ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

PuTTY

The Insider's Guide

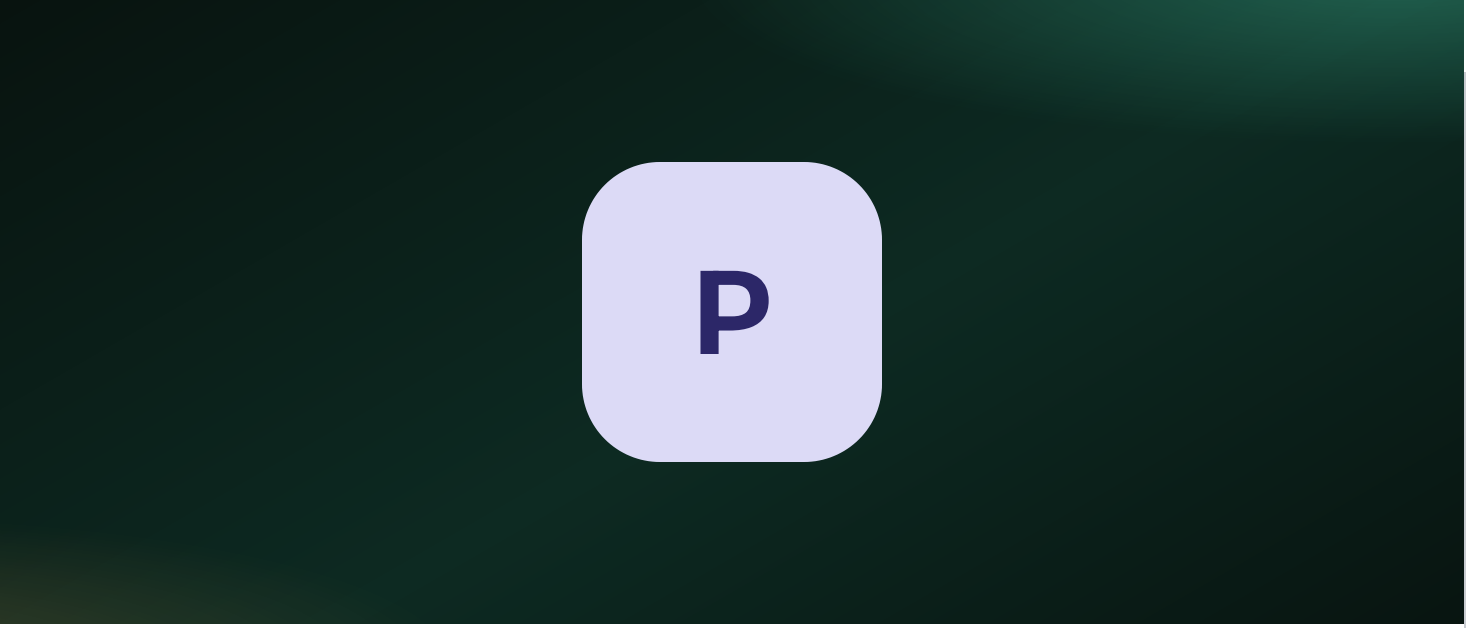
Free SSH and Telnet client for Windows with file-copy utilities



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among remote desktop apps, read from PuTTY's own pages.

Made by Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

3.0
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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from PuTTY's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on PuTTY's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

3.0

GPA, above 75 of the 85 other remote desktop apps we grade

PuTTY is a free implementation of SSH and Telnet for Windows and Unix platforms, with an xterm terminal emulator. It is written and maintained primarily by Simon Tatham. The download bundle also carries command-line SCP and SFTP clients, a key generator and an SSH authentication agent.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about PuTTY**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> "
>
> **It stays small and costs nothing, but it is a plain window with no tabs or session extras, and Unix users only get source code to build.**
>
> From our report card of PuTTY

1 **Best for a bare-bones SSH client on Windows**

PuTTY is a free SSH and Telnet client for Windows with file-copy, key and command-line tools in the same download.

2 **It is free**

PuTTY has no paid plan at all.

3 **It runs on 2 platforms**

Windows and Linux.

4 **SSH and Telnet client**

putty.exe is the SSH and Telnet client itself; a separate puttytel.exe is a Telnet-only build with no encryption-law caveat.

