



Red Hat Enterprise Linux 9

Getting started with the GNOME desktop environment

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9

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Abstract

This document describes how to use GNOME, which is the only desktop environment available in RHEL 9. It explains the basics of using GNOME Shell and certain GNOME applications.

Table of Contents

MAKING OPEN SOURCE MORE INCLUSIVE	3
PROVIDING FEEDBACK ON RED HAT DOCUMENTATION	4
CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF GNOME ENVIRONMENTS	5
1.1. GNOME ENVIRONMENTS, BACK ENDS, AND DISPLAY PROTOCOLS	5
1.2. GNOME STANDARD	5
1.3. GNOME CLASSIC	6
1.4. ENABLING WINDOW OVERVIEW IN GNOME CLASSIC	8
1.5. GRAPHICS BACK ENDS IN RHEL 9	10
1.6. SELECTING GNOME ENVIRONMENT AND DISPLAY PROTOCOL	11
1.7. DISABLING WAYLAND FOR ALL USERS	12
CHAPTER 2. LAUNCHING APPLICATIONS IN GNOME	13
2.1. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN THE STANDARD GNOME SESSION	13
2.2. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN GNOME CLASSIC	13
2.3. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN GNOME USING A COMMAND	14
CHAPTER 3. DISABLING THE HOT CORNER FUNCTIONALITY ON GNOME SHELL	16
3.1. DISABLING HOT CORNER USING SETTINGS	16
3.2. DISABLING HOT CORNER USING GSETTINGS	16
3.3. DISABLING THE HOT CORNER FUNCTIONALITY FOR ALL USERS	17
CHAPTER 4. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS	18
4.1. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS IN GTK APPLICATIONS	18
4.2. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS IN ANY APPLICATIONS	18
CHAPTER 5. ENABLING CHINESE, JAPANESE, OR KOREAN TEXT INPUT	20
5.1. INPUT METHODS	20
5.2. AVAILABLE INPUT METHOD ENGINES	20
5.3. INSTALLING INPUT METHOD ENGINES	20
5.4. SWITCHING THE INPUT METHOD IN GNOME	20

MAKING OPEN SOURCE MORE INCLUSIVE

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2. Use your cursor to highlight the part of the text that you want to comment on.
3. Click the **Add Feedback** button that appears near the highlighted text.
4. Add your feedback and click **Submit**.

Submitting feedback through Bugzilla (account required)

1. Log in to the [Bugzilla](#) website.
2. Select the correct version from the **Version** menu.
3. Enter a descriptive title in the **Summary** field.
4. Enter your suggestion for improvement in the **Description** field. Include links to the relevant parts of the documentation.
5. Click **Submit Bug**.

CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF GNOME ENVIRONMENTS

You can switch between several user interfaces and graphics back ends in GNOME.

1.1. GNOME ENVIRONMENTS, BACK ENDS, AND DISPLAY PROTOCOLS

This sections provides information on two available GNOME environments:

- GNOME Standard
- GNOME Classic

Both environments can use two different protocols as their graphical back ends:

- The **Wayland** protocol, which uses **GNOME Shell** as the **Wayland** compositor and display server.
This solution of display server is further referred as **GNOME Shell on Wayland**
- The **X11** protocol, which uses **X.Org** as the display server.

The default combination in RHEL 9 is the GNOME Standard environment using **GNOME Shell on Wayland** as the display server. However, due to certain **Wayland** limitations, you might want to switch the graphics protocol stack to **X11**. You can also switch from GNOME Standard to GNOME Classic.

Thus, you can select from the following combinations of back ends and environments when logging in:

- **GNOME Shell on Wayland** (the default combination in RHEL 9)
- **GNOME Shell on X11**
- **GNOME Classic on Wayland**
- **GNOME Classic on X11**

Additional resources

- For information on how to switch the environments, see [Selecting GNOME environment and display protocol](#).

1.2. GNOME STANDARD

The GNOME Standard user interface includes these major components:

Top bar

The horizontal bar at the top of the screen provides access to some of the basic functions of GNOME Standard, such as the **Activities Overview**, clock and calendar, system status icons, and the **system menu**.

System menu

The **system menu** is located in the upper-right corner, and provides the following functionality:

- Updating settings
- Controlling the sound volume

- Accessing your Wi-Fi connection
- Switching the user
- Logging out
- Turning off the computer

Activities Overview

The **Activities Overview** features windows and applications views that let you run applications and windows and switch between them.

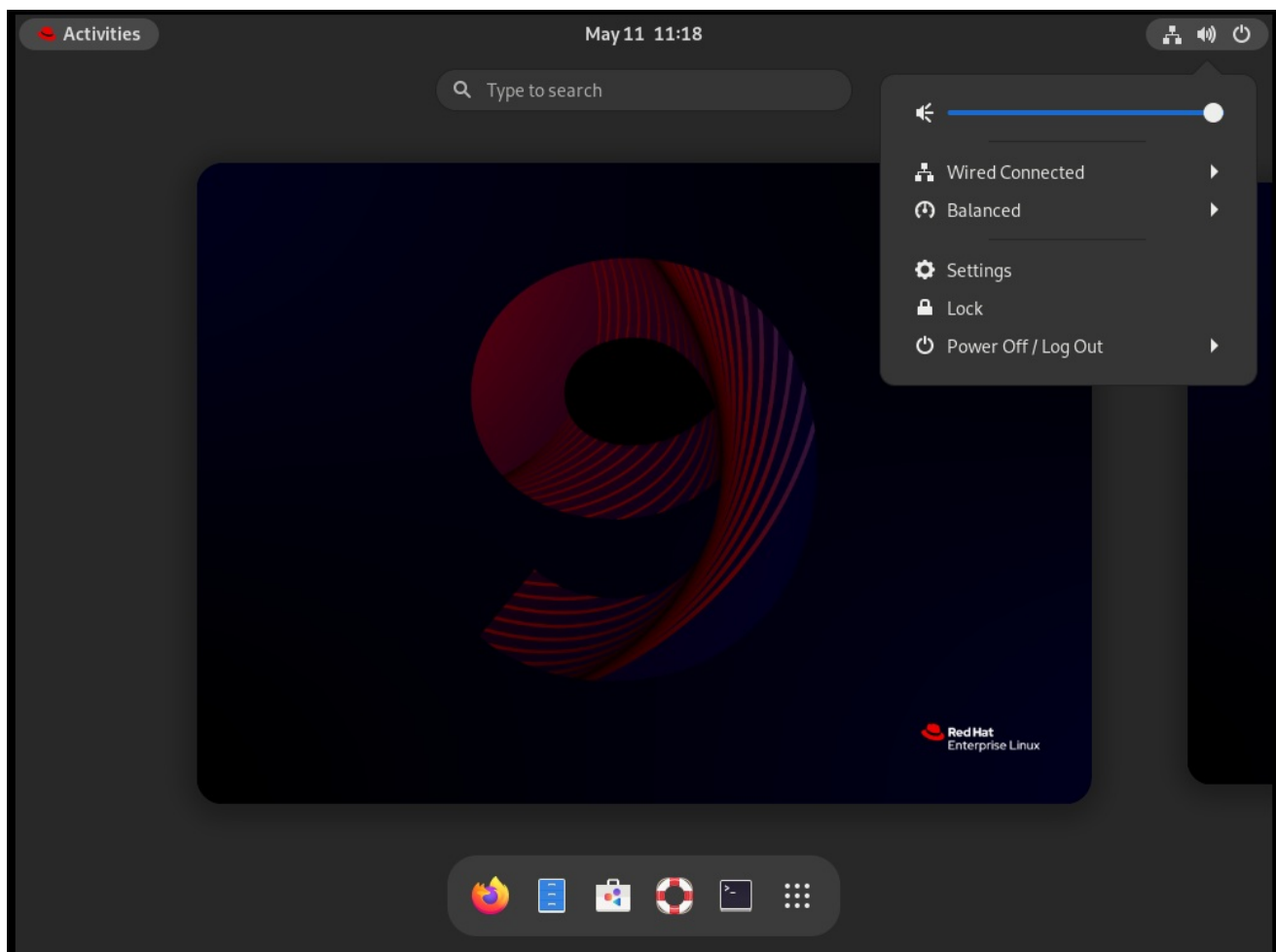
The **search entry** at the top allows for searching various items available on the desktop, including applications, documents, files, and configuration tools.

