My Google™ Chromebook

Michael Miller

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Michael Miller

que®
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My Google™ Chromebook

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About the Author

Michael Miller is a prolific and popular writer of non-fiction books, known for his ability to explain complex topics to everyday readers. He writes about a variety of topics, including technology, business, and music. His best-selling books for Que include *Using Google Advanced Search*, *Absolute Beginner's Guide to Computer Basics, Windows 7 Your Way, Your First Notebook PC,* and *Facebook for Grown-Ups*. Worldwide, his books have sold more than one million copies.

Find out more at the author's website: **www.molehillgroup.com**

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Dedication

To my wonderful grandkids Alethia, Collin, Hayley, and Judah.

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In this chapter, you'll learn about the many configuration options available with Chrome OS, from changing Chrome's startup behavior to selecting a new visual theme.

6

- Changing Themes
- Configuring Basic Options
- Configuring Personal Stuff
- Configuring System Options
- Configuring Networking Options
- Getting Under the Hood
- Managing Users

Configuring and Personalizing Chrome OS

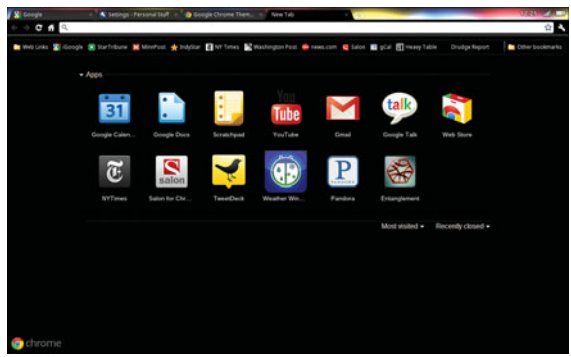
Chrome OS works just fine in its default configuration. But there are some things about Chrome you can configure, to create a more uniquely personal user experience. That is, you can personalize Chrome to look and feel the way that best suits your needs—and tastes.

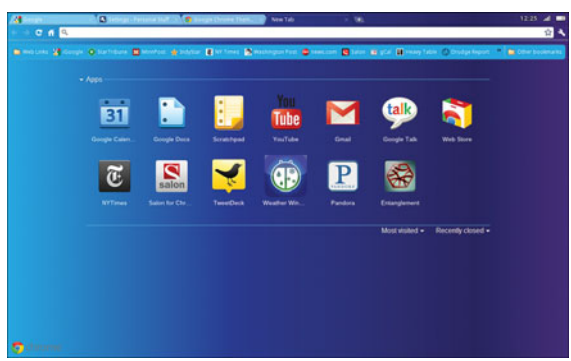
Changing Themes

One of the most visible changes you can make to Chrome is in its visual theme. A theme is a combination of colors, fonts, and background images; you can choose from any number of predesigned themes to personalize the look of Chrome.

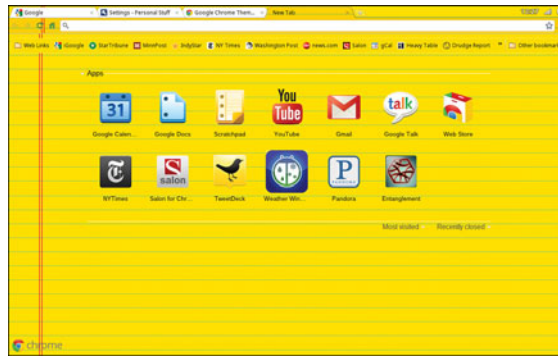
Let's face it; basic Chrome is a little boring. That's fine; your operating system doesn't have to be snazzy. But if you want something a little more exciting, there's sure to be a theme you like.

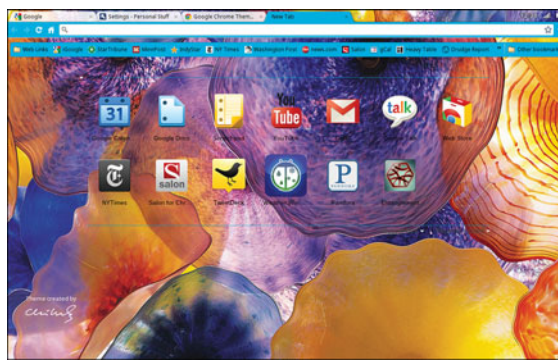
Some themes mainly affect the color of the Chrome browser window. For example, the Glow theme turns the tabs and frame black and puts a nice glow behind the tabs. The Gradient theme, on the other hand, paints the entire window in a cool blue gradient.





Other themes have more of a graphical element. For example, the Legal Pad theme puts a lined yellow background in the window, just like on a legal pad. And the Dale Chihuly theme turns the entire browser into a dazzling display of colorful blown glass, just like a display by the famous artist.

