

Using a Mac OS 11

Working from the Desktop



In today's example Jane is using a Mac computer and its various applications with the OS 11 operating system.

In this lesson, Jane is going to learn about the different sections of the computer's desktop including the Dock, Apple Menu and more.

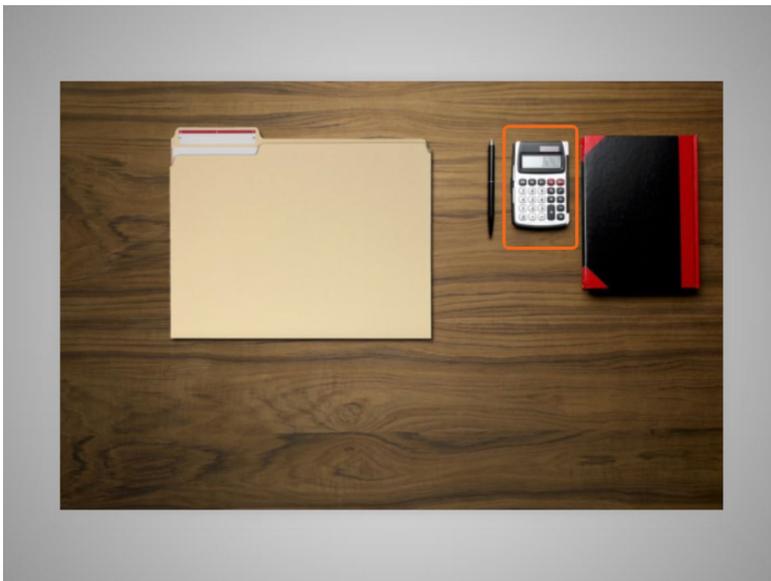


When the computer is turned on, Jane sees what's known as the desktop in the monitor. Here we see Jane's macOS 11 Big Sur desktop.

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



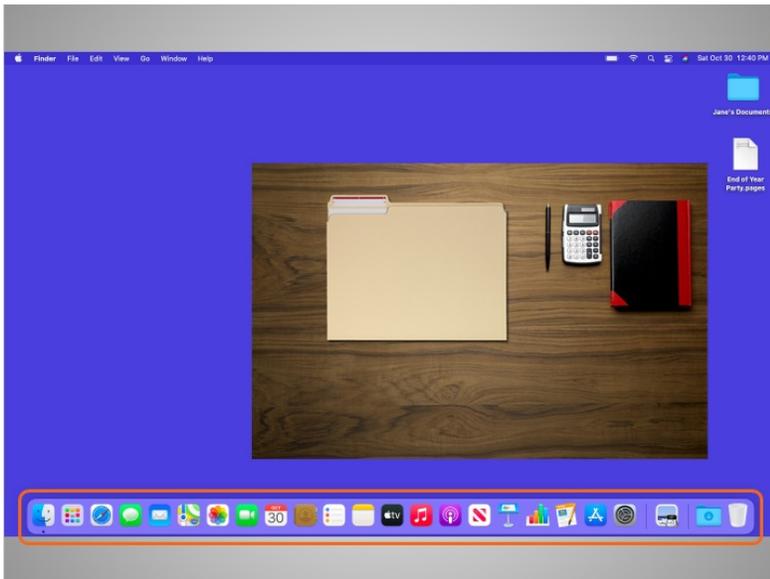
The desktop is just like the top of Jane's desk at home or at work, where she keeps different folders with papers in them, and other tools she needs to get things done,



