Google Drive

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What is Google Drive?

Google Drive is a free service from Google that allows you to store files online and access them anywhere using the cloud. Google Drive also gives you access to free web-based applications for creating documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and more.

Why use Google Drive?

Google Drive is one of the most popular cloud storage services available today, offering 15 gigabytes (15GB) of free storage space. If you've never used a cloud-based storage service like Google Drive before, take a moment to consider the advantages of keeping your files online. Because files can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection, Drive eliminates the need to email or save a file to a USB drive. And because Drive allows you to share files, working with others becomes much easier.

Creating files on Google Drive

Google Drive doesn't just store your files; it also allows you to create, share, and manage documents with its own productivity apps. If you've ever used a suite like Microsoft Office, some things about Google Drive's apps might seem familiar. For instance, the types of files you can work with are similar to files that can be created with various Microsoft Office programs.
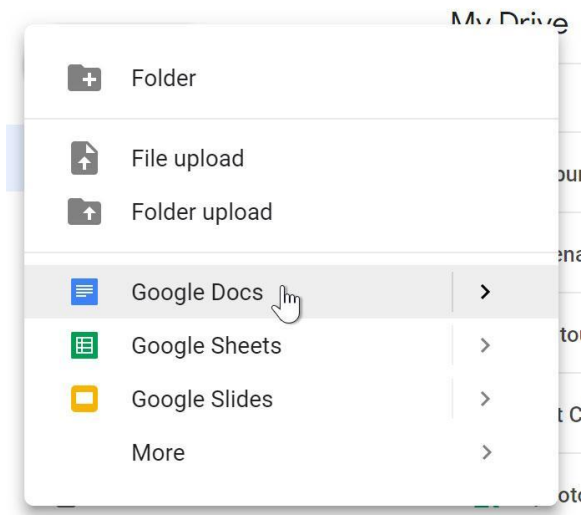
Below are the types of files you can create and share on Google Drive:

- **Documents:** For composing letters, flyers, essays, and other text-based files (similar to Microsoft Word documents)
- **Spreadsheets**: For storing and organizing information (similar to Microsoft Excel workbooks)
- **Presentations:** For creating slideshows (similar to Microsoft PowerPoint presentations)
- **Forms:** For collecting and organizing data
- **Drawings:** For creating simple vector graphics or diagrams

Creating a Google account

In order to use Google Drive, you will need a Google account. Google accounts are free, and signing up for one is fairly simple. In order to create a Google account, you'll need to enter some information, including your name, birth date, and location. Creating a Google account will automatically create a Gmail email address and a Google+ profile.

If you have a Gmail address, you already have a Google account, so you won't need to create an account—you can simply sign in to Drive using your Gmail information.

Accessing Google Drive

Once you've set up your Google account, you can access Google Drive by going to http://drive.google.com in your web browser.

You can also navigate to Google Drive from any Google page (such as Gmail or Google search) by selecting the grid icon near the top-right corner, then clicking Drive.
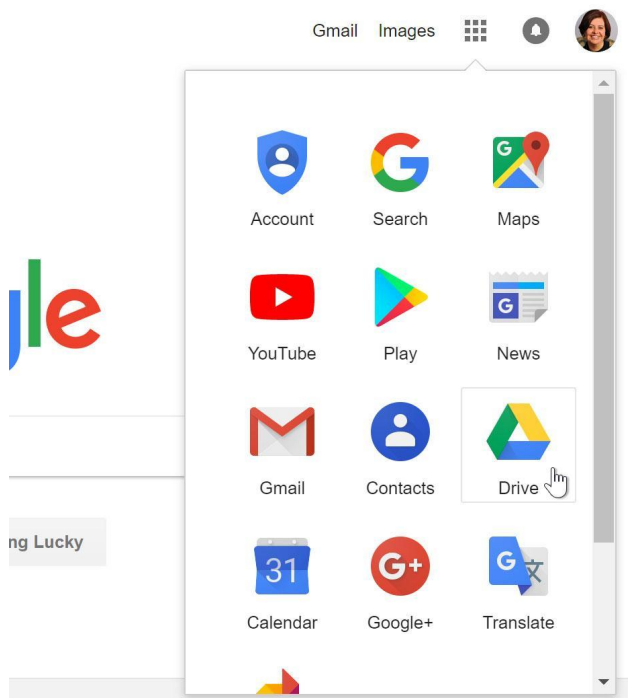
The Google Drive interface

Your Google Drive may be empty right now, but as you begin to upload and create files you'll need to know how to view, manage, and organize them in the interface.

Google Drive for mobile devices

Available for both iOS and Android, the Google Drive mobile app allows you to view and upload files to Google Drive using your mobile device.
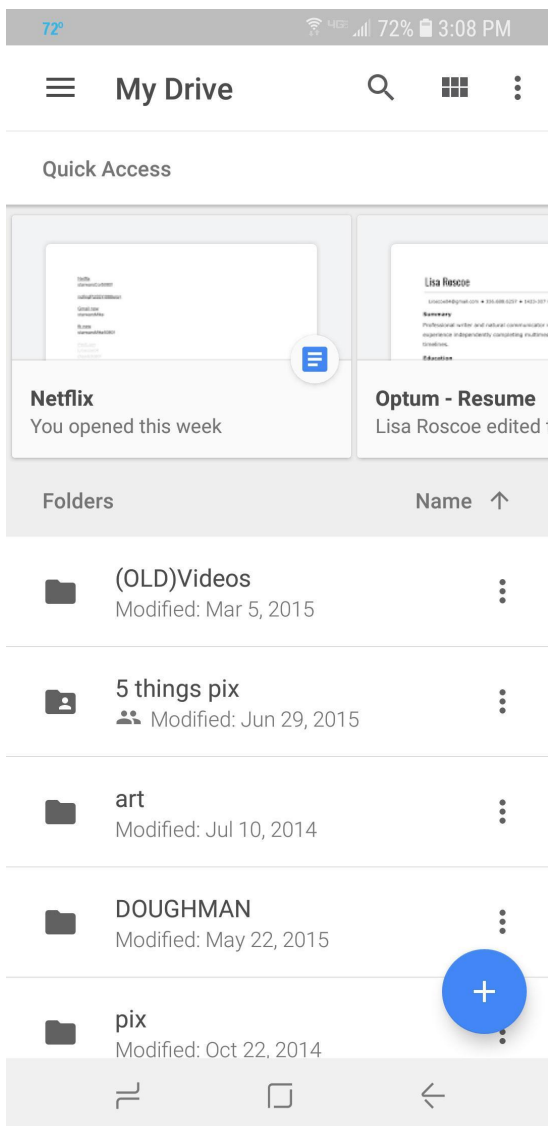
Google also has separate mobile apps for creating and editing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. To learn more, check out Google's blog post on New mobile apps for Docs, Sheets, and Slides.

Google Drive for desktop

If you prefer to work on the desktop, you can download the Google Drive desktop app to your computer. Available for Windows and OS X, this app makes it a bit easier to upload your existing files and work offline. Once it's installed, you'll see a new Google Drive folder on your computer. Any files you move into this folder will automatically be uploaded to your Google Drive.
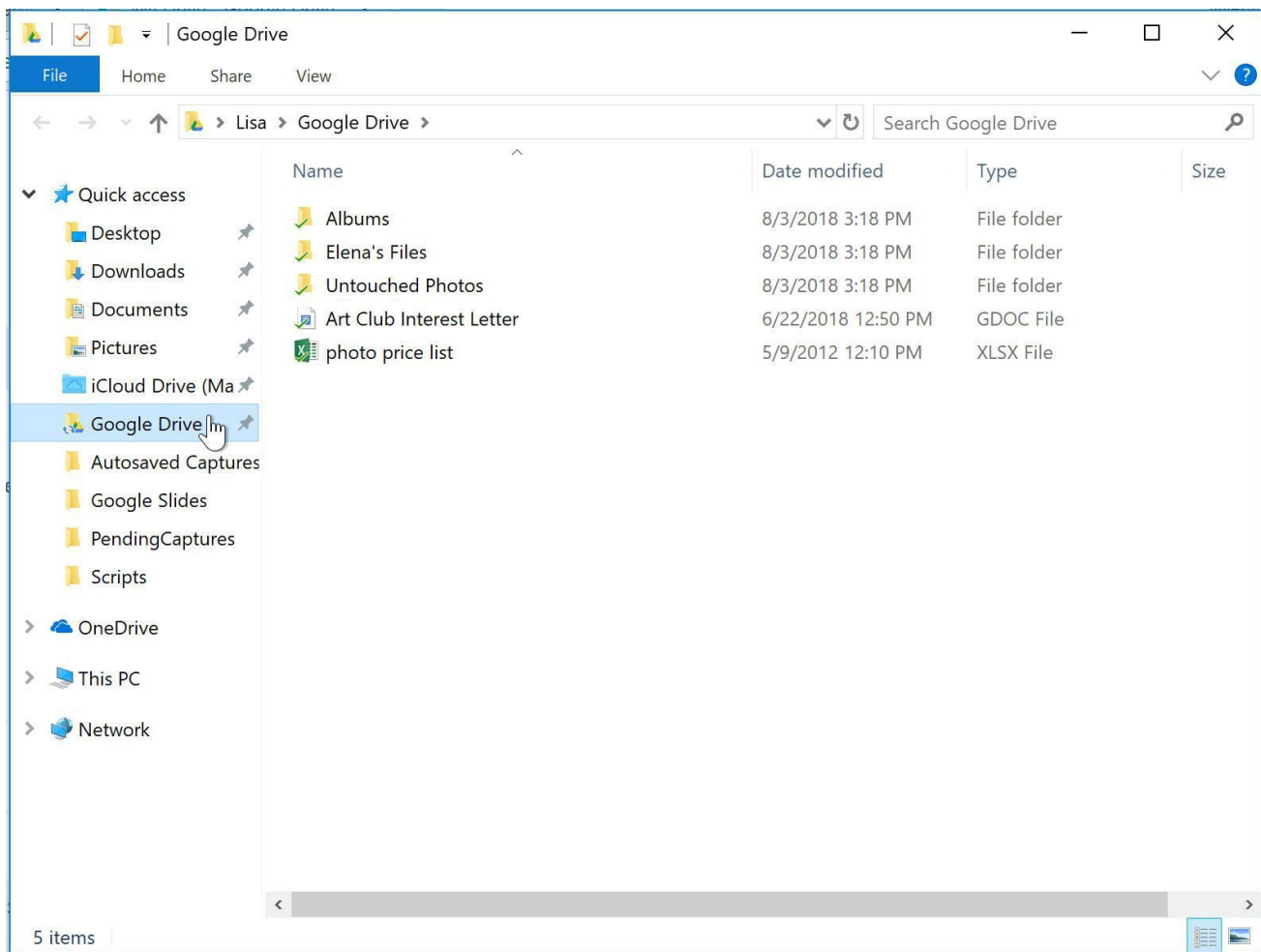
Uploading files to Google Drive

Google Drive gives you 15 gigabytes (15GB) of free storage space to upload files from your computer and store them in the cloud. There are two main types of files you can store on your Google Drive:

- **Files you can edit,** like Microsoft Office files, PDFs, and other text-based files

- **Files you cannot edit,** like music, videos, compressed archives (.zip files), and most other files

Once you upload a file—no matter what type of file it is—you'll be able to manage, organize, share, and access it from anywhere. And because the files on Google Drive are synced across your devices, you'll always see the most recent version of a file.