The horizontal bar on the bottom contains a list of favorite and running applications. You can add or remove applications from the default list of favorites.

Message tray

The **message tray** provides access to pending notifications. The **message tray** shows when you press **Super+M**.

The GNOME Standard desktop



1.3. GNOME CLASSIC

GNOME Classic represents a mode for users who prefer a more traditional desktop experience that is similar to the GNOME 2 environment used with RHEL 6. It is based on GNOME 3 technologies, and at the same time it includes multiple features similar to GNOME 2.

The GNOME Classic user interface consists of these major components:

Applications and Places

The **Applications** menu is displayed at the upper-left corner of the screen. It gives you access to applications organized into categories. If you enable window overview, you can also open the **Activities Overview** from that menu.

The **Places** menu is displayed next to the **Applications** menu on the top bar. It gives you quick access to important folders, for example **Downloads** or **Pictures**.

Taskbar

The **taskbar** is displayed at the bottom of the screen, and features:

- A window list
- A notification icon displayed next to the window list
- A short identifier for the current workspace and total number of available workspaces displayed next to the notification icon

Four available workspaces

In GNOME Classic, the number of available workspaces is set to 4 by default.

Minimize and maximize buttons

Window title bars in GNOME Classic feature the minimize and maximize buttons that let you quickly minimize the windows to the window list, or maximize them to take up all of the space on the desktop.

A traditional **Super+Tab** window switcher

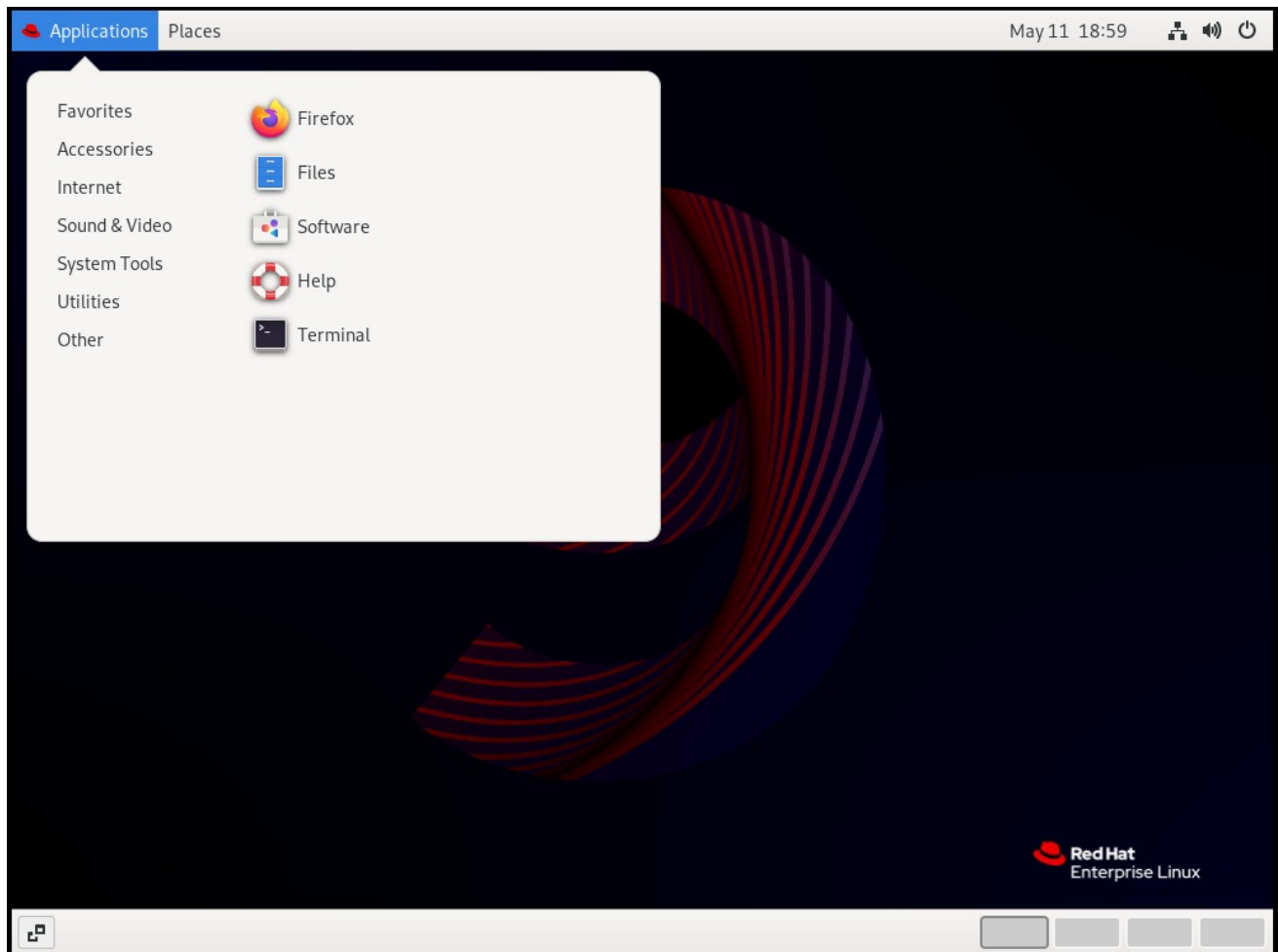
In GNOME Classic, windows in the **Super+Tab** window switcher are not grouped by application.

System menu

The **system menu** is located in the upper-right corner, and enables the following actions:

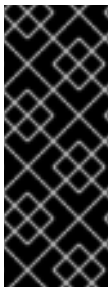
- Updating settings
- Controlling the sound volume
- Accessing your Wi-Fi connection
- Switching the user
- Logging out
- Turning off the computer

The GNOME Classic desktop with the Favorites submenu of the Applications menu



1.4. ENABLING WINDOW OVERVIEW IN GNOME CLASSIC

In GNOME Classic, the overview of open windows is not available by default. This procedure enables the window overview for all users on the system.



IMPORTANT

Enabling the window overview by this procedure is not a permanent change. Each update of the **gnome-classic-session** package overwrites the configuration file to the default settings, which disable the window overview.

To keep the window overview enabled, apply the procedure after each update of **gnome-classic-session**.