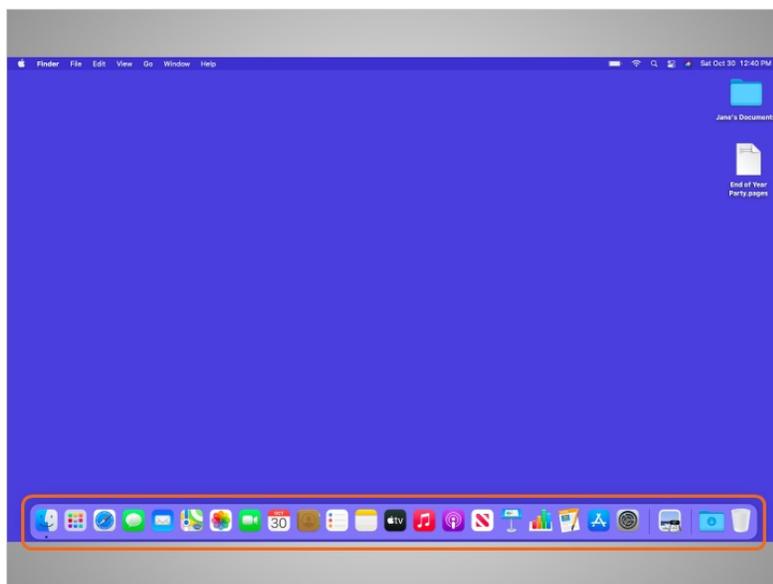
such as a calculator for math,



a pen for writing, or a book for looking things up.

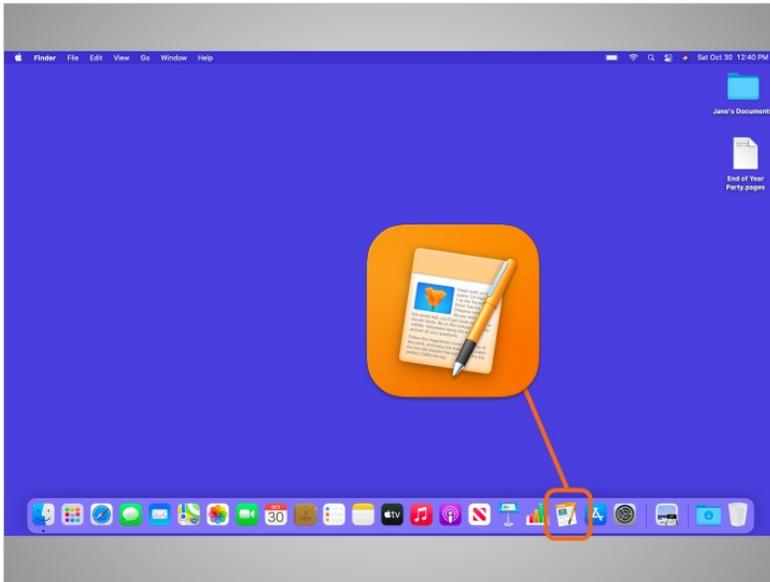


Just as Jane has folders and tools on her physical desk, she also has those tools and folders on the computer, which she can access through the desktop.



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 you access the applications.

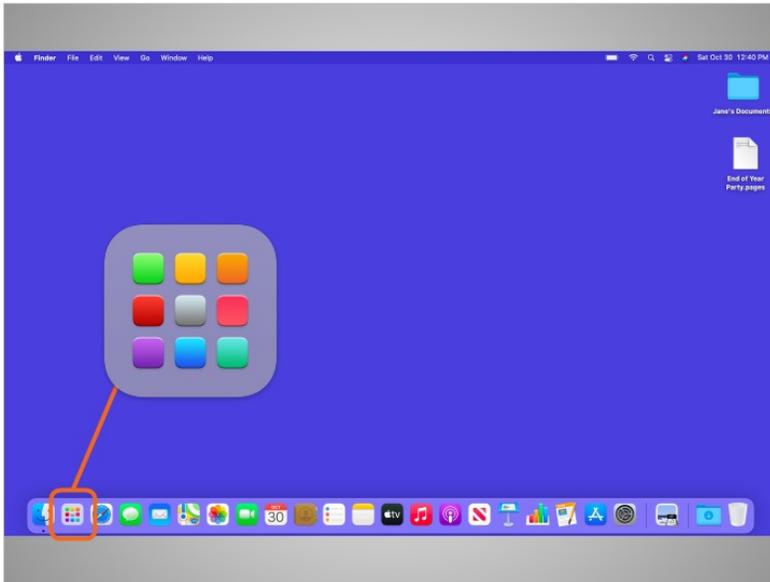
To open an application, Jane can click on these icons, also known as shortcuts, right from the Dock.



