

What are the F1 through F12 keys?

The **function keys** or **F-keys** on a computer keyboard, labeled **F1** through **F12**, are keys with a special function defined by the operating system or the running program. They may be combined with the **Alt** or **Ctrl** keys.



On laptop computers

On some smaller keyboards and laptop computers the F-keys may have a dedicated function such as changing the screen brightness, the volume, or other device-specific functions. On these keyboards, there's a separate **Fn** key that you can hold down to indicate you want to use the key as a standard function key. For instance, on the **MacBook Pro** laptop computer, the F12 key's primary function is to increase the audio volume. If this key is pressed while the **Fn** key is held down, the key registers as F12 and triggers functions configured to use this key.



If you would prefer not to press the Fn key to access your function keys, you can configure the keyboard to treat them as regular function keys in your [Control Panel](#) or System Settings.

If your keyboard does not have a row of function keys, they are probably set up as secondary functions on other keys. Look for alternate labels on your keys, or consult your computer's manual for more information.

Below are some of the more common functions of the functions keys for [Windows](#) and [macOS](#). As mentioned above, not all programs support these function keys, and the function keys on your keyboard may perform different tasks than those mentioned below. For additional specific shortcut keys and function key examples, please visit our [shortcut keys](#) general index.

F1

- Used as the help key in almost every program.
Opens a help screen when this key is pressed.
- Enter BIOS setup.
- **Windows Key** + F1 would open the Microsoft Windows help and support center.
- Open the **Task Pane**.

F2

- In Microsoft Windows, renames a highlighted **icon**, **file**, or **folder** in all versions of Windows.

- In **Microsoft Excel**, edits the **active cell**.
- Alt+Ctrl+F2 opens document window in **Microsoft Word**.
- Ctrl+F2 displays the print preview window in Microsoft Word.
- **Rename** a selected file or folder.
- Enter BIOS setup.

F3

- Often opens a search feature for many programs, including Microsoft Windows when at the **Windows desktop**.

- In some programs, after an initial search is performed, F3 finds the next search value.
- In MS-DOS or Windows command line, F3 repeats the last command entered.
- In Microsoft Word Ctrl+F3 lowercases any highlighted text.
- Shift+F3 changes the text in Microsoft Word from upper to lowercase or a capital letter at the beginning of every word.
- Windows Key + F3 opens the Advanced find window in Microsoft Outlook.
- In Windows Explorer, start the search function.

- Open **Mission Control** on an Apple computer running the macOS X operating system.

F4

- Open find window in Windows 95 to XP.
- Open the **address bar** in **Windows Explorer** and **Internet Explorer**.
- Repeat the last action performed (Word 2000+).
- **Alt+F4** closes the program **window** currently active in Microsoft Windows.
- **Ctrl+F4** closes the open window or **tab** in the active

window in Microsoft
Windows.

F5

- In all modern **Internet browsers**, pressing F5 **refreshes** or reloads the page or document window.
- Ctrl+F5 forces a complete refresh of the web page, clearing the cache and downloading all contents of the page again.
- Refresh the list of contents in a folder.
- Open the find, replace, and go to window in Microsoft Word.

- Starts a slideshow in PowerPoint.

F6

- Move the cursor to the address bar in Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and most other Internet browsers.
- Ctrl+Shift+F6 opens to another open Microsoft Word document.
- Reduce laptop speaker volume (on some laptops).

F7

- Commonly used to spell check and grammar check a document in Microsoft

programs such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, etc.

- Shift+F7 runs a Thesaurus check on the word highlighted.
- Turns on Caret Browsing in [Mozilla Firefox](#).
- Increase laptop speaker volume (on some laptops).

F8

- Function key used to enter the Windows startup menu, commonly used to access Windows [Safe Mode](#).
- Used by some computers to access the Windows recovery system, but may

require a Windows
installation CD.

- Displays a thumbnail image
for all workspaces in
macOS.

F9

- **Refresh** document
in **Microsoft Word**.
- Send and receive e-mail
in **Microsoft Outlook**.
- Opens
the *Measurements* toolbar in
Quark 5.0.
- Reduce laptop
screen **brightness** (on some
laptops).
- With macOS 10.3 or later,
displays a thumbnail for

each window in a single workspace.

- Using the **Fn key** and F9 at the same time opens **Mission Control** on an Apple computer running the macOS X operating system.

F10

- In Microsoft Windows, activates the **menu bar** of an open application.
- Shift+F10 is the same as **right-clicking** on a highlighted icon, file, or Internet link.
- Access the **hidden recovery partition** on Compaq, HP, and Sony computers.

- Enter BIOS setup on some computers.
- Increase laptop screen brightness (on some laptops).
- With macOS 10.3 or later, shows all open Windows for the active program.

F11

- Enter and exit fullscreen mode in all modern Internet browsers.
- Ctrl+F11 as the computer is starting to access the hidden recovery partition on many Dell computers.
- Pressing F11 by itself accesses the hidden recovery

partition

on eMachines, Gateway,
and Lenovo computers.

- With macOS 10.4 or later,
hides all open windows and
shows the desktop.

F12

- Open the Save as window
in Microsoft Word.
- Ctrl+F12 opens a document
in Word.
- Shift+F12 saves the
Microsoft Word document
(like Ctrl+S).
- Ctrl+Shift+F12 prints a
document in Microsoft
Word.

- Preview a page in Microsoft Expression Web.
- Open **Firebug** or browser debug tool.
- With an Apple running macOS 10.4 or later, F12 shows or hides the **Dashboard**.
- Access the list of **bootable devices** on a computer at startup, allowing you to select a different device to boot from (e.g., **hard drive**, **CD** or **DVD** drive, **floppy drive**, **USB** drive, and **network**).

F13 - F15

- On newer Apple keyboards, the F13, F14, and F15 may be shown in place of the **Print Screen key**, **Scroll Lock key**, and **Pause key**.

F16 - F19

- On newer Apple keyboards, the F16, F17, F18, and F19 keys are above the **number pad**.

F13 - F24

- Early **IBM** computers also had keyboards with F13 through F24 keys. However, because these keyboards are no longer used, they are not listed on this page.