Procedure

1. Open the `/usr/share/gnome-shell/modes/classic.json` file as the **root** user.
2. Find the following line in the file:

```
"hasOverview": false
```

3. Change the line to the following:

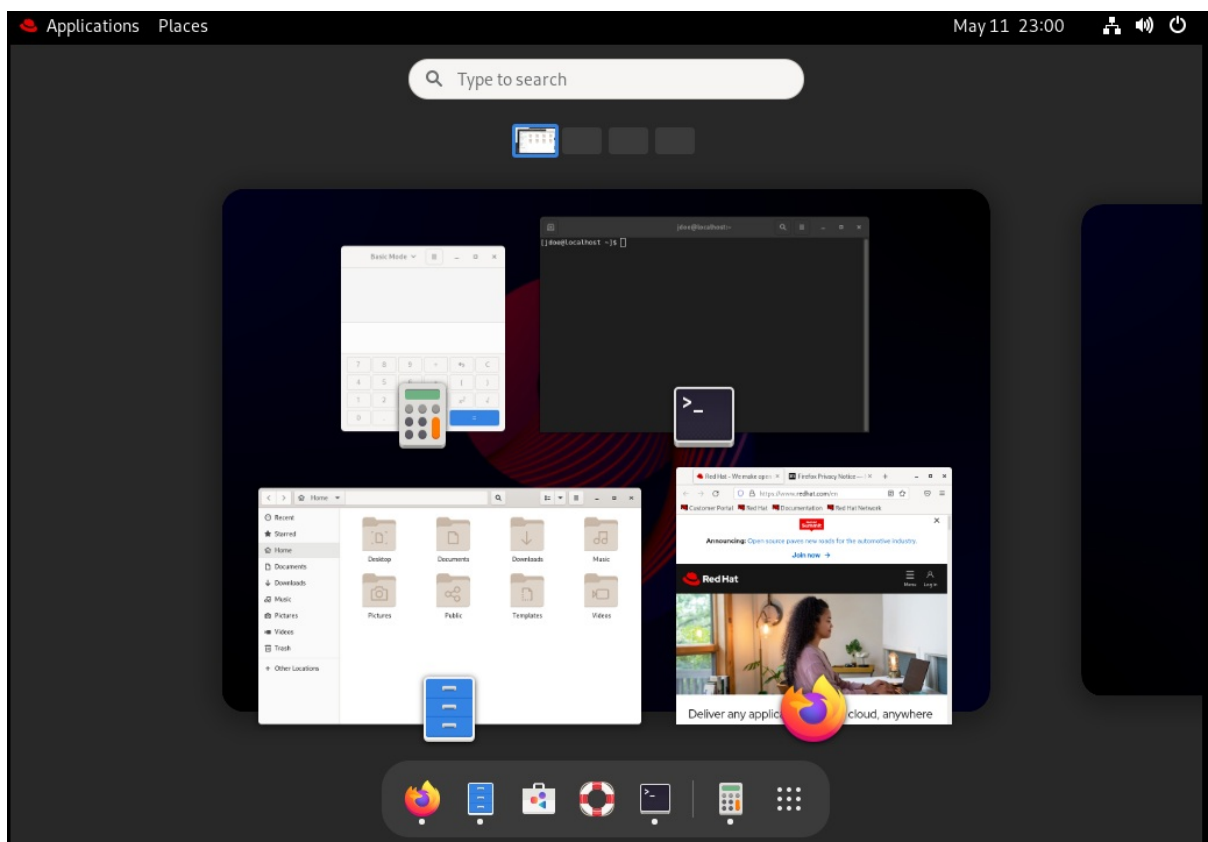
```
"hasOverview": true
```

4. Save changes, and close the `/usr/share/gnome-shell/modes/classic.json` file.
5. Restart the user session.

Verification steps

1. In your GNOME Classic session, open multiple windows.
2. Press the **Super** key to open the window overview.
3. In the overview, check that:
 - The **Dash** (the horizontal panel on the bottom of the screen) is displayed.
 - The bottom panel is not displayed.

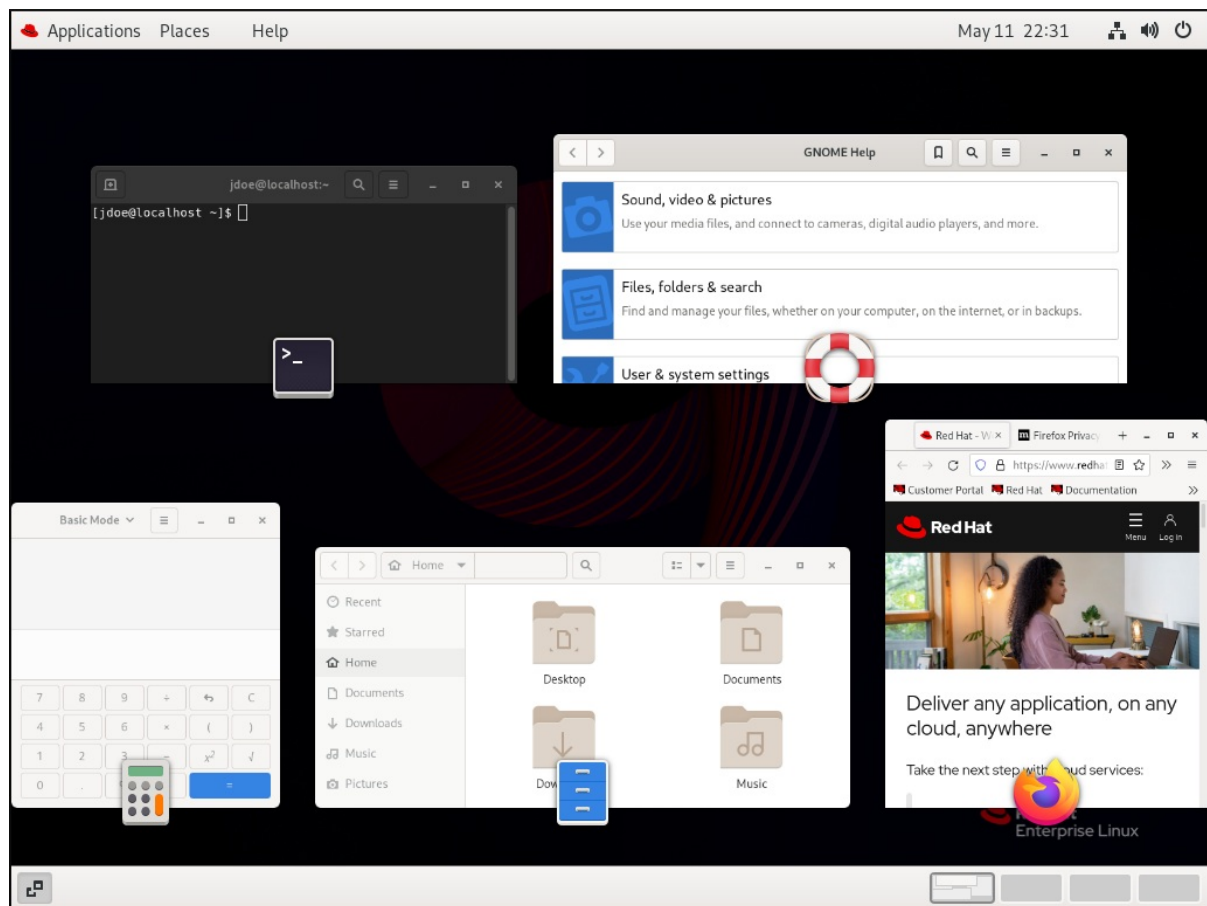
Window overview with "hasOverview": true



With the default settings ("**hasOverview**": **false**), the overview has the following features:

- The **Dash** is not displayed.
- The bottom panel is displayed. It includes the **Window picker** button in its left part and the workspace switcher in its right part.