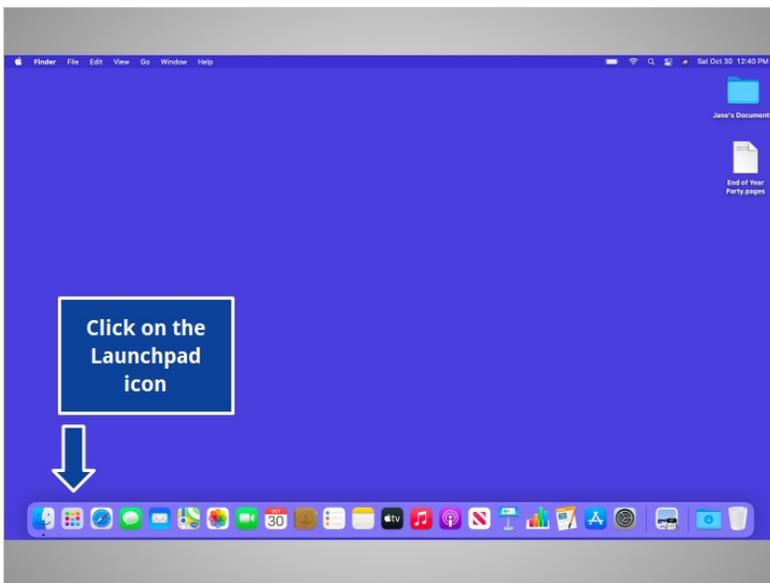
If Jane wanted to handwrite a letter, she would use her pen. Since she wants to create a letter on her computer, she will click on the icon for the writing application to open it. In today's example, Jane is selecting Pages to write the letter.



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 the applications available on the computer. If Jane clicks on the icon with rows of multicolored dots on it, it will open the Launchpad.



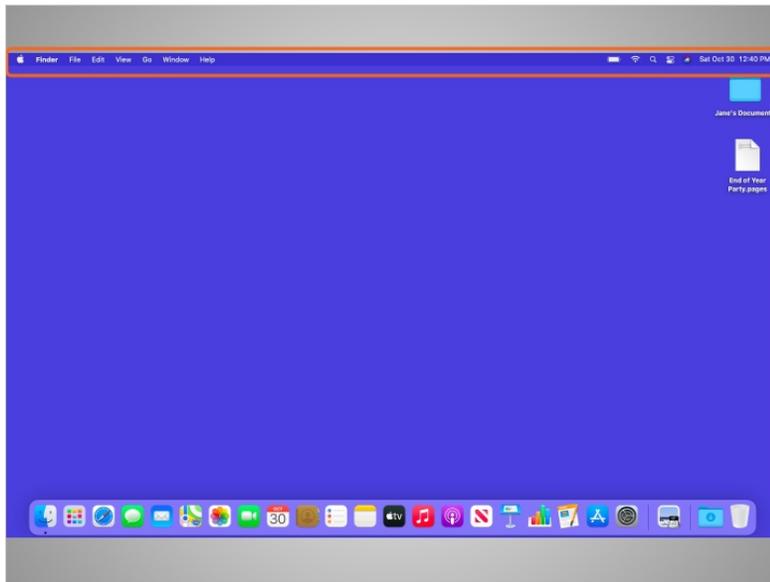
Would you help Jane and click the Launchpad icon to open the Launchpad menu?



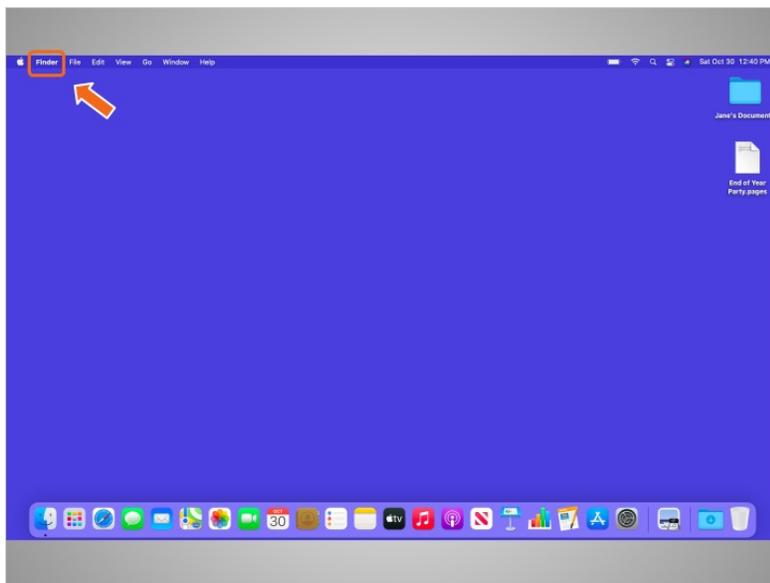
Good job! The Launchpad lists all applications available on Jane’s computer. To open an application from the Launchpad, Jane would click on the shortcut of the application she wants to open, just as she could in the Dock.



