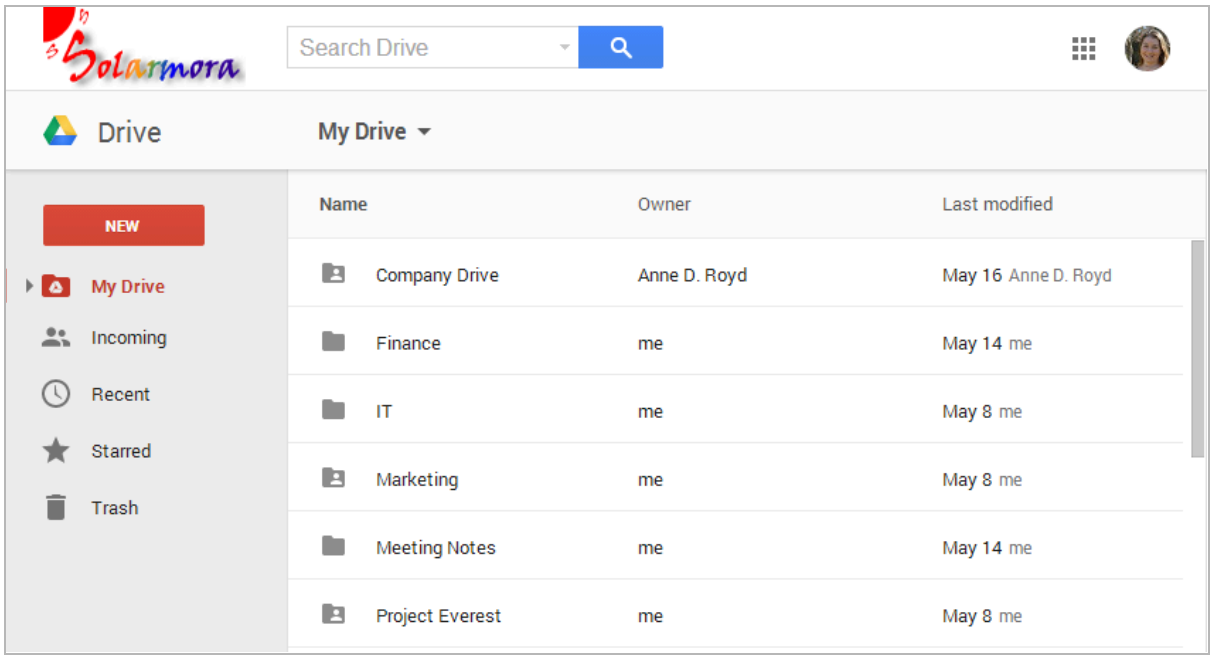
Google Drive: Access and organize your files

Use Google Drive to store and access your files, folders, and Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides anywhere. Change a file on the web, your computer, tablet, or your mobile device, and it updates on every device where you've installed Google Drive. You'll always have the latest version of your files and Google Docs at your fingertips. Read, edit, share, and collaborate wherever you are!

Set up Google Drive

1. In your browser, go to **drive.google.com**.

   When you first access Google Drive on the web, you'll see a Welcome page. If you've previously used Google Docs, Google Drive on the web will look something like this:



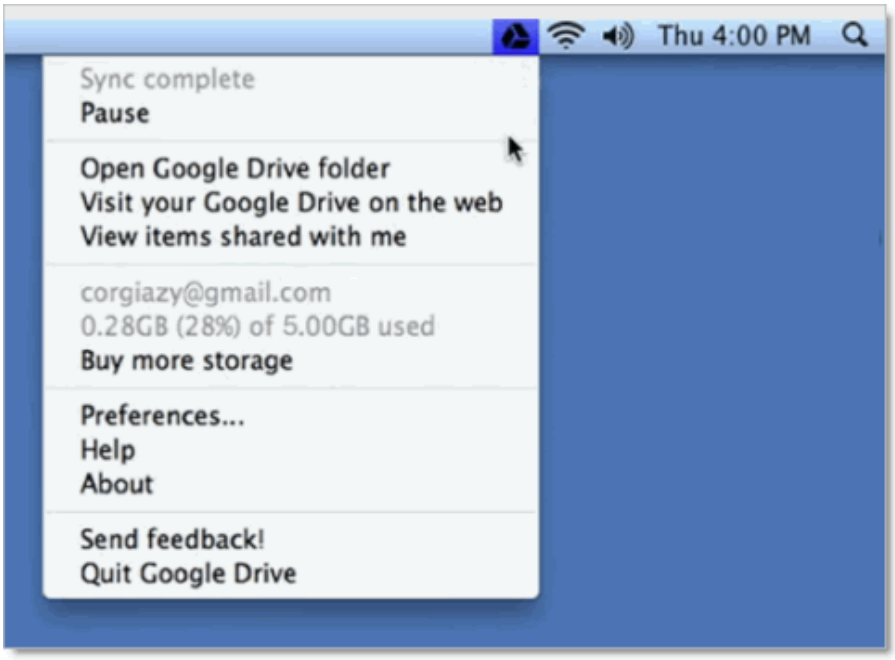
2. Download and install **Google Drive for your Mac/PC**. (Or your administrator might do this for you.) This lets you sync files from your computer to Google Drive on the web, giving you access to your files on any device, at any time. Syncing is built-in—you don't have to do anything to set it up. Just connect to the Internet and you're ready to go.

   Note: The link to download and install Google Drive for your Mac/PC might be disabled in your organization. If it's not available or if you choose not to install it, Google Drive on the web still provides access to all your Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and any files that you manually upload.