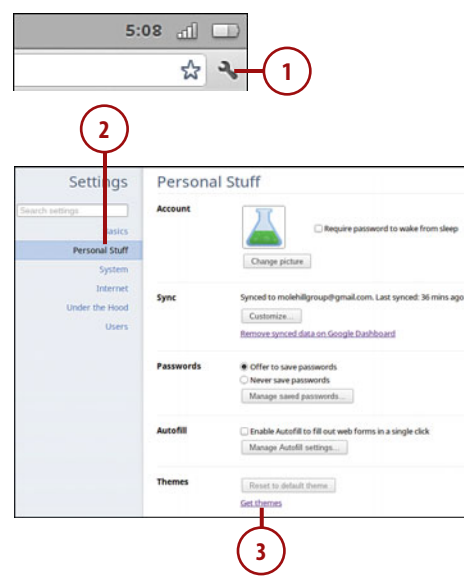




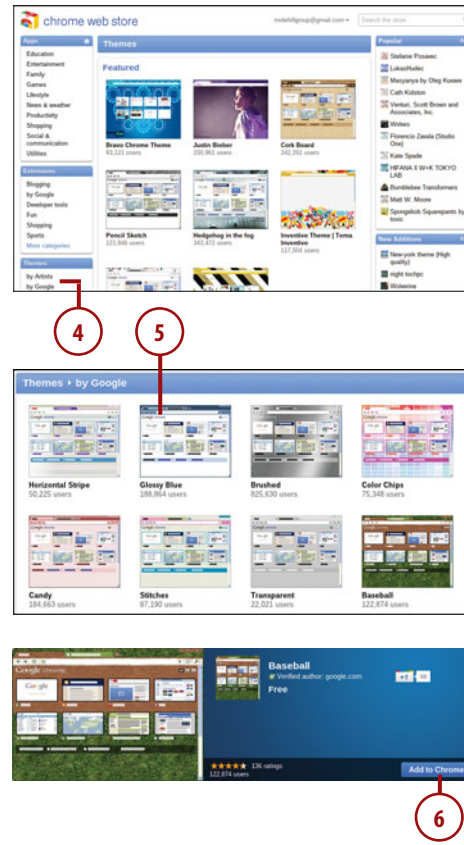
Selecting a New Theme

You can change your theme at any time, and as many times as you like.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Go to the Themes section and click the Get Themes link.



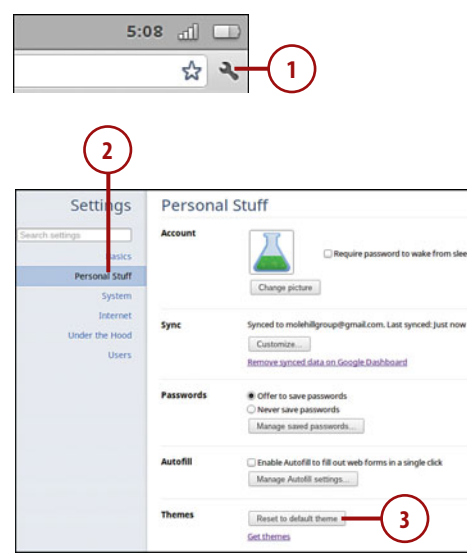
4. When the Chrome Web Store page appears, go to the Themes pane in the left column and click either By Artists or By Google.
5. Click any theme you're interested in.
6. From the theme page, click the Add to Chrome button to apply the theme.



Resetting to the Default Theme

You can return to Chrome's default theme at any time.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Go to the Themes section and click the Reset to Default Theme button.



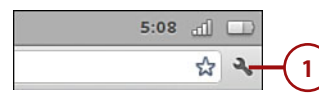
Configuring Basic Options

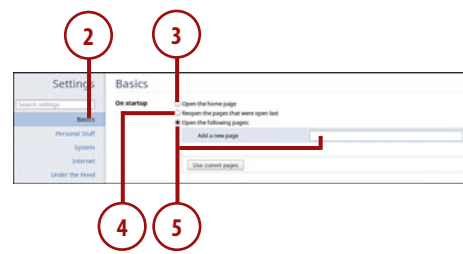
Chrome's Settings page is where all configuration takes place. There are six tabs on this page, accessed from the left sidebar: Basics, Personal Stuff, System, Internet, Under the Hood, and Users. The Basics tab, not surprisingly, lets you configure basic Chrome operations.

Configuring Startup Behavior

When you turn on your Chromebook and launch Chrome OS, one of three things can happen: Chrome can open the home page you set, reopen those pages that were open last, or open any pages you've preselected. You tell Chrome what to do on Startup from the Basics tab of the Settings page.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. To have Chrome open the home page on startup, go to the On Startup section and select the Open the Home Page option.
4. To have Chrome open the pages that were last open on startup, go to the On Startup section and select the Reopen the Pages That Were Open Last option.
5. To have Chrome open pages you specify on startup, go to the On Startup section and select the Open the Following Pages option. Enter the URL for the first page into the Add a New Page field and press Enter; this displays an additional field. Enter the second URL into the second field and press Enter; this displays another field. Continue adding URLs as desired.





Use Current Pages

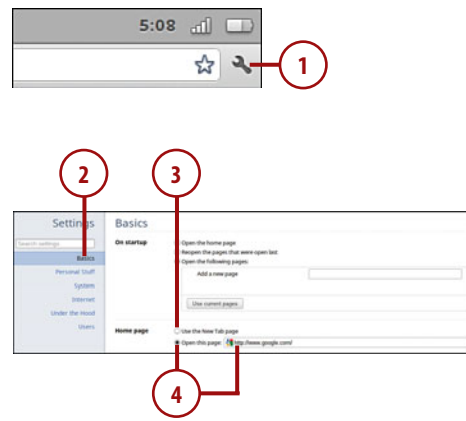
Another approach to specifying pages to open is to open the pages you want in separate browser tabs, then click the Use Current Pages button.

Changing Chrome's Home Page

If you opted to display Chrome's home page on startup, you need to specify a home page. This page will also display when you click the Home button in the Chrome browser.

By default, Chrome displays the New Tab page as your home page; this is the page that automatically displays when you open a new tab in the browser, and includes a list of those apps you're using, as well as recently visited web pages. You can also specify any web page as your home page; for example, you might want the Google search page to be your home page.

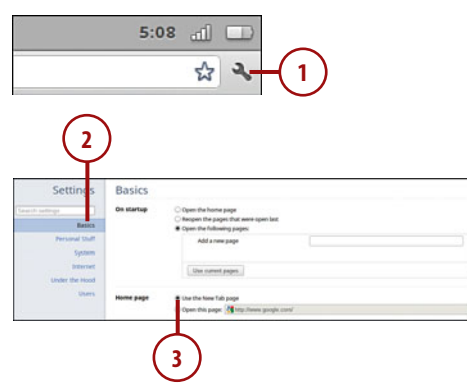
1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. To set the New Tab page as your home page, select the Use the New Tab page option.
4. To specify another web page as your home page, check the Open This Page option and enter that page's URL into the corresponding field.



Displaying the Home Button

You can configure Chrome to open your home page on startup. You can also display a Home button in the toolbar, next to the Address box; clicking this Home button displays the page you've set as your Home page.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. Go to the Toolbar section and check the Show Home Button box.