You can also preview many different file types, even if you don't have the software required for that file on your computer. For example, you can use Google Drive to preview a Photoshop file, even if Photoshop is not installed on your current computer.

Converting files to Google Drive formats

If you are uploading files you plan to edit online, you will need to convert them to Google Drive format. Converting allows you to edit a file and collaborate with others easily. Only certain file types—like Microsoft Office files and PDF documents—can be converted to Google Drive formats.

Unfortunately, this conversion isn't always perfect. Depending on the level of formatting used in the original document, the converted document could turn out looking quite different, as shown in the example below.

Uploading files and folders

It's easy to upload files from your computer to Google Drive. If you're using the Google Chrome web browser, you can even upload entire folders.

To upload a file:

1. From Google Drive, locate and select the New button, then select File upload.
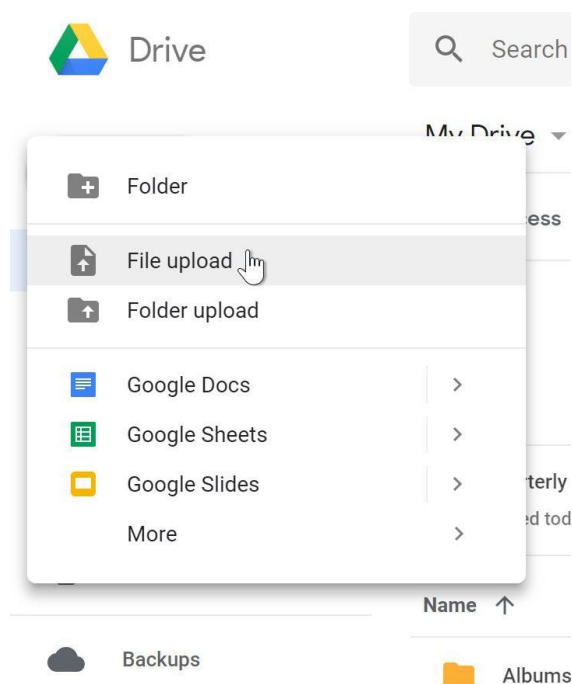
2. Locate and select the file(s) you want to upload, then click Open.

3. The file(s) will be uploaded to your Google Drive.

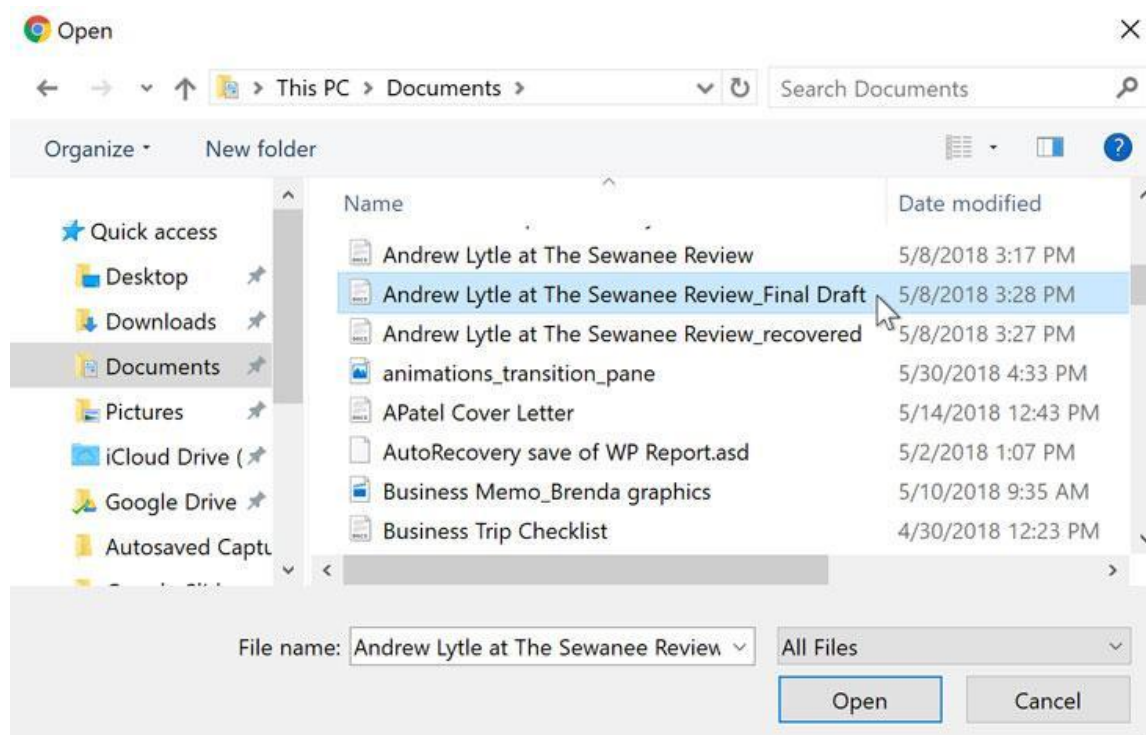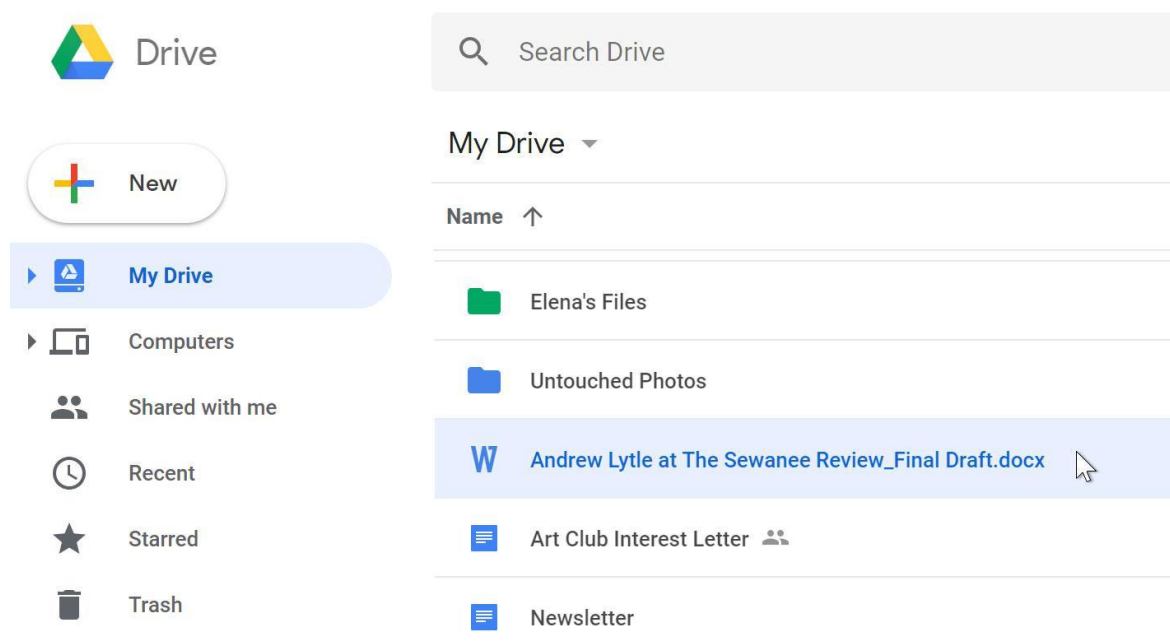★ Depending on your browser and operating system, you may be able to upload files by clicking and dragging a file from your computer into your Google Drive.

To upload a folder:

Note: This feature is only available if you're accessing Google Drive through Google Chrome.

