A beginner's guide to connecting to the internet

Helping you get online

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1. Introducing you to the internet

Hello,

Welcome to Age UK's 'Beginner's guide to getting connected to the internet'. This guide will show you how to set up an internet connection – also known as getting online – in your home. It will also show you how to search for information online, so you can, for example, look up opening times for the supermarket or plan a day out.

Firstly, let's answer the big question: what is the internet? It's a global system of networks that connect computers all over the world. You can use a device, such as a computer, tablet or a smartphone, to connect to the internet and access information and services.

The internet is a really exciting tool. Before I started using it, I didn't realise how much you could do with it. You can check emails, do online shopping and banking, keep in touch with family and friends, read the news, watch television and use social media.

Getting online can be beneficial to your everyday life. You can use it to look up any topic you're interested in, from the times of local buses to finding out the potential side effects of a medication you've been prescribed.

Learning at your own pace

You can work through the guide by yourself, with the support of an Age UK Digital Champion, or friends, family and carers. It's best to work through the guide at your own pace, repeating any sections you want to focus on. Try to take the time to reflect on what you've learned and make notes, as this will help to build your skills and confidence.

If you've got any questions as you work your way through the guide, you may be able to get support from your local Age UK or local Age Cymru. You can find your local Age UK at www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/

Once you're feeling comfortable with the information in this guide, you can move onto our intermediate guide to learn how to connect to Wi-Fi when you're out and use more advanced tools to search for information online.

Now, it's time to get you connected to the internet.

Ruth, 75

2. Using this guide

2. Using this guide

This is a beginner's guide for people who'd like to know how to use the internet at home and search for basic information online. To use this guide you'll need:

- access to a device like a desktop computer, laptop or tablet.

- an internet connection

You can read 'A guide to choosing a device' to help you find the right technology for your needs.

3. Understanding key terminology

3. Understanding key terminology

We've explained some key terms below to help you understand what is involved in connecting to the internet. These are in alphabetical order so you can refer to them when working through the guide:

Address bar: The address bar is at the top of your web browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. It's where the address of a webpage (or URL) appears. You can type a web address straight into the address bar, for example, typing 'www. ageuk.org.uk' will take you to our website.

Application, or 'app': A type of program that you can download for your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. There are lots of apps available, from games and puzzles to banking.

Apple: A brand of phones and tablets. Apple phones are known as iPhones and tablets are called iPads. If your device isn't Apple, it's likely to be an Android device.

App Store: An official, pre-installed program on iPhones and iPads which gives you access to apps.

Android: The name of the software that many devices use to function. Phones and tablets from lots of different brands fall into the bracket of Android devices. These brands include Alcatel, Google, HTC, LG, Moto, Samsung and Sony.

Bandwidth: The amount of data that can be transferred through your internet connection. The lower the bandwidth, the slower the speed of the internet connection. If your bandwidth is low, it could mean webpages load slowly, especially if they have images. Or you may struggle to watch videos online.

Broadband: Broadband is a generic term for the internet connection which allows you to access the internet. To get home broadband, you'll need to set up a contract with a broadband provider, such as BT, Sky or Virgin.

Broadband/internet provider: This is a company that provides your broadband/ internet connection, such as BT, Sky or Virgin. They will charge you for the equipment needed to connect your smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer to the internet.

Click: This is when you tap on a mouse or the touch pad on a laptop to open a file or webpage. Sometimes you may need to click twice, known as double clicking. For example, you might double click to open a document in an email.

Device: A general term for a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Drag: If your device has a touchscreen, you put your finger on the screen of your device and move it across, up, down, left or right.

Drag click: If you're using a mouse, or a touchpad on a laptop, to interact with your device, you need to 'click' first, before 'dragging'. Click on the object that you want to move on the screen. You can move it while keeping your finger pressed down on your mouse.

3. Understanding key terminology

Fibre optic broadband: A type of broadband that uses fibre cables made of plastic or glass, rather than copper wires. These carry more data at higher speeds so the internet connection is faster.

Hardware: This describes the physical parts of a computer such as the screen, mouse and keyboard.

Icon: An image or symbol which represents an app or function on your phone, tablet or computer screen. You usually 'tap' (see definition below) on an icon to open an app.

Internet: Also known as the world wide web (www), this a large network that connects computers and devices around the world through which you can access information. You'll see the abbreviation 'www' at the beginning of web addresses. For example, our website is www.ageuk.org.uk.

Operating system: The software that manages different programs on a computer, phone or tablet. Examples include Android for certain smartphones, such as Samsung and Sony, and iOS for Apple devices.

Play Store: An official, pre-installed program on Android devices which gives you access to apps.

Router: A device that connects your computer, phone or tablet to a broadband-ready telephone line and sends out your home internet signal.

Search bar: A box in a search engine where you can enter a topic to search.

Search engine: These help you to find information on the internet. Popular search engines include Google and Bing. You can type in keywords in the space provided. The search engine will search through relevant webpages and display them in a list. Someone might tell you to 'Google' something, which means looking up information online using Google. You access search engines through a web browser (see below).

Smartphone: A mobile phone which connects to the internet. You can use it to do everything from sending emails to making video calls.

Spyware: An unwanted program that runs on your device, which can make it slow and unreliable or make you a target for online criminals. Anti-spyware software helps protect your device against security threats caused by spyware.

Tablet: A small portable computer with a touch screen. You tap the screen with your finger or a special pen, often referred to as a 'stylus', to use the device rather than using a keyboard and 'mouse'.

Tap: This is when you touch and then lift your finger off the touch screen of your device to carry out an action. This could be to move to a new screen or open an app on your device. It's the equivalent of clicking a mouse on a computer. You can read more about this in 'A guide to making your device easier to use'.

3. Understanding key terminology

Touch screen: A type of screen on a device that allows you to use your finger, or a stylus, to navigate and interact with content. This is an alternative to a mouse and keyboard.

Viruses: These are programs that spread from one computer to another by email or through websites. They can slow your computer down, display unwanted pop-up messages and delete files.

Web/internet browser: A program that runs on your device. It allows you to access webpages on the internet. Common web browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer or Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari.

Webpage: Webpages provide information through text, images and videos, and are displayed on your web browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. Websites are made up of webpages, just like a book is made up of pages.

Website: A set of related webpages owned by one person or organisation. For example, Age UK's website is made up of hundreds of individual webpages on different topics, but all the webpages begin with 'www. ageuk.org.uk'. You visit websites on your web browser, such as Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge.

Wireless network, or 'Wi-Fi': How your phone, tablet, laptop or computer connects to the internet without using wires or cables. You can access public Wi-Fi networks, for example when out and about, or arrange a contract with an internet provider so you can use Wi-Fi at home.

Webcam: A video camera that allows other people to see you on video calls, such as Skype or Zoom. Most smartphones, tablets and computers have inbuilt webcams. You may also hear people just call them cameras. If you have an older computer, you might need to buy a separate webcam if you want to be seen on video calls.

