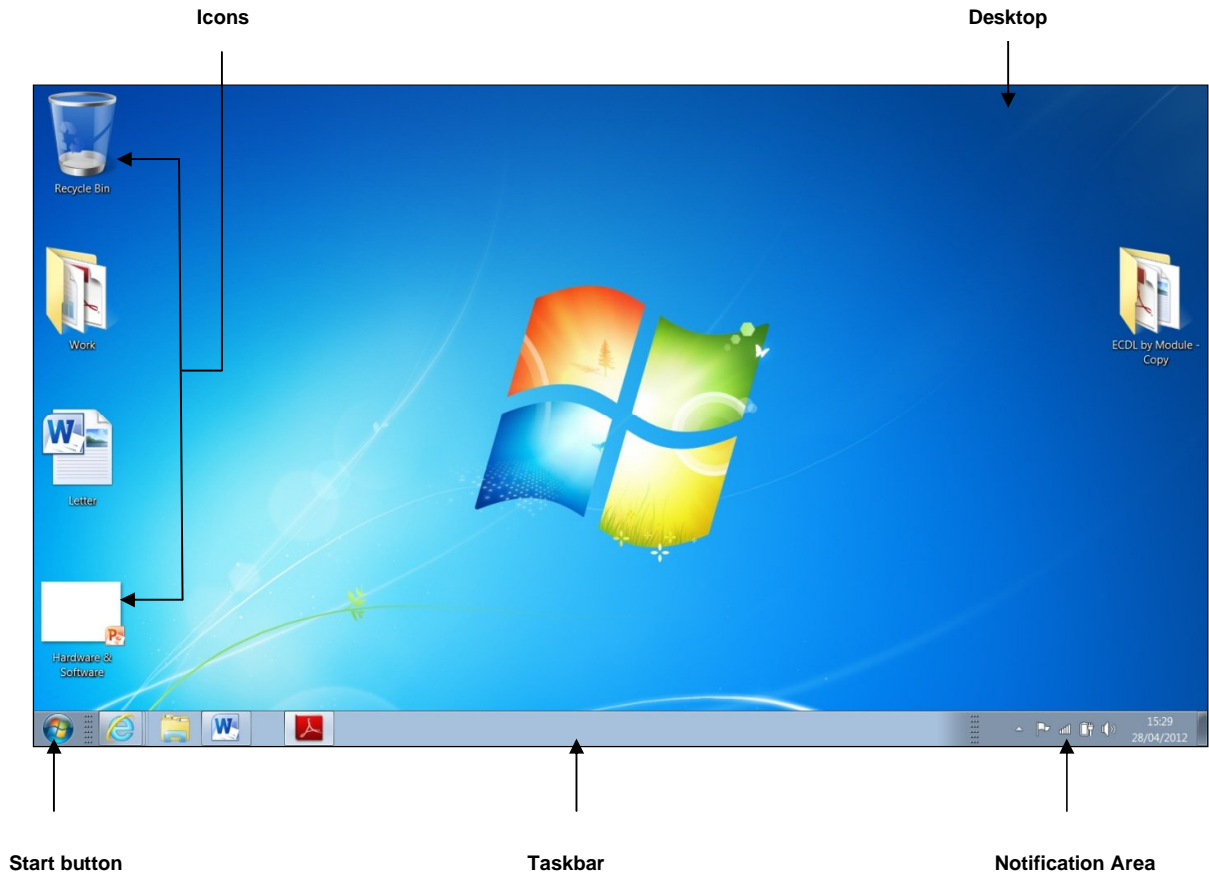# ■ DESKTOP, ICONS & SETTINGS

MS Windows Desktop & Task Bar

When you start your computer and log in MS Windows a similar screen to the following will be displayed. This screen is known as the MS Windows desktop.

MS Windows Desktop

Icons   **Desktop**

Start button   **Taskbar**   **Notification Area**

The desktop is the main screen area that you see after you turn on your computer and log on to MS Windows. Like the top of an actual desk, it serves as a surface for your work. When you open programs or folders, they appear on the desktop. You can also put things on the desktop, such as files and folders, and arrange them however you want.

The MS Windows desktop contains icons. Icons are small pictures that represent files, folders, programs, and other items. The number of icons you see depends on the components installed in MS Windows. When you first start Windows, you'll see at least one icon on your desktop: Recycle Bin (trash can).

The taskbar is the horizontal strip that runs along the bottom of the screen. It has three sections:

- ▪ The Start button - is the 'ignition switch' that gives you access to almost all of MS Windows. This is used to open programs and files to work on.

