

Learner Full Name: _____

School: _____

Class: _____

Workstation Device: _____

Station #: _____

Session 3: The Desktop and Programmes

When you sit down at your school desk, you place your exercise book, pen, ruler, and eraser in front of you. In the computer world, your screen is called the **Desktop** because it acts as your electronic work table!

1. Anatomy of the Desktop Workspace

Look at your screen right now. Every desktop screen has four main zones:

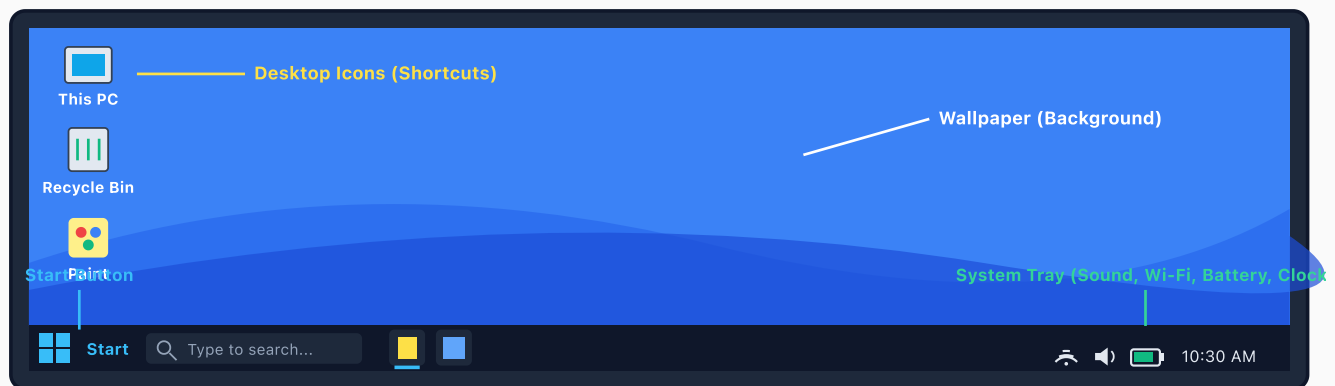


Figure 3.0: The Desktop Screen. The Taskbar sits on the bottom rim, keeping track of every open program.

2. Plain Talk: The Four Core Elements

- **1. The Wallpaper:** The picture or color covering your screen surface.
- **2. Desktop Icons:** Small labeled pictures that act as shortcuts to open programs, folders, or files.
- **3. The Taskbar:** The long bar at the bottom. It shows the Start button and small icons for every program currently running.
- **4. The System Tray:** Found on the bottom-right corner. It displays background information: sound volume, internet connection, the time, and the battery level (if using a laptop).

1. Everyday Analogy: Different Tools for Different Work

To cut wood, you pick up a **saw**. To knock in a nail, you pick up a **hammer**. You would never cut timber with a hammer! In computing, a **Programme** (also called an **Application** or **App**) is a specialized electronic tool built to do one particular job:

Programme Type	What It Lets You Do	Examples on Your Computer
Word Processor	Write letters and essays, then format and print them.	Microsoft Word, LibreOffice Writer, Google Docs.
Text Editor	Type plain notes with no styling.	Notepad.
Drawing / Paint Tool	Draw shapes, diagrams and posters.	MS Paint, TuxPaint.
Web Browser	Read, search and watch lessons on the internet.	Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox.
Calculator	Add, subtract, multiply and divide quickly.	Windows Calculator app.

2. Two Ways to Open (Launch) Any Programme

Method 1: From a Desktop Icon

1. Glide your pointer over the icon on the desktop screen.
2. Perform a fast **Double-Click** (tap the Left Button twice fast: *Click-Click!*).
3. Wait 2 seconds. The program opens inside a box called a **Window**.

Method 2: Using the Start Menu Search

1. Left-click the **Start Button** in the bottom-left corner.
2. Immediately type the program name (e.g., paint or calculator).
3. Tap the **Enter** key on your keyboard.

3. Icons Decoded: Can You Spot the Difference?

Look at the small pictures on your desktop. They fall into three groups:

- **Program Icon:** The tool itself (e.g., a paintbrush for Paint, a blue 'W' for Word). Often has a tiny curved arrow in the corner showing it is a shortcut.
- **File Icon:** A single document you or someone else created (e.g., a sheet of paper with writing).
- **Folder Icon:** A yellow plastic-looking folder used to organize multiple files together.