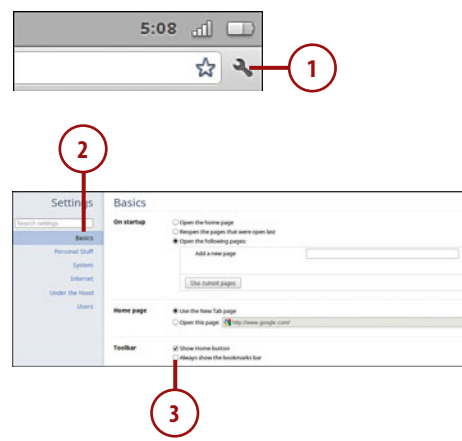


Displaying the Bookmarks Bar

Chrome lets you store bookmarks to your favorite pages on Bookmarks bar. This is a toolbar that displays beneath the normal Chrome toolbar. You can then click a button on the Bookmarks bar to go directly to a bookmarked web page.

The Bookmarks bar displays automatically on the New Tab page. You can also opt to display the Bookmarks bar all the time in the Chrome browser.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. Go to the Toolbar section and check the Always Show the Bookmarks Bar box.

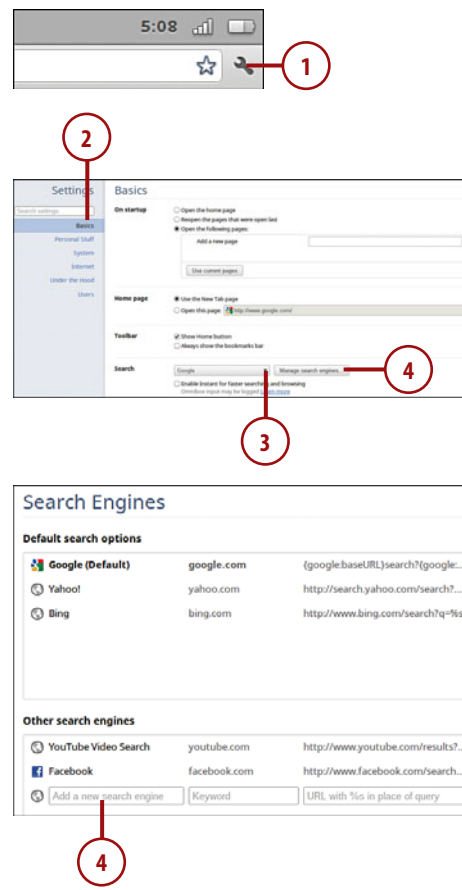


Changing Search Providers

Chrome's Address box also functions as a Search box. That is, you can enter a search query into the Address box (also called the Omnibox) and your query will be sent to your web search engine of choice.

By default, Google is set as Chrome's search engine provider. You can, however, opt to send your queries to any other search engine.

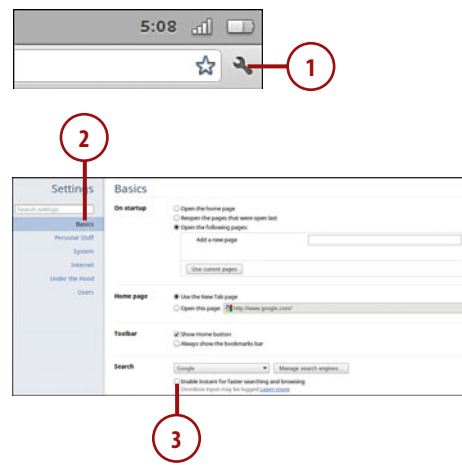
1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. Go to the Search section, pull down the list, and select from Google, Yahoo!, or Bing.
4. To send your queries to a search engine not listed here, click the Manage Search Engines button. When the Search Engines page appears, select from a choice in the Other Search Engines section, or add another engine not listed here into the Add a New Search Engine fields. After the search engine has been added, hover over the search engine name and click the Make Default button.



Enabling Google Instant

When you're using Google's search engine, you can enable a new feature called Google Instant. This feature, not enabled by default, displays predicted search results as you type your query.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Basics tab.
3. Go to the Search section and check the Enable Instant for Faster Searching and Browsing box.



Configuring Personal Stuff

More personalization options can be found on the Personal Stuff tab of Chrome's Settings page. As you might suspect, this "personal stuff" includes things like your account picture, the way Chrome handles passwords, and the like.

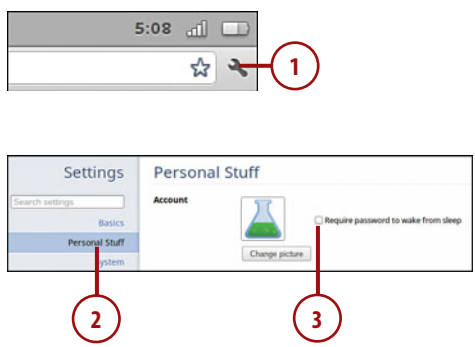
Changing Your Account Password

As covered in Chapter 4, "Managing Multiple Users," you can easily change the picture that displays for your account on the Chrome login screen. You do this from the Account section of the Personal Stuff tab; return to Chapter 4 for more details.

Waking from Sleep

If you want to keep strangers from accessing your Chromebook, you can require the entry of your user password whenever Chrome wakes from sleep mode. This is a nice bit of added security that ensures that nobody but you can access your running Chromebook and Google Account.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Check the Require Password to Wake from Sleep box.