- ▪ The middle section - shows you which programs and files you have open and allows you to quickly switch between them.

- ▪ The Notification Area - displays little pictures that tell you what is happening with your computer. When you are printing, for example, a picture of a printer appears in this area. If you have a sound card fitted in your computer, a picture of a speaker appears. This area will also display the clock.

Common Icons

The MS Windows desktop may contain different icons representing files, folders, application/program shortcuts, recycle bin etc.

Desktop Icons	Example	
File	Letter	Sometimes you may decide to save a file on the desktop. Normally you will save this file on the desktop because you need fast access to this file.
Folder	Work	Saving individual files to the desktop will clutter the desktop. Therefore you will save these files to an individual folder icon on the desktop. Typically desktop folder icons are created to store files which are accessed by the user on a regular basis.
Application Shortcut	Adobe Reader X	Shortcut icons have a small arrow in the lower left corner. Clicking such icons will normally open a program (such as Adobe Reader) or a file or a folder. Shortcuts are also known as aliases.
Recycle Bin	Recycle Bin	The place in which MS Windows stores deleted files. You can retrieve files that you have mistakenly deleted in error, or you can empty the Recycle Bin to create more disk space.

The Mouse

The mouse is an important tool you need to use to do most of the tasks in MS Windows. This is particularly so if you are beginning to use computers. The basic idea is simple - you move the mouse on its pad, and a small arrow (the mouse pointer) moves correspondingly on the screen.

Mouse Technique	Example
Pointing	If you position the mouse pointer over the Start button, a yellow banner that says "Start" appears. The technique of positioning the mouse pointer on an item is known as pointing.
Clicking	If you point the mouse to the Start button and press the left mouse button, a list of options appears on top of the Start button. The technique of pressing the left mouse button once is known as clicking.
Double-clicking	If you point the mouse to the Recycle Bin icon and press the left mouse button twice in rapid succession, a frame (known as a window or a dialog box) will open. The technique of pressing the left mouse button twice is known as double-clicking.
Right-clicking	If you position the mouse over the desktop and press the right mouse button, a pop-up menu will be displayed. The technique of pressing the right mouse button is known as right-clicking.
Dragging	If you position the mouse over any desktop icon, press and hold the left mouse button whilst moving the mouse, you will move the icon*. This technique is known as dragging. *The icon will move only if the Auto arrange icons option is not switched on.

Note that:

- You may need to restart your computer when install program updates and new programs. Typically updates will be applied when you restart your system.

Selecting & Moving Icons

By default, MS Windows stacks icons in columns on the left side of the desktop. But you can move an icon by dragging it to a new place on the desktop:

1. To select a desktop icon, click the icon. The icon will be highlighted as shown:

2. To move the icon, drag the mouse. The icon will move only if the Auto arrange icons option is not switched on.

Arranging Icons

You can arrange the icons on your desktop as follows:

1. Right-click on an empty area of the desktop.
2. Point to Sort by.
3. Click one of the commands on the submenu, as explained in the table.

Click	To Do This
Name	Arrange icons in alphabetical order by the icon name.
Size	Arrange icons in order of file size. If the icon is a shortcut to a program, the size refers to the size of the shortcut file.
Item Type	Arrange icons in order of type. For example, if you have shortcuts to several MS PowerPoint presentations on your desktop, these will be arranged next to each other.
Date modified	Arrange icons in the order that the shortcut was last modified.

To automatically arrange the icons in columns along the left side of your desktop:

1. Right-click on an empty area of the desktop.
2. Point to View.
3. Click Auto arrange icons.

Note that:

- When switched on, the Align icons to grid option snaps icons into place as designated by an invisible grid on your screen. The grid keeps the icons aligned with each other.

Creating Shortcut Icons

In MS Windows a shortcut is a pointer to a file, document or printer. A shortcut is represented by an icon containing a curved arrow on the desktop.

Selecting the program shortcut icon runs the program to which the shortcut "points". Selecting a document shortcut runs the application that created the document (provided the document type is associated with a program).

To create a desktop shortcut to a folder or file:

1. Open Windows Explorer by pressing Windows key + E.
2. Locate the folder or file.
3. Right-click the folder or file.
4. Point to Send to.
5. In the sub-menu, click Desktop (create shortcut). The shortcut icon appears on MS Windows desktop.