4. Check Your Thinking

Question: Ama wants to draw a map of Ghana showing the Volta Lake. Which program on the school computer should she launch?

1. What is a "Window"?

When you launch an application, it appears inside a framed rectangular area called a **Window** (this is why the operating system is named *Microsoft Windows*!). A window lets you see and work inside one program at a time.

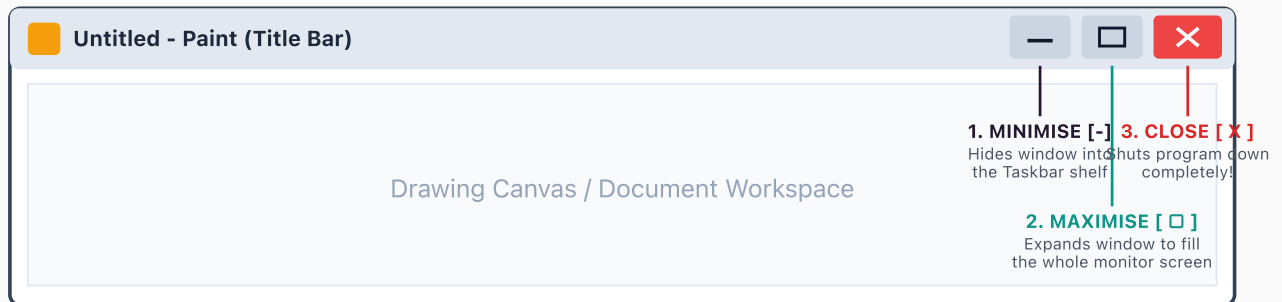


Figure 3.1: The Window Anatomy. The three magic control buttons always sit in the top-right corner.

2. Master the Three Magic Window Buttons

Button Symbol	Button Name	What Actually Happens When You Click It
[–]	Minimise	The window instantly disappears from view, but it is NOT closed! It tucks down into the bottom taskbar, waiting for you.
[□]	Maximise / Restore	Grows the window to cover the entire screen. Once maximised, the icon changes to two overlapping squares (Restore Down) to shrink it back.
[×]	Close	Shuts the application down completely. If you have unsaved drawings or words, the computer will ask you if you want to save first!

3. Moving and Resizing a Window

How to MOVE a Window

1. Move your pointer over the empty gray space on the **Title Bar** at the very top.
2. **Click and HOLD** the left mouse button (or hold the bottom-left touchpad corner).
3. Slide your mouse across the desk. The whole window slides with you! Release to park it.

How to RESIZE a Window

1. Move your pointer very slowly to the **outer rim or corner** of the window frame.
2. Watch the arrow pointer transform into a **double-headed arrow** (↔ or ↑).
3. Click and drag inward to shrink the window, or drag outward to make it bigger!

1. What is Multitasking?

In school, you might have your Science textbook open on your left while writing notes in your exercise notebook on your right. A computer can do this too! Having more than one program running at the same time is called **Multitasking**.

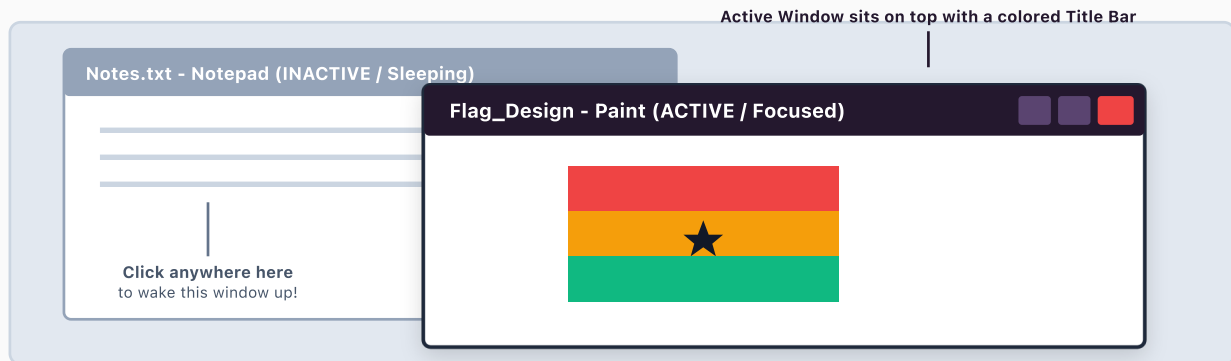


Figure 3.2: Overlapping windows. The "Active" window has the colored title bar; the "Inactive" window sleeps behind it.

