Google
Apps Learning Center

Get started with Drive

1	2	3	4	5
Upload and store	Sync and access	View and update	Organize and search	Share and collaborate

What can you do with Drive?

With Google Drive, you can upload and store all of your files online. You can then share these files with your team and access them from any computer, smartphone, or tablet.

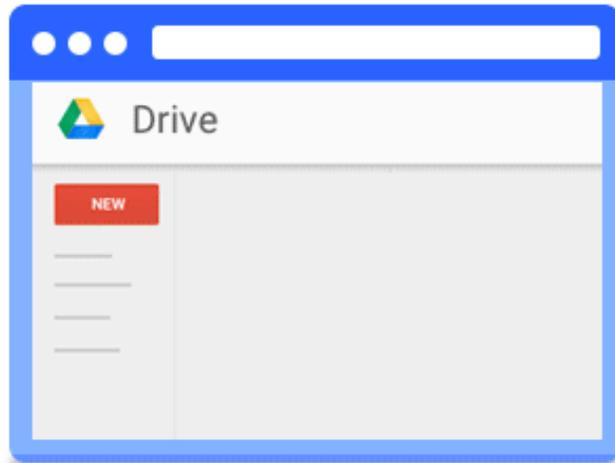**What you'll need:**

Google Apps account

10 minutes

Switching from a different cloud storage solution?

You may also want to check out one of these guides:

- Switching to Drive from Dropbox®

- Switching to Drive from Box®

- [Switching to Drive from Microsoft® OneDrive®](#)

- [Switching to Drive from C:\Drive](#)

1

Upload and store

You can store any file in Drive: pictures, drawings, videos, and more. You only need to store a file in Drive on one device, and it will automatically be

available on all your other devices. There are three ways to get your files into Drive.
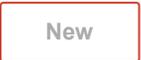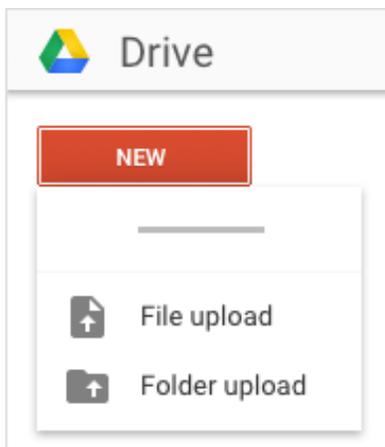
In this section:

- Upload files to Drive on the web
- Store files using a desktop sync client
- Upload files from your phone or tablet

1.1

Upload files to Drive on the web

One way to store files in Drive is to upload a copy of them using your web browser:

1. Go to Drive.

2. Click [New], select **File upload** or **Folder upload**, and then choose the file or folder you want to upload.

3. Click **Open**.

Or, if you're using the latest version of Chrome or Firefox®, you can simply drag files directly from your computer to the Drive page on your browser.

When you see **Upload complete**, your files have uploaded successfully and can be accessed in any browser or device that has Drive installed.
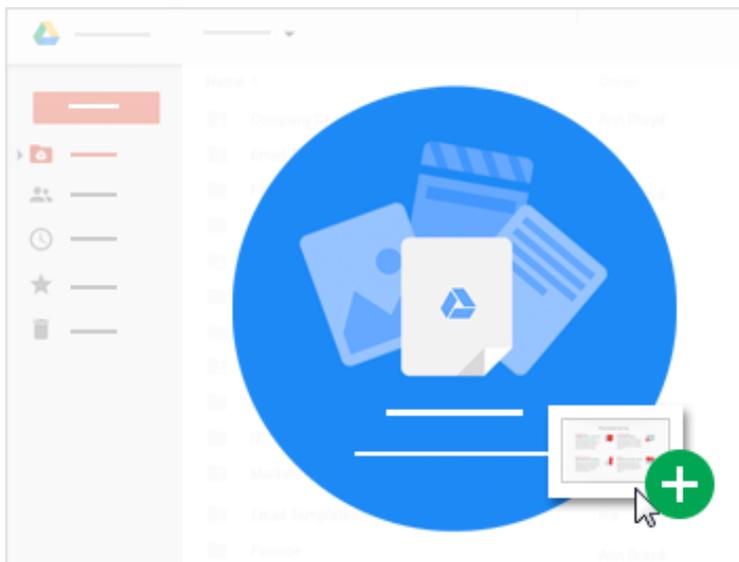
Store files using a desktop sync client

If you like to open and work on files from your desktop and also store them in Drive, install **Google Drive for Mac/PC**. This desktop sync client is convenient for storing a large collection of files that would otherwise take a long time to upload.

