CHAPTER 1

Getting Started with Windows Vista

Are you ready to learn about Windows Vista? In this chapter, you learn the basics of starting and activating Windows Vista, getting help, and shutting down your system.

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Start Windows Vista

When you turn on your computer, Windows Vista starts automatically, but you may have to navigate the Welcome screen along the way.

The first time you start your computer, you may need to run through a series of configuration steps.

Start Windows Vista

1. Turn on your computer.
   - The Windows Vista Welcome screen appears.

Note: *If your version of Windows Vista is configured with just a single user and no password, then you will bypass the Welcome screen and go directly to the desktop.*

2. Click the icon that corresponds to your Windows Vista username.

   Windows Vista may ask you to enter your password.

3 Type your password.

Note: *The password characters appear as dots as you type them so that no one else can read your password.*

4 Click the **Go** arrow ( ).

The Windows Vista desktop appears.

TIP

What happens if I forget my Windows Vista password?

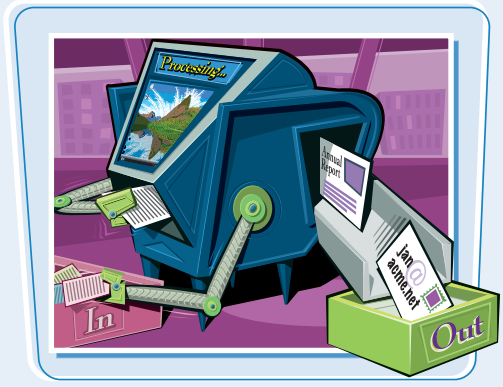
Most Windows Vista user accounts that are password protected are also set up with a password "hint" — usually a word or phrase designed to jog your memory. You choose the question when you set your password, as explained in the "Protect an Account with a Password" task in Chapter 7. If you forget your password, click the **Go** arrow ( ) and then click **OK** to see the password hint.

What You Can Do with Windows Vista

Windows Vista is an operating system that contains a collection of tools, programs, and resources. Here is a sampling of what you can do with them.

Get Work Done

With Windows Vista, you can run programs that enable you to get your work done more efficiently, such as a word processor for writing memos and letters, a spreadsheet for making calculations, and a database for storing information. Windows Vista comes with some of these programs (such as the WordPad program you learn about in Chapter 3), and there are others you can purchase and install separately.



Create and Edit Pictures

Windows Vista comes with a lot of features that let you work with images. You can create your own pictures from scratch, import images from a scanner or digital camera, or download images from the Internet. After you create or acquire an image, you can edit it, print it, or send it via e-mail. You learn about these and other picture tasks in Chapter 4.

Play Music and Other Media

Windows Vista has treats for your ears as well as your eyes. You can listen to audio CDs, play digital sound and video clips, watch DVD movies, tune in to Internet radio stations, and copy audio files to a recordable CD. You learn about these multimedia tasks in Chapter 5.

Get on the Internet

Windows Vista makes connecting to the Internet easy (see Chapter 9). And after you are on the Net, Windows Vista has all the tools you need to get the most out of your experience. For example, you can use Internet Explorer to surf the World Wide Web (see Chapter 10) and Windows Mail to send and receive e-mail (see Chapter 11).

