

How to Create Your Own Digital Skills Check

Ready-to-use example

One example file gives you everything you need for both versions.

Paper version (Microsoft Word): open **Digital-Skills-Check-Paper.docx** in Word, change anything you like, and print.

Online version (Microsoft Forms): use the questions in **Digital-Skills-Check-Paper.docx** and follow **Option B** to build your form. It takes about 10 minutes.

Both versions ask the same questions, so learners get the same skills check on paper or online.

Before you start

A digital skills check is a short self-rating form. It shows what learners can already do with technology and what they want to learn. It is **not a test**. There are no scores, grades, or pass/fail results.

This handout shows two ways to build one:

- **Option A: Microsoft Word.** A printed form learners complete on paper. Best for learners with little device experience or no internet access.
- **Option B: Microsoft Forms.** An online form learners complete on a phone or computer. Responses are collected for you.

You can offer both. Always keep a paper or spoken option for learners who need it.

Use the same three answer choices for every skill:

I can do this

I can do this with help

I want to learn this

Choose 10 to 15 skills. Write each skill as a short "I can" sentence that matches your learners' goals. Examples:

- I can turn on a computer and log in.
- I can use a keyboard and mouse.
- I can connect my device to Wi-Fi.
- I can search for information online.
- I can fill out a form online.
- I can read and reply to an email.
- I can send an email with a photo or file.
- I can save a file and find it later.
- I can make a strong password.
- I can tell when a message or link looks unsafe.

Add one goals question: "What do you want to use technology for? Choose all that are important to you." Suggested choices: apply for a job, talk with my employer, talk with my child's school, take an online class, make a health appointment, use a patient portal, find transportation, housing, or services, talk with family and friends, and other.

Writing tips: keep sentences under 12 words, use everyday words, and put one skill in each sentence.



Option A: Create a paper skills check in Microsoft Word

Use the example file (fastest)

Open **Digital-Skills-Check-Paper.docx** in Word. Make any of these changes, then print.

Add your program name:

1. Select **[Your Program Name]** in the title, including the brackets.
2. Type your program's name.

Change a skill:

1. Select the skill sentence in the table.
2. Type the new sentence. The checkboxes stay in place.

Add a skill:

1. Click in the last row of the table.
2. Go to **Layout** and click **Insert Below**.
3. Type the new skill in the first cell of the new row.
4. Select the three checkboxes in the row above, copy them (**Ctrl+C**), click the first empty answer cell in the new row, and paste (**Ctrl+V**).

Remove a skill:

1. Click anywhere in that row.
2. Go to **Layout > Delete > Delete Rows**.

Change a goal on page 2: select the goal's words and type new ones. To remove a goal, click its row and use **Layout > Delete > Delete Rows**.

The banner and icons are optional. To remove one, click it and press **Delete**.

Or build your own from scratch

Your version will look plainer than the example, without the banner and icons. That's fine. The steps below cover everything learners need: a title, directions, a skills table with checkboxes, and a goals question.

Step 1: Start a new document

1. Open Microsoft Word.
2. Click **Blank document**.
3. Go to **Layout > Orientation** and choose **Portrait**.
4. On the **Home** tab, set the font size to **14** or larger.

Step 2: Add a title and directions

1. Type a title, such as **[Your Program Name] Digital Skills Check**.
2. Select the title and click **Heading 1** on the **Home** tab.
3. Below the title, type: This is not a test. There are no grades. Tell us what you can do with technology and what you want to learn. Your answers help us plan classes for you. Read each sentence. Check one box.
4. Optional: add a line for the date. Leave out a name line unless your program needs names.

Step 3: Insert the skills table

1. Click **Insert > Table**.
2. Choose **4 columns** and 1 more row than your number of skills (for example, 11 rows for 10 skills).
3. In the top row, type: **Skill**, **I can do this**, **I can do this with help**, **I want to learn this**.
4. Select the top row. On **Table Design**, add light shading.
5. With the top row selected, go to **Layout** and click **Repeat Header Rows**.
6. Drag the right border of the first column to make it wider.

Step 4: Type the skills

1. Click the first empty cell in the **Skill** column.
2. Type one skill sentence.
3. Press the **Down arrow** key to move to the next row. Repeat for each skill.

