Apple laptop: Security and privacy

Staying safer and more secure when using macOS Catalina.

macOS Catalina has powerful safety and security features. The **Sign-in** screen protects your computer and prevents others from accessing your information without your permission, while other features work in the background to stop viruses and other threats.

What you will need

Before you begin the course, your Apple computer must have the latest operating software, which is macOS Catalina. For more information about **macOS Catalina**, refer to **page 6** of this guide. You should check that your computer is connected to mains power, switched on, and showing the **Sign-in** screen. Also check that the mouse and keyboard are connected properly, and that your computer is connected to your home Wi-Fi and the internet.
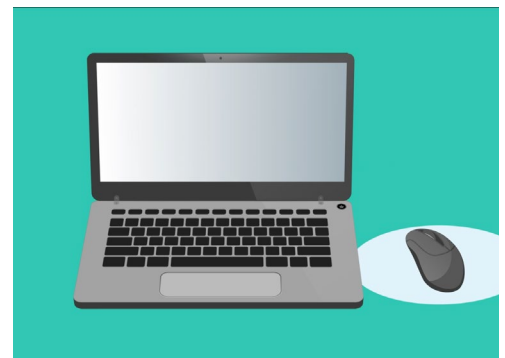
You'll also need the password you created when you first set up your computer.

First steps

When your computer is showing the **Sign-in** screen, it is locked and secure.
To sign in, you'll need the password of the account you use on this computer.

To sign in:

1. Check that the Sign-in screen is showing your account name and image.

2. In the white box under your account name, enter your account **Password** and then press **Enter** on the keyboard.

3. The Sign-in screen goes away, and the **Desktop** appears.

You sign into your computer
with a password

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How to secure your computer

It's important to secure your computer whenever you're not using it, to protect your information. One way to do this is to switch it off. Before you switch off your computer you should save your work and close any open applications first.

Then hold down the power button for about five seconds. (Be careful not to hold down the power button for more than five seconds, or your computer will switch off and then automatically switch back on again.) Next, you'll see a box which says **Are you sure you want to shut down your computer now?**

Remember to close apps and save your work before switching off your computer

The box offers four choices:

1. **Restart** turns off your computer then switches it back on automatically, ready for you to sign in with your password.

2. **Sleep** lets you secure your computer without shutting it down.

3. **Cancel** lets you stop your computer from shutting down.

4. **Shut Down** turns off your computer completely. To use your computer again, you will need to press the **Power** button to turn it back on, then sign in with your password.

Using the Sleep function

When you choose the **Sleep** option, the screen will go black. Your computer is now locked and nobody can access it without your password.

To wake up your computer, press any key on the keyboard.

For security, your Apple computer will also go to sleep automatically if you haven't used it for a period of time.

If your computer has gone to sleep by itself for less than five minutes, you can wake it up and use it without having to sign back in. After five minutes, you will need to sign in with your username and password.

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Changing the Require password delay

While the five-minute delay can be handy, it's more secure to have a shorter delay. You can change the delay so your Apple computer locks after one minute in automatic Sleep mode.

1. Click on the **Apple icon** in the top left of the screen.

2. From the menu that appears, click on **System Preferences**

3. On this panel, click on **Security & Privacy**. A new panel opens, and **General** should be highlighted.

4. Click the box to the right of the words **Require password** to see a list of time options.

5. Choose the **1 minute** option.

6. A box will appear and you will need to enter your password to confirm the change. Type in your password and click **OK**.

7. Click on the small red button in the top left to close **Security & Privacy**.

The Security and Privacy icon opens options for keeping your computer and personal information safe

How macOS Catalina uses notifications

macOS Catalina does a lot in the background to keep your computer up to date and secure. From time to time, it will let you know what it is doing by showing a **notification**.

Notifications appear in the top right of the screen, and other apps and websites can send notifications too.

Most notifications disappear after a moment, which means they are not urgent or important.

If the notification is from an app or website you trust, you can click on it for more information about what to do next.

Notifications appear in the top right of the computer screen

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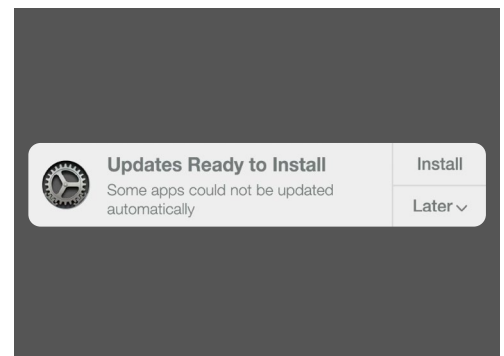## How macOS Catalina sends an urgent notification

Sometimes, your computer will send you a pop-up notification that stays on your screen. This means it wants to tell you something important.

Example 1: Basic update

A basic system update appears as a notification at the top right of the screen. You can click **Install** to get the update now, or **Later** to choose when you would like to be reminded from a list of options.

Choosing **Turn on Automatic Software Updates** means your Apple computer will take care of some updates automatically, and you'll see fewer notifications.

If you click **Install**, you might have to wait a few minutes for the update to be downloaded before it is installed. This will happen in the background, and you won't have to restart your computer.