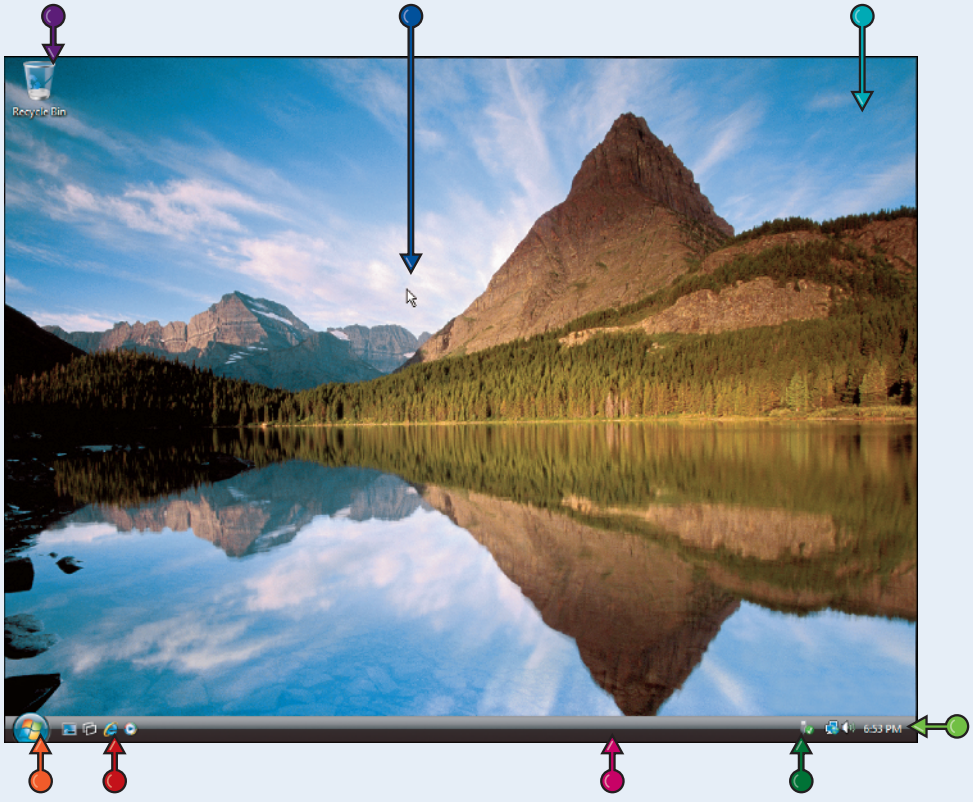
The Windows Vista Screen

Before getting to the specifics of working with Windows Vista, take a few seconds to familiarize yourself with the basic screen elements.

Desktop Icon
An icon on the desktop represents a program or Windows Vista feature. A program you install often adds its own icon on the desktop.

Mouse Pointer
When you move your mouse, this pointer moves along with it.

Desktop
This is the Windows Vista "work area," meaning that it is where you work with your programs and documents.



Time
This is the current time on your computer. To see the current date, position the mouse over the time. To change the date or time, double-click the time.

Notification Area
This area displays small icons that notify you about things that are happening on your computer. For example, you see notifications if your printer runs out of paper or if an update to Windows Vista is available over the Internet.

Start Button
You use this button to start programs and launch many of Windows Vista's features.

Quick Launch Toolbar
You use these icons to launch some Windows Vista features with just a mouse click.

Taskbar
The programs you have open appear in the taskbar. You use this area to switch between programs if you have more than one running at a time.

Using a Mouse with Windows Vista

Windows Vista was built with the mouse in mind, so it pays to learn the basic mouse techniques early on, because you will use them throughout your Windows career.

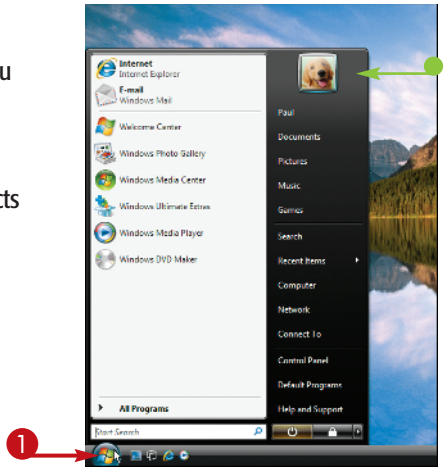
If you have never used a mouse before, this approach to learning how to use it is key: Keep all your movements slow and deliberate, and practice the techniques in this task as much as you can.