(If you decide later to uninstall the client, your Drive files won't be affected and can still be accessed from Drive on the web.)

Google Drive for Mac/PC is only available if your administrator has turned it on for your organization or team.

To use the client, you install Drive on your computer, which creates a desktop folder named **Google Drive**. This folder works like any other folder on your computer, except that anything you put in it automatically syncs to the web and to any other devices with Drive installed.
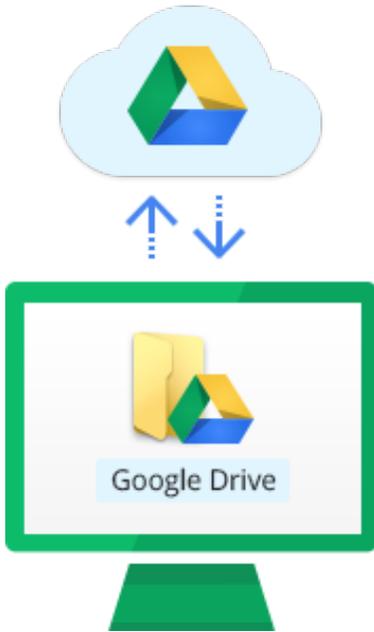
Install Drive on your computer:

1. Go to the Drive download page.

2. Click **Download Drive** and select **Mac and PC**.

3. Click **Accept and Install**.

4. Follow the instructions to install Drive.

Download Drive ⌄

🖥 Mac and PC

🤖 Android devices

 iPhone and iPad
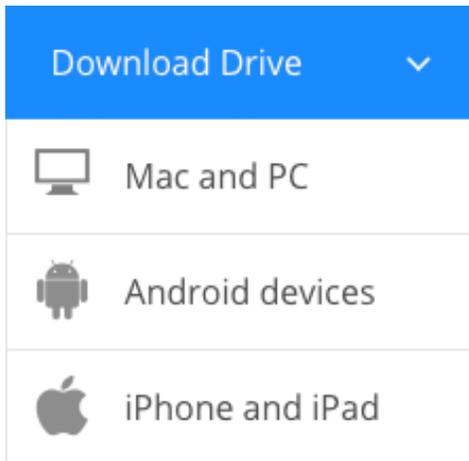
Move files to the Drive desktop folder:

Now that you've installed Drive on your computer, you can store files right from your desktop.

1. Decide which files you want to store in Drive.

2. Organize the files in folders the way you want them to appear in Drive.

3. Move the files and folders into the Drive folder on your computer. From now on, these files exist in the Drive folder and are synced with other devices that also have Drive installed.

If your Internet connection breaks or you need to go offline in the middle of a sync, **Google Drive for Mac/PC** picks up where it left off when you're back online.
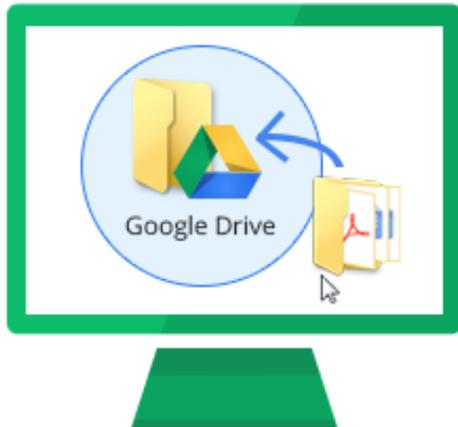
Upload files from your phone or tablet

You can also use the Drive app to store files on your Android or iOS device. (If you decide later to uninstall the app, your Drive files won't be affected and can still be accessed from Drive on the web.)

1. Depending on your device, choose one of these options:

   - **Android phone or tablet:** Touch   .

   - **iOS devices:** Touch   .

2. Find and install the **Google Drive** app.

3. Open the app containing the file you want to upload, touch **Share**, and then touch **Drive**.
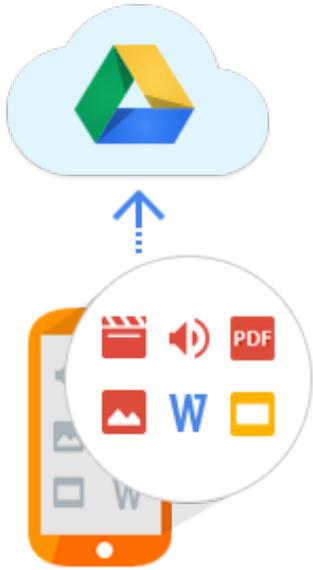
2

Sync and access

Before Drive, if you wanted to access files from different computers or devices, you typically had to make separate copies. Updating one copy meant you had to manually update all the other versions, too. Drive simplifies your work by automatically **synchronizing** the latest version of your file across the web and all your devices.

