# COMPUTER COMFORT

Learning the basics of computer use.

What is a computer?

A computer is an electronic device that uses data to perform tasks. Common computers include desktop computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets. The physical parts of the computer are called *hardware*. Examples of hardware include the mouse, keyboard, and computer chips. The operating instructions that tell the hardware what to do are called *software*. Examples of software include web browsers, media players, and word processing applications.

There are two main types of computers: PC and Mac. PC, which originated with IBM in 1981, has been developed by many other companies. PCs usually use the Microsoft Windows operating system. Mac (short for Macintosh) computers originated with Apple in 1984. These computers are only made by Apple. Macs use the Mac OS X operating system. These two types of computers have a different style but share the same basic functions. Computer users tend to prefer one or the other of these styles. Due to their prevalence, the rest of this handout will focus on using PCs.

PC

Mac
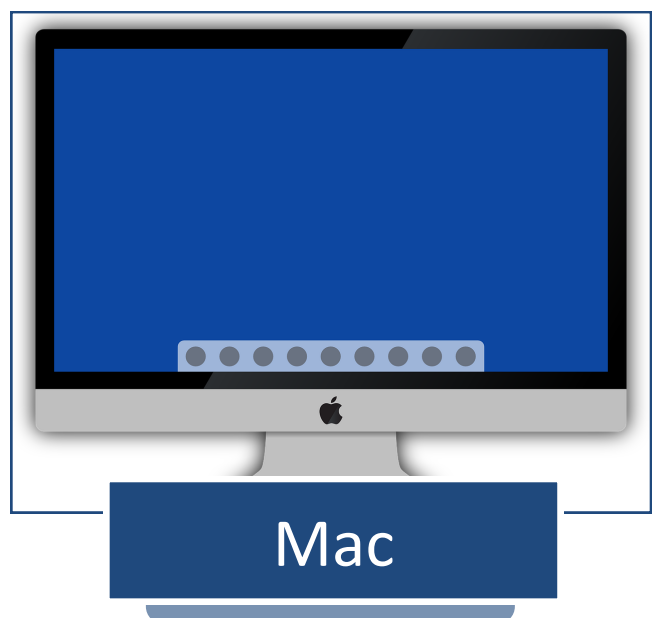
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Monitor/Screen: The monitor on a desktop computer and the screen on a laptop computer display information and options which allow the user to visually interact with the computer.

Computer case: On desktop computers, a vertical or horizontal box called a computer case accompanies the monitor and houses all of the computer chips and wiring. The power button will be located on the computer case. On laptops and all-in-one computers these parts are combined with the rest of the computer eliminating the computer case.

Keyboard: The keyboard allows the computer user to input letters, numbers, and functions into the computer. On laptops, functions on the keyboard can include volume control and brightness control. Additionally, the laptop power button is usually found above the keyboard area.

