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🔍 Plain & Simple

Windows 10



Nancy Muir Boysen

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Nancy Muir Boysen

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all the day-to-day production work on this challenging visual book. Thanks to Ed Bott for providing assistance with select figures. Finally, thanks to my technical reviewer, Randall Galloway, for keeping me on track with Windows 10.

Customizing the appearance of Windows 10

Windows 10 is an environment in which you'll spend a lot of time, so being able to set up the appearance of its various elements in ways that please you is a great benefit. You can change the background image for the desktop, colors, the size of text, and more. You can also work with the size and placement of tiles in the Start menu.

Some of these settings customize the desktop appearance, whereas others make working with apps a lot easier. For example, you can arrange open windows on the desktop so that you can view more than one app at a time, which helps when you need to copy and paste contents from one app to another or reference information in one document while working in another. You can customize the taskbar contents such that the icons you need most often are always close at hand.

4

In this section:

- Changing the desktop background
- Customize the Lock Screen
- Using themes
- Adjusting colors and transparency
- Changing the screen saver
- Making timeout settings
- Enlarging text
- Changing screen resolution
- Customizing the taskbar
- Adding tiles to the Start menu
- Moving tiles
- Resizing tiles
- Using Snap to arrange apps on the Desktop


Changing the desktop background

We all like to personalize our work environment, from pinning photos to the wall of a cubicle at work to decorating the walls of our home office. In the same way, Windows 10 provides images that you can use to add visual appeal to your Desktop.

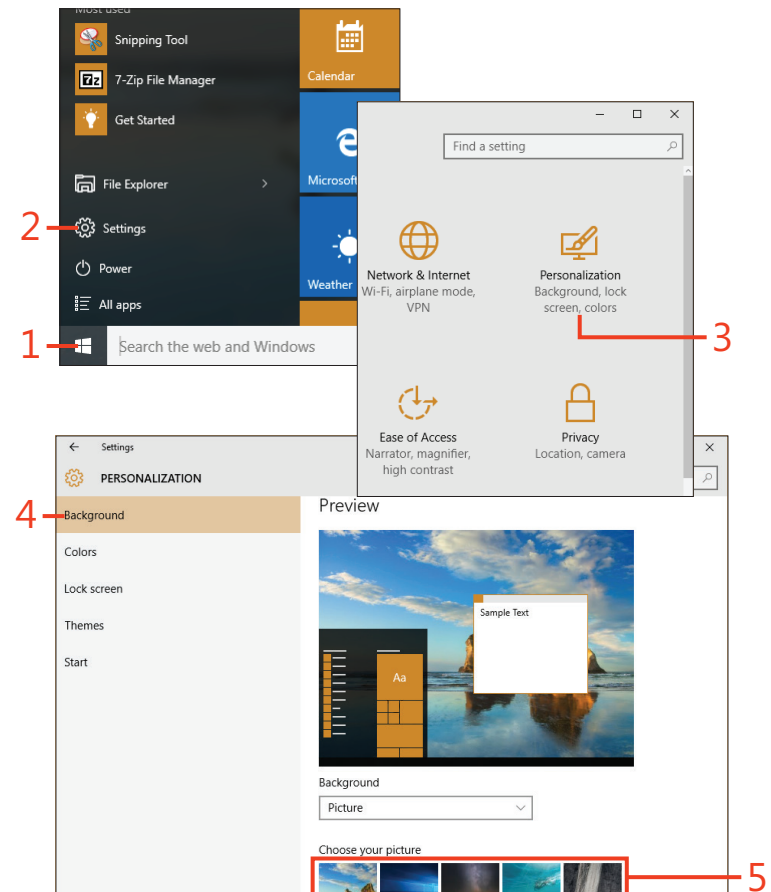
Choose a new background picture

- 1 Click the Start button.
- 2 Click Settings.
- 3 Click Personalization.
- 4 Click Background.
- 5 In the Choose Your Picture section, click an option.

 **TIP** To select your own picture as your background in step 5, you can click the Browse button (not shown in the illustration) and then locate a picture of your own by using File Explorer. When you've found the picture you want, click the Choose Picture button to select the image.

 **TIP** If you prefer a solid color background to a picture, click the Background drop-down list and choose Solid Color before making a background selection.

To customize your Windows experience, you can change which Windows images appear as backgrounds, and even use your own images.



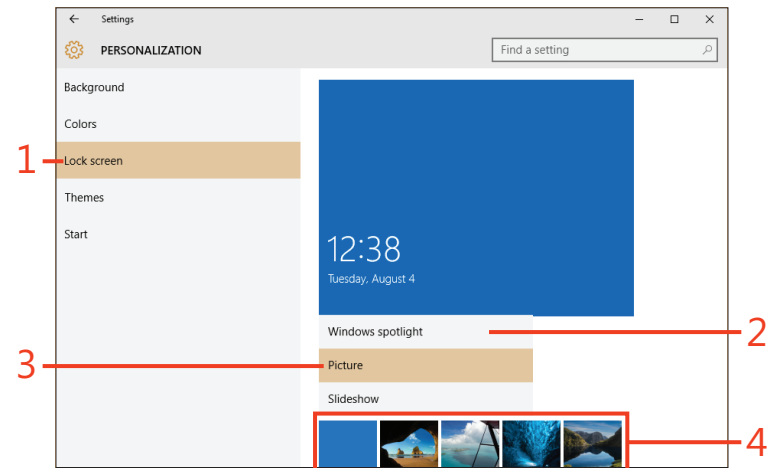
Customize the Lock Screen

The Lock Screen appears whenever your computer goes to sleep. When you want to wake up your computer and begin using it again, you see the Lock Screen image, which you then click to display a sign-in screen to access Windows 10. You can

choose what type of background image appears on the Lock Screen: Windows Spotlight, which shows images from the Bing search engine; a Microsoft provided picture; or a slide show of images from your Picture folder or Windows Spotlight.

Choose a new Lock Screen background

- 1 In Settings, choose Personalization, and then click Lock Screen.
- 2 Click the Background drop-down list.
- 3 Click Picture.
- 4 In the Choose Your Picture section, click an image.



TIP You can affect what images are shown if you select Windows Spotlight for Lock Screen Images in step 3. With the Lock Screen displayed, in the top-right corner, move your pointer over Like What You See?, and then click either I Like It! or Not a Fan? to cast your vote. The next time you go to Spotlight, you'll see images more like those that you've endorsed. Spotlight can also learn about you and the services and features you use in Windows 10 to make suggestions on the Lock Screen about other features or apps that you might enjoy.

Adjusting colors and transparency

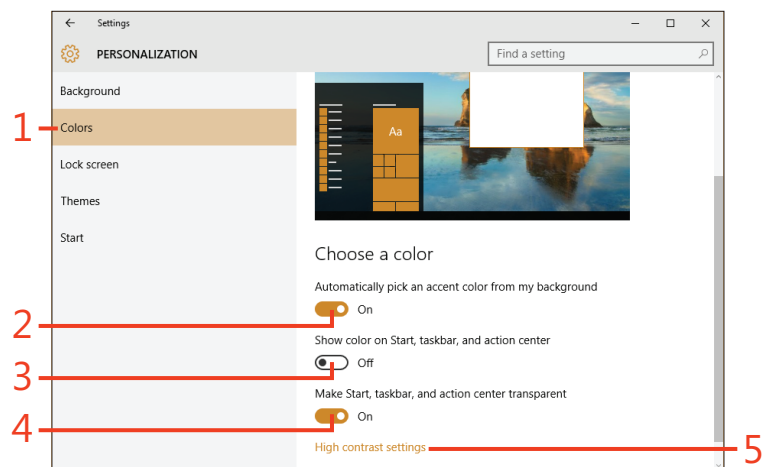
The colors that appear on various elements of your screen (for example, the taskbar and open window borders) have two functions. First, they might appeal to your personal color sense and make your computing environment more attractive. Second, they might make the content on the screen easier to see. You can configure Windows 10 to pick a color scheme that matches

the background image you've chosen for your desktop or make the Start menu transparent. You can also choose from among several high-contrast color schemes which are especially helpful for those who have low vision. You can even customize and save high-contrast color themes to use the colors you prefer.