Essay - Shortcut

To create a desktop shortcut to a program:

1. Click Start button.
2. Locate the program.
3. Right-click the program.
4. Point to Send to.
5. In the sub-menu, click Desktop (create shortcut). The shortcut icon appears on MS Windows desktop.

Adobe Reader X

Note that:

- Shortcut icons display a curved arrow.

- A shortcut does not create a copy of the item (file, folder or application program) on the desktop. Therefore deleting a shortcut to an item, does not delete the item. It still exists on your computer in its original location.

Renaming Shortcut Icons

To rename a shortcut icon:

1. Right-click the shortcut icon. This will display a pop-up menu.
2. Click Rename. The name of the shortcut will be highlighted.
3. Type the new name for the selected shortcut.
4. Press Enter key.

Moving Shortcut Icons

To move a shortcut icon:

1. Click the shortcut icon to move. The icon will be highlighted.
2. Drag the shortcut icon to the new location. The icon will move only if the Auto arrange icons option is not switched on.

Deleting Shortcut Icons

To delete a shortcut icon:

1. Click the shortcut icon (on the desktop) to delete.
2. Press DELETE key. The Delete Shortcut dialog box is displayed.
3. Click Yes button.
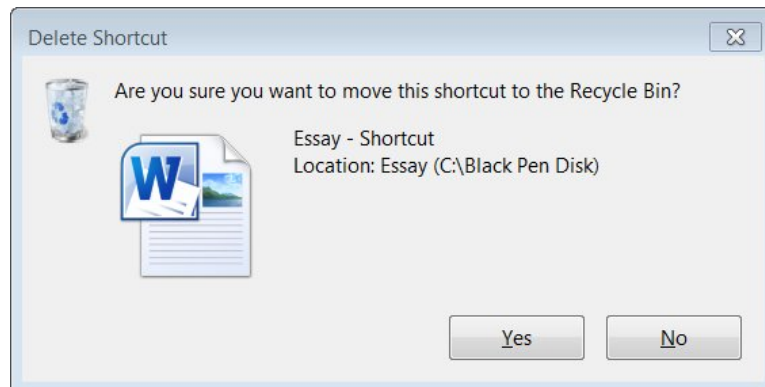
Using Windows

Whenever you open a program, file, or folder, it appears on your screen in a box or frame called a window (that's where the Windows operating system gets its name).

Although the contents of every window are different, most windows have the same basic parts.

- Menu bar - Contains items that you can click to make choices in a program.

- Title bar - Displays the name of the document and program (or the folder name if you are working in a folder).

- Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons - These buttons hide the window, enlarge it to fill the whole screen, and close it, respectively.