WhatsApp: An app that allows you to message friends and family, make phone and video calls, and send and receive photos and videos. It uses your internet connection rather than your mobile phone's text or call allowances. This guide will show you how to use WhatsApp to receive and make video calls.

Wireless network, or 'WiFi': How your phone, tablet, laptop or computer connects to the internet without using wires or cables. You can access public WiFi networks, for example when out and about, or arrange a contract with an internet provider so you can use WiFi at home.

Zoom: A type of video calling tool, which you can install as an app on your phone, tablet, laptop or computer, or access through your internet browser. This guide will show you how to join Zoom calls on a laptop or computer without installing the app or setting up an account.

4. How to connect to the internet in your home

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To get online, you need to have a device that connects to the internet. This could be a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet. You then need to set up a broadband connection with a broadband provider, such as BT, Sky or Virgin.

Types of broadband connection

Broadband allows you to connect your computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet to the internet. It uses data from the internet – known as downloading – and sends data – called uploading – to the internet.

Broadband speeds are measured in megabits per second (Mbps). The higher the number, the faster your connection.

Here are the most common types of broadband in the UK:

• Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line

  It runs on traditional copper telephone lines which can slow down data the further it travels. Your distance from the nearest telephone exchange can affect the speed of your internet. This type of broadband is available to 99.9% of homes in the UK.

• Fibre optic broadband

  This runs on fibre optic cables made out of plastic or glass rather than copper lines so data can move at a faster rate. This isn't available all over the country.

• Satellite broadband

  This uses a satellite connection to bounce data to and from your home. It's available across most of the UK.

• Mobile broadband

  You can get online using a 3G, 4G or 5G connection on your mobile phone. To do this, you need good mobile coverage.

TOP TIP

When choosing an internet provider, make sure you pick a package with a broadband speed that meets your needs. From visiting a website to watching a video, everything you do online uses data. As mentioned above, broadband speed is essentially how quickly you can upload or download data using your internet connection and is measure in megabits per second (Mbps). For example, you'll find that videos load quicker if you have a higher speed (the higher the number, the faster your connection).

You can check your internet speed with the Which? speed checker at **www.which. co.uk/reviews/broadband/article/broadband-speed-test-check-and-fix-your-internet-speed-aqNtT3s3Rlix**

Or you can visit **www.paessler.com/it-explained/bandwidth** for more information about bandwidth.

How to choose an internet provider

The first step to choosing a provider is to check which providers offer broadband in your local area. Use a website that is accredited by the communications regulator Ofcom to compare the different options and the monthly costs. This will help you to choose the right deal for you. These include **www.broadbandcompared.co.uk** and **www.broadband.co.uk**.

When you speak to broadband providers, find out what estimated speed the internet connection they can provide is. The speed offered can differ depending on where you live. If it's too low, you may find it takes a while to load webpages or download files. Many providers offer fibre optic broadband which provides a faster internet connection. This is especially helpful if you plan to download or share photos and videos.

It's a good idea to speak to family and friends who already have internet connections to find out which providers they use, especially if they live locally. They may be able to offer advice.

Once you've decided which broadband provider to go with, you'll need to sign a contract. Once signed and agreed, they'll send you the equipment you need to connect to the internet. This is normally a router. An engineer will arrange a time to visit your home and install the router. You will be given a password and details on how to access the connection with your equipment.

TOP TIP

Protect your wireless network. You will need to set up a password for your Wi-Fi so that people living nearby can't access it. Your wireless router may come with instructions on how to set up a password, or you may be directed to instructions online. Setting a password will stop others from accessing the internet through your router. Some routers will already have a password set up to make them secure.

TOP TIP

The strength of a Wi-Fi network is shown next to its name. If more bars are showing white, then the connection is stronger.
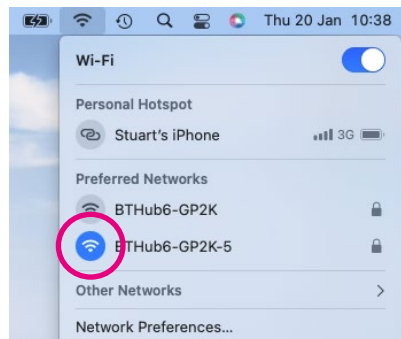
4. How to connect to the internet in your home

Using an Android phone or tablet to access Wi-Fi at home

1. Go to 'Settings' on your device, then tap on 'Connections' which is the first option on the menu.

2. Tap on 'Wi-Fi. It will give you a list of 'Available networks'. The Wi-Fi you're looking for will be listed. Tap on the Wi-Fi network.
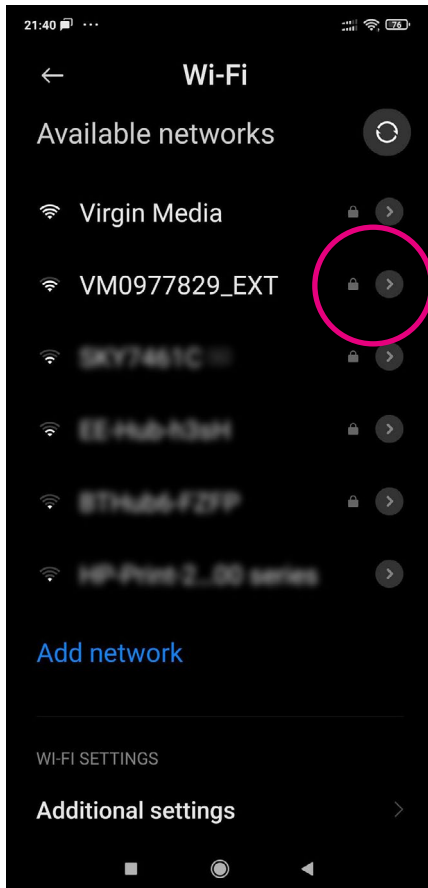
3. Next, you'll be asked to enter the password. Type this into the space provided. Tap the blue 'Connect' button below to connect to Wi-Fi. When you're connected, the name of the network will turn from black to blue text and it will say 'Connected' underneath.