After you store your files in Drive, you can reach them on any computer, smartphone, or tablet. When you change or delete a file stored in one location, Drive makes the same change everywhere else, so you don't have to.

In this section:

- [Check your sync status](#)
- [Access your files from any device](#)

- [Access your files offline](#)

2.1

Check your sync status

On the web: When you see **Upload complete**, your files have uploaded successfully and can be accessed in any browser or device that has Drive installed.

On your computer: Dragging files to your Drive folder automatically syncs them with Drive on the web (though it might take a moment for files to sync).

Files with   haven't been synced to Drive yet.

Files with   have synced successfully and can be accessed from Drive in any browser or from any device with Drive installed.

Access your files from any device

After your files sync, you can access them from any browser or device.

| Browser or device	Access location
Web browser (computer or mobile device)	drive.google.com
Computer	Google Drive folder
Mobile devices	Drive app

Access your files offline

* Chrome browser only

Internet outages and long plane rides shouldn't prevent you from working in Drive.

Set up offline access so that the next time you don't have Internet access, you can view Google documents, shuffle folders around, and edit files stored in your Drive folder.

1. In Drive, click   and select **Settings**.

2. In the **Offline** section, check the box.

3. Click [Done].

Note: To make sure other people can't see your files, set up offline access on computers that only belong to you.
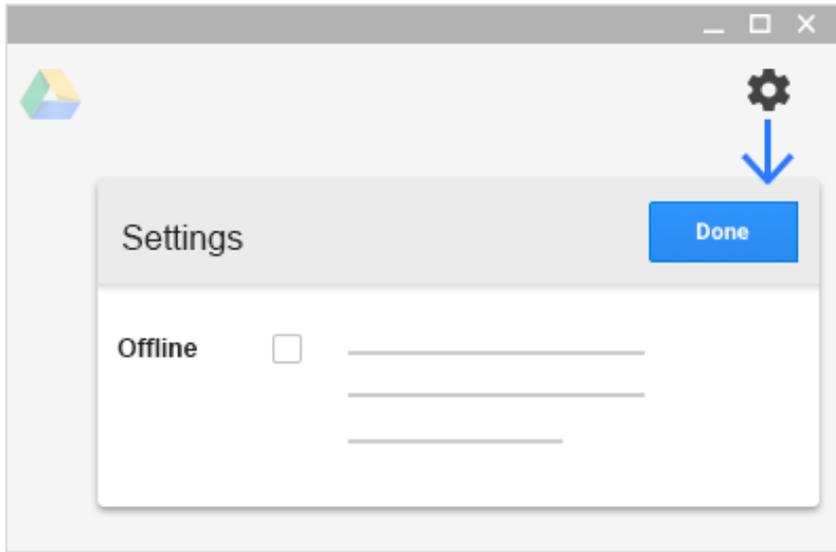
View and update

In this section:

- Preview and download stored files
- Open your files
- Update Drive files
- Delete your files
- Restore deleted files

# Preview and download stored files

On the web:

To take a quick look at a Drive file on the web, right-click it and select **Preview**.

In the overlay, you can:

- Scroll through your document.

- Click   or click   to preview your previous or next document in Drive.

- Click **View all** to select and preview another document in Drive.

- Share your document with others.

- Print your document.

- Open your document to edit it.

- Click   to download your document.

- Click   to exit the preview.