Mouse/Trackpad: The mouse controls the arrow (called a cursor) on the computer screen. This allows the computer user to click on options or move objects on the screen. On laptops, trackpads function as a computer mouse to allow the same options. On the next page, we will look closer at the parts of a computer mouse.
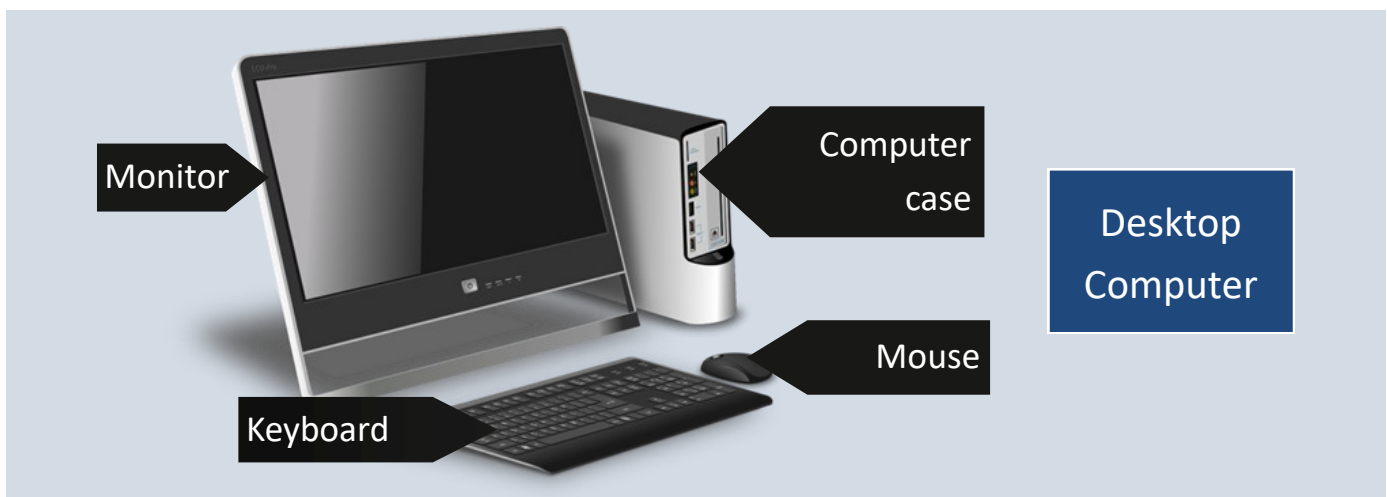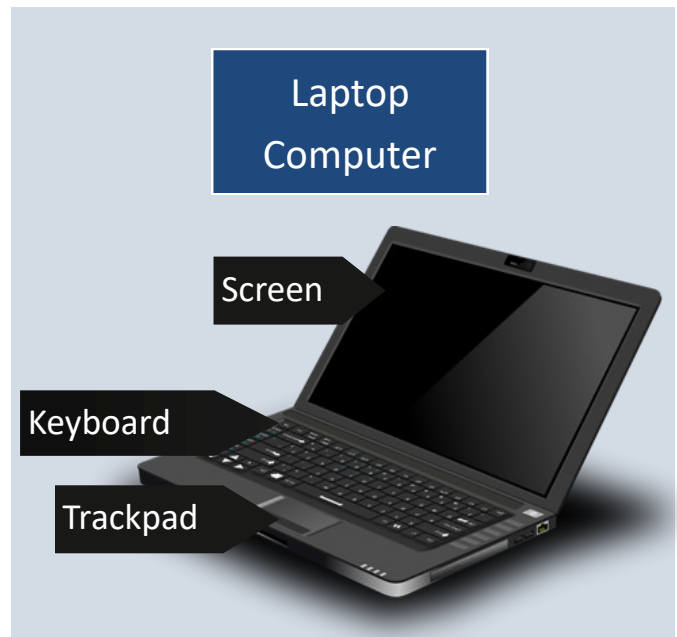
A standard mouse has two buttons and one scroll bar. The left-click button is the most frequently used for selecting options in basic navigation or moving objects. The right-click button presents additional options in menus. The scroll bar makes it easy to move through pages by smoothly scrolling a page up or down.

Right-click button

Scroll bar

Left-click button

Computer Mouse
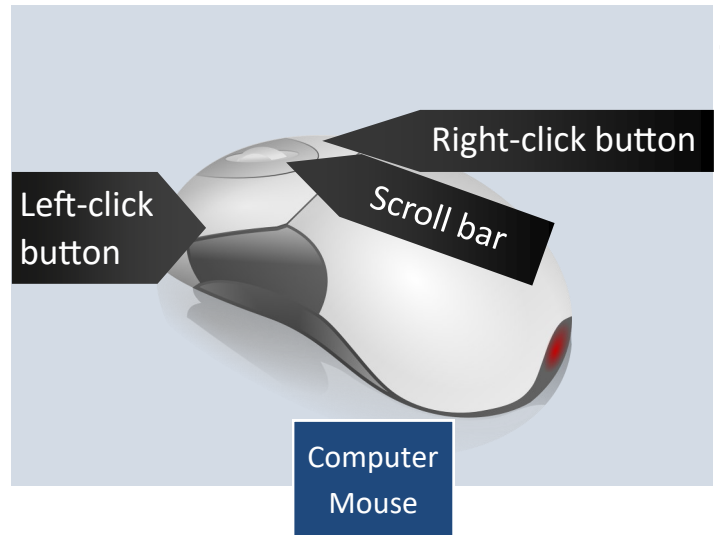
Learning the layout

When the computer turns on, the monitor will display the start screen, or desktop. The desktop is the command center for the computer and often holds icons for programs. When a program is open on the computer it will show in a window in front of the desktop. The taskbar is displayed at the bottom of the desktop. Open programs will be listed on the taskbar with their icons. The taskbar can be customized to hold icons for favorite programs for easy access. It also houses the Start Menu for finding programs and files. The right-hand corner of the taskbar holds the computer notifications, calendar and clock features, and network settings.