Window overview with "hasOverview": false



1.5. GRAPHICS BACK ENDS IN RHEL 9

In RHEL 9, you can choose between two protocols to build a graphical user interface:

Wayland

The **Wayland** protocol uses **GNOME Shell** as its compositor and display server, which is further referred to as **GNOME Shell on Wayland**.

X11

The **X11** protocol uses **X.Org** as the display server. Displaying graphics based on this protocol works the same way as in RHEL 7, where this was the only option.

New installations of RHEL 9 automatically select **GNOME Shell on Wayland**. However, you can switch to **X.Org**, or select the required combination of GNOME environment and display server.

X11 applications

Client applications need to be ported to the **Wayland** protocol or use a graphical toolkit that has a **Wayland** backend, such as GTK, to be able to work natively with the compositor and display server based on **Wayland**.

Legacy **X11** applications that cannot be ported to **Wayland** automatically use **Xwayland** as a proxy between the **X11** legacy clients and the **Wayland** compositor. **Xwayland** functions both as an **X11** server and a **Wayland** client. The role of **Xwayland** is to translate the **X11** protocol into the **Wayland** protocol and reversely, so that **X11** legacy applications can work with the display server based on **Wayland**.

On **GNOME Shell on Wayland**, **Xwayland** starts automatically at login, which ensures that most **X11** legacy applications work as expected when using **GNOME Shell on Wayland**. However, the **X11** and **Wayland** protocols are different, and certain clients that rely on features specific to **X11** might behave differently under **Xwayland**. For such specific clients, you can switch to the **X.Org** display server.

Input devices

RHEL 9 uses a unified input stack, **libinput**, which manages all common device types, such as mice, touchpads, touchscreens, tablets, trackballs and pointing sticks. This unified stack is used both by the **X.Org** and by the **GNOME Shell on Wayland** compositor.

GNOME Shell on Wayland uses **libinput** directly for all devices, and no switchable driver support is available. Under **X.Org**, **libinput** is implemented as the **X.Org libinput** driver, and you can optionally enable the legacy **X.Org evdev** driver if **libinput** does not support your input device.

Additional resources

- You can find the current list of environments for which Wayland is not available in the `/usr/lib/udev/rules.d/61-gdm.rules` file.
- For additional information on the **Wayland** project, see [Wayland documentation](#).

1.6. SELECTING GNOME ENVIRONMENT AND DISPLAY PROTOCOL

The default desktop environment for RHEL 9 is GNOME Standard with **GNOME Shell on Wayland** as the display server. However, due to certain limitations of **Wayland**, you might want to switch the graphics protocol stack. You might also want to switch from GNOME Standard to GNOME Classic.

The change of GNOME environment and graphics protocol stack is persistent across user logouts, and also when powering off or rebooting the computer.

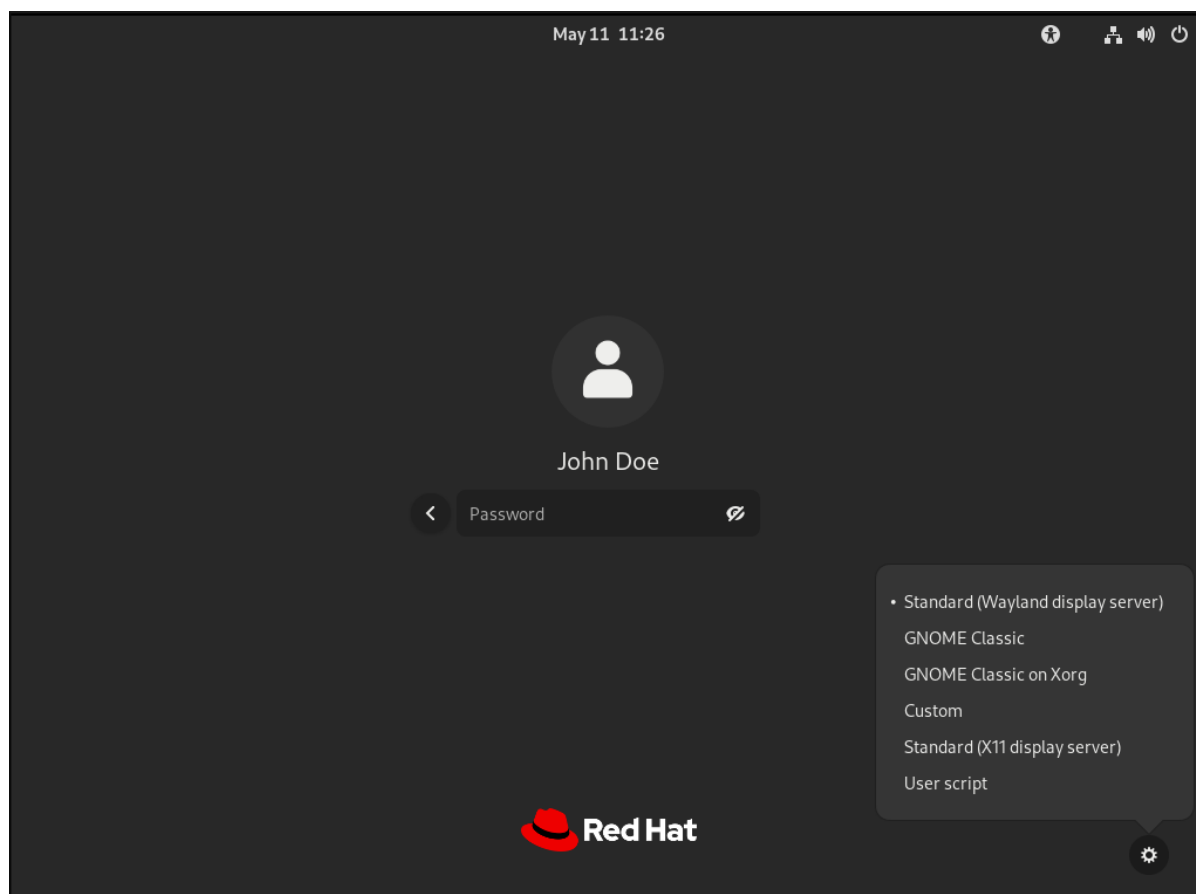
Procedure

1. From the login screen (GDM), click the cogwheel in the right bottom corner of the screen.



NOTE

You cannot access this option from the lock screen. The login screen appears when you first start RHEL or when you log out of your current session.



2. From the drop-down menu that appears, select the option that you prefer.
In the menu, the **X.Org** display server is also marked as **X11**.

1.7. DISABLING WAYLAND FOR ALL USERS

You can disable the Wayland session for all users on the system, so that they always log in with the X11 session.

Procedure

1. Open the `/etc/gdm/custom.conf` file as the **root** user.
2. Locate the following line in the **[daemon]** section of the file:

```
#WaylandEnable=false
```

3. Uncomment the line by remove the **#** character. As a result, the line says:

```
WaylandEnable=false
```

4. Reboot the system.

CHAPTER 2. LAUNCHING APPLICATIONS IN GNOME

You can launch installed applications using several different methods in the GNOME desktop environment.