1. Click the New button, then select Folder upload.

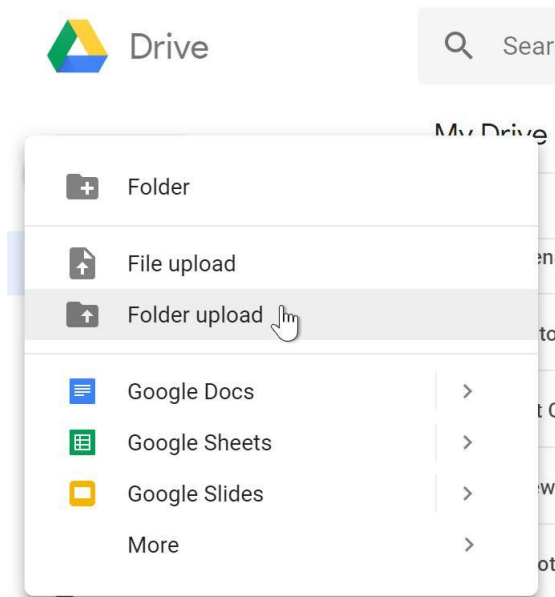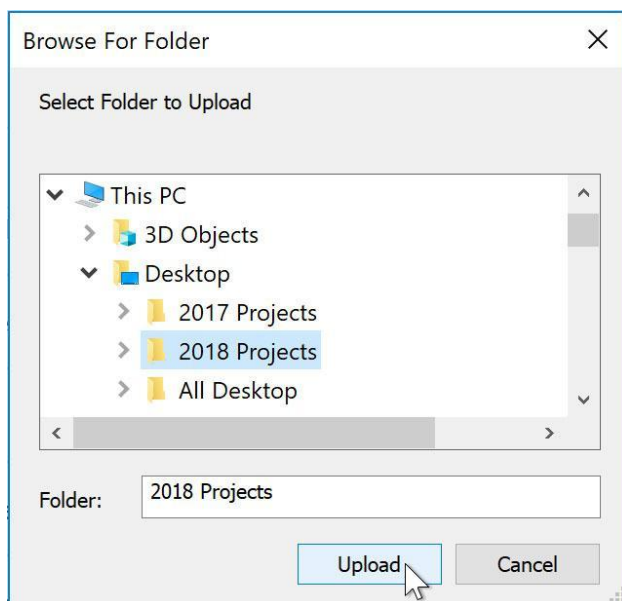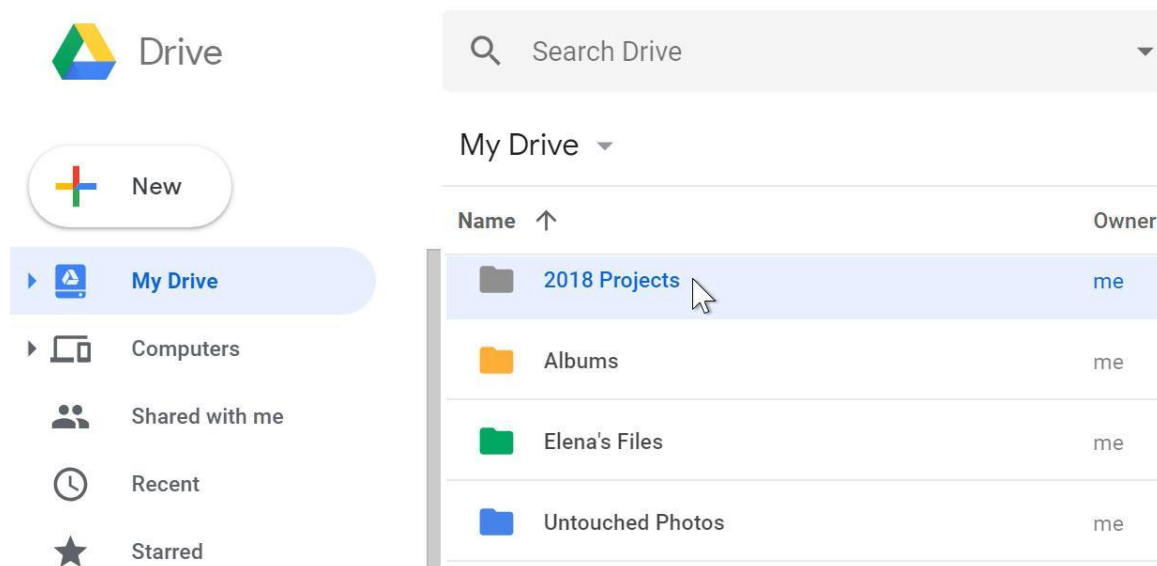
2. Locate and select the folder you want to upload, then click OK.

3. The folder and the files within it will be uploaded to your Google Drive.

Managing your files

After you've been using Google Drive for a while, you might find yourself having a difficult time keeping track of all of your files. Fortunately, Drive offers several features to help you manage and organize them.

## Searching for files

Searching lets you look for specific files using words contained within the file or file name. To do this, locate the search bar, then enter the word or file name you're looking for. A list of suggested searches and files will appear as you type. Simply click a file to open it directly from the search results. You can also press the Enter key to see a full list of search results.
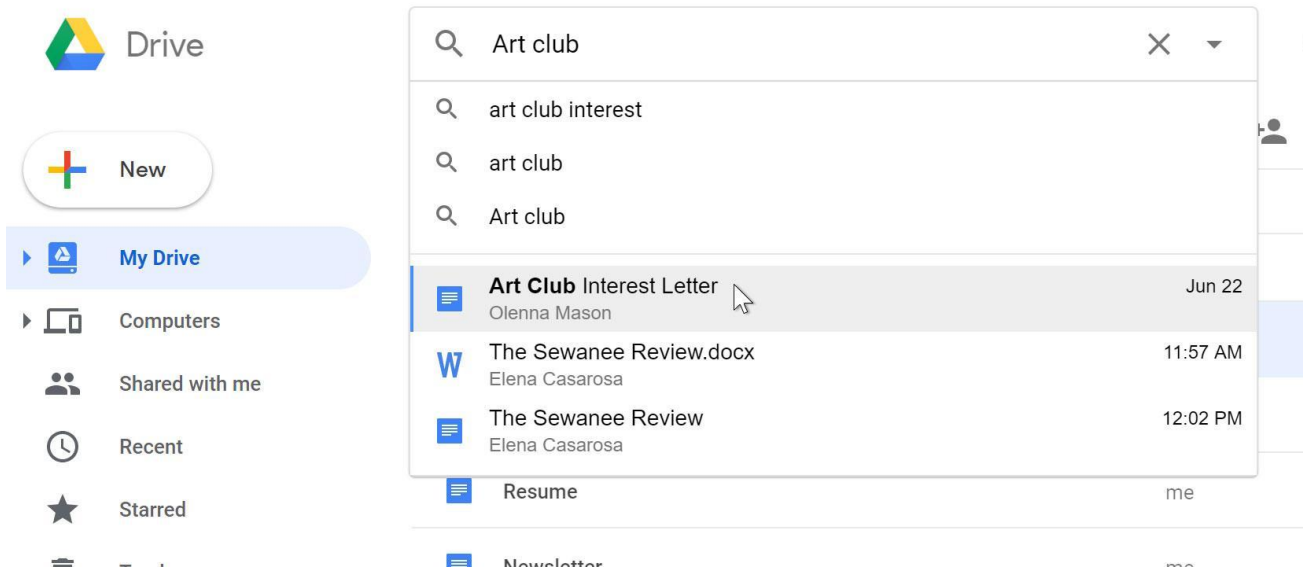
Sorting files

By default, your files are already sorted from newest to oldest. However, you can apply other sorts to put your files in a different order. To sort by name, click the Name button just above the list of files. To sort by date, click the Last modified button, then choose the desired sort option.
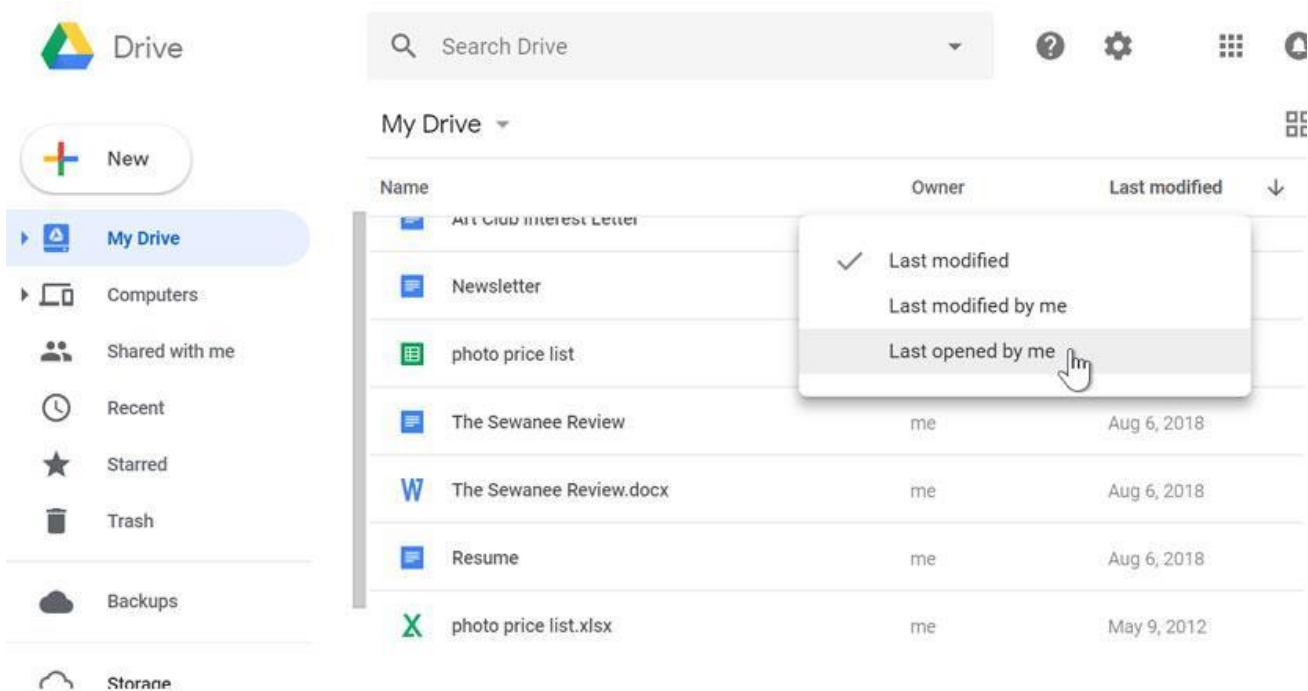
To apply a filter:

Filters let you hide unimportant files and focus only on the ones you're interested in. For example, if you were looking for a presentation, you could use a filter to narrow down your visible files so you would only see presentations.
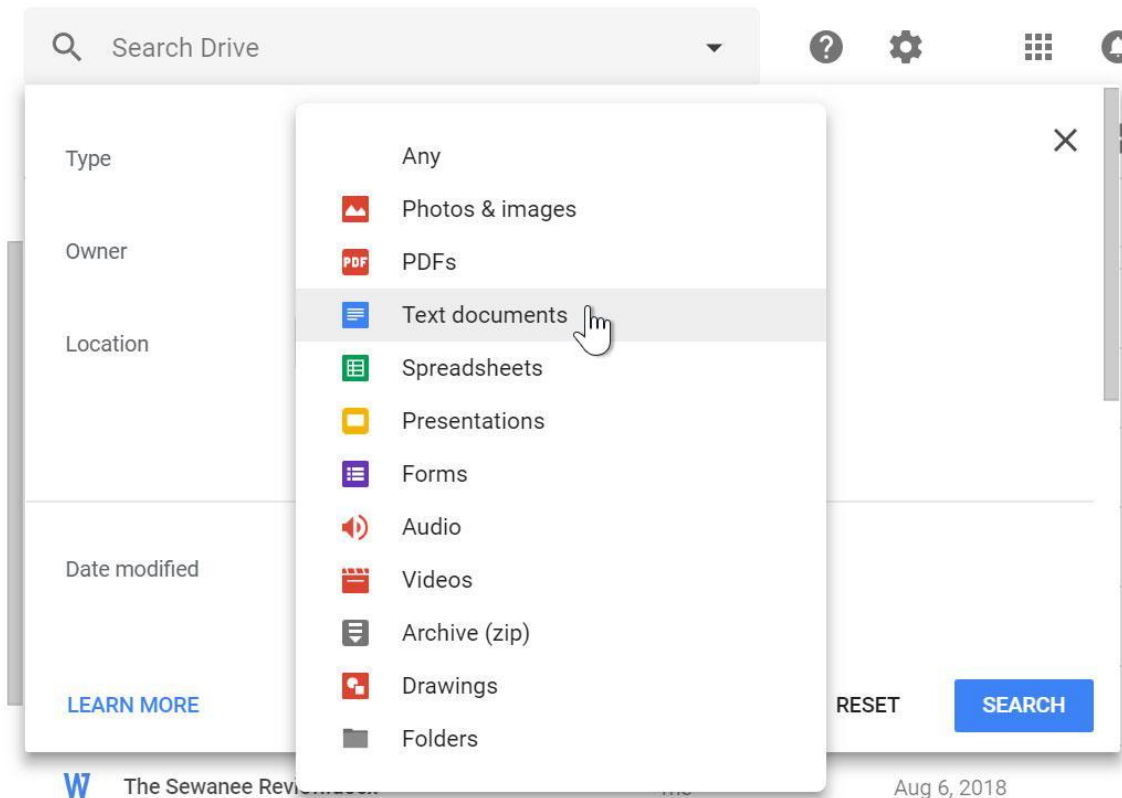
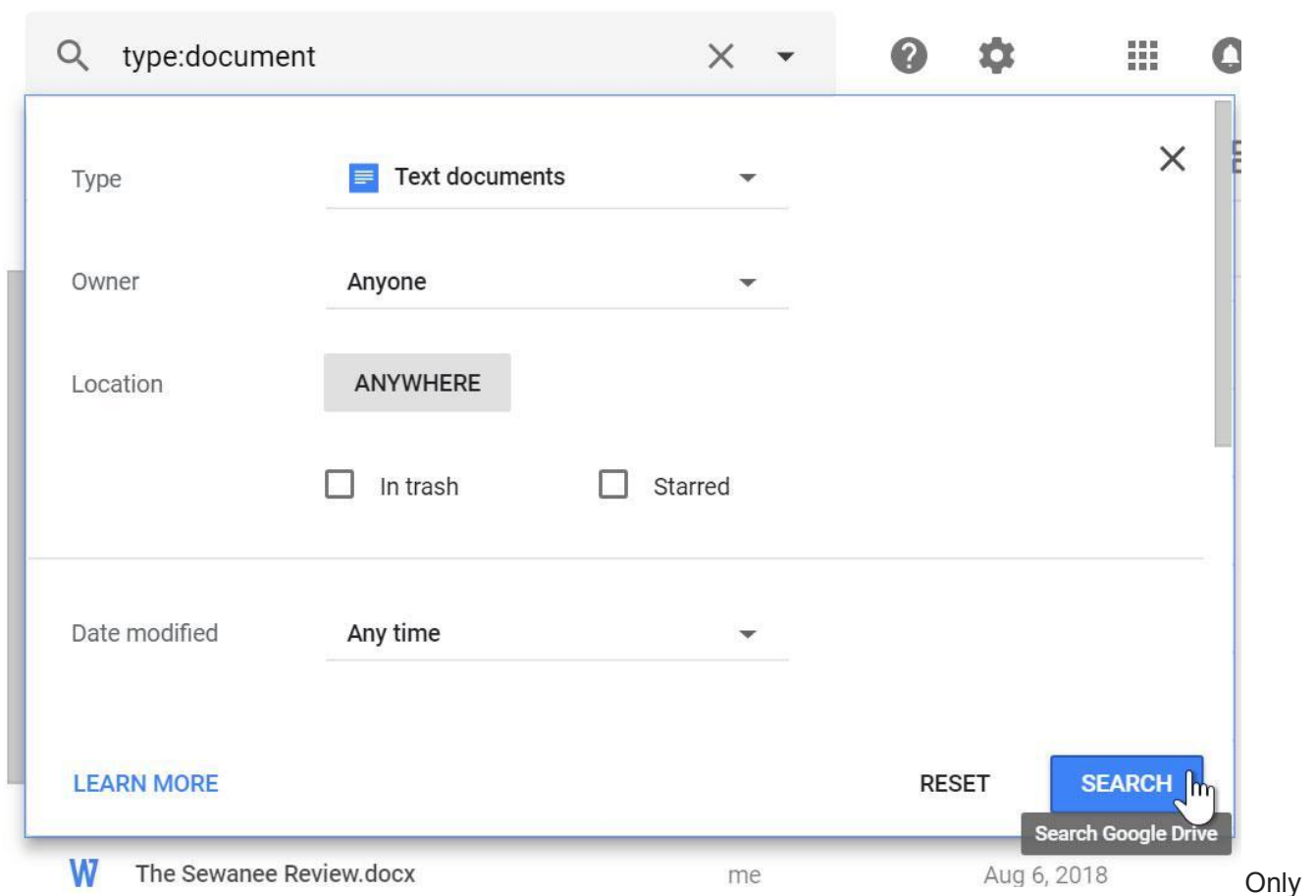1. Locate and select the Search options arrow in the search bar.
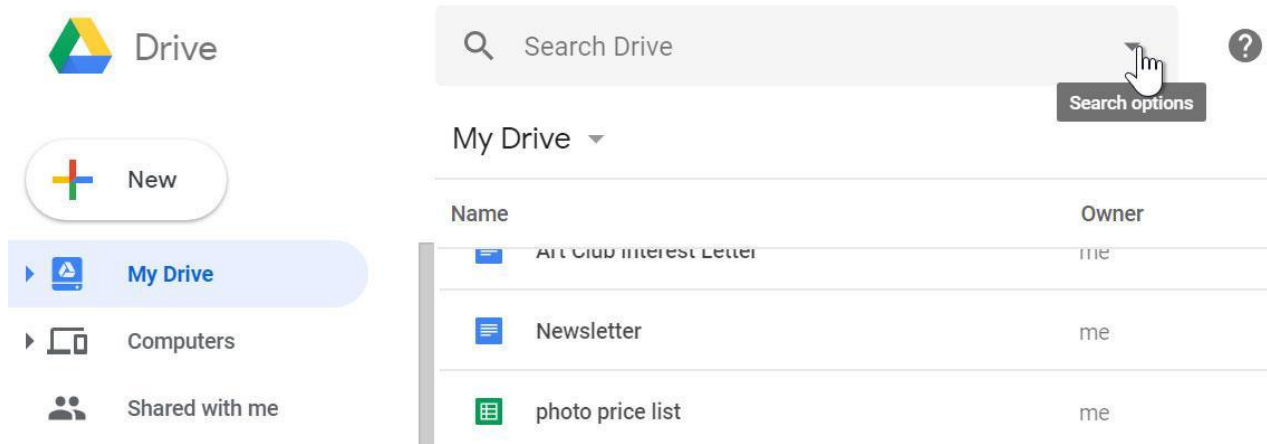
Choose the filter you want to use. In our example, we'll set a filter for file type.
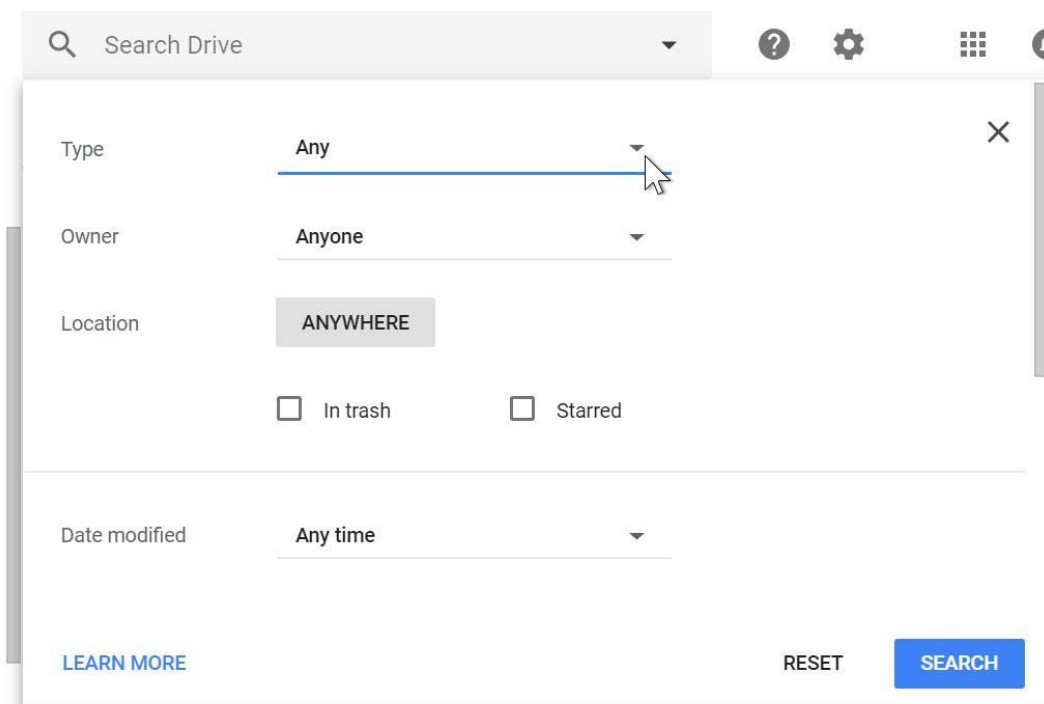
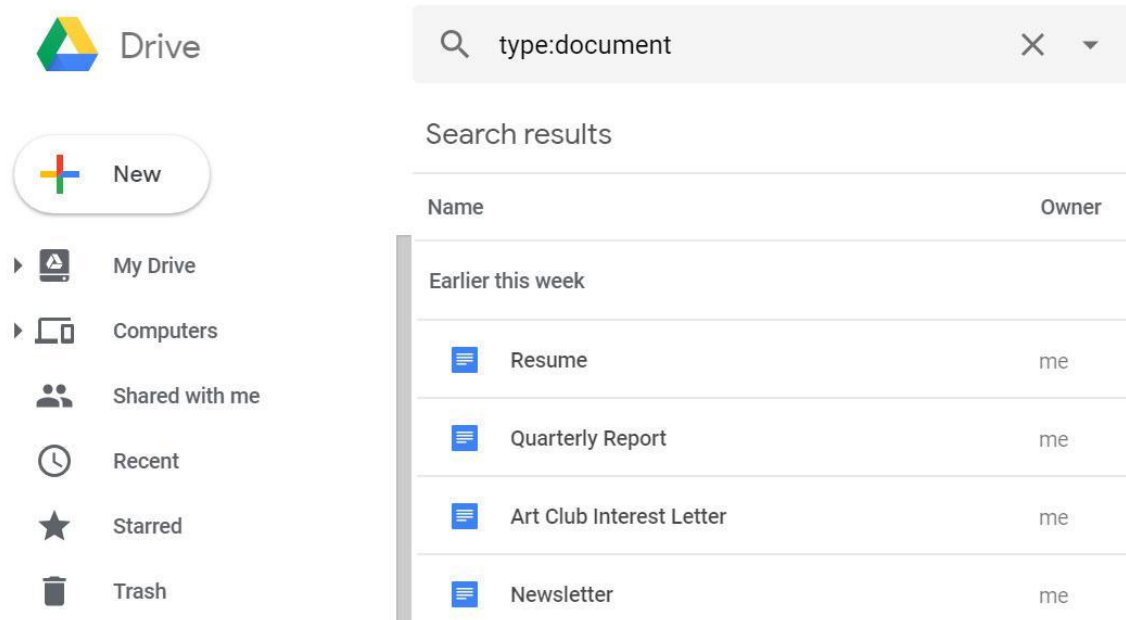Choose the desired filter. In our example, we'll select Text documents.