Desktop

Icon

Window

Notifications

Calendar

Network Settings

Start Menu

Taskbar

Menus

Navigating computers requires interacting with a variety of menus. The most prominent computer menu is the Start Menu which displays programs available on the computer. The Start Menu usually has a search bar. This search bar allows you to search for programs, files, or options that are on the computer. The power icon gives options for shutting down the computer, restarting the computer, or entering sleep mode. In sleep mode, the computer enters a low power state but remains on. Other computer menus often appear from using the right mouse button. Place the cursor on the desktop and try clicking with the right mouse button. A dropdown menu will appear. The right mouse button will activate dropdown menus with further options in many programs and applications.
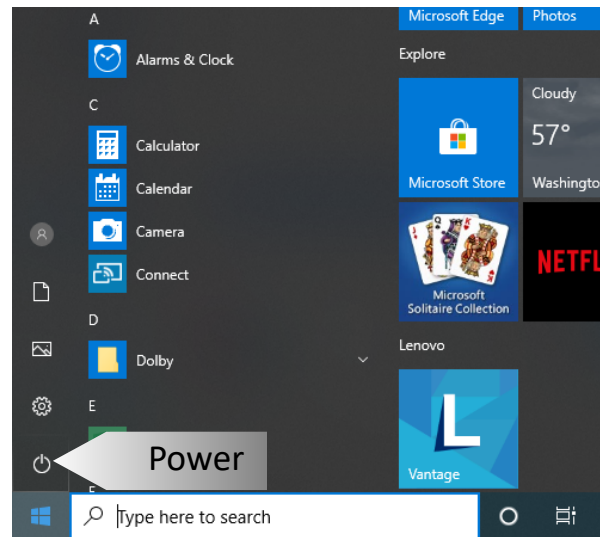
Opening Programs

To open a program, also called an application ("app"), move your cursor until the arrow is hovering over the icon of the program you want to open. Then, do *one* of the following actions:

- Double-click with the left mouse button

- Single-click with the left mouse button then press the Enter key on your keyboard

- Single-click with the right mouse button and choose "Open" from the dropdown menu

For program icons on the taskbar or in the start menu, a single-click of the left mouse button will open the program.

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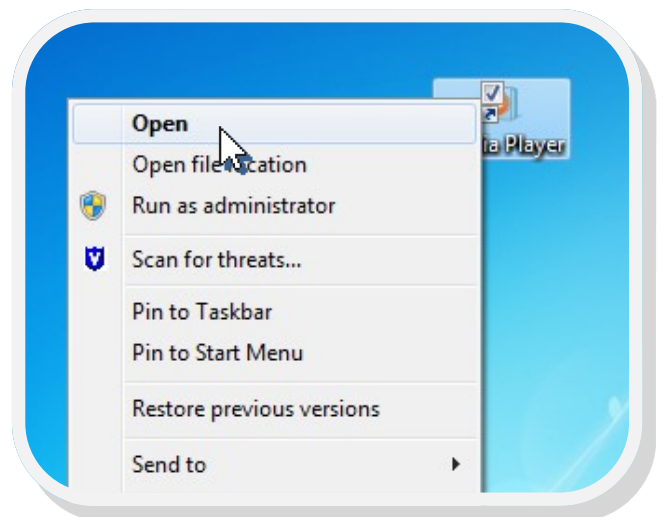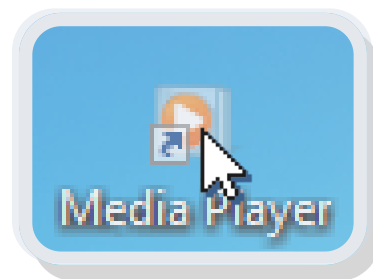
Each program, or application, opens in a window. In the upper right corner of a window are options for minimizing, resizing, and closing the program

Minimizing – The minimize button causes the window to collapse to the taskbar. When a program is minimized, it is still running. To re-access the window, simply click on the program's icon on the taskbar.

Resizing – The resize button reduces or maximizes the size of the window. When the window is filling the screen this button will give the option to "Restore down" which reduces the size of the window. When the size of the window is reduced, you can manipulate the size by dragging the sides or

corners of the window with your mouse. To return to a full screen view of the window, click on this button again which will give the option to "Maximize."

