



Using Google Drive

Version 1.2

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive guide on how to use Google Drive to share files and foster teamwork and collaboration.

Audience

This guide is intended for:

1. **Team leaders** who need to set up shared folders to enable file sharing and collaboration among team members.
2. **Team members** who need to access shared files and collaborate with their team.

How this Document is Organised

This document is in 12 Sections:

1. **Cloud Storage Terms and Concepts.** Google Drive is an example of a Cloud Storage Service. This section explains the general terms and concepts of Cloud Storage.
2. **Google Drive Terms and Concepts.** This section explains the terms and concepts of Google Drive.
3. **Getting Started with Google Drive.** In order to access files managed by Google Drive, you need to be a registered Google user. This section explains what you need to do to become a registered Google user so you can get started with Google Drive.
4. **Accessing Files on Google Drive.** There are two ways of accessing files managed by Google Drive: via your Drive Folder on your device or via the Web interface. This section explains the differences between those two methods.
5. **Installing the Google Drive App.** This Section explains how to download and install the Google Drive app on various devices.
6. **Using the Google Drive App.** This Section explains how to use the Google Drive app on various devices.
7. **Offline Access.** It's often useful to work with your files where a copy of the files are physically stored on your device. In that case, Google Drive can automatically synchronise the files for you. This Section explains how synchronisation works so you can access your files offline.
8. **Security and Privacy.** This section explains the security and privacy features of Google Drive.
9. **Creating and Sharing Files and Folders in Google Drive.** This section explains how to create files and folders in Google Drive and share them with other users.
10. **Using Google Drive with Multiple Google Accounts:** This Section explains how Google Drive handles multiple Google accounts and how to manage files across different accounts.
11. **File and Folder Ownership:** This section explains how file and folder ownership works in Google Drive and provides instructions for transferring ownership from one user to another.
12. **Adding Comments.** This section explains how to add comments about files managed by Google Drive.
13. **Google Drive Best Practice.** Google Drive is a powerful tool, but many people only scratch the surface of what it can do. This Section provides some practical recommendations to help you use Google Drive more effectively in your daily work.
14. **Guidelines for Document Reviewers.** This Section provides a set of guidelines for writers managing team reviews with consistent commenting in Google Drive.
15. **What Happens if the Google Drive App Stops Running.** This Section explains what happens if the Google Drive App stops running and offers advice on the best practice for Windows and macOS users to reduce the possibility of this happening.

Points to Remember

1. You need to be a registered Google user to use Google Drive. If you have a Gmail address, you are already registered. If you don't have a Gmail address, you can create one (it's free), or you can become a registered Google user with your non-Gmail address.
2. Google Drive makes it easy to share your work with others—without the hassle of managing multiple versions or sending files back and forth by email.
3. You can access files on Google Drive using the Google Drive app or via your web browser.
4. Installing the Google Drive app on each of your devices enables you to have ready access to your files even though you are not connected to the Internet because the files will be synchronised between the Google Drive server and your devices.
5. If you have more than one Google account, e.g. a personal account and a work account, you can access both in your web browser simultaneously, but it's important to understand how this works to avoid confusion.
6. When you transfer ownership of a folder, ownership transfers only for that specific folder—it does not cascade down to the contents within it. If you want to fully transfer control of an entire folder structure to another person, you must individually transfer ownership of the top-level folder, then each subfolder within it, and then each file.
7. When you transfer ownership of a file to another user, their Google Drive storage allowance is increased and your Google Drive storage allowance is decreased.
8. If you are accessing Google Drive from a Windows PC or a Mac computer, it is a good idea to restart your computer every few days. Restarting ensures that Google Drive and other background applications start again cleanly and continue synchronising your files.

Guidance for the Reader

1. Google Drive offers flexible options for file sharing, teamwork, and collaboration.
2. **File format choice:** You can work with Microsoft Office files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) or Google Workspace files (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms). Google Workspace files support real-time collaboration, while Office files may be preferred for specific formatting needs or external compatibility.
3. **Access method:** You can access files through the web interface or via the synced local drive on your computer.
4. Each team should choose the combination that best meets their workflow needs. These choices can be adjusted over time as you discover what works best.

Update History

Version	Date	Content
Version 1.0	24 January 2026	Initial Version.
Version 1.1	5 February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new Section – Section 10: Using Google Drive with Multiple Google Accounts. • Add new Section – Section 11: File and Folder Ownership.
Version 1.2	8 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Section 11: File and Folder Ownership to include an explanation about what happens to your Google Drive storage allowance when ownership is transferred. • Add new Section – Section 15: What Happens if the Google Drive App Stops Running.

1. Cloud Storage Terms and Concepts

Google Drive is an example of a Cloud Storage Service. This Section explains the general terms and concepts of Cloud Storage.

Cloud storage is a service that allows you to store data on remote servers accessed via the Internet, rather than on local hardware like your computer's hard drive.

1.1 What is Cloud Storage?

Cloud storage means your files are stored on servers maintained by a service provider (like Google, Microsoft, or Amazon) in data centres around the world. You access these files through the Internet whenever you need them, from any device with an Internet connection.

1.2 Core Concepts

Data Centres: These are physical facilities housing thousands of servers where your data is actually stored. Providers typically have multiple data centres in different geographic locations.

Redundancy: Your data is usually copied and stored in multiple locations automatically. This protects against data loss if one server or data centre fails.

Scalability: You can easily increase or decrease your storage capacity as needed, often paying only for what you use. There's no need to buy and install new physical hardware.

Synchronisation: Many cloud storage services automatically synchronise files across your devices, so changes made on one device appear on all others.

1.3 Common Terms

Object Storage: A method of storing data as distinct units (objects) rather than in a traditional file hierarchy. Each object includes the data, metadata, and a unique identifier. This is commonly used for storing large amounts of unstructured data like photos, videos, and backups.

Block Storage: Divides data into fixed-sized blocks, similar to traditional hard drives. This is typically used for databases and applications that need consistent, low-latency performance.