Using a Mouse with Windows Vista

CLICK THE MOUSE

1. Position the mouse over the object with which you want to work.
2. Click the left mouse button.

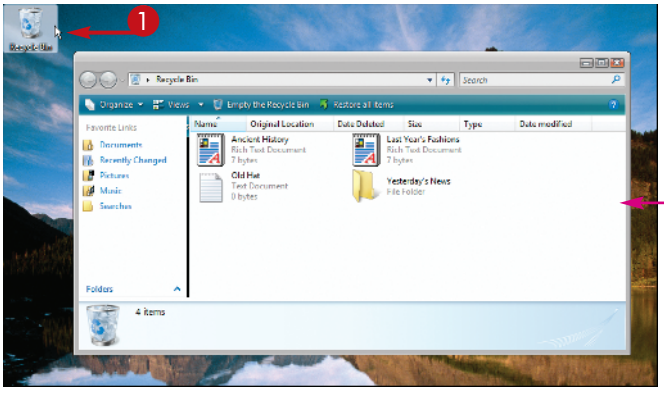
- Depending on the object, Windows Vista either selects the object or performs some operation in response to the click (such as displaying the Start menu).



DOUBLE-CLICK THE MOUSE

1. Move the mouse over the object with which you want to work.
2. Click the left mouse button twice in quick succession.

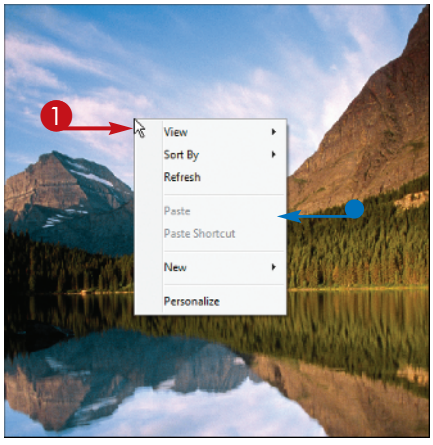
- Windows Vista usually performs some operation in response to the double-click action (such as displaying the Recycle Bin window).



RIGHT-CLICK THE MOUSE

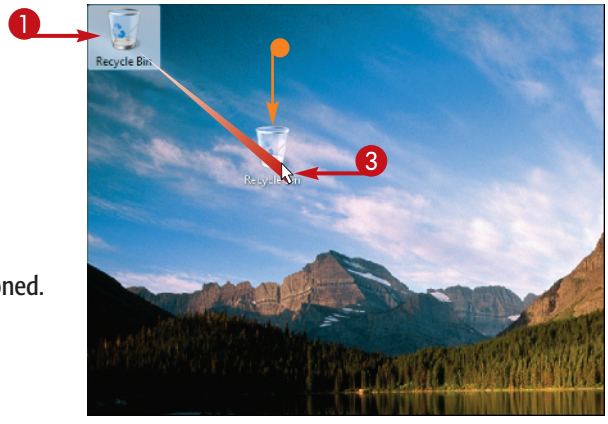
1. Position the mouse over the object with which you want to work.
2. Click the right mouse button.
   - Windows Vista displays a shortcut menu when you right-click something.

Note: *The contents of the shortcut menu depends on the object you right-clicked.*



CLICK AND DRAG THE MOUSE

1. Position the mouse over the object with which you want to work.
2. Click and hold the left mouse button.
3. Move the mouse to drag the selected object.
   - In most cases, the object moves along with the mouse.
4. Release the mouse button when the selected object is repositioned.



TIPS

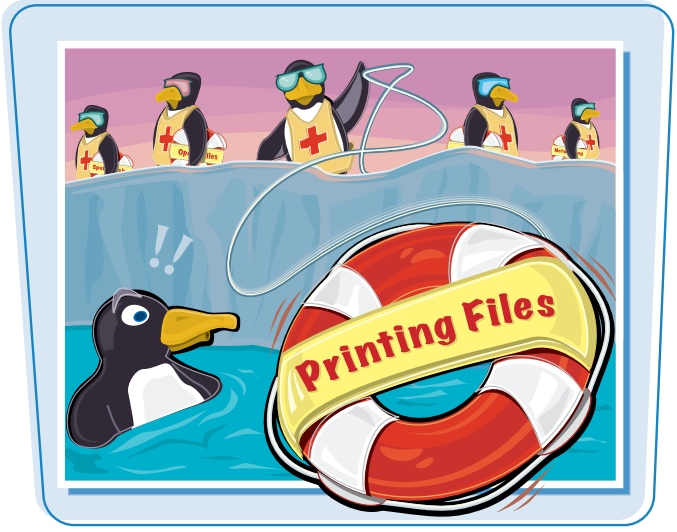
Why does Windows Vista sometimes not recognize my double-clicks?