Using an iPhone or iPad to access Wi-Fi at home

1. Tap on the 'Settings' icon on your device.
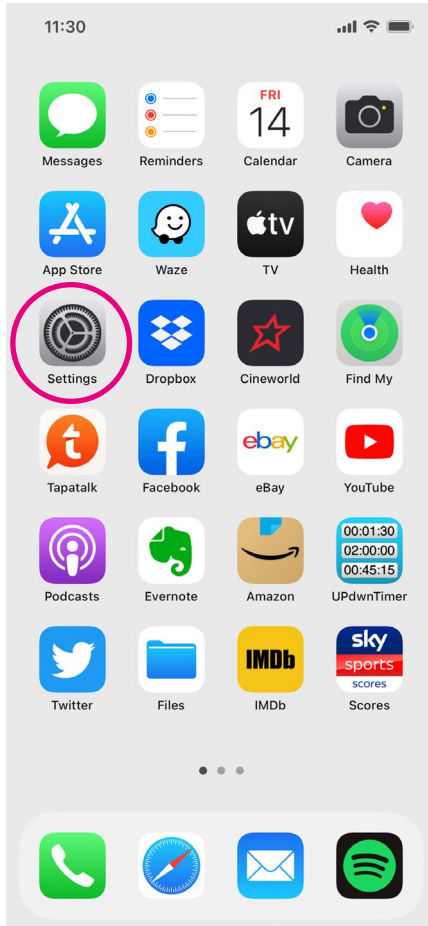
2. Next tap 'Wi-Fi' in the settings menu.

3. When you go onto the next screen, slide the circle in the slider to the right so it turns green. Your device will search for available Wi-Fi networks.
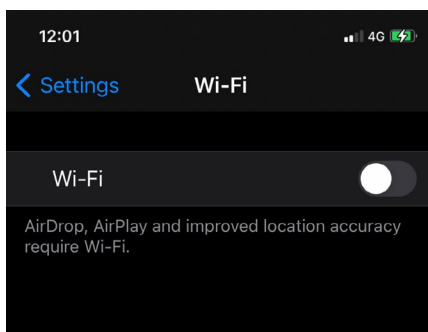
4. Tap the Wi-Fi network you want to use. You'll be asked to enter the password. When you're connected to this network, there will be a blue tick to the left of the name of the network. The Wi-Fi network you are connected to will appear above the 'Networks' section in the 'Wi-Fi' menu.
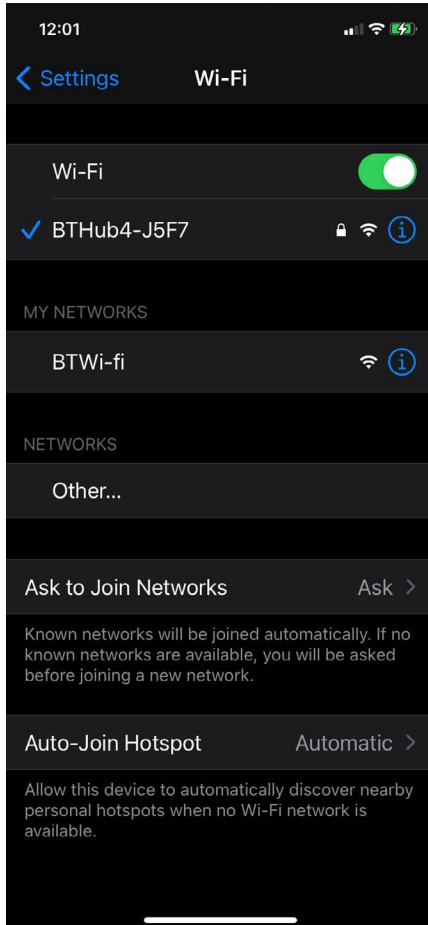
Using a Windows laptop to access Wi-Fi at home

1. Go to 'Settings' on your laptop.
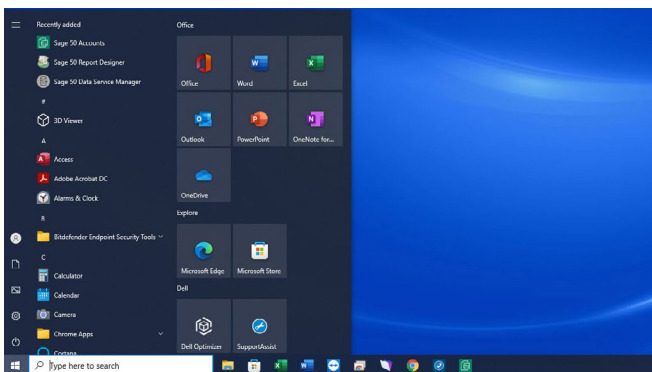
2. Click on 'Network & Internet'.
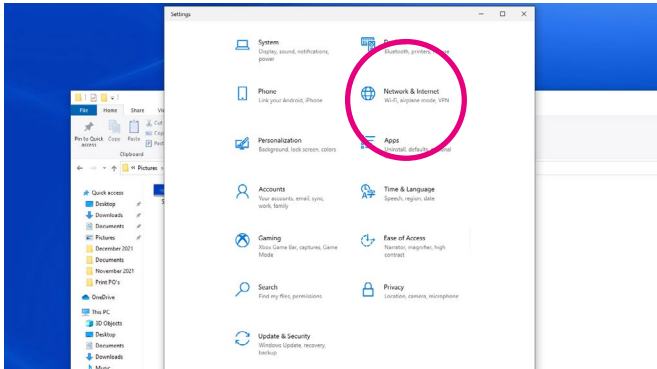
3. Then click on 'Wi-Fi' which is the second option in the left-hand menu.
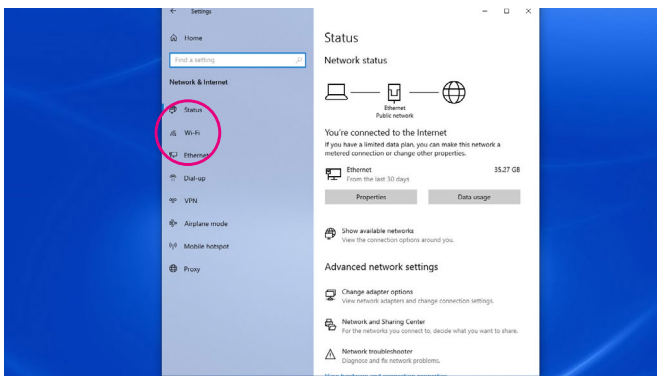
4. Click on the 'Wi-Fi' icon at the top of the screen to show the available Wi-Fi networks. The icon will turn blue.
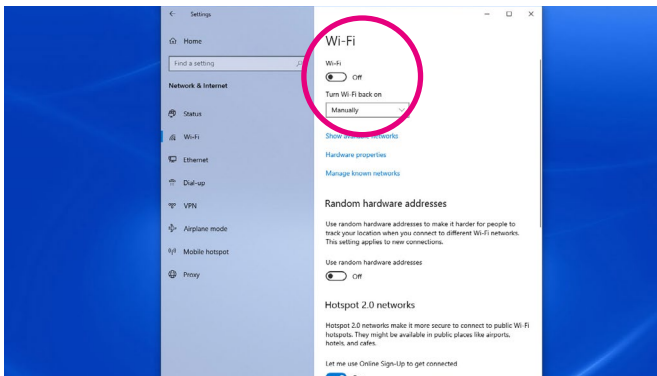
5. Click the blue link underneath the icon which says: 'Show available networks'. A list of available Wi-Fi networks will appear in a box on the right-hand side of the screen. Click on the one you need.
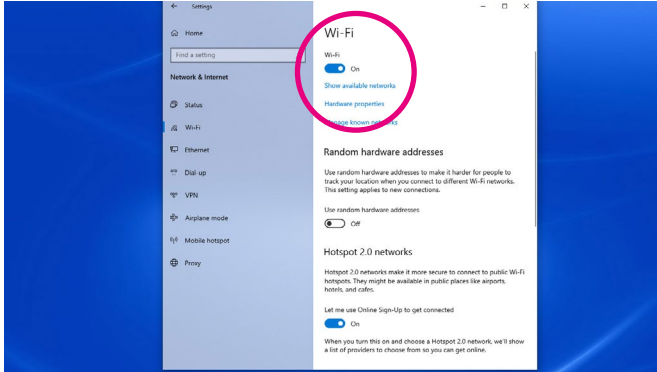
6. You'll see a tick box saying: 'Connect automatically'. Tick this to save entering your password each time you connect to the internet. You'll automatically connect to the Wi-Fi when you turn device on. Next, click the blue 'Connect' button below.