Control colors and transparency

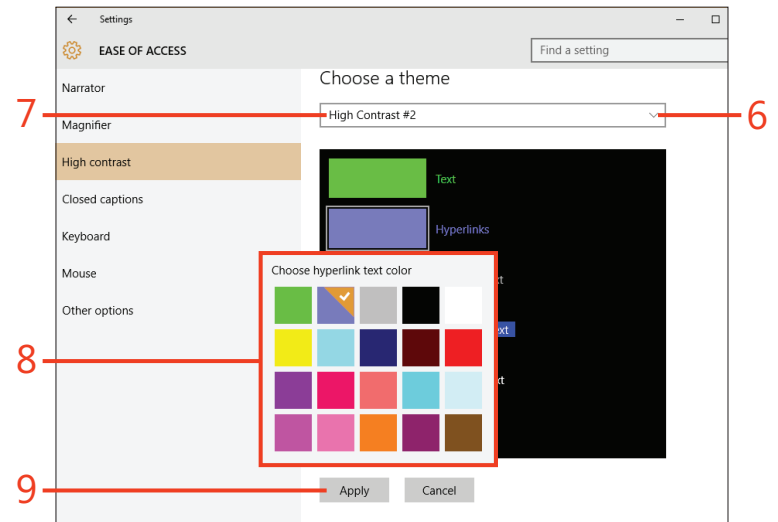
- 1 In Settings, choose Personalization, and then click Colors.
- 2 Click the switch to turn on the Automatically Pick An Accent Color From My Background setting.
- 3 If you want the taskbar to change color (rather than remaining black), be sure the Show Color On Taskbar And Start Menu option is set to On.
- 4 Click to turn on or off the Make Start, Taskbar, And Action Center Transparent option.
- 5 Click High Contrast Settings to choose a color scheme in the Ease Of Access settings.

(continued on next page)



Control colors and transparency *(continued)*

- 6 Click the drop-down list at the top to display available themes.
- 7 Click a theme.
- 8 To customize your own theme, click any screen element, and then, from the palette that opens, choose a color.
- 9 Click Apply.



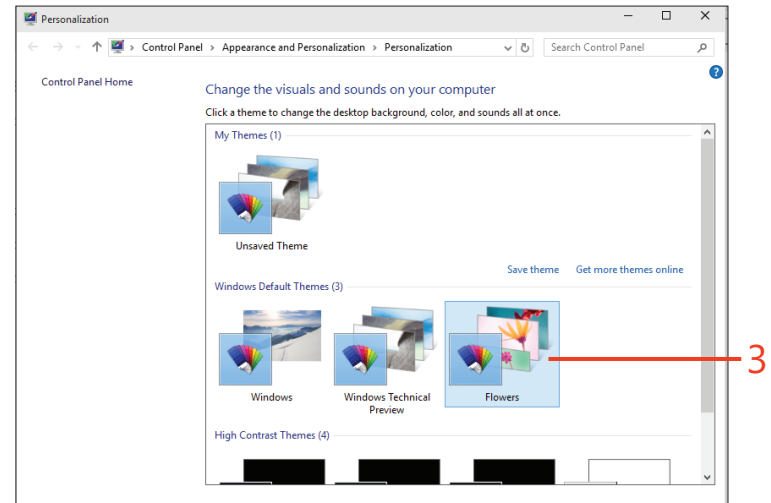
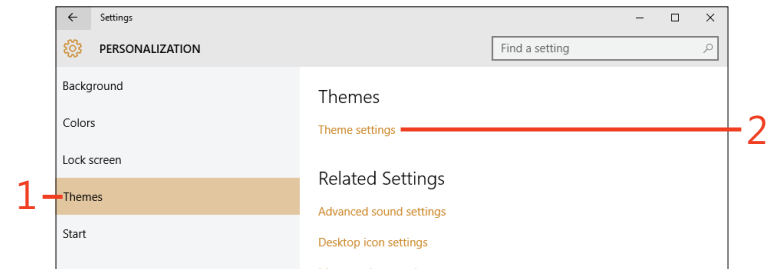
Using themes

Windows 10 includes several themes that control the appearance of your screen. These themes provide an easy way to apply a variety of settings such as colors, font, and background

images to the computer interface. There are even high-contrast themes that make the screen easier to see for those who have low vision.

Select a theme

- 1 In Settings, choose Personalization, and then click Themes.
- 2 In the Themes section, click Theme Settings.
- 3 Click a theme to select it.



TIP You can create your own themes. Before going to the theme window make any personalization settings you prefer. Then, in the theme window, click Save Theme. This opens a dialog box in which you can provide a name for your theme and save all current settings as a custom theme.

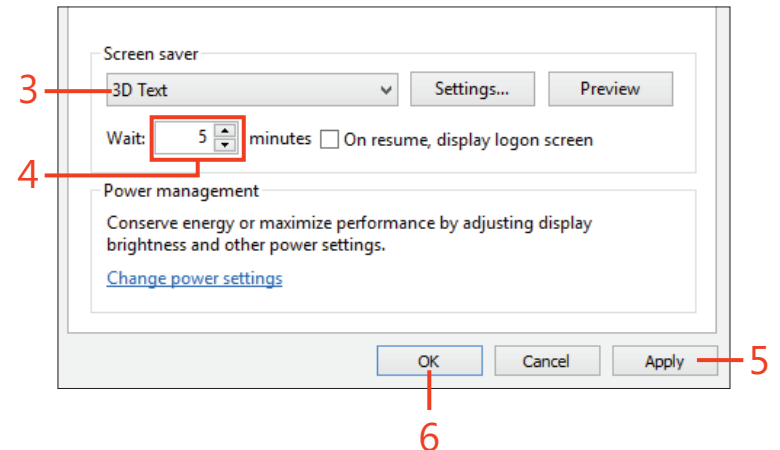
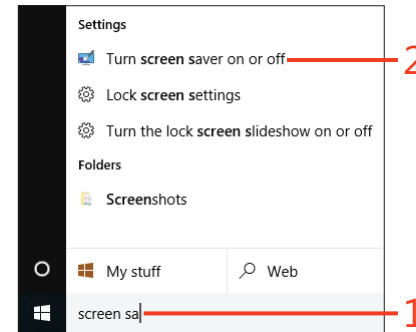
Changing the screen saver

You can set up a screen saver that will appear after a preset interval of inactivity on your computer. The screen saver is an animation that takes up the computer's full screen. A screen saver keeps your screen's contents private. When you want to

get back to using your computer, you don't need to raise the Lock Screen and type your password or PIN; instead you can just click your mouse and your computer returns to whatever you were working on at the moment the screen saver activated.

Select a screen saver

- 1 In the Cortana search box, type **screen saver**.
- 2 Click Turn Screen Saver On Or Off.
- 3 Click the Screen Saver drop-down list, and then select a screen saver.
- 4 Click the up or down arrows on the Wait box (or you can also simply type a number directly in the box) to set an interval of inactivity after which the screen saver turns on.
- 5 Click Apply.
- 6 Click OK to close the dialog box.



TIP You can see what the screen saver will look like by clicking the Preview button in the Screen Saver Settings dialog box. The screen saver animation appears full screen. To return to the dialog box, press the Esc button on your keyboard.