Once installed, you can find Google Drive for your Mac/PC in your Windows system tray or Mac menu bar. Here's how it looks on the Windows system tray:



Click the icon to see sync status, access your Google Drive folder on your computer or on the web, pause the sync, set preferences, and more. Here's how it looks on a Mac:

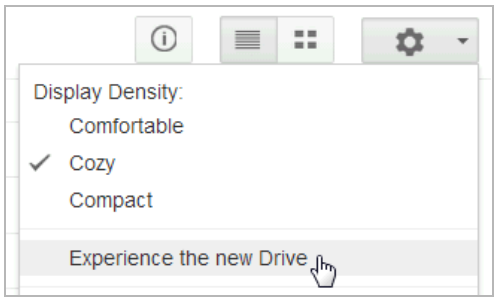


You can also access Google Drive files on your Android or iOS device. See Google Drive on a mobile device to learn how.

Get to know your Drive

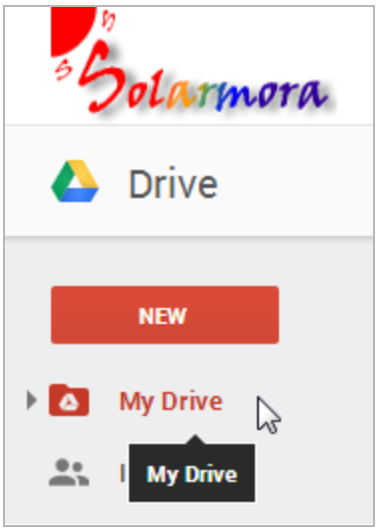
There are lots of ways to view your files, folders, and Google documents in Google Drive on the web. Let's take a quick look around.

Note: Not seeing the new Drive? Click the gear icon and select **Experience the new Drive**!



My Drive

When you first get Google Drive on the web, all the files and folders you've uploaded and Google Docs that you own are in the section called **My Drive**:



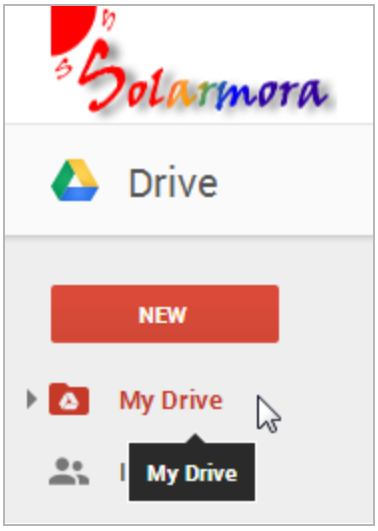
Click the NEW **New** button to upload more files and folders to **My Drive.**

If you or your administrator installed Google Drive for your Mac/PC, the contents of **My Drive** will sync with the contents of a folder called **Google Drive** on your computer. Only the contents of **My Drive** are synced.

You can move files that have been shared with you to **My Drive** if you want them to sync to your computer and mobile devices. You can also add new files to **My Drive** by moving or saving files to the **Google Drive** folder on your computer. In a nutshell: everything you put in **Google Drive** on your computer can also be found in **My Drive** on the web and mobile devices, and vice-versa. We'll demonstrate how that works in just a bit.

Incoming

Incoming is where you'll find the files, folders, and Google documents that have been shared with you.



Incoming only shows items that were shared with you explicitly. You won't find items here that were shared with the "Public" or "Anyone with the link." (You can find those items using the search box.) If you'll be referencing a shared document often, you can drag it into **My Drive** (or a specific folder in your Drive) so that it appears there as well.

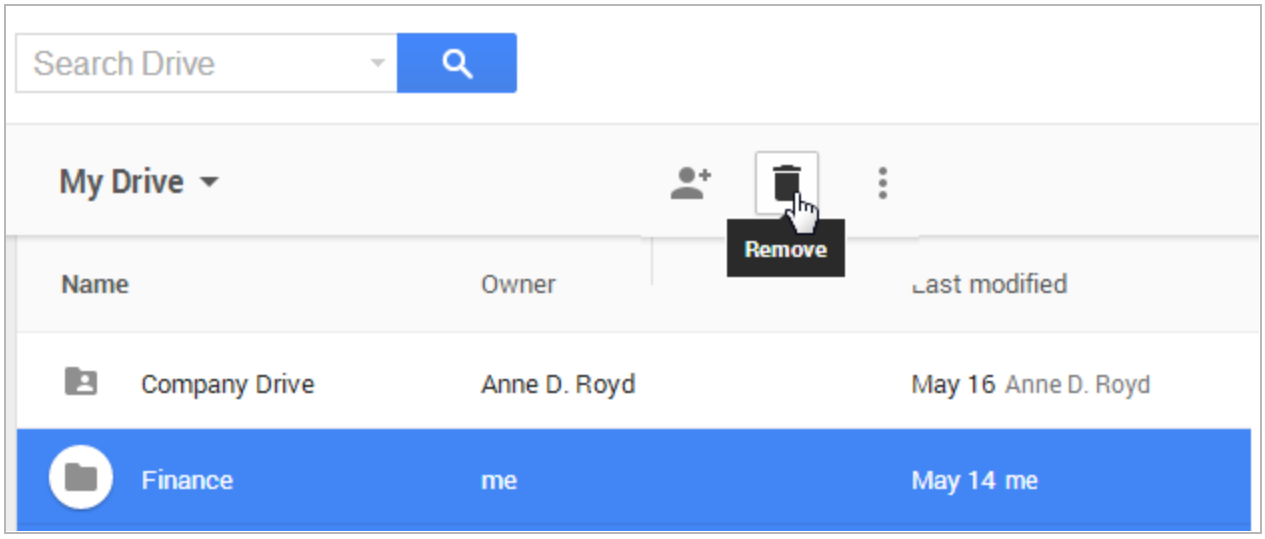
Starred and Recent

Click **Starred** to see all the items you've marked with a star. Just click the star to the left of an item to mark it. Stars are like "bookmarks" or "favorites" in a browser to mark web sites you want to access frequently.