5 **File transfer tools**

pscp.exe is a command-line secure file copy and psftp.exe is an SFTP client for general file transfer sessions.

6 **Key tools**

puttygen.exe generates RSA and DSA keys, and pageant.exe is an SSH authentication agent for the other tools.

7 **A 3.0 GPA, above 75 of 85**

That is against the other remote desktop apps we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

PuTTY is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

PuTTY at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN It is free
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Windows, Linux
MADE BY Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team	CATEGORY Remote Desktop
OUR GRADE 3.0 GPA, very good	

The report card

Best for a bare-bones SSH client on Windows

PuTTY is a free SSH and Telnet client for Windows with file-copy, key and command-line tools in the same download. It stays small and costs nothing,

but it is a plain window with no tabs or session extras, and Unix users only get source code to build.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	PuTTY	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	Free to download and run, with no account and no paid tier at all. That puts it under the $1.67 a month line that marks the very cheapest remote-access tools.
Free plan and trial	A	Everything is free outright: the SSH client, pscp, psftp, plink, puttygen and pageant, with nothing held back for a paid plan.
Features	C	It does the SSH and Telnet job fully, plus file copy and key tools, but it is a smaller job than a full session manager: the listing shows no tabs, no saved-session extras and no RDP.
Ease of use	B	No store rating on record, but it is a program you download and start using; you type a host name and connect, though the key tools and command-line pieces take some reading.
Platforms and integrations	C	Windows and Linux only, and the listing says Linux users get a source archive to build, not binaries. A program for computers alone, with no phone or web version.
Grade point average		Very good, out of 4.0 **3.0**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who PuTTY is for

- ✓ Fits if you want a free, small SSH client on Windows and need nothing else
- ✓ Works for scripts that call plink or pscp from the command line

Who it is not for

- ✗ Not for you if you want tabs or a saved-session manager, because it is one window per connection
- ✗ Skip it if you are on a Mac or on Linux and want a ready-made app, as Unix gets a source archive only
- ✗ Watch out: the vendor says using the SSH tools is illegal in countries that outlaw encryption
- ✗ Watch out: putty.org is not the project's site; the real one is the chiark.greenend.org.uk page

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Windows users who want a small, free SSH client with no account
- ✓ Scripts that need a command-line SSH or file-copy tool
- ✓ Admins who already hold PuTTY-format keys and sessions

Worth knowing

- ⓘ Unix users get a source archive to build themselves; the download page lists no Unix binaries.
- ⓘ The vendor warns that using the SSH tools is illegal in countries where encryption is outlawed.
- ⓘ The official site is the chiark.greenend.org.uk page; putty.org is an unaffiliated page that says it is not endorsed by the project.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

PuTTY is free to use.

> **Free to download and run, with no account and no paid tier at all.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

PUTTY

$0

Free download of the full PuTTY suite; the Microsoft Store copy is also free of charge.

Read from chiark.greenend.org.uk on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

2

Places it runs: Windows and Linux

Free SSH and Telnet client for Windows with file-copy utilities. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: file sharing, remote desktop.

> **Windows and Linux only, and the listing says Linux users get a source archive to build, not binaries.**
>
> From our grade for platforms and integrations

SSH and Telnet client

putty.exe is the SSH and Telnet client itself; a separate puttytel.exe is a Telnet-only build with no encryption-law caveat.

File transfer tools

pscp.exe is a command-line secure file copy and psftp.exe is an SFTP client for general file transfer sessions.

Key tools

puttygen.exe generates RSA and DSA keys, and pageant.exe is an SSH authentication agent for the other tools.

Command-line back end

plink.exe offers a command-line interface to the PuTTY back ends, for scripts and other programs.

Installers and standalone binaries

MSI installers cover 64-bit x86, 64-bit Arm and 32-bit x86, or each tool can be downloaded as a single exe.

Where it runs

Windows Linux

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

PuTTY is made by Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

75/85

Other remote desktop apps it is graded above

PuTTY's GPA of 3.0 is higher than 75 of the 85 other remote desktop apps we grade, and level with 3.