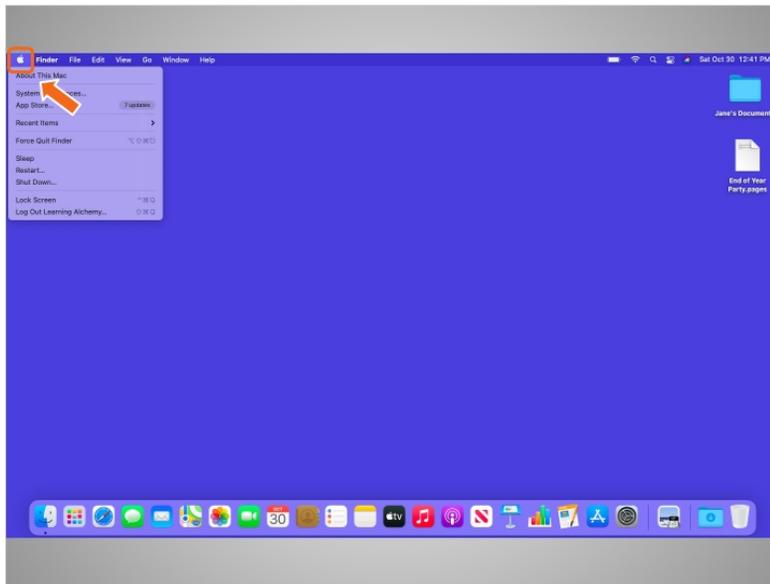
For example, if Jane wants to add a list of numbers, she would single click the Calculator shortcut and the calculator would open.



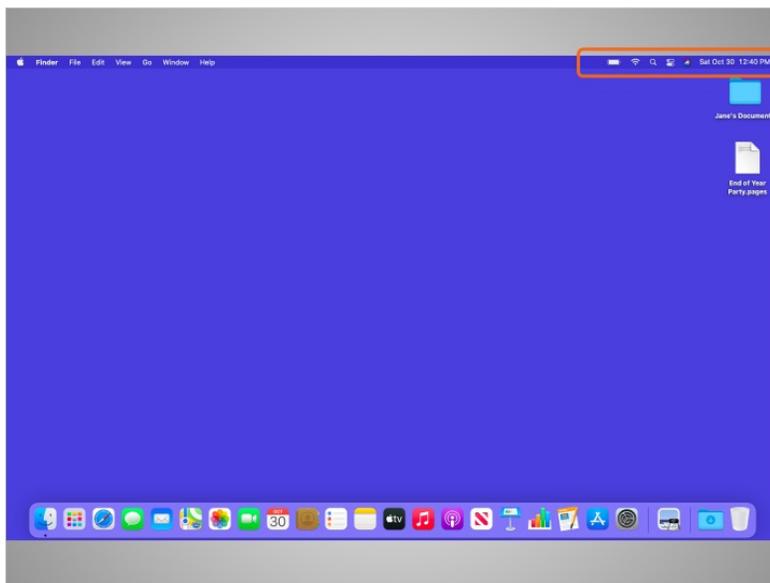
Above the desktop at the top of the screen is the menu bar, which includes different menu options depending on what program you are in.



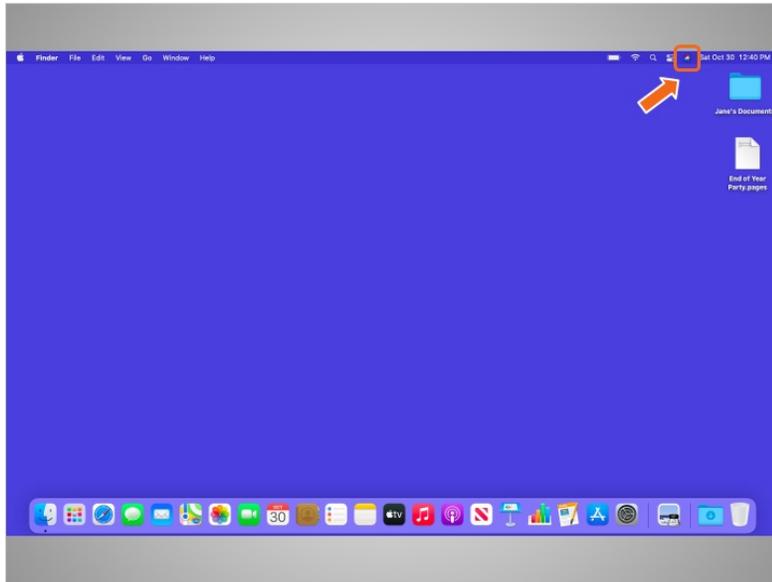
In this example, the active menu is the Finder menu.