Use the **Recent** view to see all the private and shared files that you've opened, in reverse chronological order. This is a great way to quickly find your most current stuff.

Trash

Trash contains everything you've deleted. To delete an item, click the item and click the trash icon that appears:

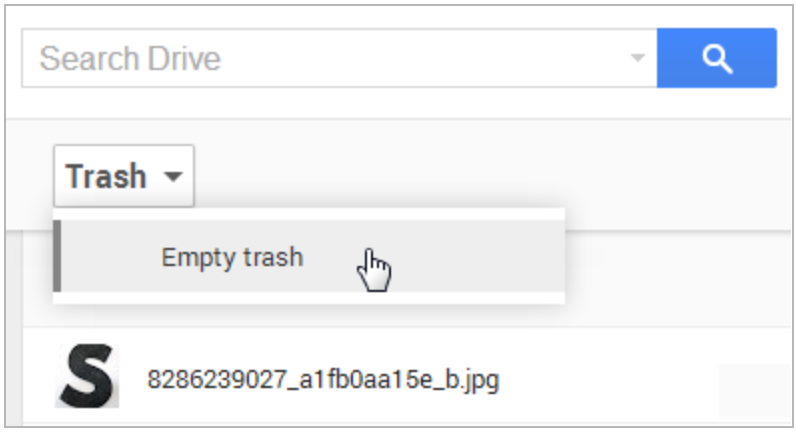


Note: You can only trash items that you own. Trashing an item you don't own will take it out of your Google

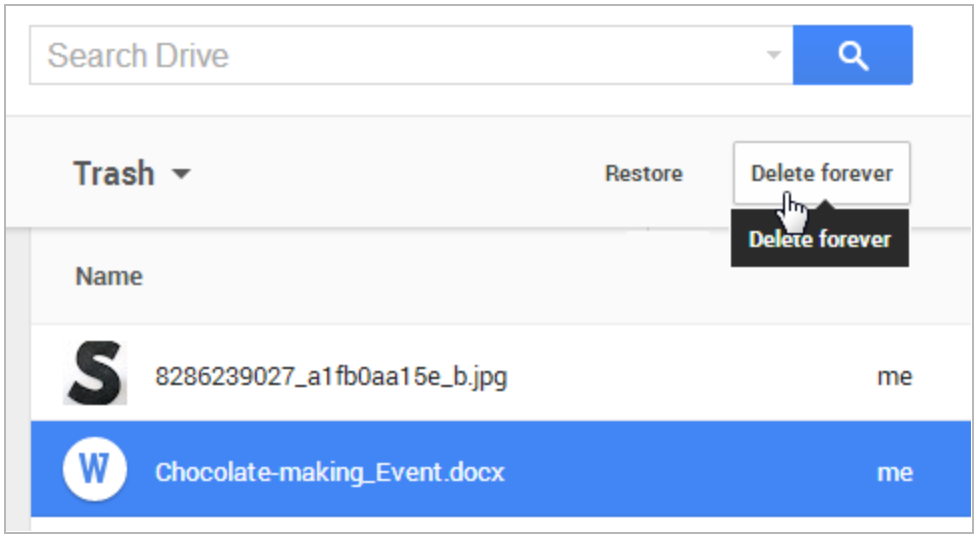
Drive, but not remove them for everyone else.

Your trash is never automatically emptied, so you'll probably want to clean it out once in a while. Items in your Trash still count toward your storage quota, so this helps free up some space. To clean it out:

- In the **Trash** view, click the **Trash** drop-down menu and select **Empty trash** to permanently delete everything:



- Or, select individual items and click **Delete forever**:



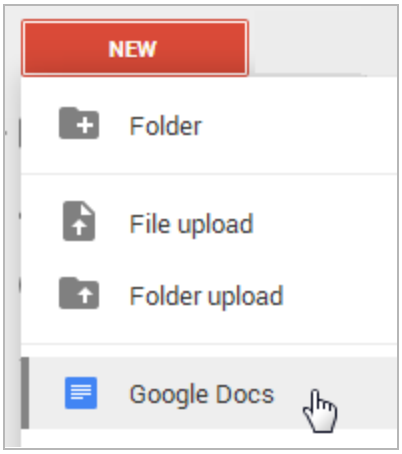
  Notice that after you select items in the trash, you can also choose to **Restore** them.

Note: Only synced or uploaded files take up storage space. Files shared with you and Google documents (such as Docs, Sheets, and Slides) don't take up any of your storage space.

Do you need extra storage? You can purchase additional storage, but check with your system administrator first. Your organization might do that for you!

Add files and folders to Drive

When you're ready to create new documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and more, just click the red **New** button and select an app from the list to get started.