Closing – The "X" button closes the program. Next time you open the program, it will open to its start page. Before closing most programs, it is important to make sure you have saved your document!

Saving Documents
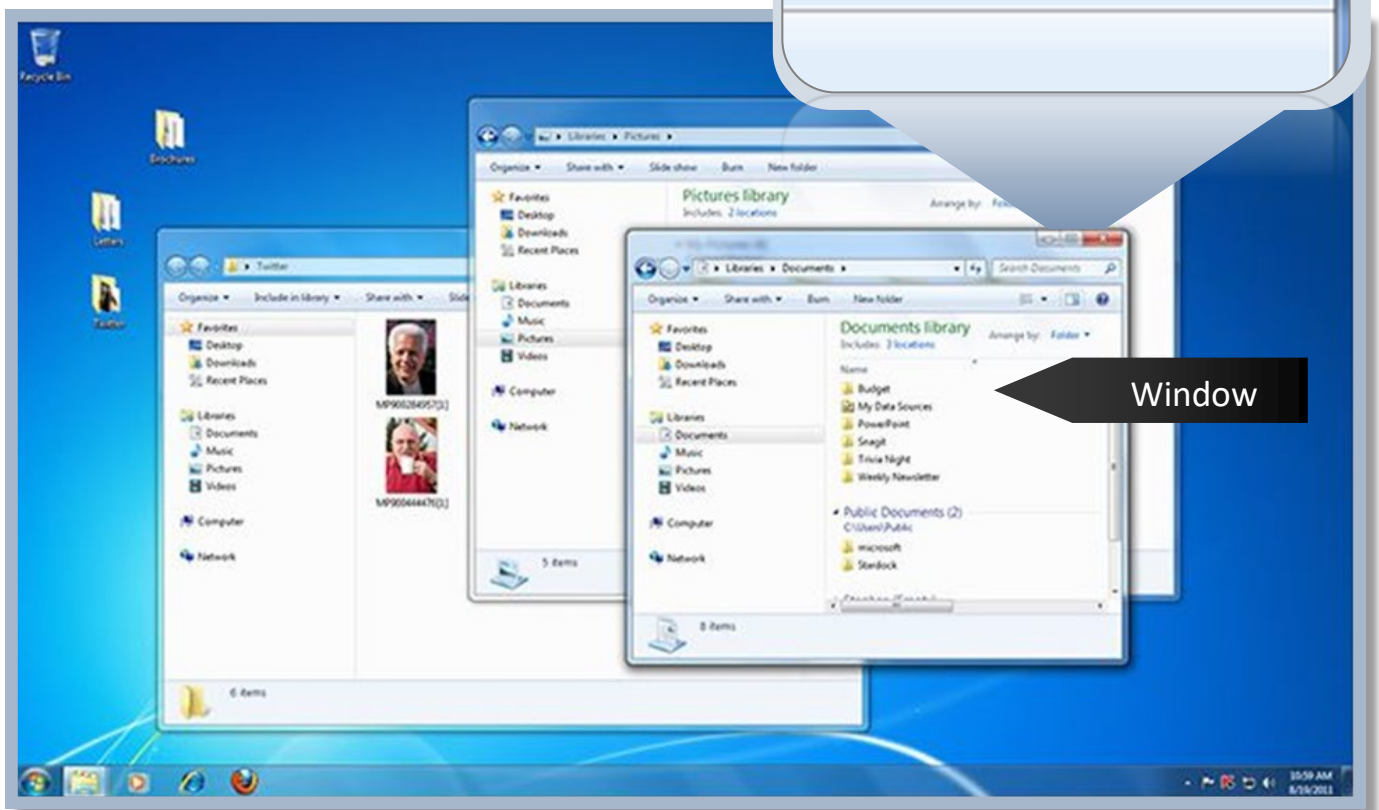
After creating a document, you can save it to your computer or other storage by choosing the Save As option. In Microsoft Office, and many other programs, a Save icon is included in the main options. The Save icon is a small square in the shape of a floppy disk, sometimes blue, as in the image above. Clicking this button will save the document or open the Save As dialog box. If you do not see a Save icon, look for the File menu to navigate to Save As. From here, the Save As dialog box will open.

If you choose to save to the computer, the computer's folders will display allowing you to choose the file's location.

In the File Name line, you can type the document name. This line will default to the first line of text in the document. Simply, click in the line to begin typing and replace the text.