Want to save a file on your computer or mobile device to access later? Download a file from the preview screen by clicking   . Or, select a file in Drive,
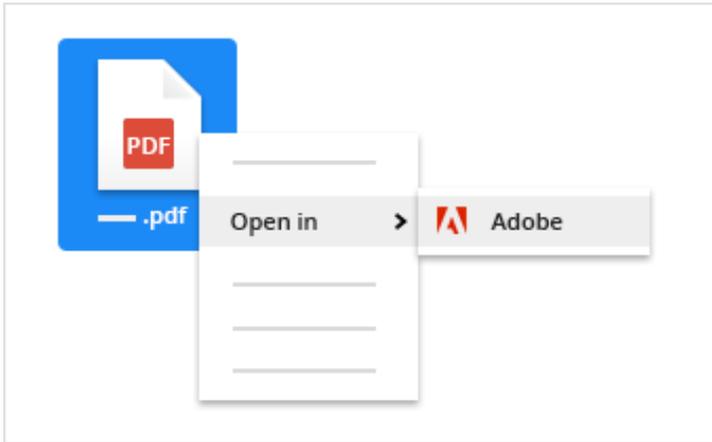
click   , and select **Download**.
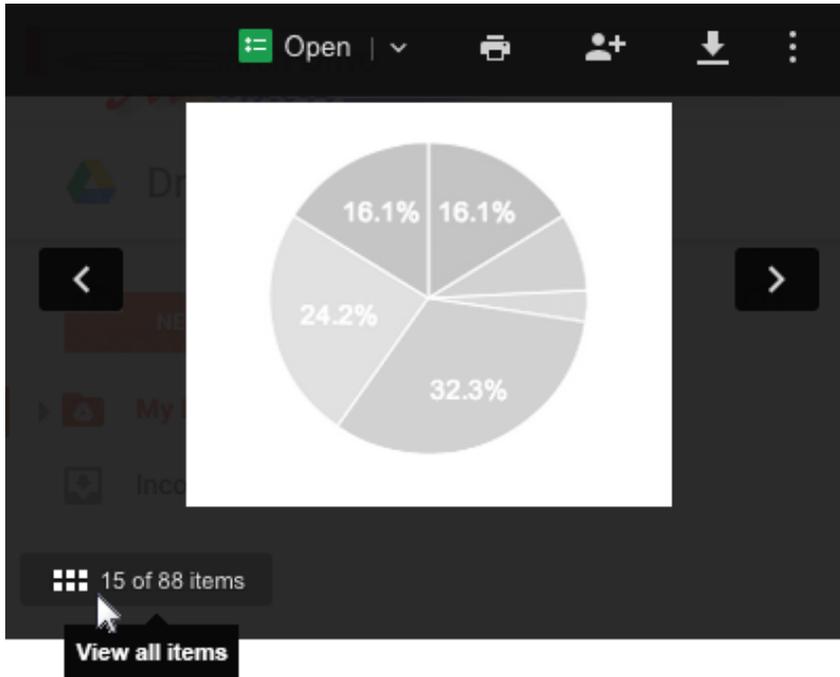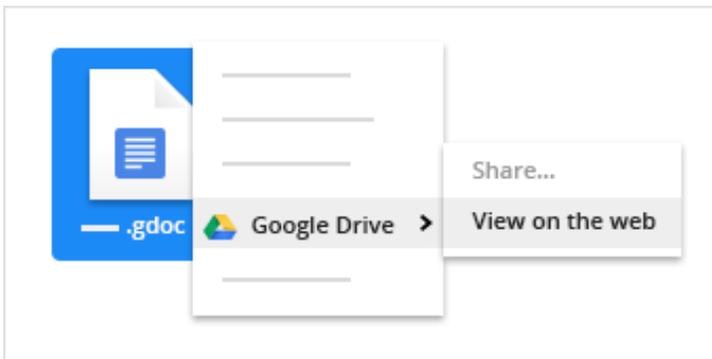
Open your files

On the web:

Double-click the file you want to open.

On your computer:

Open your files straight from your computer's Drive folder.

- Files in your Drive folder created by Google Docs editors open in your browser.

- Other files in your Drive folder open in their regular applications on your computer.

Update Drive files

On the web:

To manage versions of files that weren't created in one of the Google Docs editors:

1. Right-click the file and select **Manage versions**.

2. Click **Upload new version** and select a file from your computer.

3. When the new version is done uploading, click **Close**.

Now you can keep all of your drafts in a single file.

On your computer:

To update a file, just open it from your computer's Drive folder. Make your changes, and they'll automatically sync with Drive on the web.

It works the other way around, too. Changes you make in Drive on the web sync back to your computer. Your files and folders are now up to date everywhere.
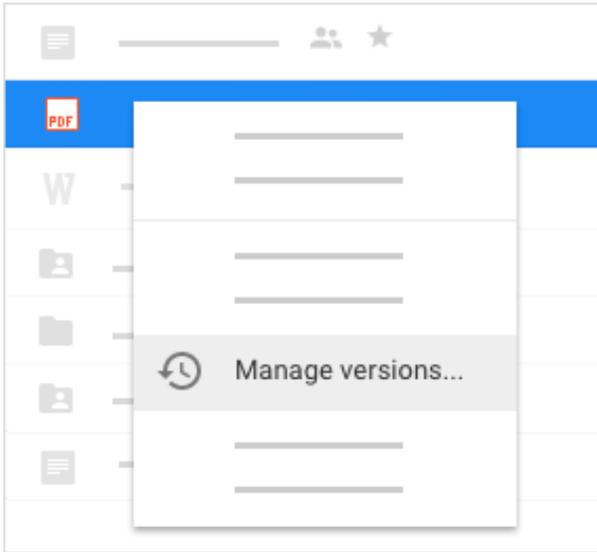
3.4

Delete your files

If you remove a file you own in Drive on any device, it is automatically removed from Drive on all of your devices and on the web.