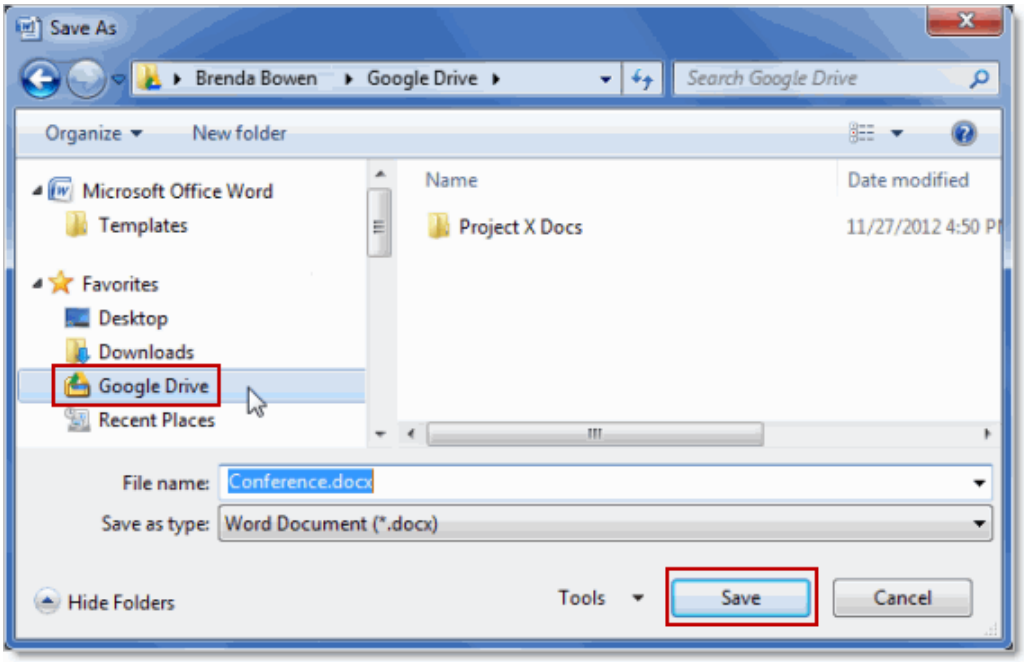
See Using Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides to learn more about using these Google productivity apps.

Add files to Google Drive using sync

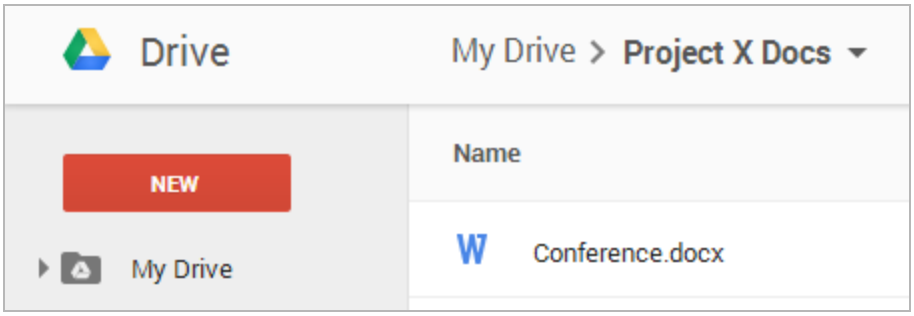
Do you have existing files and folders you want to add to Google Drive? You can easily sync or upload those files to add them to Google Drive on the web and your mobile devices.

If you or your administrator has installed Google Drive for Mac/PC, anything you add to the **Google Drive** folder on your computer will automatically sync to **My Drive** on the web and your mobile devices. So all you need to do is move or save files to the **Google Drive** folder. For example:

1. In Microsoft Word, save your document to the **Google Drive** folder:



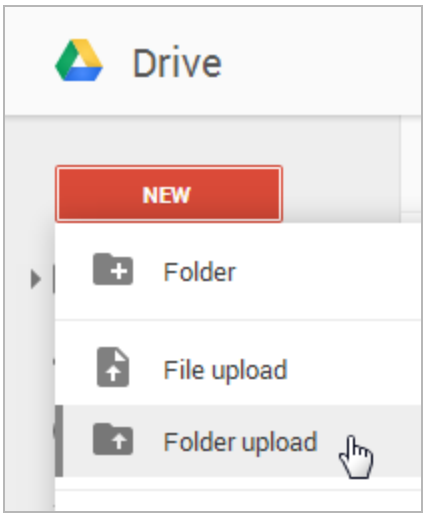
That's it! Now you can access your Word document in Google Drive on the web and your mobile devices:



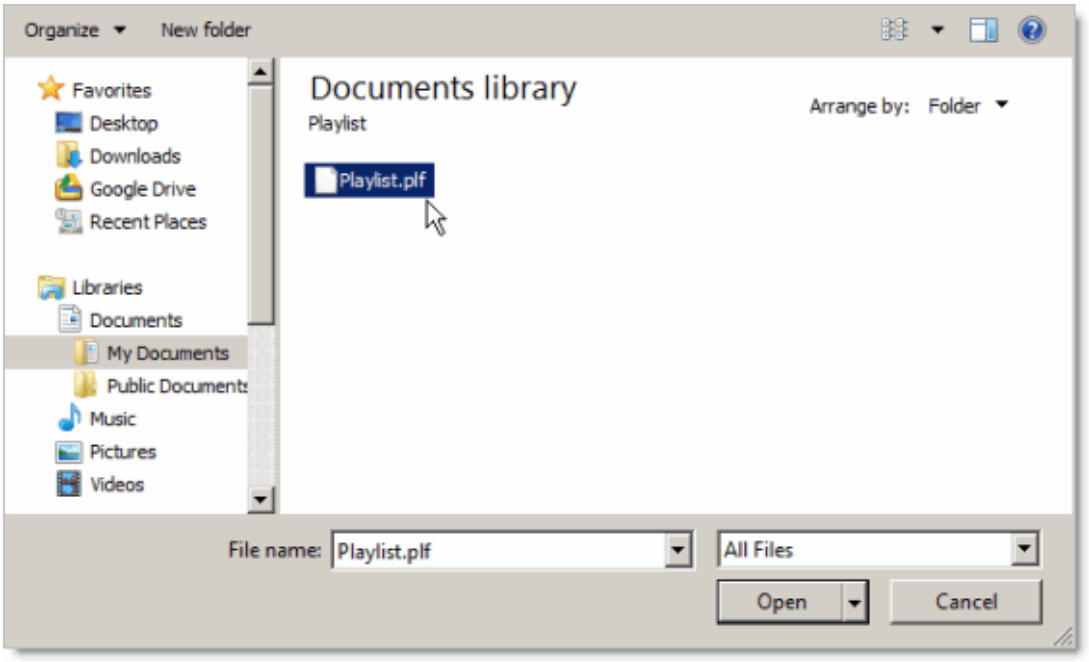
Upload files and folders to Google Drive