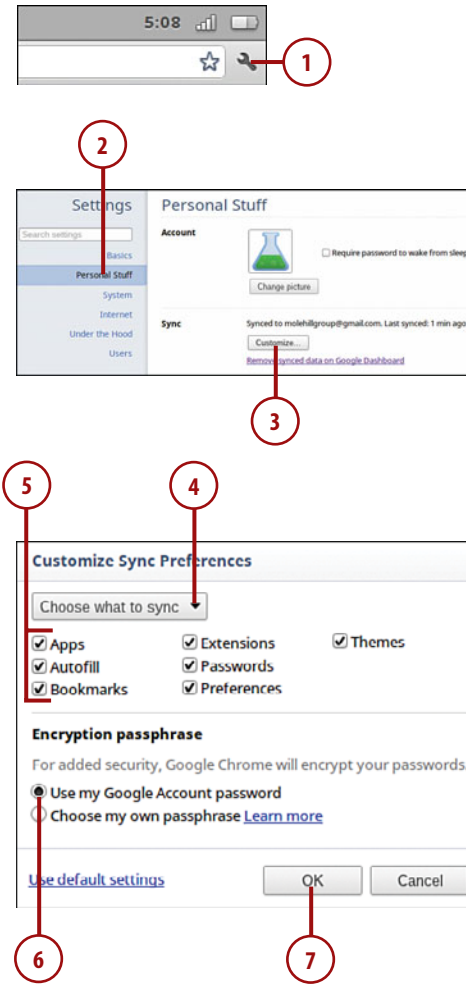
Syncing Your Account

Chrome OS and the Chrome browser are part of Google's Web-based, cloud computing architecture. As such, if you use the Chrome browser on multiple computers (even Windows or Mac machines), you can configure Chrome to use the same bookmarks and settings on those other PCs.

This synchronization is possible because Google saves all your bookmarks and settings online in your Google Account. Whenever or wherever you launch Chrome and connect to your Google Account, the settings you see will be the same ones you saved previously. Any changes you make from any computer are also saved online, and those changes are visible from other computers you use to access the Internet. So after you get your Chromebook properly configured, the Chrome browser will look and feel the same on any other computer you use.

This synchronization is enabled by default on your Chromebook. You can, however, configure just what settings you want to sync across all your computers.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Go to the Sync section and click the Customize button.
4. When the Customize Sync Preferences dialog box appears, pull down the Sync Everything button and select either Sync Everything (default) or Choose What to Sync.
5. If you opted to choose what to sync, check any or all of the following items to synchronize: Apps, Autofill, Bookmarks, Extensions, Passwords, Preferences, or Themes.
6. By default, Google encrypts your passwords using your Google Account password. If you'd rather use a different password, select the Choose My Own Passphrase option, then enter and confirm the new password.
7. Click the OK button when done.

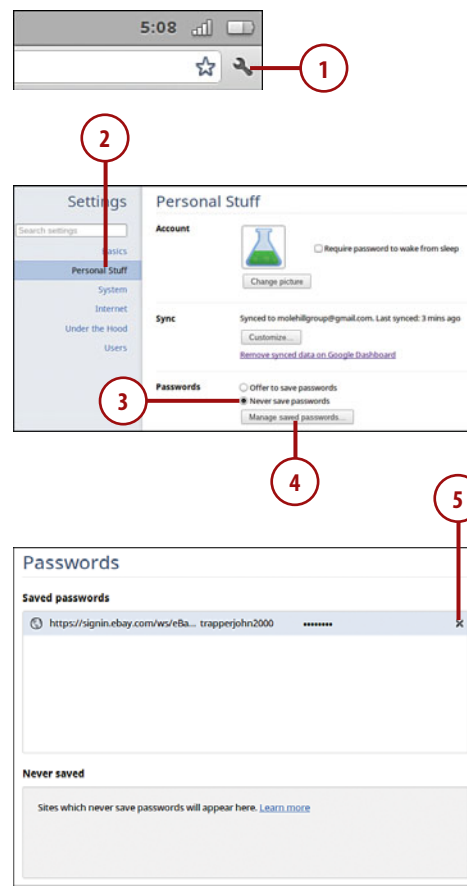


Saving Passwords

By default, Chrome will offer to save any passwords you enter when visiting web pages. This makes revisiting these pages that much faster and easier; Google enters the passwords for you, rather than you having to manually enter them yourself.

You can opt, however, for Google not to offer to save these passwords. This means you'll always have to enter required passwords manually—which makes for better security.

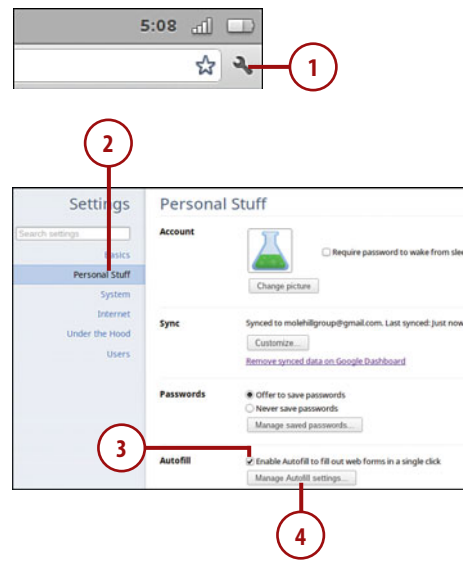
1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Go to the Passwords section and select the Never Save Passwords option.
4. To delete any saved passwords, click the Manage Saved Passwords button.
5. When the Passwords page appears, sites where you've saved passwords appear at the top of the page; sites where you've opted not to save passwords appear at the bottom. Hover over a site in the Saved Passwords section and click the X to delete that password from the list.

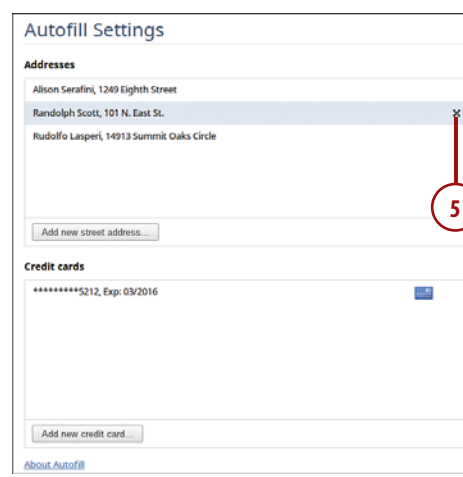


Enabling Autofill

If you do a lot of online shopping, you probably find yourself re-entering the same personal information on multiple sites. You can simplify all this form entering by enabling Chrome's Autofill feature, which stores your basic information and enters it automatically whenever you encounter a similar form on a web page.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Personal Stuff tab.
3. Check the Enable Autofill to Fill Out Web Forms in a Single Click box.
4. To view and manage your Autofill settings, click the Manage Autofill Settings button.
5. When the Autofill Settings page appears, you see saved Addresses and Credit Cards. To delete an item, hover over it and click the X button. To add a new item, click either the Add New Street Address or Add New Credit Card button.





