

What is 3G?

 [Print this guide](#)

While using your mobile phone or [smartphone](#), you may have noticed '3G' in the top of your screen, or been informed that you cannot perform a particular function over 3G.

3G or 3rd generation mobile telecommunications is a generation of standards for mobile phones and mobile telecommunication services.




Largely made popular by devices such as Apple's [iPhone](#), 3G revolutionised the way mobile phones connect to the internet by allowing a constant connection that no longer requires dialing up to perform tasks like checking your email or surfing the web.

Laptop users can also buy 'dongles', which plug into their computers to allow them to access the internet via 3G.

As a result, the burden on 3G mobile networks has been growing, meaning that some applications and web services only allow you to use them over a [wireless](#) internet connection to reduce the load on the network.

4G, the next step in mobile data services, was introduced in 2012 and now covers much of the UK. 4G can deliver speeds of up to 50 megabits per second (Mbps), considerably faster than 3G's average of 1.5Mbps.

Next steps

-  [Best ... smartphones for older users](#)
-  [What is a tablet computer?](#)
-  [How to connect to the internet](#)

Want to help people learn Digital Skills?

[Find out about Digital Champions](#)