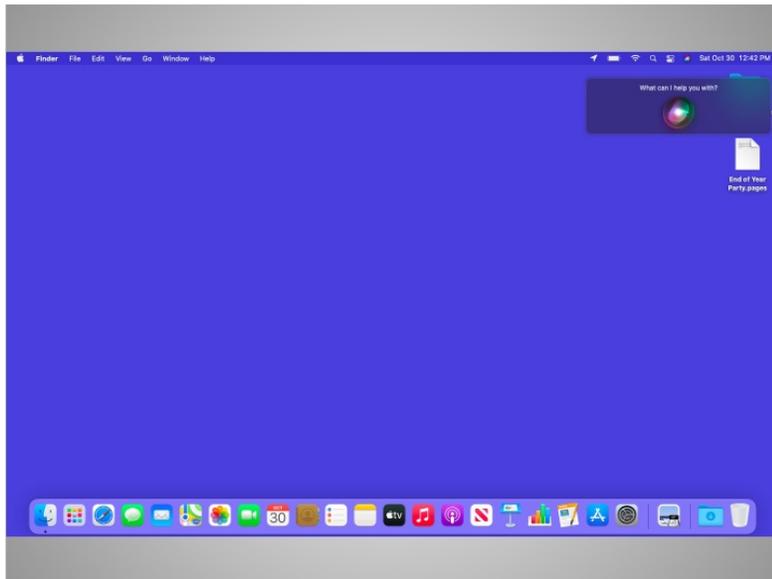
The Apple icon in the top left is where you can do things like shut down your computer and change the computer's settings.



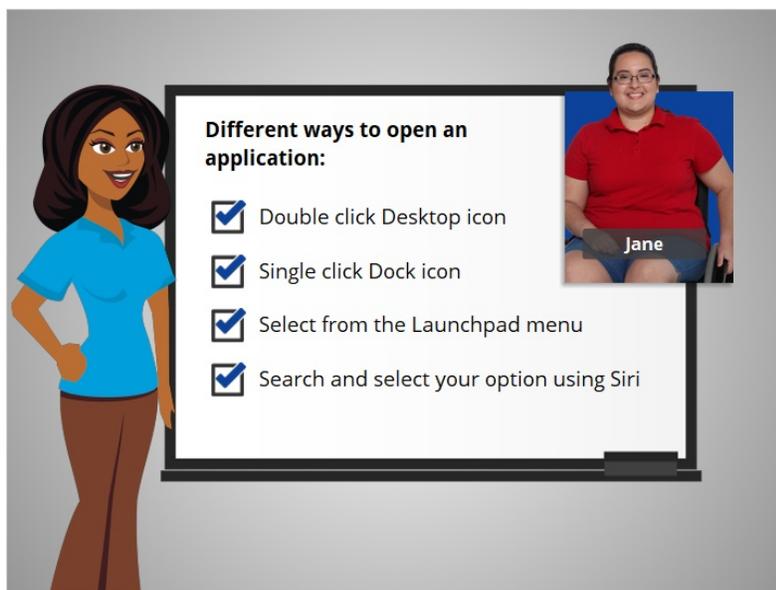
On the right side of the menu bar is a collection of icons that allow you to see the date and time, adjust volume, and more.



In today's example, when Jane clicks on this icon



it opens Siri, a virtual assistant in the Mac operating system. Siri responds to voice commands by using the computer speakers. Sometimes, using this tool can be the fastest way to find the program you'd like to open. To ask Siri for help, click on the icon and speak to Siri with your question or request, like "Siri, what is the weather in Chicago today?"



Jane is happy to learn that there is more than one way to open an application on the Mac computer. She can double click on a Desktop icon. She can single click on the Dock icon. She can select the application from the Launchpad menu. Or she can search and select the application using the Siri virtual assistant.

In this lesson we've seen how to open applications in the Mac operating system. In the next lesson Jane will learn how to find files and folders on the Mac computer.