Making timeout settings

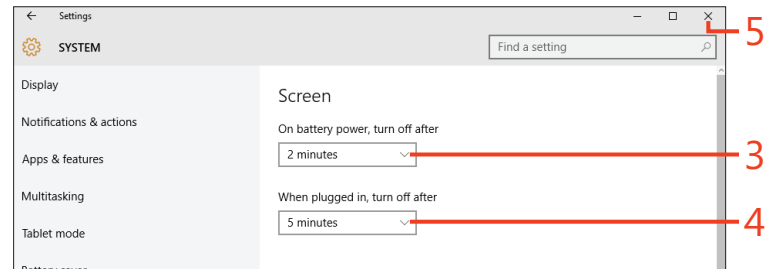
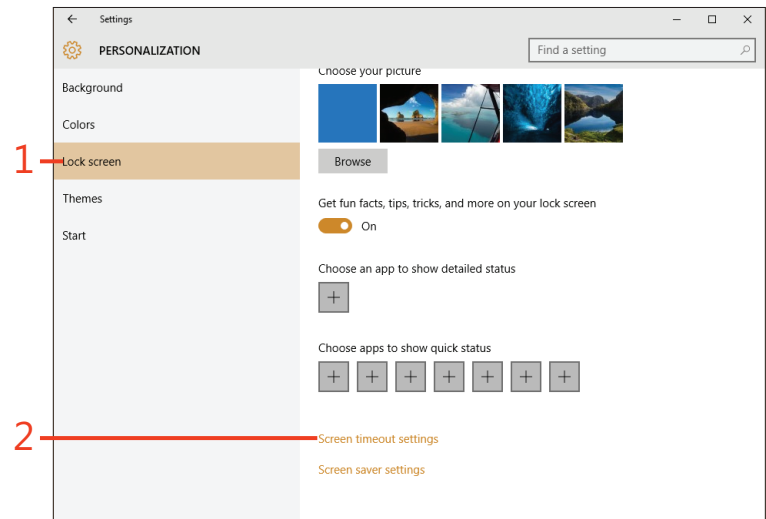
After a certain interval of inactivity, Windows will go to sleep. When your computer is asleep you must click the Lock Screen and then type a password or PIN on the sign-in screen that opens to access your computer. You might find it disruptive if this happens after a very short interval. Conversely, if Windows waits a long time before it goes to sleep, you might end up draining your laptop battery of power unnecessarily.

You can control how quickly your computer goes to sleep or turns off when it's running on battery power or plugged into

a power outlet. Another way in which you can conserve power is by turning your screen off while still leaving the computer on. Although this doesn't save as much energy as when the computer goes to sleep, one benefit of turning off the screen is that it doesn't stop existing apps such as Music from working, whereas putting your computer to sleep stops apps from running and requires you to sign in again.

Choose when your screen times out

- 1 In Settings, choose Personalization, and then click Lock Screen.
- 2 Scroll down and click Screen Timeout Settings.
- 3 Click a drop-down list to choose a time interval for when the screen turns off while running on battery or when plugged in.
- 4 Click a drop-down list to choose a time interval for when the computer goes to sleep while running on battery or when plugged in.
- 5 Click the Close button.



CAUTION Setting up too long an interval before your computer turns off the screen or goes to sleep can drain a laptop battery. Default settings are often suitable for most people, but if you do choose a lengthier interval, you should be aware of your power consumption trade-offs.

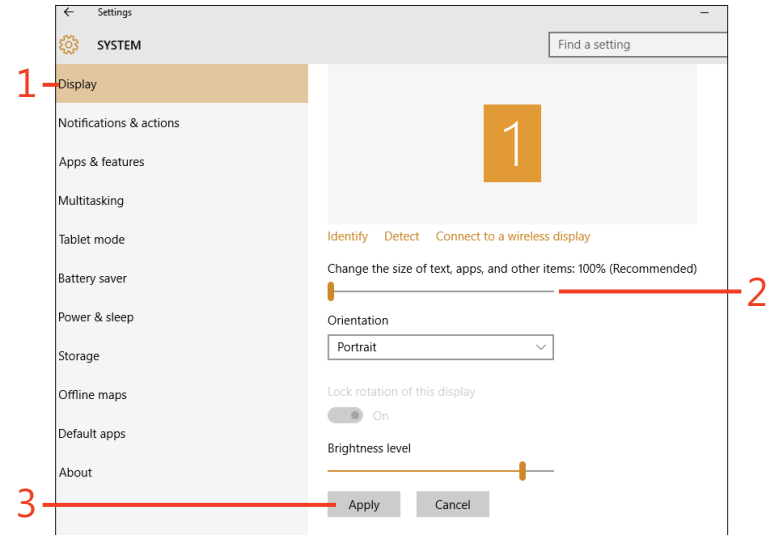
Enlarging text

If you want Windows interface text to be displayed in a larger size to help you read things more easily, you can use a System setting to choose the appropriate size. This setting doesn't

control text size in apps, however. What it does control is text in Windows elements: dialog boxes, Settings windows, the taskbar, Start menu, and so forth.

Make text larger

- 1 In Settings, choose System, and then click Display.
- 2 Drag the slider for the Change The Size Of Text, Apps, And Other Items setting to the size you desire.
- 3 Click Apply.



TRY THIS If you have a touchscreen computer, you can also use your fingers to expand or reduce the display of many apps, including the Microsoft Edge browser. To enlarge the display, simply put two fingers together on the screen and spread them apart. To reduce the size of the display, place your fingers apart and pinch them toward each other.



TIP The Magnifier Ease of Access feature zooms in on areas of your screen to help those who have low vision see the screen as if they were holding a magnifying glass to it. See "Using Magnifier" on page 88 for more about using this feature.

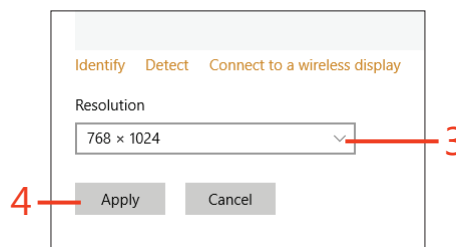
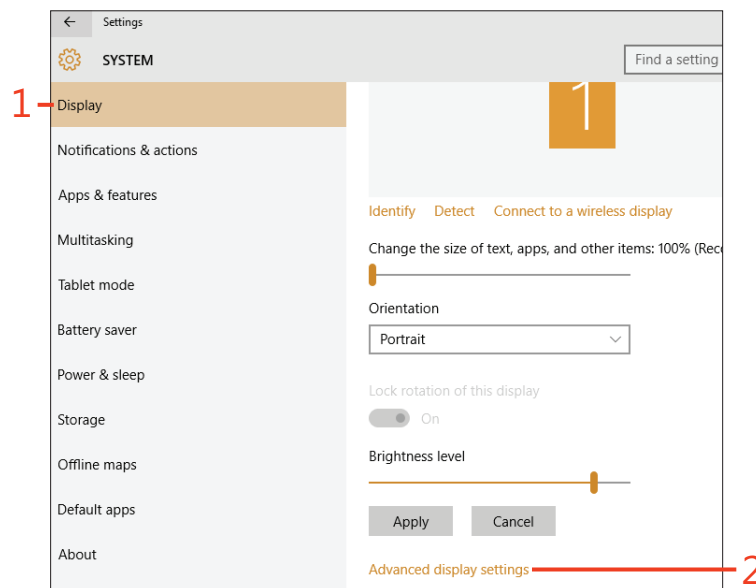
Changing screen resolution

The monitor on your computer or laptop displays your desktop and its contents at a certain resolution, expressed in pixels in a ratio of height to width, such as 1024 x 768. Resolutions containing higher numbers provide a crisper screen, though elements might be smaller. Resolutions with a lower number provide a

less crisp image, but elements are bigger, which might make the screen more readable for some. If you ever share images of your desktop you might be asked to shoot those images at a certain resolution, so it's useful to know how to change this setting.

Choose a screen resolution

- 1 In Settings, choose System, and then click Display.
- 2 Click Advanced Display Settings.
- 3 Click the Resolution drop-down list, and then select the setting you want.
- 4 Click Apply.



TIP Not all computers offer the same resolution options, because these depend on their screen quality. Newer computers with higher-quality displays and better-quality graphics cards will typically offer higher resolution settings.