Click the Search button or press the Enter key to apply the filter.
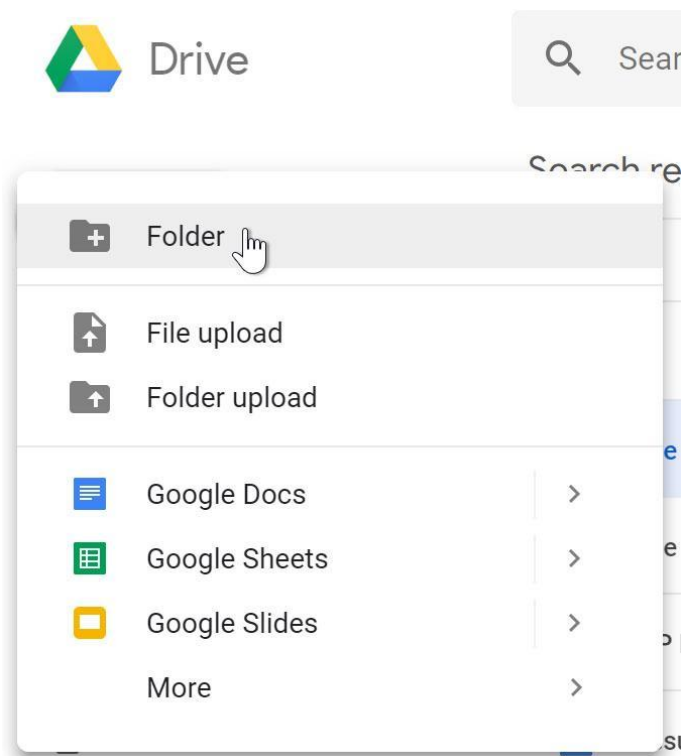

Only
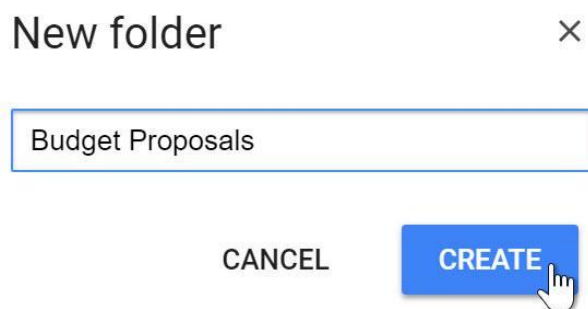
files that match the filter will appear.

To clear a filter, select the text in search bar, then press the Backspace or Delete key.
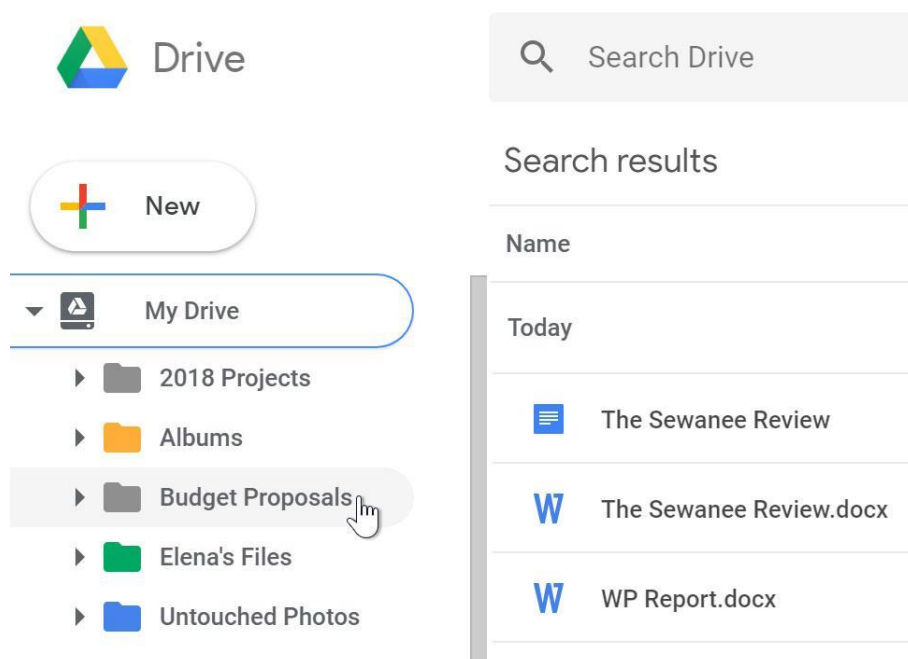
To create a folder:

1. From Google Drive, click the New button, then select Folder from the drop-down menu.

2. A dialog box will appear. Enter a name for your folder, then click Create.

New folder   ✕

Budget Proposals

CANCEL   CREATE
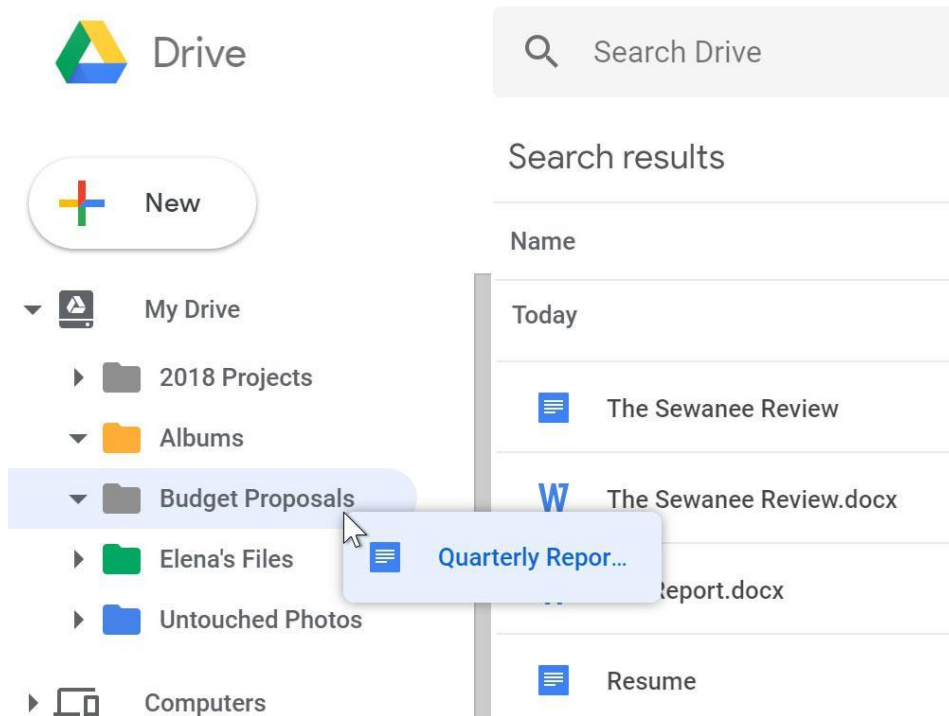
3. Your folder will appear on the left below My Drive. You may need to click the drop-down arrow to see your folders.

