# Starter Guides

Four one-page guides for getting started on a computer and online.

Print this packet, staple it, and keep it by your computer. Each page works on its own, so you can start with the one you need.

## What is inside

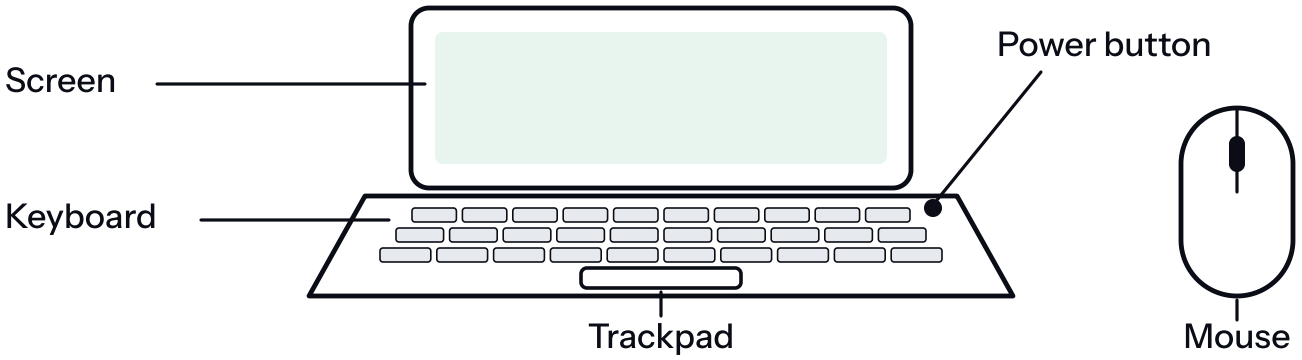

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These guides give general information, not legal or financial advice. Menus and prices change, so each guide shows when we last checked it.

COMPUTER CENTER ONLINE · FREE GUIDE · LEVEL 1

# Using a Computer: The Basics

What the parts are, how to start and stop, and how to open, save and close things.




## Turn it on and off

Press the power button once and wait. When the sign-in screen appears, choose your name and type your password.

To turn it off, use the menu instead of the power button. On Windows, choose Start, then Power, then Shut down. On a Mac, open the Apple menu and choose Shut Down. On Linux, open the main menu and choose Shut Down or Power Off.

## Mouse and trackpad

Slide the mouse, or one finger on the trackpad, to move the pointer. Click once to choose something and double-click to open it. A right-click, or a tap with two fingers, shows more choices. Scroll with the wheel or two fingers.

## Windows and icons

An icon is a small picture that opens a program or a file. Each program opens in a window. The buttons in the top corner of a window make it smaller, make it larger, or close it.

## Type, save and close

Click where you want to type. Save your work often, give it a name you will recognize, and choose a folder such as Documents. When you finish, close the window.

## Shortcuts that help

| Action | Windows, Linux | Mac |
|---|---|---|
| Copy | Ctrl + C | Command + C |
| Paste | Ctrl + V | Command + V |
| Undo | Ctrl + Z | Command + Z |
| Save | Ctrl + S | Command + S |

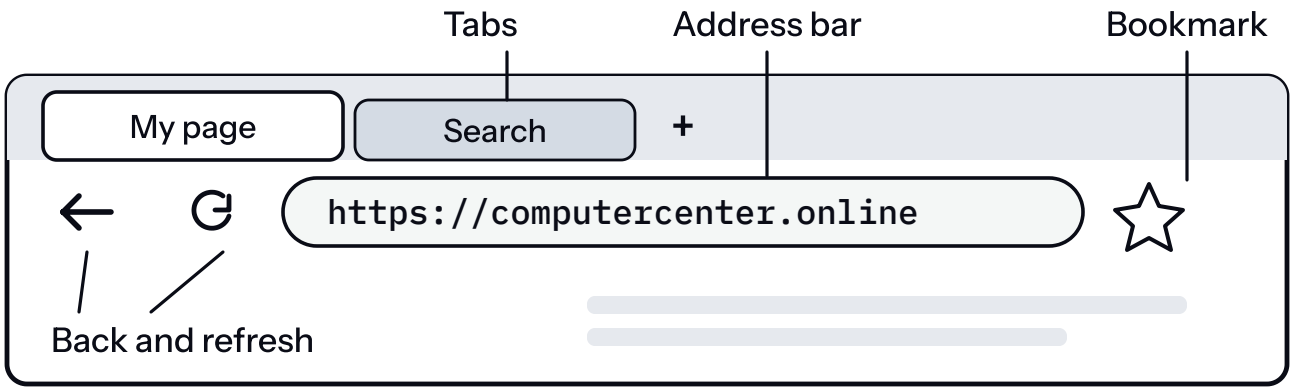
Enter confirms or starts a new line, Backspace erases the letter before the cursor, Shift makes capital letters, and Esc backs out of something.

## If it freezes

Wait one minute and try closing the window. If nothing responds, hold the power button for about 10 seconds until the computer turns off, then turn it on again. You may lose work you had not saved.