- Scroll bar - Lets you scroll the contents of the window to see information that is currently out of view.
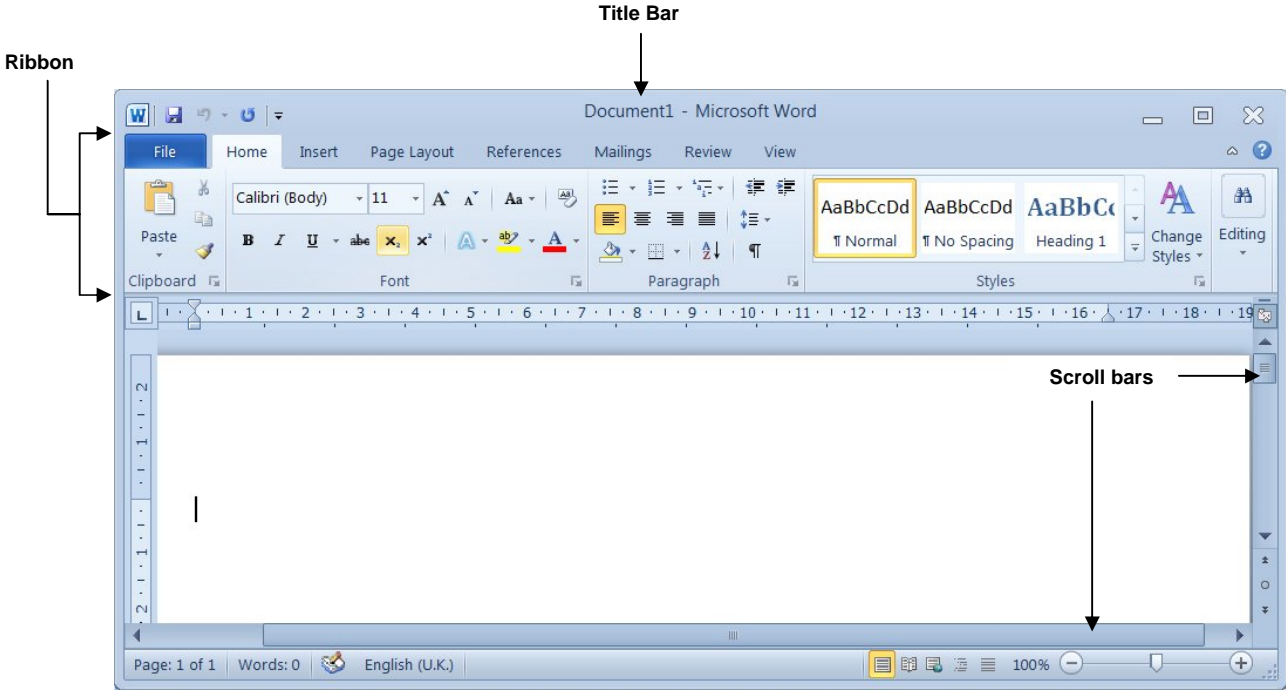
- Borders and corners - You can drag these with your mouse pointer to change the size of the window.
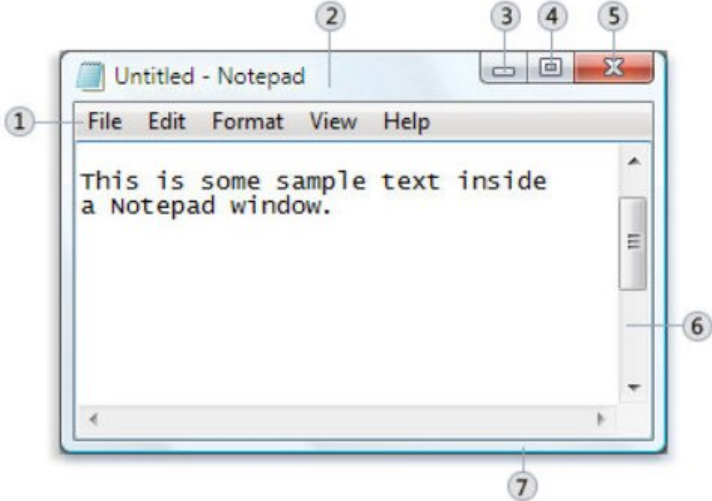
(1) Menu bar	(4) Maximize button	(7) Border
(2) Title bar	(5) Close button	
(3) Minimize button	(6) Scroll bar	

Some windows (e.g. MS Word) have a set of toolbars placed on several tabs referred to as the ribbon.

Maximising (Expanding) a Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the Maximise button.
2. Click the mouse.

Note that:

- When a window is maximised it fills the entire screen covering the desktop area. The Maximise button changes to the Restore button.

- You can also maximise a window by double-clicking on its title bar.

Restoring Down a Maximised Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the Restore button.
2. Click the mouse.

Note that:

- You can also restore a maximised window by double-clicking on its title bar. The maximised window returns to its previous size.

Minimising (Collapsing) a Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the Minimise button.
2. Click the mouse.

Note that:

- You can also minimise a window by pressing the shortcut key combination: Windows key + M.

- The window will disappear from the desktop, but its name will still show on a button located on the taskbar.

Restoring a Minimised Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the taskbar button showing the name of the window.
2. Click the mouse.

Note that:

- The minimised window returns to its previous size.

- You can also restore a minimised window by pressing the shortcut key combination: Windows key + SHIFT + M.

Moving a Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the title bar of the window.
2. Press the left mouse button.
3. Move the mouse to the location where the window will be positioned.
4. Release the mouse button.

The technique of pressing the left mouse button, moving the mouse and releasing the button is known as <u>dragging</u>.

Resizing a Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the window border (the pointer will change to a double-headed arrow).
2. Drag the mouse.

Note that:

- A window that is maximized cannot be resized. You must restore it to its previous size first.

- Although most windows can be maximized and resized, there are some windows that are fixed in size, such as dialog boxes.

- If some of the icons will be hidden when changing the window size, columns appear to the right or bottom of the window. The right or vertical grey column is known as the <u>vertical scroll bar</u>. The bottom or horizontal grey rectangle is known as the <u>horizontal scroll bar</u>. The arrows in the scroll bar are used to display any hidden icons in the window.

Closing a Window

1. Point the mouse pointer to the Close button.
2. Click the mouse.

Note that:

- When you close a window, this will disappear from the desktop and the taskbar. When a window is minimised, this will also disappear from the desktop, but its button still shows in the taskbar.