Step 5: Add checkboxes

Printed boxes (simplest):

1. Click inside the first answer cell.
2. Go to **Insert > Symbol > More Symbols**.
3. Set the font to **Wingdings** and select the empty box (character code 168).
4. Click **Insert**, then **Close**.
5. Copy the box (**Ctrl+C**). Select the other answer cells and paste (**Ctrl+V**).
6. Select the answer columns and click **Center** on the **Home** tab.

Clickable boxes (if learners will fill it out on a computer):

1. Turn on the **Developer** tab: **File > Options > Customize Ribbon**, check **Developer**, click **OK**.
2. Click inside an answer cell.
3. On the **Developer** tab, click **Check Box Content Control**.
4. Copy and paste it into the other answer cells.

Step 6: Add the goals question

1. Click below the table and press **Enter** twice.
2. Type: **What do you want to use technology for? Check all that are important to you.**
3. Type each goal on its own line, starting each line with an empty box.
4. End with: **Other: _____**

Step 7: Check and print

1. Go to **File > Print** and look at the preview.
2. If a row splits across pages, select the table, go to **Layout > Properties > Row**, and uncheck **Allow row to break across pages**.
3. Print one copy. Fill it out yourself, or ask a colleague to try it.
4. Go to **File > Save As** and give the file a clear name, such as Digital Skills Check - Paper.

Option B: Create an online skills check in Microsoft Forms

Copy the skill sentences and goals from **Digital-Skills-Check-Paper.docx** as you go, or use your own.

You will build a form with one Choice question per skill. Microsoft Forms collects the answers and makes summary charts for you.

Step 1: Start a new form

1. Go to **forms.office.com** and sign in.
2. Click **New Form**. Do not choose New Quiz. A quiz adds scoring, which you do not want.

Step 2: Add a title and directions

1. Click **Untitled form** and type your title.
2. Click below the title and add: This is not a test. There are no grades. Tell us what you can do with technology and what you want to learn. Your answers help us plan classes for you.

Step 3: Add the first skill question

1. Click **Add new**, then **Choice**.
2. Type one skill sentence in the question box.

3. Type the three answer choices: **I can do this**, **I can do this with help**, **I want to learn this**.
4. Make sure **Multiple answers** is off and **Required** is off.

Step 4: Add the rest of the skills (shortcut)

1. Point to the question and click the **Copy question** icon.
2. Change only the skill sentence. The answer choices are copied for you.
3. Repeat until every skill is added.

Step 5: Add the goals question

1. Click **Add new**, then **Choice**.
2. Type: **What do you want to use technology for? Choose all that are important to you.**
3. Add each goal as a choice. Click **Add "Other" option** for the last one.
4. Turn **Multiple answers** on.

Step 6: Check the settings

1. Click the **...** (More form settings) menu, then **Settings**.
2. Choose who can respond. For most programs, choose **Anyone can respond** so learners do not need to sign in.
3. Do not collect names or email addresses unless your program needs them.
4. Leave **One response per person** off unless learners must sign in.

Step 7: Preview and test

1. Click **Preview**.
2. Check both **Computer** and **Mobile** views. Most learners will use a phone.
3. Submit a test response. Delete it later from the **Responses** tab.

Step 8: Share with learners

1. Click **Collect responses**.
2. Click **Copy link** to paste it into an email, text, or class website.
3. Or click the **QR code** icon and **Download** it. Print it on a flyer or show it on a screen. Learners scan it with a phone camera.
4. Test the link or QR code on a phone before sharing it.



Using the results

Look for skills where many learners chose "with help" or "want to learn." Teach or support those first.

Paper forms: make a tally sheet with the same table. Add a tally mark in the matching column for each answer. Count the goals the same way.

Microsoft Forms:

1. Open your form and click the **Responses** tab to see summary charts.
2. Click **View results** to see one learner's answers at a time.
3. Click **Open results in Excel** to sort and filter all the answers.

Reminders:

- Do not use results to score, rank, or label learners.
- Do not use results to decide who can join a class.
- Use each learner's answers to start a conversation. "With help" might mean they can do it on a phone but not a computer, or they need practice.
- Keep learner answers private and store them safely.

The goal is not to measure learners. The goal is to listen to them and choose the next useful step.