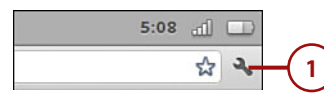
Configuring System Options

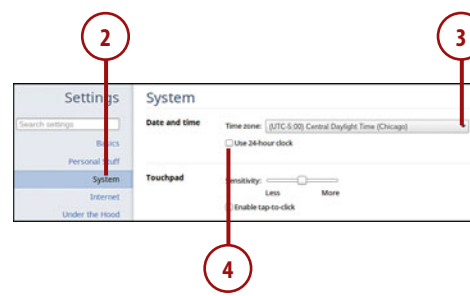
Among the things you can configure in Chrome are some basic system settings, found on the System tab of the Settings page. These include your current time zone, touchpad sensitivity, language displayed, the behavior of selected keys, and features to enhance accessibility.

Changing Your Time Zone

Chrome determines the current date and time over the Internet. However, it might not know your exact location—especially when you're traveling. Fortunately, it's easy to change the time zone displayed in Chrome.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the System tab.
3. Go to the Date and Time section, pull down the Time Zone list, and select your current time zone.
4. By default, Chrome uses a standard AM/PM clock. If you'd rather use a 24-hour military clock, check the Use 24-Hour Clock box.





Managing Touchpad Sensitivity

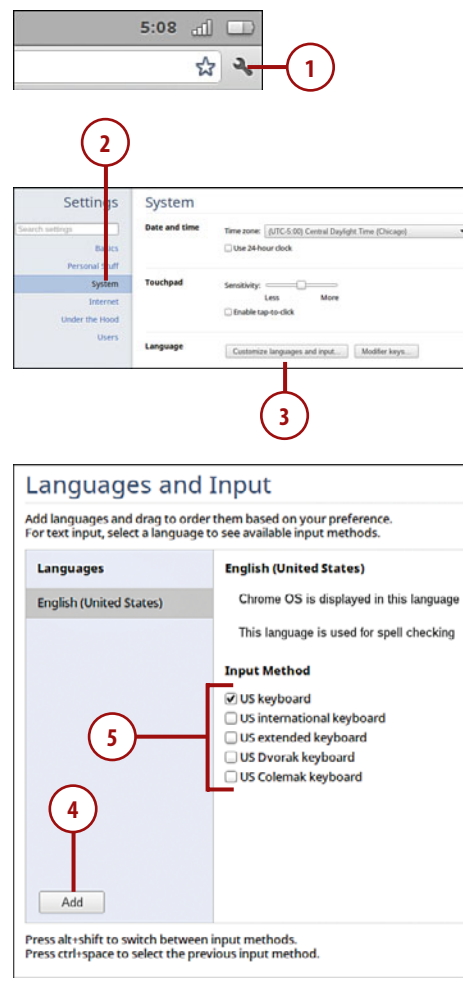
In Chapter 2, "Getting to Know Your Chromebook," you learned how to adjust the sensitivity of your Chromebook's touchpad. That setting is found in the Touchpad section of the System tab. Revisit Chapter 2 to learn how to configure this option.

Customizing Languages and Input Methods

By default, Chromebooks shipped in the U.S. display all menus and dialog boxes in English. If you speak another language, however, you can change this, and have Chrome display in a more familiar language.

You can also change the input method used for your Chromebook's keyboard. By default, Chrome uses a standard U.S. keyboard. You can opt instead to have your Chromebook mimic an international keyboard, extended keyboard, Dvoark keyboard, or Colemak keyboard.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the System tab.
3. Go to the Language section and click the Customize Languages and Input button.
4. When the Languages and Input tab appears, click the Add button in the Languages section to add another display language. When the next dialog box appears, click the language you wish to use.
5. To change the keyboard input method, select another option from the Input Method section.



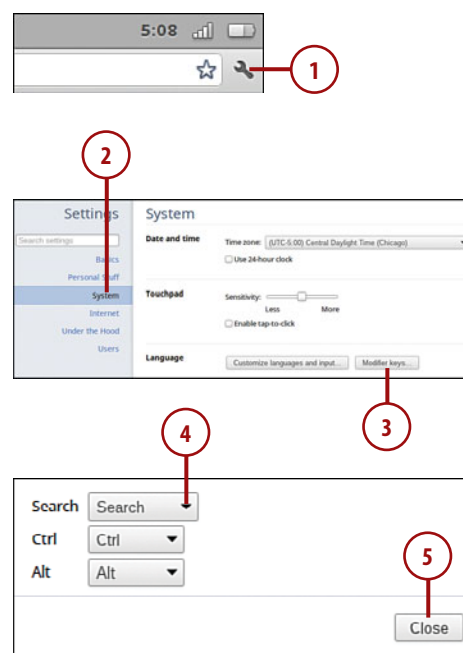
Changing Search, Ctrl, and Alt Key Behavior

As previously noted, the Chromebook keyboard does not include some familiar keys, such as the Caps Lock key. You can, however, reconfigure how the Search, Ctrl, and Alt key work in Chrome—and thus turn these keys into other keys that you might be missing.

Specifically, you can modify these keys as follows:

- **Search**. Change to Ctrl, Alt, Caps Lock, or disable.
- **Ctrl**. Change to Search, Alt, or disable.
- **Alt.** Change to Search, Ctrl, or disable.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the System tab.
3. Go to the Language section and click the Modifier Keys button.
4. When the next dialog box appears, pull down the list for the key you wish to modify and make a new selection.
5. Click the Close button.



