JAWS Cheat Sheet: Download, Install, and Keystrokes

For web accessibility testing on Windows. Last checked November 2026.

Download

- **Official download page:** support.freedomscientific.com/Downloads/JAWS
- Always take the latest annual release. Vispero ships a new version each fall, with monthly updates in between.
- One installer covers both standard Windows (x64) and Windows on ARM. It detects ARM64 automatically, so the same download works in a Windows 11 ARM virtual machine on a Mac.
- Do not download JAWS from third-party software sites.

License and demo mode

- Without a license, JAWS runs in demo mode for 40 minutes. Restart Windows to start a new 40-minute session.
- Starting with JAWS 2026, users in the United States must create and sign in with a free Vispero account before JAWS will run. You can sign up with an email address or a Google account.
- Home licenses are for non-commercial use. Paid client testing needs a Professional license.

Install

1. Uninstall any older version of JAWS first. Keep NVDA installed as a backup screen reader during the switch.
2. Run the downloaded installer and accept the license agreement.
3. Restart Windows when the installer asks.
4. When JAWS starts, sign in to your Vispero account, or create one from the sign-in screen.
5. Work through the Startup Wizard. Set the keyboard layout here (see the next section).
6. Turn down the speech rate only as far as you need. A faster rate saves time once you are used to it.

The JAWS key

Most commands use the JAWS key, written as **INSERT** below.

- **Desktop layout:** INSERT is the JAWS key.
- **Laptop layout:** CAPS LOCK is the JAWS key. Use this on a Mac keyboard or in a Mac virtual machine, since Mac keyboards have no Insert key.
- To change it: Settings Center (INSERT+6), then Keyboard, then Keyboard Layout.
- To type a real Caps Lock on a laptop keyboard, press CAPS LOCK twice quickly.

Essential keystrokes

Action	Keystroke
Stop speech	CTRL
Read from here to the end (Say All)	INSERT+DOWN ARROW
Read current line	INSERT+UP ARROW
Read page title	INSERT+T
Say the focused element	INSERT+TAB
Open the JAWS window	INSERT+J
Open Settings Center	INSERT+6
Speech History (copy exactly what JAWS said)	INSERT+SPACEBAR, then H
Keyboard help (say what a key does)	INSERT+1, press keys, then INSERT+1 again
Quit JAWS	INSERT+F4

Web page navigation

On web pages, JAWS uses the Virtual Cursor. Single letters jump between elements. Add SHIFT to move backward.

Move to next	Key
Heading	H
Heading at level 1 through 6	1 to 6
Landmark or region	R
Main region	Q
Link (any)	TAB
Unvisited link	U
Visited link	V
Button	B
Form field	F
Edit field	E
Combo box	C
Checkbox	X

Move to next	Key
Radio button	A
Table	T
List	L
List item	I
Graphic	G

Element lists

List	Keystroke
Headings	INSERT+F6
Links	INSERT+F7
Form fields	INSERT+F5
Regions and landmarks	INSERT+CTRL+R
Buttons	INSERT+CTRL+B
Tables	INSERT+CTRL+T

Forms and tables

Action	Keystroke
Enter Forms Mode on a field	ENTER
Leave Forms Mode	ESC or NUMPAD PLUS
Turn the Virtual Cursor on or off	INSERT+Z
Move between table cells	CTRL+ALT+ARROW KEYS
Read current table row	WINDOWS+NUMPAD 5 or, in laptop layout, CAPS LOCK+SHIFT+UP ARROW

Testing tips

- Pair JAWS with Chrome or Edge. That is the most common combination among real JAWS users.
- Recent versions no longer start reading a page automatically when it loads. Press INSERT+DOWN ARROW to start Say All, or turn auto-read back on in Settings Center under Web/HTML/PDFs, Reading.
- Paste the Speech History output into findings as evidence of what JAWS actually announced.

- Write a short test script before each session so a 40-minute demo session is not spent deciding what to test.
- Record the JAWS version, browser and version, and Windows version with every finding.