IN THIS CHAPTER

- Understanding what an operating system is and is not
- Turning your Mac on and off
- Setting up Tahoe
- Logging in to macOS
- Meeting the desktop
- Pointing, clicking, and dragging
- Putting your Mac to sleep and shutting it down
- Taking care of your Mac
- Getting help from your Mac
- Getting the lowdown on Apple Intelligence

Chapter 1
Diving into Tahoe

So you're the proud owner of a Mac running macOS Tahoe? Great choice! Your Mac gives you powerful hardware in a sleek package, and Tahoe — macOS version 2026, if you're feeling formal — puts an intuitive and easy-to-use interface on Unix, the best industrial-strength operating system in the world.

In this chapter, we'll make sure you're set up to put your Mac and macOS to good use. We'll start by taking a quick look at what macOS actually does. We'll then move along to getting started by the numbers: turning on your Mac, going through the setup routine if it's a new Mac or a new install, logging in, and meeting the desktop. We'll review how to use your mouse or trackpad. We'll go through a few essentials of treating your Mac well and avoiding avoidable damage, then look at how to get help on Macs, macOS, and apps. Finally, we'll talk about Apple's major

Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiative, Apple Intelligence, and where to find it on your Mac.

If your Mac is all set up and you're comfortable with startup, login, navigation, and shutdown, feel free to skip this chapter and move ahead to whichever chapter will most benefit you immediately.

Before we start, a quick word about macOS version numbers and version names . . .


TECHNICAL STUFF

Each version of macOS has both a version number and a version name. This book covers macOS version 2026, whose version name is Tahoe. Most people prefer the version names because they're easier to remember.

What about previous versions? Okay (deep breath): macOS version 15 was Sequoia, version 14 was Sonoma, version 13 was Ventura, version 12 was Monterey, version 11 was Big Sur, version 10.15 was Catalina, 10.14 was Mojave, 10.13 was High Sierra, and 10.12 was Sierra. Before that, Apple called the operating system "OS X" (with the X pronounced "ten") rather than "macOS." OS X version 10.11 was El Capitan, 10.10 was Yosemite, 10.9 was Mavericks, 10.8 was Mountain Lion, 10.7 was Lion, 10.6 was Snow Leopard, 10.5 was Leopard, 10.4 was Tiger, 10.3 was Panther, 10.2 was Jaguar, 10.1 was Puma, and 10.0 was Cheetah.

Why the jump from macOS 15 to macOS 26? Apple decided in 2025 to standardize the numbers of all its major operating systems to reflect the year following their release. So macOS 2026 (released in fall 2025) is accompanied by iOS 2026 (iPhone), iPadOS 2026, watchOS 2026, tvOS 2026 (Apple TV), and visionOS 2026 (the Vision Pro headset).

Okay, What Does macOS Do?

The operating system (that is, the *OS* part of *macOS*) controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of macOS and your Mac, the operating system

- Manages memory
- Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- Keeps track of files
- Manages networking and security
- Does housekeeping (but only its own — not yours)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and web browsers, rely on the OS to create and maintain the environment in which they work. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information and save it in a file. In the background, the OS is the muscle for the word processor, performing the following crucial functions:

- Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the on-screen window in which you write the memo
- Keeping track of the file when you save it
- Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with
- Communicating with other programs

There's much, much more — but you get the idea.

Turning On Your Mac

No great surprises here: You turn on your Mac by pressing the power button — once you find it. Here's where to look:

- **MacBook:** At the upper-right corner of the keyboard
- **iMac:** At the back of the screen, lower-left corner or lower-right corner
- **Mac mini M4 (the tiny one):** Left back corner of the bottom of the enclosure — you'll need to pick the computer up
- **Mac mini (older, larger models), Mac Studio:** At the back of the enclosure
- **Mac Pro:** On the front panel

The power button usually looks like the little circle icon you see in the margin — but on some Mac models, the power button doubles as the Touch ID button for authenticating you via your fingerprint and doesn't show the icon.

What you should see on startup

When you turn on your Mac, the Mac powers up, checks the hardware, and then loads macOS. While loading macOS, the Mac displays a white Apple logo in the middle of the screen, as shown in the margin here.

If you need to set up macOS Tahoe, the setup routine begins automatically. See the following section, "Setting Up macOS Tahoe." Otherwise (assuming Tahoe has already been set up), the login screen appears, and you can log in. See the section "Logging In," later in this chapter.