It's also easy to upload existing files and folders to Google Drive on the web. Here's how to upload a file (folders work the same way):

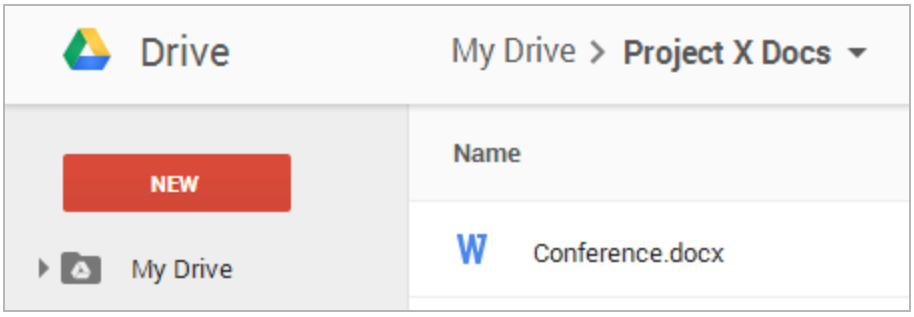
1. In Google Drive on the web, click the red **New** button and then select **Upload files...:**



2. Select the file (or files) you want to upload and click **Open**. Here's how it might look on Windows:

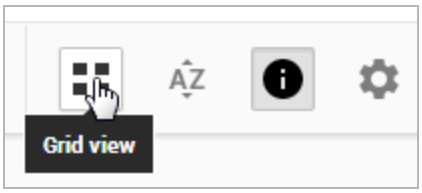


That's all you need to do. As soon as the upload completes, you'll see the file in **My Drive**:

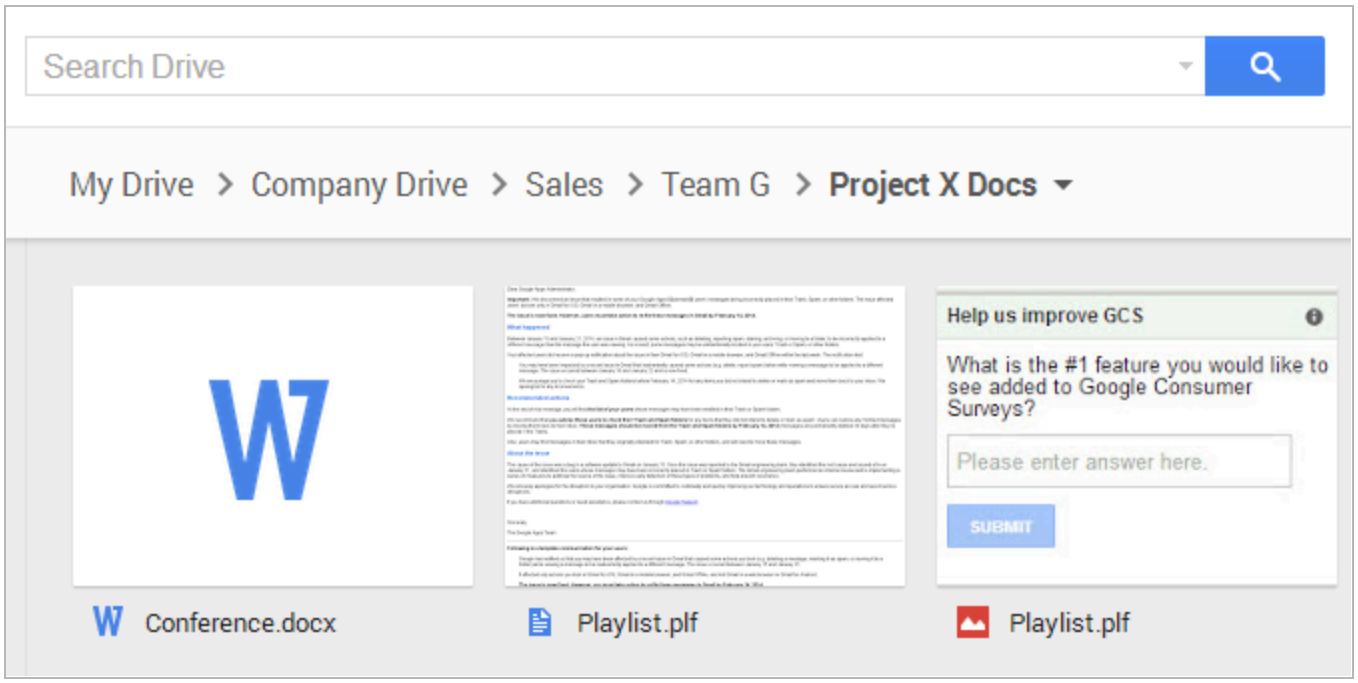


Preview or learn about a file

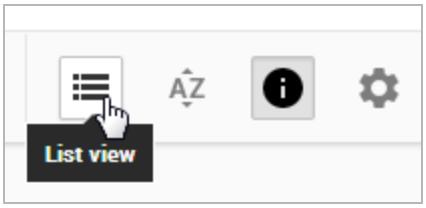
So far we've seen how files look in Google Drive using the default List view. This is the most compact way to view your files. If you'd prefer to see a preview of each file in Google Drive, click the **Grid view** icon in the upper-right of Google Drive on the web:



Now your files are displayed in a grid of thumbnail previews. This can help you locate a file without having to open each one. You can also select files and folders to make changes.



