Apple desktop: Managing storage

Saving space on your computer and keeping it running nicely.

You can use macOS Catalina's **Storage** feature to make sure you don't run out of space for files, and you can also delete files yourself and use the **Bin** to get them back if you make a mistake.

What you will need

Before you begin the course, your computer must have the latest edition of the operating software, which is **macOS Catalina**. For more information about macOS Catalina, refer to the *Apple desktop: Security and privacy* guide. You should check that the mouse and keyboard are connected properly, and that your computer is connected to the internet via your home Wi-Fi.

You should be signed into your computer, and it should be showing the desktop.

If you'd like to follow along on your own computer, you should also have a USB stick that hasn't been shared with anyone else.

What is storage?

Your computer stores files on the **hard drive**. If the hard drive fills up, you won't be able to save more files, and the computer may not run smoothly. The hard drive is sometimes also called the **hard disk** or **hard disk drive**.

Your computer comes with built-in storage-saving features, which keep an eye on the hard drive, and how much space the computer has left.

Built-in features help ensure your computer doesn't run out of space for files

Don't download any app that offers to clean up or optimise your computer for you. It will almost always contain a scam that makes your computer less safe to use.
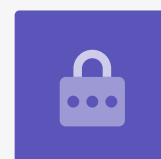
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How to check how much space your computer has left

To check hard drive space, do the following:

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

2. Some options will appear. Click on **About this Mac** from the list.

3. On the panel that appears, look for the **Storage** tab, and click it.

4. You'll see a bar graph that shows how much space is being used on your computer, and how much is left.

5. The different colours represent different types of files. This lets you see how much space the documents, photos, videos and other files are using.

6. Click **Manage** to see options for freeing up space on your computer.
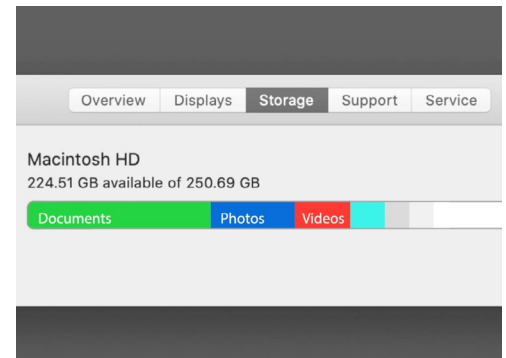
A bar graph shows how much space different file types are using

How to manage freeing up space

When you click on **Manage**, **Recommendations** will be highlighted on the left, and more options will appear on the right.

1. First, click on **Optimise**.

2. **Optimise** lets your computer automatically remove old emails and some video files you've already watched.

3. A box will appear asking you to confirm this action. Click **Optimise** in this box.

4. Under Optimise, click on **Empty Bin Automatically** to automatically delete items that have been in your computer's Bin for more than 30 days. Click **Turn On**.

5. A box will appear asking you to confirm this action. Click **Turn On** to confirm.

6. Finally, the **Reduce Clutter** option lets you click on **Review Files** to see a list of all the files on your computer. This shows items that are taking up the most space so you can delete them if you want.

How to delete a file yourself

You can also safely delete an item from your computer's desktop yourself.

First click the **red dot** in the top left of the **Storage** panel to close it. Then again to close **System Information**. Your computer should now be showing the desktop.

In this example, we have a file on the desktop we are going to delete. If you don't have a file you want to delete right now, you can keep this guide handy for when you do.
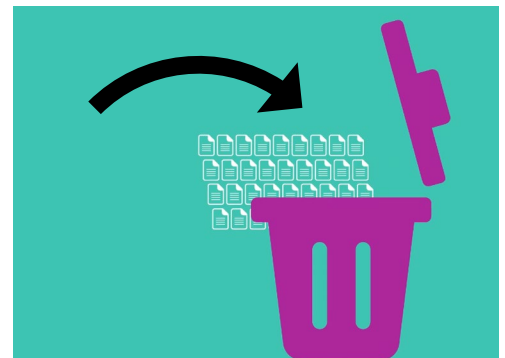
To delete an item:

1. Decide which file you want to delete, and then use your mouse to right-click on it. A **Context** menu will appear.

2. Look for the **Move to Bin** option near the top. Click it to delete the file.

Files you want to remove from your computer can be moved into the Bin

Getting a file back from the Bin

If you deleted a file by accident, don't worry! You can get it back right away using the **Bin**.

1. First, move the cursor to the row of icons at the bottom. This is known as the **Dock** and is where you'll find icons for some of your computer's most commonly used applications.