Enabling Accessibility Features

If you have vision problems, using any operating system or web browser is difficult. Fortunately, Chrome includes several accessibility features that help you to find your way around the Chrome interface.

When you enable Chrome's accessibility features, the first thing you notice is that the login screen speaks. Chrome speaks the username and password prompts to help you log in.

Sign Out to Enable

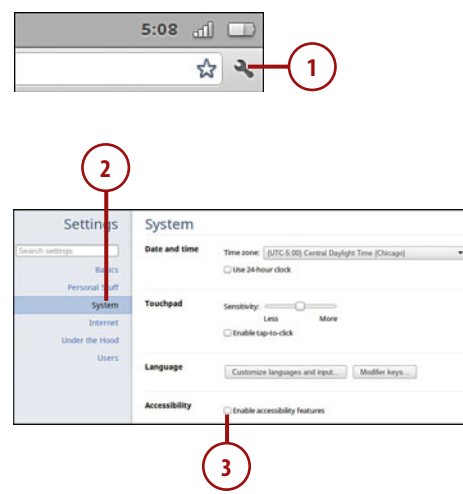
To enable Chrome's accessibility options, you must sign out, and then sign back in to your user account.

In addition, Chrome includes the ChromeVox screenreader, which provides spoken feedback for all user actions. For example, when ChromeVox is activated, all of Chrome's menus talk, and opening a web page produces a combination of spoken feedback and auditory cues. ChromeVox also includes a set of keyboard commands you can use to navigate Chrome menus and web pages.

ChromeVox

To learn more about the ChromeVox screenreader, go to http://google-axs-chrome.googlecode.com/svn/trunk/chromevox_tutorial/index.html.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the System page.
3. Go to the Accessibility section and check the Enable Accessibility Features box.



Configuring Networking Options

As you learned in Chapter 5, "Working Wirelessly," Chrome includes a variety of settings you can use to manage your wireless and wired Internet connections. These settings are found on the Internet tab of the Settings page. Return to Chapter 5 to learn more about configuring these network settings.

Getting Under the Hood

There are even more configuration options available if you want to get "under the hood" with Chrome. The Under the Hood tab includes settings for various privacy options, how web content is displayed, and various other technical options.

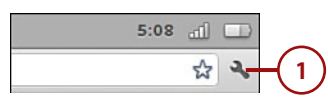
Configuring Privacy Options

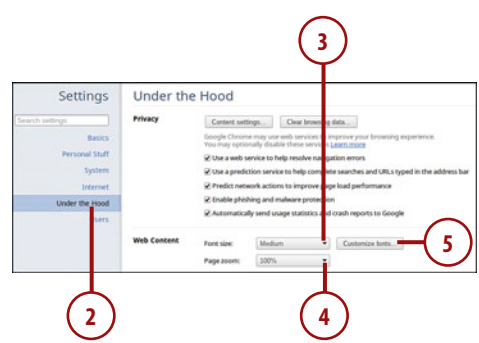
Privacy and security are important when you're browsing the Web. To that end, Chrome includes a variety of privacy-related settings on the Under the Hood tab that can help make your web browsing safer and more secure. These settings are covered in Chapter 14, "Using Google Chrome Safely and Securely." Turn there for more details.

Displaying Web Content

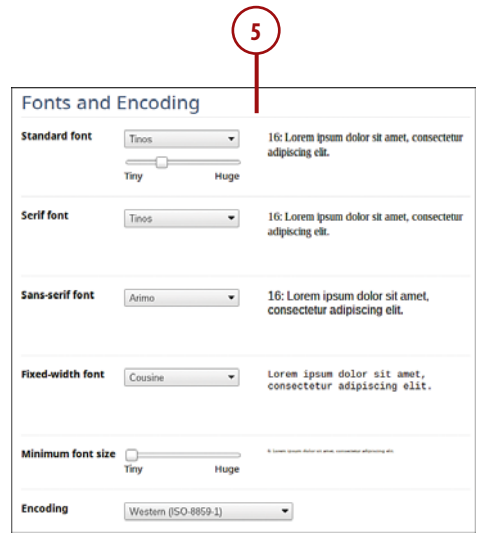
Also on the Under the Hood tab are options for varying how web pages are displayed. In particular, you can change the size and type of fonts used to display web pages, as well as change the zoom level when viewing pages.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Under the Hood tab.
3. To change the size of the fonts used to display web pages, go to the Web Content section, pull down the Font Size list, and make a new selection from Very Small to Very Large. (Medium is the default size.)
4. To change the zoom level of the pages displayed, pull down the Page Zoom list and make a new selection.





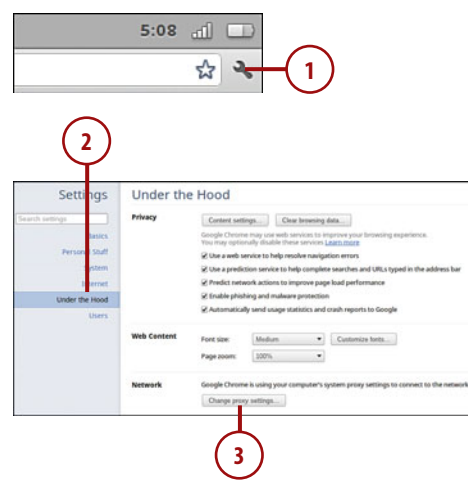
5. To change the fonts used to display web pages, go to the Web Content section and click the Customize Fonts button. To change the basic font, pull down the Standard Font list, make a new selection, then adjust the slider to select the font size (from Tiny to Huge). To change the serif font used, pull down the Serif Font list and make a new selection. To change the sans serif font used, pull down the Sans-Serif Font list and make a new selection. To change the fixed-width font used, pull down the Fixed-Width Font list and make a new selection. To change the smallest size font displayed, adjust the Minimum Font Size slider.