File Storage: Organises data in a hierarchical folder structure, just like on your computer. This is familiar and easy to use for most people.

Bandwidth: The amount of data you can upload to or download from cloud storage over a given time period. Some providers limit or charge for bandwidth usage.

API (Application Programming Interface): A set of tools that allows applications to interact with cloud storage programmatically, enabling automated backups, file transfers, and integrations.

Encryption: The process of converting data into coded form to prevent unauthorised access. This can happen during transfer (in-transit encryption) and while stored on servers (at-rest encryption).

Access Control: Security settings that determine who can view, edit, or share your files. This includes permissions, authentication, and authorisation mechanisms.

1.4 Practical Benefits

Cloud storage eliminates the need for physical storage devices, enables easy file sharing and collaboration, provides automatic backups, and allows access from anywhere. Most services offer some free storage with paid plans for additional capacity.

1.5 Cloud Storage Service Providers

Here are the main cloud storage providers for consumers:

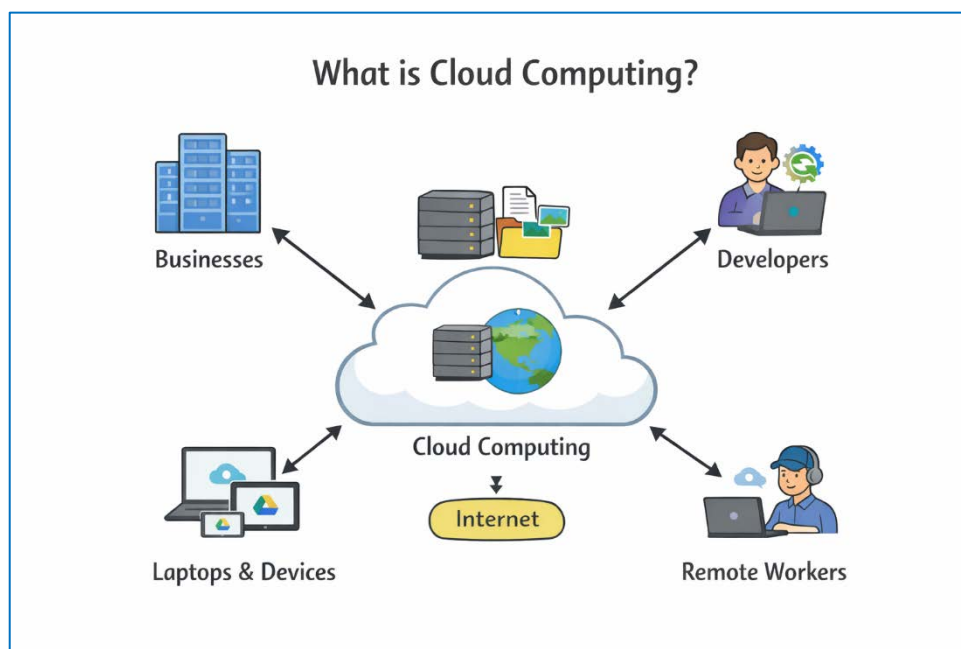
- **Google Drive** - 15 GB free storage, integrates with Google Docs, Sheets, and other Google apps.
- **Microsoft OneDrive** - 5 GB free storage, works seamlessly with Windows and Microsoft Office.
- **Dropbox** - 2 GB free storage, known for excellent file syncing and sharing features.
- **Apple iCloud** - 5 GB free storage, designed for syncing across iPhones, iPads, and Macs.
- **Mega** - 20 GB free storage, emphasises privacy and security.
- **pCloud** - Offers both subscription and lifetime payment options.
- **Sync.com** - Privacy-focused with end-to-end encryption.
- **Box** - Popular for personal use and small business collaboration.

The most widely used are Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, and iCloud, as they come integrated with the devices and software most people already use.

1.6 Why is it Called "Cloud Storage"?

The name comes from how network engineers and IT professionals create diagrams of computer networks.

When drawing network diagrams, they represent the Internet or any complex network infrastructure as a simple **cloud shape**. This cloud symbol indicates "there's a bunch of complicated networking stuff happening here, but the details don't matter for this diagram."



The cloud symbol essentially meant: "Your data goes in here, travels through various servers and networks we don't need to specify, and comes out there." It was a convenient shorthand for representing infrastructure that was either too complex to diagram in detail or whose specific configuration wasn't relevant to understanding the overall system.

When companies started offering remote storage and computing services over the Internet in the 2000s, the industry needed a catchy name for this concept. Since these services involved storing your data "somewhere out there" on the Internet—exactly what those cloud symbols had always represented—the term "cloud computing" and "cloud storage" naturally emerged.

The cloud metaphor also captures some key characteristics of these services:

- **Abstraction:** Just like clouds obscure what's behind them, you don't need to know the technical details of where or how your data is stored.
- **Accessibility:** Like clouds that you can see from anywhere, your data is accessible from any location with Internet access.
- **Fluid and shapeless:** Clouds change shape easily, just as cloud storage can scale up or down based on your needs.

