

## What are computer skills?

### [Computer skills](#)

fit into two categories: hardware and software.

Hardware skills allow you to physically operate a computer. Hardware skills can be as simple as knowing how to turn devices on and off. They might also involve more complex tasks like connecting machines to networks, changing parts or fixing broken devices. For these complex tasks, many employers hire trained technicians with advanced computer skills.

Software skills help you to efficiently use computer programs and applications. There are some software skills that employers may consider as prerequisites to employment. Employers may not include some software skills on job posts under the assumption they are universally understood. For example, many employers may believe all applicants have a basic knowledge of word processing programs, like Microsoft Word.

Related: [How To Say You're Good With Computers on Your Resume](#)

Some common computer skills include:

- [Analytics](#)
- • Social media
- [Graphic design](#)
- • Microsoft Office
- Spreadsheets
- Email communication
- Marketing automation
- [Data visualization](#)
- 

Certain software skills are more commonly desired in different fields. If you're a [computer programmer](#)

, you may be required to know various coding languages like [Python](#)

, C++, Java or HTML, among others. Those who are applying for positions in administrative assistance will likely need be experienced with Microsoft Office Suite, Google apps and accounting software.

To find out which skills employers in your industry might expect, spend some time researching the most common software skills for your career. Carefully read job descriptions and take note of the requirements listed there.

Related: [Technical Skills: Definitions and Examples](#)

## Why are computer skills important?

Most jobs now require the use of computers, mobile devices or software applications in some capacity. Some employers will require prior knowledge or experience with specific applications, while others will offer on-the-job training. If you have a working knowledge of commonly used software, you may be able to more easily learn how to use new programs.

Whether you're employed in customer service, manufacturing, food service or tech, employers use computer applications to automate certain tasks, streamline communication and more.

Job applicants with computer skills are highly sought-after due to the increase of technology in the workplace. You can showcase your computer skills by identifying computer-related requirements on job postings and explaining on your resume how you meet or exceed those requirements with past experience.

Related: [12 Top Job Skills for Any Industry: Transferable Skills You Need](#)

## Computer skills examples

The types of computer skills employers expect will vary depending on your career or industry. For example, if you're applying for a job as an [office manager](#)

, you will likely be required to have a basic knowledge of word processing programs, spreadsheets, email platforms and other communication tools.

There are many other computer skills, however, that are commonly used across all industries that are important for most job applicants to know. Some of the most important computer skills to learn include the following:

### 1. Operating systems (Windows and MacOS)

An operating system is the software that supports and manages a computer's basic functions. Although there are many different operating systems, most employers use either Windows or MacOS. If you have more experience in one or the other, it may be helpful to spend some time learning the basics of the other operating system. You can often find both systems on computers at your local library, although you may also be able to learn on the job as well.

Video: [Types of Operating Systems: OS Functions and Examples](#)

Understanding operating systems or OS is essential to working in IT. OS types vary depending on the device and its function. This video reviews what operating systems are, why they're important, and the different types of operating systems in use today.

## **2. Office suites (Microsoft Office, G Suite)**

Basic knowledge of productivity software suites can add value to your resume. Office software suites are composed of various collaboration and productivity tools, like Microsoft Word, Outlook and Excel. Knowing how to use these applications can help you perform tasks on the job.

### [Word processors](#)

, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs, are among the most commonly used productivity tools. They are writing programs used to help produce digital documents. Employers often assume that most applicants know how to use word processing programs. As a result, these programs may not be listed on a job posting. If you find you are unfamiliar with how to use word processors, it may be helpful to spend time researching the basic skills required to use these programs.

You may also want to practice navigating the most common features of these applications. Google Docs is a free [word processor](#)

that you can access online for practice.

## **3. Presentation software (PowerPoint, Keynote)**

Presentation skills are both valuable soft and computer skills. Presentation software is important to have a basic knowledge of in many careers both for organizing and presenting ideas in a company, internally and externally. There are several programs you can use to create presentations, including PowerPoint, which is the most widely used software across industries.

Read more: [20 Tips for Making a Good PowerPoint Presentation](#)

## **4. Spreadsheets (Excel, Google Spreadsheets, etc.)**

Spreadsheets are applications used to organize data and other information into tables and quickly calculate numbers. Spreadsheets can also be used for advanced data analysis. Some employers may expect you to possess a basic working knowledge of spreadsheet software. If you're applying for more technical jobs, you may need to know how to use advanced spreadsheet features.

Refer to the job posting to understand whether the employer is looking for these skills, and if so, to what level they require you to manipulate data in spreadsheets. If it seems your skills are not advanced enough, spend some time practicing. There are many online and in-person classes you can consider taking.

Related: [Database vs. Spreadsheet: Which Is Better For You?](#)

## **5. Communication and collaboration tools (Slack, Skype, etc.)**

Many businesses use communication and collaboration tools to help with productivity. If relevant to the positions you're applying to, you might consider listing relevant tools you're experienced with on your resume. Carefully review the job description to understand whether

you should include this information. Tools such as Slack and Skype are popular among businesses where workers often telecommute.

## **6. Accounting software (QuickBooks, FreshBooks, Xero, etc.)**

Accounting software skills are important if you are applying for positions in the finance or business sectors. If you're applying to work for a small business, accounting software skills may be useful if you are required to assume multiple roles in the business. That may include helping manage accounts, payments or other financial data.

Read more: [4 Ways To Learn QuickBooks](#)

## **7. Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)**

Social media skills are now highly desired as companies look to increase and manage their online presence. These skills are more commonly desired for positions in public relations, marketing and advertising. Knowledge of specific social media software like Hootsuite is often required for many of these positions. If you're looking for a career in social media, you might be able to take on small projects at your current company to add these skills to your resume.

## **8. Data visualization**

Alongside basic knowledge of spreadsheets, having data visualization skills might also be helpful in a data-heavy role. Many data visualization tools are built into the spreadsheet programs like Excel, while some others, such as Tableau or Datawrapper, allow you to take data from spreadsheets for more advanced visualization and analysis. Data visualization is growing in popularity as data analysis becomes more important for businesses, making this a good computer skill to learn.