

Customizing macOS for a Better Experience

On macOS Sequoia 15.0

Objective: Students will learn how to personalize their macOS environment by adjusting settings to enhance usability, aesthetics, and efficiency.

Materials: macOS device (or virtual macOS environment) for each student.

Note:

These steps are optimized for **macOS Sequoia 15.0**, which came out in September 2024. While it's possible that devices running versions newer than macOS Sequoia can still follow these steps, there may be some differences in the menus or settings as Apple continues to update macOS. If you're using a future macOS version, always check for minor variations in system settings.

How to Check Your macOS Version:

1. Click the **Apple menu** in the top left corner of your screen.
 2. Select **About This Mac**.
 3. The macOS version will be displayed in the window that appears.
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Introduction

- **Overview:** Today, we're going to customize your macOS to make it not only easier to use but also more fun and visually appealing! By the end of this lesson, you'll know how to tweak settings like a pro.
 - **Engage the Students:** Start by asking, "How many of you have ever wanted to change something on your Mac but didn't know how?" Build excitement around the idea of making the Mac their own.
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Lesson Steps

1. Turn on Dock Magnification

- a. Go to **System Settings > Desktop & Dock**.
- b. Turn on **Dock Magnification** and set it to a small magnification level.

Why It's Great: The Dock icons will grow slightly when you hover over them, making them easier to identify and more fun to interact with. It's a cool, dynamic effect that also helps with usability!

2. Minimize Windows into App Icon Using Genie Effect

- a. Stay in **System Settings > Desktop & Dock**.
- b. Under **Minimize windows using**, select **Genie Effect**.
- c. Turn on **Minimize windows into app icon**.

Why It's Great: Minimizing windows into their app icons keeps your Dock clutter-free, and the genie effect is visually satisfying. Plus, it keeps your workspace organized.

3. Auto Hide and Show the Dock

- a. In **System Settings > Desktop & Dock**.
- b. Turn on **Automatically hide and show the Dock**.

Why It's Great: This gives you a cleaner desktop by hiding the Dock when you're not using it, but it's there when you need it by simply hovering over the bottom of the screen.

4. Make Downloads Folder Accessible and Adjust View

- a. Drag the **Downloads** folder to the Dock if it's not already there, placing it next to the trash bin.
- b. Right-click the Downloads folder in the Dock, choose **Display as Folder**, and select **View Content as Grid**.

Why It's Great: Having quick access to your downloads speeds up your workflow. Showing it as a folder keeps it neat, and the grid view is perfect for quickly finding files.

5. Sort Desktop Items by Date Added

- a. Go to your desktop, right-click, and choose **Sort By > Date Added**.

Why It's Great: This simple trick makes finding your latest files easy, and your desktop stays more organized.

6. Show the Path Bar and Status Bar in Finder

- a. Open **Finder**.
- b. Click **View** in the top menu bar.
- c. Select **Show Path Bar** and **Show Status Bar**.

Why It's Great: The Path Bar shows exactly where a file is located on your Mac, and the Status Bar shows how many items are in a folder, how many you've selected, and how much space is left on the Mac's hard drive.

7. Set Finder View to Column View

- a. Open **Finder**.
- b. Click **View** in the top menu bar, and select **as Columns**.

Why It's Great: Column view is one of the fastest and easiest ways to navigate folders, especially when dealing with a lot of nested directories. It gives a clean, hierarchical view of your files.

8. Remove Unwanted Items from the Finder Sidebar

- a. Go to **Finder > Settings > Sidebar**.
- b. Uncheck **Applications**, **Movies**, **Music**, **Pictures**, and **Home** if you don't use them.
- c. Also uncheck **Hard Disks**, **Connected Servers**, and **Tags**.

Why It's Great: A cleaner sidebar makes it easier to find what you actually use and removes unnecessary clutter from your Finder.

9. Turn On 'Remove Items from Trash After 30 Days'

- a. Go to **Finder > Settings > Advanced**.
- b. Turn on **Remove items from Trash after 30 days**.

Why It's Great: This ensures you don't accumulate trash forever and keeps your Mac tidy and efficient without having to think about it.

10. Turn Off Show Recent Applications in the Dock

- a. Go to **System Settings > Desktop & Dock**.
- b. Scroll down to find **Show recent applications in Dock** and turn it **off**.

Why It's Great: Disabling recent applications in the Dock reduces clutter and gives you more space for apps you use frequently. It helps keep the Dock clean and more organized, especially if you prefer to manage apps manually.

11. Turn On Right Click for Apple Magic Mouse

- a. Go to **System Settings > Mouse**.
- b. Under **Secondary Click**, turn on **Click on Right Side**

Why It's Great: Right-clicking with a mouse is essential for quickly accessing contextual menus, providing easy shortcuts for actions like copying, pasting, and opening files. It streamlines navigation and enhances productivity.

12. Turn Off Stage Manager

- a. Go to **Control Center** in the menu bar (top right corner).
- b. Click on **Stage Manager** to toggle it off.

Why It's Great: Turning off Stage Manager can help prevent confusion, especially for new users who might accidentally trigger it. Stage Manager groups open windows in a way that can be unfamiliar or overwhelming for those who prefer to manage their windows manually. Disabling it lets you see all your open apps and windows more clearly, reducing potential frustration.

13. Set Google Chrome as the Default Browser

- a. Go to **System Settings > Desktop & Dock**.
- b. Scroll down to **Default Web Browser**.
- c. From the drop-down list, select **Google Chrome**.

Why It's Great: Since Aubrey ISD is a Google-centered school district, using Google Chrome as the default browser ensures seamless integration with Google services like Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Classroom. It helps students stay aligned with district resources and improves the overall experience when working with Google tools.

Desktop-Specific Changes

1. Turn On Right Click for Apple Magic Mouse

- a. Go to **System Settings > Mouse**.
- b. Under **Secondary Click**, turn on **Click on Right Side**

Why It's Great: Right-clicking with a mouse is essential for quickly accessing contextual menus, providing easy shortcuts for actions like copying, pasting, and opening files. It streamlines navigation and enhances productivity.

Laptop-Specific Changes

1. Enable Tap to Click

- a. Go to **System Settings > Trackpad**.
- b. Turn on **Tap to Click**.

Why It's Great: Instead of pressing down on the trackpad to click, you can just tap! It's quicker and makes your Mac feel more responsive.

2. Enable Three-Finger Drag

- a. Go to **System Settings > Trackpad**.
- b. Turn on **Three-Finger Drag**.

Why It's Great: This makes moving windows around with the trackpad effortless. Just use three fingers to drag any window without clicking.

3. Turn On Battery Percentage

- a. Go to **System Settings > Control Center**.
- b. Scroll down to **Battery**.
- c. Toggle **Show Percentage** to on.

Why It's Great: Turning on the battery percentage allows you to easily see exactly how much charge is left on your laptop. This is especially useful for managing battery life throughout the day, helping you stay aware of when to charge your device before running out of power.

Conclusion

- **Recap:** Ask students what their favorite customization was and why. Discuss how small changes can make their Mac more fun and productive to use.