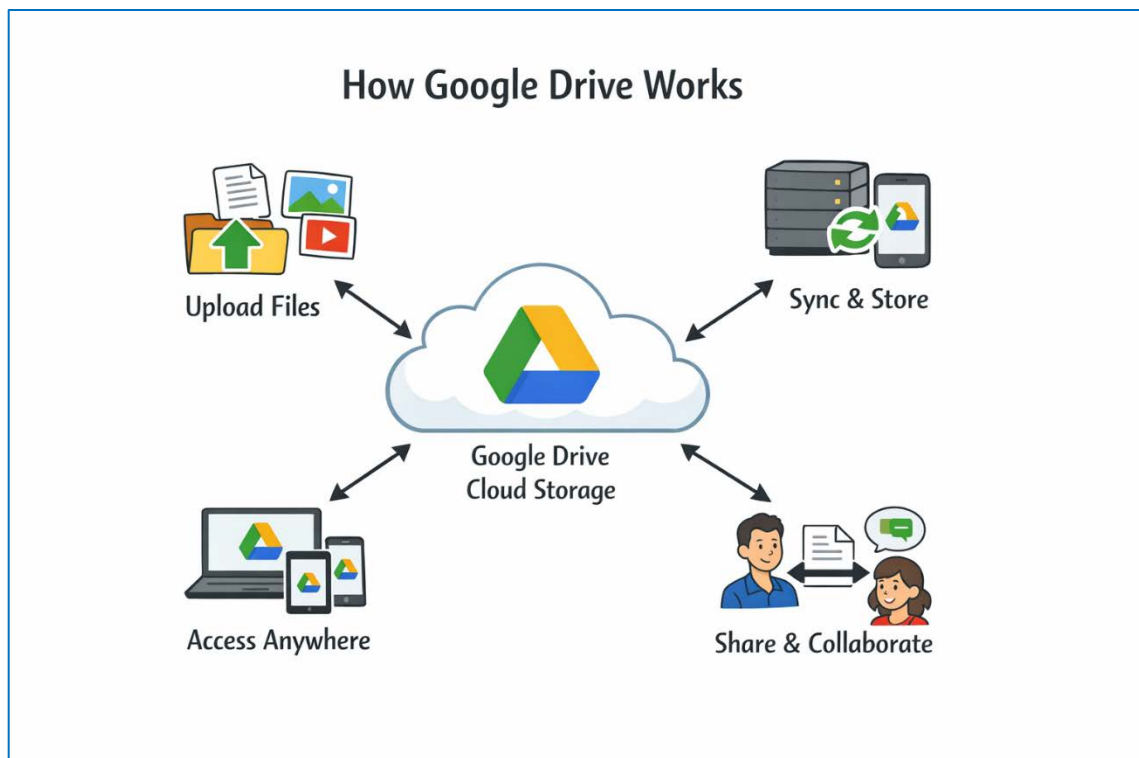
So there's nothing inherently "cloudy" about the technology itself—it's just a metaphor that stuck because it perfectly captured the idea of remote, abstracted computing resources accessed over the Internet!

2. Google Drive Terms and Concepts

This Section explains the terms and concepts of Google Drive.

Here are the key terms and concepts for understanding Google Drive:

- **Cloud storage** - Online space where you store files that you can access from any device with Internet connection, rather than saving only on your computer's hard drive.
- **File sharing and collaboration** - The ability to share documents, spreadsheets, and other files with specific people or groups, and work on them together in real-time.
- **Google Workspace integration** - Google Drive works seamlessly with Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms, letting you create and edit documents directly in your browser without downloading software.
- **Syncing** - Files automatically update across all your devices, so changes you make on your phone appear on your computer and vice versa.
- **Access permissions** - Control who can view, comment on, or edit your files, ranging from private (only you) to public (anyone with the link).
- **Version history** - The system automatically saves previous versions of files, so you can see changes over time and restore earlier versions if needed.
- **Storage quota** - The amount of space available for your files, typically 15 GB free across Google services, with options to purchase more.
- **Offline access** - The ability to view and edit certain files even without Internet connection, with changes syncing once you're back online.
- **Folders and organisation** - Ways to structure your files hierarchically, similar to folders on your computer, plus the ability to search across everything you've stored.



3. Getting Started with Google Drive

In order to access files managed by Google Drive, you need to be a registered Google user. This Section explains what you need to do to become a registered Google user so you can get started with Google Drive.

There are 3 possible scenarios:

1. You have a Gmail address so you are already registered with Google.
2. You don't have a Gmail address but you would like to create one.
3. You want to use an existing non-Gmail email address.

3.1 Existing Gmail Address

If you already have a Gmail address, you are already registered as a Google user and you can start using Google Drive by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://drive.google.com>.
2. Sign in using your Gmail address and password.
3. You're now in Google Drive and can start uploading files, creating documents, and organising your content.

3.2 Create a New Gmail Address

If you don't have a Gmail address, but you would like to create one, you can start using Google Drive by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://accounts.google.com> or click "Create account" from google.com.
2. Click "Create account" and select "For my personal use" (or choose the appropriate option)
3. Fill in the required information:
 - a. First name and last name.
 - b. Choose a Gmail address (e.g., yourname@gmail.com) - Google will suggest options if your choice is taken.
 - c. Create a strong password.
4. Click "Next".
5. Enter a phone number for account verification and recovery.
6. You'll receive a verification code via text or call - enter this code.
7. Optionally add a recovery email address.
8. Enter your date of birth and gender.
9. Review and accept Google's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.
10. Your account is now created! You automatically get 15 GB of free storage.
11. Access Google Drive by going to <https://drive.google.com>.

3.3 Non-Gmail Address

If you want to use an existing non-Gmail address, you can register your non-Gmail address with Google and start using Google Drive by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://accounts.google.com>.
2. Click "Create account".
3. Fill in your first and last name.
4. Instead of creating a new Gmail address, look for and click "Use my current email address instead".
5. Enter your existing email address (Yahoo, Outlook, work email, etc.).
6. Create a password for your Google Account.
7. Click "Next".
8. Google will send a verification code to your email address - check your inbox and enter the code.

