

Desktop



The computer Jane is using is a Macintosh and is running the OS X operating system.

When the computer has started, Jane sees what's known as the desktop in the monitor.

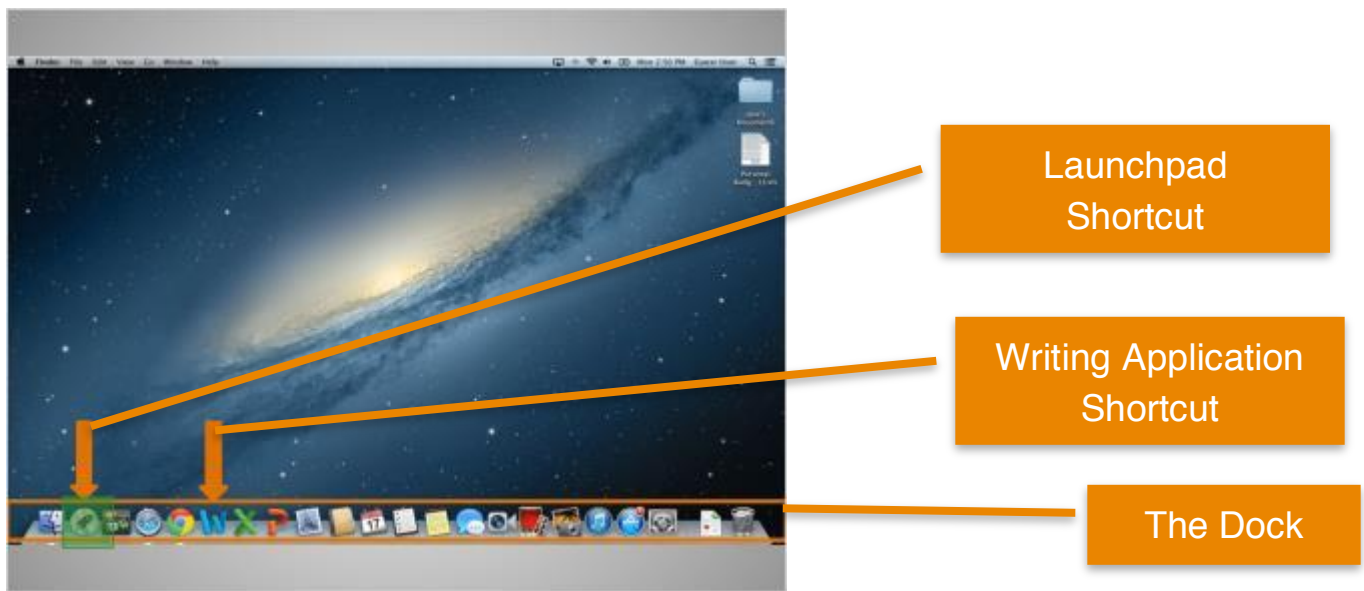
Here we see the OS X desktop.

If you're using a Mac that has a different version of the operating system running, the desktop may look different.



The desktop is just like the top of Jane’s desk at home or at work, where she keeps different folders with papers in them, and other tools she needs to get things done, such as a calculator for math, a pen for writing, or a book for looking things up.

Just as Jane has folders and tools on her wooden desk, she also has those tools and folders on the computer, which she can access through the desktop.



On a Mac, files and folders are often kept on the desktop and applications are often found in the Dock.

The Dock is usually located along the bottom of the screen but can also appear on the left or right side. The Dock is where access to applications is located.

To open an application, she can click on these icons, also known as shortcuts, since you can open the application right from the dock.

If Jane wanted to handwrite a letter, she would use her pen. Since she wants to create a letter on her computer, she would click on the icon for the writing application to open it.

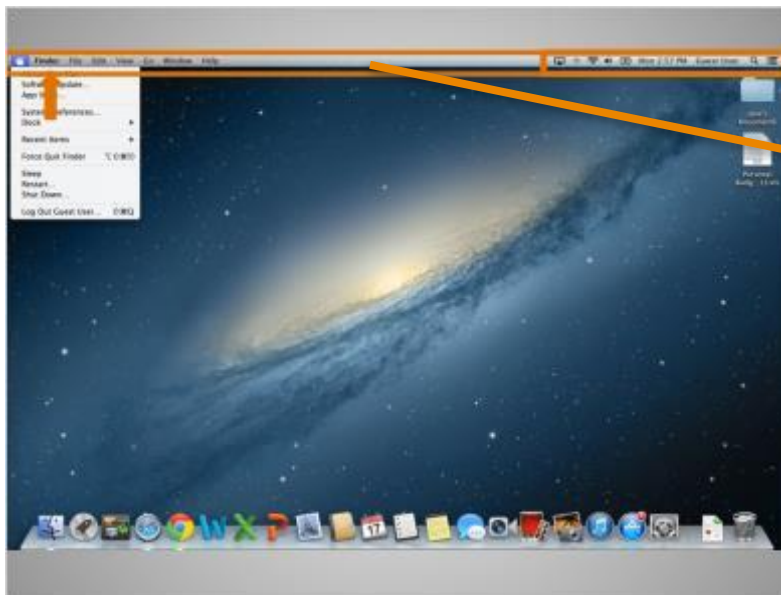
Applications are tools that allow you to do things on a computer.

Some applications allow you to work on text documents, like the one Jane will use for her letter, and others allow you to do things like edit pictures or do math.

Another way to access applications is through the Launchpad. While the Dock has the most commonly used applications on it, it may not have all of them. Clicking on the icon that has a rocket ship on it will open the Launchpad.



The Launchpad lists all applications. You can click on a shortcut for an application in the Launchpad to open that application, just as you could in the dock.



The Menu Bar

Above the desktop at the top of the screen is the menu bar, which includes different menu options depending on what program you are in.

In this example, the active menu is the finder menu, as that is the default for the desktop. Later we will see a menu in an application.

A few parts of the menu bar don't change.

The apple icon in the top left is where you can do things like shut down your computer and change the computers settings.

On the right side of the menu bar is a collection of icons that allow you to see the date and time, adjust volume, and more.