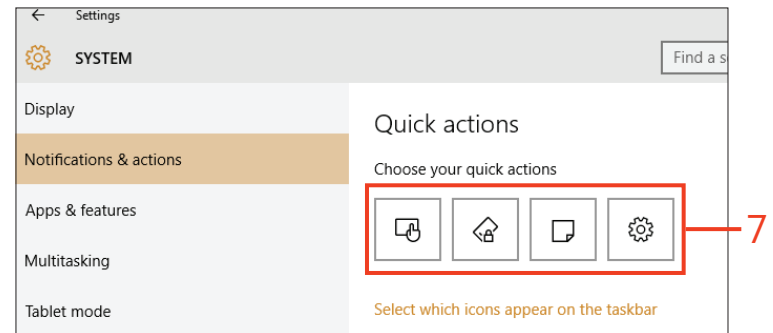
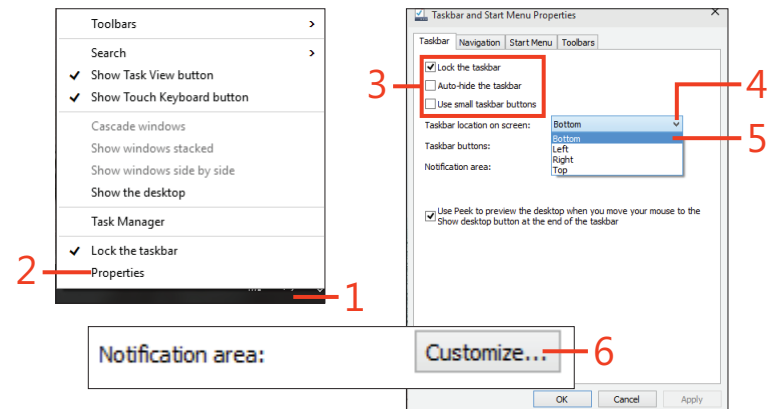
Customizing the taskbar

You can customize the taskbar that runs along the bottom of the Windows desktop in several ways. First, you can control whether the taskbar is locked in place so that it can't shift to a different position (such as to the top, left, or right of your desktop). You can also control whether your taskbar is automatically hidden so that you can view the full screen without it until you

move your pointing device near its position on the screen. You can move the taskbar to the top, bottom, right, or left of the screen. You can also change which Quick Action buttons, such as those that control volume, power, network connections, and so forth, appear on the right side of the taskbar.

Choose taskbar settings

- 1 Right-click the taskbar.
- 2 Click Properties.
- 3 Select any of the check boxes, such as Lock The Taskbar or Auto-Hide The Taskbar, to apply that setting.
- 4 Click the Taskbar Location On Screen drop-down box.
- 5 Click a location.
- 6 Click Customize for the Notification Area.
- 7 Click a Quick Action icon, and then, from the list that appears, select a different one.



TIP If your taskbar becomes too crowded with icons, you can choose whether to hide labels that appear next to some buttons to gain some extra space. In the Taskbar And Start Menu Properties dialog box, click the Taskbar Buttons drop-down list, and then choose whether these labels should be displayed or hidden.

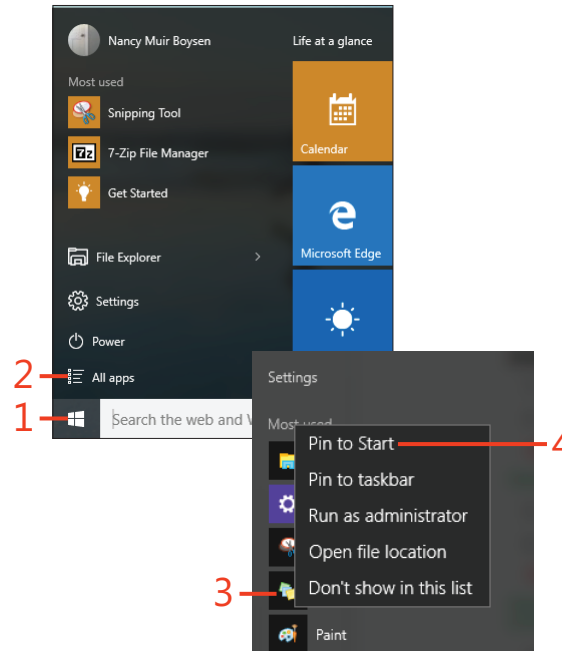
Adding tiles to the Start menu

There are several apps tiles included in the Start menu when you first turn on your Windows 10 computer. In designing Windows 10, Microsoft bet that these would be the most

commonly used and useful tiles, but you can also choose which apps you prefer to pin to the Start menu.

Add a new tile to the Start menu

- 1 Click the Start button.
- 2 Click All Apps.
- 3 Right-click an app in the list.
- 4 Click Pin To Start.



TIP Don't need an app on your Start menu anymore? You can remove an app tile by right-clicking it in the Start menu, and then, in the shortcut menu that opens, click Unpin From Start.

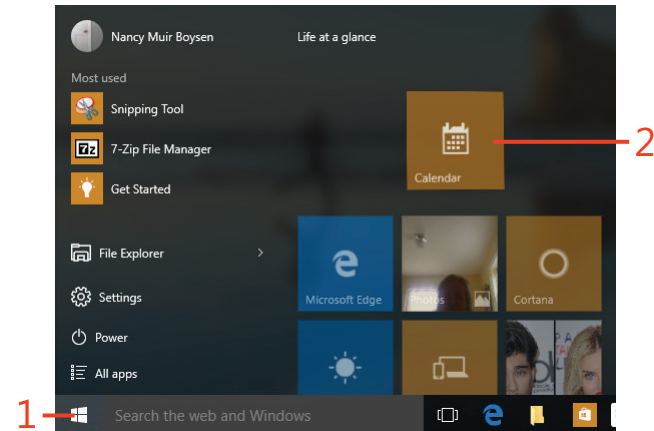
Moving tiles

The position of a tile on your Start menu can make it easier to find. For example, you might want to place your most commonly used app tiles along the top, and less-used tiles at the bottom.

Or, you might decide to move a tile from one group of tiles to another. You can easily move tiles around on the Start menu by dragging them from place to place.

Move a tile

- 1 Click the Start button.
- 2 Drag a tile to a new location on the Start menu.
- 3 Release the mouse button.



TRY THIS When you add tiles to the Start menu, they appear in a new group. Add a couple of tiles and then click above them and type a name for the new group. Try moving a tile from one group to another using the procedure described here.

Using Snap to arrange apps on the desktop

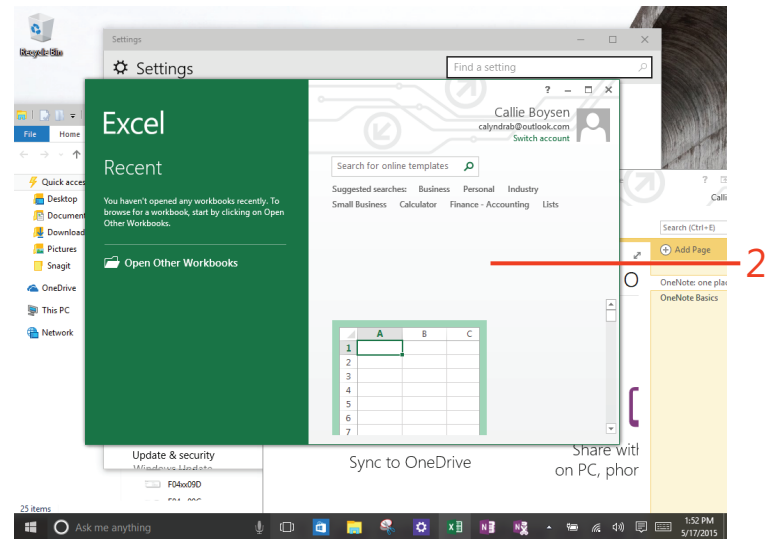
Snap is a feature that has been around for several versions of Windows. Snap helps you to quickly arrange open windows on the right or left side of your screen. In Windows 10 a vertical snap functionality has been added which makes it possible for

you to move an open but not maximized app window to the top or bottom of your screen. The Snap feature works by selecting an app and dragging it, by using shortcut keys, or, with a touchscreen, by swiping an open app with your finger.