An update notification will let you choose when to install the update

Example 2: Important update

Some updates require a restart of your computer. You can click **Restart** on the notification to restart your computer and install the updates now, or **Later** to choose when you'd like to start the update.

If you're ready to install the update right away, make sure to save your work and close any applications.

When you click **Restart**, you might have to wait a few minutes for the update to download before it is installed.

When your computer is ready, a box will appear and ask **Are you sure you want to restart your computer now?** You can:

1. Click **Cancel** to stop your computer from restarting.

2. Click **Restart** to restart your computer straight away.

3. Do nothing, in which case your computer will restart by itself after 60 seconds.

After your computer restarts, you'll see the **Sign-in** screen, and you'll need to type in your **password** and press **Enter**.

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How macOS Catalina protects you against viruses

Your computer includes built-in security, which works away in the background to keep your computer protected.

This includes helping to protect your computer from viruses, keeping your account passwords safe, and much more.

Keeping your software up-to-date is an important part of maintaining your computer's security.

You might wish to also purchase antivirus software for extra protection. You can buy it from a shop or website. Be aware that antivirus software usually has ongoing subscription costs, so be sure to read the fine print carefully before signing up.

Blocking your computer's webcam

Most computers have a small built-in camera called a webcam. To check if your computer has a webcam, look at the top of the screen for a small circle.

This camera is useful for making video calls, and your computer will automatically turn it on when you need it.

Although it's unlikely, it's possible for someone else to access your camera and turn it on without your permission.

To protect against this, simply get a small piece of masking tap, and put it over the camera!
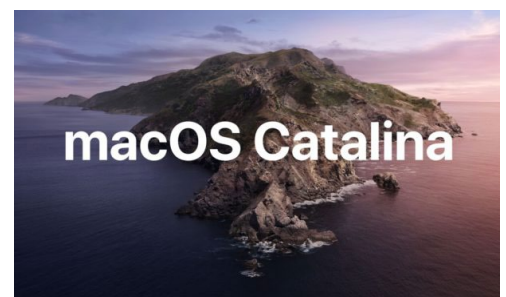
All about macOS Catalina

Everything you need to know about Apple's operating software, macOS Catalina, including what it is, how to check if you have it, and how to install it on your computer if you don't.

What is macOS Catalina and why do I need it?

All computers need a special kind of software to work called an operating system. Catalina is an operating software designed by Apple.

Catalina makes it possible for your computer to open documents, play music and videos, send emails, browse the internet and much more.

You computer's operating software controls the way it works and provides the latest security features

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It also provides your computer with the latest security features and helps to protect it against viruses and other threats.

To follow along with our courses you'll need the latest edition of macOS Catalina.

How do I tell if I have macOS Catalina?

Most new Apple computers come with macOS Catalina. The best way to be certain your computer has macOS Catalina is to push the power button to turn on the computer.

Once you've signed in and you're looking at the **Desktop**, click on the **Apple icon** on the top left of the desktop. Then, click on **About This Mac** in the dropdown menu.

The **Overview** panel will open, it should say macOS Catalina at the top, with a version number that begins with 10.15.

If you see a different name, such as macOS Mojave version 10.14.6, then you're not running macOS Catalina, but you can update to the latest edition for free. This guide will show you how.

What if my computer is second-hand?

If you've just been permanently given, or have purchased, a second-hand computer, and it still has the previous owner's information on it, it's best to do a full reset before you continue.

Doing a reset will remove the previous owner's personal details, files, programs, and will get your computer ready for you to set up. The *Apple laptop: Prepare to set up* course will show you to do this. You can start this course when you're ready or keep reading this guide for some information about keeping macOS Catalina up to date and secure.

How do I check if my computer is up to date with macOS Catalina?

Your computer regularly checks to see if there are new updates and versions of operating software. When it finds one, a message will pop up on your computer to tell you that you need to download and install it.

Almost all Apple computers made after 2012 should work with macOS Catalina. You can find out more and check at:

https://www.apple.com/au/macos/how-to-upgrade/#hardware-requirements

If your computer hasn't been switched on for a while, or you just bought it, you might like to check for any updates that came out while your computer wasn't being used.

Before you start, make sure your computer is connected to your home Wi-Fi.

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With your computer showing the **Desktop**, click on the **Apple menu** icon and the top left of the desktop. Click on **About This Mac** in the dropdown menu. The **Overview** panel will open.

Click the **Software Update** button at the bottom. Depending on your computer, either the **Software Update preferences panel** or the **App Store** app will open.

If the **App Store** opens, your computer will check for updates automatically. It will also tell you whether a newer version of the operating software is available for your computer. If this is the case, it will prompt you with an **Install** button.

You need to be connected to the internet to upgrade your computer's operating software

If the **Software Update preferences panel** opens, look for **Update & Security** and click it. Your computer will look for any updates or new versions of operating software and, if it finds some, you'll see **An update is available for your Mac** message with an **Update Now** button.

Whichever way your computer works, it's possible that it might need to restart while installing updates or a newer version of operating software.

Before any restart, it's important to save all your files and close your applications. If you're upgrading to a newer version of the operating software, it's also a good idea to back-up your files to a USB stick or USB hard drive. You can learn how to do this in the *Apple laptop: Managing storage* course.

Once that's done, click the **Update Now** or **Install** button to start the upgrade.