2. The **Bin** is on the far right. Click on it now.
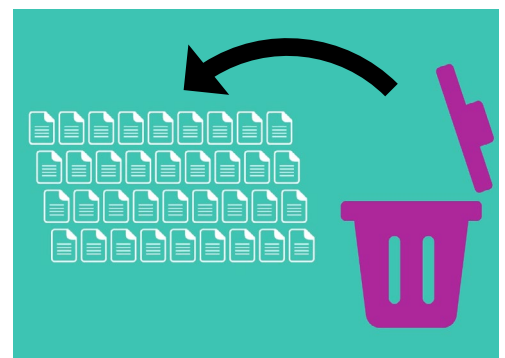
If you accidentally deleted a file, you can take it back out off the Bin

3. A panel opens showing at the files that have been sent to the Bin recently. Find the file you just deleted.

4. Right-click on the file and some options appear. Click on **Put Back**.

5. The file will disappear from the Bin and then reappear on the desktop.

Whenever you **Put Back** an item, it returns to the place you deleted it from, such as the desktop or from inside a folder.

Emptying the Bin

You can make sure items are deleted permanently, by emptying the Bin.

1. Click on the **red dot** in the top left of the **Recycle Bin** window to close it.

2. Now, find the **Bin** icon in the **Dock**. If the icon has rubbish inside, the Bin contains items you can delete.

3. Right-click on the **Bin** icon and from the options that appear, point your mouse cursor to **Empty Bin**.

4. If you are sure you want to delete everything in the **Bin**. click on **Empty Bin**.

5. A box asking you to confirm you want to permanently delete all items will appear. Click **Empty Bin**, and you'll see the **Bin's** icon has changed to an empty bin.

If the Bin icon has rubbish inside, there are items you can delete

Getting ready to move items onto a USB stick

A **USB stick** plugs into your computer's USB port, and is a safe and easy way to transfer and store files and folders.

This example will move a folder from the desktop onto a USB stick. You can keep this guide handy for when you have a USB stick and some files you want to move.

1. Plug the USB stick into your computer.

2. Once it's plugged in, it will appear as an icon on your desktop.

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To avoid viruses, only use a USB stick that's brand new or hasn't been shared with anyone else. You can buy one from the newsagency or supermarket, and they don't cost much!
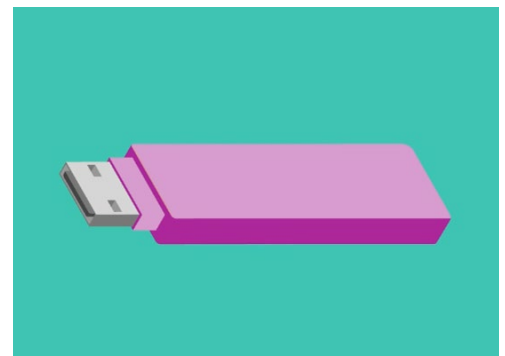
3. Now find the **Finder** icon in the Dock and click on it.

4. The **Finder** panel will open. On the left, look down the list to find **Locations**. Your USB stick will appear here, and its name will be something similar to USB Disk.

5. Click on the USB stick name, and the panel on the right will change to show the files on the USB stick. If the panel is blank, it means the USB stick has no files on it at all.

Moving items to a USB stick

Now we're ready to move files onto the USB stick. This demonstration will move a folder of files called **Gardening**, onto the USB stick.

1. Left-click and hold the mouse on the **Gardening** folder on the desktop.

2. Use the mouse to drag the folder across to the **Finder** panel.

3. When the folder is over the window, release the mouse button to drop the folder onto the USB stick.

4. The computer will copy the **Gardening** folder and the files inside it, onto the USB stick.

A USB stick is a safe and easy way to save and transfer files from your computer

When you see the Gardening folder appear in the USB's **Finder** panel, it's finished copying and the files are safely stored on the USB stick.

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Deleting files from the computer after they are copied to a USB stick

It's important to remember the Gardening folder has only been copied onto the USB stick, and is still on your desktop. To free up storage space on your computer we're going to delete the folder from the desktop.

1. Right-click on the Gardening folder on the desktop to show the **Context** menu.

2. From the options that appear, click **Move to Bin** to delete it from the desktop and transfer to the **Bin**.

3. To completely remove the file from your computer, right click on the **Bin** icon, select **Empty Bin** from the list, and then select **Empty Bin** once more to confirm.

All done! The folder is on the USB stick, and the computer has a bit more space now.

Safely removing the USB stick

When you've finished copying files, it's important not to just unplug the USB stick right away. If you do, your files might become damaged.

Instead, you should safely eject the USB stick.

1. Look for the USB stick name and icon in the left of the **Finder** panel.

2. Next to the icon, you will see an arrow pointing upwards. Click on the arrow once to let your computer know you're about to unplug the USB stick.

3. After a moment, the **Finder** panel will close and the icon for the USB stick will disappear from the desktop.

4. You can now unplug the USB stick from your computer and put it away somewhere safe.

Eject the USB stick properly before removing it from your computer to avoid damaging your files