

11 What is an Application?

You may have heard people talking about using a **program**, an **application**, or an **app**. But what exactly does that mean? Simply put, an **app** is a type of software that allows you to **perform specific tasks**. Applications for desktop or laptop computers are sometimes called **desktop applications**, and those for mobile devices are called **mobile apps** or just **apps**. When you open an application, it runs inside the **operating system** until you close it. Most of the time, you will have more than one application open at the same time, which is known as **multitasking**.

 Play the video by going to page 1 and clicking the link below: (Ctrl + click)

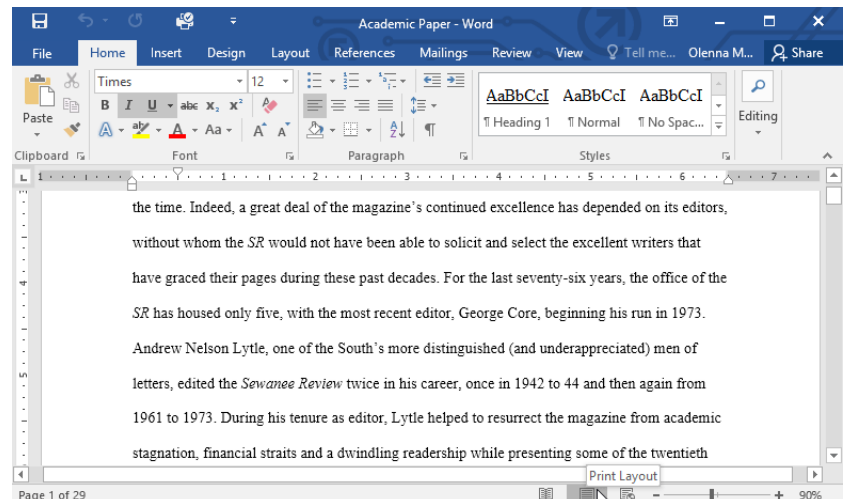
[What is an Application?](#)

- After you watch the video, **read** the rest of the section on the following pages and **answer the quiz questions**.

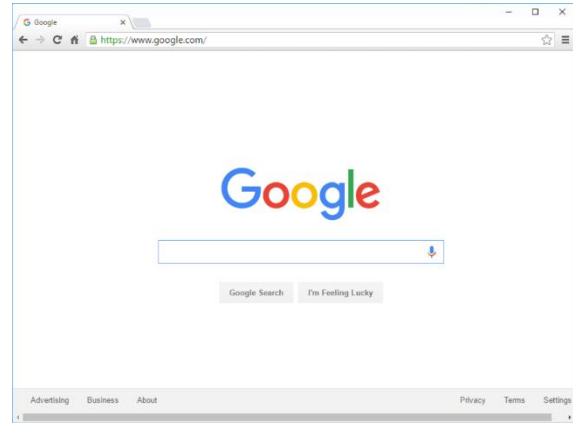
Types of Desktop Applications

There are countless desktop applications, and they fall into many different categories. Some are more **full-featured** (like **Microsoft Word**), while others may only do **one or two things** (like a **clock** or **calendar app**). The following are just a few types of applications you might use:

Word processors: A word processor allows you to write a letter, design a flyer, and create many other types of documents. The most well-known word processor is **Microsoft Word**.



Web browsers: A web browser is the tool you use to access the **Internet**. Most computers come with a web browser **pre-installed**, but you can also download a different one if you prefer. Examples of browsers include Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Microsoft Edge.



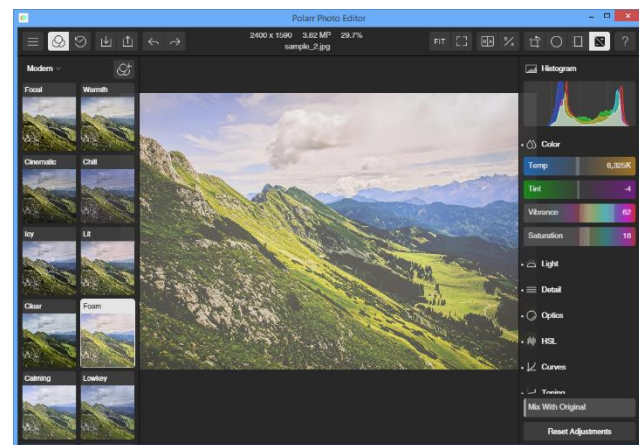
Media players: If you want to listen to **MP3s** or watch movies you've downloaded, you'll need to use a **media player**. **Windows Media Player** and **iTunes** are popular media players.



Games: There are many different games you can play on your computer. They range from card games such as **Solitaire** to action games like **Halo**. Many action games require a lot of **computing power**, so they may not work unless you have a newer computer.