File type options are included in a dropdown below the file name to allow for saving to different file types. The file type will default to the one standard for that program. For example, files saved in Word will save as a .doc or .docx file; whereas, files saved in PowerPoint will save as a .ppt file. A commonly used file alternative is PDF or Portable Document File. PDFs are relatively small in file size and are locked for editing making them a good choice for sharing via email.

Once you have made your selections, click the Save button to apply them and save the document. After initially saving the document, clicking the Save icon will save new changes to the document without reopening the Save As dialog box.

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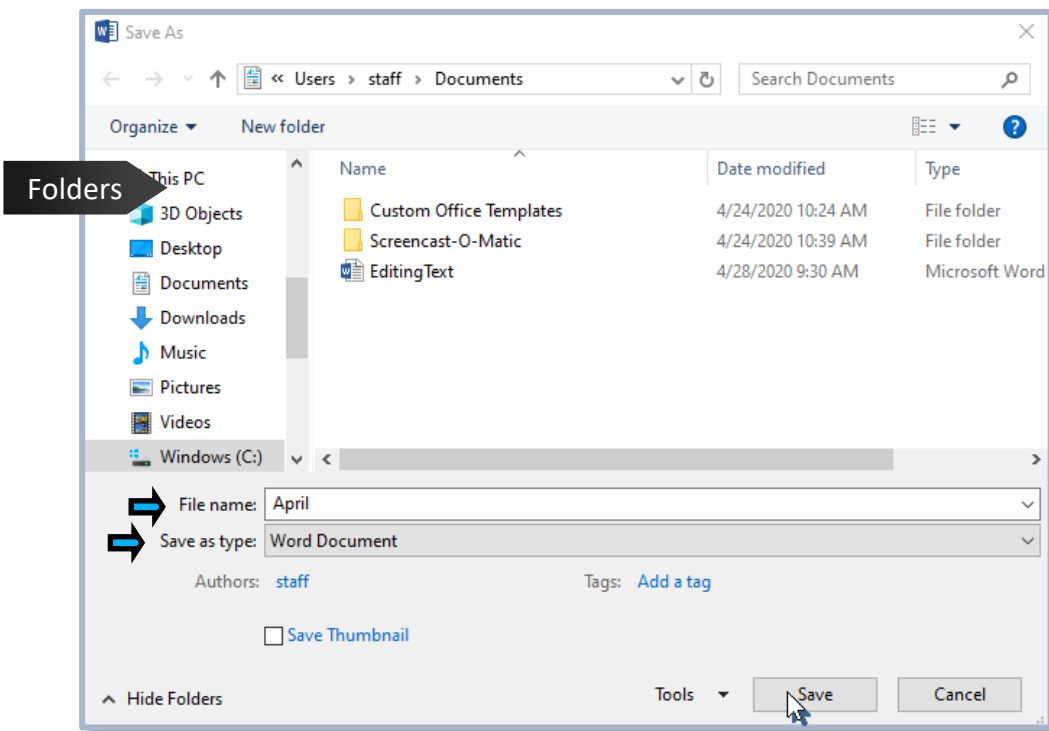
There are a variety of storage options for keeping track of digital documents, media files, and images. Computers have a limited amount of storage on the hard drive. Options for additional storage include the following:

USB Flash Drives — Flash drives are small memory sticks that can hold digital files and have the benefit of being mobile. They can be connected to any computer with a USB port. These are handy for keeping backup copies of files, transferring files, or bringing a document to the library for printing!

External hard drives — For a larger amount of storage, external hard drives are a great option. These can be connected to a computer via a USB port. Many people use external hard drives to keep backup copies of important files or to store images.

SD Card— An SD card is a small storage device used in digital cameras, mobile phones, and tablets. Despite its small size, it can have substantial storage. Some computers have SD card slots for accessing stored files. If your mobile device needs extra storage, an SD card is the perfect option.

Cloud storage — Today, many people take advantage of cloud storage including Google Drive, Dropbox, and OneDrive. Google Drive and OneDrive are available for free via accounts with Google or Microsoft. Files uploaded to a cloud are stored on servers run by the parent company. Cloud storage can be very handy as files stored in the cloud can be accessed from any device connected to the internet. Digital storage prevents losing files from missing flash drives or computer crashes.

