

Windows laptops & PCs | Easy | 2 min read

# Keyboard keys not working or typing the wrong characters

If pressing a key gives you the wrong symbol, or some keys do nothing, the cause is often a setting rather than a broken keyboard.

## Quick fixes to try first

- Restart the laptop.
- Check that **Caps Lock** and **Num Lock** lights are what you expect.
- Gently turn the laptop over and tap it to dislodge crumbs, or use a soft brush on the keys.
- If you can, test with a USB or wireless keyboard to see whether the problem is the laptop or the keyboard itself.

## Step by step

If the quote mark and the at sign are swapped, or the pound sign gives a hash, Windows is probably using the wrong keyboard layout.

1. Hold the Windows key and press the spacebar. A small menu pops up. If it shows **ENG US**, press the spacebar again with the Windows key held to switch to **ENG UK**.
2. For a lasting fix, open **Settings**, then **Time & language**, then **Language & region** (Windows 11) or **Language** (Windows 10).
3. Make sure **English (United Kingdom)** is your language, and remove any keyboard layouts you do not use.
4. If many keys seem to type numbers instead of letters, try pressing **Fn** with **Num Lock**, as some laptops have a number pad overlaid on the letters.
5. If keys seem to stick or repeat, open **Settings**, then **Accessibility**, then **Keyboard**, and check that **Sticky keys** and **Filter keys** are off.

## If that did not work

- Install updates from **Windows Update** and restart.
- Make sure the keyboard is not damaged by liquid. If it has been spilt on, switch it off at once.

## When to get more help

Stop and email us if only some keys are dead, there has been a spill, the keys are physically stuck, or the problem comes back after changing the settings. Do not prise the keys off yourself. Tell us the make and model and exactly which keys misbehave.

**Still stuck?** Email [admin@visiontech336.com](mailto: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.