What you may see if things go wrong

If something is wrong with your Mac, you may see any of the following on startup:

- **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you may see a blue, black, or gray screen. See Chapter 22 for moves to try to get your Mac well again. Failing those, it may need repairs. If your computer is under warranty, set up a Genius Bar appointment at your nearest Apple Store or dial 1-800-SOS-APPL (or the equivalent number in your country or region), and a customer-service person can tell you what to do.

- **Prohibitory sign or flashing question mark in a folder:** These icons mean that your Mac can't find a startup disk, hard drive, USB drive, or network server containing a valid Mac operating system. See Chapter 22 for ways to ease your Mac's ills.
- **Kernel panic:** You may occasionally see a block of text in several languages, including English. This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic*, the most severe type of system crash. Restart your Mac (there's no other choice). If either of these messages recurs, see Chapter 22 for advice.

Setting Up macOS Tahoe

If your Mac is new, or if you've just installed Tahoe from scratch rather than upgrading it from an earlier version of macOS, you'll need to run through a setup routine. Here are the main steps:

- **Specify your country or region.** On the Select Your Country or Region screen, click your country, and then click the Continue button.
- **Choose Accessibility features.** On the Accessibility screen, set up any accessibility features you need by clicking the Vision button, the Motor button, the Hearing button, or the Cognitive button, and then working through the resulting screens. You can set up most accessibility features at this point if you know that you or other users of the Mac will need them. However, you may find it better to set up only those features that you need now to help you complete the setup routine, and then configure other accessibility features

after setup. If you don't need to set up any accessibility features now, click the Not Now button to move right along.

- **Connect to a Wi-Fi network.** On the Select Your Wi-Fi Network screen, click the network you want your Mac to use, and then type the network password in the Password box. Once the connection is established, click the Continue button.

TIP

If your Mac has an Ethernet port that is connected to your wired network via a cable, you won't need to connect to a Wi-Fi network.

- **Read about data and privacy.** On the Data & Privacy screen, read the information, and click the Learn More link if you want to learn more. Click the Continue button when you're ready to move along.
- **Choose whether to transfer your data to this Mac.** On the Migration Assistant screen, select the From a Mac, Time Machine Backup, or Startup Disk option button if you want to transfer data from one of these Mac-based sources; or select the From a Windows PC option button if you want to transfer data from a PC; and then click the Continue button and follow the prompts to specify the data. If you don't want to transfer data at all, or you want to transfer it later, click the Not Now button.
- **Sign in using your Apple ID.** On the Sign In with Your Apple ID screen, type the email address associated with your Apple ID. Enter the password, and then click the Continue button.
- **Accept the Terms and Conditions.** On the Terms and Conditions screen, read the terms and conditions. If you want to proceed, click the Agree button, and then click the Agree button again in the confirmation dialog.
- **Read the Find My information.** On the Find My screen, read how the Find My feature helps you retrieve your Mac when it goes missing and protects your Mac with Activation Lock. Click the Continue button to proceed.
- **Choose whether to enable Location Services.** On the Enable Location Services screen, select the Enable Location Services on This Mac check box if you want to turn on Location Services, which tell apps like Maps and services like Spotlight Suggestions where your Mac is located. Once more, click the Continue button to proceed.
- **Choose whether to share your Analytics information.** On the Analytics screen, choose whether to share your analytics data with Apple and with app developers. This is a public-spirited action that helps Apple and the developers improve their software, and Apple anonymizes the data so that it cannot come back to haunt you. Click the Continue button to move along.
- **Choose whether to enable Screen Time.** On the Screen Time screen, read the details of the Screen Time feature, which enables you to set usage limits

for the Mac for yourself and other users. Click the Continue button if you want to enable Screen Time now; if not, click the Set Up Later button.


TIP

The setup routine implies Screen Time is something you should want to use. Screen Time can certainly be useful, especially if you need a commitment device to limit your Mac usage in certain ways (such as setting time limits on social media) or you need to manage family members' usage. But if your Mac is yours alone and you don't need or want Screen Time, don't set it up. Screen Time is not a notorious resource hog, but it certainly doesn't make your Mac run faster. You can set up Screen Time later if needed.