Drive

Q   Search Drive

Search results

New

Name

My Drive

Today

▶ ▣ 2018 Projects

▶ ▣ Albums

▤ The Sewanee Review

▶ ▣ Budget Proposals

W The Sewanee Review.docx

▶ ▣ Elena's Files

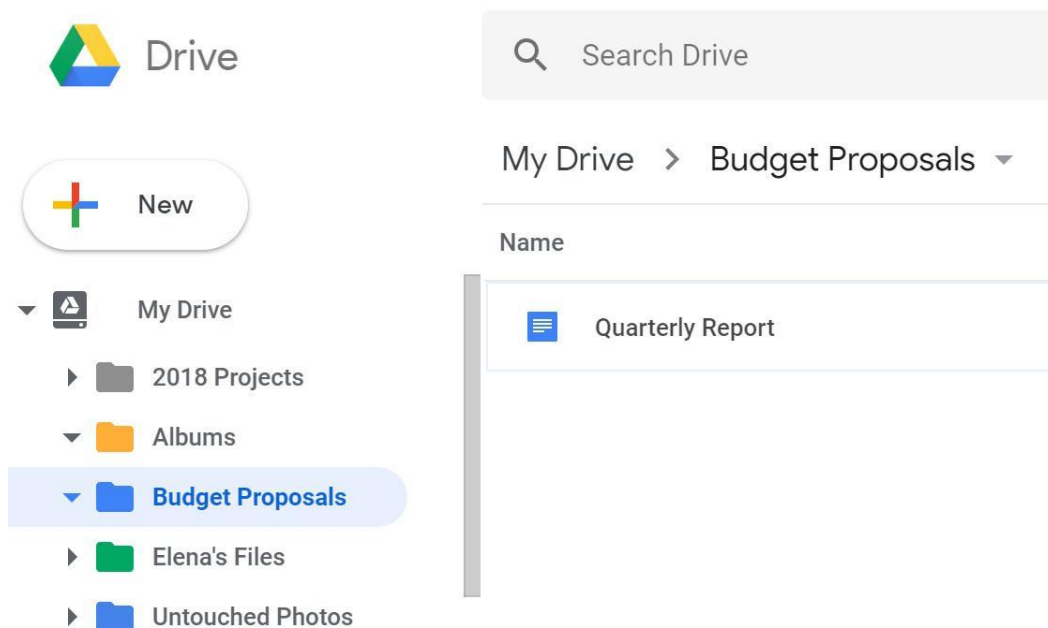W WP Report.docx

▶ ▣ Untouched Photos
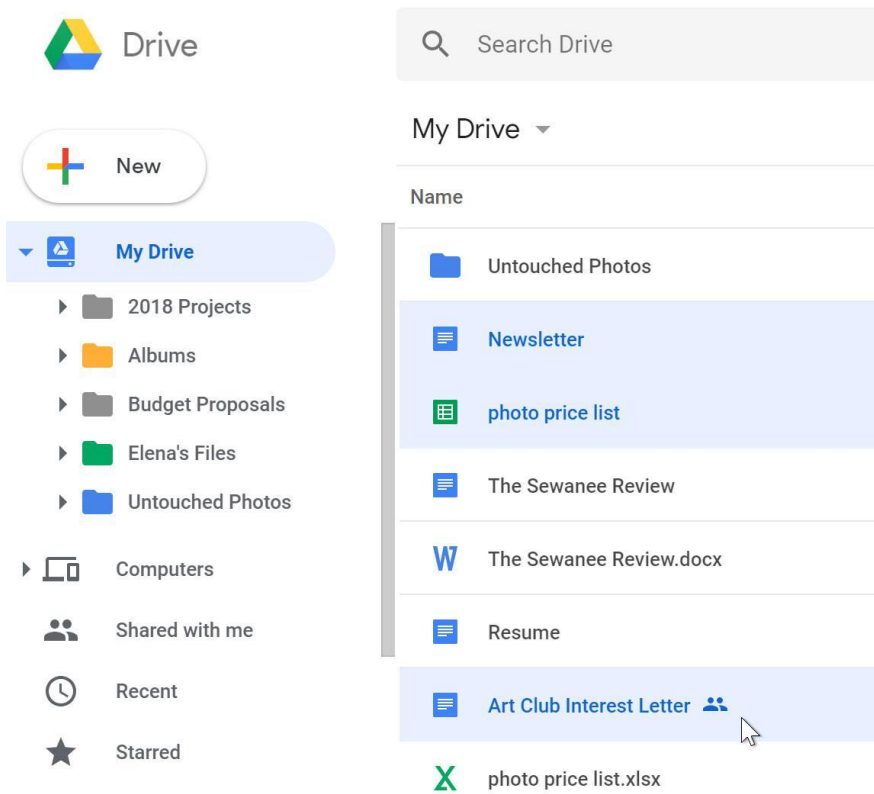
To move files into folders:

1. Click and drag the file to the desired folder.

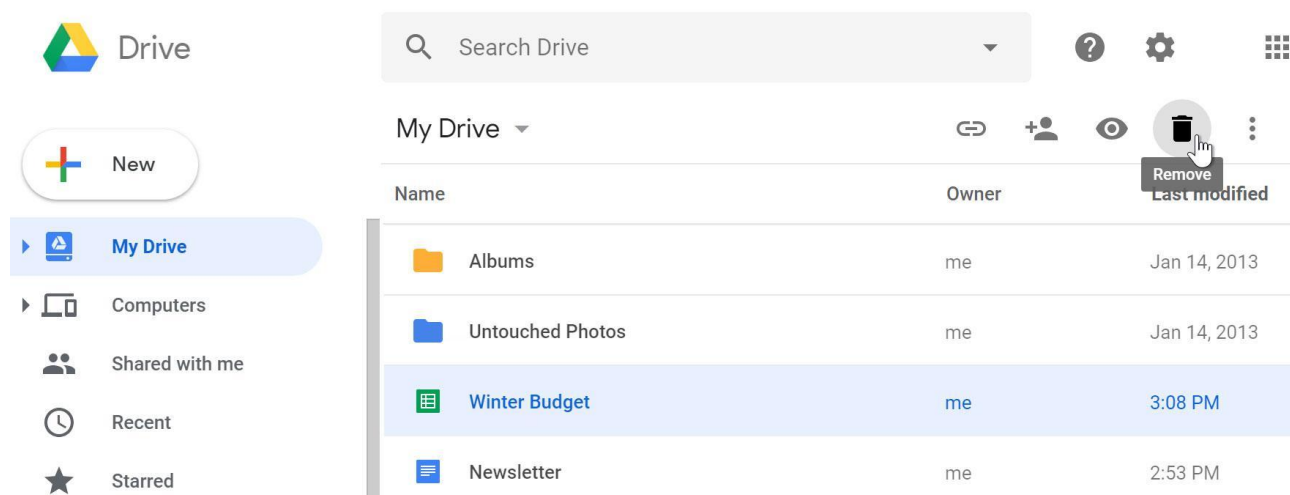2. The file will appear in the selected folder.

To add multiple files to the same folder, press and hold the Ctrl key (or Command on a Mac), then click to select each desired file. When you're ready, click and drag the files to the desired folder.

To delete a file:

Deleting a file from your Google Drive is similar to deleting a file from your computer. You will have to move the file to the Trash folder and then delete it permanently, just like you would delete a file from the Trash or Recycle Bin on your computer.
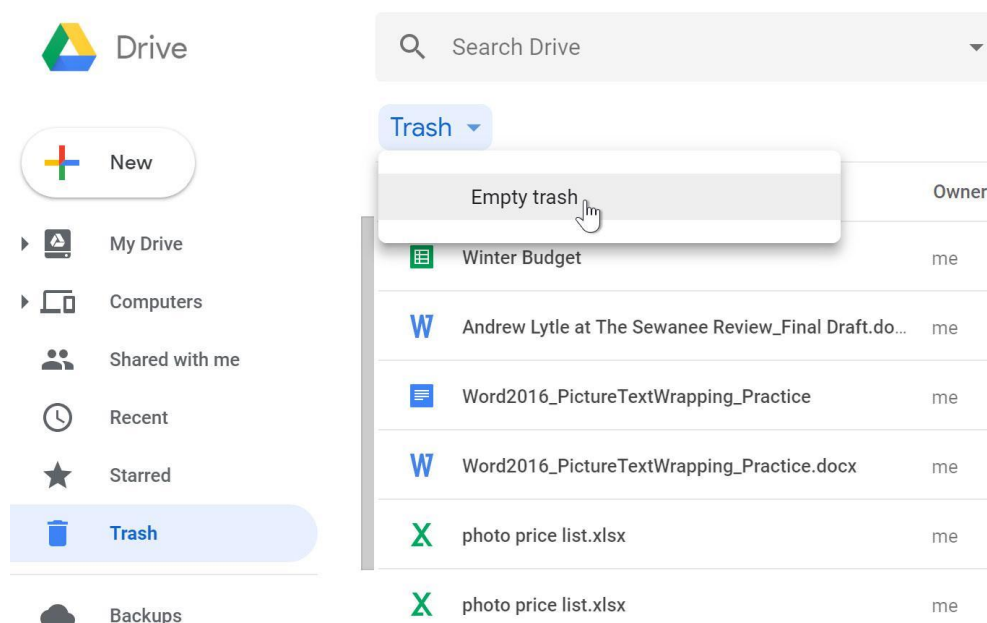
1. Select the file you want to delete, then click the Remove button to move the file to the
    Trash folder.

2. Select Trash in the left navigation pane.
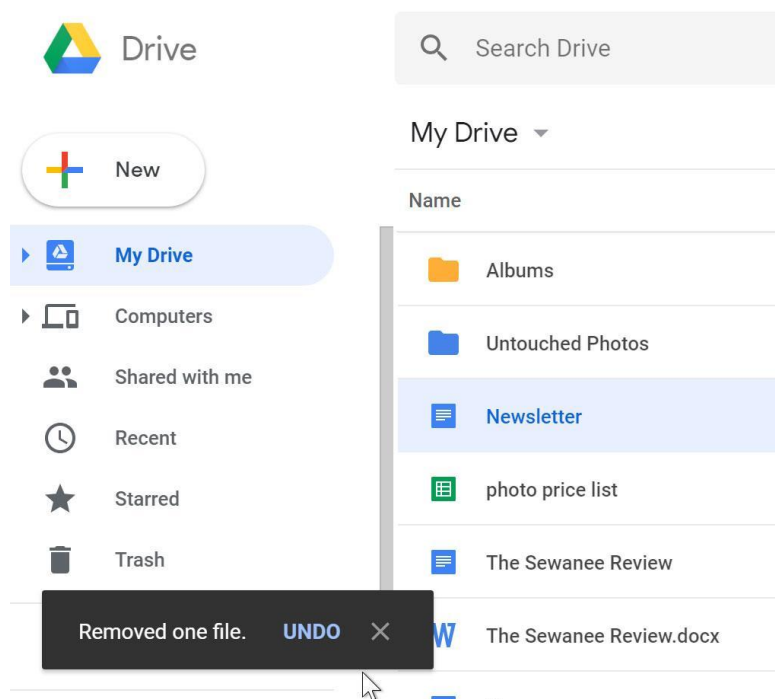
3. The Trash folder will appear. Click Trash near the top of the screen, then select Empty Trash. The files will be permanently deleted.
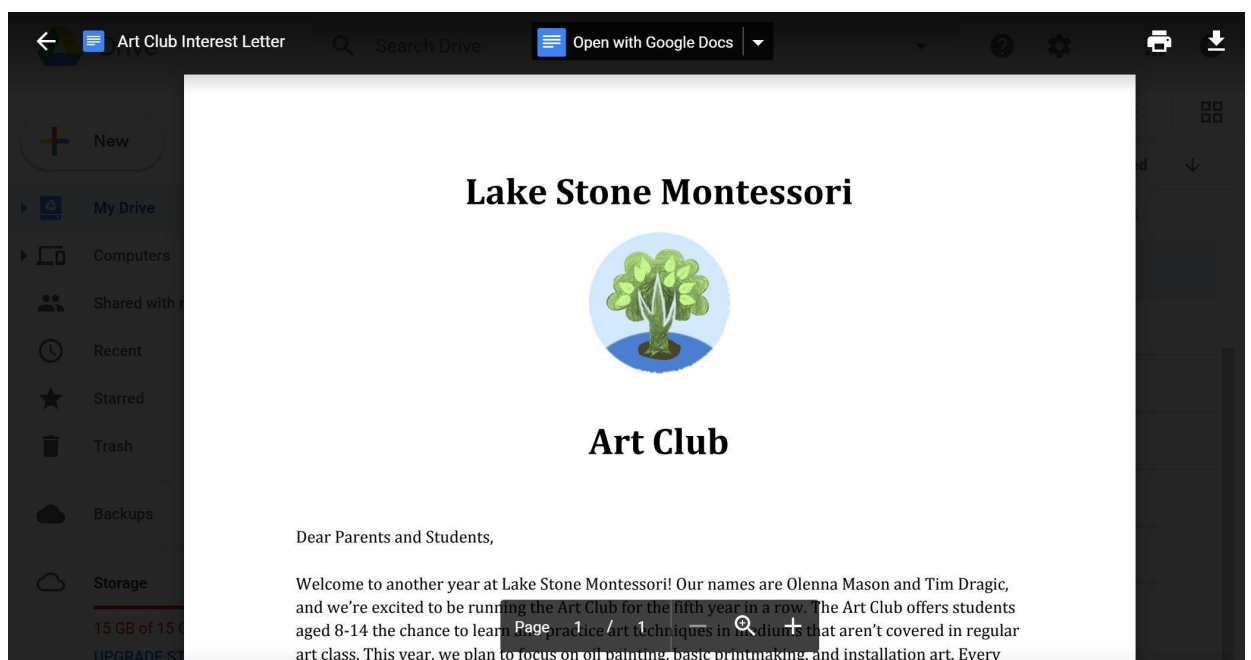

