

The Gemini app for Windows

Installing it, opening it with Alt+Space and understanding when it beats the website



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Contents

How to use this handout	3
1. An app or a website?	3
2. Installing it safely	4
3. The first tour: it is the same Gemini.....	4
4. Alt+Space: Gemini at the touch of a key.....	6
4.1 When it is handy	7
5. A conversation in the app	7
6. Web or app? The practical choice	8
Hands-on exercise	9
Questions that come up in class.....	10
Glossary.....	10
Further reading	11

How to use this handout

This handout gathers, in written and ordered form, everything covered in the lesson. You do not need to memorise it: it is there so you can find things again calmly, later, when the lesson is over and a question is left hanging.

GOAL

Download and open the Gemini app for Windows, use the Alt+Space shortcut, recognise the differences from the web and choose when to use one or the other.

What you will be able to do

- Download the app only from the official page and sign in with your account.
- Open Gemini over any program with Alt+Space.
- Recognise that chats, settings and features are the same as on the web.
- Choose sensibly between app and website.

1. An app or a website?

The website is like going to the bank: you open the browser, look for the address, go in. The app is the bank round the corner, always open.

Until yesterday, to use Gemini on your computer you had to open the browser and go to gemini.google.com. Since **10 September 2026** Google has made a **Windows app** available worldwide, for Windows 10 and 11. The advantage is convenience: an icon on the taskbar, a window of its own and, above all, a **keyboard shortcut** that opens it in an instant, wherever you are.

IN PLAIN WORDS

It is not another Gemini. It is the same one, with a more comfortable front door.

Important note: **the app was already installed on the PC I use for this course**, so I describe the installation part from Google's official page and not from a test of mine. Everything else I saw with my own eyes.

2. Installing it safely

The app is downloaded from the official page **gemini.google/desktop**. It is the only place to get it.

1. Open the page **gemini.google/desktop** by typing the address yourself in the browser, without clicking links received by email or found in ads.
2. Download the installer and run it. Windows may ask for confirmation: check that the publisher is Google.
3. At first launch sign in with your Google account, the same one you use on the web.
4. If you like, pin the icon to the taskbar: right-click the icon, then **Pin to taskbar**.

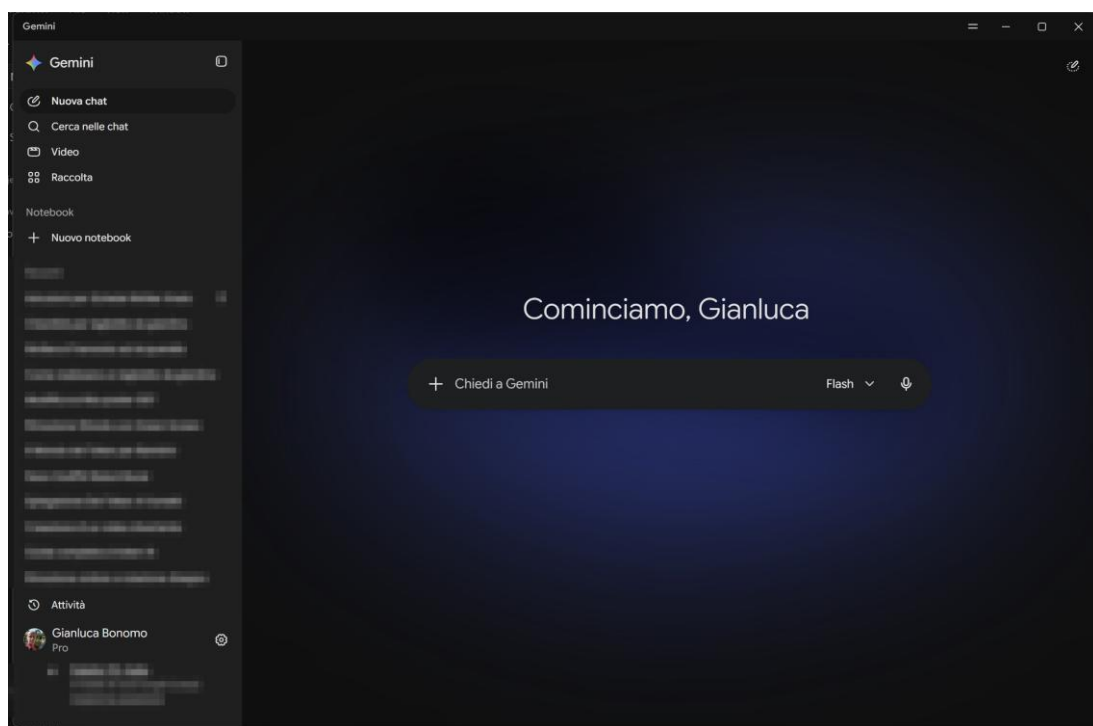
BEWARE OF FAKES

When a program becomes famous, sites appear that imitate it and distribute fake versions, sometimes with viruses. If a site asks you to download «Gemini» and it is **not** google.com or gemini.google, download nothing. If in doubt, type the address yourself.

