(Approx. 641 words)

Using the Windows Start Button

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All editions of Windows have a Windows icon in the lower-left corner of your desktop screen, sometimes known as the Start button. The “start” button on Windows is a very useful way to access any app or controls on your computer! (This article is for Windows 10, but the information is relevant to all Windows versions.) Left-clicking your mouse on the Start button brings up, among other things, a list of all your apps in the left column that are installed on your computer. Windows has many free apps, and you may have installed others. They ALL will be on this list.

One difficulty with scrolling down this list is that the scrollbar is almost invisible on the right side of this column. Gently move your mouse icon to the right side or edge of the column, and at just the right place, the vertical scrollbar will appear in normal size so you can use it. Note that many apps are stored in “folders” containing several apps since there are so many apps. All folders will have a yellow icon and a small arrow “>” on the right. Clicking your mouse on this arrow will open the folder and display the apps contained in it.

Practice scrolling down this list and finding the apps you have been using. You will also see many apps you have no idea were on your computer! There are lots to explore here when you have time, or “Ask Google” about any of them.

You can also find any app by typing the app name into the search bar just to the right of the Windows icon. When you use this search bar, it will search not only your computer but also the internet and your files and folders, so you will see many things related to whatever you searched for.

Back to the app list; what can you do after you find an app on the list? Well, you can right-click your mouse on the app to get a short list of what you can do. You can UN-install it -- that is, remove the app from your computer. You can also “pin” the app to the Taskbar at the bottom of your screen or the start menu. When you “pin” something like this, it will remain in that location until you delete or move it somewhere else. You can choose “pin to taskbar,” then move or “drag” the app icon from the Taskbar to your desktop.

You can also “drag” any app directly from this list to your desktop. To do this, place your mouse arrow on the app, HOLD down the left mouse button, and move your mouse to any blank area on your desktop. Let up the mouse button, and the app is on your desktop! An app icon on your desktop is a “link” that lets you open and use the app just by double-clicking your left mouse button. If the app icon is on your Taskbar, you only left-click it once.

In addition to displaying a list of all your apps when you click on the start button, you also get a short list of icons on the very left of this window. One is “settings” (which looks like a gear wheel), which gives you all the set-up options and controls for your computer. Another option you always use is the “power” option to turn off your computer or put it into “sleep” mode. You can look up or “Ask Google” what each menu item can do for you or information about any app. The Start button and the Search bar are always handy and helpful in finding apps and files on your computer, so don’t be shy about using them.