Switching between Open Windows

If you have two application windows running, you can switch from one window to another by clicking on the appropriate button located on the taskbar.

You can also cycle through application windows that are running on the computer by pressing ALT+TAB keys.

You can also arrange open windows in three ways:

1. Right-click the mouse on an empty area of the taskbar.
2. Click Cascade Windows or Show windows stacked or Show windows side by side.

Note that:

- The cascade format arranges all open windows in a stair-like format. The stacked format puts windows in one or more vertical stacks depending on how many windows you have open. The side by side format places each window - open, but not maximized -on the desktop so you can see all the windows at once.

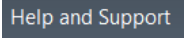*Arrange windows in a cascade (left), vertical stack (center), or side-by-side pattern (right)*

- To see your desktop without closing your open windows, minimize all of your windows at once by clicking the Show desktop button next to the notification area at the end of the taskbar.

Show Desktop

Using Help

MS Windows provides on-line help to assist you as you use the program:

1. Click Start button.
2. Click Help and Support to get help on MS Windows itself. The Windows Help and Support window will be displayed.
3. Type a word or phrase (e.g. shut down computer) to search help on in the Search Help field.
4. Click Search Help button to the right of the Search Help field.
5. Click the help topic from the list.
6. Close Windows Help and Support.

Note that:

- You can also display Windows Help and Support by pressing the shortcut key combination: Windows key + F1.