To return to the List mode, click the **Switch to List** icon:

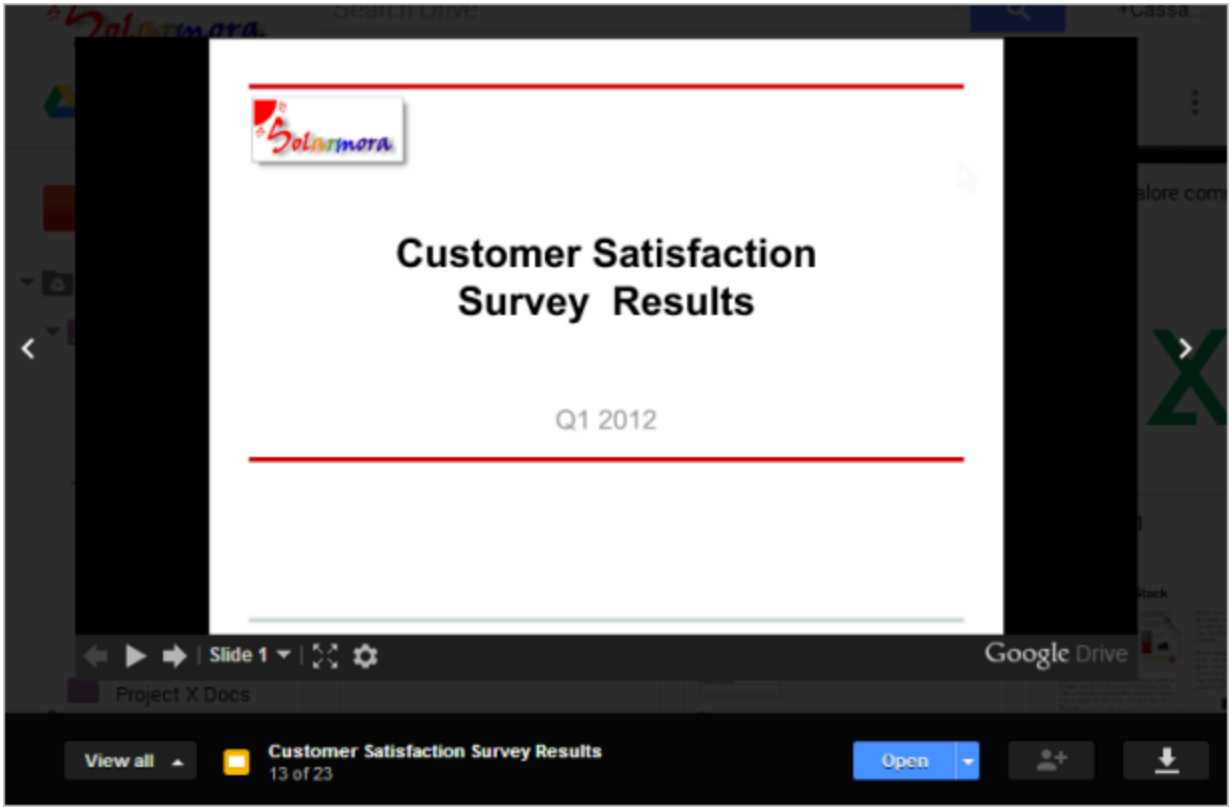


However, if you like to work in List mode and want to see a visual preview of a file, you can do that too.

1. Right-click a file.
2. Hover over **Open with**.

3. Select **Preview** from the drop-down menu.

The preview will display as an overlay:

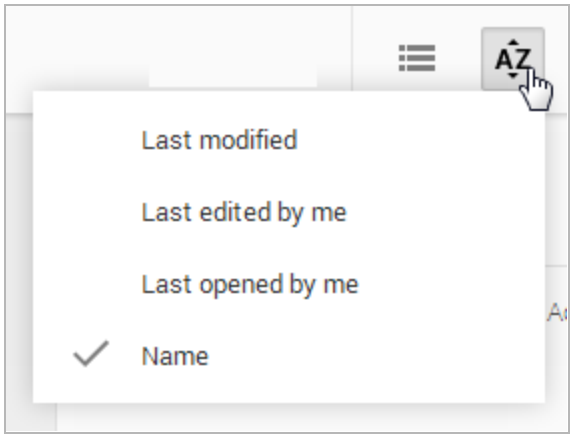


In Preview mode, you can:

A. Scroll through your displayed document.
B. Preview the previous or next document in your Drive.
C. Select another document from your Drive to preview by clicking **View all.**
D. Share your document with others.
E. Print your document.
F. Open your document to edit it.
G. Download your document.
H. Exit the preview by click the **X** in the upper right corner.