Snap apps

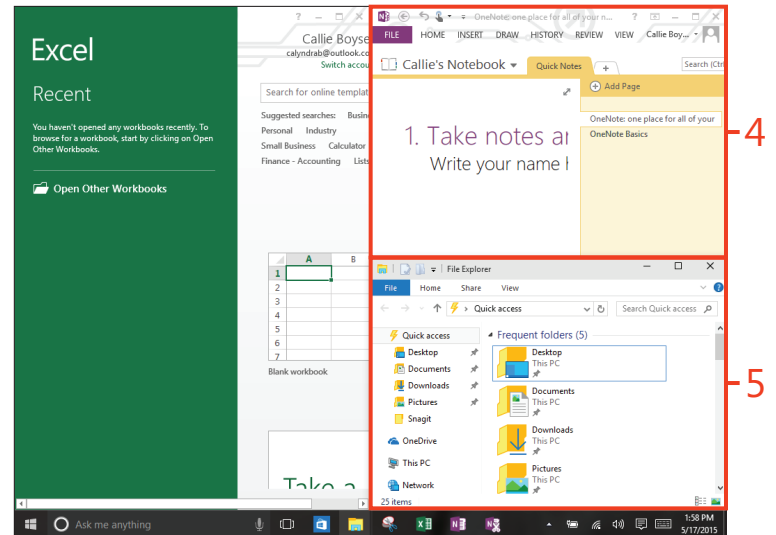
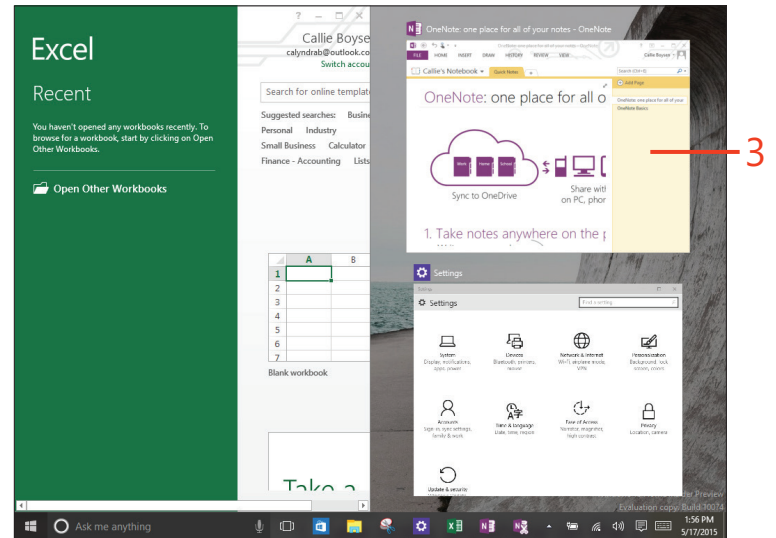
- 1 Using the Start menu, open several apps on the desktop.
- 2 Click an open app and quickly drag it to the left side of the screen.

(continued on next page)



Snap apps (continued)

- Click another app to expand it, and it opens on the right side of the screen.
- Press the Windows logo key+Up arrow on your keyboard to snap a selected app to the top quadrant of the desktop.
- Press the Windows logo key+Down arrow on your keyboard to snap a selected app to the bottom quadrant of the desktop.



TIP If you have a touchscreen, note that dragging an open app's title bar to the top of the screen maximizes the app. Instead use the Windows logo key+Up arrow method described here.

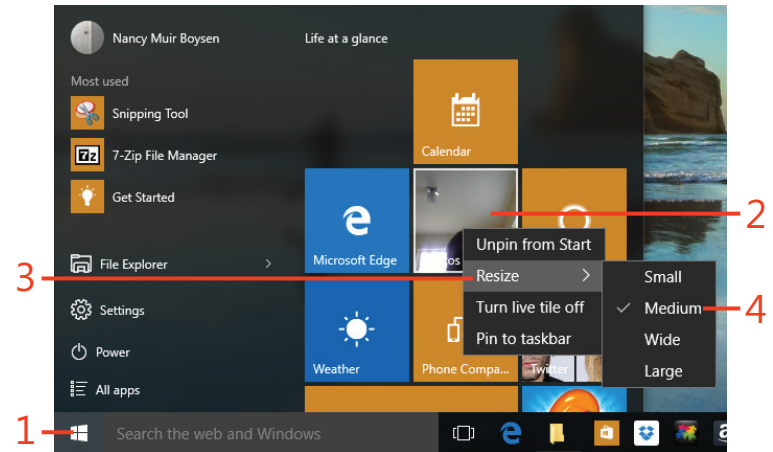
Resizing tiles

Your Start menu can become crowded with tiles as you continue to add apps to it. One way to relieve the clutter and view more tiles in the menu is to reduce the size of some tiles. You might

also want to enlarge a tile that you want to more easily find. There are four sizes for tiles: Small, Medium, Wide, and Large. By default tiles appear in the Medium or Wide size.

Change tile size

- 1 Click the Start button.
- 2 Right-click a tile.
- 3 Click Resize
- 4 Click Small, Medium, Wide, or Large.



TIP You might have noticed that some tiles have specific content such as a news story displayed on them, whereas others only sport a solid background and an icon. Tiles with content in them are called *live tiles*. If the live content in a tile distracts you, right-click that app tile in the Start menu, and then, in the shortcut menu that opens, choose Turn Live Tile Off.

Making Windows accessible

Windows is used by millions of people around the globe. Some of those people face challenges in using a computer. Some have dexterity issues such as carpal tunnel syndrome or arthritis and need to adjust mouse and keyboard settings to make providing input easier. Others face visual challenges that make content on the screen difficult to read. Some might need help hearing sounds or require an alternative way to connect with the spoken word in videos, such as close captioning.

Windows 10 offers several accessibility features to address these needs, such as Magnifier to enlarge content on the screen, Narrator to read content to a user, the ability to adjust screen brightness or contrast, and the option of speaking text rather than typing it. All of these tools make using a Windows 10 computer very easy.

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- Using Magnifier
- Setting up high contrast
- Adjusting screen brightness
- Making elements on your screen easier to see
- Changing mouse settings
- Changing keyboard settings
- Using Touch Feedback
- Working with Narrator
- Using Speech Recognition
- Turning on Closed Captioning
- Using visual alternatives for sounds

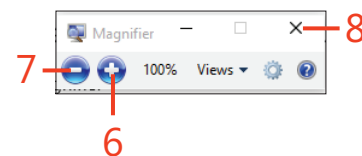
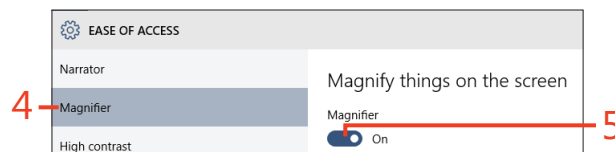
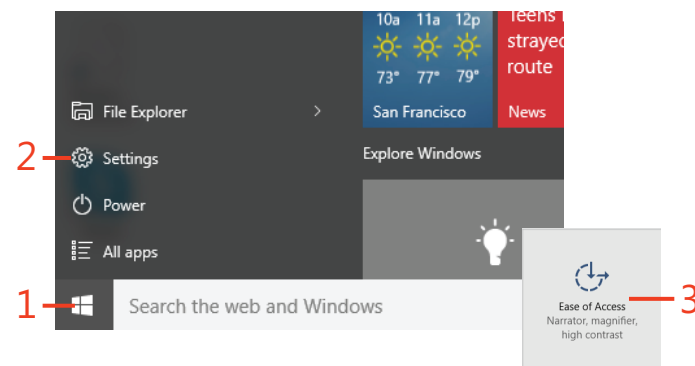
Using Magnifier

Although it's possible to enlarge or reduce contents in many instances—such as on a webpage or in a word processed document—it's not possible to enlarge the Windows environment itself. For example, you can't enlarge the entire desktop (though

you can enlarge the icons for desktop shortcuts). To enlarge your entire on-screen environment by a significant factor, you can use the Magnifier feature. This feature is useful to those who have low vision.

