

Some of Our Favorite TI-84 Apps

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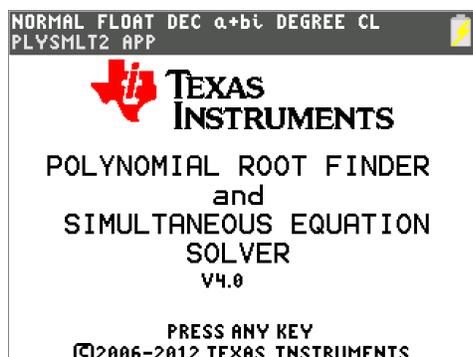
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The best feature of the TI-84 calculator has to be the ability to install and run programs and apps. These apps range from emulators for games like Flappy Bird, Pokemon, or Mario, to different utilities, such as science tools, unit and number conversion tools, a periodic table, and a polynomial solver. Texas Instruments ships the TI-84 with a selection of apps, which range from utilities to language packs for their calculators. Of course, this does not mean more apps cannot be added. To add these apps, you can either run TI Connect or TI Connect CE on your computer (check out our article here on mastering the TI-84) or you can use the mini-USB double-ended cable which came with your calculator to copy an app from another calculator. (Simply hook up the two calculators, then go "2nd" > "X,T,θ,n" to open the options to start a file transfer. Then, select what you want to send on the calculator that has the file already, then select "RECEIVE" on the calculator receiving the file.) What are some of the best apps to have? Well, let's take a look, shall we?

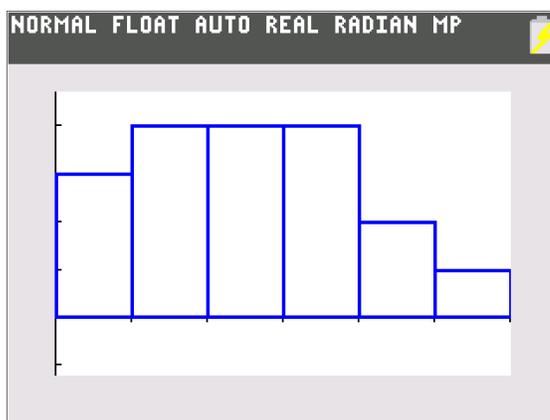
Polynomial Root Finder and Simultaneous Equation Solver ("Poly")



Commonly called "Poly," this app is one of the most necessary apps to have. It typically ships on brand-new calculators in the TI-84 Plus family, but can easily be downloaded from TI if you would not have the app or if you lose it. The app's main purpose is simple. Say, you get an equation such as $0 = 2x^2 - 2x + 9$ and you cannot figure out how to solve it, you can enter it into Poly, and it will tell you that it has no real roots. It's that simple. This app finds itself useful across the board, from an algebra student who wants to check their homework on the Quadratic Formula to a calculus student trying to quickly find zeros of a derivative.

Science Tools

While this app doesn't typically ship on the calculators themselves, this app is also downloadable from TI's website. Its best feature has to be the unit conversion calculator. Need to quickly go from inches to millimeters? Just plug in your number and it spits out a conversion. Other tools in this app, which may not help all but may help some, include a sig-fig calculator for those tedious calculations where significant figures are an issue, a vector calculator for physics, and a data and graphs wizard for graphing sets of data, like that which is found in an experiment. This app can be a timesaver, especially in math, science, and engineering classes.



Pac-Man

The classic 20th century game feels at home on the TI-84, especially with its low-res screen. This game, like many others, can be downloaded from various sources, one of the best being www.ticalc.org. This game makes the list because it is one of my personal favorites, and it shows how games can be made

from scratch for this calculator or, in this case, redone to work on the TI-84. Of course, this is not the only game available for the graphing calculator, but it shows the highlights of playing games on the calculator by using the basic arrow keys to move Pac-Man around to eat dots and miscellaneous fruits in order to score points. It shows how games on this device can be used to kill a spare five minutes of time. Hopefully, however, this is not used to kill your 45 minutes of algebra class.

Doors CSE

Quite possibly the key to getting the most out of your calculator is the app Doors CSE, yet another app available on www.ticalc.org. Doors CSE is for running special programs on your calculator where they may be too robust to just run under the standard TI-84 operating system. Doors is an emulator of sorts which can help to run more graphically-intense programs. For anyone who remembers the short craze of this mobile game, Doors CSE is the secret to running games like Flappy Bird on your device. By the way, the 8-bit design of Flappy Bird, once again, fits right in on the low-res screen of the TI-84, helping to set an ambiance of playing a classic game. (This ambiance, by the way, is something you won't find in the Flappy Bird-like Easter egg found in Android Lollipop and Marshmallow, which you can read about online.) Doors CSE can obviously run more than just a game with an aviationally-challenged bird trying not to crash into a large green pipe, but this provides a nice example of just what this powerful utility can do.

An Afterthought

Of course, there are many more apps you can download now from the web for your calculator, from www.ticalc.org, TI's own website, and many more places. However, these apps come with a disclaimer. As with any technology, it is a good idea to know the source from which you are downloading your apps. While www.ticalc.org and TI's website are both trustworthy as well as some other sources, some may not be such nice places. Remember not to just download random files from unknown places, because doing so can hurt your computer and, possibly, your calculator. However, as long as you keep this in mind, you should be okay as you download apps to get the most out of your TI-84 calculator.

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