

Apple laptop: System preferences

Getting macOS Catalina working just the way *you* like.

Your Apple computer lets you change lots of different settings, or preferences, such as the language it uses, the date and time, screen brightness, Wi-Fi settings, and more.

What you will need

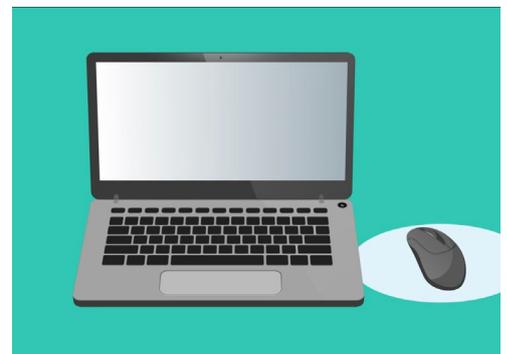
Before you begin the course, your computer must have the latest operating software, which is **macOS Catalina**. For more information about macOS, refer to the *Apple laptop: Security and privacy* guide. Check that your computer is connected to mains power, switched on, and showing the desktop. You should also check that the mouse and keyboard are connected properly, and that you have your home Wi-Fi network name and password to hand.

First steps

Many of your computer's settings are controlled from its **System Preferences** options. To open them:

1. Click on the **Apple icon** in the top left of the screen.
2. From the drop-down list, click **System Preferences**.
3. The **System Preferences panel** opens on the screen.

The **System Preferences** panel has various icons that let you access different options. You can click on any icon to explore the settings for that topic.



System Preferences lets you adjust your computer's language, date, time, screen brightness and more.

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Setting the time and date

On the **System Preferences** panel, find the icon labelled **Date & Time**, which looks like a clock. Click it to open the **Date & Time** menu.

Before you can make any changes, you need to click on the padlock at the bottom left, where it says **Click the lock to make changes**.

A box will appear asking for your computer's username and password. This is the username and password you use to sign into your computer.

Enter your password in the box, and click **Unlock**.

To set the date manually:

1. Find the box next to **Set date and time automatically**, and click it so it does not show a tick.
2. You can now change the time and date manually. In the box above the calendar, click the first number, which represents the **day**. Use the number keys to type in a new date.
3. You can also use the up and down arrows, or click a day on the **calendar** below, to change it too.
4. Click on the **month** to highlight it, then click the arrows to change it.
5. Next, click on the **year** to highlight it, and then click the arrows to change it.



The Date & Time icon opens options for manually setting your computer's calendar and clock

To set the time manually:

1. Click on the box with the **time** in it to highlight the hours and minutes.
2. Use your keyboard or click the up and down arrows to change the **hour, minute, second** and whether it's **AM** or **PM**.

When you're happy with the date and time that you have set, click the **Save** button to set it.

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Setting the time zone

Your computer will also want to know what time zone you live in. To set your time zone:

1. First click the **Time Zone** tab at the top of the panel to see the **Time Zone** options.
2. Untick **Set time zone automatically using current location**.
3. A map will appear, showing the current time zone your computer is using. It's also written under the map, with a box showing the nearest city.
4. On the map, click and drag the small blue button to change its location on the map. The details below the map will change as you move the button.
5. You can also click on the arrow in the **Closest City** box to see a list, and choose another city.



Your computer automatically shows the time and date for your location

Letting your computer set the date and time

Allowing your computer to control the date and time is handy, so it's best to keep **Set the time automatically** and **Set the time zone automatically** switched on.

1. Click the box next to **Set the time zone automatically** so it turns blue with a tick.
2. Click **Date & Time** tab to return to that menu, and then click the box next to **Set the time automatically** so it turns blue with a tick.
3. To finish, click the on the **padlock** to save these settings.

Your computer will now keep the time, date, and time zone adjusted automatically.

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Setting your computer's language

To change your computer's language settings, first click on the **Show All** button at the top of the **Date & Time** panel, to return to the **System Preferences** panel.

Click on the **Language & Region** icon, which looks like a flag. The **Language & Region** menu will open.

On the left you'll see your preferred languages, which may list only **English**. Below, it should say **English (Australia) - Primary**, which means it is the main language used on your computer.

To select another language:

1. Click on the + symbol below the **Preferred languages** list.
2. A list of available languages appears. Scroll to find the language you want, and click on it.
3. Click the **Add** button to select that language.
4. A new box appears, and you can make this new language the primary language. You may need to restart your computer for this to take effect.

Checking and setting your computer's region

Choosing the correct region helps ensure that your computer provides you with information and updates specifically for Australia, and that your computer uses Australian date, time and calendar formats.

On the right side of the **Language & Region** menu, you can see details for your region, calendar, and other common formats.

To set your region to Australia:

1. Click on **Region**.
2. Scroll down to **Oceania**.
3. Click on **Australia**.

When you're finished, click the red dot in the top left to close the **Language & Region** menu.

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Changing the volume, and screen brightness

An Apple keyboard has special keys to quickly adjust the volume of the speakers and the brightness of the screen. They are in the top row of the keyboard, above the number keys.