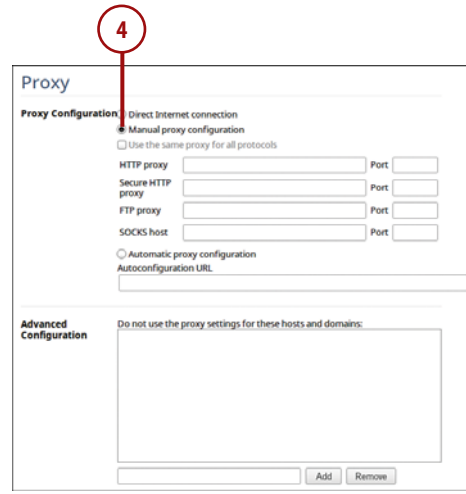
Changing Proxy Settings

This one is kind of technical and probably best left to when you need specific technical support. If you need to change the proxy configuration for your Internet connections, which you might if you're having trouble connecting over a given network, Chrome lets you do so.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Under the Hood tab.
3. Go to the Network section and click the Change Proxy Settings button.



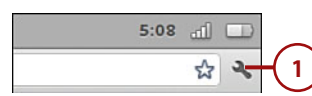
4. When the Proxy page appears, select Manual Proxy Configuration and enter the new information as appropriate.

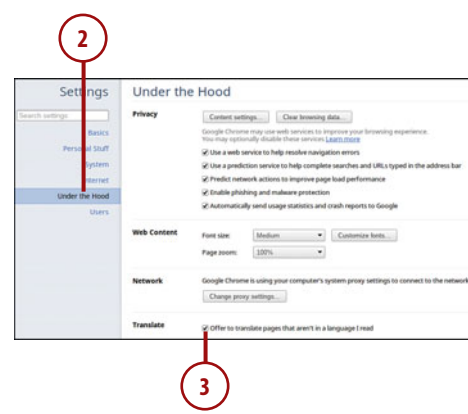


Translating Pages

Chrome can take advantage of the Google Translate service to translate web pages from most foreign languages. While Chrome doesn't do this automatically, you can configure Chrome to offer to translate these pages. (This option is enabled by default.)

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Under the Hood tab.
3. Check the Offer to Translate Pages That Aren't in a Language I Read box.

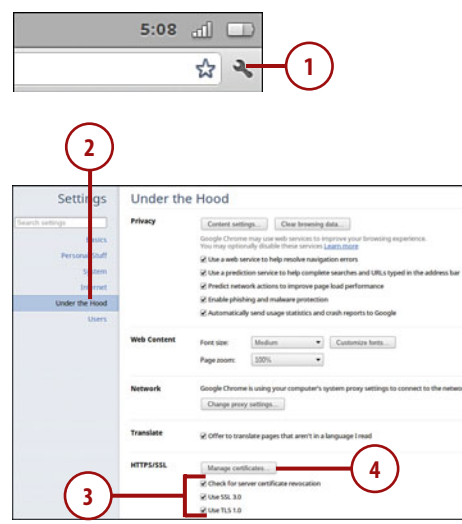




Managing HTTPS/SSL Security

As part of Chrome's advanced security-related features, the browser is configured to use secure socket layer (SSL) and transport layer security (TLS) protocols for safer web browsing. Chrome is also configured to let you access secure websites that require certificates of authenticity to be installed on your computer. You can disable the SSL and TLS protocols if you wish, as well as manage the certificates stored on your computer.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Under the Hood section.
3. To disable server certificates, SSL, or TLS, uncheck those particular boxes.
4. To manage the security certificates stored on your Chromebook, click the Manage Certificates button.



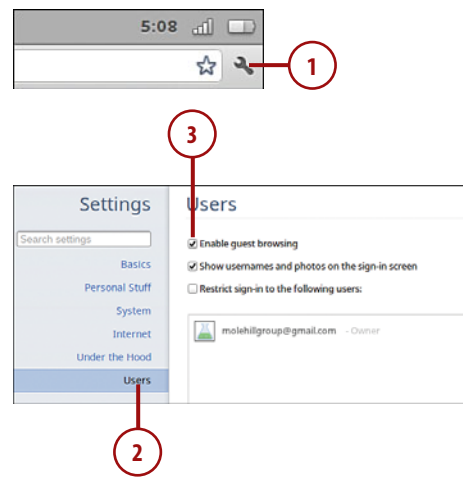
Managing Users

In Chapter 4, you learned how to set up different users on your Chromebook. Chrome also lets you disable guest browsing, if you wish, as well as opt not to display usernames and images on the login screen.

Disabling Guest Browsing

Guest browsing is enabled by default in Chrome. If you'd rather not have unregistered users using your Chromebook, you can disable the guest browsing feature.

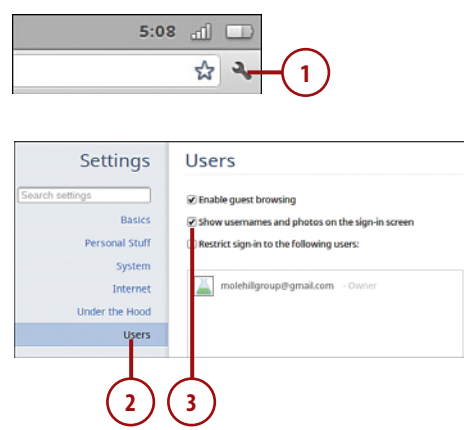
1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Users tab.
3. Uncheck the Enable Guest Browsing box.



Hiding Usernames

By default, you see the usernames and associated images for all users added to your Chromebook. You can, however, opt to hide these usernames and images.

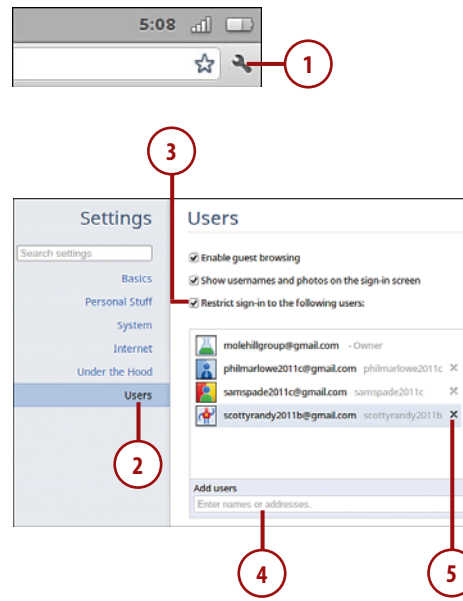
1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Users tab.
3. Uncheck the Show Usernames and Photos on the Sign-In Screen box.