External Hard Drive

SD CARD

64 GB

USB Flash Drive

Cloud Storage
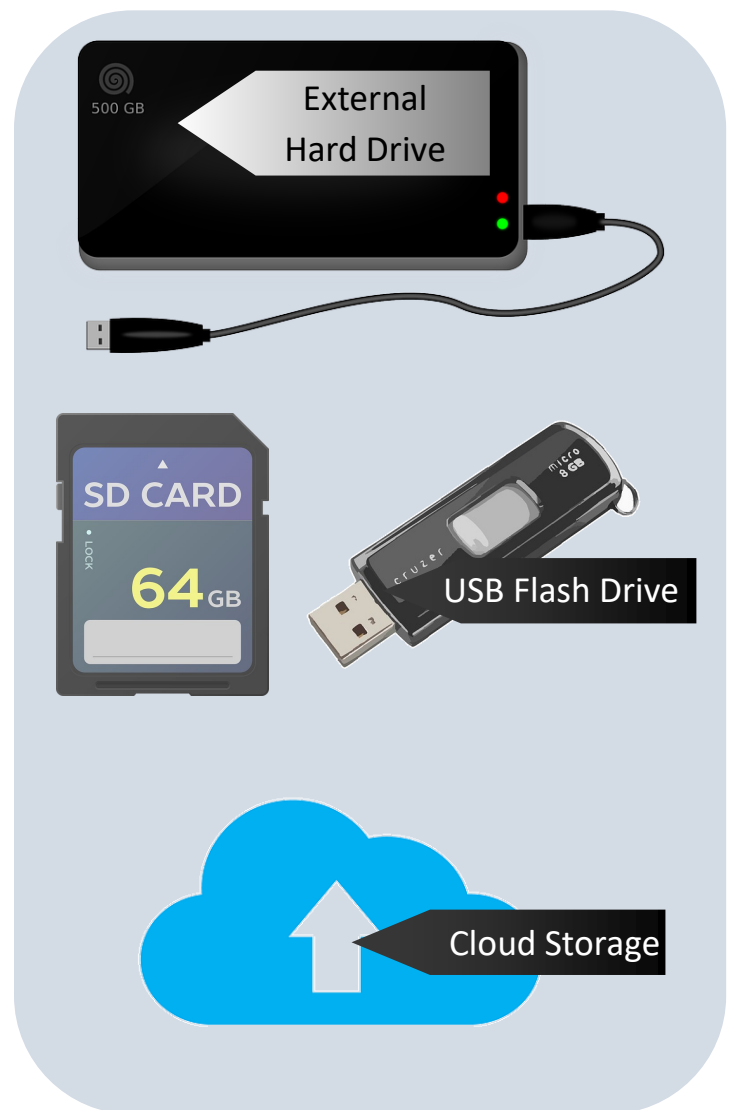
Organizing files and folders on your computer or storage device makes it easier to find them later. Open File Explorer to navigate through computer files or to access USB flash drives and external hard drives.

Using File Explorer

The File Explorer in Windows lists the computer's folders on the left-side of the window. Some folders will have an arrow next to them. Clicking on the arrow will display folders located within the folder. USB flash drives and external hard drives will show under the section called Computer.

Creating Folders

To create a new folder, choose a location for the folder, such as, Documents. Then, hover your cursor over the white space in the folder and right-click with your mouse. A dropdown menu will appear. Hover the mouse cursor over the option called New. An additional menu will appear. Select Folder from this menu. Once you

do so, a new folder will be created. Left-clicking on the folder title will highlight the text allowing you to edit the folder name. Double-clicking on the folder will open it.

Moving Files

To move a file, select it with a left-click then right-click on the file to access the dropdown menu. Select Cut. Open the folder where you would like to move the file and right-click again. Choose Paste from the dropdown menu. Now the file will have moved locations.

Try organizing things by category (e.g., Recipes) or date (e.g., June 2019). Taking charge of organizing files as you create them saves a lot of hassle later!