Sort your files

If you have a lot of files, it can get harder to keep track of them. One way to make your files easier to find is to sort them. Click the **Sort options** icon to see your options:

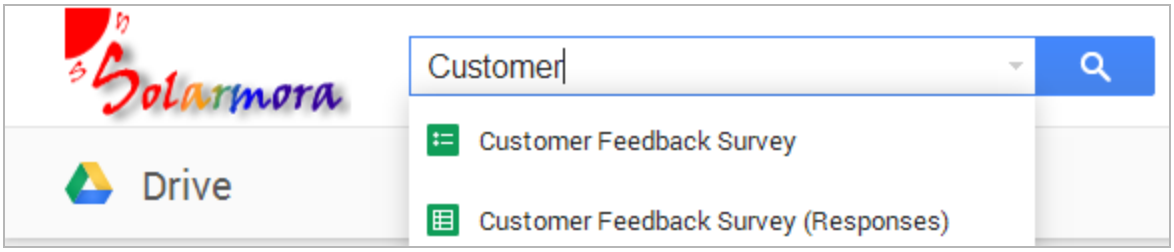


The sort options above are available in most Google Drive views. Here are a few sorting tips:

- Sort by **Last modified** to 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.
- Sort by **last edited by me** to see the files or folders that you've changed.
- Use **Last opened by me** to find things you've recently opened, regardless of whether you've edited them. This is a great way to get back to items you were recently looking at if you accidentally closed a tab in your browser or you didn't bookmark something.
- Sort by **Name** to see your files in alphabetical order.

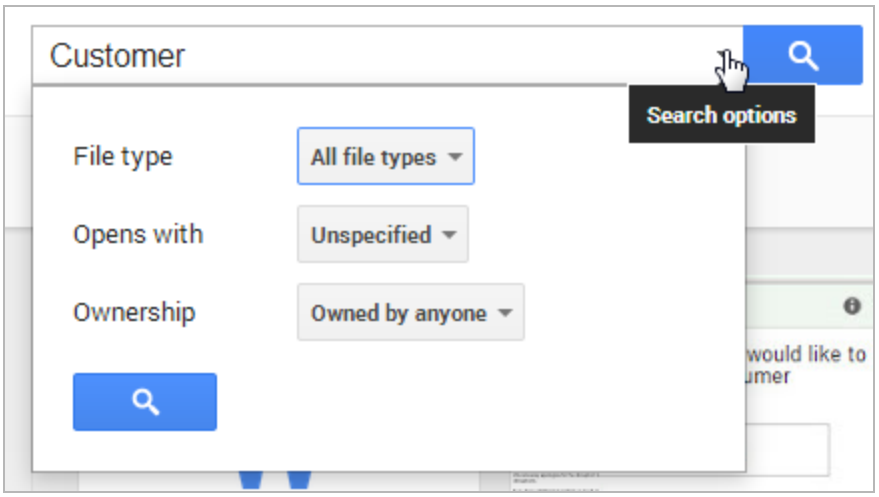
Find a file

Type a word or phrase in Drive's search box to find a specific file, folder, or Google document. As you're typing, Drive will try to predict what you are looking for and give you a list to choose from.

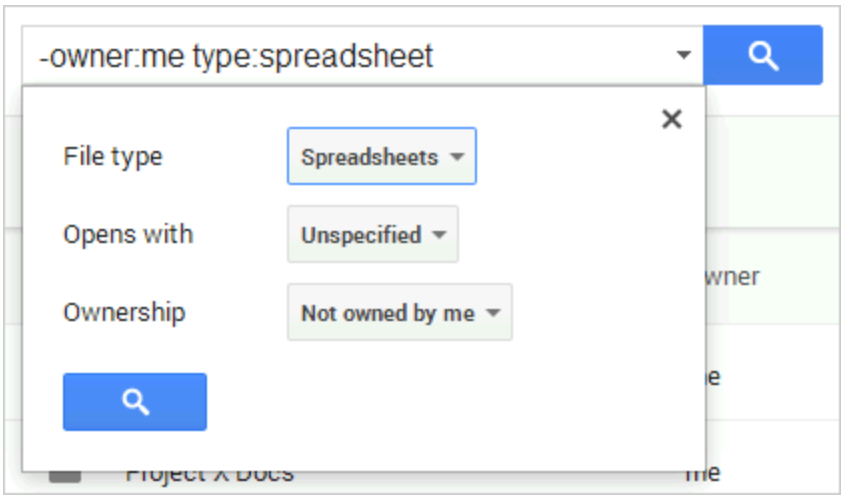


Narrow your search results

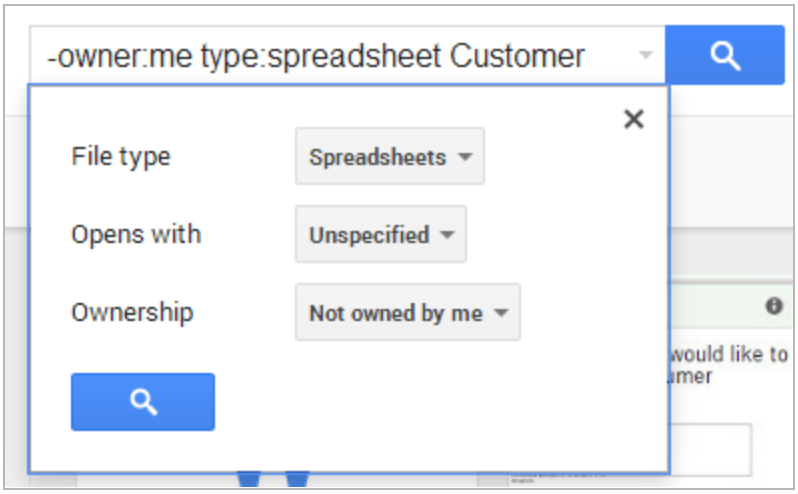
1. In the search box, click the down arrow to see search options:



2. Choose any search option to narrow your search. You can also choose a combination of search options to further filter your results. For example, maybe you know the file you want is a spreadsheet that you don't own. Click those options and your search box will look like this:



3. At this point you might already see what you're looking for. If not, type a search query, such as "expenses," and click the blue search button.

