

Basic Keyboarding



An Introduction to the Computer Keyboard

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Sitting at the Controls



A driver sitting behind the wheel of a car for the first time will adjust the seat, mirrors, and scan the car's dashboard before going down the highway.

Make sure you are comfortably positioned to use your computer controls before starting your journey on the electronic highway.

Keyboard Height: *upper arms should not have to extend very far forward to reach the keyboard or the mouse.*

- The forearms should be approximately parallel to the floor when keying. There should be no more than a very slight reach up or down. If the keyboard is too low, your shoulders and arms will become tired.

Distance from the Keyboard: *one hand-span*

- Hand-span tells you how far you should sit away from your keyboard. If you sit too far away, you will not be able to reach the keys above home row. If you sit too close, you will not be able to reach the keys below home row.

Positioning Yourself: *feet flat on the floor*

- They help balance your body for keyboarding. Crossing your ankles or knees puts a strain on your spine. Sit up straight to keep your spine straight and comfortable as well as provide balance. Elbows in keeps fingers positioned on the home row.

Wrist Position: *slightly curve your fingers as they rest on the home row keys*

- Don't raise your palms so much that your wrists arch. Maintaining proper wrist position helps avoid fatigue in your hands. If your wrists rest on your keyboard, this will cause you to make typing mistakes.

Eyes on Copy: *keep your eyes on what you want to type*

- Just like a driver keeps his eyes on the road, you will make fewer mistakes if you learn to keep your eyes on the screen.

Fingers Anchored: *rest your fingers on the home row keys*

- When you reach for a key on the top or bottom row, remember to bring your fingers back to the home row position.

Lighting and Your Eyes: *people tend to stare at the computer screen without blinking*

- Make sure you blink while at the computer to minimize your risk of dry-eye syndrome. Adjust the height and angle of the monitor (if possible) for comfortable viewing and to reduce screen glare.

Fingers on the Keyboard

Your computer needs you! The keyboard, the mouse, and your fingers work together to tell the computer where you want to go for information and to express your thoughts in the documents you create. Many people never learn to type and use a two-fingered “hunt and peck” method. However, that leaves eight other fingers wondering what to do.

A Typical PC Keyboard: keyboards will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer but generally have four areas:

- Function Keys
- Typewriter Keys
- Cursor Control Keys
- Numeric Keypad



ComputerHope.com

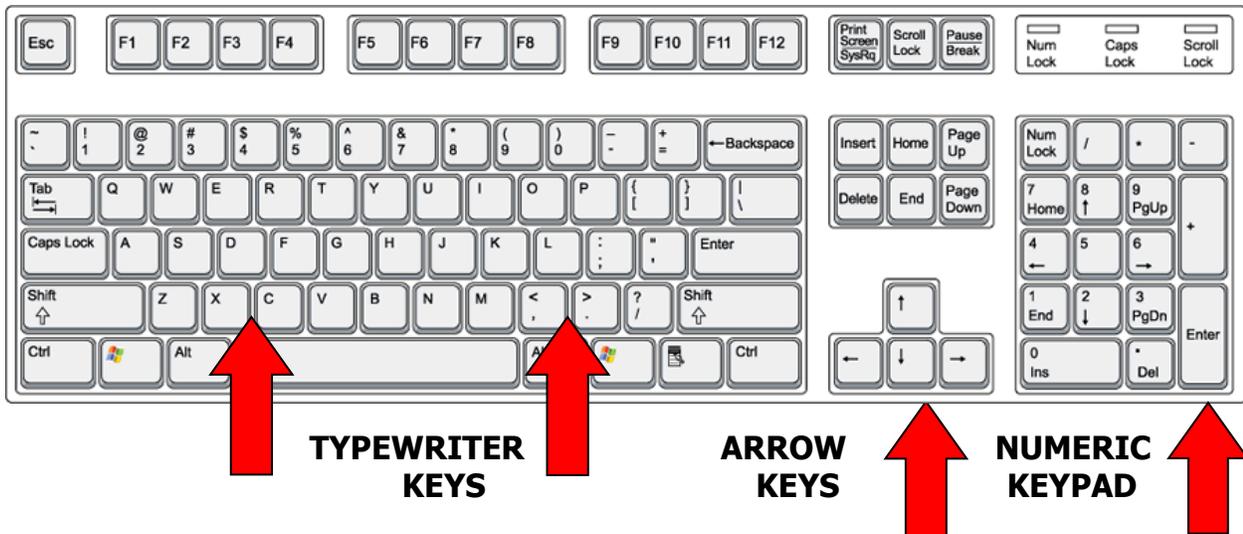
FUNCTION KEYS: these keys are assigned a special task or function (F1 – F12)