- **Choose whether to enable Ask Siri.** On the Siri screen, select or clear the Enable Ask Siri check box, as needed, and then click the Continue button. If you enable Ask Siri, choose a voice on the Select a Siri Voice screen. Click the Continue button to keep moving along.
- **Choose whether to set up Touch ID.** If your MacBook or your Mac's keyboard includes a Touch ID fingerprint reader, set up Touch ID fingerprint recognition by clicking the Continue button on the Touch ID screen, and then following the prompts. If you prefer to set up Touch ID later, click the Set Up Touch ID Later link.
- **Choose Light Mode, Dark Mode, or Auto Mode.** On the Choose Your Look screen, click the Light button, the Dark button, or the Auto button, as needed. Auto Mode switches between light and dark to match the time of day in your current location. Click the Continue button one final time.

The setup routine finishes, and your desktop appears. Move on to the section "Meeting the macOS Desktop," later in this chapter.

Logging In

After starting up successfully, macOS displays the login screen. Figure 1-1 shows an example of the login screen with four user accounts set up on the Mac. As you can see, the user accounts appear at the bottom of the screen.

Click your username to display the Enter Password field (see the left screen in Figure 1-2), type your password, and then press Return or click the little right-arrow-in-a-circle to the right of the password (see the right screen in Figure 1-2). The arrow appears once you've typed something in the Enter Password field.

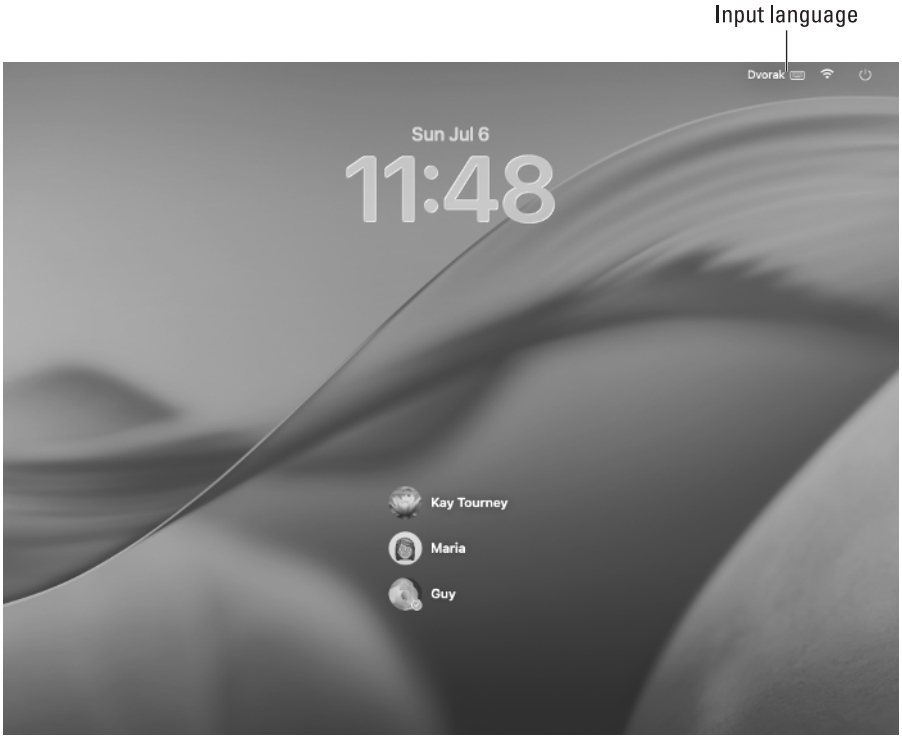

FIGURE 1-1: On the login screen, click your username. You may sometimes need to change the input language.

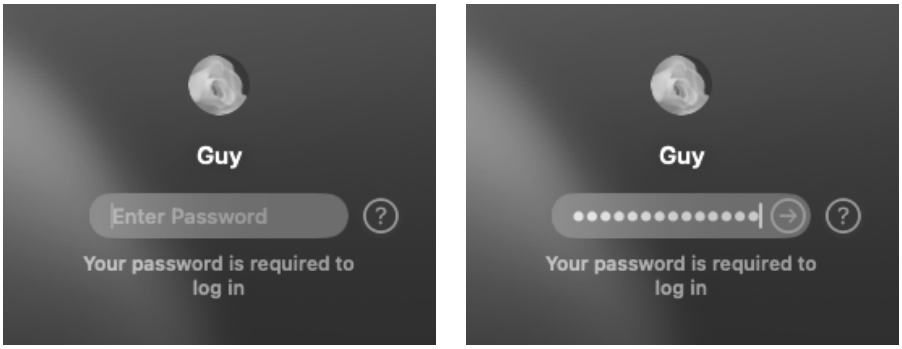

FIGURE 1-2: Type your password (left), and then press Return or click the arrow (right).