File Explorer

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Printing Documents
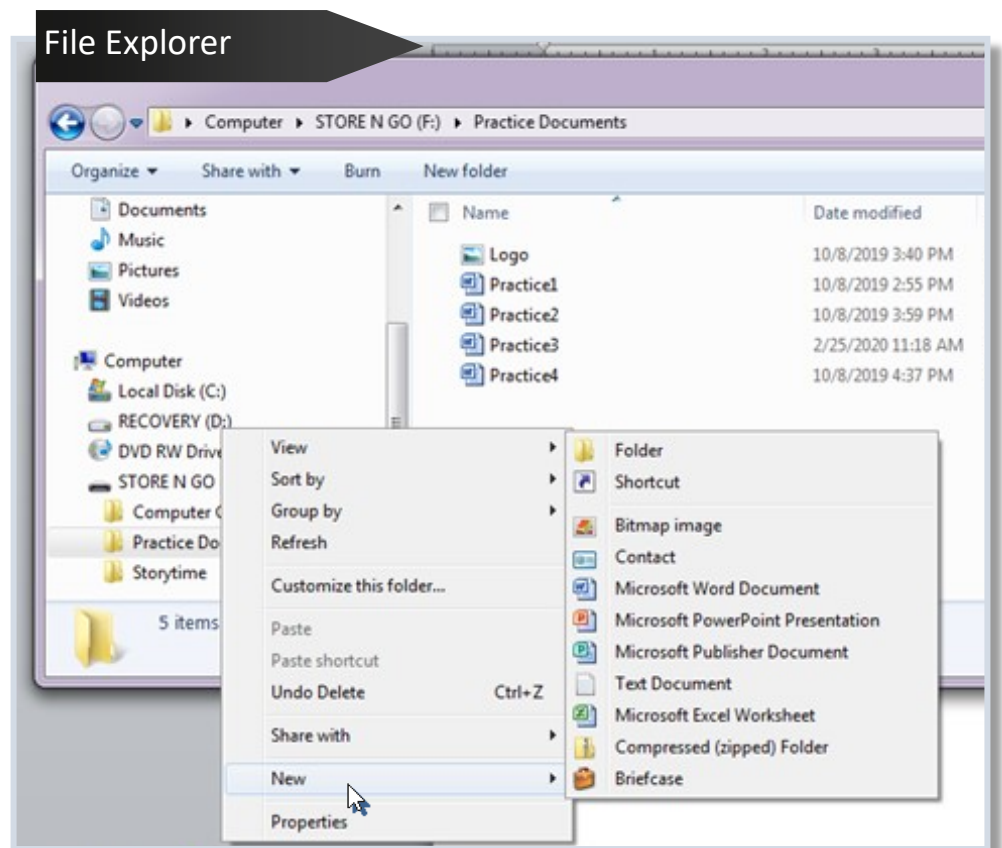
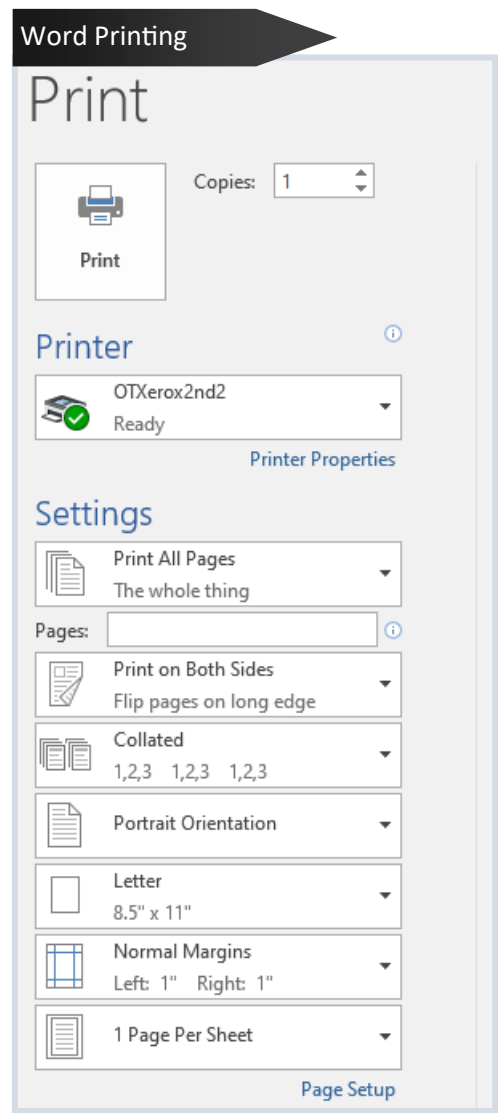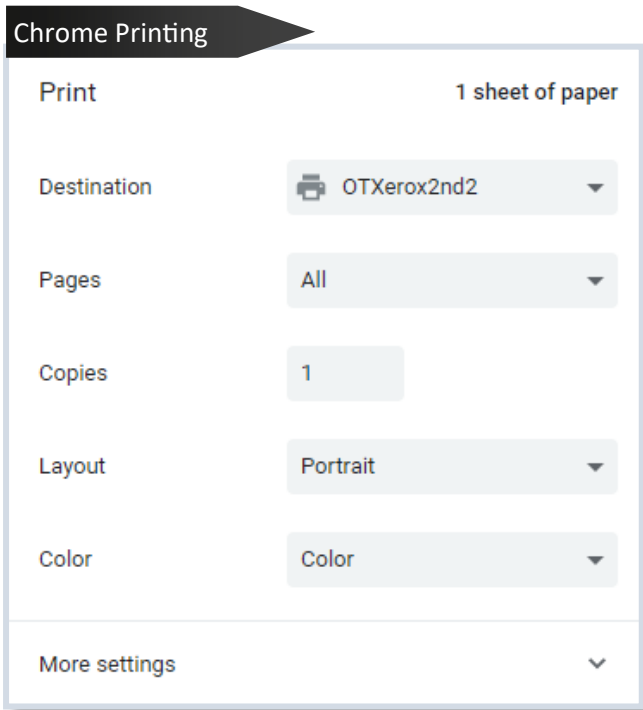Printing is a useful option for creating a paper copy of a document or webpage. To print a document, select the Print option. In many programs, a print icon will appear on the toolbar. If no print icon is present, the print option can be located under the File menu in Office programs or the dropdown menu in web browsers. For easy access, holding down the Ctrl button on your keyboard and pressing the letter P (Ctrl + P) will open the print dialog box.
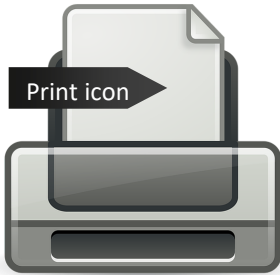
Print icon