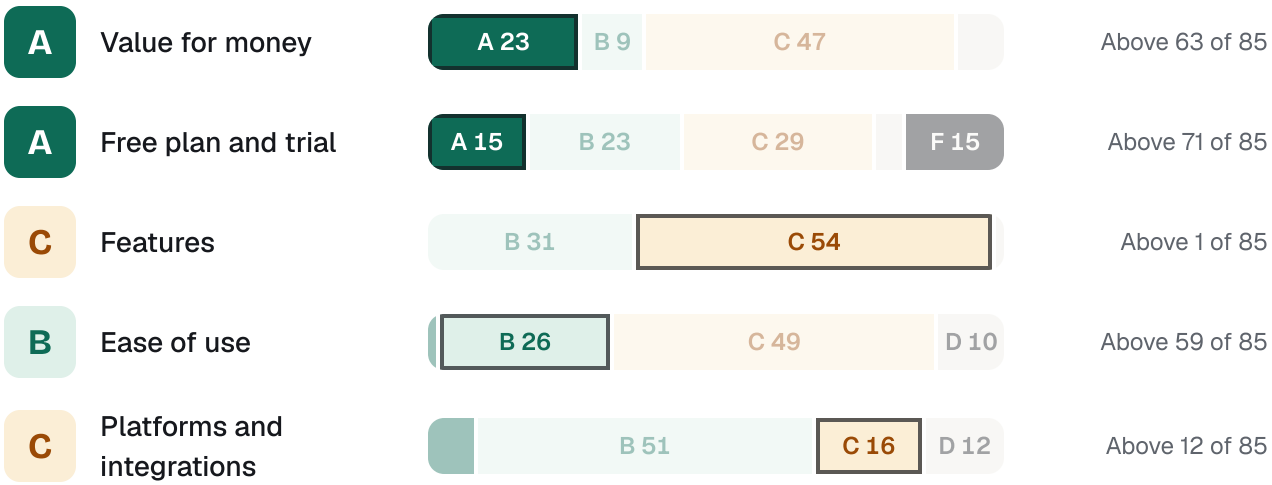
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 71 of 85) and worst on features (C, above 1).

PuTTY has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.3 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

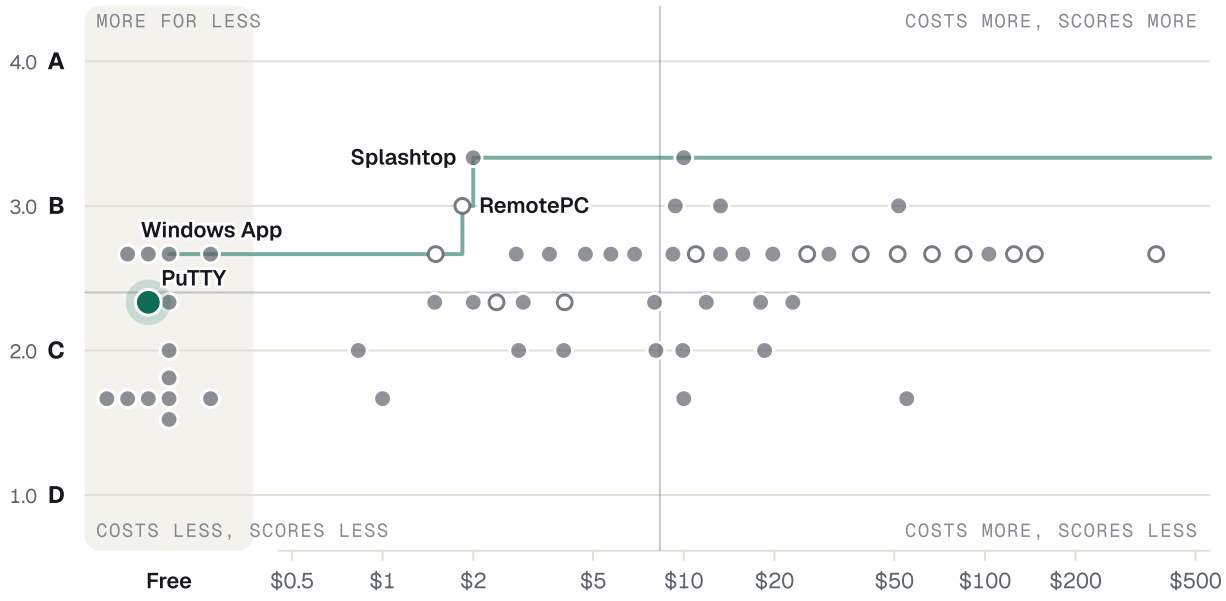
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 86 remote desktop apps we grade, cut by the letter each got. PuTTY's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 59 remote desktop apps. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. PuTTY is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

PuTTY is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 3.0 is higher than 75 of the 85 other remote desktop apps we grade.