- Beginners are advised to click Learn about Windows basics in Windows Help and Support.
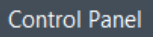
Help topics can include graphics and text that link to other Help topics or to more information about the current topic. These are called jumps. Jumps are usually identified by a different colour or an underline. When you point to a jump, the pointer changes to a hand shape.
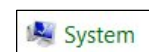
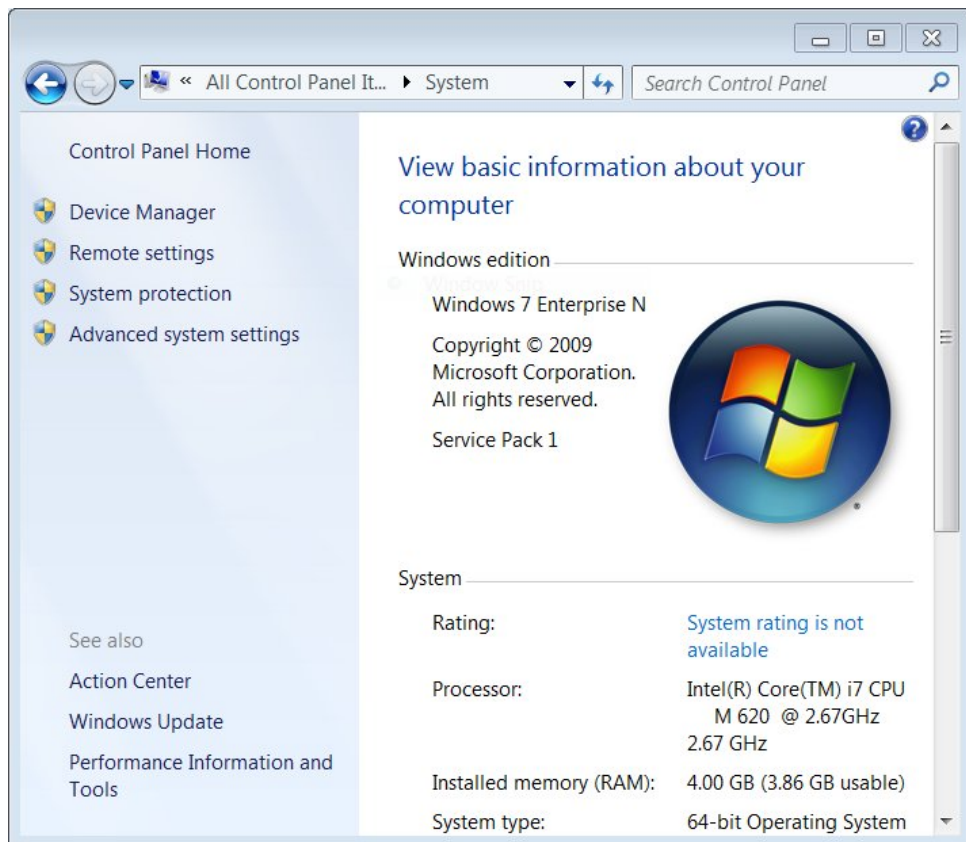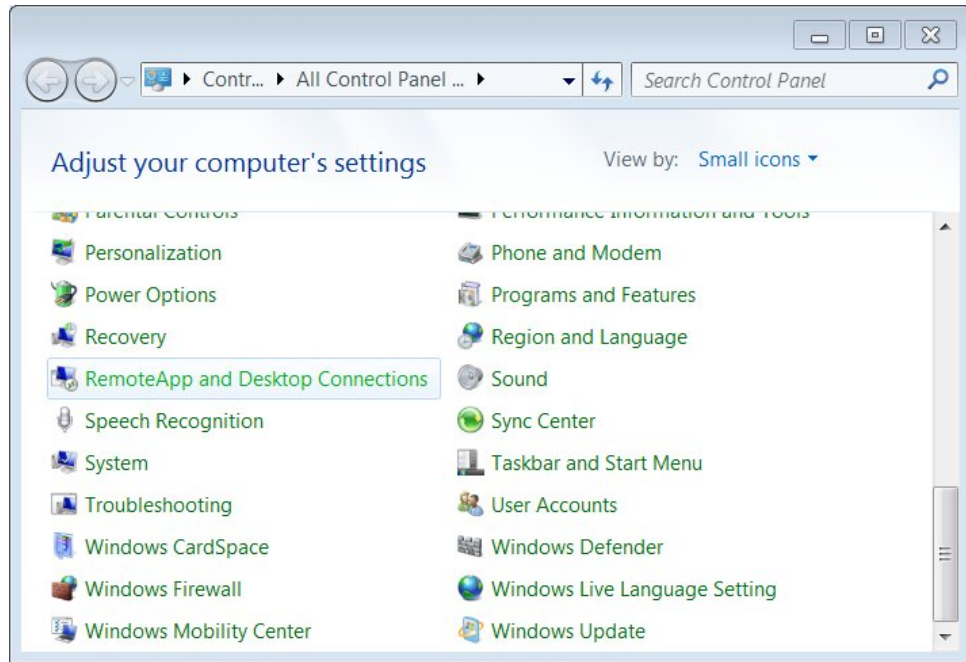1. Point the mouse to underlined/coloured text.
2. Click the mouse.
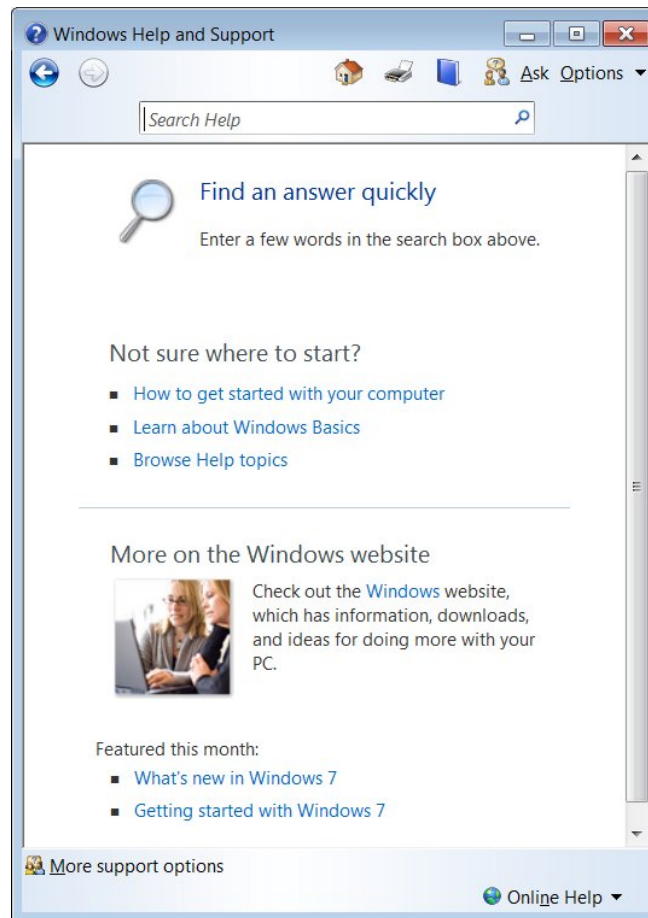
Viewing the Computer's System Information

The computer's basic system information e.g. the operating system (OS) and version number, and installed RAM (Random Access Memory), can be viewed through the Control Panel:

1. Click Start button.

2. Click Control Panel.   Control Panel

    The Control Panel window (shown below) displays many icons. Clicking on any of these icons allows you to view and configure the various components of your computer system.