Installing Applications

Your computer allows you to do some really amazing things. Digital photo editing, sophisticated computer gaming, video streaming—all of these things are possible because of different types of **software**. Developers are always creating new software applications, which allow you to do even more with your computer.



Every computer will come with some **applications already built in**, such as a web browser and media player. However, you can **also purchase and install new apps** to add more functionality.

Today, the most common way to get new software is to **download it** from the Internet. Applications like Microsoft Office and Adobe Photoshop can now be **purchased online** and downloaded right to your computer. You can also install free software this way.

! Use caution when downloading software, unless it is from a reputable company as it can contain **viruses** or other **malware**.
! If you have an **antivirus** program, you should scan the downloaded software before installing it.

The installation file will be saved to your computer in **.exe format**. Pronounced **dot e-x-e**, this is the standard extension for installation files on Windows computers.

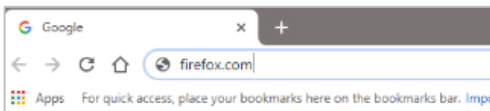
Steps to Download Software

The following is an example of steps to install the free Firefox web browser:

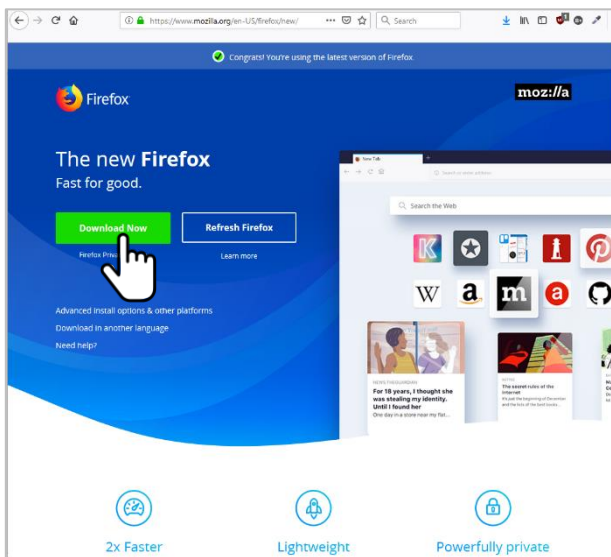
- Open the Google Chrome web browser.



- Go to the Firefox website to access the software download:
Type **Firefox.com** into the address bar.



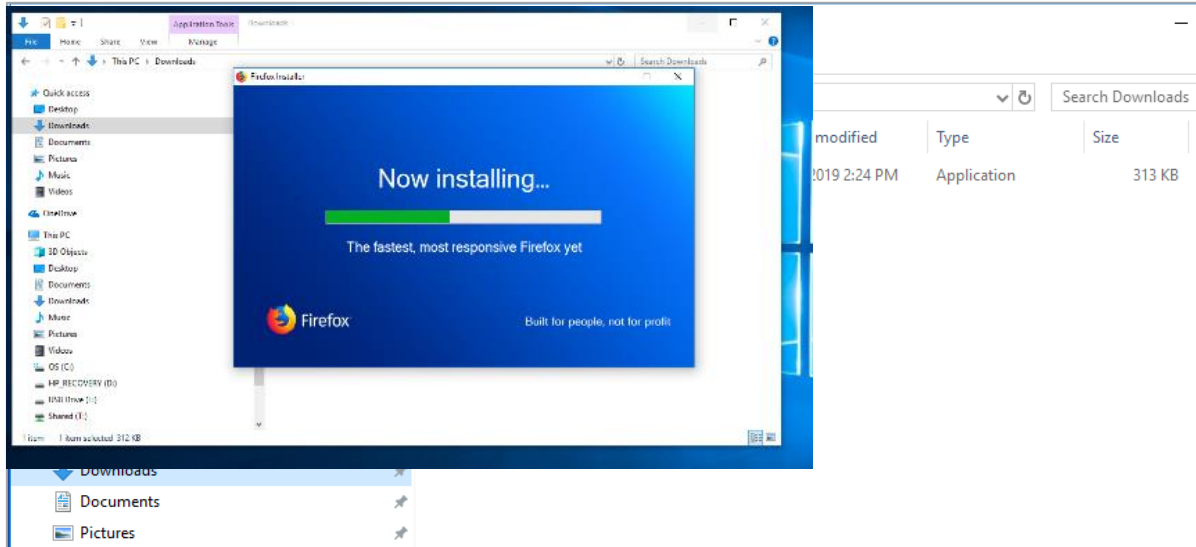
- On the Firefox web page, click the green **Download Now** button.