Print options include the choice of color or black and white printing, number of copies, and choice of printer. Different print menus will look slightly different.

Compare the images to see the differences between the print menu in Word and the print menu in Chrome. Being familiar with print options will make them easier to find in different menus.

Need help connecting a printer to your computer at home? I suggest the GCFLearnFree.org tutorial on setting up a printer at: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/basic-computer-skills/how-to-set-up-a-new-

Word Printing

Print

Copies: 1

Print

Printer ⓘ

OTXerox2nd2
Ready

Printer Properties

Settings

Print All Pages
The whole thing

Pages: ⓘ

Print on Both Sides
Flip pages on long edge

Collated
1,2,3 1,2,3 1,2,3

Portrait Orientation

Letter
8.5" x 11"

Normal Margins
Left: 1" Right: 1"

1 Page Per Sheet

Page Setup

Chrome Printing

Print   1 sheet of paper

Destination   OTXerox2nd2

Pages   All

Copies   1

Layout   Portrait

Color   Color

More settings

Continue developing computer skills with the following resources:

Poudre River Public Library — We are committed to supporting you as you Connect to Curiosity in technology tools. Take advantage of our free assistance at a class or by stopping by a help desk.

Recommends: Internet Searching Course and Tech Tips video collection. Visit our resources at https://read.poudrelibraries.org/research/z264.html

GCF Learn Free — Quality collection of technology tutorials free of advertisements and free to use.

Recommends: Typing Tutorial, Internet Basics, and Email Basics. Check out all they have to offer at https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/tech/

TechBoomers — This website's collection of insights and tutorials are valuable for anyone working on strengthening their tech skills. They house a great collection of tutorials on specific websites and apps.

Recommends: Gmail tutorial, Ancestry tutorial, and Internet 101 courses. Access their robust course directory at https://techboomers.com/courses

NorthStar Digital — Tutorials and assessments for a variety of computer skills. Earn badges and certificates.

Recommends: Essential Computer Skills. Access on our computer resources page: https://read.poudrelibraries.org/research/z264.html

LinkedIn Learning — Access to this database of computer and business classes is offered with a library card.

Recommends: Computer Literacy for Mac and Computer Literacy for Windows 10. Find it on the Library's Research page: https://read.poudrelibraries.org/research/eresources.cfm?flter=alll

Digital Learn — Free website of tech tutorials from the Public Library Association. Begin with the basics and find tips for more advanced skills.

Recommends: Getting Started on a Computer and Intro to Email. Access it at https://www.digitallearn.org/

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