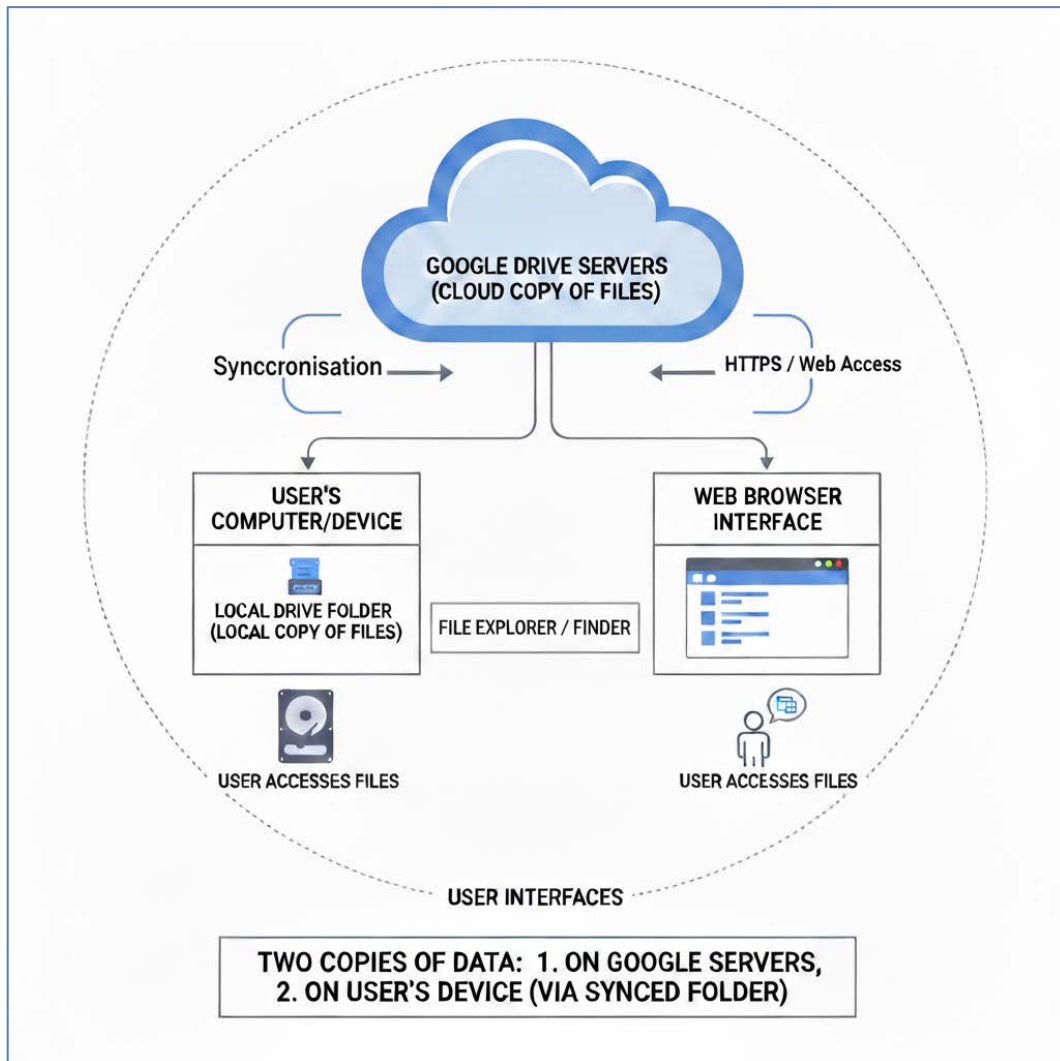
9. Enter a phone number for additional security.
10. Verify the phone number with the code sent via text or call.
11. Complete any remaining steps (date of birth, etc.).
12. Review and accept Google's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.
13. Your Google Account is now created using your existing email address.
14. Access Google Drive by going to <https://drive.google.com> and signing in with your email address and the password you created.

4. Accessing Files on Google Drive

There are two ways of accessing files managed by Google Drive: via your Drive Folder on your device or via the Web interface. This Section explains the differences between those two methods.

4.1 File Access Options

Although the files managed by Google Drive are physically stored on the Google Drive servers, it is possible to have a copy of those files physically stored on the user's device. In that case, bidirectional synchronisation will be performed by Google Drive to keep the copies in sync.



The main reasons for using file synchronisation with Google Drive are:

- **Offline access** - Synced files are stored locally on your device, so you can view and edit them without an Internet connection. Changes synchronise automatically when you reconnect.
- **Faster access and performance** - Working with local copies is generally faster than streaming files from the cloud, especially for large files or when you have a slower Internet connection.
- **Backup and redundancy** - Having files in multiple locations (cloud and local device) provides an extra layer of protection against data loss, though Google Drive itself already provides cloud backup.
- **Integration with desktop workflows** - Synced files appear in your regular file explorer/finder, making it easier to work with them using desktop applications, drag-and-drop functionality, and existing file management habits.
- **Reduced bandwidth usage** - Once files are synced, you're not constantly downloading them each time you access them, which can be helpful if you have limited bandwidth or data caps.
- **Collaboration continuity** - You can continue working on shared documents even when offline, with changes merging when you reconnect (though conflicts can occasionally occur).

The main trade-off is that syncing takes up local storage space on your device.

4.2 The Google Drive App

You will need to install the Google Drive app on your device in order to have your files synchronised between the Google Drive server and your devices.

The Google Drive app is available for download free of charge on a number of different platforms:

1. Desktop (Drive for Desktop App):
 - Windows: Windows 10 and newer (64-bit required).
 - Windows on Arm: Native support for Arm-compatible Windows 11 PCs (Qualcomm Snapdragon).
 - macOS: macOS 12.1 (Monterey) or later is required for the latest updates.
 - Linux: While there is no official, native Google-developed Linux client, the Drive web interface is fully supported, and third-party tools (like Rclone or ExpanDrive) can mount Drive as a filesystem.
2. Mobile & Tablet (Native Apps):
 - Android: Android 6.0 (Marshmallow) or later.
 - iOS: iPhones and iPads running iOS 15.0 or later.
3. Other Platforms:
 - ChromeOS: Deeply integrated natively; no app download is necessary.

All versions of the app synchronise changes across devices, so edits you make on your phone or tablet will appear on your computer and vice versa.

5. Installing the Google Drive App

This Section explains how to download and install the Google Drive app on various devices.

5.1 Installing the Google Drive App for Windows

1. Download the Windows app using this link: <https://dl.google.com/drive-file-stream/GoogleDriveSetup.exe>
2. Open the downloaded file: GoogleDriveSetup.exe
3. Follow the on-screen instructions.

When you install the Google Drive app for Windows, it creates a drive in My Computer. This is usually called the G: Drive. It functions as a "virtual drive" that appears in your File Explorer next to your physical hard drives (like C: or D:). This allows you to browse your cloud files locally on your computer.