Turn on Magnifier

- 1 Click the Start button.
- 2 Click Settings.
- 3 Click Ease Of Access.
- 4 Click Magnifier.
- 5 Click to turn on Magnifier.
- 6 In the Magnifier controls, click the Zoom In button to zoom in.
- 7 Click the Zoom Out button to zoom out.
- 8 Click the Close button to close Magnifier.



TRY THIS For some people, a dark background with white text is easier to read. To invert color to make the screen black and text white, click Magnifier, turn on Magnifier, and then turn on Invert Colors.

TIP If you have a touchscreen computer, you can also zoom in or out in Magnifier by pinching in or spreading out with two fingers on the screen.

TIP After a few seconds, the Magnifier controls change to a magnifying glass icon. To redisplay the controls, click the magnifying glass.

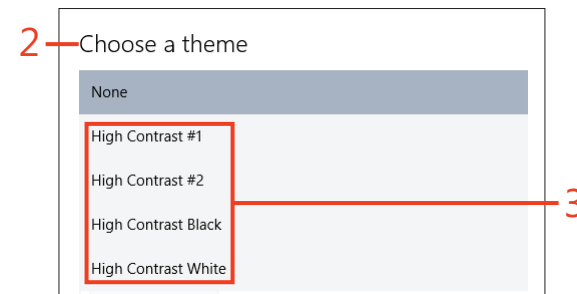
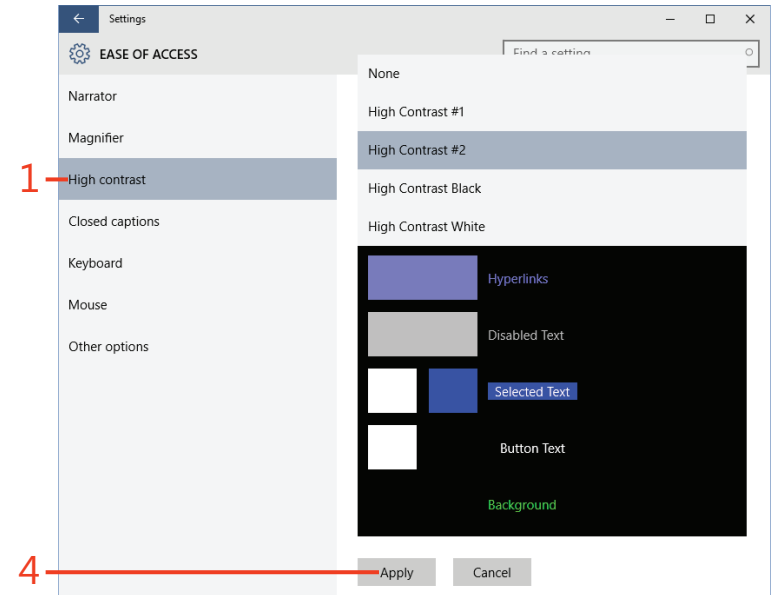
Setting up high contrast

You can make elements on your screen easier to discern if you increase the contrast between lighter and darker colored objects. To do that, you can apply any of four preset

high-contrast color schemes. These schemes control the color of your background, selected text, hyperlinks, and more.

Make high-contrast settings

- 1 In the Ease Of Access settings window, click High Contrast.
- 2 Click the Choose A Theme drop-down list.
- 3 Click a theme.
- 4 Click Apply



TIP If you have difficulty discerning colors, choose a high-contrast theme that contains colors you can easily see.

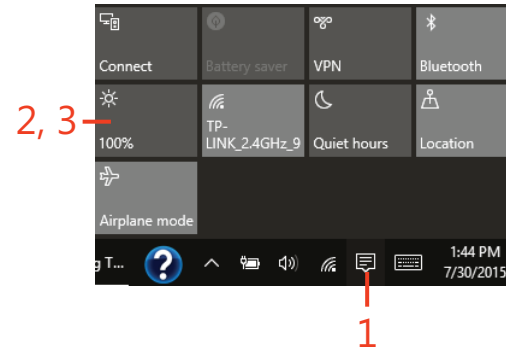
Adjusting screen brightness

The brightness setting for your screen can make elements on the screen easier to see. However, be aware that if you're using a

laptop, the brighter you set your screen, the quicker you'll drain your battery.

Set the screen to be brighter or dimmer

- 1 Click the Action Center button.
- 2 Click the Brightness button.
- 3 Click the button again to move to the next highest brightness level in increments of 25 percent.



TIP You can also go to the System settings window and click Display to access a brightness slider. This slider gives you much greater control over the increments of brightness on your screen.

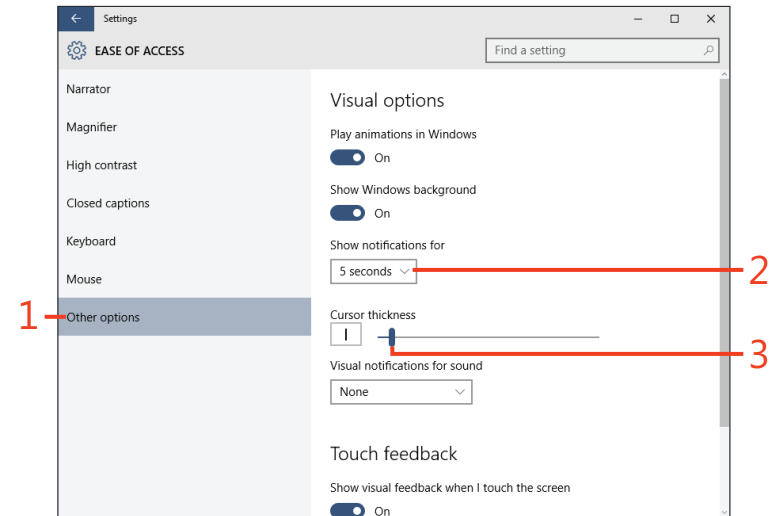
Making elements on your screen easier to see

You can adjust some visual options to help you spot certain elements on your screen. For example you can adjust the thickness of your mouse pointer (the little arrow on the screen that shows the location of your mouse). You can also control the duration

for which notifications about your computer, such as how to handle a newly inserted USB stick, stay on the screen, to give you more time to read them.

Adjust how cursors and notifications appear

- 1 In the Ease Of Access window, click Other Options.
- 2 Click the Show Notifications For drop-down list and select an increment from 5 seconds to 5 minutes.
- 3 Click the Cursor Thickness slider and drag it to the desired width.



TIP If it's easier for you to make out items on the desktop with no background showing, you can turn off the Show Windows Background setting in the Visual options window shown here. This turns your desktop background to black.

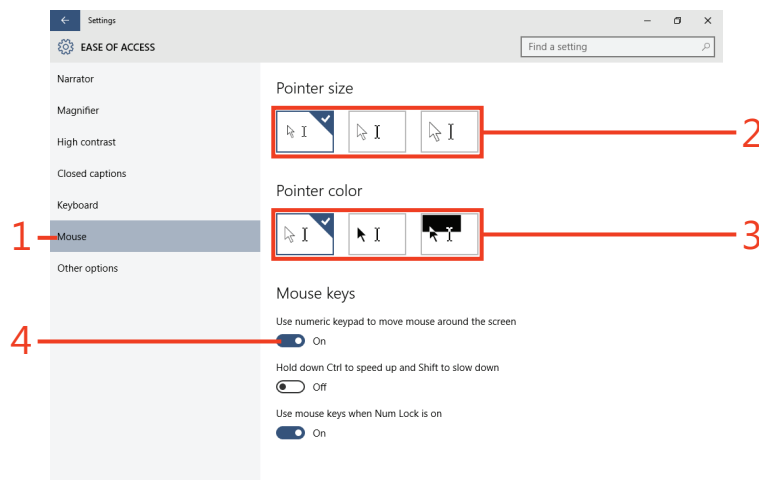
Changing mouse settings

Whether your mouse control comes from a touchpad or moveable mouse, when you use it around your screen, it displays a variety of symbols often called *pointers*. You can control the size and color of your mouse pointer in the Ease Of Access settings, and even configure it so that keys on your numeric keypad can

control the movement of your pointer on the screen if you have trouble controlling a physical mouse device. When this feature is turned on, numeric keypads embedded in keyboards have keys that you can use to move the pointer up, down, left, and right, as well as paging up and down.