Some of the common functions and associated tasks:

- increase volume
- decrease volume
- increase brightness of screen
- decrease brightness
- connect to a projector

F keys are also used in combination with the Shift, Alt, and Ctrl keys for more advanced tasks. Each keyboard may have different function keys.

Look at the pictures at the bottom of the key for help. Hold down the FN button while pressing or tapping the function key.



TYPEWRITER KEYS: letters, numbers, and punctuation keys exactly as they were on typewriters

- Additional keys include the **space bar**, **Shift key** (for capital letters and top symbol on keys), and **Caps Lock** key for a series of capital letters.
- Press the **Enter** key to begin a new paragraph in a word processor program (also the same as clicking the OK button in a dialog box).
- The **Spacebar** separates a series of letters and/or numbers.

CURSOR CONTROL KEYS: (also called arrow keys) move your text cursor in the direction of the arrow

NUMERIC KEYPAD: similar to a calculator for entering numbers and doing mathematical operations quickly and easily

What about all the OTHER keys?

Combination Keys:



The **SHIFT** key is used to make capital letters or to access the punctuation and other symbols on the number keys and other keys. It is also used in combination with function and/or ctrl keys.



The **ALT** key is used in combination with the command keys for special functions such as CTRL + ALT + DEL for task manager.



The **CTRL** (CONTROL) key used in combination with other command keys for special functions.

- CTRL+F10 will maximize the document window.
- CTRL and "-" (minus key) will zoom out; CTRL and "+" will zoom in.

Locking Keys:

These keys change how certain parts of the keyboard respond and can make your task easier. For each key you click, a small light will usually appear on the top right of the keyboard. To turn off a key, just click it again.



CAPS LOCK (CAPITAL LETTERS LOCKED) causes all letters to be capitalized until the key is pressed to turn off Caps Lock. If you press the Shift key while the Caps Lock is on, the letters return to normal.



NUM LOCK (NUMBER PAD LOCKED)

This key activates the numeric keypad at the right of the keyboard.

Press the key again to turn off the Num Lock and use the arrow keys on the 2, 4, 6, and 8.



Navigation Keys:

Cursor Control (arrow) keys, Page Up, Page Down, Home, and End are convenient to move your cursor to the desired location **WITHOUT DELETING TEXT**.

OOOOOPS! Keys:



BACKSPACE

Deletes text to the left of the cursor each time you click on the key.



DELETE

Deletes text to the right of the cursor each time you click the key

OR

Click and drag your cursor over a line(s) of text to highlight the text and click *Delete* or *Backspace*.

ALL THE SELECTED TEXT WILL BE DELETED.

Helpful Keys:



WINDOWS key. Shortcut for the **START MENU**. This is also shown on the very bottom left of the screen and gives access to all the programs on the computer.