You should also see a small Google Drive icon in the System Tray. This is usually in the bottom-right corner of the screen, near the clock. This is the Google Drive "Control Centre." Clicking on this icon allows you to see synchronisation progress, check for errors, and access the Settings/Preferences menu.



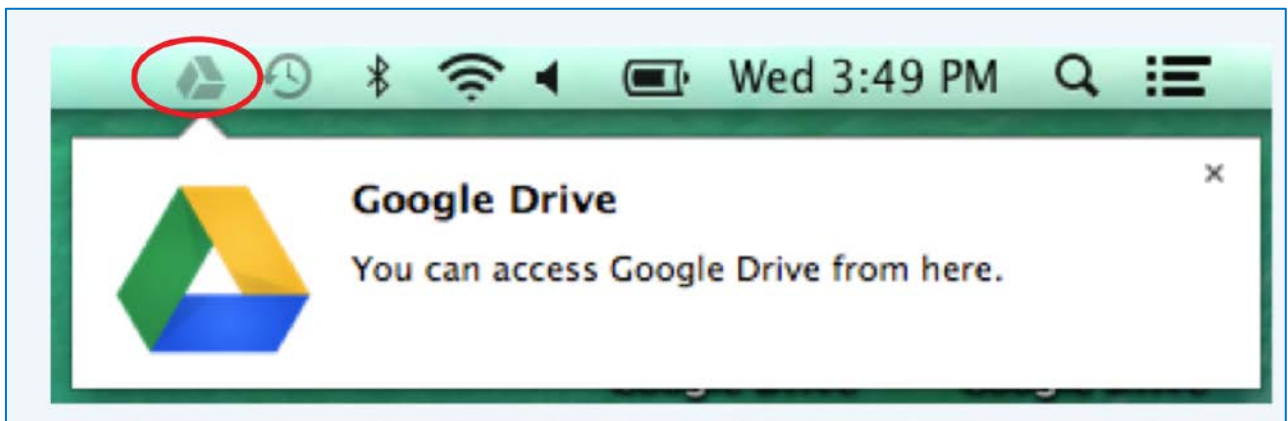
If you don't see it immediately, it might be hidden in the "overflow" menu—just click the **upward-facing arrow (^)** to find it. You can drag and drop it directly onto the main taskbar area if you want it to be visible all the time.

5.2 Installing the Google Drive App for MacOS

1. Download the MacOS app using this link: <https://dl.google.com/drive-file-stream/GoogleDrive.dmg>
2. Open the downloaded file: GoogleDrive.dmg
3. Follow the on-screen instructions.

When you install the Google Drive app for MacOS, it creates a location in Finder called Google Drive. This allows you to browse your cloud files locally on your computer.

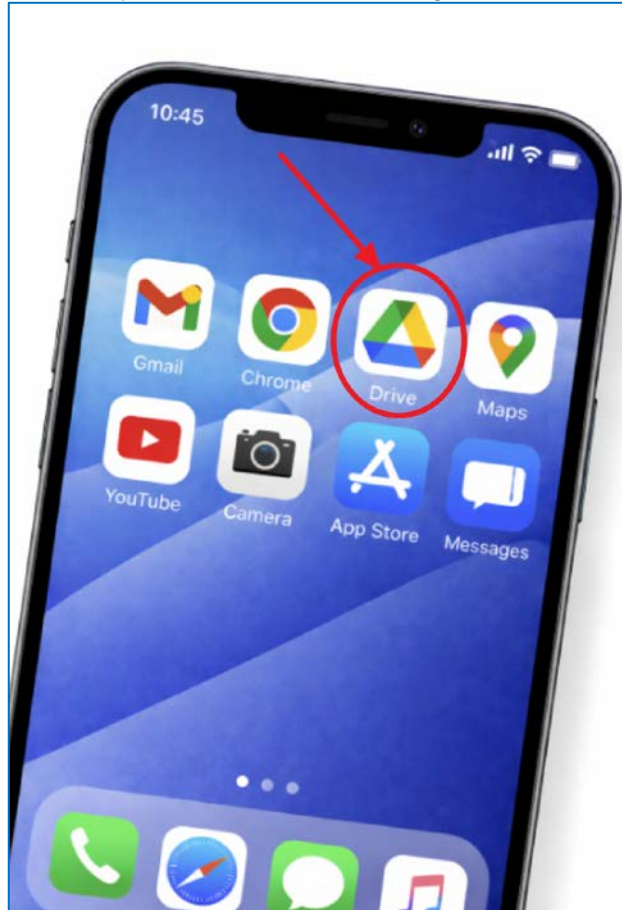
You should also see a small Google Drive icon in the Menu Bar. This is usually at the top-of the screen. This is the Google Drive "Control Centre." Clicking on this icon allows you to see synchronisation progress, check for errors, and access the Settings/Preferences menu.



5.3 Google Drive App for Android Devices

Download the Google Drive app for Android Devices from the Play Store using this link:
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.docs&hl=en>

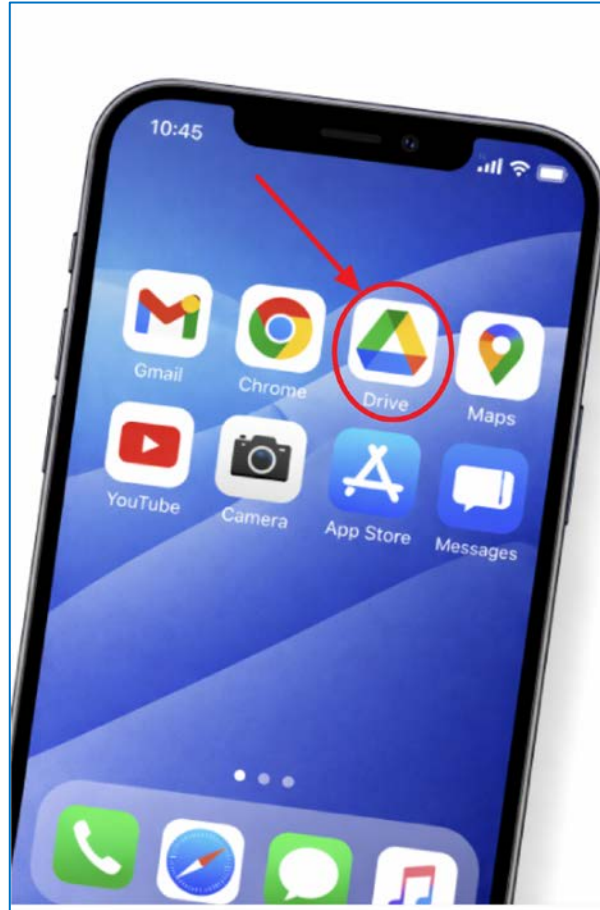
Once the app has been installed, you should see the Google Drive icon on the device:



5.4 Google Drive App for iPhones and iPads

Download the Google Drive app for iPhones and iPads from the Apple Store using this link:
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/google-drive/id507874739>

Once the app has been installed, you should see the Google Drive icon on the device:



6. Using the Google Drive App

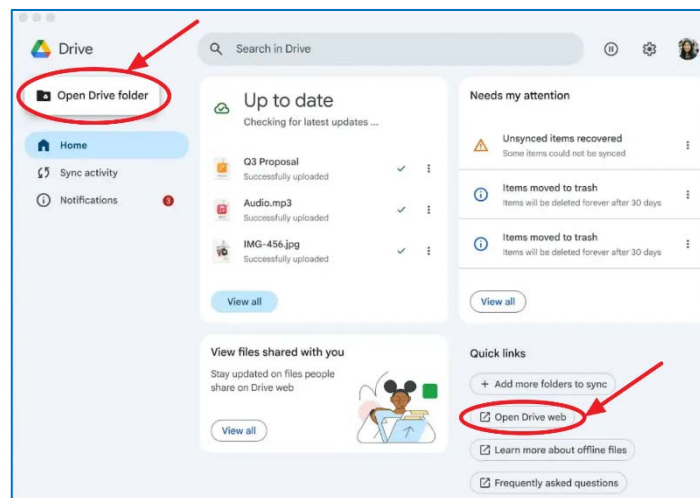
This Section explains how to use the Google Drive app on various devices.

6.1 Using the Google Drive App on Windows

To launch the Google Drive App on Windows, click on the Google Drive icon in the Windows Status Bar:



The system will display the Google Drive Control Centre:

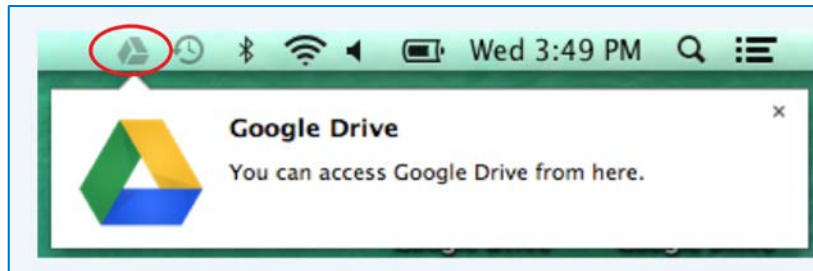


The 2 options for accessing the files managed by Google Drive are highlighted in the image above:

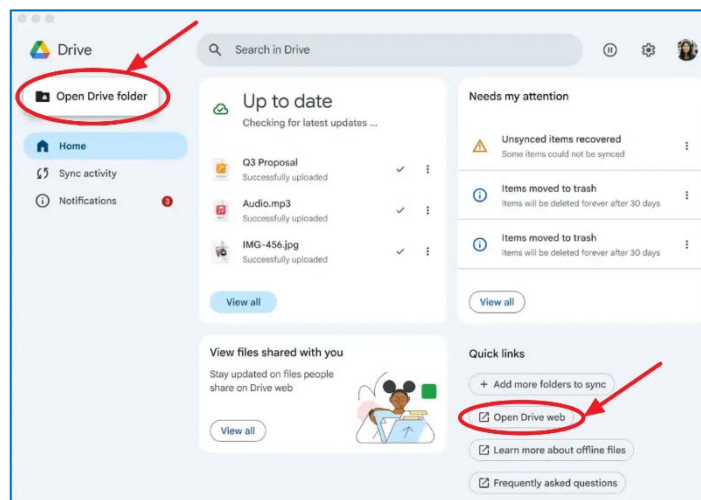
1. **Open Drive folder.** This option enables you to work with the synced Google Drive files and folders stored locally on your computer. When you select this option, it opens File Explorer on Windows. It's a quick way to access your Drive files directly through your operating system's file browser rather than through a web browser. This is useful when you want to work with your Drive files using your computer's native file management tools - like dragging and dropping files, opening them with desktop applications, or managing them alongside other local files.
2. **Open Drive web.** This option opens Google Drive in your web browser. When you select this option, it launches your default web browser and takes you to drive.google.com, where you can access the full web interface of Google Drive. This is useful when you want to:
 - o Access features that are only available in the web version (like advanced sharing settings, version history, or certain integrations).
 - o View all your Drive files, including those not synced to your computer.
 - o Work with Google Docs, Sheets, or Slides in their web editors.