Login should be straightforward, provided that you know your password and can type it without mistakes (and without seeing the characters). But there are three things that might trip you up:

- **Caps Lock or Num Lock is enabled.** If Caps Lock or Num Lock is enabled on the keyboard, your password likely won't match. The login screen may or may not show a warning that Caps Lock or Num Lock is on. If in doubt, look at the keyboard to see if there's a status light showing that Caps Lock or Num Lock is on.

- **The keyboard is set to a different layout.** Look at the readout in the upper-right corner of the screen to make sure the keyboard is set to the appropriate layout, such as U.S. If not, click the readout, and then choose the right layout on the menu that appears. This problem occurs only when the Mac is configured to use multiple layouts, such as the U.S. layout and the Dvorak layout.
- **Your Bluetooth keyboard isn't connected or isn't working.** If you're using a Bluetooth keyboard, make sure it's showing its usual lights. If not, try connecting the keyboard via USB (if it supports that) or using a different keyboard.


TIP

If you don't want to type your password every time you start or restart your Mac, you can set up automatic login. This is almost never wise, but some people find it useful. See Chapter 20 for details.

Meeting the macOS Desktop

Once you've logged in, the macOS desktop appears. Figure 1-3 shows how the desktop looks before you customize it. The desktop is mostly empty space at first, so for visual interest, this figure also shows the About This Mac window, whose macOS readout shows the version of macOS your Mac is running — Tahoe 26.0 in this example. To open this window, click the icon in the upper-left corner of the screen, and then click the About This Mac command on the menu that opens. To close the window, click the red button in its upper-left corner.

Here are the elements you see in the figure:

- **Apple menu:** This menu always appears at the left end of the menu bar. It gives you access to essential system commands, including Sleep, Restart, Shut Down, and Log Out.
- **Menu bar:** This bar appears across the top of the screen and displays the menus for the active app. In Figure 1-3, the active app is Finder, the macOS file-management app. Chapters 4 and 5 dig into Finder in depth.
- **Wallpaper:** This is the background that appears on the desktop. macOS includes a wide range of wallpapers, but you can also use your own pictures. Each major release of macOS includes a new wallpaper designed to suit that release's character.

FIGURE 1-3: The default desktop and widgets with the About This Mac window open.

TIP

Wallpaper — on the desktop? If the term seems strange — yes, it is. OS X and earlier versions of macOS used to call the wallpaper the "desktop background," but Apple switched to "wallpaper" a few years ago to make macOS more like iOS and iPadOS, which use the term "wallpaper" for the background on the iPhone and iPad.

- **Close button:** You click this button to close the window on which it appears.
- **A window:** Most apps and features appear in separate windows on the desktop. You can reposition windows as needed. Chapter 2 tells you what you need to know about windows.
- **Menus:** These little menus identified by icons appear on the right side of the menu bar and give you quick access to frequently used macOS features, such as Wi-Fi and Spotlight Search.

- **Control Center:** This menu opens the Control Center panel, which lets you quickly control important settings, such as display brightness and sound volume.
- **Siri:** This menu enables you to trigger the Siri virtual assistant with a click of your mouse or trackpad.
- **Clock:** This readout shows the day, date, and time but also gives you access to the Notification Center panel, which shows the notifications clamoring for your attention.
- **Widgets:** These mini-apps appear directly on the desktop, showing information. macOS Tahoe displays the Weather widget and the Calendar widget by default, but you can display any other widgets you want.
- **Dock:** This feature gives you access to all your running apps and enables you to launch other apps whose icons appear here. Chapter 3 gives you the lowdown on the Dock.

Pointing, Clicking, and More

Now that you've got the macOS desktop on your screen, let's take a minute to make sure we're clear on pointing and all the different forms of clicking. Here are the terms and what they mean:

- **Point:** Before you can click or press anything, *point* to it. Place your hand on your mouse, and move it so that the pointer arrow is over the object, such as an icon or a button.

