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How to fix CLS: why the page jumps while it loads

Speed Tests & Core Web Vitals

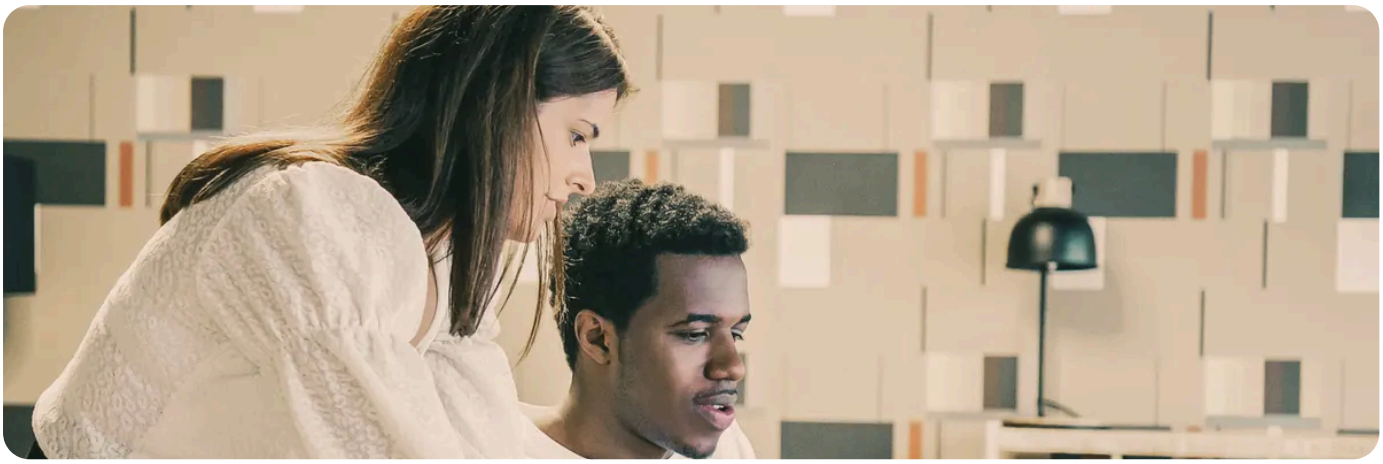
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How to fix CLS: why the page jumps while it loads

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CLS measures **how much the content moves while the page loads**: you go to tap a button and at the last instant an ad appears above it and the button drops. The cause is nearly always the same: **something arrives without having reserved its space**. The cure is to reserve the space before the content comes.

The causes, most common first

What jumps	Why	How to reserve the space
Images	With no width and height declared, the browser only learns the size after the image arrives.	Put `width` and `height` on the `<img>`. WordPress already does it for images inserted through the editor; themes and page builders are what sometimes lose it.
Ads, banners and cookie notices	They show up late and push the text down.	Give the box a fixed minimum height, or have them overlay the content instead of pushing it.
Embedded videos and maps (iframes)	They arrive with no size and the box suddenly grows.	Give the iframe a width and height, or a fixed ratio in CSS (`aspect-ratio`).
Fonts that swap	The text appears in one font and changes when the right one arrives, with a different width.	Fewer fonts and a well-chosen `font-display`. See **web fonts**.
Content inserted by script	Promotion bars, chat widgets, “read more”.	Reserve that block’s height in CSS before the script runs.

Finding what moves, step by step

1. In **PageSpeed Insights**, on the mobile tab, open the diagnostics and look for **“Avoid large layout shifts”**. The list names the elements that moved most.

2 In Chrome, press F12, open the **Performance** panel, record the load and look for the “Layout Shift” marks: click one and the element is highlighted.

3 Fix **one element at a time**, from the one that moves most to the least, and measure again. Reading the tools is covered in **measuring your site speed**.

Deferring everything makes CLS worse.
If you postpone the theme’s CSS or scripts to “gain points”, the final styling arrives after the content and the page lurches at the end. If CLS went up after you touched optimisation options, undo the last one and measure again. See **minifying CSS and JavaScript without breaking the site**.

Field data and lab data can disagree.
The lab test loads the page and stops; visitors scroll, open menus and accept cookies, and that is where many shifts happen. If the Search Console report talks about CLS and the lab test is clean, try the page as a visitor would: with the cookie notice, scrolling and opening the tabs. The limits are on web.dev and they change: check them there.

A page that holds still is also nicer to use than a fast page that moves. It is worth the effort even if Google did not exist.

NEED A HAND?

Reserved the space and the page still moves? Send us the address and what the report names.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Core Web Vitals in plain words →
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- Hosting plans and what each includes →

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