# Getting Online: Internet and Wi-Fi

How to connect, use a web browser, and avoid common traps.




### Wi-Fi and the internet

Wi-Fi is the signal between your device and a router, and the router connects to the internet. If Wi-Fi shows connected but pages will not load, the internet service itself may be down.

### Connect to Wi-Fi

Click or tap the Wi-Fi icon: bottom right on Windows, top right on a Mac, and in Settings on a phone. Choose the network name, type the password, and connect. The password for a home network is often on a sticker on the router.

### The browser

A browser is the program that opens websites. Firefox is free and open source. To visit a site, type its address, like computercenter.online, in the address bar. To search, type a few words instead.

### Tabs, back and bookmarks

Each tab holds one page. The back arrow returns to the page before. A bookmark saves a page so you can find it again.

### Search results and pop-ups

The first results marked Ad or Sponsored are paid. Check who runs a site before you trust it. A pop-up that says your computer is infected is a trick, so close the tab. Download programs only from the maker's own site.

### Public Wi-Fi

On a network you do not control, such as a cafe, avoid logging into your bank or typing a card number when you can. Look for https:// at the start of the address.

### Free and low-cost internet

Public libraries in New York offer free Wi-Fi and computers, and the city runs public computer centers. Lifeline is a federal program that takes up to $9.25 a month off phone or internet service for people who qualify. Check at lifelinesupport.org.

**Sources:** lifelinesupport.org; websites of the New York, Brooklyn and Queens public libraries. Last checked November 2026. Is something unclear or out of date? Use the contact form on our website and choose Guide feedback.

# Accounts and Passwords

Make accounts that are hard to break into, and keep them yours.

**Weak** ✗

`sunshine1`

**Strong** ✓

`river lamp ocean button cactus paper`




**Two-step login**
Code from an app

## What an account is

An account is a username or email address plus a password. Websites, apps and computers use accounts to know it is you.

## Make a strong password

A longer password is harder to guess. Use at least 16 characters, make them random, and use a different password for every account. Six random words work well, picked by chance and not from your own life. Avoid names, birthdays and pet names. If one site leaks a password you reused, every account that shares it is open.

## Keep track of them

A password manager stores them so you only remember one strong password. KeePassXC is free, open source, and keeps your passwords in a file on your own computer. Ask us if you want help setting it up.

## Add a second step

Two-step login, also called multi-factor or 2FA, asks for a code after your password. An authenticator app makes a new code every 30 seconds and is safer than a code sent by text. Aegis (Android) and 2FAS (iPhone and Android) are free and open source. A text code is still better than none. Keep the backup codes somewhere safe.

## Protect your email first

Email can reset your other accounts, so give it your strongest password and two-step login.

## Never share codes

No real company, bank or helper will ask for your password or the code sent to you. Anyone who does is trying to get into your account.

## Names and recovery

Most sites let you use a name you choose. Banks and government sites usually need your legal name. Set up a recovery email or phone now, so Forgot password works when you need it.

**Sources:** CISA Secure Our World (cisa.gov/secureourworld); EFF Surveillance Self-Defense (ssd.eff.org). Last checked November 2026. Is something unclear or out of date? Use the contact form on our website and choose Guide feedback.

COMPUTER CENTER ONLINE · FREE GUIDE · LEVEL 1

# Shopping Online Safely

Check the seller, pick a safe way to pay, and spot scams.

**Credit card**
Strongest protection

**Debit card**
Report problems fast

**Gift cards, wires, crypto to strangers**
Almost no way back

## Before you buy

Search the store's name with the word reviews or scam, and read what people say on other sites. Look for a real address, a phone number and a clear return policy. Check the web address for spelling tricks. A price that seems too good is a warning. Read the return policy before you pay.

## How to pay

A credit card is the safest choice. You can dispute a wrong or unauthorized charge, and the most you can owe for unauthorized charges is $50. A debit card pulls money straight from your bank account, so report problems the same day. With either card, tell your card company within 60 days of the statement that shows the charge.

## Do not pay a stranger this way

Do not pay with a gift card, wire transfer, cryptocurrency or payment app when someone insists on it, and do not deposit a check and send money back. Honest sellers do not demand these, and the money is almost impossible to recover.

## Signs of a scam

- You are pressured to act right now.
- You won a prize you never entered.
- A message says your account is locked and sends you to a link.
- Someone you only know online asks for money.
- A job asks you to pay a fee first.

Real companies do not ask for your password or a code.

## Used items and marketplaces

Meet in a public place and check the item before you pay. Be wary of anyone who asks you to pay first or sends a check for more than the price.

## Names and addresses

Your bank sets the name on your card, and some banks can print your chosen name on it even if your legal name has not changed. Ask yours. For delivery, a PO box, a store pickup point or a trusted friend's address can work. Some pickup points ask for ID, so check first.

## If something goes wrong

Contact the seller, then your card company. Save your order confirmations and report scams at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

**Sources:** FTC (consumer.ftc.gov); FDIC and CFPB card-dispute guidance. General information, not legal or financial advice. Last checked November 2026. Is something unclear or out of date? Use the contact form on our website and choose Guide feedback.