  If you're using a trackpad, slide your finger lightly across the pad until the pointer arrow is over the object.
- **Click:** Also called *single click.* Use your index finger to push the mouse button (or the left mouse button if your mouse has more than one) down and then let it come back up. Usually the button will make a clicking sound. Use a single click to select an icon, press a button, or activate a check box or window.

  In other words, first you point and then you click — *point and click,* in computer lingo.

  If you're using a trackpad, press down on it to click. You can also configure the trackpad so that you can tap to click; see Chapter 6.
- **Double-click:** *Click twice* in rapid succession. You double-click to open a folder or to launch a file or app.

Trackpad users: Press down on the pad two times in rapid succession. If you've enabled Tap to Click, you can double-tap to double-click. Again, see Chapter 6.

- **Control-click or right-click:** Also called *secondary click,* this click displays the *contextual menu* or *shortcut menu* for the object you click — a menu that contains commands related to that object. Early Mac mice had only a single button, so to issue the secondary click, you would hold down the Control key on the keyboard while clicking. You can still use this method if you like, even if your mouse bristles with buttons; but usually it's easier to click with the secondary mouse button. Usually, this is the right button — hence the term *right-click*.

  On the trackpad, either hold down the Control key while you press down on the trackpad with one finger, or click or tap the trackpad with two fingers without holding down the Control key.

  If tapping your trackpad with two fingers doesn't bring up a little menu, check your Trackpad pane in System Settings (see Chapter 6).

- **Drag:** *Dragging* something usually means you have to click it first and hold down the mouse or trackpad button to keep hold of the object. Then you move the mouse (or your finger on the trackpad) so that the pointer and the selected object move across the screen to the object's destination, at which point you release the mouse button or trackpad button to drop the object. This technique is often called *drag-and-drop*.

- **Wiggle (or jiggle):** If you lose the pointer on your screen, just wiggle your mouse back and forth (or jiggle your finger back and forth on the trackpad) for a few seconds. The pointer magically gets much bigger, making it easier to see. When you stop wiggling or jiggling, the pointer returns to its normal size.

- **Choose an item from a menu:** To get to macOS menu commands, you open a menu and then choose the option you want. Click the menu name to open the menu, and then click the command you want. When the menu is open, you can also type the first letter or letters of the item to select it, and then press the spacebar or Return to execute the command.

TIP

You can also use the menus a different way. Move the pointer over the menu's name, and then click to open the menu. Keep holding down the button and drag downward until you select the command you want. When the command is highlighted, let go of the button to execute the command. Some people find this method preferable, but even if you don't, it can come in handy. For example, you may realize mid-click that the pointer is pointing at the wrong menu item. To fix that, keep holding the click down, move the pointer to the right menu item, and then release the click.

REMEMBER

The terms given in the preceding list apply to all Macs — both MacBooks and Mac desktop systems. If you use a trackpad with your Mac, you'll want to add a few more terms — such as *tap*, *swipe*, *rotate*, *pinch*, and *spread* — to your lexicon. You can read all about them in chapters 2 and 11.

Putting Your Mac to Sleep and Shutting It Down

When you've finished using your Mac for now, you can put it to sleep or shut it down. If you're planning to use your Mac again in the near future, as will usually be the case, put it to sleep. But if you're not intending to use your Mac for several days, shutting down is the better choice.

WARNING

If you have a MacBook, and it will be enclosed in a bag or briefcase for more than a few hours, turn it off. Otherwise, it could overheat — even in Sleep mode.

Putting your Mac to sleep

When you put your Mac to sleep, it goes into a state in which it consumes only minimal amounts of electricity but from which it can usually be ready to use in a few seconds when you wake it.

To put your Mac to sleep, choose ➪ Sleep. To wake it, press any key on the keyboard or click the mouse or trackpad.

TIP

You can put a MacBook to sleep by closing its lid and wake it (you've guessed!) by opening the lid.

TIP

You can configure macOS to put your Mac to sleep after a specified period of inactivity. See Chapter 20 to learn how to do this.

Shutting down your Mac

Always shut down your Mac via macOS rather than just switching off the power or unplugging it. Choose ➪ Shut Down, and then click the Shut Down button in the Are You Sure You Want to Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog (see Figure 1-4).

TIP

When the Shut Down button is highlighted, you can activate it by pressing the Return key rather than clicking it. The same goes for any highlighted button.

