

OneDrive & SharePoint (Files, Sync, Sharing) — Complete End-User Guide

For employees/students using Microsoft 365 at work or school. This manual explains **what OneDrive and SharePoint are**, where to sign in, how to **sync** (Windows/macOS), how to **share** safely (inside/outside), **version history & restore**, **Known Folder Move**, **Files On-Demand**, limits you should know, a **troubleshooting cookbook**, and an escalation checklist. Admin-only notes are marked (*Admin*).

0) What this covers

- What OneDrive and SharePoint are, and when to use which
 - Sign-in locations for web and desktop clients
 - Sync on Windows & macOS; Files On-Demand; Known Folder Move (Desktop/Documents/Pictures)
 - Share files/folders with the right permissions (org/external)
 - Manage large libraries, version history, and “Restore your OneDrive” (30-day rollback)
 - Path/filename limits and tips to avoid sync errors
 - Troubleshooting: unlink/relink, client **reset**, common error fixes
 - What to include when you escalate to IT
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1) What are OneDrive and SharePoint?

- **OneDrive (work or school)** = *your personal* cloud storage area for work—perfect for drafts, personal workspace, and content you own.

- **SharePoint** = *team* sites & libraries—content owned by a team, tied to a site (often also a Teams channel).
 - The **OneDrive sync app** (also called the OneDrive client) syncs **both** your OneDrive **and** any SharePoint/Teams libraries you connect, with **Files On-Demand** so you can browse everything without downloading it all. [Microsoft Support+1](#)
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2) Where to sign in (bookmark these)

- **OneDrive on the web:** <https://onedrive.live.com> (work/school sign-in)
 - **SharePoint on the web:** <https://<yourtenant>.sharepoint.com> (or from [office.com](#) → SharePoint)
 - **Microsoft 365 portal:** <https://office.com> (launch Outlook/OneDrive/Teams)
 - Desktop: **OneDrive** app (Windows/macOS) signs in with your org account and shows a cloud icon in the tray/menu bar.
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3) Files On-Demand (save disk space, keep everything visible)

What it does: shows all cloud files instantly with small status icons; files are **online-only** until you open/mark **Always keep on this device**.

- **Windows:** Files On-Demand is available and (on modern builds) **on by default** in current OneDrive versions. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - **macOS:** Files On-Demand is supported and keeps placeholders on disk with on-access download. [Microsoft Support](#)
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4) Desktop setup & daily use

4.1 Windows — OneDrive sign-in & basics

1. Launch **OneDrive** (Start menu) → sign in with work/school account.
2. In File Explorer you'll see **OneDrive – <Your Org>** and any synced **SharePoint** libraries under **<Org>**.
3. Right-click any file/folder → **Always keep on this device** (force offline copy) or **Free up space** (return to online-only). Files On-Demand keeps your disk light. [Microsoft Support](#)

4.2 macOS — OneDrive sign-in & basics

1. Open **OneDrive** → sign in with work/school account.
 2. The **OneDrive – <Your Org>** folder appears in Finder.
 3. Use the cloud/status icons in Finder to control **Always keep** vs **Free up space**. [Microsoft Support](#)
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5) Sync SharePoint/Teams libraries to your computer

You can work on team files in File Explorer/Finder by syncing the library:

- From the **SharePoint site or Teams files tab**, open the library in the browser and click **Sync**. The OneDrive client connects that library to your computer; it'll appear beneath your org name in File Explorer/Finder. [Microsoft Support+1](#)

Tip: Use Files On-Demand so the library doesn't consume full disk—download only what you open. [Microsoft Support](#)

6) Known Folder Move (KFM) — protect Desktop/Documents/Pictures (Windows)

(Often deployed by IT via policy.)

KFM redirects your **Desktop, Documents, and Pictures** into OneDrive automatically so

they're backed up and available on new PCs. Admins can enable and silently move them; once moved they stay redirected. [Microsoft Learn](#)

7) Sharing files/folders safely

7.1 OneDrive (your files)

- Right-click a file/folder → **Share**. Choose **People in your organization** or **Specific people**, set **Can edit** or **Can view**, and optionally an expiration date. You can also generate a link from the desktop client. [Microsoft Support](#)

7.2 SharePoint (team files)

- In the library, select the item → **Share** to send a link with the right scope (org/specific people). Note that sharing multiple items at once isn't supported; put items into a folder first and share the folder. [Microsoft Support](#)

7.3 External (guest) sharing

- Your org's policy may allow external guests. End users can send **specific-people** links (if permitted); admins control org/site-level external sharing settings. [Microsoft Support](#)[Microsoft Learn](#)

7.4 Permissions & inheritance (SharePoint)

- Libraries/folders normally **inherit** permissions from the site. To give unique access, **stop inheriting permissions** on the library/folder, then grant only who should access it. Avoid excessive unique permissions (can impact performance & manageability). [Microsoft Support](#)[Microsoft Learn](#)

8) Version history & “Restore your OneDrive”

8.1 Version history (single file restore)

- For Office files, open the doc and use **File** → **Version History**, or right-click the file in OneDrive/SharePoint → **Version History** → **Restore** the version you want. [Microsoft Support](#)

8.2 Restore your OneDrive (roll back the entire drive)

- If many files were deleted/overwritten/corrupted (e.g., ransomware), you can **roll back your entire OneDrive** to a point in the last **30 days**. Use OneDrive on the web → **Settings/Options** → **Restore your OneDrive** and follow the wizard. [Microsoft Support](#)

(Related: ransomware recovery workflow guidance.) [Microsoft Support](#)

9) Limits & naming rules (avoid sync errors)

