



NVDA Screen Reader

Getting Started

NVDA is a free screen reader program you can install on your computer.

NVDA speaks what's on your screen and lets you use your computer to efficiently do everything you want to do, without needing to see what's on the screen. **Try it out!**

Tip: NVDA works with Microsoft Windows. So if you're using a phone or a Mac computer, check out our other technology workshops to find out what you need to know for your device.

Tip: Before beginning this workshop, download and install the NVDA program from nvaccess.org/download.

Modifier Keys

Modifier keys are keys that you press with other keys on the keyboard to do specific things.

- **Shift**
- **ALT**
- **CTRL**
- **NVDA (Insert or Caps Lock key)**

Starting NVDA

1. If you are right at the end of installing NVDA, and hear your screen reader say, “Please press OK to start the installed copy,” press the **Spacebar** to select the **OK** button.
2. If you already installed NVDA, press **CTRL + ALT + N** to start the program.

Tip: You will hear a welcome message and information about NVDA. If you want NVDA to stop reading, tap the **CTRL** key.

NVDA Set-Up

When you start NVDA, the **Welcome** dialog box appears with some set-up options.

3. Press **Tab** to move to **Keyboard Layout**, the first set-up option. There are two options in the drop-down menu:
 - **Desktop:** Full-size keyboard with a number pad.
 - **Laptop:** Smaller keyboard without a number pad.

Tip: This workshop uses the Desktop option which is the default. Press the Down arrow to switch to Laptop. If you're not sure which to choose, keep the default option. You can always change it later.

4. Press **Tab** to move to the next option, **Use Caps Lock as an NVDA modifier key**. Then press the **Spacebar** to check this box.

Tip: Keyboards vary, so the Insert key may not be in the same place for everyone. But the Caps Lock key is always above the Shift key on the left side of the keyboard. So it's easy to find and gives you another option for your NVDA key.

5. Press **Tab** to move to the next option, **Start NVDA after I sign in**.
6. If you want NVDA to start automatically when you log in to your computer, press the **Spacebar** to check this box.
7. Press **Tab** to move to the final option, **Show this dialog when NVDA starts**. This option is checked by default.
8. If you don't want to see this options dialog box every time you log in, press the **Spacebar** to uncheck the box.
9. **Tab** once more to move to the **OK** button. Then press the **Spacebar** to select it and apply your changes.

Tip: If you chose to have the options dialog box pop up every time you log in, but you don't want to Tab through all the options every time, just press Shift + Tab to move directly to the OK button. Shift + Tab moves you backward through the options in any dialog box.

Review

- **CTRL + ALT + N:** Start NVDA.
- **CTRL:** Make NVDA stop speaking.
- **Tab:** Move forward through a dialog box
- **Shift + Tab:** Move backward through a dialog box
- **Spacebar:** Select buttons and check boxes.

Now you can use modifier keys and set up NVDA with the options you want. Try another workshop to learn how to customize how NVDA speaks.