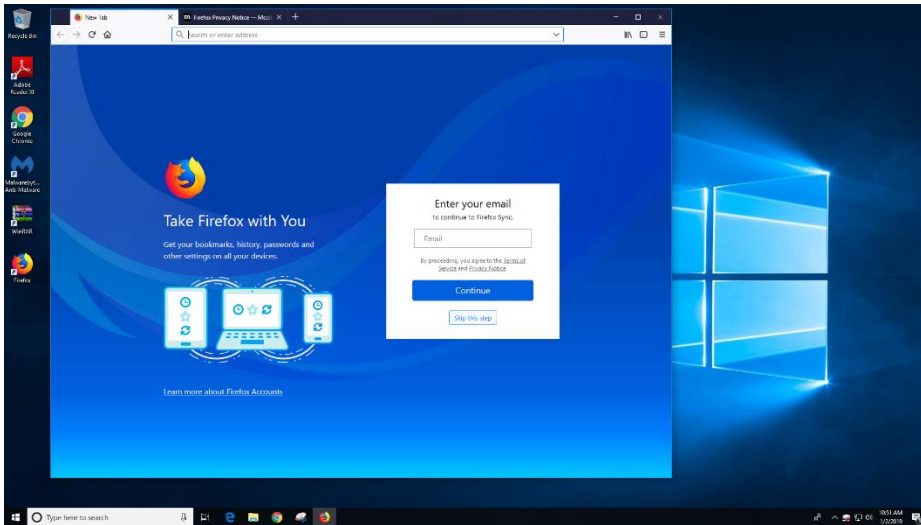
- You may be asked to confirm the download.

The software file will be automatically saved to your **Download folder**.

- Click **File Explorer** on the task bar to access your download folder.
- Double click the **Firefox Installer** to launch the installation of the software.



- The **Firefox web browser** window will open and is ready to use. Entering your email address will allow you use **Firefox Sync**. Firefox Sync will save your bookmarks, browsing history and other settings and is accessible from any device you log on to using Firefox.



Opening Files with Applications

Many applications are designed to open one or more types of **files** (or **file formats**).



For example, **Microsoft Word** can create and edit Word documents such as **resumes, letters and brochures**. If you don't have the right kind of application, you won't be able to open a file.



Some file types, such as an **mp3 audio** file, which is a typical music file, can be opened by a vast selection of applications. A few of the more common applications are **Apple iTunes** and Microsoft **Windows Media Player**.



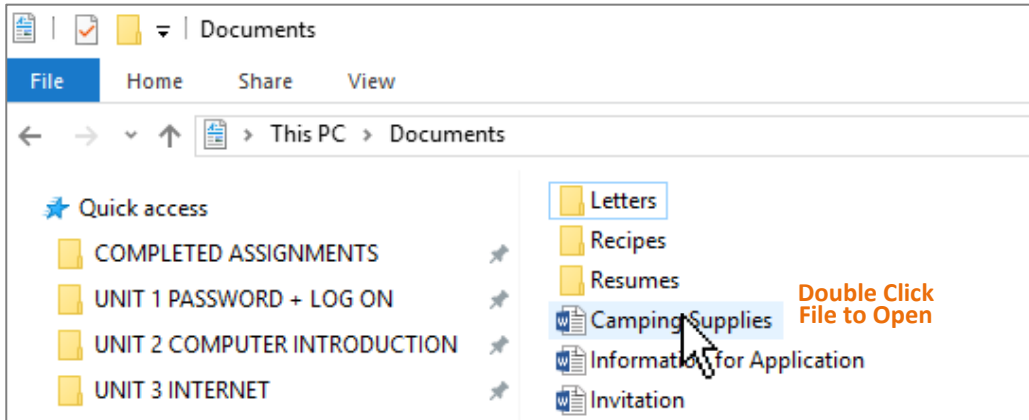
Other file types, such as an **Excel** file, can only be opened by spreadsheet applications.

All files have a **default application**. Imagine you have a file, such as a picture, which can be opened by many different applications on your computer. You may have an app to view your pictures, an app to organize your pictures, an app to edit or touch up your pictures, and an email app to share your pictures. That's a lot of different apps!

If you double click on a picture, your computer needs to know what app to open it with. A default app is assigned to each file type. It is usually set automatically but it can be changed later. For instance, pictures are opened with **Windows Photo Viewer** by default on a PC.

There are two main ways to open a file:

1. **Find the file on your computer, and double click it.**
This will open the file using the default application.



2. **Open the application, then use the application to open the file.** This method allows you to choose which application to use.



Once the application is open, you can select a file from the list of **Recent Documents** or click on **Open Other Documents** which will allow you to go to a specific folder.