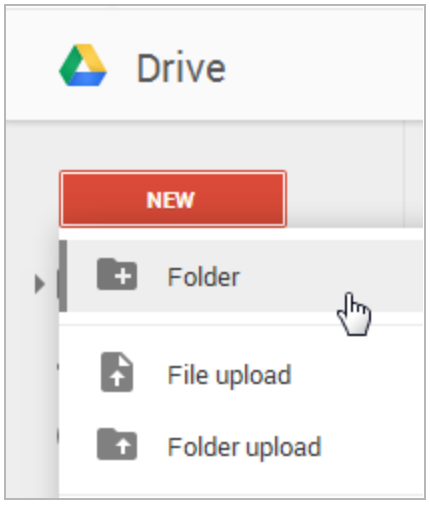


Organize your files

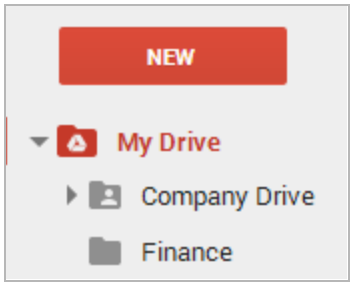
You probably have a lot of files in **My Drive**, or will soon. Use folders to organize the contents, just like you do on your computer.

Create a folder in Google Drive on the web

1. Click the red **New** button and then select **New folder...**



2. Enter a name for the folder and click **OK**. Your new folder is created in **My Drive**:



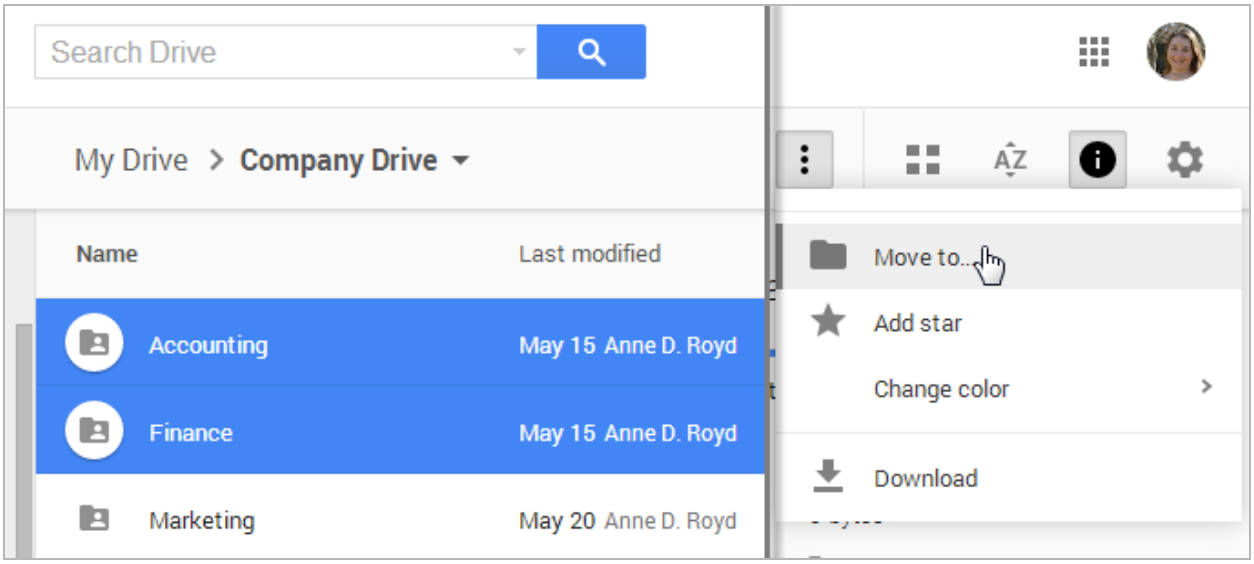
Move files to a folder

1. Click the item (or items) you want to move.

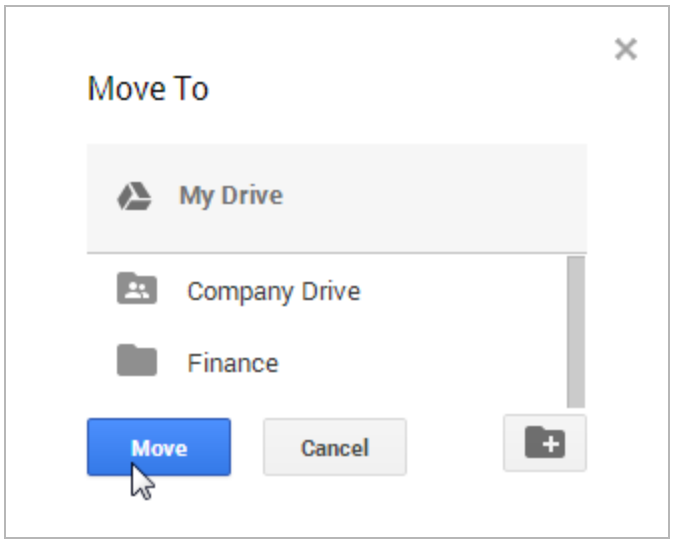


Do you want to move multiple items? Hold **Ctrl** or **Command** key to click all the items you want to select.

2. Click the **Move to...** icon that looks like a folder:



3. In the **Move to** dialog, select the folder where you'd like to move your items, or create a new folder for them.



4. Click **Move**.

Share a folder

You can share a folder, just as easily as you share your Google documents.

1. Click the file or folder you'd like to share.
2. Click the  **Share** icon and add the people or Groups you'd like to share the folder with.

Once the folder is shared with others, it will have a  shared folder icon on it.

See Sharing and Collaboration to learn about your sharing options.