

A Tectorial: Why Wait for Techies? Troubleshoot Your Own Classroom Technology

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WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to troubleshoot your own computer, so you don't have to call on a techie -- and wait for help -- every time you have a problem.

What hardware and/or software does the tectorial apply to?

This tectorial will provide troubleshooting tips for computers, printers, monitors, microphones, and keyboards.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the tectorial address?

The tectorial will help teachers accomplish standard 1b in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each tectorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#).

HELP! I CAN'T PRINT!

Can't print? Check the following before you turn to your resident techie:

- Is the power on? (Check for a steady green light.)
- Does the printer have paper?
- Does the printer have ink?
- Has a printer alert window opened on your monitor? It may explain what the problem is.
- Is a green light flashing? That often means that the printer is preparing a document for printing. Wait 5-10 minutes to see if it prints.
- Do you see a red light? You may have a paper jam.

Still can't print?

- Check your network connection. The computers at a school or business often are linked to one another on a network. Networked computers usually print to the same printer. If you can't print, your network connection may be down.
- Are *you* connected? To make sure you're logged in, restart your computer (Be sure to save your document first!) and re-enter your username and password.
- Try printing to another printer. Go to File>Print and use the drop down menu at the top of the screen to choose a different printer.
- Try printing one page at a time. Photographs, artwork, and other graphics take up a lot of printer memory. A printer may slow down or stop when you try to print students' drawings, photos, etc. (Go to File>Print and select the page you want to print.)
- Turn the printer off and then turn it on again.

HELP! MY MONITOR WON'T COME ON!

Has your monitor lost its power or its connection to the computer?

- Check the power button on the monitor. A green light usually means the monitor is getting power and receiving a signal.
- If you don't see a green light, look behind the monitor and follow the two cables. One cable should go from the monitor to the power outlet. The other should go from the monitor to the compute tower. (Note: On some computers, the monitor is built into the same plastic case as the tower. Those will not have a second cable.) Make sure both cables are securely plugged into the monitor, the tower, and the outlet.
- As a last resort, turn off the computer, unplug the monitor, and swap it with another monitor (preferably using different cables as well). If that works, the problem is probably with the first monitor. If not, the problem probably is with the computer.

HELP! MY MOUSE WON'T OBEY ME!

Is your cursor suddenly uncontrollable? The problem may be with your mouse.

- Make sure the mouse cord is secure. The cord connects to the keyboard (on an older Mac) or to the back of the computer (in most PCs and newer Macs).
- If the mouse has a roller ball, clean it out:
 1. Turn off the computer.
 2. Turn the doughnut-shaped plastic piece on the bottom of the mouse counter-clockwise and remove the mouse ball.
 3. Use a fingernail to scrape dirt and dust from inside the mouse. (Do *not* use a metal object.)
 4. Wipe the ball off with a clean, dry cloth.
- If you have an optical mouse, flip it over and blow firmly into the eye of the mouse to dislodge any debris.

HELP! MY KEYBOARD'S GONE KRAZY!

Are you typing one thing and getting something different -- or nothing at all? First, make sure the keyboard is connected to the computer. Then

- if everything you type is capitalized, even though the CAPS Lock is not on ... Find the NUM lock on your PC keyboard. (above the number keys on the right side of the keyboard.) If it's on, turn it off.
- if odd things appear or open when you try to type... You might have enabled Sticky Keys or another accessibility feature. Hit SHIFT five times to disable Sticky Keys, or try restarting the computer.
- turn the computer off, flip the keyboard over, and tap it gently against a desk or table. Food or other debris may be lodged under a key.
- use a can of compressed air (found at any office supply store) to thoroughly clean the keyboard.
- Swap keyboards to see if the problem is with the keyboard or with the computer.

HELP! MY COMPUTER IS DEAD!

And if you're computer just won't start...?

- Check the cord. (Sound familiar?) A power cord (usually black) goes from the

tower or case to a power outlet. Make sure both connections are secure.

- Are lights on or flashing? A solid green light usually means the computer is running and you probably have a monitor problem. Red, orange, or another color probably means the problem is with the computer itself.
- Try to restart the computer manually. Press the power button, wait 20 seconds, and then press it again.
- Still won't start? It might be time to find a techie!

HELP! I NEED A TECHIE!

So you've tried all your troubleshooting tricks and nothing has worked? It's time to contact your technical support staff. When you talk to tech support:

- Give as many details as possible about what you were doing when the problem occurred. Don't worry about not knowing the correct technical terms. Just describe what programs you were using and explain what happened.
- Describe what you did to try to fix the problem. They will appreciate your spending time to try to save them time.

After the problem is fixed, ask tech support to explain how they fixed it. Find out what you can do in the future to prevent or fix the problem yourself.

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I find more information about troubleshooting my computer?

For troubleshooting a Mac, go to [MacFixIt](#). For PC help, try [Computer Hope](#).