7. It will then ask you to enter the password.

Using a Mac to access Wi-Fi at home

1. Click the Wi-Fi icon in the menu bar.
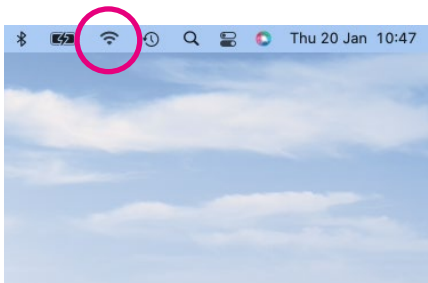
2. If Wi-Fi is off, choose 'Turn Wi-Fi on'.
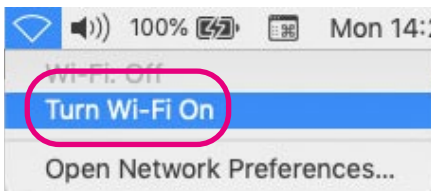
3. Select a nearby Wi-Fi network from the list. Click on this.

4. Enter your password.

Protecting your device from viruses

Going online can leave your device at risk from viruses. You can protect it by installing anti-virus and anti-spyware software. Anti-virus software will look for and remove viruses before they can infect your computer. Anti-spyware software prevents unwanted adverts from popping up and stops programs from tracking your activities and scanning your computer for private data, such as bank details.

You can buy a package from a reputable provider, such as McAfee or Norton, either online or from a computer shop. There are also free security software programs available online, such as AVG, Avast and Microsoft Security Essentials.

5. How to find information online

5. How to find information online

Whether you're looking for the opening times of your local post office or researching a holiday, finding information online is straightforward once you get the hang of it.

Your device will probably come with a web browser that is already installed. If you want to download another web browser on your laptop or computer, you will need to use your existing browser to do this. For your smartphone or tablet, you can download the browser using the App or Play Store.

Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge are two of the most popular browsers which we'll take you through in this guide. There are other browsers, such as Safari, which is for Apple devices, and Mozilla Firefox for Windows, Macs, Android devices, and iPhones and iPads.

To download Google Chrome to your Windows computer:

1. Go to **www.google.co.uk/chrome**

2. Click on the blue 'Download' button in the middle of the screen
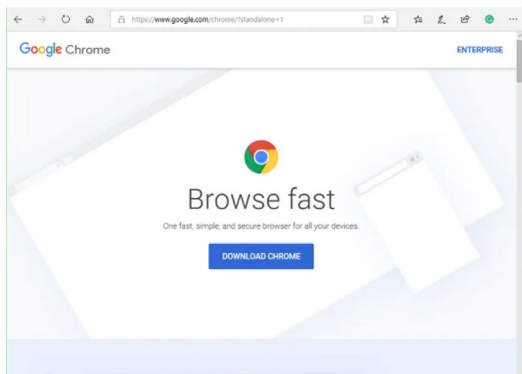
For Windows:

1. If prompted, click 'Run' or 'Save'.

2. If you chose 'Save', double-click the download to start installing.
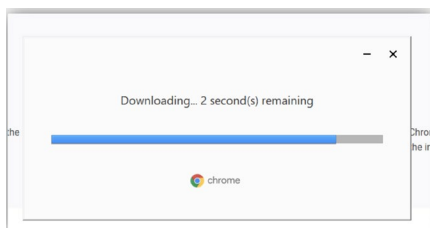

3. Start Chrome:

There are different types of Windows operating systems. The higher the number, the latest version of Windows you have. Having the latest version will mean your device runs faster.

5. How to find information online

- Windows 7: A Chrome window opens once everything is done.

- Windows 8 and 8.1: A welcome window appears. Click 'Next' to select what browser you'd prefer to use as a default.

- Windows 10: A Chrome window opens after everything is done. You can make Chrome your preferred browser.

To download Google Chrome to your Apple mac:

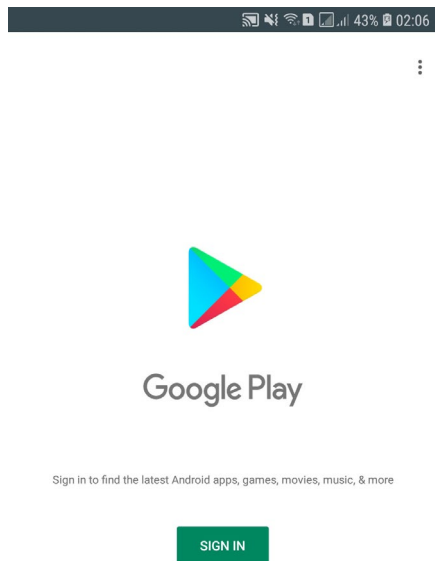1. Open the downloads folder and double click the file called 'googlechrome.dmg'. This will install it to your computer.
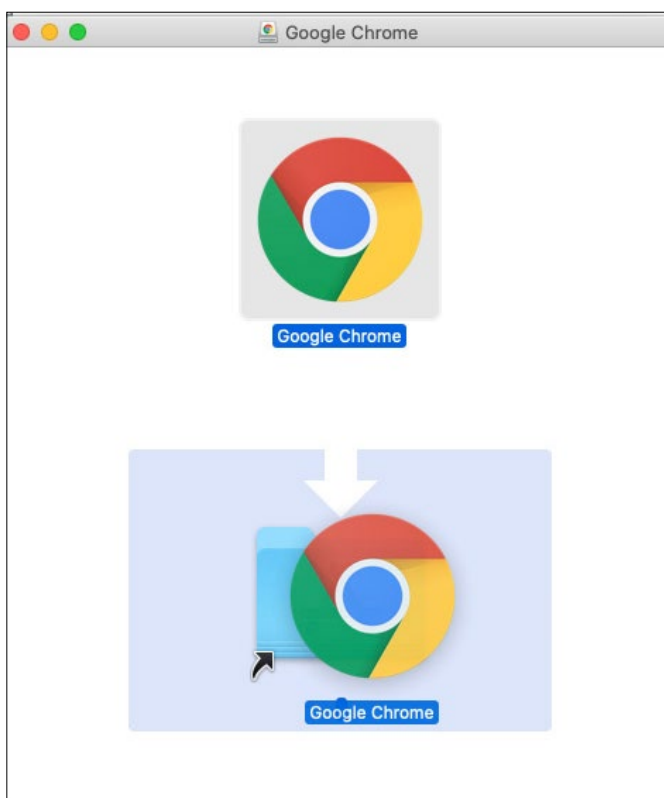
2. Then drag Google Chrome to the 'Applications' folder. This will copy Chrome to your device.

