

As with
any tutorial
of this nature...

Make sure
you back up
everything you
need first!

Installation order

Windows first, primary last

Installing Windows first can actually make the installation process a lot smoother – this is also good news if you've already got an existing or new Windows computer. The major benefits of installing Windows first is that you don't have to mess around with recovering and rebuilding GRUB at the end of the installation process, and it won't try and overwrite your currently installed Linux distros during its own installation process. The GRUB benefits also apply to installing your primary distro last, as you'll then be able to easily modify and update it later.

Linux first, Windows second

Performing installation in this order has its advantages by more easily tracking what you're installing and where. If you're setting up a disc from scratch or already have a Linux distro installed, you can use GParted straight away to get the disc formatted to your specifications. This means that while you're still in the live disc you can do the first installation. This can save a lot of time if you have limited resources for creating live discs or live USBs – you're already in Linux to edit the partitions, so why not install it?

Partitioning

Set up your hard drive so that space is usefully split between your different distros

In the first partition we have our primary default distro – this could be your work or leisure distro. We recommend about 20 GB ext4 partition for a Linux distro

The same as the first partition – a 20 GB ext4 partition for your other version of Linux. If you're triple booting Linux, you can use a third one of these quite easily

This partition is larger as we will install Windows here. Make it NTFS so Windows can see it during installation. It's best to give Windows 100 GB of space to be safe

Partition	File System	Label	Size	Used
/dev/sdc1	unknown	Microsoft reserved partition	128.00 MiB	---
/dev/sdc3	ext4		19.53 GiB	486.07 MiB
/dev/sdc4	ext4		19.53 GiB	486.07 MiB
/dev/sdc5	ntfs		97.66 GiB	67.50 MiB
/dev/sdc6	ntfs		324.92 GiB	74.60 MiB
/dev/sdc2	linux-swap		4.00 GiB	0.00 B

We'll create a shared storage partition for all operating systems. This can be made up of all the remaining space and it's best to keep it to NTFS so everything can use it

This is the swap partition, used with the RAM when Linux is running. Similar to Windows' page file system but that resides on the main Windows installation partition

If you plan to set up the hard drive and install the operating systems from scratch, it's best to use GParted – found on most live distros or any maintenance distribution

Above we have listed what we believe to be a useful setup for triple booting your system, but this is only a guideline. The 20 GB sizes for the Linux distros take into account just purely installing packages – in many ways it's a very liberal estimation of how much space you're going to use, however this depends on your development habits and what kind of software you are planning on using. The order is also fairly arbitrary – it won't make any difference to disc speed but it may make sense to you personally.

While we do recommend a shared storage partition, the file structure of the home folder in Linux and Windows is quite different, which can easily complicate things.

Windows and Linux both allow you to mount specific parts of the partition to specific locations in their hierarchy though, which can make it a lot easier and quicker to organise. However, another option that you can think about is splitting up the storage partition between the two.