2.1. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN THE STANDARD GNOME SESSION

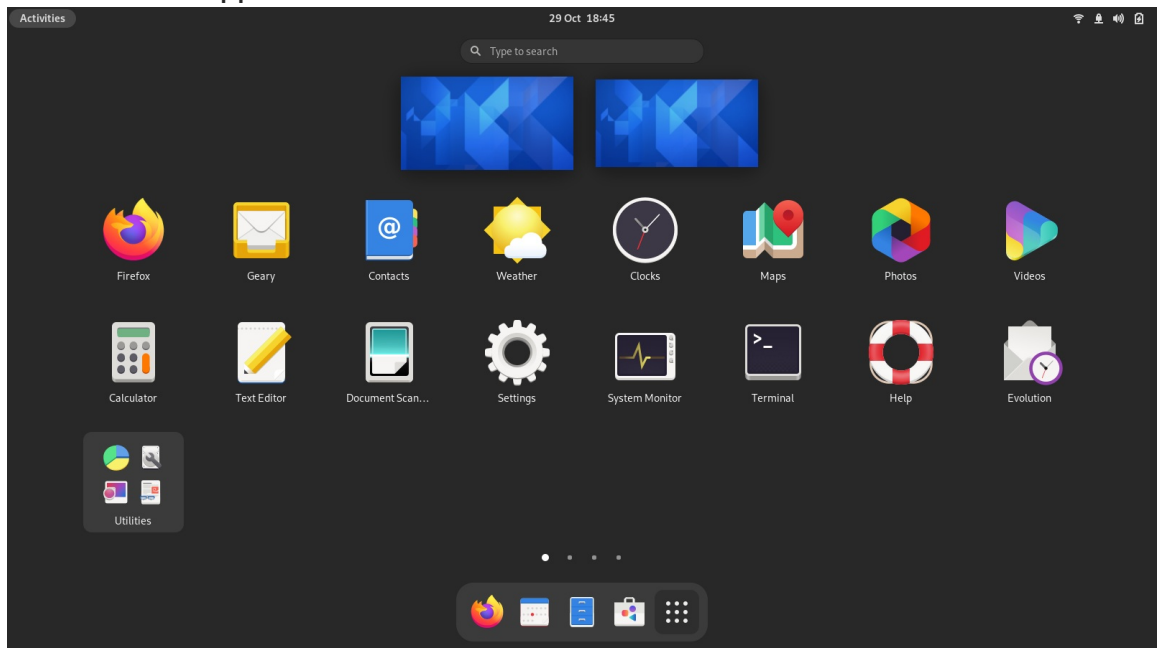
This procedure launches a graphical application in the GNOME desktop environment.

Prerequisites

- You are using the standard GNOME session.

Procedure

1. Open the **Activities Overview** screen using either of the following ways:
 - Click **Activities** in the top panel.
 - Press the **Super** key, which is usually labeled with the Windows logo, , or .
2. Find the application using either of the following ways:
 - Click the **Show Applications** icon in the bottom horizontal bar.



- Type the name of the required application in the search entry.
3. Click the application in the displayed list.

2.2. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN GNOME CLASSIC

This procedure launches a graphical application in the GNOME Classic desktop environment.

Prerequisites

- You are using the GNOME Classic session.

Procedure

1. Open the **Applications** menu in the top panel.
2. Choose the required application from the available categories, which can include:
 - Favorites
 - Accessories
 - Graphics
 - Internet
 - Office
 - Sound & Video
 - System Tools
 - Utilities

2.3. LAUNCHING AN APPLICATION IN GNOME USING A COMMAND

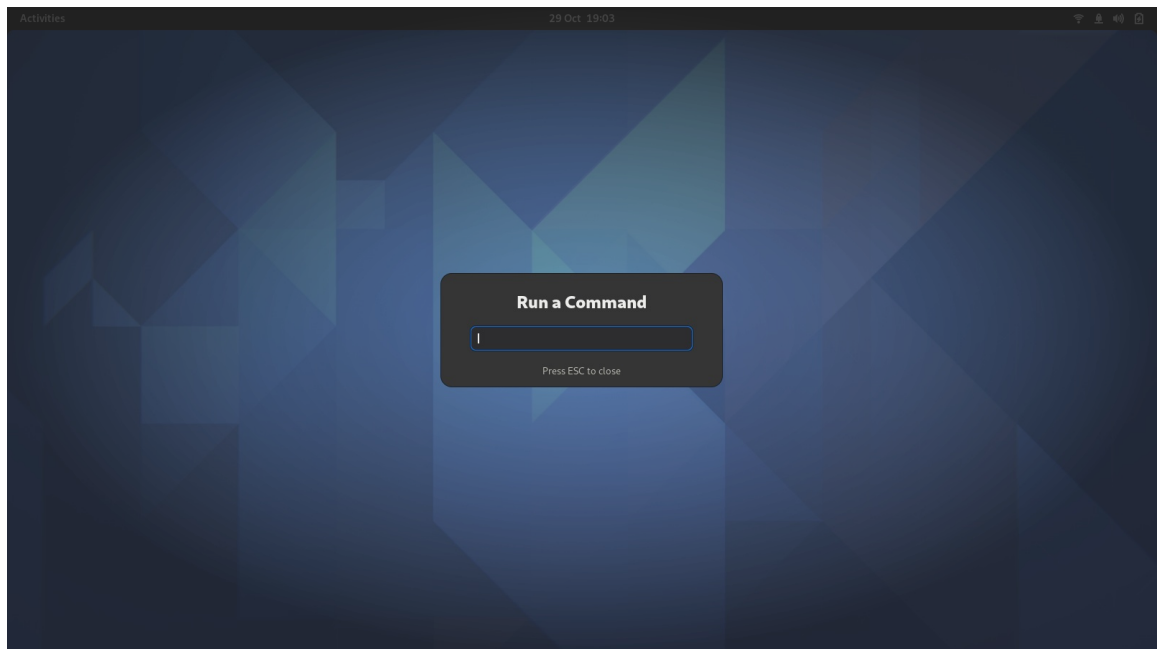
This procedure launches a graphical application in GNOME by entering a command.

Prerequisites

- You know the command that starts the application.

Procedure

1. Open a command prompt using either of the following ways:
 - Open a terminal.
 - Press the **Alt+F2** shortcut to open the **Enter a Command** screen.



2. Type the application command in the command prompt.
3. Confirm the command by pressing **Enter**.

CHAPTER 3. DISABLING THE HOT CORNER FUNCTIONALITY ON GNOME SHELL

The GNOME environment provides the hot corner functionality, which is enabled by default. This means that when you move the cursor to the area of the upper-left corner and push the cursor to the screen corner, the **Activities Overview** menu opens automatically.

However, you may want to disable this feature to not open **Activities Overview** unintentionally.

3.1. DISABLING HOT CORNER USING SETTINGS

To disable the hot corner functionality using the **Settings** application, follow this procedure.