3. Double click on Google Chrome to start using it.

5. How to find information online

To download Google Chrome to your Android:

1. Open the Play Store in your phone or tablet's menu by tapping on the 'Play Store' icon.

2. First, you'll need to set up a Google account or login to your Google account. This is the account you will use to access other Google services, like Gmail, a type of email account.
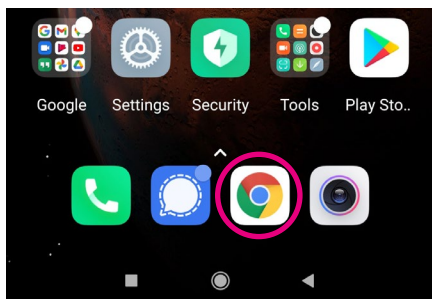
It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, write down a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

5. How to find information online

3. Search for 'Google Chrome' by typing it into the search bar at the top of your screen.
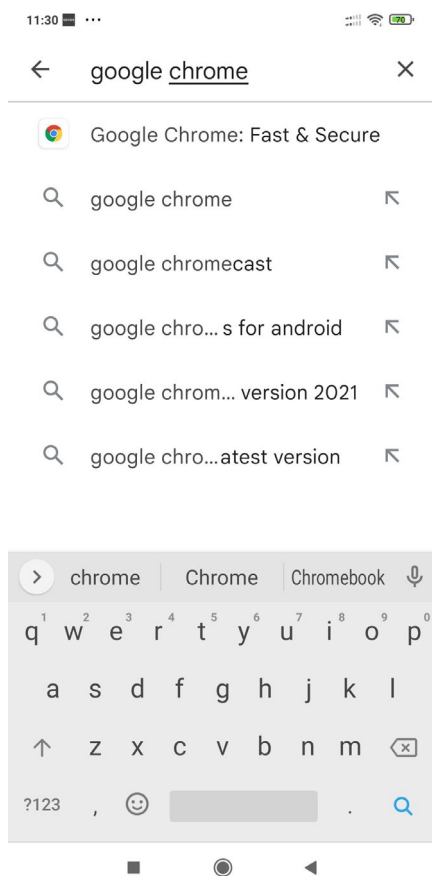
4. When you see it in the list that comes up, tap on the name of the app – 'Google Chrome: Fast & Secure'.

5. Tap 'Install', which is a green button underneath the Google Chrome icon.

6. Google Chrome will download and automatically be added to your menu. If you've got a lot of apps already, you may run out of room for new icons. You'll need to 'swipe' across the screen to see the new Google Chrome icon.

5. How to find information online

To download Google Chrome to your iPhone and iPad:

1. Open the App Store in your iPhone or iPad's menu by tapping on the App Store icon.
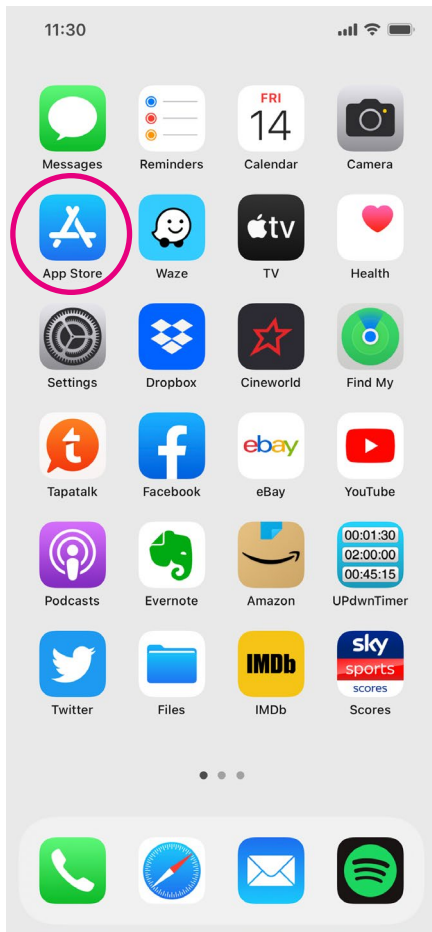
2. You'll need to set up an Apple ID or login to your existing Apple ID account. This is the account you will use to access Apple services.

TOP TIP

It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

3. Click the 'Search' icon at the bottom right of the screen. It has a magnifying glass icon. Search for 'Google Chrome' by typing in the search bar.
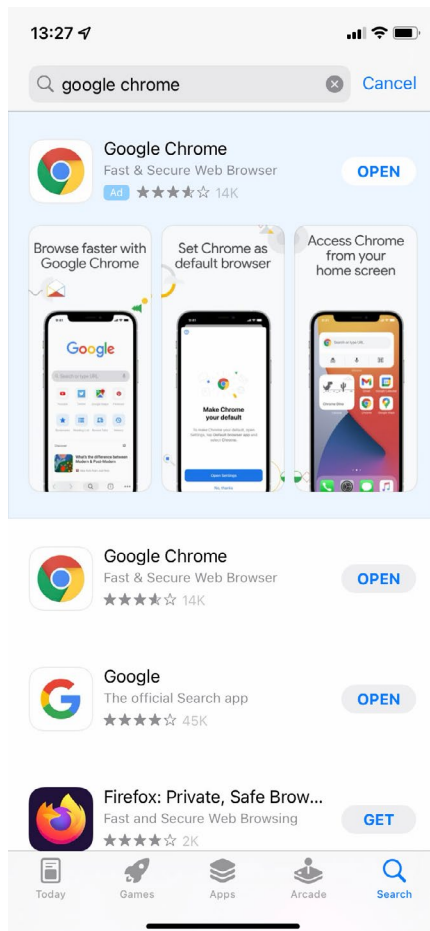
4. When you see it in the list that comes up, tap on the name of the app. Tap on 'Google Chrome: Fast & Secure Web Browser'.

5. Tap 'Get' which is a blue button next to the icon symbol.

6. Google Chrome will download and automatically be added to your menu. If you have a lot of apps in your menu, you may run out of room for new icons, and you'll need to 'swipe' across the page to see the new icon.