Try to double-click as quickly as you can, and be sure not to move the mouse between clicks. If you continue to have trouble, click **Start**, **Control Panel**, and then **Mouse** to open the Mouse Properties dialog box. In the Double-click speed group, click and drag the slider to the left (toward Slow).

How can I set up my mouse for a left-hander?

Click **Start**, **Control Panel**, and then **Mouse** to open the Mouse Properties dialog box. Click **Switch primary and secondary buttons** (☐ changes to ☑).

Get Help



You can find out more about Windows Vista, learn how to perform a task, or troubleshoot problems by accessing the Help system.

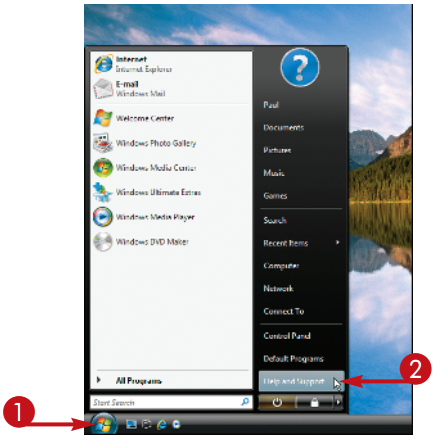
Most of the Help system is arranged into various topics, such as "Get pictures from your camera" and "Make your computer battery last longer." Each topic offers a number of subtopics, and each subtopic contains a collection of related tasks, articles, tutorials, and other items.

Get Help

1. Click **Start**.

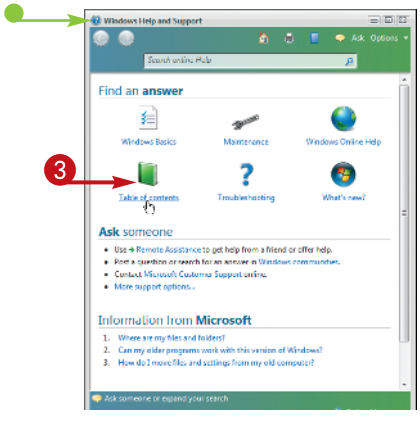
   The Start menu appears.

2. Click **Help and Support**.



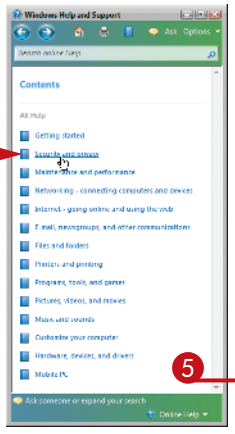
- The Windows Help and Support window appears.

3. Click the **Table of Contents** button.



The Table of Contents appears.

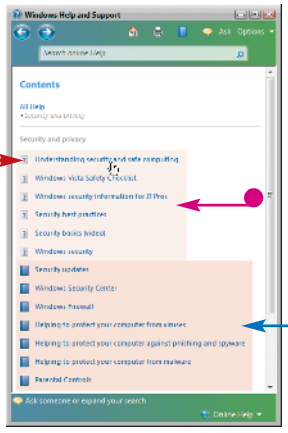
4 Click a topic.



- A list of Help articles appears for the topic you selected.
- A list of subtopics appears for the topic you selected.

5 Click an article, task, an overview, or a tutorial.

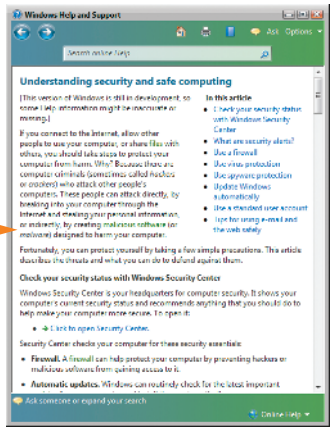
Note: *If the article you want is part of a subtopic, click the subtopic to display the list of articles it contains, and then click the article.*



- The item you select appears in the Help and Support Center window.