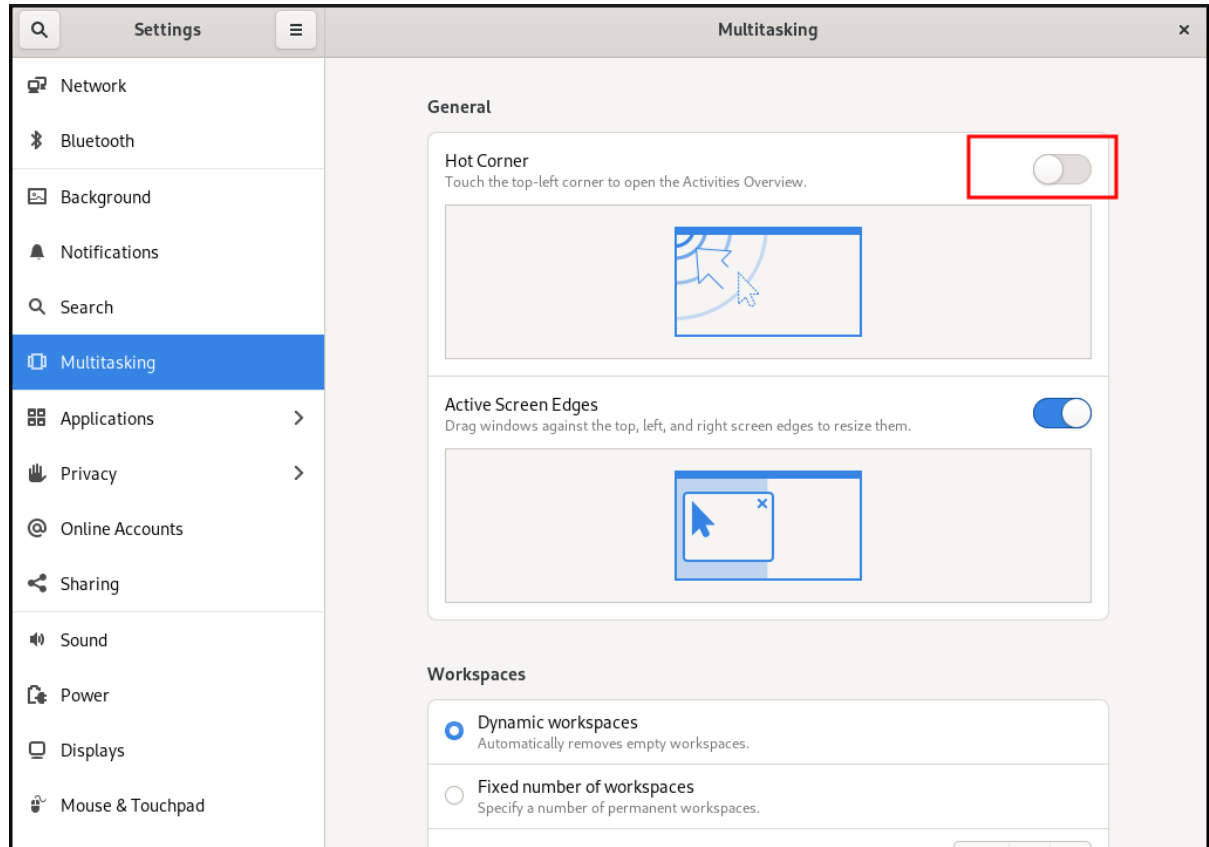
NOTE

This procedure disables the hot corner functionality for a **single** user.

Procedure

1. Open the **Settings** application by clicking the cogwheel icon.
2. In the **Settings** application, go to **Multitasking**.
3. In the **General** section, disable the **Hot Corner** button.

Disabling hot corner using the Settings application



3.2. DISABLING HOT CORNER USING GSETTINGS

To disable the hot corner functionality using the **gsettings** command-line utility, follow this procedure.

Procedure

- Disable the hot corner feature:

```
$ gsettings set org.gnome.desktop.interface enable-hot-corners false
```

Verification steps

- Optionally, verify that the hot corner feature is disabled:

```
$ gsettings get org.gnome.desktop.interface enable-hot-corners
false
```

3.3. DISABLING THE HOT CORNER FUNCTIONALITY FOR ALL USERS

To disable the hot corner functionality for all users, you need to create a **dconf** profile.

Procedure

1. Create the user profile in the **/etc/dconf/profile/user** file.

```
user-db:user
system-db:local
```

2. Create the **/etc/dconf/db/local.d/locks/00-interface** file with the following content.

```
# Specify the dconf path
[org/gnome/desktop/interface]

# GSettings key names and their corresponding values
enable-hot-corners='FALSE'
```

3. Create a file in the **/etc/dconf/db/local.d/locks** directory, for example **/etc/dconf/db/local.d/locks/00-interface**, with the following content.

```
# Prevent users from changing values for the following keys:
/org/gnome/desktop/interface/enable-hot-corners
```

The configuration file locks down the **/org/gnome/desktop/interface/enable-hot-corners** key for all users. This key controls whether the hot corner is enabled.

4. Update the system databases for the changes to take effect.

```
# dconf update
```

5. Ensure that all users log out. The changes take effect when users log back in.

CHAPTER 4. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS

You can type emoji characters using several different methods in GNOME, depending on the type of the application.

4.1. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS IN GTK APPLICATIONS

This procedure inserts an emoji character in an application that uses the GTK graphical toolkit, such as in native GNOME applications.

Prerequisites

- Make sure that the application is built on the GTK toolkit.

Procedure

1. Open a GTK application.
2. Make sure that a text field is active.
3. Press **Ctrl+;**.
The emoji selection menu opens.
4. Browse the emoji characters or type a keyword that identifies the emoji character that you want to insert, such as **smile**.
For the full list of keywords associated with emoji characters, see the *Other Keywords* column on the [Emoji List](#) page.
5. Click the selected character, or navigate to it using the cursor keys and press **Enter**.

Verification

- Check that the intended emoji character now appears at your cursor.

4.2. TYPING EMOJI CHARACTERS IN ANY APPLICATIONS

This procedure inserts an emoji character in any application, regardless of the graphical toolkit that the application uses.

Procedure

1. Open an application.
2. Make sure that a text field is active.
3. Press **Ctrl+.**.
The underscored letter **e** appears at your cursor.
4. Type a keyword that identifies the emoji character that you want to insert, such as **smile**.
For the full list of keywords associated with emoji characters, see the *Other Keywords* column on the [Emoji List](#) page.
5. Repeatedly press **Space** to browse the emoji characters that match your keyword.

6. Confirm the selected emoji character by pressing **Enter**.

Verification

- Check that the intended emoji character now appears at your cursor.

CHAPTER 5. ENABLING CHINESE, JAPANESE, OR KOREAN TEXT INPUT

If you write with Chinese, Japanese, or Korean characters, you can configure RHEL to input text in your language.

5.1. INPUT METHODS

Certain scripts, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, require keyboard input to go through an Input Method Engine (IME) to enter native text.

An input method is a set of conversion rules between the text input and the selected script. An IME is a software that performs the input conversion specified by the input method.

To input text in these scripts, you must set up an IME. If you installed the system in your native language and selected your language at the **GNOME Initial Setup** screen, the input method for your language is enabled by default.

5.2. AVAILABLE INPUT METHOD ENGINES

The following input method engines (IMEs) are available on RHEL from the listed packages:

Table 5.1. Available input method engines

Languages	Scripts	IME name	Package
Chinese	Simplified Chinese	Intelligent Pinyin	ibus-libpinyin
Chinese	Traditional Chinese	New Zhuyin	ibus-libzhuyin
Japanese	Kanji, Hiragana, Katakana	Anthy	ibus-anthy
Korean	Hangul	Hangul	ibus-hangul
Other	Various	M17N	ibus-m17n

5.3. INSTALLING INPUT METHOD ENGINES

This procedure installs input method engines (IMEs) that you can use to input Chinese, Japanese, and Korean text.