The program works with Windows 10 and 11. Some more advanced features, such as the **Spark** agent and the **Omni** video generator, according to Google require a Google AI subscription and an account of the right age.

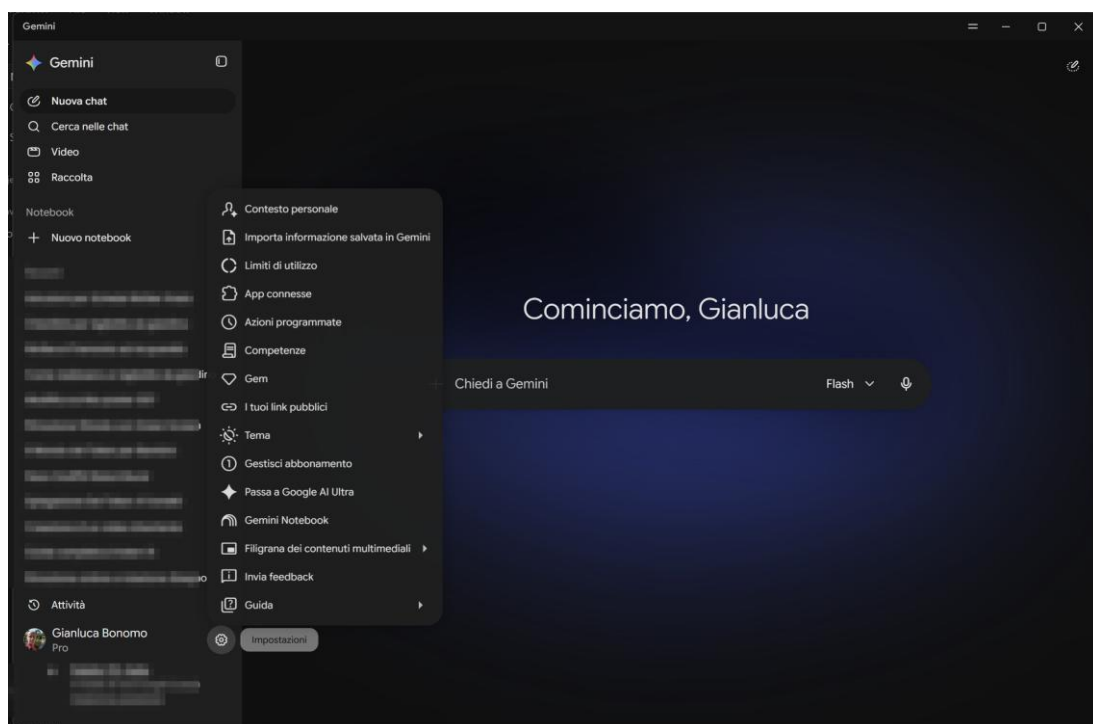
3. The first tour: it is the same Gemini

Open the app from the taskbar. A window opens with the title **Gemini**, and inside you find something very familiar.



The Gemini app for Windows window. Recent chats and personal data have been blurred. Interface in Italian.

The sidebar, the writing box, the model selector, the microphone: **everything is the same as the website**. The chat list is the same too: the conversations I had made from the browser, with the pond, the water lilies and the checklist, were already there, because chats are tied to the account and not to the program.

