call does it	Usually better as a visit
Walking through a setting or a how-to	Setting up a new computer or printer
"Is this a scam?" questions	Trouble with the machine itself or cables
Resetting a forgotten PIN or password	Internet or Wi-Fi that's down in the house
Showing you where something lives	Anything hands-on you'd rather I just handle

And don't fret about sorting your problem into the right column — that's my job, not yours. You just call, tell me what's going on in your own words, and I'll tell you whether we can knock it out on the phone or whether I'll swing by. Easy as that.

Your gentle plan for this week

Here's all I'd like you to do in the days ahead — nothing more. Pick *one* small thing and get comfortable with it. There's no rush and no order you have to follow:

- **Just practice the mouse.** Move the pointer, click a few things, roll the wheel. Five minutes here and there (Part 1 has the practice ideas).
- **Make the text bigger** so the screen is easy on your eyes (Part 6). A comfortable screen makes everything else more inviting.
- **Get comfortable, one small thing at a time.** Open your email and read one message. Look at one photo. Visit one website. That's a wonderful day's work.

Remember the promise I made you on the very first page, and it still holds on this last one: **you can't break it.** Poke around, try things, be curious. If something surprises you, press **Esc**, or **Ctrl + Z** to undo, or just close the window — and you're right back to safe. Little by little, this computer is going to go from a stranger to an old friend. You've got this. I believe it, and soon you will too.

Warmly,

— Bill · Bill's Home Tech · (330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com