What you could not

- ✕ A fast, secure link to another computer through any network.
- ✕ Storing and serving files for other people.
- ✕ A real app for Windows and Linux. Something home-made would be a web page.

What this rests on. PuTTY's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



MobaXterm, SecureCRT, Xshell, Termius and Tabby

The 5 tools PuTTY is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

MobaXterm

2.8 GPA

Free plan · from $69 one-time

Tabbed SSH client and X server for Windows in one portable app.

- Only PuTTY lists a Linux app.

PuTTY and MobaXterm compared in full

SecureCRT

2.6 GPA

Free trial · from $119/yr

SSH, Telnet and serial terminal for Windows, macOS and Linux.

- PuTTY has a free plan. SecureCRT does not, though it has a free trial.
- Only SecureCRT lists macOS and iOS apps.
- SecureCRT can be bought with a one-time purchase.

PuTTY and SecureCRT compared in full



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Xshell

Free plan · from $119/yr

SSH terminal for Windows with session, tab and file managers.

- Only PuTTY lists a Linux app.
- Xshell can be bought with a one-time purchase.
- PuTTY also covers file sharing.

PuTTY and Xshell compared in full



2.6
GPA

Termius

Free plan · from $10/mo

SSH and SFTP client for desktop and mobile with a synced vault.

- Only Termius lists macOS, iOS and Android apps.
- PuTTY also covers file sharing and remote desktop.

PuTTY and Termius compared in full



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Tabby

Free

Configurable terminal with built-in SSH, Telnet and serial clients.

- Only Tabby lists a web app.
- Only Tabby lists a macOS app.
- Tabby is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.

PuTTY and Tabby compared in full

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

11

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is PuTTY free?

Yes. PuTTY is free to use.

How much does PuTTY cost?

PuTTY lists one plan. PuTTY: $0.

What platforms does PuTTY work on?

PuTTY is available on Windows and Linux.

Does PuTTY have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. PuTTY is listed for Windows and Linux.

Does PuTTY have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. PuTTY is listed for Windows and Linux.

Is PuTTY open source?

PuTTY is not described as open source on its own site, as read on Nov 13, 2026.

Who makes PuTTY?

PuTTY is made by Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team.

What are the alternatives to PuTTY?

The closest alternatives to PuTTY in our directory are MobaXterm, SecureCRT, Xshell, Termius and Tabby.

How does PuTTY compare with other remote desktop apps?

PuTTY's GPA of 3.0 is higher than 75 of the 85 other remote desktop apps we grade, and level with 3.

Is PuTTY good value for money?

ToolGPA grades PuTTY A for value for money. PuTTY has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of PuTTY?

PuTTY is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from PuTTY's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Simon Tatham's own page own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team. Prices change, so check chiark.greenend.org.uk before you buy.

chiark.greenend.org.uk/~sgtatham/putty/ chiark.greenend.org.uk/~sgtatham/putty/latest.ht…
putty.org

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at toolgpa.com.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

PuTTY, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/putty

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "PuTTY: The Insider's Guide", checked
Nov 13, 2026. https://toolgpa.com/tools/putty
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ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded remote desktop apps after PuTTY, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Remote Desktop Insider's Guide

Every one of the 86 remote desktop apps we grade, compared

Chrome Remote Desktop Insider's Guide

Google's free remote access to your own computers from a browser

3.2 GPA

DWService Insider's Guide

Free browser-based remote access to computers via an agent

3.2 GPA

HopToDesk Insider's Guide

Free open-source remote desktop with a paid device dashboard

3.2 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what PuTTY's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. PuTTY is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Simon Tatham and the PuTTY team. Prices and plans change: check chiark.greenend.org.uk before you buy.