6 Read the article.

Note: *To return to a previous Help and Support Center screen, click the* ***Back*** *button ( ) until you get to the screen you want.*



TIP

How do I get help for a specific program?

Almost all Windows programs have their own Help features. You can access Help in a specific program one of three main ways:

- Click **Help** from the menu, and then click the command that runs the Help features (it may be called **Help Contents**, **Help Topics**, or ***Program* Help**, where *Program* is the name of the program (for example, **Microsoft Word Help**).
- Press F1.
- In a dialog box, click the **Help** button ( ), and then click a control to see a description of the control.

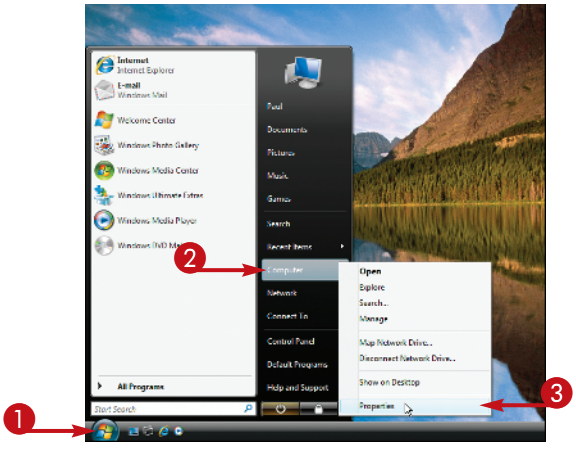
Activate Your Copy of Windows Vista

To avoid piracy, Microsoft requires that each copy of Windows Vista be activated. Otherwise, your copy of Windows Vista will refuse to run after the activation period has expired.

This task assumes that Windows Vista has not yet prompted you to start the activation. If you see an icon in the notification area with the message "Activate Windows now," click that message and then skip to Step 5.

Activate Your Copy of Windows Vista

1. Click **Start**.
2. Right-click **Computer**.
3. Click **Properties**.

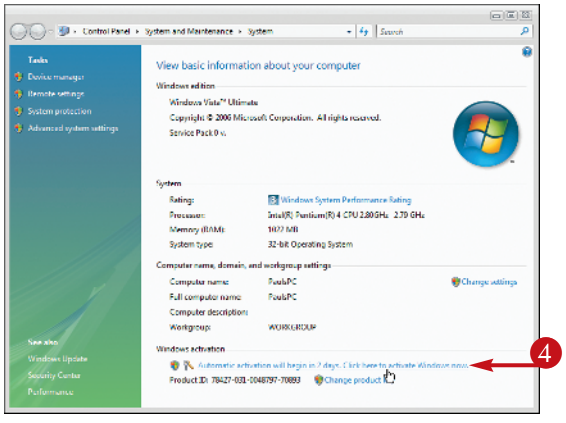


The System window appears.

Note: *If the System window shows the Ask for Genuine Microsoft Software logo in the Windows Activation area, then you do not need to perform the rest of the steps in this task. Click the* ***Close*** *button (*) *to close the System window.*

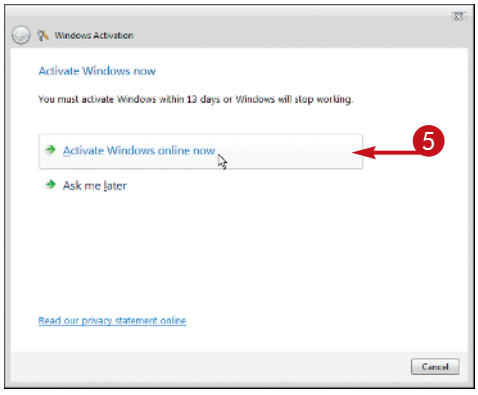
4. Click the **Automatic activation will begin in X days. Click here to activate Windows now** link.