Procedure

- Install all available input method packages:

```
# dnf install @input-methods
```

5.4. SWITCHING THE INPUT METHOD IN GNOME

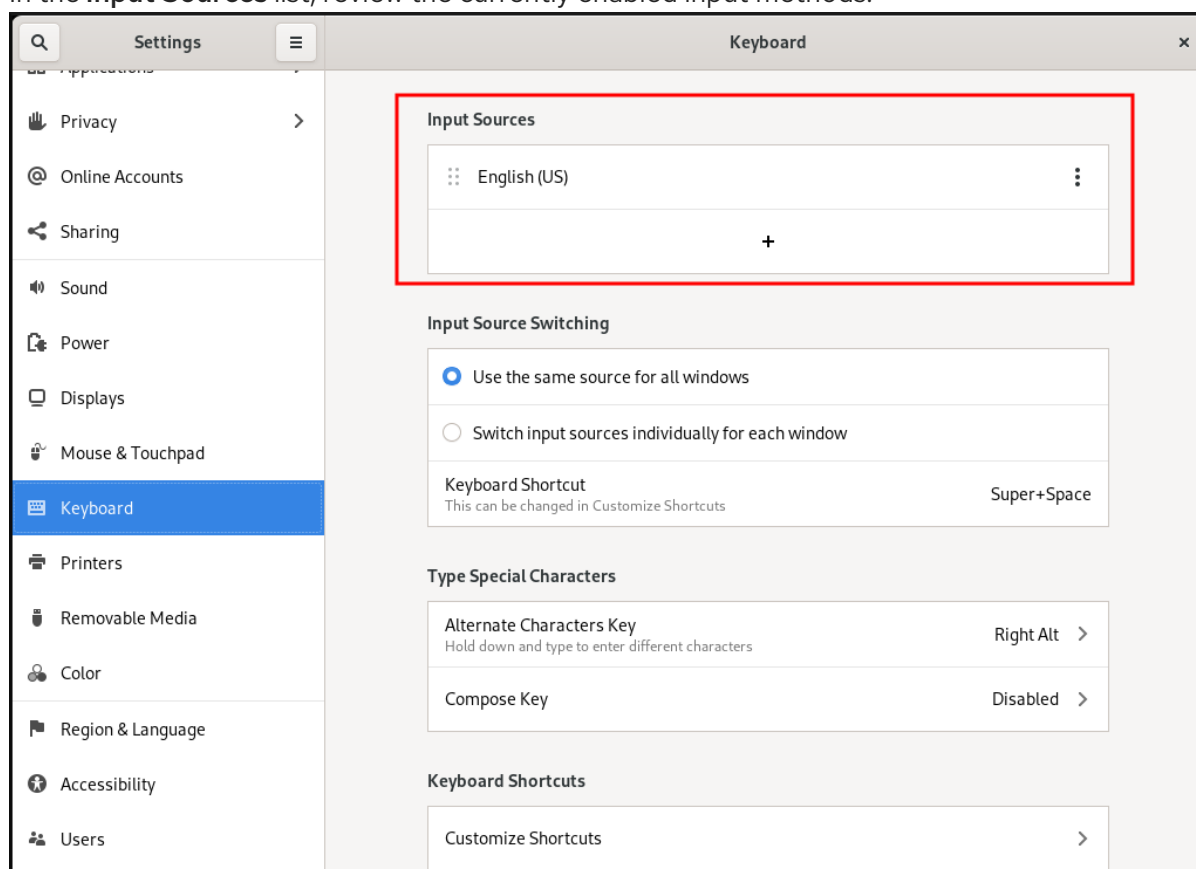
This procedure sets up the input method for your script, such as for Chinese, Japanese, or Korean scripts.

Prerequisites

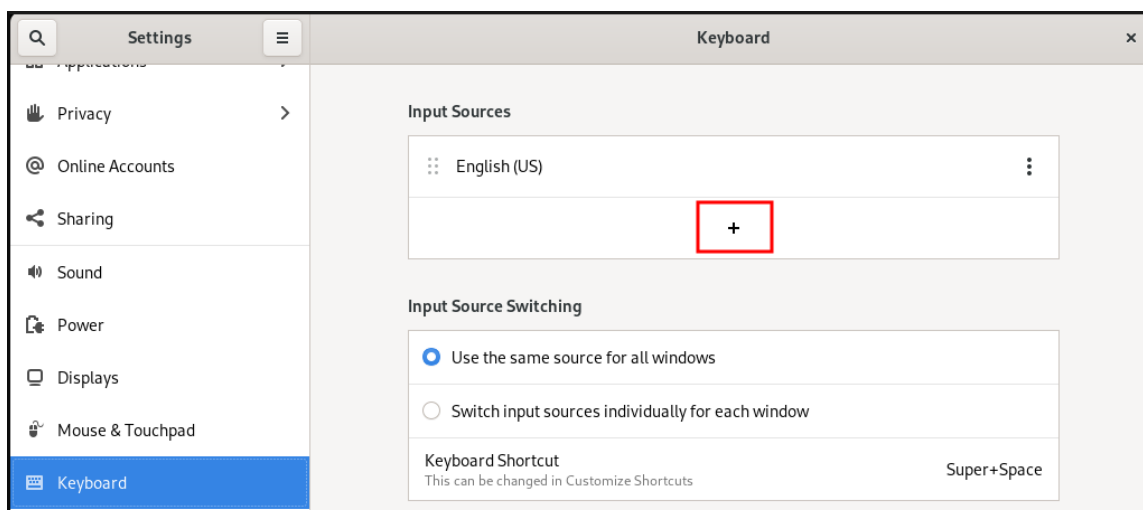
- The input method packages are installed.