2. Three Ways to Switch Between Open Windows

- **Method 1 (The Taskbar Click):** Move your pointer down to the bottom taskbar. Click on the icon of the program you want. It immediately pops to the front!
- **Method 2 (The Background Tap):** If any small edge of the background window is peeking out, click on it once. It instantly leaps to the front.
- **Method 3 (The Pro Keyboard Shortcut):** Hold down the **Alt** key with your left thumb, and tap the **Tab** key once. A small selector box appears. Release both keys to swap windows!

3. Panic Button / Troubleshooting

HELP! I clicked the minus button [-] and my whole document vanished! Did I delete my work?

No, your work is 100% safe! You clicked the **Minimise** button. Minimise never erases anything; it simply rolls the window up and parks it on the bottom shelf (the Taskbar).

How to get it back: Look at the bottom taskbar rim. Find the icon with a tiny glowing dot or blue line underneath it. Click that icon once. Your window will instantly leap back onto the screen!

1. Lab Goal: Run Two Applications Side-by-Side

Today you will be an artist and a writer at the same time. Follow these steps carefully:

- 1 **Open Paint:** Click Start → Type paint → Press **Enter** .
Using the pencil, brush, or shape tools, draw a simple outline of a house, a tree, or the Ghanaian flag.
- 2 **Open Notepad:** Click Start → Type notepad → Press **Enter** .
Notice how Notepad opens directly on top of your drawing! Paint is not gone; it is just sitting behind Notepad.
- 3 **Write in Notepad:** In Notepad, type two sentences describing your drawing:
"I drew a house with a green compound. Technology helps us build ideas."
- 4 **Practice Switching:** Use the Taskbar icons at the bottom of the screen to switch back and forth between Paint and Notepad **three times**.

2. Closing Properly: The "Save Changes?" Dialog Box

When you click the red **[X]** button to close a program, the computer protects you from accidentally throwing your work into the dustbin:

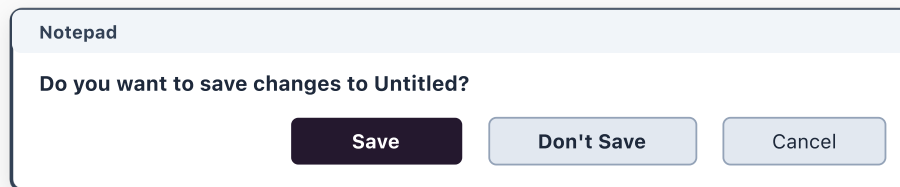


Figure 3.3: The standard Save Warning dialog box. Always read before clicking!

Button Option	What the Computer Does When You Click It
Save	Stores your work so you can open it next week.
Don't Save	Closes the program and permanently throws away everything you typed/drew today. (Use only for scrap practice).
Cancel	"Oops, I didn't mean to close!" Takes you back to your document.

On Windows 11, Notepad may close without asking and keep your text for the next person. Close the tab (**Ctrl + W**) and choose **Don't save**.

1. Match the Window Button to its Purpose

Draw a line connecting each window button symbol on the left to its correct action on the right:

[–] (Minus)

[□] (Single Square)

[×] (Red X)

Title Bar Drag

- Shuts down the program completely.
- Moves the window to a new spot on your screen.
- Hides the window temporarily down into the Taskbar.
- Expands the window to fill the entire monitor glass.

2. Written Review Questions

Question 1: What is the difference between *Minimising* a window and *Closing* a window?

Question 2: You have a drawing program open, but you need to check the time. In which corner of the Desktop screen is the clock located?

Question 3: If you accidentally click the red Close button [X] on your essay, which button in the warning box should you click so your document stays open?

3. Self-Assessment & Mentor Sign-Off

Tick the column that reflects your confidence at the end of Session 3:

Desktop & Window Navigation Skill	With Help	Almost Alone	All By Myself!
1. I can identify the Wallpaper, Desktop Icons, Taskbar, and System Tray.	☐	☐	☐
2. I can correctly use the Minimise, Maximise, and Close buttons.	☐	☐	☐
3. I can move a window by dragging its Title Bar and resize it from the corner.	☐	☐	☐
4. I can run Paint and Notepad simultaneously and switch between them.	☐	☐	☐

Mentor Signature: _____

Date Completed: _____