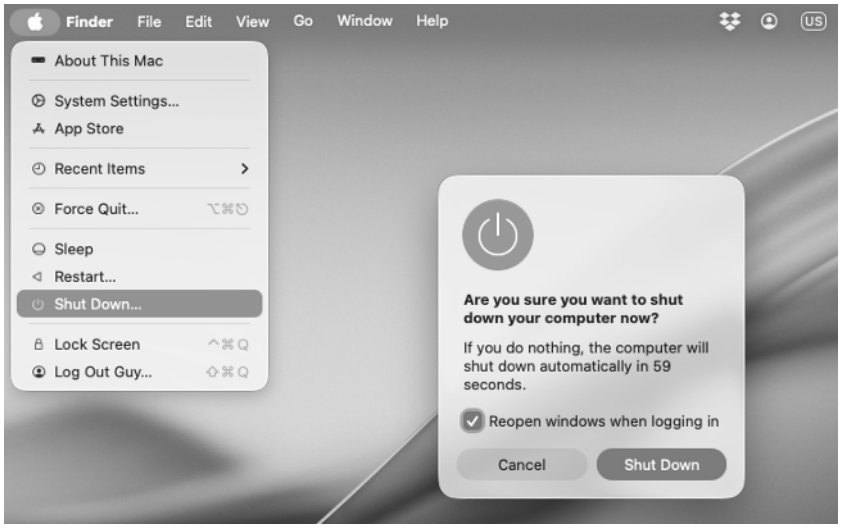

FIGURE 1-4: Always shut down your Mac by choosing Shut Down and then clicking Shut Down in the confirmation dialog.

The Are You Sure You Want to Shut Down Your Computer Now? dialog includes the Reopen Windows When Logging In check box. If you select this check box, your Mac will start back up with the same windows (and apps) that were open when you shut down (or restarted). This can be a real time-saver, but you can clear the check box if you don't want those windows and apps reopened.

WARNING

Turning off the power without shutting down macOS can corrupt your files. At startup, macOS checks the Mac's filesystem and attempts to fix any problems that it detects, so usually macOS is able to recover from the Mac being shut down improperly. Even so, make sure you shut down your Mac properly unless you absolutely cannot. Really, the only time you should turn off your Mac without shutting down properly is when your screen is completely frozen or when the Mac has crashed due to a kernel panic and you've already tried all the potential fixes explained in Chapter 22.

Looking After Your Mac

To keep your Mac happy and fully functional, you should feed it consistently, treat it gently, and back up your data regularly.

Feeding your Mac

Your Mac's preferred diet is clean electricity, and it will get cranky if denied this sustenance.

To protect a desktop Mac against power outages or surges, power it via an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) rather than directly from a power socket. The UPS will enable the Mac to ride out brief outages and will give you time to shut down the Mac "gracefully" (that means "under control") during a longer outage. The UPS will also provide surge protection. But if a thunderstorm is rumbling nearby, you may want to shut down your Mac and disconnect the power cable. If Zeus is casting thunderbolts in the vicinity, disconnecting your other electronic equipment is probably wise, too.

A MacBook runs off its battery, so power outages are not a problem unless the battery fails. To protect the MacBook fully against surges, you should plug the power supply into a computer-grade surge suppressor rather than directly into a power socket. During an electrical storm, disconnect the power supply from the MacBook for safety; also disconnect the MacBook from any other devices that are connected to power sockets, such as external drives that have their own power supplies. You can then continue using the MacBook if you like.

Treating your Mac gently

Apple's design esthetic prioritizes style over substance. As a result, Apple's hardware products look great but are less tough than they might be. That means you should treat your Mac as gently as possible. Even if the Mac has a solid-state drive rather than a more fragile hard disk with spinning platters, the Mac is chock-full of sensitive components that you can damage with minimal effort.

WARNING

Definitely do not use household window cleaners or paper towels on your Mac's screen. Either one can harm it. Instead, use a soft clean cloth (preferably microfiber), and if you're going to use a liquid or spray, make sure it's specifically designed not to harm computer displays. Finally, only spray the cleaner onto a cloth; never spray anything directly onto the screen.

Backing up your data

If the files on your Mac mean anything to you, you must back them up. Even if your most important file is your last saved game of Resident Evil 7: Biohazard, you still need to back up your files. Fortunately, macOS includes a powerful but easy-to-use backup utility called Time Machine that can back up your data to an external hard drive. See Chapter 21 to learn how to use Time Machine. If you use Apple's iCloud service, you can use its online synchronization as another means of backing up your files.