3. Click System. The window shown overleaf is displayed.   System

4. Click Close button.
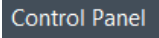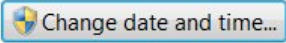
Note that:

- To display the System Properties window, you can press the shortcut key combination: Windows key ⊞ + Pause Break
- The System Properties window displays the following information:

- The name of the operating system running on the computer: Windows 7.
- The installed memory (Random Access Memory RAM): 4.00 GB

Setting the Date & Time

1. Click Start button.

2. Click Control Panel. The Control Panel window is displayed.

3. Click Date and Time. The Date and Time dialog box shown on the following page will be displayed.

4. Click Change date and time... button. The Date and Time Settings dialog box will be displayed.

5. Set the date by selecting the required date from the calendar displayed under Date.

6. Set the time by clicking the arrows next to the digital time field. You can also set the time by typing.

7. Click OK button to close the Date and Time Settings dialog box.

8. Click OK button to close the Date and Time dialog box.

Note that:

▪ You can also display the Date and Time dialog box, by double-clicking the clock in the Notification Area (bottom right corner of screen).

▪ You may not be able to set the Date and Time if your computer is connected to a network system and restrictions have been set by the system administrator.
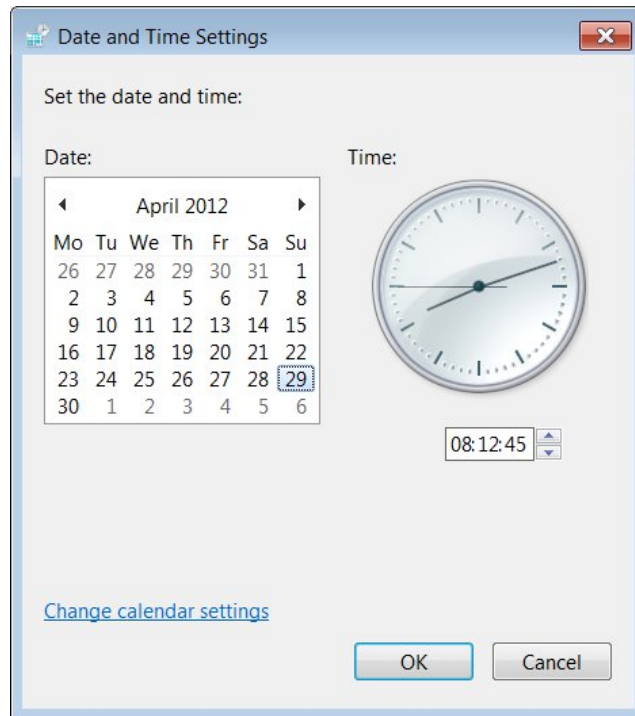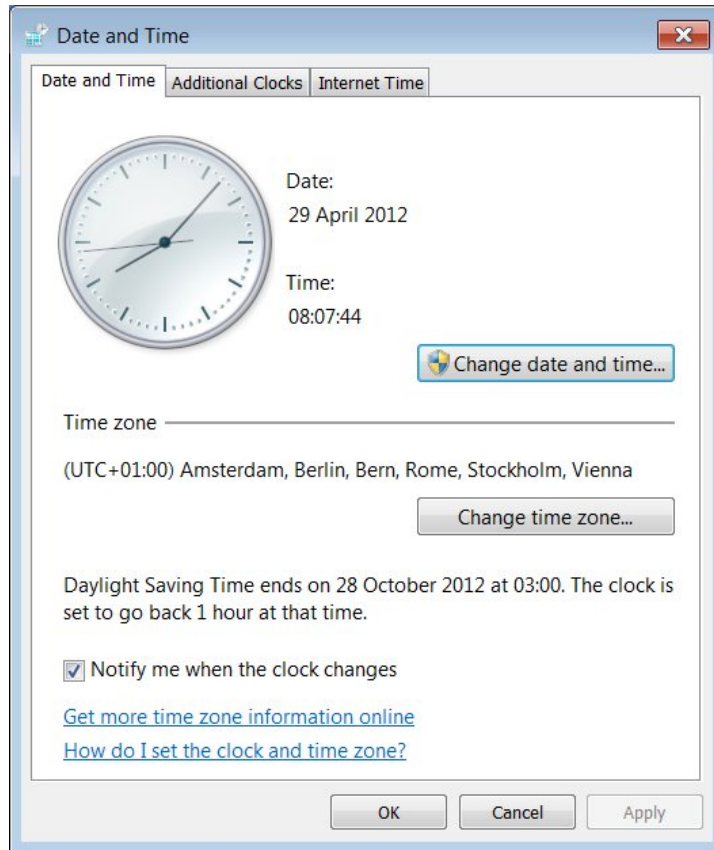
Adjusting the Volume Settings

Most speakers have a volume control, but you can also control the level of sound on your computer using MS Windows.