6.2 Using the Google Drive App on MacOS

To launch the Google Drive App on MacOS, click on the Google Drive icon in the MacOS Menu Bar:



The system will display the Google Drive Control Centre:



The 2 options for accessing the files managed by Google Drive are highlighted in the image above:

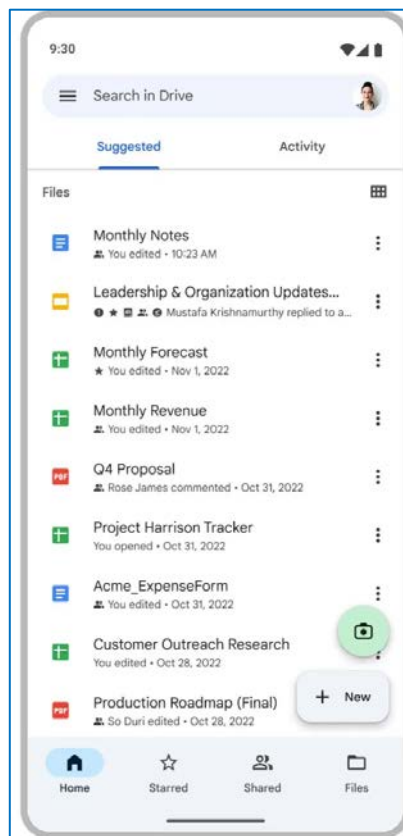
1. **Open Drive folder.** This option enables you to work with the synced Google Drive files and folders stored locally on your computer. When you select this option, it opens Finder on MacOS. It's a quick way to access your Drive files directly through your operating system's file browser rather than through a web browser. This is useful when you want to work with your Drive files using your computer's native file management tools - like dragging and dropping files, opening them with desktop applications, or managing them alongside other local files.
2. **Open Drive web.** This option opens Google Drive in your web browser. When you select this option, it launches your default web browser and takes you to drive.google.com, where you can access the full web interface of Google Drive. This is useful when you want to:
 - o Access features that are only available in the web version (like advanced sharing settings, version history, or certain integrations).
 - o View all your Drive files, including those not synced to your computer.
 - o Work with Google Docs, Sheets, or Slides in their web editors.

6.3 Using the Google Drive App on an Android Device

To launch the Google Drive App on an Android device, tap the Google Drive icon:



The system will display the Google Drive home page:



You will see a navigation bar at the bottom with tabs like "Home," "Starred," "Shared," and "Files".

At the top, there's a search bar to find files and a menu icon for settings.

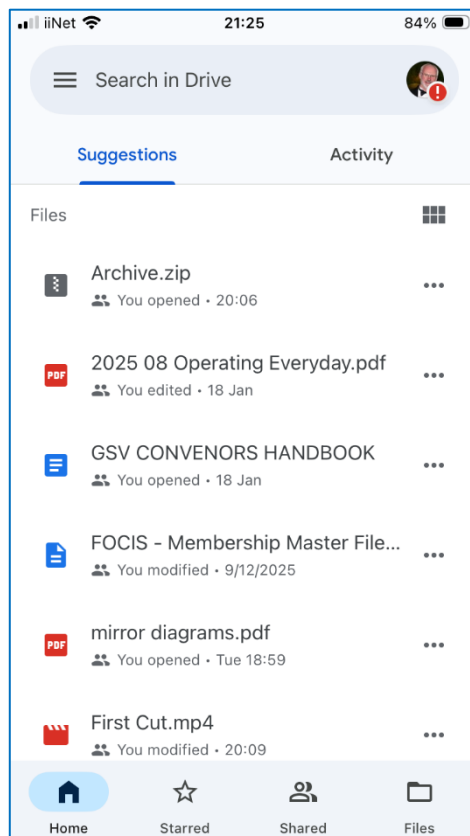
The experience is designed to give you quick access to your most relevant files while letting you navigate your entire Drive storage when needed. The interface is pretty intuitive and works similarly to a file manager, but with cloud sync capabilities.

6.4 Using the Google Drive App on an iPhone or an iPad

To launch the Google Drive App on an iPhone or an iPad, tap the Google Drive icon:



The system will display the Google Drive home page:



You will see a navigation bar at the bottom with tabs like "Home," "Starred," "Shared," and "Files".

At the top, there's a search bar to find files and a menu icon for settings.

The experience is designed to give you quick access to your most relevant files while letting you navigate your entire Drive storage when needed. The interface is pretty intuitive and works similarly to a file manager, but with cloud sync capabilities.

7. Offline Access

It's often useful to work with your files where a copy of your files are physically stored on your device. In that case, Google Drive can automatically synchronise the files for you. This Section explains how synchronisation works so you can access your files offline.

7.1 How Google Drive Manages Files

Google Drive is a cloud-based storage service that stores your files on remote servers rather than solely on your local device. This approach offers several advantages:

- **Access from anywhere:** View your files from any device with Internet access.
- **Automatic backup:** Files are protected against device loss or hardware failure.
- **Collaboration:** Multiple people can work on the same files simultaneously.
- **Storage efficiency:** Save space on your local hard drive.

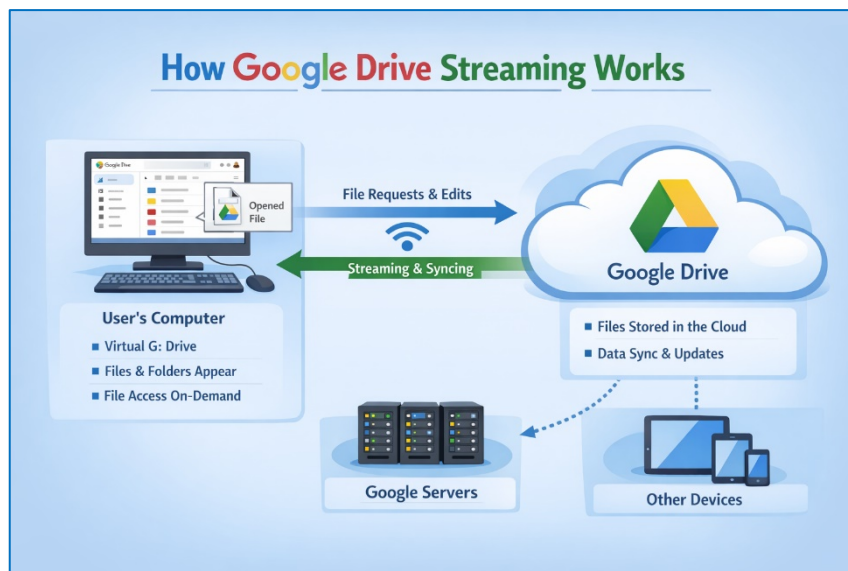
However, cloud storage requires an Internet connection to access your files. Google Drive offers different modes to balance between saving local storage space and ensuring you can work without Internet connectivity.

