

External Monitor Setup Checklist

Get a monitor working through a hub or dock the first time, on Mac or Windows.

Before you buy

1. Does your laptop's USB-C port output video? Look for a Thunderbolt bolt or DisplayPort "D" symbol, or check the spec page.
2. **Mac display limits:** base M1/M2 MacBooks drive one external display. Newer base-chip MacBook Airs can drive two (on some models only with the lid closed). Pro/Max chips drive two or more.
3. Two monitors from one hub on a Mac? Standard hubs use MST, which macOS can't extend. You'll get mirrored screens. You need a Thunderbolt dock with two video outputs or a DisplayLink dock plus its driver.
4. For 4K, make sure the hub says **4K@60Hz**. 4K@30Hz feels choppy for desk work.

Setting up

1. Use the cable that came with the hub/dock, or a 5Gbps+ USB-C cable (charging-only cables carry no video).
2. For 4K60 over HDMI, use a "Premium High Speed" (HDMI 2.0) or better HDMI cable.
3. Plug the laptop charger into the hub's PD input *before* connecting the laptop.
4. Mac: System Settings → Displays → choose "Extend" or "Mirror". Windows: press Win + P.
5. Set the refresh rate: Mac Displays → Refresh Rate; Windows Settings → Display → Advanced display.

If it doesn't work

1. Try the laptop's other USB-C port (not all ports carry video).
2. Swap the HDMI cable, then the monitor input (HDMI 1 vs 2).
3. Update the laptop OS, and the dock firmware if the maker publishes it.
4. DisplayLink docks need the DisplayLink Manager app from Synaptics; standard hubs need no driver.