

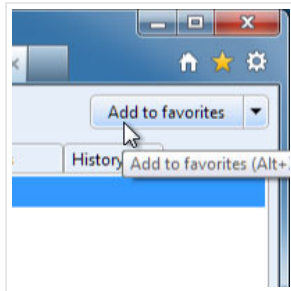
Internet 101

Browser Basics



Page 3

Introduction



A **web browser** is the tool you use to access the **World Wide Web**. In order to get the most out of the Web, it's important to understand the various features of a browser.

In this lesson, we'll talk about **navigating** the Web with a browser, **downloading** files, **bookmarking** your favorite websites, **tabbed browsing**, and **plug-ins**.

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Browser Basics

To get the most out of your web browser, there are some basic **concepts** that you need to be familiar with, including navigation, downloading, bookmarking, tabbed browsing, and plug-ins.

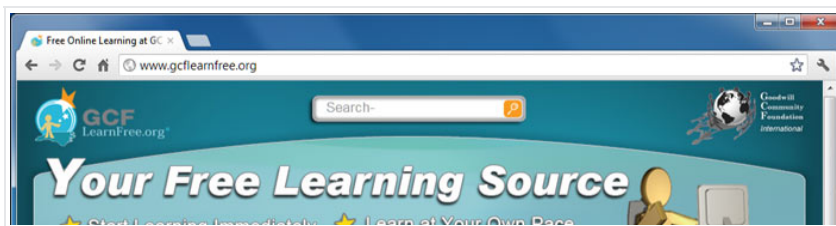
Video: Browser Basics



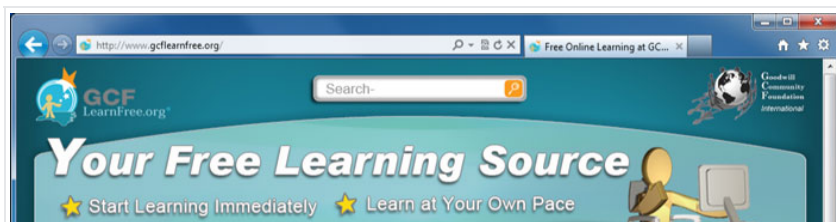
Common web browsers

Today, **Chrome** and **Firefox** are the most popular web browsers. Other browsers include **Internet Explorer**, **Safari**, and **Opera**. Each one has its own look and feel, but they have the same goal: to display webpages correctly. For most webpages, any well-known browser will work.

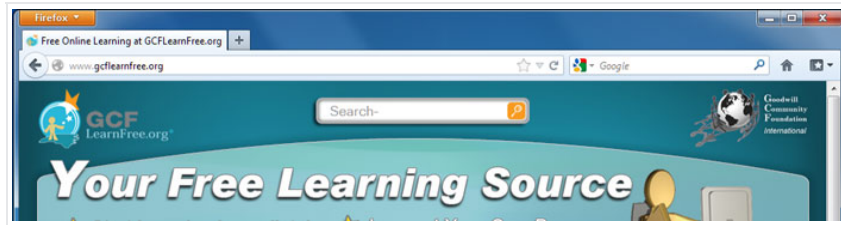
- Chrome:



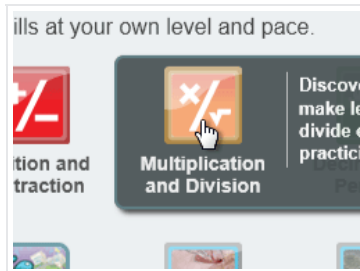
- Internet Explorer:



- Firefox:



Like most modern programs, browsers use a **Graphical User Interface (GUI)**, which means you can navigate by pointing and clicking with a mouse instead of just typing. Some devices like mobile phones use different types of GUIs, such as **touchscreens**. However, many of the principles remain the same. In the images below, you can compare a point-and-click interface with a touchscreen interface.



