

# Use the Chat Feature Effectively

## Microsoft Teams Chat: Complete How-To Guide

Microsoft Teams chat is an essential feature for private conversations that don't need to happen in public team channels. This guide covers everything you need to know about using Teams chat effectively.

### Getting Started with Chat

To access chat in Microsoft Teams:

1. Navigate to the left-hand navigation rail
2. Select **Chat** from the navigation options
3. You'll see a list of all your previous chats, including those from team meetings

### Creating a New Chat

#### Starting a One-on-One Chat

1. Go to the top of the navigation pane
2. Select the **New Chat** option
3. In the "To" field that appears, start typing the name of the person you want to chat with
4. Navigate to the bottom of the screen to start typing your message
5. Remember: anything you type here will be private between you and the recipient(s)

### Using the Message Toolbar

The toolbar beneath the message window provides several options:

- **Formatting options** for text styling
- **Attach files** to share documents or links
- **Emojis** for expressive communication
- **Create forms** for collecting information

When you attach files, they appear both in the chat and in the **Files tab** at the top of the content section.

## Managing Your Chats

### Chat Organization

- Recent chats automatically filter to the top of the navigation pane
- As you accumulate more conversations, the most recent ones stay visible

### Pinning Important Chats

To keep a specific chat at the top of your list:

1. Select the chat you want to pin
2. Click the three dots menu
- 3. Select Pin**
4. The pinned chat will remain at the top until you unpin it

### Pop-Out Chat Feature

Available only in the desktop app (not the web version):

1. Open the chat you want to pop out
2. Use the pop-out chat feature to create a separate window
3. Move and resize the window as needed
4. This allows you to continue chatting while working on other tasks in Teams

## Group Chats

### Creating a Group Chat

- 1. Select New Chat**
2. Type multiple names in the "To" field
3. This creates a group conversation with all selected participants

### Customizing Group Chat Names

Instead of using the default naming (all participants' names):

1. Click the dropdown arrow on the right side of the screen
2. Select the option to rename the chat
3. Choose a descriptive name that makes the chat easier to identify

## Managing Group Chat Participants

Use the **View and Add Participants** button to:

- **Add new people** to the chat
- **Leave the chat** if you no longer need to participate
- **Remove other members** from the chat (if you have permissions)

### Adding Participants

1. Click **View and Add Participants**
2. In the dialog box, type the name or email address of the person to add
3. Choose how much chat history to include:
  - a. **Don't include chat history** (default)
  - b. **Include chat history for a certain number of days**
  - c. **Include all chat history**
4. Click **Add** to confirm

The new participant will receive a confirmation message about their chat history access level.

## Special Chat Features

### Chat with Yourself

A recent addition allows you to create a private chat with yourself:

- Only you can see this chat
- Useful for collecting links and important information
- Helpful when switching between work and personal computers
- Acts as a personal notepad within Teams

### Best Practices

- Use descriptive names for group chats to make them easier to find
- Pin frequently used chats to keep them accessible
- Consider chat history inclusion carefully when adding new participants
- Use the pop-out feature (desktop only) for multitasking

- Leverage the "chat with yourself" feature for personal organization

### Key Differences: Desktop vs. Web App

- **Pop-out chat feature:** Available only in desktop app
- **Full functionality:** Desktop app provides complete chat experience
- **Web limitations:** Some features may be restricted in the web version

Teams chat is a powerful tool for private communication and collaboration. Master these features to improve your productivity and communication effectiveness within your organization.