Note: *If the User Account Control dialog box appears, click* ***Continue*** *or type an administrator password and click* ***Submit****.*



The Windows Activation dialog box appears.

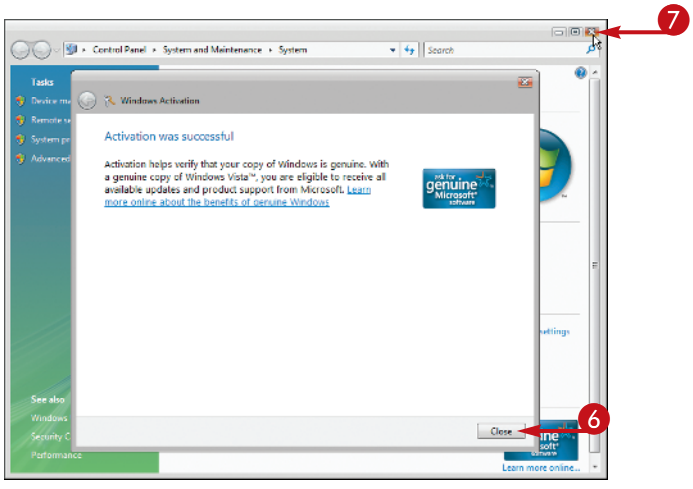
5 Click **Activate Windows online now**.



Windows Vista confirms that it has been activated.

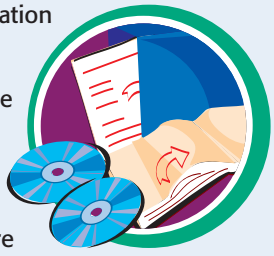
6 Click **Close**.

7 Click the **Close** button ( ).



TIPS

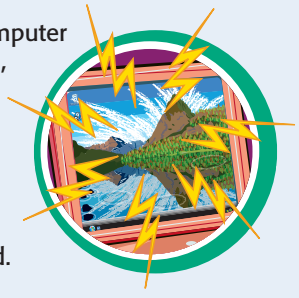
Can I activate Windows Vista on more than one computer?



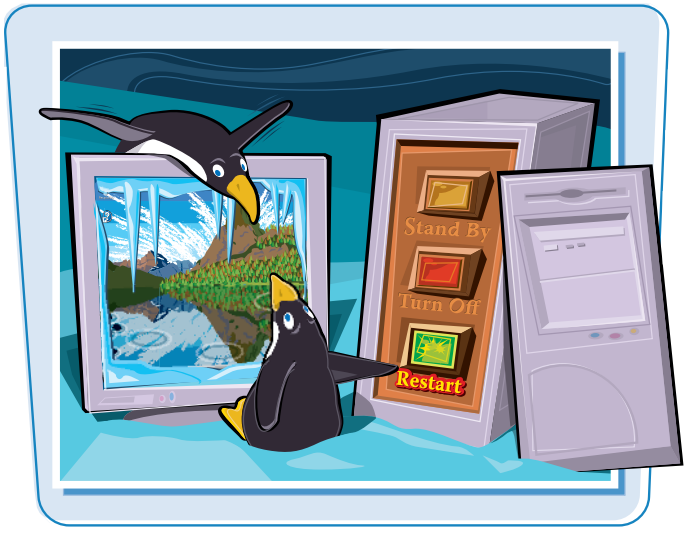
No, not usually. The activation process creates a special value that is unique to your computer's hardware configuration. When you activate Windows Vista, your copy of the program is associated with this unique hardware value, which means your copy only works with that one computer. However, if that computer breaks down, you can telephone Microsoft to let them know, and they should allow you to activate Vista on another computer.

How can I activate my copy of Windows Vista if I do not have Internet access?

If you do not have Internet access, perform Steps **1** to **5** anyway. After a few moments, Windows Activation displays a list of options. Click **Show me other ways to activate**. If your computer has a modem attached, click **Use my modem to connect directly to the activation service**. If you do not have a modem, click **Use the automated phone system**, instead.