Getting Help

macOS Tahoe includes excellent built-in help. Click the Help menu to reveal the Search field, the Tips for Your Mac item, and the macOS User Guide item. Click the macOS Help item to open the window shown in Figure 1-5.

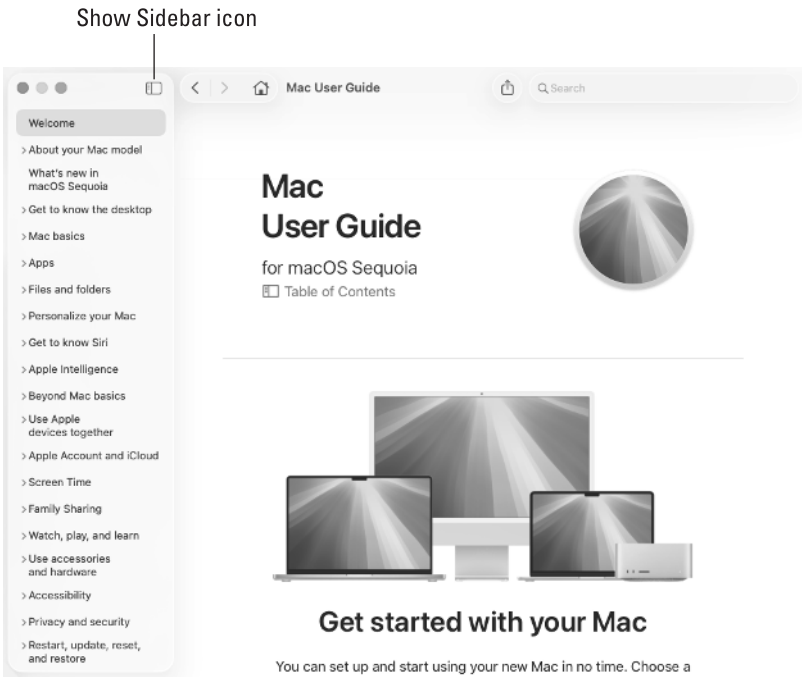

FIGURE 1-5: Mac Help stands ready to help you figure out your Mac and macOS.

TIP

Press Shift+⌘+? to open Help for the current app.

You can browse Help by clicking a topic in the table of contents and then clicking a subtopic. If you don't see the table of contents, click the Show Sidebar icon, labeled in Figure 1-5.

To search Mac Help, simply type a word or phrase in either Search field — the one in the Help menu itself or the one near the top of the Help window on the right side — and then press Return. In a few seconds, your Mac provides one or more articles to read, which (theoretically) are related to your question. As long as your Mac is connected to the Internet, search results include articles from the Apple online support database.

REMEMBER

Although you don't have to be connected to the Internet to use Mac Help, you do need an Internet connection to get the most out of it. (Chapter 13 can help you set up an Internet connection, if you don't have one.) That's because macOS installs only certain help articles on your hard drive and downloads others as needed from the Apple website, giving you the most up-to-date information. What it downloads, it leaves on your hard drive for future reference.

If you see a See More Results on the Web link, you can click it to launch Safari and perform a web search for the phrase you typed.

TIP

Mac Help also has a cool feature that literally points you to the commands you need. Try this:

1. **In the Help menu's Search field, type a word or phrase.**
2. **Select any item that has a menu icon to its left (such as the items with *side* in their names in Figure 1-6).**

   An arrow appears, pointing at that command in the appropriate menu.