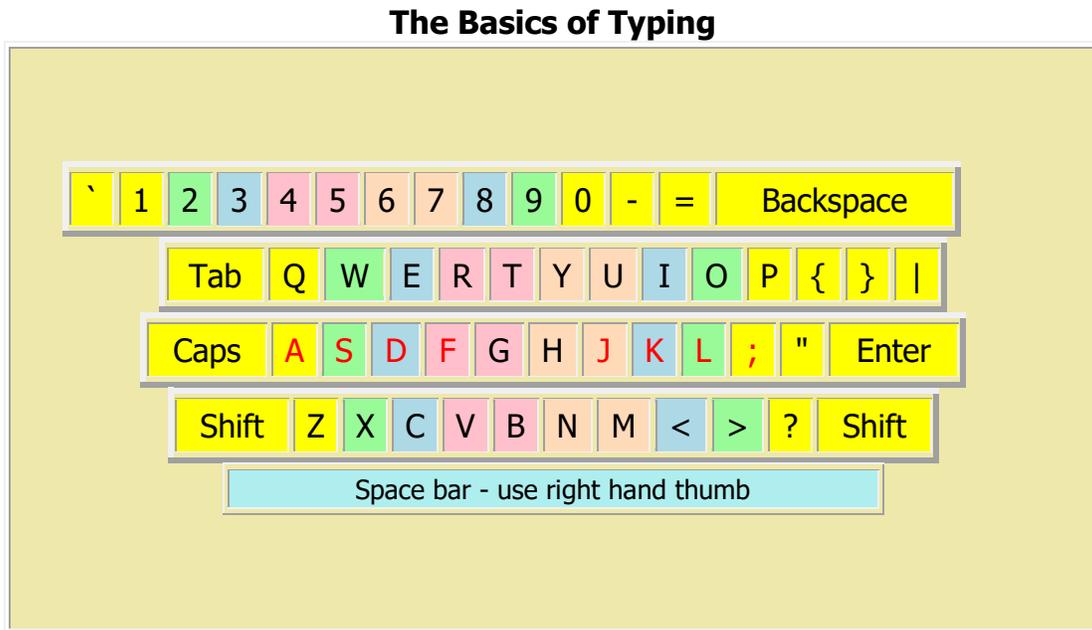
PRINT SCREEN - pressing print screen will capture the entire screen, while pressing the ALT key in combination with print screen will capture the currently selected window.



ESCAPE – shortcut in dialog boxes for *No*, *Quit*, *Exit*, *Cancel*, or *Abort*, as well as a common shortcut key for the *Stop* button in many web browsers. When watching a video, ESC exits full screen.

Knowing Where to Put Your Fingers

It is not absolutely necessary to use all ten of your fingers on your keyboard. You can learn where all the alphabet and punctuation keys are and continue with the two-finger approach. But it certainly makes sense to get those other eight fingers working for you for speed and accuracy.



Home row keys:

Left hand: A S D F

A - little finger

S - ring finger

D - middle finger

F - forefinger

Right hand: J K L ;

J - forefinger

K - middle finger

L - ring finger

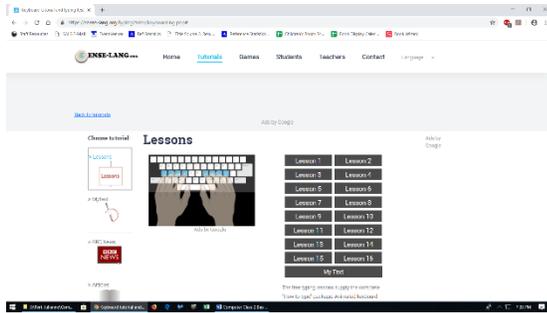
; - little finger

Thumbs of both hands are on space bar

WEBSITES

Familiarity with the keyboard will increase your confidence. Here are websites with keyboard lessons, paragraph writing, and games for the inexperienced as well as experienced typist looking to update their skills. Some programs give you your “words per minute”, number right, number wrong and your practice time.

BEST FREE PRACTICE WEBSITE: www.sense-lang.org/typing



Click *Tutorials* and choose *Keyboarding Tutorials*

Click on the lesson of your choice and **Click Start**

Place your fingers on the home row and begin typing. If you make an error, the program will show you the hand and finger of choice.

Other websites:

www.powertyping.com

Typing lessons (13) plus Typing Tests, Practice, and Games. Something for all ability levels.

www.goodtyping.com

27 guided practice lessons, but you must register in order to use the program.

www.typing-lessons.org

Peter's Online Typing Course. Simple but packed with good points to know and practice exercises.

www.freetypinggame.net/free-typing-lesson.asp

Free typing games, lessons, and tests with scoreboard feature.

www.typing.com

This program wants you to register to keep track of your progress, but you can still use it without registering – your scores will not be saved.

www.seoconsultants.com/windows/keyboard

Excellent. Simple but clear explanation of QWERTY keyboard and keyboard shortcut keys.

**THE MORE YOU PRACTICE YOUR KEYBOARD AND MOUSE SKILLS,
THE EASIER IT WILL BE TO USE THE COMPUTER.**

Start with 10-15 minutes a day.