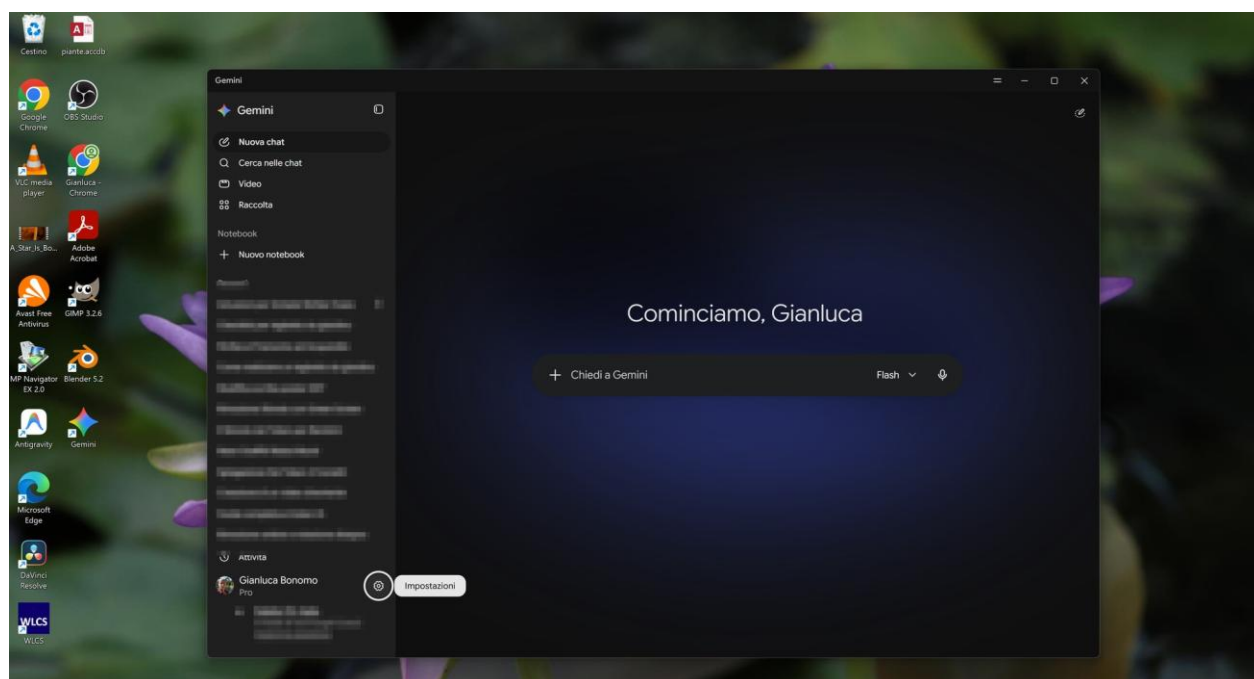


The settings menu is also the same as on the web: Personal context, Usage limits, Connected apps, Gems, Gemini Notebook and so on.

- **Same account, same chats:** what you do in the app you find on the website and vice versa.
- **Same settings:** limits, connected apps, Gems, skills, Notebook.
- **Same tools:** the + button with attachments, images, video, music, Canvas and Deep Research.

4. Alt+Space: Gemini at the touch of a key

The real novelty of the app is the shortcut. According to Google, pressing **Alt+Space** from any screen opens Gemini over the program you are using, be it Word, a spreadsheet or the browser. According to the launch coverage, the key can be changed in the app's settings.



After Alt+Space on the desktop: Gemini appears in the foreground over the wallpaper.

On my PC, with the app already running, pressing **Alt+Space** from the desktop brought Gemini's window to the front, as you see in the screenshot. On someone else's computer, or with a different version, the panel may look more compact: follow what you see.

A WINDOWS QUIRK

In Windows, Alt+Space normally opens the little system menu of the window (resize, move, close). If the app takes this shortcut for itself, that menu no longer opens with that key. If it bothers you, change the shortcut in the app's settings, if available.

4.1 When it is handy

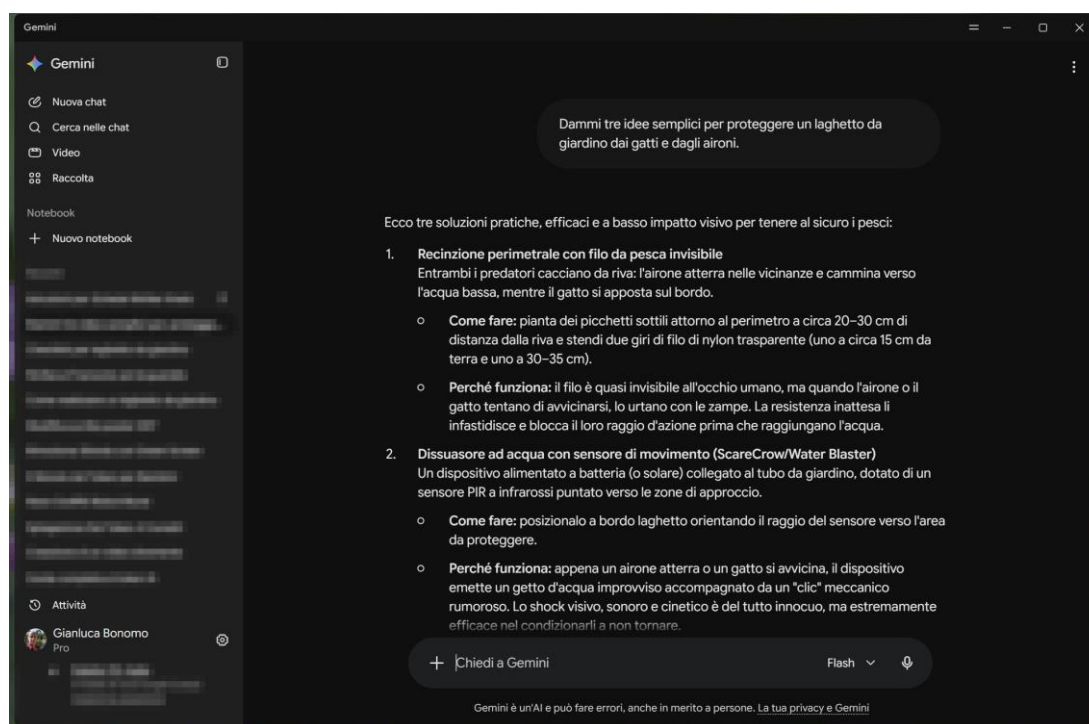
1. You are writing an email and want to **polish a sentence**: Alt+Space, paste, ask «make it friendlier».
2. You have a long text and need a **five-line summary**.
3. A **quick question** not worth searching on Google.
4. You need a **list of ideas** while in the middle of a job.