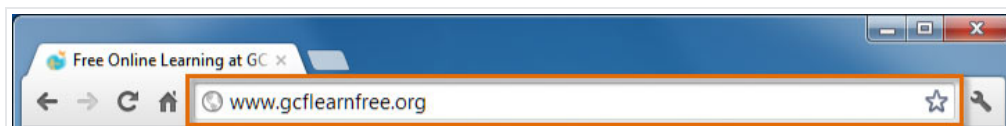
For tips that are more specific to your browser, you can check out our tutorials on [Internet Explorer](#), [Chrome](#), and [Firefox](#).

Navigating to a website

To get the most out of your web browser, there are some basic **concepts** you need to be familiar with.

Address bar

Browsers have an **address bar** that shows the web address (also called a URL) of the page you are on. To go to a different page, you can type an address in the address bar and then press **Enter** (or **Return**).



Links

Most of the time, you will get to a different page by clicking on a **link**. A link can be **text** or an **image**, and it's usually formatted to stand out so you know to click on it. Many text links are **blue**, and they may also be **underlined**.

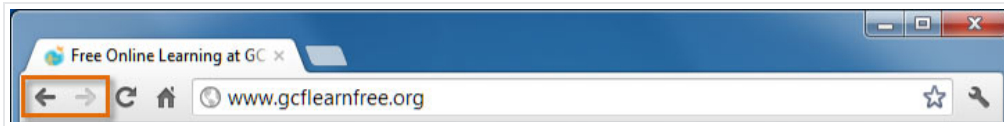
For example, [this is a link](#). It will open a webpage in a new window, and you can close it to come back to this page.

A link may lead to another webpage, or it could lead to a document, video, or any other type of file. If you're not sure if something's a link, hover the mouse over it. **The pointer should change to a hand symbol.**

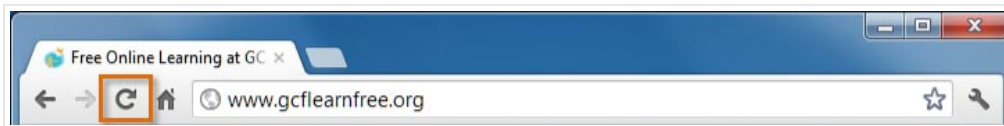


Navigation buttons

Sometimes after you click on a link, you might want to go back to the previous page. You can do this using your browser's **Back** button. Once you've pressed the Back button, you can press the **Forward** button to follow the link again.



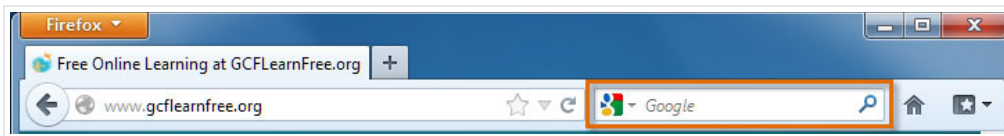
When you use the **Back** and **Forward** buttons, your browser may use its **web cache** to display the page. The web cache stores recently viewed webpages so they don't need to be downloaded again. This is good because it speeds up your web browsing, but sometimes you want to see the most up-to-date information on the page. You can use the **Refresh** button (sometimes called **Reload**) to tell the browser to load the page again.



There are some instances when you don't want to use the navigation buttons. For example, with some online stores you shouldn't refresh the page after purchasing an item because it could cause you to purchase the item twice.

Search bar

Some browsers have a built-in **search bar** for performing web searches. However, many browsers have combined the address bar and the search bar into a single bar where you can type web addresses or search terms. We'll talk more about web searches in the next lesson.