Restart Windows Vista



You can restart Windows Vista, which means it shuts down and starts up again immediately. This is useful if your computer is running slow or acting funny. Sometimes a restart solves the problem.

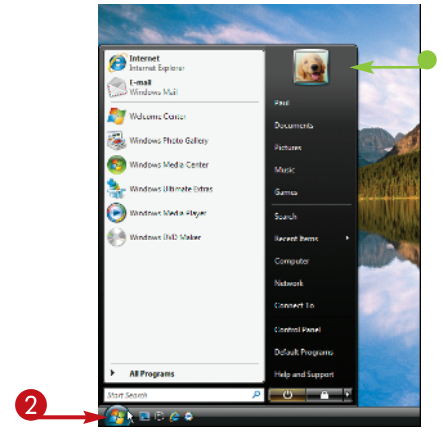
Knowing how to restart Windows Vista also comes in handy when you install a program or device that requires a restart to function properly. If you are busy right now, you can always opt to restart your computer yourself later, when it is more convenient.

Restart Windows Vista

1. Shut down all your running programs.

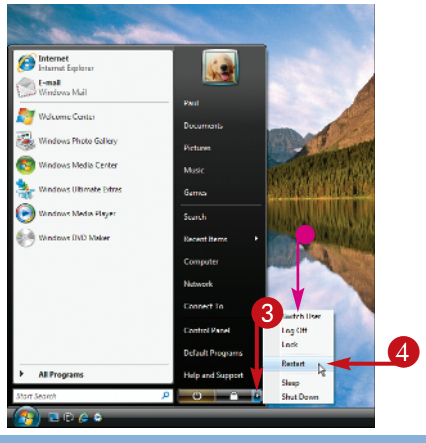
Note: *Be sure to save your work as you close your programs.*

2. Click **Start**.
   - The Start menu appears.



3. Click the **Lock** arrow.
   - The Lock menu appears.
4. Click **Restart**.

   Windows Vista shuts down and your computer restarts.



Shut Down Windows Vista

When you complete your work for the day, you should shut down Windows Vista. However, do not just shut off your computer's power. Follow the proper steps to avoid damaging files on your system.

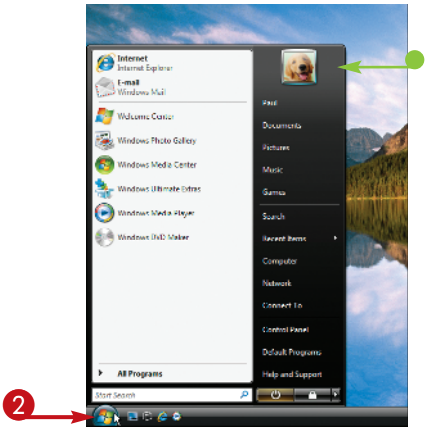
Shutting off the computer's power without properly exiting Windows Vista can cause two problems. First, if you have unsaved changes in some open documents, you may lose those changes. Second, you could damage one or more Windows Vista system files, which could make your system unstable.

Shut Down Windows Vista

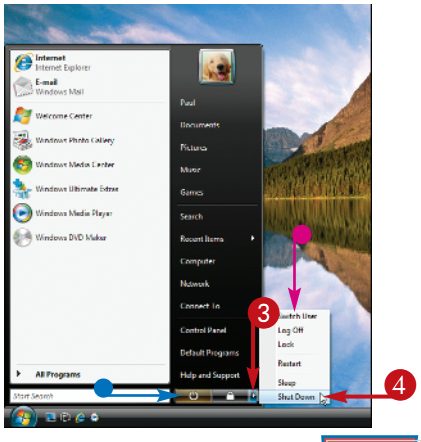
1. Shut down all your running programs.

Note: *Be sure to save your work as you close your programs.*

2. Click **Start**.
   - The Start menu appears.



3. Click the **Lock** arrow.
   - The Lock menu appears.
4. Click **Shut Down**.

   Windows Vista shuts down and turns off your computer.

   - If you want Windows Vista to automatically reopen all the programs and documents currently on your screen, click the **Sleep** button, instead.