Note: Removed files you own are moved to Trash in Drive and still count towards your total storage, until you permanently delete them on the web.
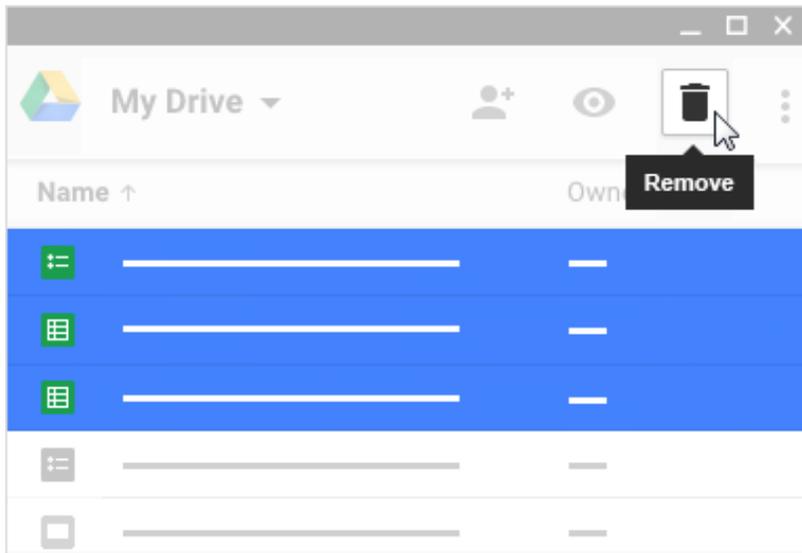
On the web:

Select the files or folders you want to remove and click   .

Delete files permanently: To permanently delete a file when you're in Trash, select the file and click **Delete forever**. To permanently delete all your Trash files, click [**Trash**] and select **Empty trash**.

On your computer:

Just select the files or folders you want to remove and delete them as you would any other file on your computer.


3.5

Restore deleted files

If you change your mind, you can restore removed files to Drive.

On the web: From your Drive's "Trash", select the files you want to restore and click **Restore**.

On your computer: Files you remove from your computer's Drive folder go to your recycling bin. You can restore them as you would any other file on your computer.

Note: Files restored from your computer's recycling bin re-sync to Drive as new files. On the web, you'll see the restored file in your My Drive folder; a copy of the removed file stays in "Trash".
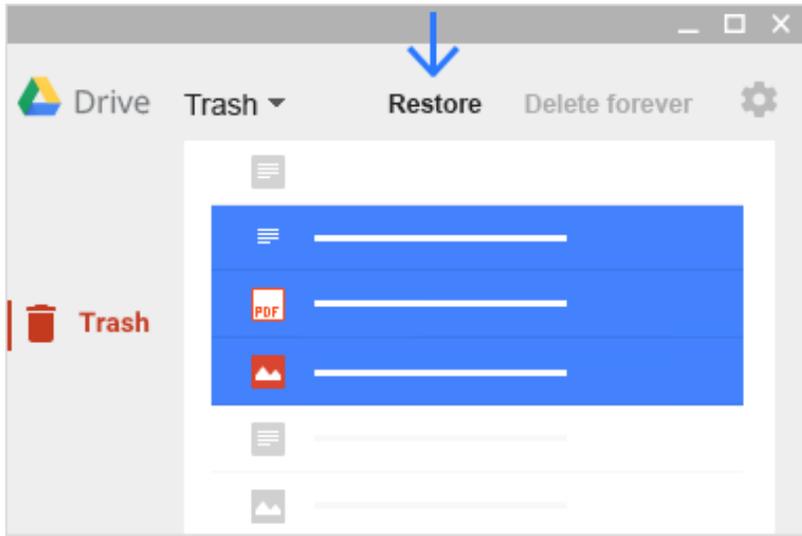
Organize and search

Now that all your files are in Drive, here are some of the key ways you can stay organized.

In this section:

- Create folders
- Move files to folders
- Star important files and folders
- Search and sort your files and folders

Create folders

Any new folders you create in your computer's Drive folder or in Drive on the web automatically appear on your devices so that you're organized everywhere.

On the web:

Click **New** and select **Folder**.