1. Click Speakers button in the notification area of the taskbar.
2. Move the slider up or down to increase or decrease the speaker volume.
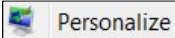
Note that:

▪ After you open the Speaker volume, click Mixer if you want to separately control the volume of your speakers and other sound devices or programs using the Volume Mixer.
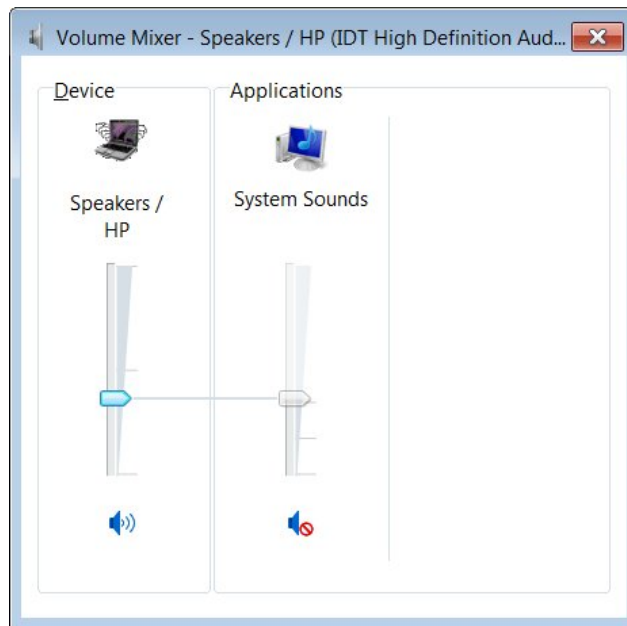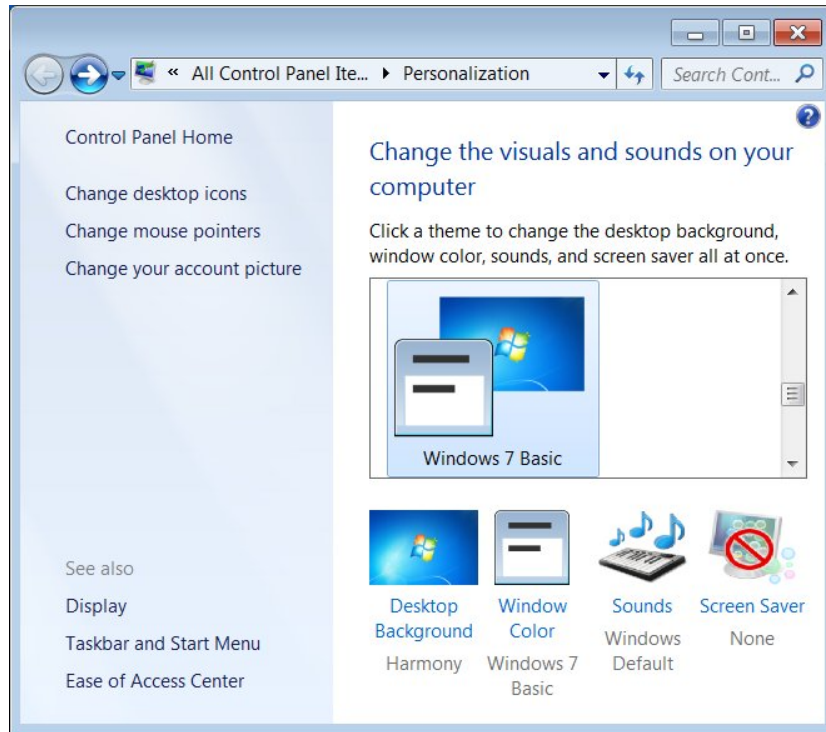
Click Mute button   or Unmute button   to control the sounds.

Setting the Desktop Background

You can change the appearance of the desktop background (also called wallpaper):

1. Right-click anywhere on the desktop. A pop-up menu is displayed.
2. Click Personalise.   Personalize

3. Click Desktop Background.