Procedure

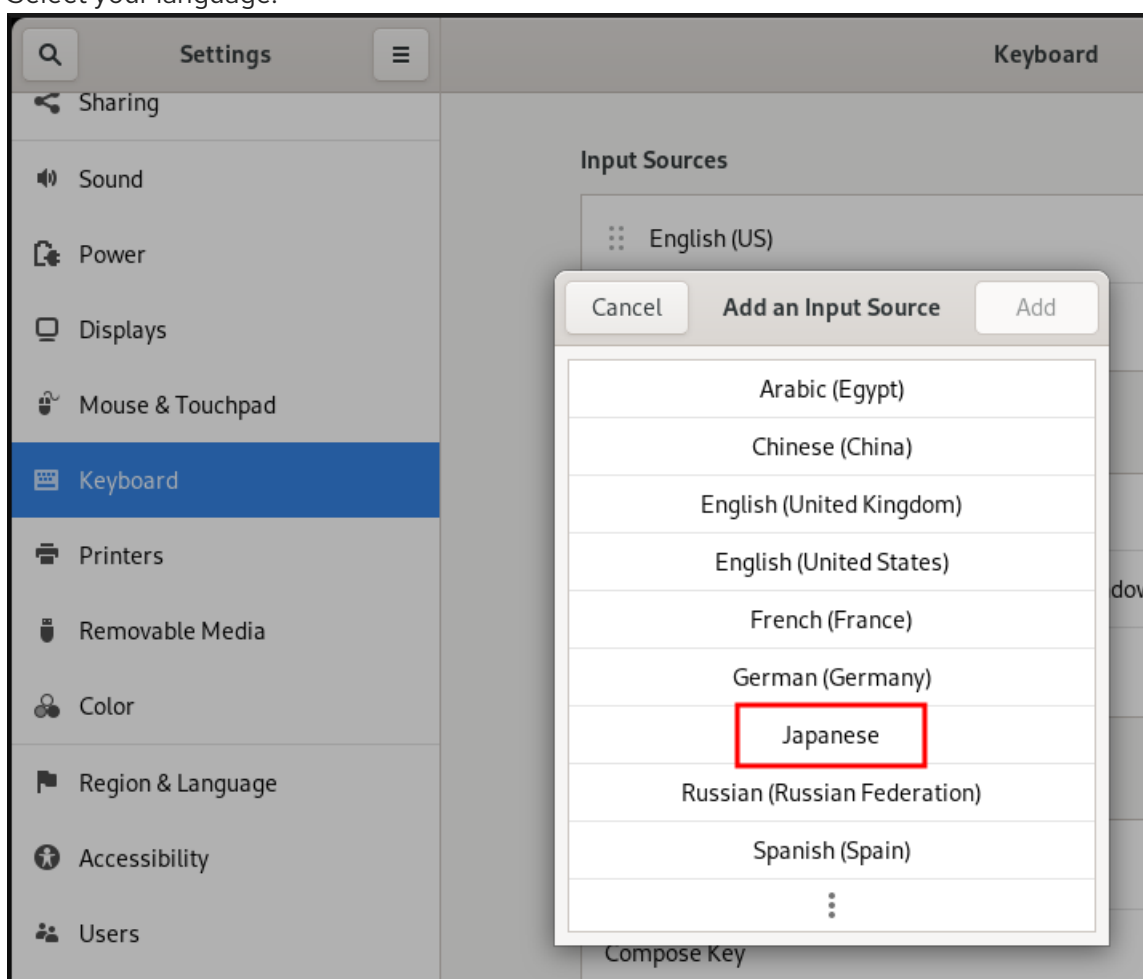
1. Go to the **system menu**, which is accessible from the top-right screen corner, and click the **Settings** icon.
2. Select the **Keyboard** section.
3. In the **Input Sources** list, review the currently enabled input methods.



4. If your input method is missing:
 - a. Click the + button under the **Input Sources** list.



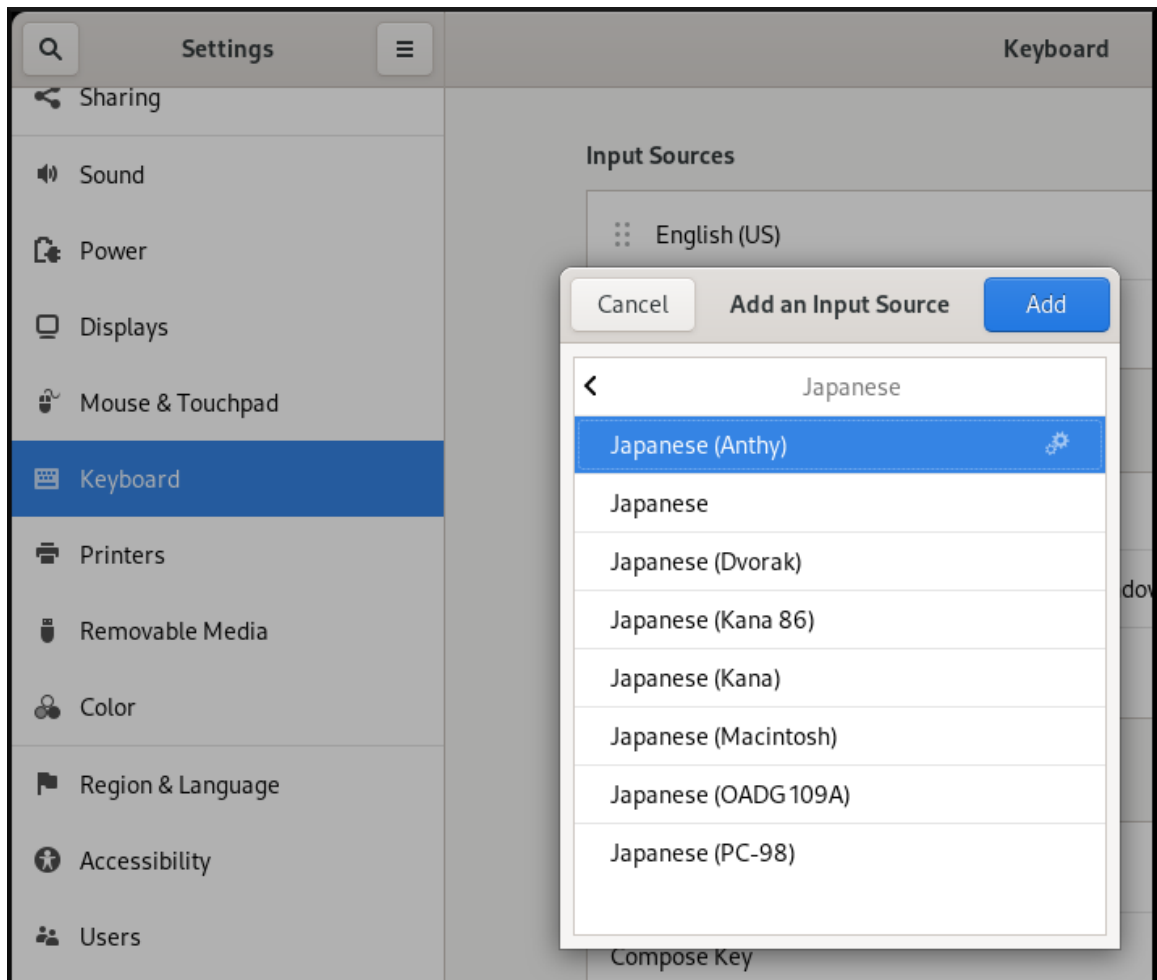
b. Select your language.



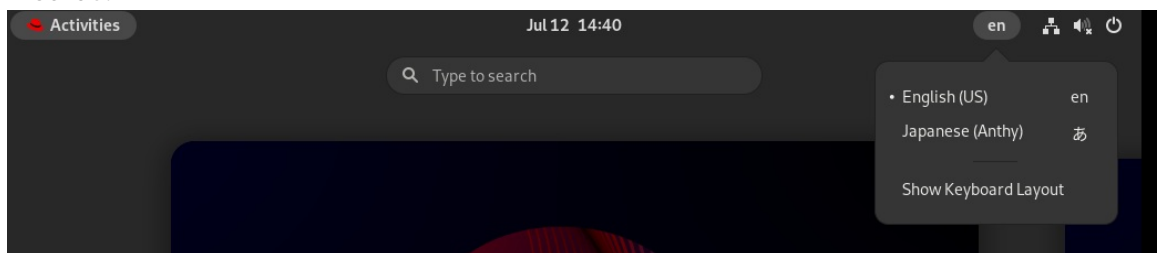
NOTE

If you cannot find your language in the menu, click the three dots icon (**More...**) at the end of the menu.

c. Select the input method that you want to use. A cog wheel icon marks all input methods to distinguish them from simple keyboard layouts.



- d. Confirm your selection by clicking **Add**.
5. Switch the active input method using one of the following ways:
 - Click the input method indicator on the right side of the top panel and select your input method.



- Switch between the enabled input methods using the **Super+Space** keyboard shortcut.

Verification

1. Open a text editor.
2. Type text in your language.
3. Verify that the text appears in your native script.