5. How to find information online

To download Microsoft Edge

This is for Windows laptops and computers, Macs, iPhones and iPads, and Android devices.

To download Microsoft Edge to your laptop or computer:

1. Go to www.microsoft.com/en-us/edge
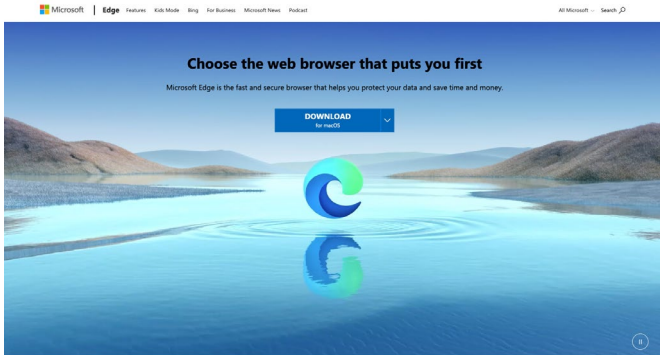
2. Click on the blue 'Download Edge' button in the middle of the screen. This will take you through to a new screen.

3. Choose either 'Microsoft Edge for Windows' or 'Microsoft Edge for macOS'. Click the blue 'Download' button underneath the one you choose. There are five options for Windows: Windows 8.1, Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Server 2016 and Windows Server 2019.
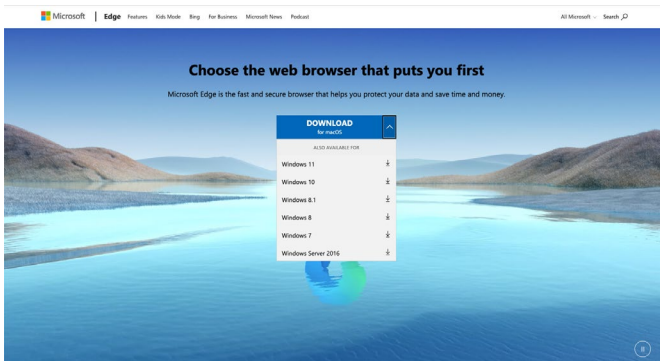
4. Follow the instructions to download the browser to your device.

5. How to find information online

To download Microsoft Edge to your Android:

1. Open the Play Store in your phone or tablet's menu by tapping on the Play Store icon.

2. First, you'll need to set up a Google account or login to your Google account. This is the account you will use to access other Google services, like Gmail, a type of email account.
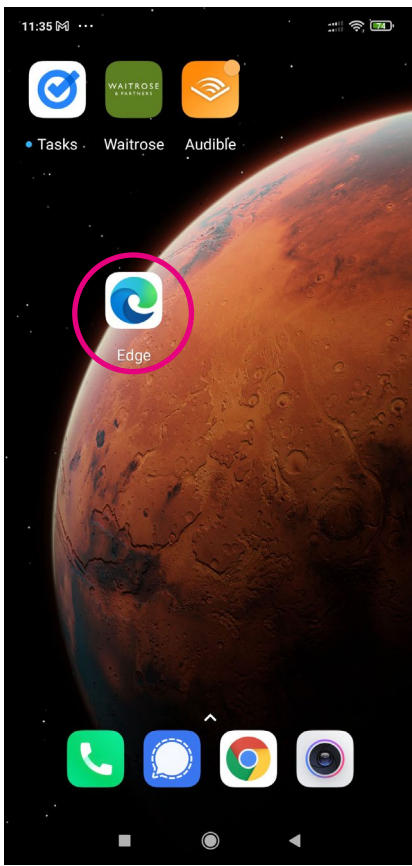
It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, write down a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

3. Search for 'Microsoft Edge' by typing it into the search bar at the top of your screen.
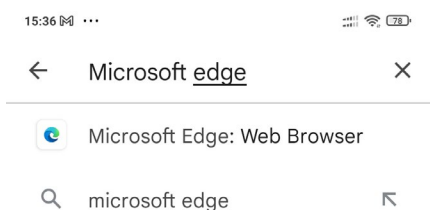
4. When you see it in the list that comes up, tap on the name of the app – 'Microsoft Edge'

5. Tap 'Install', which is a green button underneath the Microsoft Edge icon.

6. Microsoft Edge will download and automatically be added to your menu. If you've got a lot of apps already, you may run out of room for new icons. You'll need to 'swipe' across the screen to see the new WhatsApp icon.

To download Microsoft Edge to your iPhone and iPad:

**1.** Open the App Store in your iPhone or iPad's menu by tapping on the App Store icon.

2. You'll need to set up an Apple ID or login to your existing Apple ID account. This is the account you will use to access Apple services.

It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

5. How to find information online

3. Click the 'Search' icon at the bottom right of the screen. It has a magnifying glass icon. Search for 'Microsoft Edge' by typing in the search bar.
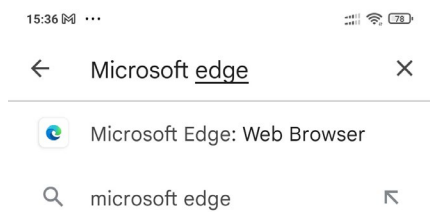
4. Tap on 'Microsoft Edge: Web Browser'.

5. Tap 'Get' which is a blue button next to the icon symbol.

6. Microsoft Edge will download and automatically be added to your menu. If you have a lot of apps in your menu, you may run out of room for new icons, and you'll need to 'swipe' across the page to see the new icon.

Using a search engine to find information

1. Click on the web browser and wait for it to open.

2. This will sometimes load up a search engine. Different web browsers use different search engines. For example, Google Chrome uses Google and Microsoft Edge uses Bing. If it doesn't bring up a search engine, go to the address bar at the top of the page and type in www.google.co.uk or www.bing.com. This will take you to the search engine. Here, you can search for information you're looking for.
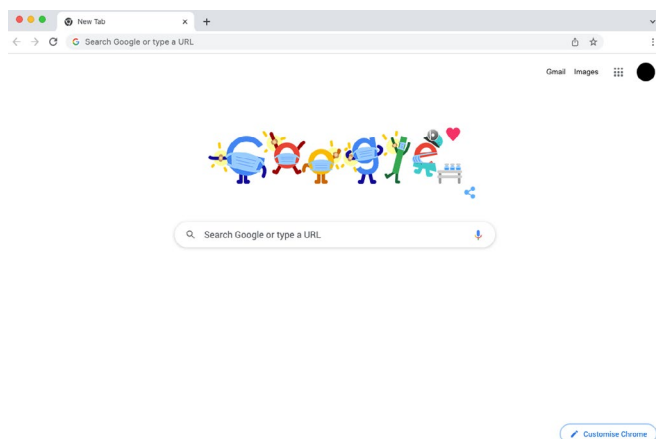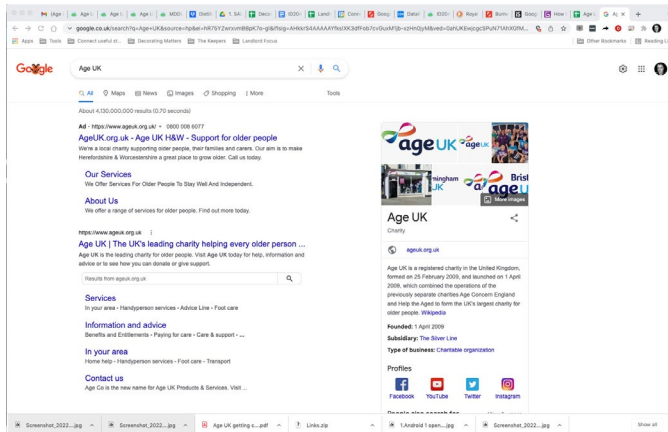
5. How to find information online