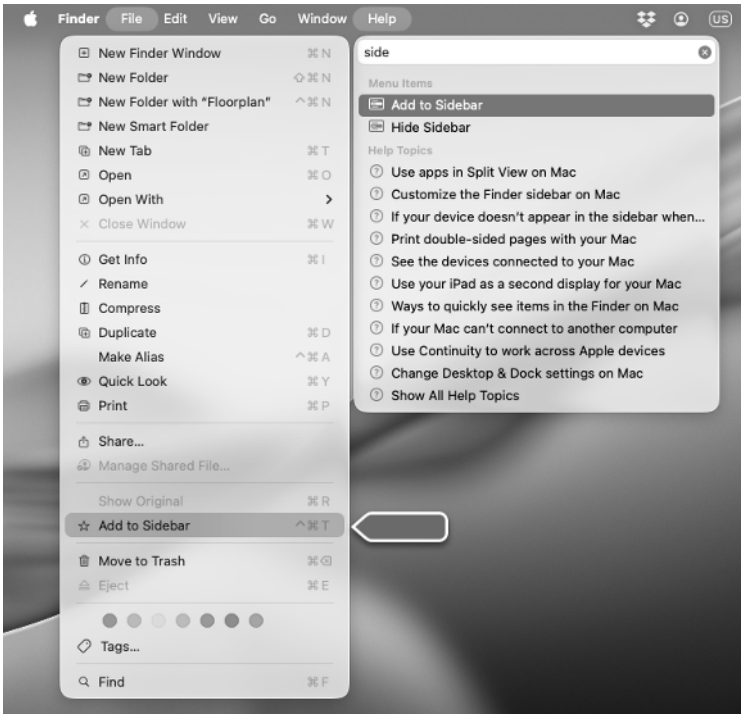

FIGURE 1-6: Highlight a command in the Help menu to display an arrow showing where to find the command.

Finally, don't forget that most apps have their own Help systems, so if you want general help with your Mac, you need to first click the Finder icon on the Dock, click the desktop, or press the app-switching shortcut, ⌘+Tab, to activate Finder. Once Finder is active, you can choose Mac Help from Finder's Help menu.

Getting the Lowdown on Apple Intelligence

Apple Intelligence is the suite of artificial intelligence (AI) features that Apple has added to its major operating systems, including macOS, iOS (the iPhone's operating system), and iPadOS (three guesses). Apple Intelligence aims to use AI tools to make your Apple devices and their apps more useful to you while protecting your privacy.

Here are seven quick examples of ways Apple Intelligence can help you with tasks on your Mac:

- **Proofread and rewrite text.** When you write an email message, you can have Apple Intelligence proofread it for you to identify errors and suggest fixes. Better yet, you can get Apple Intelligence to rewrite the message to change its tone — for example, changing from a casual tone to a more formal, professional tone. We'll look at how to use these features in the Mail app in Chapter 15, but you can use them in many other apps as well.
- **Summarize content.** Apple Intelligence can condense a long message, document, or report into a summary that you can read quickly. This feature can be a great time-saver.
- **Make Siri more helpful.** Siri, Apple's virtual assistant, has been helping out on the Mac since Apple released macOS Sierra in 2016, but Apple Intelligence boosts Siri to impressive new levels. One change that sounds minor but makes a huge difference is that Siri retains the content of your requests rather than treating each subsequent request as a blank slate, so you don't have to keep repeating yourself. Another improvement is that you can interact with Siri either by speaking or by typing, and you can switch easily between the two. Chapter 9 covers Siri.
- **Search for photos and videos.** Even if you diligently apply keywords to your photos and videos in the Photos app, searching for particular items can still be a slow and unwieldy process. But with Apple Intelligence, you can describe what you want in natural language — for example, you might say "black-and-white cat sprawled on my laptop" — and have Photos round up the matching items for you.

- **Create Memory movies to order.** If you've used the Photos app on the Mac, the iPhone, or the iPad, you know how Photos creates short movies called Memories from related photos. Up until now, Photos has just gone ahead and created Memories on its own initiative. Now, however, you can get Apple Intelligence to create a specific Memory movie for you.
- **Create and edit images.** Apple Intelligence's Image Playground feature enables you to create images by supplying a text description of what you want an image to contain. You can even add photos of people from your Photo Library and get Image Playground to alter their appearance — for example, changing their hairstyle or adding a mustache or shades.
- **Create custom emoji.** If you like emoji, those small but expressive icons, you'll likely love being able to create custom ones using Apple Intelligence. Apple calls these custom emoji "Genmoji," and you can create them in various apps, such as the Messages app (see Chapter 15).

When you use Apple Intelligence features, the device you're using — your Mac, iPhone, or iPad — performs the processing if it can. When the Apple Intelligence feature needs more complex computation than your device can provide, Apple Intelligence transfers the required data across the Internet to Apple's servers, which crunch the numbers and return the result. When transferring data across the Internet, Apple uses an approach called Private Cloud Compute that uses various technologies, including anonymization and encryption, to keep your data secure and private.

When your Apple Intelligence tasks require input from ChatGPT or other tools provided by OpenAI, a market-leading AI company, Apple Intelligence notifies you of the planned data transfer and gets your approval before performing it.