On your computer:

Create new folders in your computer's Drive folder the same way you create other folders on your computer.
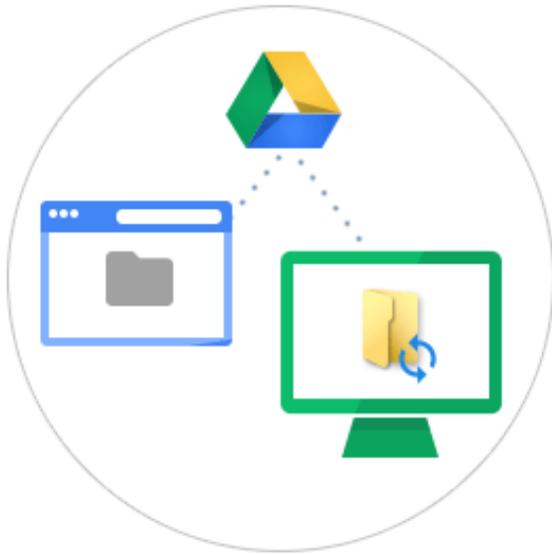
Move files to folders

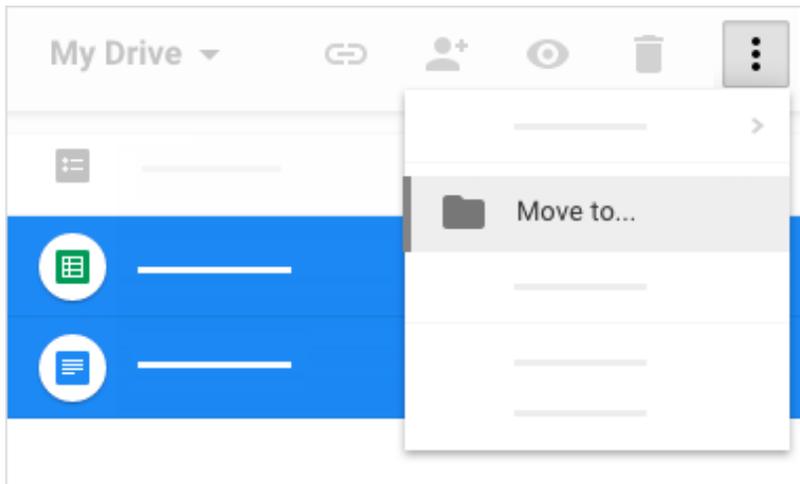Organize your Drive files by moving them into the folders you created.

On the web:

1. Select the files you'd like to move.

2. Click   > **Move to**.

3. Select the folder and click **Move**.

You can also drag them to My Drive on the left.

On your computer:

Select the files you want to move and drag them to any folder in Drive, the same way you'd move any other file on your computer.
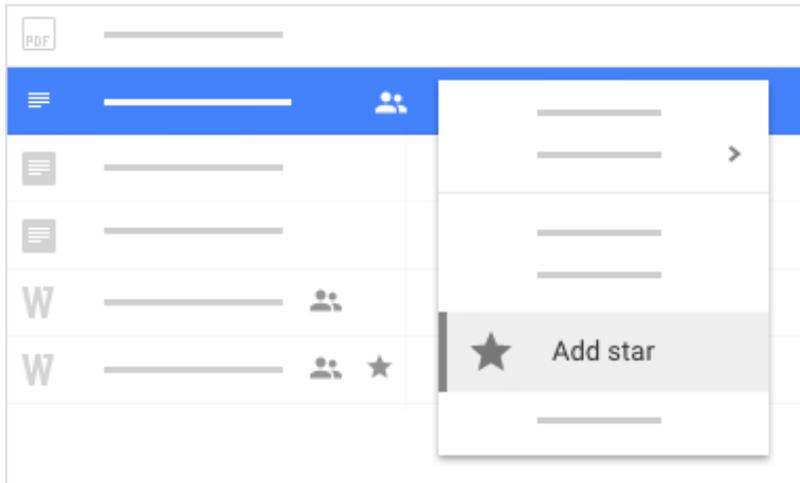
Star important files and folders

On the web:

Flag important files or folders to find them quickly later. Just right-click a file or folder and select **Add star**.

To see all your starred files and folders, in the left sidebar, click **Starred**.

4.4

Search and sort your files and folders

On the web:

It can be difficult to browse through hundreds of files just to find the one you need. So, try searching Drive instead.

In Drive's search box, type a word or phrase. To help you search faster, Drive suggests search terms as you type. Click one of the suggestions to open

it, or click   to see a list of results.

Advanced search options: In the search box, click   to see the search options. Choose any option or combination of options to filter your results further.

Sorting options:

Click   to sort files in any of these ways:

- **Last modified**—See items that were recently modified by anyone (not just you). This might help you keep track of things that your collaborators have recently changed.

