

THE CLIPBOARD IN WINDOWS 11

The Windows Clipboard allows you to share the information stored in one application with another application using well-understood copy, cut, and paste operations. It has evolved over the years to include rich text formats including those supported by Microsoft Office applications and multiple graphics formats. And the Windows user interface uses the Clipboard to copy or move files and folders between different file system locations.

The Clipboard can only hold a single item by default and it exists solely in RAM, so it will not survive a reboot. That item is stored in multiple formats when necessary, however, for maximum compatibility. For example, if you copy or cut formatted text from a Microsoft Word document, that item is stored in the Clipboard in multiple formats so that it can retain its formatting or be pasted as plain text, depending on the destination application.

Windows 11 provides the most advanced version of Clipboard yet. In addition to supporting all of the functionality you remember from previous Windows versions, you can also use a *Clipboard history* feature to store multiple items in the Clipboard at once, sync Clipboard text between multiple PCs, and get suggestions for supported actions when you copy a date, time, or phone number to the Clipboard.

These additional Clipboard features require you to sign into Windows with a Microsoft account.

Paste multiple items to the Clipboard with Clipboard history

To help overcome the Clipboard's most obvious limitation—it can hold only a single item at a time—Windows now lets you enable a Clipboard history feature that lets you save multiple items to the Clipboard. Then, you can use a new keyboard shortcut, WINKEY + V, to determine which item to use when you paste information into another application.

Enable Clipboard history

To enable Clipboard history:

1. Open Settings (WINKEY + I)
2. navigate to System
3. Then Clipboard.
4. Then, enable the setting “Clipboard history.”

Alternatively, you can simply press WINKEY + V. The Clipboard history window will appear, and you can click a “Turn on” button to enable this feature.

Now, when you copy something to the Clipboard, it will be added to the Clipboard and will not replace whatever was in the Clipboard previously.

That said, Clipboard history does have a few limitations:

- It can support up to 25 items
- Those items can be text, HTML, and bitmap graphics only
- Each item must be 25 MB or smaller

The Clipboard will still work normally with items that do not meet those criteria. But unsupported items will not appear in Clipboard history.

Using Clipboard history

With Clipboard history enabled, normal paste operations—perhaps by typing CTRL + V—will work as before: you will paste the last item that was added to the Clipboard.

But if you paste using the new WINKEY + V keyboard shortcut, the Clipboard history window will appear so that you can choose which item to paste.

Using this pop-up window, you can select from the items that are available in the Clipboard.

Because the Clipboard works differently with different types of items and with different apps (each of which has its own capabilities), what you see here—and what you can paste—may vary. For example, if you copy an image from Microsoft Paint to the Clipboard and then try to paste it to Notepad, a plain text editor, you will see that the graphic appears in Clipboard history.

But if you select this item to paste, nothing happens because Notepad cannot accept a paste operation involving anything other than text. However, you can paste this item into a Microsoft Word document.

Do more with Clipboard history

In addition to basic copy and paste operations, Clipboard history supports some other useful features. These include: Pin item. If you find yourself pasting one of the items in Clipboard history repeatedly, you can “pin” it so that it remains in Clipboard history, won’t be overwritten, and will even survive reboots. To do so, find the item you wish to pin and then click its “Pin item” icon (it resembles a pushpin).

Yes, you can pin multiple items to Clipboard history.

And, yes, when you pin an item in Clipboard history, it becomes persistent, meaning that it will always be available, even after you reboot the PC.

Paste item as text. The Clipboard supports multiple text styles, including rich text like that created by Microsoft Word. If you want to ensure that text stored in Clipboard history is pasted as plain text, select its “See more” link (“...”) and then the “Paste as text” icon that appears. (This resembles a physical clipboard.)

To remove an item from Clipboard history, select its “See more” link (“...”) and then the “Delete” icon that appears. (This resembles a trashcan.)

Delete all items. To remove all of the items from Clipboard history, select the Clear all button.