To preview a file:

Previewing files is a great way to make sure you're opening the right version of a file or to take a quick look at files without opening them.

1. Select the file you want to preview, then click the Preview button.
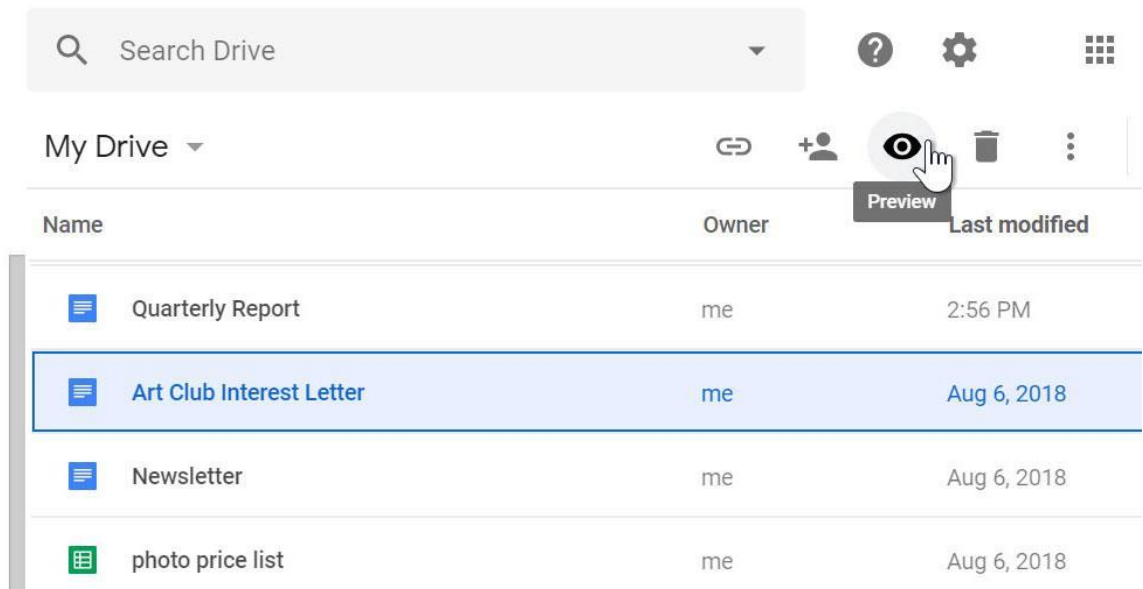
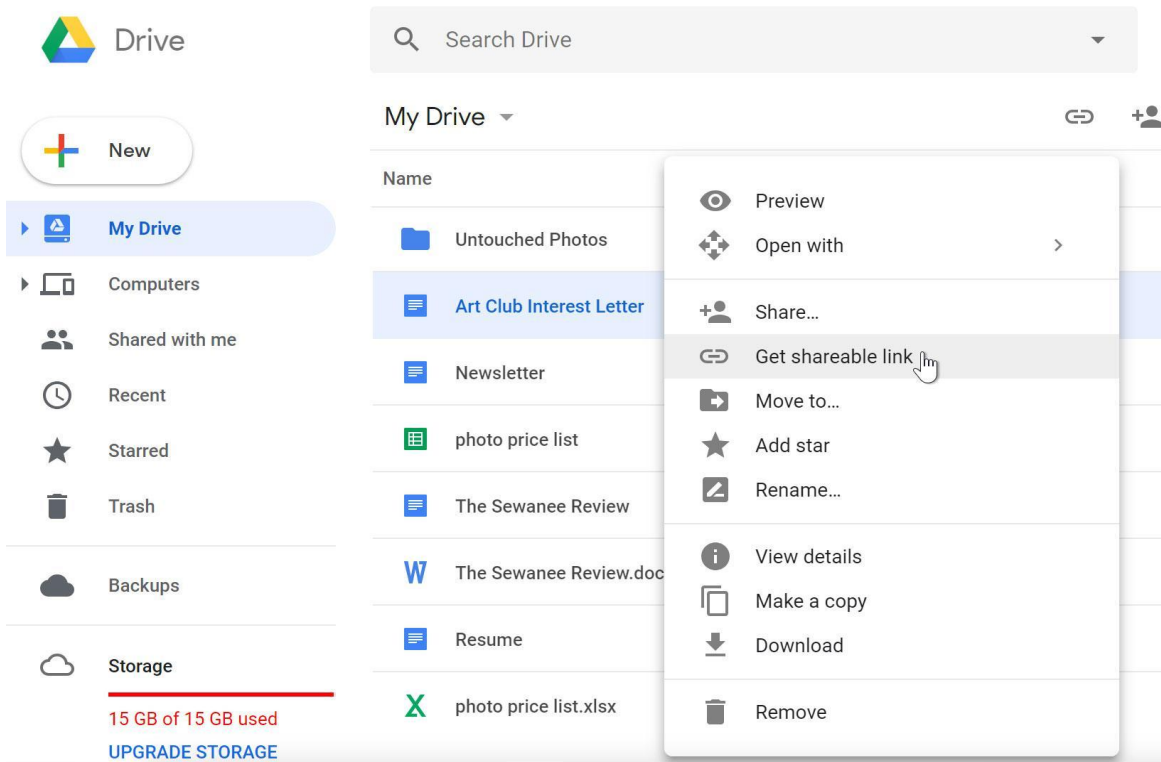2. A preview of the file will appear.

Right-clicking

Right-clicking allows you to access the full list of actions for any file. Most of the actions listed here are accessible in other places on Google Drive, but it serves as a great shortcut.
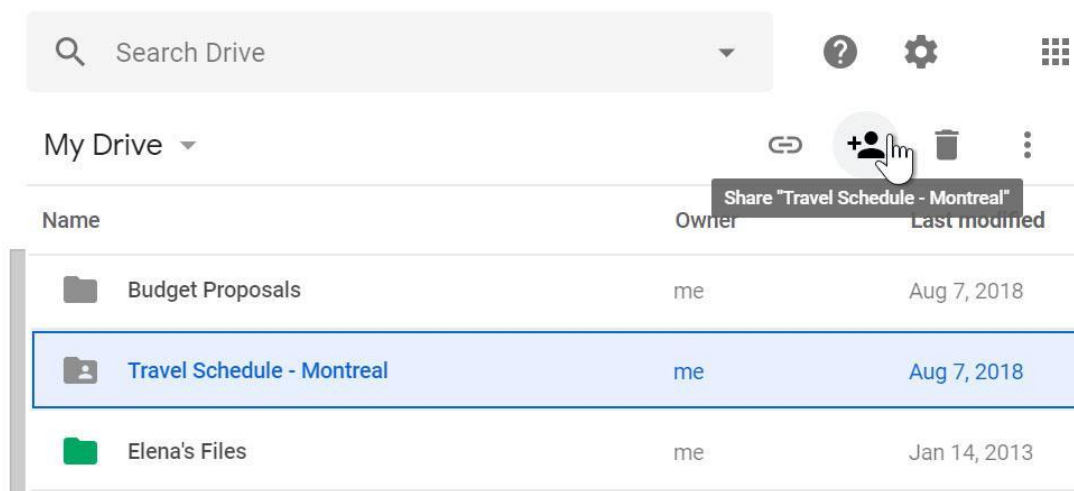
Sharing and collaborating on files

Google Drive makes sharing your files simple. It also allows multiple people to edit the same file, allowing for real-time collaboration.

To share a file with a limited group of people:

1. Locate and select the file you want to share, then click the Share button.

2. A dialog box will appear. In the People box, type the email addresses of the people you'd like to share the file with. If you want, you can add a message that will be emailed to the people you share the file with.

3. Click Send. Your file will be shared.

Share with others   Get shareable link 🔗

People

[👤 Julia Fillory ✕] Add more people...   [✏️ ▾]

Hi Julia,

Here's the schedule for our upcoming trip! I'm so excited!

Olenna

[Send]   [Cancel]   Advanced

★ For more control over your files, you can click the drop-down arrow to decide whether people can edit, comment on, or simply view the file.