- **Last edited by me**—See the files or folder that you've changed.

- **Last opened by me**—Find files you recently opened, regardless of whether you've edited them. This is a great way to get back to items you were recently viewing, if you accidentally closed a tab in your browser, or if you didn't bookmark something.

- **Name**—See your files in alphabetical order.
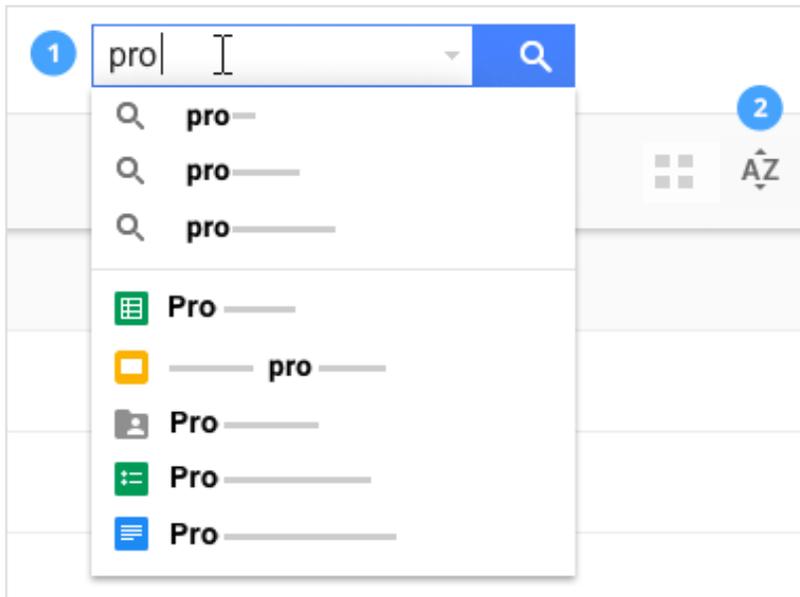
Share and collaborate

After you share Drive files or folders, you can work on them with teammates or even people outside of your company.

In this section:

- Share files and set access levels and visibility
- View Drive activity
- Collaborate with Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms

Share files and set access levels and visibility

On the web:

To share a file you own or can edit:

1. Select the file or folder you want to share.

2. Click   .

3. In the **Share with others** box:

    a. Enter the email addresses or Google Groups you want to share with.

    b. Choose what kind of access you want to grant:

- **Can edit**—Collaborators can add and edit content as well as add comments.
- **Can comment**—Collaborators can add comments, but not edit content.
- **Can view**—People can view the file, but not edit or add comments.

C. If you want to control how visible your files are to other people, such as keeping them completely private or allowing anyone on the web to see them, click **Advanced > Change** and choose an option. The options available will depend on your administrator's settings for your organization.