3. You'll see a search bar, a space for you to enter information. This is usually in the middle of the screen.
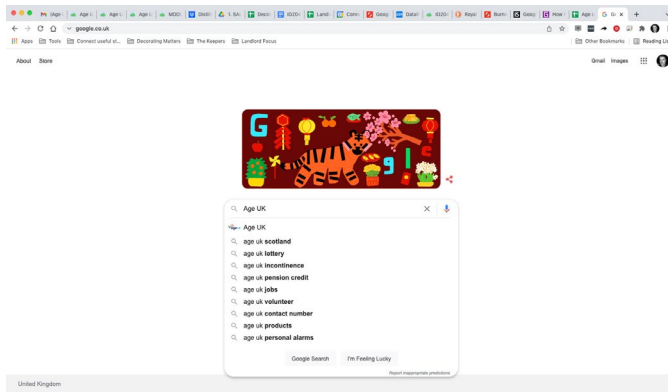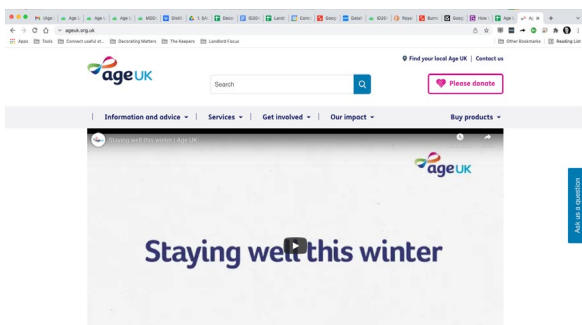

4. Type what you're looking for into the search bar and press the enter key. A list of relevant webpages will display in a list. Click or tap on the webpage depending on the device you're using.

TOP TIP

If you know the website address you want to go to, you can type it into the address bar at the top of the web browser.

6. How to use different navigation functions
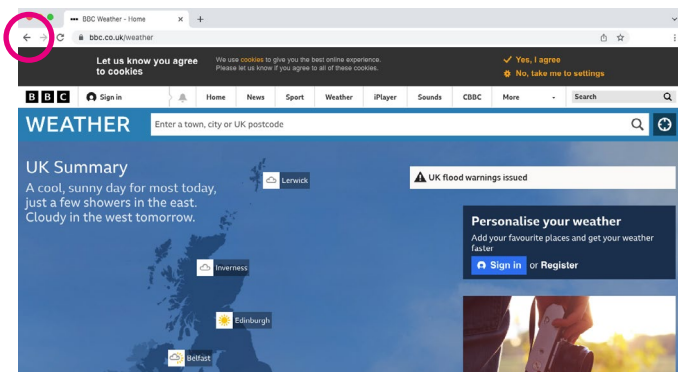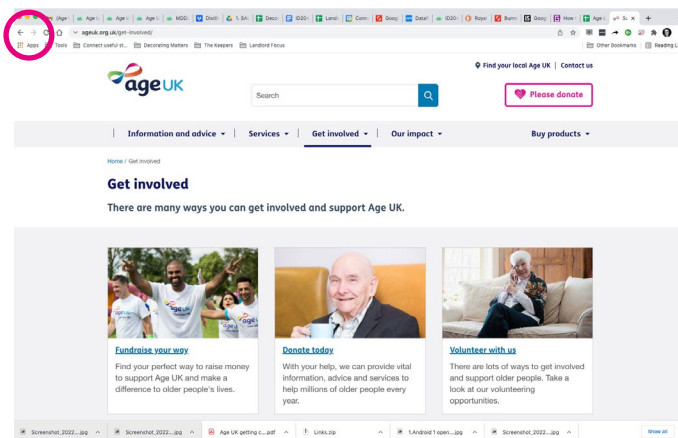
6. How to use different navigation functions

Once you're familiar with finding information online, you can learn how to use tools that will help you to read webpages more easily.

Going back or returning to a previous page

When you're reading information online, you may want to go back to something you read on a previous page. Luckily, there's a handy tool that lets you do this quickly.

On a tablet, laptop or computer, you'll see a backward-facing arrow in the top left-hand corner of the screen. Clicking on this arrow will take you back to the webpage you were looking at before. On a tablet, you'll need to tap the arrow to go back to the previous page.

This arrow may look different on different devices and when using different web browsers.