Change how your mouse works

- 1 In the Ease Of Access window, click Mouse.
- 2 Click to select a pointer size.
- 3 Click to select the pointer color (white, black, or white and black).
- 4 Click to turn the numeric keypad mouse control on or off.



TIP When you turn on the numeric keypad to control the mouse, you can also use two other settings to press and hold the Ctrl key to speed up mouse functionality or use the mouse keys only when the Num Lock setting is set to on for your keyboard.

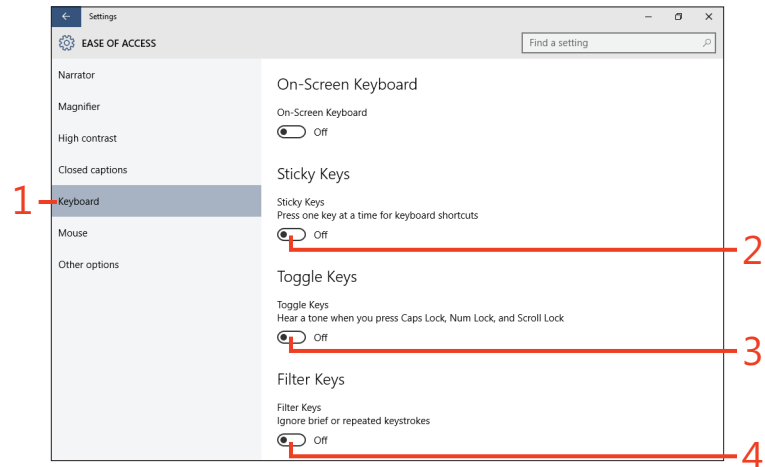
Changing keyboard settings

Using a keyboard can present certain challenges. If you have dexterity issues such as arthritis, pressing two shortcut keys at once can be difficult. In that case, you can use Sticky Keys to allow for pressing one key at a time when entering a shortcut on your keyboard. In addition, we've all pressed a key like Caps Lock without realizing it. In the Ease Of Access settings window

you can turn on Toggle Keys, a feature that has your computer make a sound when you press Caps Lock, Num Lock, or Scroll Lock. Finally, Filter Keys is a feature that causes Windows 10 to disregard a brief or repeated key press. If you have dexterity challenges, this can be useful to avoid unintended entries.

Specify how you interact with your keyboard

- 1 In the Ease Of Access window, click Keyboard.
- 2 Click the switch to turn on Sticky Keys.
- 3 Click the switch to turn on Toggle Keys.
- 4 Click the switch to turn on Filter Keys.



TIP If you want to know if you've turned on or off a setting by pressing a shortcut key combination, in the Other Settings section, click the switches to turn on either (or both) Display A Warning Message When Turning A Setting On With A Shortcut or Make A Sound When Turning A Setting On Or Off With A Shortcut.

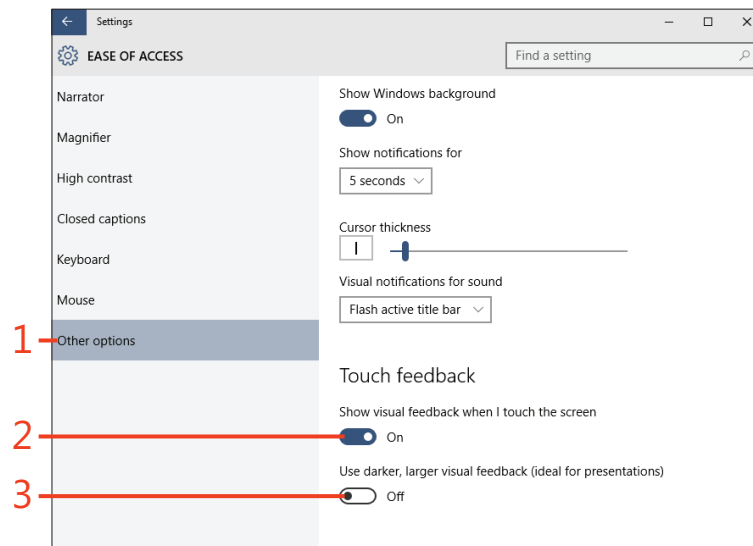
Using touch feedback

If you have a touchscreen computer, you will often touch the screen to select a feature or even to draw. Touch Feedback displays a pale circle when you touch the screen, providing you

with visual feedback that your tap was recognized. You can turn Touch Feedback on or off and also turn on a setting to provide a more enhanced visual feedback indication on your screen.

Get feedback from your touchscreen

- 1 In the Ease Of Access window, click Other Options.
- 2 The Show Visual Feedback When I Touch The Screen setting is turned on by default. Click the switch to turn it on if the setting has been switched off.
- 3 Click the Use Darker, Larger Visual Feedback switch to turn it on.



TIP You must turn on the Show Visual Feedback When I Touch The Screen setting before you can access the setting to make the feedback darker.

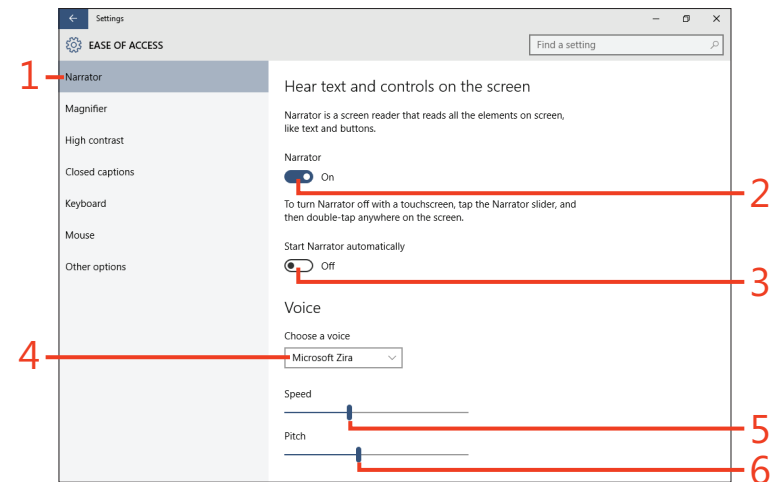
Working with Narrator

If you have difficulty seeing what's on your screen, you might want to investigate the Narrator feature. Using Narrator, Windows can “speak,” telling you what is currently displayed on the screen, describing items such as text and buttons. When

you turn on the Narrator feature, you must click an element on the screen, such as an item in Settings to hear details about it, and then click it to activate it.

Turn on Narrator

- 1 In the Ease Of Access window, in the left pane, click Narrator.
- 2 Click the Narrator switch to turn on the feature.
- 3 Click the Start Narrator Automatically switch to turn on Narrator whenever you log in to Windows 10.
- 4 Click the drop-down list for Choose A Voice to select a male or female voice.
- 5 Click anywhere in the Speed setting to speed up the Narrator speech.
- 6 Click anywhere in the Pitch setting to adjust the pitch of the Narrator voice from lower to higher.



TIP You can configure additional Narrator settings in the Ease of Access, Narrator settings. For example, you can set which elements that you want Narrator to read, such as words you type and hints for buttons. You also have the option of highlighting mouse pointers, insertion points, and keys on a touch keyboard when you lift your finger from them.