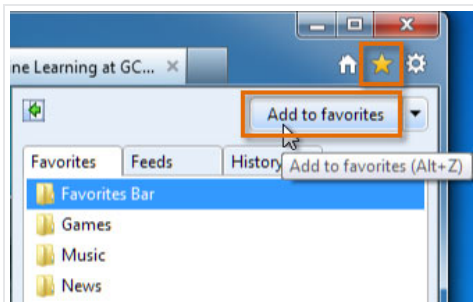


Some websites may track your activities online, usually for marketing purposes. It's also possible to encounter **malicious sites** that could harm your computer. For more tips, check out [Staying Safe While Browsing](#) in our [Internet Safety](#) tutorial.

Adding bookmarks

If you've found a page you'd like to go back to later, you can add it to your **bookmarks** (sometimes called **favorites**). Bookmarks make it easier to find a page later on. Instead of having to remember the exact **web address**, you can just **scroll through your bookmarks** until you see the name of the page.

- In Internet Explorer 9, you can add a bookmark by clicking the **star icon** and then selecting **Add to Favorites**. Other browsers are similar, but they may use different wording.

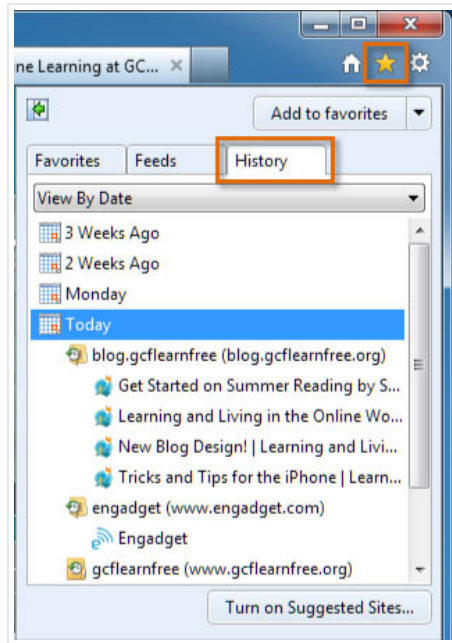


Browsing history

Suppose you visited a webpage a few days ago but forgot to bookmark it. You can find the page again by using your **history**, which is a list of websites you've visited. Usually, pages will stay in the history for a certain number of days. To maintain privacy, you can **delete your history** at any time.

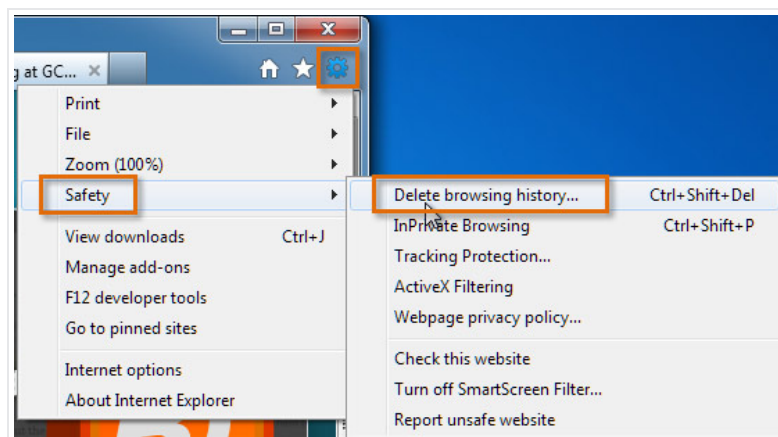
Viewing your history

- To view your history in Internet Explorer 9, click the **star icon**, then select the **history** tab.



Deleting your history

1. In Internet Explorer 9, click the **gear icon** to open the **Tools** menu.
2. Click **Safety**, then select **Delete browsing history....**



✴ If you're using a browser other than Internet Explorer, the process of viewing and deleting history will be slightly different.