- **Path length:** After decoding, OneDrive/SharePoint file path (folders + filename) must be **≤ 400 characters**; Windows Explorer can hit shorter limits depending on the path. Keep names/folder depth reasonable. [Microsoft Support](#)[Microsoft Learn](#)
 - Avoid leading/trailing spaces, trailing periods, and reserved characters in names. (If you see “Invalid characters” errors, rename in the web UI and resync.)
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10) Troubleshooting cookbook (symptom → fix)

10.1 “Blue/gray cloud missing, or files not updating”

- Make sure **OneDrive** is running (Start menu/Finder).
- **Unlink & re-link** your account:
 - **Windows/macOS:** OneDrive icon → **Help & Settings** → **Settings/Preferences** → **Account** → **Unlink this PC/Mac** → sign in again. [Microsoft Support+1](#)

10.2 “Sync is stuck / plenty of errors”

1. **Pause** syncing, then **Quit** OneDrive; reopen it.
2. **Reset** the OneDrive client (Windows):
 - Press **Win+R** → paste:
`%localappdata%\Microsoft\OneDrive\onedrive.exe /reset`
If you get “not found,” try:
`C:\Program Files\Microsoft OneDrive\onedrive.exe /reset` or
`C:\Program Files (x86)\Microsoft OneDrive\onedrive.exe /reset`
 - Start OneDrive from Start Menu afterwards. [Microsoft Learn](#)[TECHCOMMUNITY.MICROSOFT.COM](#)
3. **macOS**: Unlink, **clear OneDrive credentials in Keychain**, sign in again; follow Microsoft’s Mac sync fix guide. [Microsoft Support](#)

10.3 “SharePoint library won’t sync / disappears”

- Revisit the library in a browser → click **Sync** to reattach.
- Ensure you’re signed in to the **same** account used for the site. [Microsoft Support](#)

10.4 “Can’t share or break inheritance on a huge library”

- SharePoint can limit unique-item permission operations when there are **too many uniquely permitted items**. Reduce item count or consolidate into subfolders/libraries, then break/re-apply permissions. [Microsoft Learn](#)

10.5 “Disk full after syncing a big library”

- Use **Files On-Demand**; set large folders to **Online-only (Free up space)**. [Microsoft Support](#)

10.6 “Conflicts / duplicate files (‘PC name’ appended)”

- Open the file in the web to see the most recent authoritative version; decide which copy to keep, then delete the other.

- For shared Excel, prefer **coauthoring in the web** when many are editing concurrently.

10.7 “Frequent credential prompts after password change”

- Sign out/in once in OneDrive and Outlook/Teams; if it persists on one device, **unlink & re-link** or rebuild your Outlook profile (see Outlook guide).

10.8 “Mac: OneDrive prompts don’t match screenshots”

- Microsoft occasionally updates UI; if the **cog** menu shows only *Get Help/Quit*, sign in from the OneDrive app directly, then return to **Preferences** to unlink/relink, or run the **ResetOneDrive** script if provided. (Follow the Mac fix flow.) [Microsoft Support](#)[Microsoft Q&A](#)
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11) Working smart (everyday tips)

- Prefer **shared SharePoint libraries** for team content (ownership survives staff changes).
 - For personal drafts, use **OneDrive**; move finished work to the team library.
 - Use **Version History** liberally; don’t create v1/v2 filenames. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - For very large folders, **sync only what you need** (Files On-Demand). [Microsoft Support](#)
 - Keep folder depth modest to avoid the **400-char path** limit. [Microsoft Support](#)
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12) What to send IT (fastest resolution)

- **Who/where**: Name, department, location/time zone.
- **When** it started; how often; which network (home Wi-Fi, office, hotel, hotspot).
- **Device**: Windows/macOS version; OneDrive client version; laptop model.

- **Scope:** Only your OneDrive or also SharePoint libraries? Which libraries/sites?
 - **Exact error:** full text + screenshot.
 - **Tried already:** unlink/relink, **reset** cmd (Windows), Keychain credential clear (Mac), Files On-Demand toggles, resync via web **Sync** button.
 - **Log bundles** if asked: OneDrive **Get Help** → start troubleshooter (guides you and can collect info). [Microsoft Support](#)
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13) Quick reference (paste-able replies)

- **Sync a team library:** Open the library in the browser → **Sync** → it appears in Explorer/Finder. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - **Files On-Demand:** Keep files online-only; right-click → **Always keep** / **Free up space**. (Win/mac). [Microsoft Support+1](#)
 - **Unlink & re-link:** OneDrive icon → **Help & Settings** → **Settings/Preferences** → **Account** → **Unlink** → sign in again. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - **Reset OneDrive (Windows):** Win+R →
 %localappdata%\Microsoft\OneDrive\onedrive.exe /reset (fallback to Program Files paths). [Microsoft Learn](#)
 - **Version History:** Right-click file → **Version History** → **Restore** the version you want. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - **Restore your OneDrive (30-day rollback):** OneDrive web → **Settings/Options** → **Restore your OneDrive**. [Microsoft Support](#)
 - **External sharing:** Use **Specific people** links; admins govern org/site policies. [Microsoft Support](#)[Microsoft Learn](#)
 - **Break inheritance (SharePoint):** Library → **Permissions** → **Stop inheriting permissions** → grant only who needs access. [Microsoft Support](#)
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Final notes

- Screens vary slightly by version and tenant policy; the **menu names above remain stable** and searchable in settings.
- For managed devices, IT may silently enable **Known Folder Move** and set default **Files On-Demand** behavior. [Microsoft Learn](#)[Microsoft Support](#)