5. A conversation in the app

To try the app I did the same as on the website: I wrote a request and waited for the answer.

Give me three simple ideas to protect a garden pond from cats and herons.

The prompt used in the app (translated)



The answer in the app: three solutions, each with «Come fare» (How to) and «Perché funziona» (Why it works).

After about fifteen seconds the answer was there, with three ideas, each split into «How to» and «Why it works»: the **perimeter fence with invisible fishing line**, the **water deterrent with motion sensor** and a third solution. As always, all to be **verified**: they are suggestions, not guarantees, and how herons and cats behave changes from garden to garden.

6. Web or app? The practical choice

If...	Better	Why
You use Gemini many times a day and want maximum speed	App	An icon and a shortcut always ready.
You work in a program and want to ask quickly	App	Alt+Space opens Gemini without switching window.
You are on a computer that is not yours (office, library, friends)	Website	Nothing to install and you just sign out.
You have many tabs open and like to keep everything in the browser	Website	One more tab and you are done.
You want the newest features	Both	New things may arrive at different times on app and site: keep the app updated.

When to choose the app and when the website.

When one, when the other

Windows app

- Icon and shortcut always ready
- Alt+Space over any program
- Ideal for daily use

vs

Website

- Nothing to install
- Fine on PCs that are not yours
- All inside a tab

Web and app compared

In practice **you do not have to choose once and for all**: you can have the app on your PC and use the website when you are elsewhere. The chats follow you everywhere.

Hands-on exercise

Fifteen minutes. If the app is not installed start from step 1; otherwise from step 3.

1. Type the address `gemini.google/desktop` in the browser and download the installer from the official page.
2. Install the app and sign in with your Google account.
3. Open the app and check that the chats you made on the website appear.
4. Open any program (for example a Word document), press `Alt+Space` and see what happens.
5. Ask a quick question from there and then close the window.
6. Pin the icon to the taskbar and decide for which tasks you will use the app and for which the website.

WATCH OUT

Are the chats the same as on the web?

Did you find how the shortcut works on your computer?

Questions that come up in class

Do I have to pay to use the app?

Not for the app itself, which uses the same account as the website. Some features (such as Spark and Omni) according to Google require a Google AI subscription.

Can I use the app on Mac or Linux?

The app I am talking about is for Windows 10 and 11. For other systems use the website.

What does Spark do?

Google presents it as a personal agent for tasks that need several steps, connected to apps such as Gmail and Drive. It requires a subscription: check on your account whether it is available.

Does the app read what is on my screen?

From the sources I consulted, Alt+Space opens Gemini over the active program; no automatic screen reading is mentioned. Always check the permissions the app asks for.

Can I change the Alt+Space shortcut?

According to the launch coverage yes, from the app's settings. If the entry is not there, your version may be different.

Glossary

Term	What it means
Account	Your Google profile, which ties chats and settings to you and not to the computer.
App	A program you install on the computer, as opposed to a website you open in the browser.
Keyboard shortcut	A combination of keys that runs an action immediately.
Omni	The engine that creates video in Gemini.
Spark	Google's personal agent announced with the Windows app.

Further reading

Google, The Gemini app is now available for Windows (blog) - launch of 10 September 2026; download from gemini.google/desktop

Gemini app for Windows running on the author's PC - screenshots of 7 October 2026

WATCH OUT

Data checked on 7 October 2026. The installation is described from Google's official page and was not repeated by the author, because the app was already installed. Spark and Omni were not tried. Labels are shown in Italian as on screen, with an English gloss.