

Mac & Chromebook | Advanced | 2 min read

Chromebook: how to Powerwash (reset) safely

A Powerwash is a factory reset for a Chromebook. It wipes the local data and returns the device to how it was when new. It can fix serious problems but should be a last resort.

Warning: this erases data

A Powerwash removes all local files, such as everything in **Downloads**, along with settings, accounts and some app data on the Chromebook. Files stored in Google Drive or in your Google account stay safe online, but only if they have synced.

Before you start

1. Open the **Files** app and copy anything you want to keep from **Downloads** to **Google Drive** or an external USB drive or SD card.
2. Check that your files appear in Google Drive on another device.
3. Write down any Wi-Fi password you need.
4. Make sure you know your Google account password. You will need it to set the Chromebook up again.
5. Plug in the charger.

Check ownership first

If the Chromebook belongs to a school or workplace, do not Powerwash it. Doing so can remove it from their system and you may be unable to use it. Ask their IT team instead.

How to Powerwash

1. Sign out of your Chromebook.
2. Press **Ctrl, Alt, Shift and R** together at the sign-in screen.
3. Choose **Restart**, then choose **Powerwash**, and then **Continue**.
4. Follow the on-screen steps and sign in with your Google account.

You can also open **Settings**, then **System preferences**, then **Reset settings** (it may be listed as **Advanced** on some versions) and choose **Powerwash**. The exact wording varies by version, so use the sign-in screen method if you cannot find it.

After the reset

Sign in with your Google account. Your apps, extensions and settings usually come back from your account, though large files will need to be copied back.

Try gentler fixes first

Restart, update, remove extensions, free space and try a different Google account before resetting.

When to get more help

Contact us before resetting if you are unsure what is saved where, if the Chromebook is managed, or if you have no way to back up your files. We can help you back up and reset.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.