To adjust the volume with the keyboard:

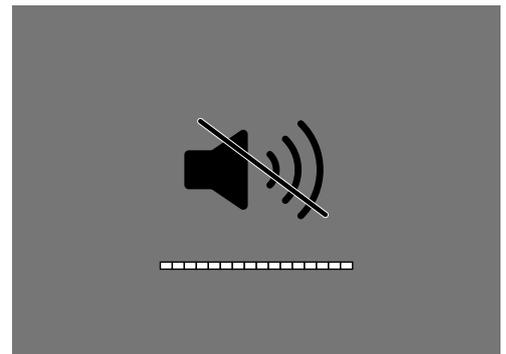
1. If you are using an Apple keyboard, press the **F12** key to increase volume, and **F11** key to decrease it. A speaker icon will pop up on the screen to show the volume changing.
2. You can mute the sound by pressing the **F10** key. Press **F10** again to unmute it.

To adjust the volume with the mouse:

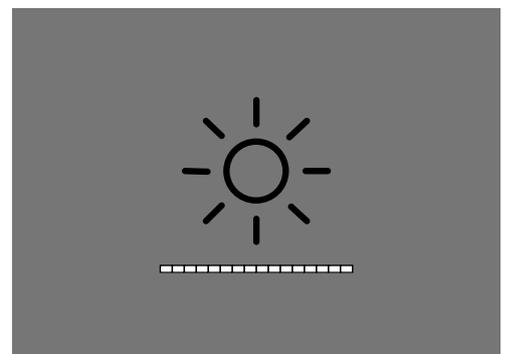
1. If your keyboard doesn't have volume keys, you can adjust the volume with the mouse. In the top right of the screen, find the **speaker icon** and click it once.
2. A slider control appears. Use the mouse to slide the button on the control to the right to increase volume, and to the left to decrease it.

To adjust the screen brightness with the keyboard:

1. If you are using an Apple keyboard, the **F1** and **F2** keys work to change screen brightness. You can see these keys also have a sun or lightbulb symbol on them.
2. Press the larger sun, or lightbulb key to increase brightness, and the smaller one to decrease it. An icon will appear on the screen to show the brightness increasing or decreasing.



A speaker icon indicates changes in volume



An icon that looks like the sun or a lightbulb shows changes in screen brightness

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To adjust the screen brightness with the mouse:

1. Click on the **Apple** icon at the top left of the screen, and then click **System Preferences** from the drop-down list.
2. From the list of icons that appears, choose **Displays**. A menu will open and **Display** should be highlighted in blue at the top.
3. You'll also see a brightness slider control. Use your mouse to slide the circle on the line to the right to increase brightness.
4. Use your mouse to slide the circle on the line to the left to decrease brightness.

The screen will brighten or dim as you move the slider. When you've found a level that suits you, click the red button in the top left to save your choice and close **System Preferences**.

How to check your computer is connected to Wi-Fi

Your computer should remember your home Wi-Fi and connect automatically each time you switch it on. But from time to time, you may need to check this connection or reconnect it manually.

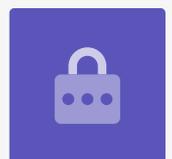
To check your Wi-Fi is switched on and connected:

1. At the top right of the screen, find a set of curved lines that look like a slice of pie. This is the **Wi-Fi icon**.
2. If all the lines are black, you are connected to the internet.
3. If Wi-Fi is turned off, you'll see an empty triangle with a curved top instead.
4. If the lines in the Wi-Fi icon are grey, it means your computer's Wi-Fi is turned on, but not connected.



The Wi-Fi icon is found in the top right of your computer screen

Remember public Wi-Fi networks may not be secure. You shouldn't use any public Wi-Fi for online banking or other tasks that involve your personal details.



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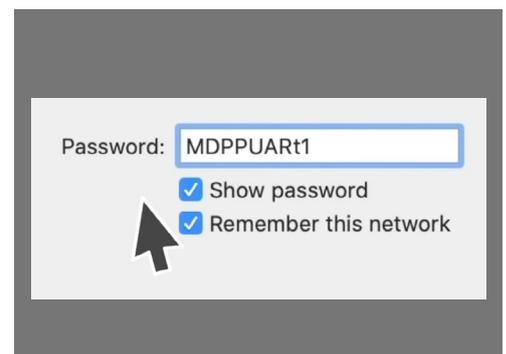
If your Wi-Fi is turned off:

1. Click on the **Wi-Fi** icon, and a drop-down menu appears.
2. On the menu, click **Turn Wi-Fi on**.
3. You should now see a list of **Wi-Fi networks**.
4. If the first network has a tick next to it, that means you're connected to that network, and the internet.

If your Wi-Fi is not connected:

1. Click on the **Wi-Fi** icon to see a list of available networks.
2. You might see several networks, such as your neighbours' or nearby public networks. If a network has a padlock next to it, it's protected by a password.
3. From the list of networks, find your home Wi-Fi name and click on it.
4. A box will appear asking you to enter the Wi-Fi password.
5. Enter the password carefully, being sure to match all capital letters and symbols. You can click **Show password** to check you have it right.
6. The **Remember this network box** should be ticked, so next time your computer will connect automatically.
7. When you've typed in your password, click **Join**.

The box will disappear and the Wi-Fi icon will flick on and off for a few seconds. Then all the lines will turn black to show you are connected to the network.



Check that you've entered your password correctly by clicking **Show password**