4. Click [Done].

Everyone you shared the document with will receive an email notification.
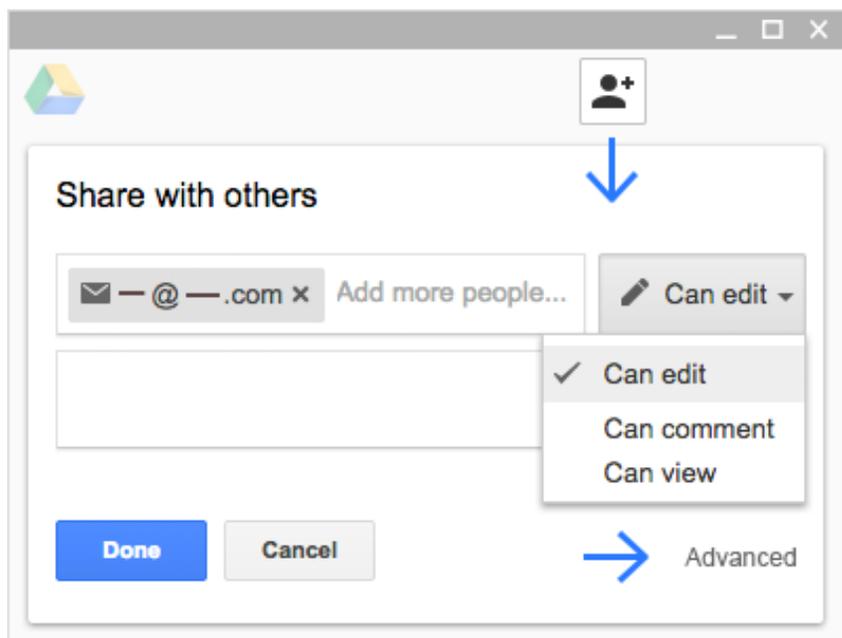
View Drive activity
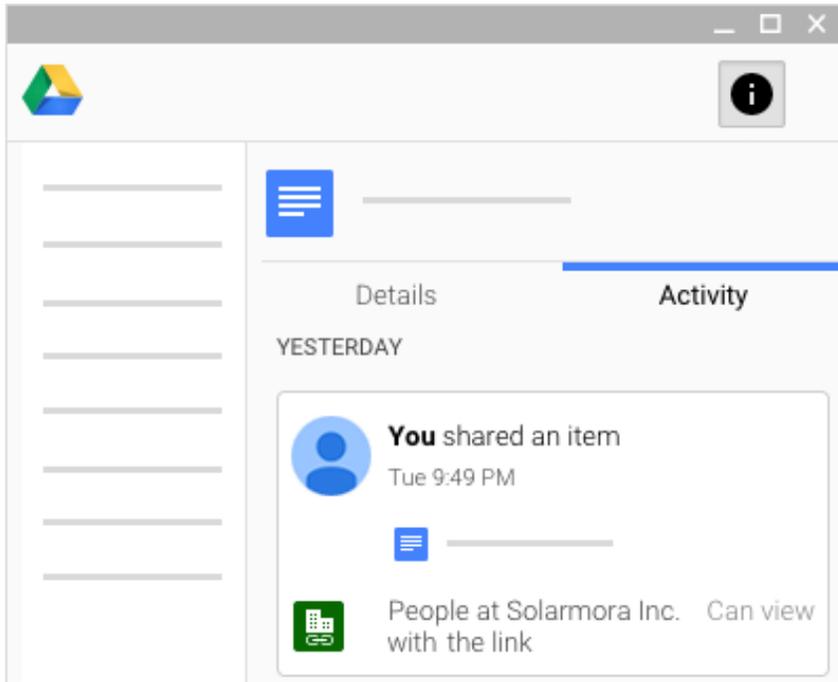
Keep track of changes to items created in or uploaded to Drive, such as:

- Uploading, moving, and removing

- Sharing and unsharing

- Renaming, editing, and commenting

- Who made the change

- People affected by the change

To view all activity in My Drive, click   .

To view the activity for a specific file or folder, select the file or folder and click   .

Collaborate with Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms

On the web:

All the Google Docs editors let you work together in the same document in real time. Commenting on any file brings a conversation into context so you avoid back-and-forth emails and lost time.

Just click [New] and select one of the file types below. Now all you need to do is share the file with your team to collaborate on a draft or key issue.
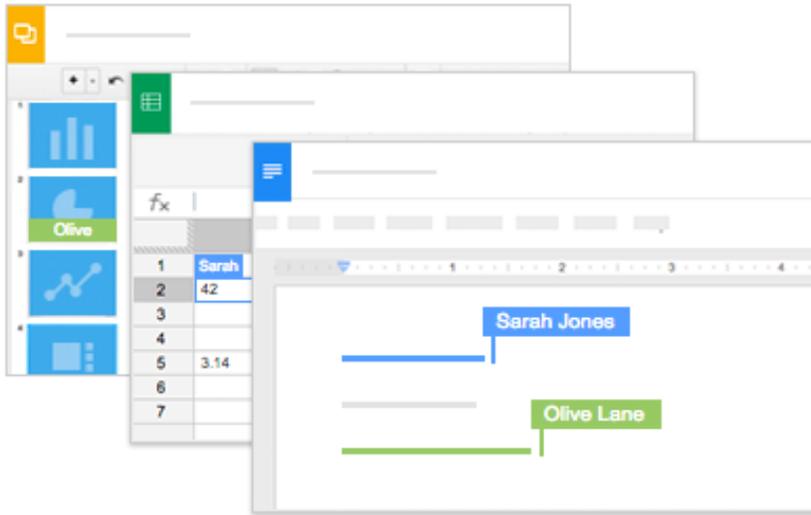
Editor	Description	Example uses
Google Docs	Text documents	Proposals, reports, shared meeting notes
Google Sheets	Spreadsheets	Project plans, budget sheets
Google Slides	Presentations	Pitch decks, training modules, team presentations
Google Forms	Surveys	Customer satisfaction surveys, group polls
Google Drawings	Shapes, charts, and diagrams	Flowcharts, organizational charts, website wireframes, mind maps

Next steps

Try it now

Go to Drive

Get more training

Edit Microsoft® Office® documents without installing Office, scan documents and images as PDFs with your phone, host webpages in Drive, and more.

See Drive tips