Restricting Sign-In

Another option is to restrict sign-in to a list of preapproved users. That way, only users you've permitted can sign into your Chromebook.

1. Click the Customize and Control (wrench) button and select Settings.
2. When the Settings page appears, select the Users tab.
3. Check the Restrict Sign-In to the Following Users box.
4. To add a user to the list, enter his or her username into the Add Users box and press Enter.
5. To delete a user from the approved list, click the X next to his or her name.



A

Google Chrome Keyboard Shortcuts

A keyboard shortcut is a combination of two or more keyboard buttons that you use to perform specific actions within Google Chrome. Using keyboard shortcuts can be a real time saver.

NAVIGATION AND BROWSER SHORTCUTS

Keyboard Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+Alt+/	Display list of keyboard shortcuts
Ctrl+O	Open a file
Ctrl+M	Open File Manager
Shift+Esc	Open Task Manager
Ctrl+H	Open History page
Ctrl+J	Open Downloads page
Alt+E	Open Customize and Control (wrench) menu
Ctrl+Shift+B	Toggle Bookmarks bar on or off
Shift+Alt+B	Place focus on the Bookmarks bar

Keyboard Shortcut	Action
Shift+Alt+T	Place focus on the browser toolbar
Shift+Alt+S	Place focus on status area in top-right corner
Ctrl+Next Page or Ctrl+Previous Page	Switch focus to next pane (status bar, Address bar, downloads bar, or open web page)
Ctrl+Full Screen	Configure external monitor
Ctrl+Alt+Z	Enable/disable accessibility settings (if you're not logged into a Google Account)
Ctrl+Shift+Q	Sign out of your Google Account
Ctrl+?	Go to Help Center

TOOLBAR NAVIGATION COMMANDS (USE WHEN FOCUSED ON TOOLBAR OR BOOKMARKS BAR)

Keyboard Shortcut	Action
Tab or Right Arrow	Go to next item on toolbar
Shift+Tab or Left Arrow	Go to previous item on toolbar
Ctrl+Alt+Up Arrow	Go to first item on toolbar
Ctrl+Alt+Down Arrow	Go to last item on toolbar
Space or Enter	Activate button
Shift+Volume Up	Open context menu for button (if available)
Esc	Return focus to the page

TAB AND WINDOW NAVIGATION SHORTCUTS

Keyboard Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+T	Open a new tab
Ctrl+W	Close the current tab
Ctrl+Shift+T	Reopen the last tab you closed
Ctrl+Tab	Go to next tab
Ctrl+Shift+Tab	Go to previous tab
Ctrl+1 through Ctrl+8	Go to the specified tab

Keyboard Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+9	Go to the last tab
Ctrl+N	Open a new window
Ctrl+Shift+N	Open a new window in Incognito mode
Ctrl+Shift+W	Close the current window
Alt+Tab	Go to next window
Alt+Shift+Tab	Go to previous window
Alt+1 through Alt+8	Go to the specified window
Alt+9	Go to the last open window
Click and hold Back or Forward button in browser toolbar	See browsing history for that tab
Backspace or Alt+Left Arrow	Go to previous page in browsing history
Shift+Backspace or Alt+Right Arrow	Go to next page in browsing history
Ctrl+click a link	Open link in new tab in background
Ctrl+Shift+click a link	Open link in new tab in foreground
Shift+click a link	Open link in new window
Drag a link to a tab	Open link in the tab
Drag a link to a blank area on the tab strip	Open link in new tab
Type URL in Address bar, then press Alt+Enter	Open URL in new tab
Press Esc while dragging a tab	Return tab to its original position

PAGE SHORTCUTS

Keyboard Shortcut	Description
Alt+Up Arrow	Page up
Alt+Down Arrow	Page down
Space bar	Scroll down web page
Ctrl+Alt+Up Arrow	Home
Ctrl+Alt+Down Arrow	End

Keyboard Shortcut	Description
Ctrl+P	Print page
Ctrl+S	Save page
Ctrl+R	Reload page
Ctrl+Shift_R	Reload page without using cached content
Esc	Stop loading current page
Ctrl and +	Zoom in
Ctrl and -	Zoom out
Ctrl+0	Reset zoom level
Ctrl+D	Save page as bookmark
Ctrl+Shift+D	Save all open pages in window as bookmarks in a new folder
Drag a link to Bookmarks bar	Save link as bookmark
Ctrl+F	Search current page
Ctrl+G or Enter	Go to next match for page search
Ctrl+Shift+G or Shift+Enter	Go to previous match for page search
Ctrl+K or Ctrl+E	Search web
Ctrl+Enter	Add www. and .com to input in Address bar and open resulting URL
Ctrl+Next Window	Take a screenshot of current screen
Ctrl+U	View page source
Ctrl+Shift+I	Toggle display of Developer Tools panel
Ctrl+Shift+J	Toggle display of the DOM Inspector

TEXT EDITING SHORTCUTS

Keyboard Shortcut	Description
Ctrl+A	Select everything on page
Ctrl+L or Alt+D	Select content in Address bar
Ctrl+Shift+Right Arrow	Select next word or letter
Ctrl+Shift+Left Arrow	Select previous word or letter
Ctrl+Right Arrow	Move to start of next word

Keyboard Shortcut	Description
Ctrl+Left Arrow	Move to start of previous word
Ctrl+C	Copy selected content to clipboard
Ctrl+V	Paste content from clipboard
Ctrl+Shift+V	Paste content from clipboard as plain text
Ctrl+X	Cut
Ctrl+Backspace	Delete previous word
Alt+Backspace	Delete next letter
Ctrl+Z	Undo last action

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