Share with others   Get shareable link 🔗

People

[👤 Julia Fillory ✕] Add more people...   [✏️ ▾]

Hi Julia,   ✓ Can organize, add, & edit

Here's the schedule for our upcoming trip! I'm so ex   Can view only
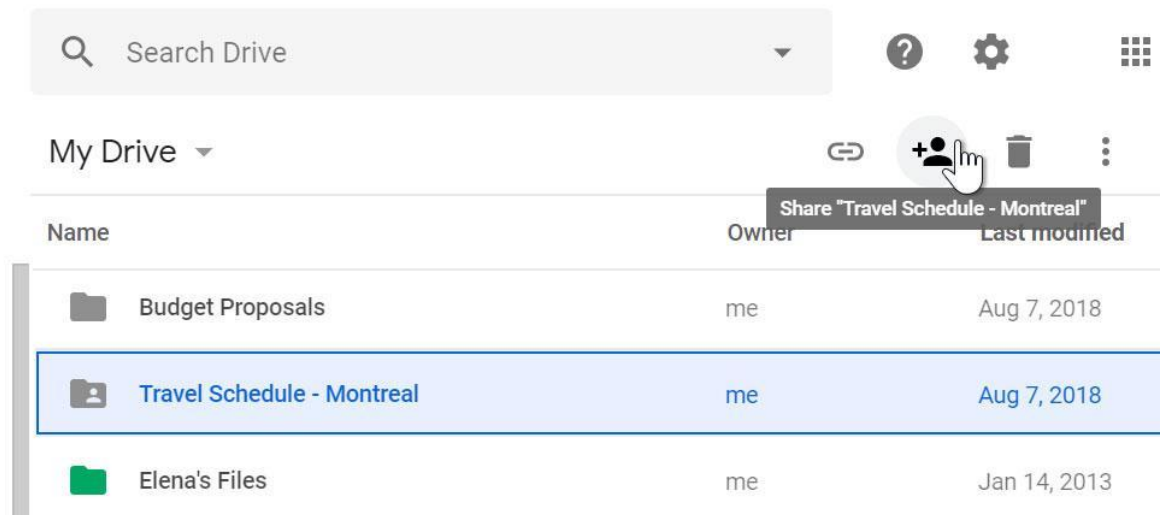
Olenna

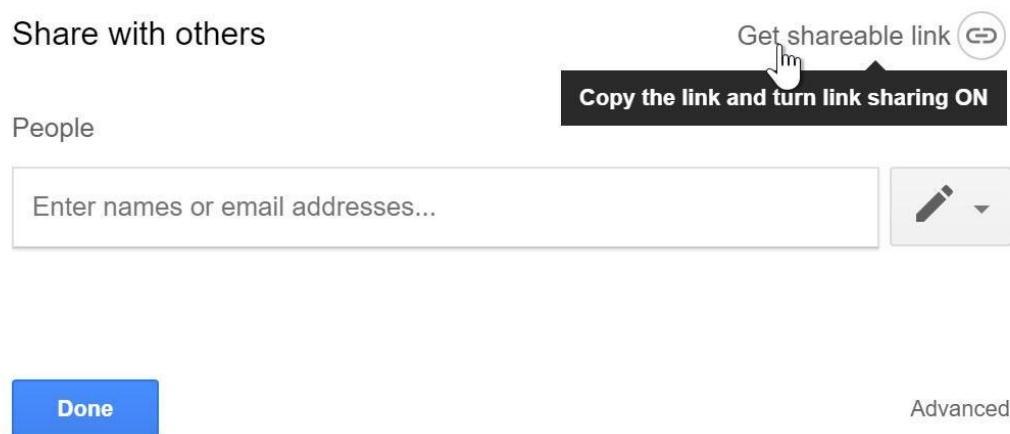[Send]   [Cancel]   Advanced

To share a link:

1. Locate and select the file you want to share, then click the Share button.

2. A dialog box will appear. Click Get shareable link.

3. A link to the file will be copied to your web clipboard. You can then paste the link in an email message or on the Web to share the file. When you're finished, click "Done".

Share with others   Get shareable link 🔗

Link sharing on   Learn more

┌───┬──────────────┐
│ Anyone with the link **can view** ▾   │ Copy link   │
│   🖑   │   │
├───┴──────────────┤
│ https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jhHUf6b-GErZPZ1OM72BRbfGMyhenFns?u│
└──┘

People

┌───┐ ┌──────────┐
│ Enter names or email addresses...   │ │ ✏ ▾   │
└───┘ └──────────┘

┌──────────┐
│   Done   │   Advanced
└──────────┘

To download a file:

1. Locate and right-click the file you want to download, then select Download.
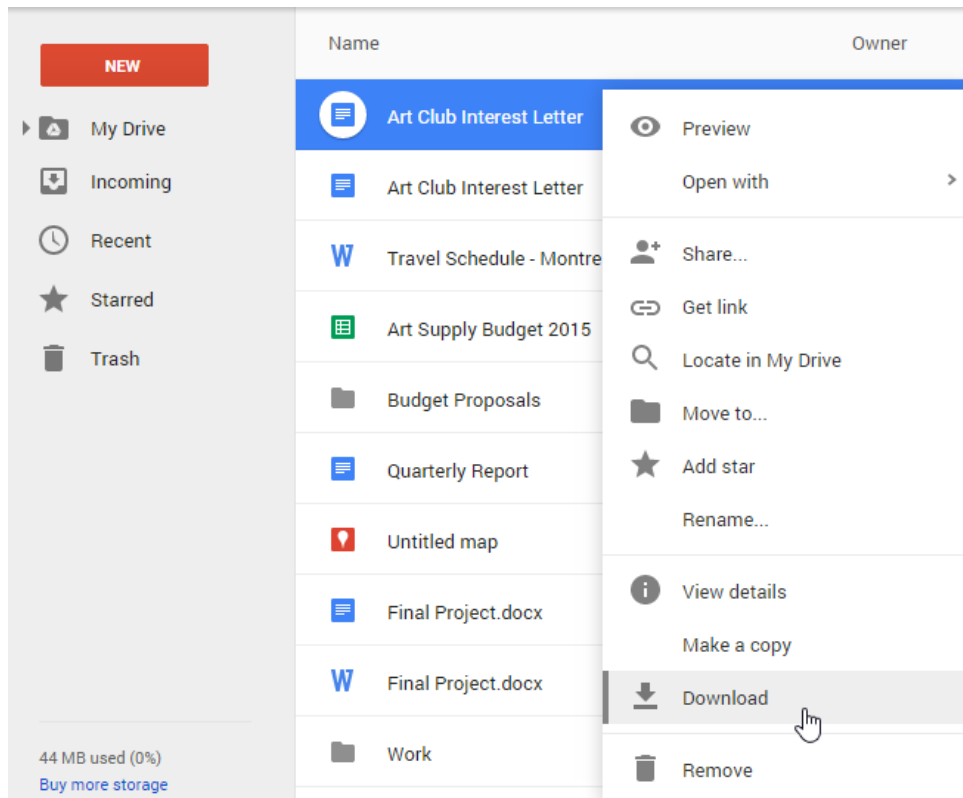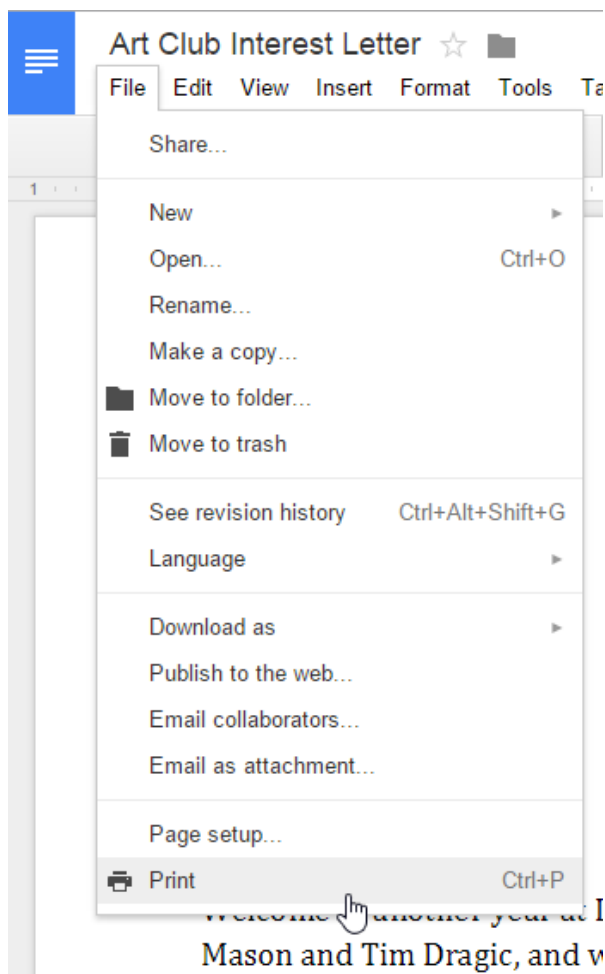
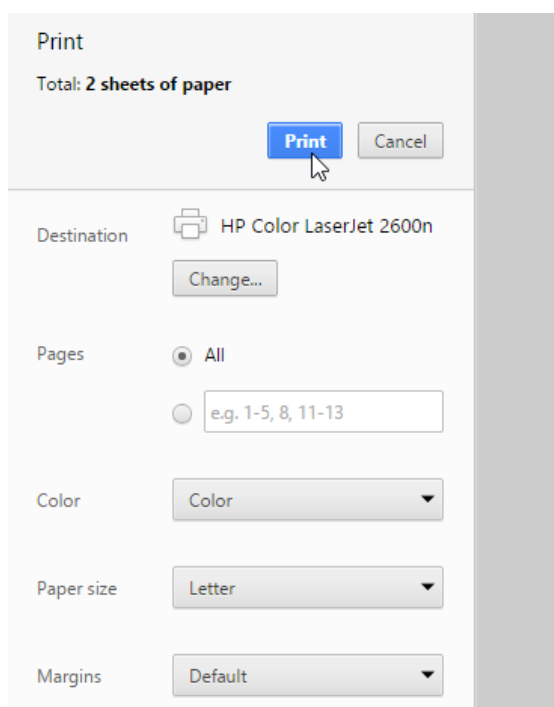

2. The file will be downloaded to your computer.

To print a file:

1. Double-click the desired file to open it.

2. Select **File** → **Print**.

3. The Print dialog box will appear, along with a preview of your file on the right. Choose the desired options, then click **Print**.

★ Note that these options will vary depending on the type of file you're printing. For example, you'll have different options for printing a spreadsheet than you would for printing a presentation.