Using Speech Recognition

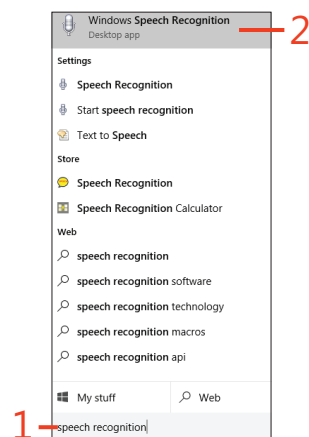
Have you ever imagined spraining your wrist and not being able to use a keyboard to enter text in apps on your computer? Speech Recognition is a feature built in to Windows that you can use to provide speech input to your computer when you're using an application such as a word processor and then let your computer carry out entering the text you've spoken.

Set up Speech Recognition

- 1 In the Cortana search box, type **Speech Recognition**.
- 2 In the results, click the Windows Speech Recognition Desktop App.

(continued on next page)

When you activate Speech Recognition, you need to ensure that your microphone is set up and that the app begins to learn your spoken patterns. When you've performed this basic setup procedure, you can then use this app to provide input to your computer.



Set Up Speech Recognition *(continued)*

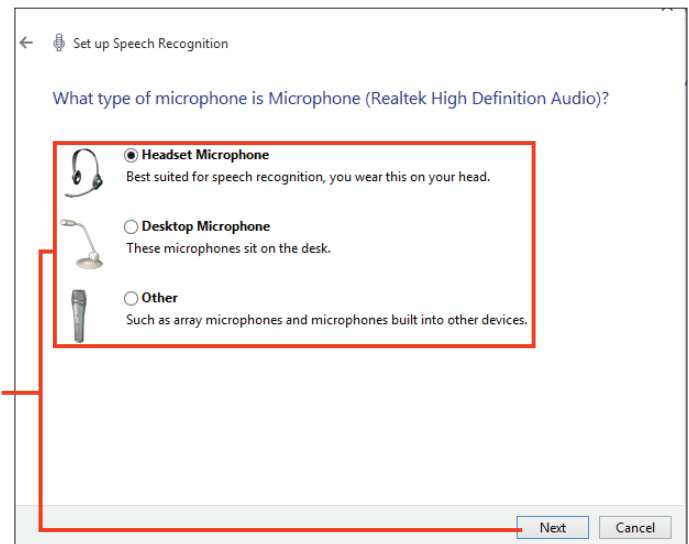
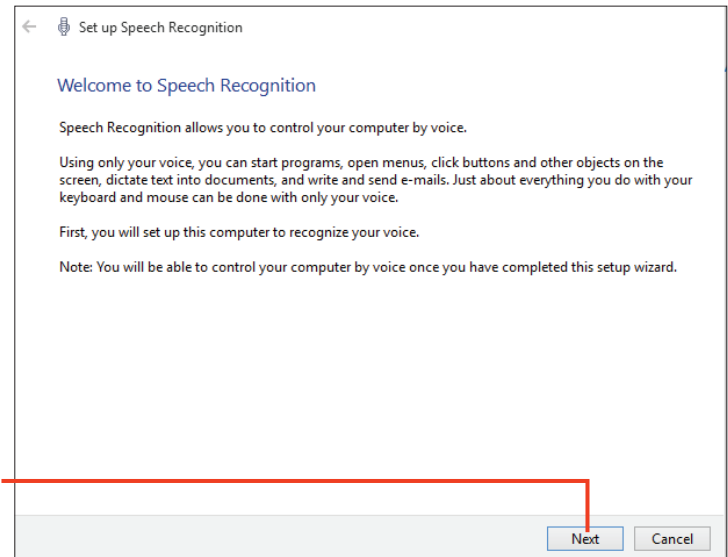
- 3 Click Next.
- 4 Choose the type of microphone that you will use, and then click Next.
- 5 Proceed through several more screens of the wizard to make settings choices.



CAUTION Speech recognition technology has come a long way since it was created, but it's still a technology that's evolving. When you dictate something using this feature, be sure to proof-read it for any errors, which can range from your computer entering "to" when you meant "two," or missing a word in a sentence.



TIP After you set up Speech Recognition, you can type the phrase *speech recognition* in the Cortana search box and then press Enter. Speech Recognition opens in Listening mode. Speak a command such as "Open Excel," or, if you have displayed a document, you can speak words, numbers, or punctuation that you want to enter. To close the feature, click the Close button (X) on the Speech Recognition controls that appears near the top of the screen, or the – symbol to minimize it.



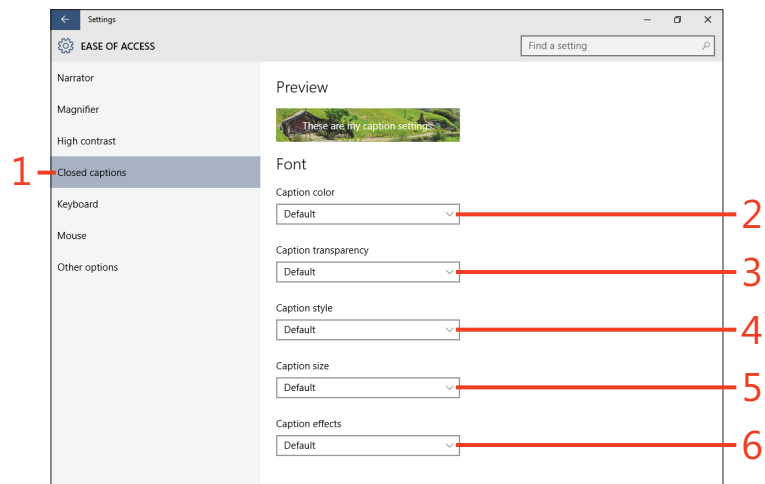
Turning on closed captioning

If you are hard of hearing, you might have used the closed-captioning feature on a television so that you could read what's being said. Your Windows computer also has a closed

captioning feature, and you can set up the color, transparency, font style, and size of the captions in the Ease Of Access settings window.

Choose closed captions options

- 1 In the Ease Of Access settings window, in the left pane, click Closed Captions.
- 2 Click to choose a Caption Color.
- 3 Click to choose whether to make the caption opaque, translucent, or transparent.
- 4 Click to choose a Caption Style for your font, such as serif, sans serif, or small caps.
- 5 Click to choose a size for your caption.
- 6 Click to choose Caption Effects such as a drop shadow or raised text.



TIP You can see a preview of your choices in the Preview section of the Closed Captions setting. Some settings might make your captions harder to read against busy backgrounds, so you'll need to experiment.

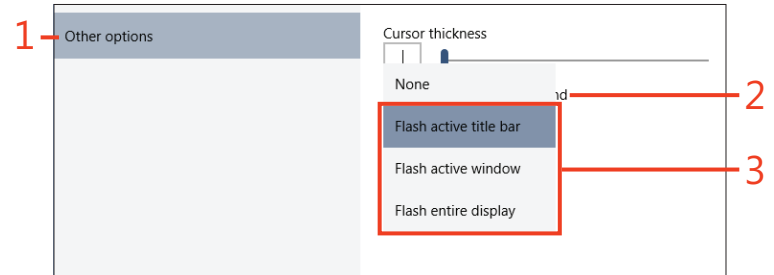
Using visual alternatives for sounds

Windows uses sounds to notify you of different events such as critical battery alerts or calendar reminders. If sound feedback when you're interacting with Windows is difficult for you

to hear, you might prefer visual indicators. You can choose to have Windows 10 flash the active title bar, active window, or the entire display in place of sounds.

Set up visual notifications for sounds

- 1 In the Ease Of Access settings window, in the left pane, click Other Options.
- 2 Click the Visual Notifications For Sound drop-down list.
- 3 Click one of the three notifications options in the list to turn one on.



TIP To turn off visual notifications, in the drop-down list shown here, choose the selection None.

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