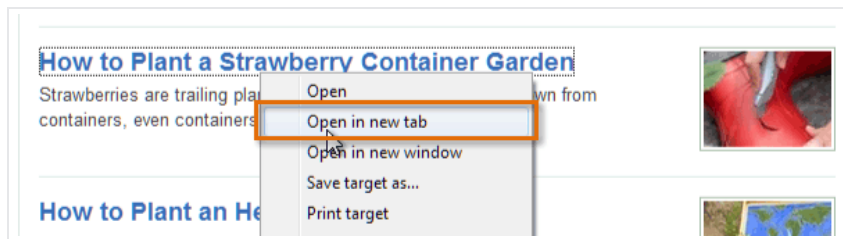
Tabbed browsing

Many browsers allow you to open a link in a new **tab**. This allows you to keep the current page open instead of going directly to the new page. For example, if you're reading an article that has a link in it, you can **open the link in a new tab** so you can finish reading the article. Then you can go to the **new tab** to view the link.



Tabs are designed to make browsing **more convenient**. You can open as many links as you want, and they'll stay in the **same browser window** instead of cluttering up your screen with multiple windows.

- To open a link in a new tab, **right-click** the link and click **Open in new tab** (the wording may vary from browser to browser). To close a tab, click the "X" on the tab.



Downloading files

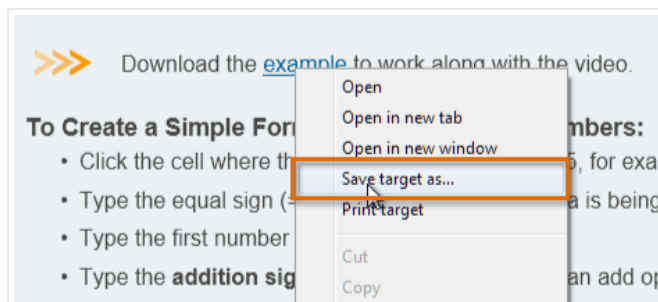
Your browser can display many different types of documents, media, and other files. But there are times when you'll want to access a file **outside of your browser**. **Downloading** enables you to do this by putting the file **on your computer** so you can access it.

For example, suppose you needed to complete and print a form you found online. You could download it to your desktop, then open it with the appropriate program (such as **Microsoft Word**) to edit it.

How to download a file

If you click on a **link** to a file, it may download automatically, but sometimes it just **opens within your browser** instead of downloading. To prevent it from opening in the browser, you can **right-click** the link and select **Save Target As** (different browsers may use slightly different wording). You'll be able to choose the folder where the file is saved.

Because the process of downloading a file **varies** from site to site, it may require some trial and error.





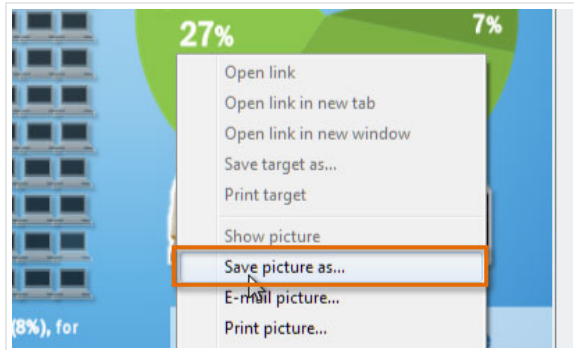
For various reasons, many sites **do not allow** you to download content. For example, YouTube does not offer a way to download its videos.



To learn more about keeping your computer safe while downloading files from the Internet, check out our [Internet Safety](#) tutorial.

Saving images

Sometimes you might want to save an image to your computer. To do this, right-click the image and select **Save Picture As**.



Some sites do not allow images to be saved to your computer.

Plug-ins

Plug-ins are programs that are installed in your browser that enable it to play various types of media, such as video. Examples of plug-ins include **Quicktime Player** and **Flash Player**. If you don't have the correct plug-in, the site will usually provide a link to download the plug-in.

Once you have the necessary plug-ins, you'll be able to enjoy **streaming video** from sites such as [Hulu](#), and play **games** on sites such as [Newgrounds](#).



Your browser may have come with some plug-ins **already installed**.