6. How to use different navigation functions

On a smartphone, the arrow will typically be in the bottom right of the screen.
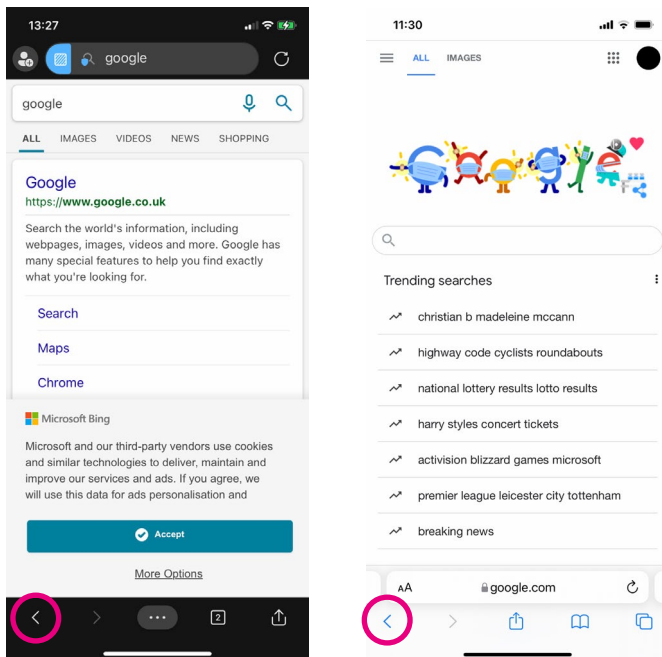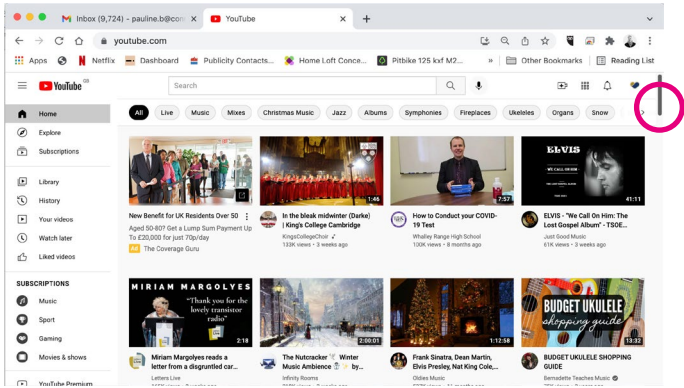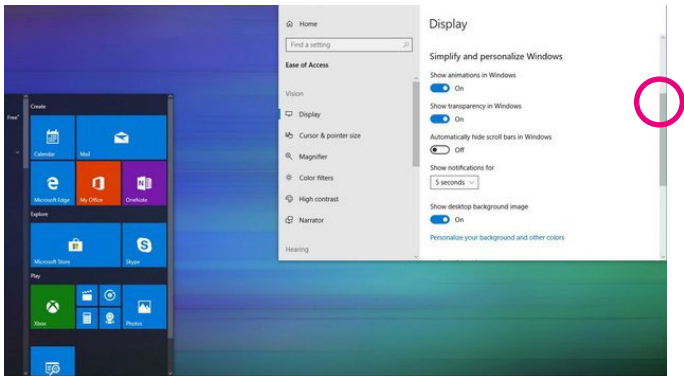

Scrolling up and down
This is when you move up and down on the screen of your device to see different information.
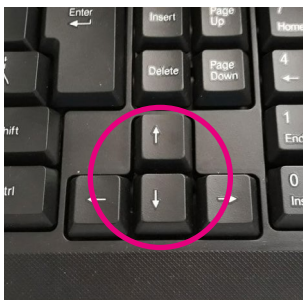
Scrolling on a laptop or computer:
There are two ways to scroll:

6. How to use different navigation functions

1. Use the touchpad on the laptop or the mouse to click the downward and upward arrows on the right-hand side of the screen.

2. You can use the down and up arrow keys on your keyboard to move down and up the screen.

Scrolling on a smartphone or tablet

1. Go to the webpage you want to look at.

2. Use your finger to drag the page up or down. You do this by moving your finger down or up the screen.

## 6. How to use different navigation functions

Zooming in and out

This is a really useful tool for those of us who have difficulty with our eyesight. When you 'zoom in' this increases the size of the text on a page. When you 'zoom out' this reduces the size of the text on a page. Different web browsers have different ways to zoom in and out.
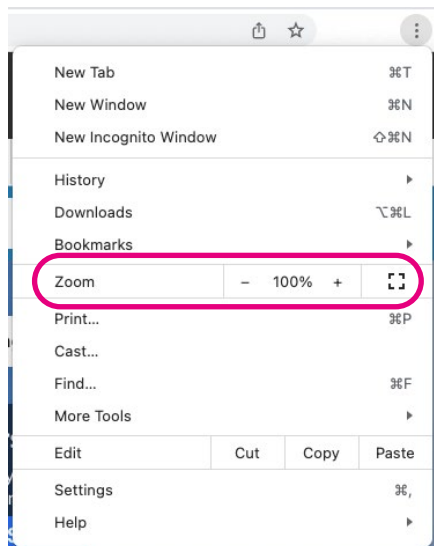
Zooming in and out on your laptop or computer:

Zooming in and out using Google Chrome

1. Open the Google Chrome browser.

2. Click on the three vertical dots in the right-hand corner of the screen.
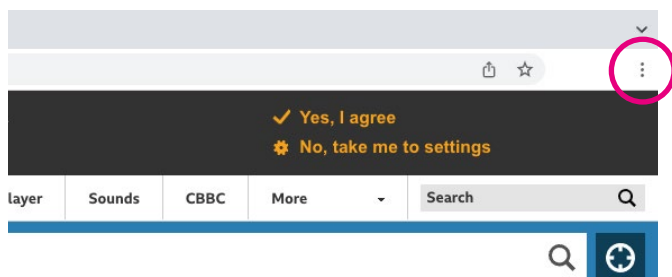
3. From the drop-down menu, you will see 'Zoom'. Click on the '+' or '–' button to zoom in and out.

4. Click on the screen to close the menu down.

TOP TIP

Shortcut: You can also press 'ctrl' and the '+' keys at the same time to zoom in. Then 'ctrl' and the '-' to zoom out.

Zooming in and out using Microsoft Edge

1. Open Microsoft Edge.

2. Click on the three horizontal dots in the right-hand corner.

3. On the drop-down menu, you will see 'Zoom'. Click on the '+' or '–' button to zoom in and out.

4. Click on the screen to close the menu down.
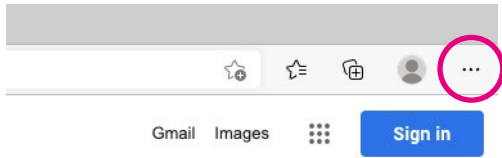
TOP TIP

Shortcut: You can also press 'ctrl' and the '+' keys at the same time to zoom in. Then 'ctrl' and the '–' to zoom out.
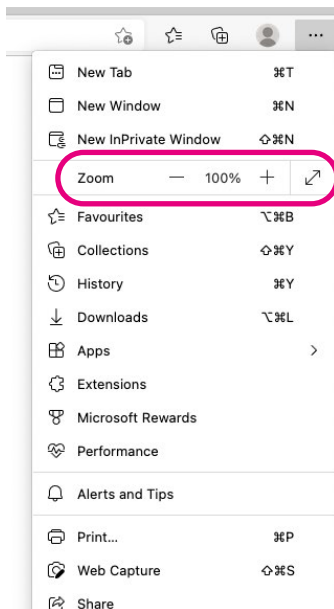
6. How to use different navigation functions

Zooming in and out on a smartphone or tablet:

Place two fingers on the area of the screen you would like to zoom into and slowly move your fingertips apart to zoom in. To zoom back out, pull the two fingers together in a pinching motion.

Staying safe online

For many people the internet has made life easier and is an excellent source of information. But it's important to use the internet safely and protect any device that connects to the internet. You can protect yourself from scams, fraud and viruses by knowing what to look out for and taking steps to avoid them. You can find out more in our 'Beginner's guide to staying safe online'.

We hope you've enjoyed working your way through this guide and now understand how to get connected to the internet.

If you feel you need some extra support, your local Age UK or local Age Cymru may be able to help. You can find your local Age UK at www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area

My Digital Champion

Telephone number:

Notes

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 678 1602

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.
You can find more information at **www.ageuk.org.uk**