Google Drive offers 2 different access modes:

1. Streaming.
2. Mirroring.

7.2 Streaming Mode

Streaming mode, also called "online-only" or "available on-demand," means files remain stored only in the cloud until you need them.



How it works:

- Files appear in your Google Drive folder on your computer, but only as placeholders.
- The actual file content stays in the cloud and isn't downloaded to your device.
- When you open a file, Google Drive temporarily downloads it for viewing or editing.
- Once you close the file, the temporary copy may be removed from your device.

Benefits:

- Saves significant hard drive space—ideal for devices with limited storage.
- You can see and organise all your files without downloading them.
- No need to manually manage what's stored locally.

Limitations:

- Requires Internet connection to open files.
- Initial opening of files may be slower as content downloads.
- Cannot access files when offline.

Best for: Users with large Google Drive libraries but limited local storage, or those who primarily work with Internet access.

7.4 Mirroring Mode

Mirroring mode, also called "available offline" or "synced," creates a complete local copy of your files on your device that stays synchronised with the cloud version.

**How it works:**

- Full copies of files are downloaded and stored on your hard drive.
- Google Drive continuously monitors for changes in both locations.
- When you edit a file locally, changes upload to the cloud automatically.
- When someone else edits a shared file in the cloud, changes download to your device.
- Both versions stay identical (mirrored) through two-way synchronisation.

Benefits:

- Full offline access—work without Internet connection.
- Faster file opening since files are already on your device.
- Changes sync automatically when you reconnect to the Internet.
- Peace of mind with local backup of your cloud files.

Limitations:

- Consumes hard drive space equal to your mirrored files' size.
- Initial sync can take considerable time for large file collections.
- Uses bandwidth to keep files synchronised.

Best for: Users who frequently work offline, need fast access to files, or want local backup copies of important documents.

7.5 *Setting Up Offline Access*

Prerequisites:

- Google Drive desktop app installed (for computer access).
- Sufficient storage space on your device.
- Initial Internet connection to download files.

Offline Access for individual files or folders:

1. Right-click the file or folder in Google Drive.
2. Select "Available offline" or "Make available offline".
3. A checkmark or download icon indicates offline availability.

Offline Access for all files (full mirroring):

1. Open Google Drive preferences/settings.
2. Look for sync or offline options.
3. Choose to mirror your entire "My Drive" or specific folders.

Managing Storage:

Monitor how much space offline files consume and adjust as needed. You can selectively make files online-only again to free up space while keeping them accessible in the cloud.

7.6 *Working Offline*

When you lose Internet connection with mirrored files:

- Open and edit files normally from your Google Drive folder.
- Changes are saved locally on your device.
- A sync indicator shows items waiting to upload.
- Once reconnected, all changes automatically sync to the cloud.
- Conflicts are rare, but if they occur, Google Drive will prompt you to choose which version to keep.

7.7 *Best Practice*

For the best experience, use a combination of both modes—mirror frequently-used files and important documents while keeping less critical or large archive files in streaming mode.

8. Security and Privacy

This Section explains the security and privacy features of Google Drive.

8.1 Core Security Features

- **Encryption:** Google Drive uses AES-256 encryption for data in transit via TLS/SSL protocols, and AES-128 encryption for files stored on servers. This means your files are protected both when traveling between your device and Google's servers and when sitting in Google's data centres.
- **Privacy Controls:** Content you save on Drive is private by default unless you choose to share it, and Google only accesses your private content with permission or when required by law. You maintain full control over who can view, edit, or comment on your files through sharing settings.
- **Account Security:** Google Drive supports two-factor authentication (also called two-step verification), which adds an extra layer of protection by requiring a second form of verification beyond your password. This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised account access.

8.2 Google Drive Access Levels

Google Drive has a number of sharing access levels that control what people can do with your files and folders:

- **Viewer** - People can view and download the file or folder, but cannot make any changes. They can also make a copy for themselves.
- **Commenter** - People can view, download, and add comments or suggestions, but cannot edit the actual content. This level is available for Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and other Google Workspace files, but not for all file types.
- **Editor** - People can view, download, comment, and make direct changes to the file or folder. For folders, editors can also add, remove, and organise files within that folder.

8.3 Additional Options

When you share files using Google Drive, you can also control:

- **Download, print, and copy permissions** - For viewers and commenters, you can disable their ability to download, print, or copy files (available for Google Workspace files only).
- **Link sharing settings** - You can share via link with different visibility options:
 - Restricted (only specific people you choose).
 - Anyone with the link (anyone who has the link can access).

For folders specifically, the access permissions cascade down to all files and subfolders inside, though individual files can have their own separate permissions that override the folder settings.

8.4 Google Drive Security

Google Drive is generally considered secure for most everyday use cases and is trusted by billions of users, including many organisations. However, for highly regulated industries or extremely sensitive data, you may want to consider additional security measures or specialised platforms designed specifically for those needs.

9. Creating and Sharing Files and Folders in Google Drive

This section explains how to create files and folders in Google Drive and share them with other users.

This guide assumes you have the Google Drive desktop app installed with mirroring enabled, which syncs a local folder on your computer with your Google Drive cloud storage.

9.1 Creating a New Folder

With Google Drive mirroring, creating folders works just like it does anywhere else on your computer:

1. Open your Google Drive folder on your computer (typically found in File Explorer on Windows or Finder on Mac).
2. Right-click in the location where you want to create the folder.
3. Select New > Folder (Windows) or New Folder (Mac).
4. Name your folder and press Enter.

The folder will automatically sync to Google Drive and appear in your cloud storage within moments.

9.2 Creating Files

You can create and save files directly to your Google Drive folder:

1. Open any application (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, text editors, Adobe products, etc.).
2. Create your document.
3. When saving, navigate to your Google Drive folder location.
4. Save the file as you normally would.

The file will automatically upload to Google Drive.

You can also create Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides files by:

1. Opening your web browser and going to drive.google.com.
2. Clicking + New and selecting the Google file type you want.
3. The file will be created in the cloud and sync to your local Google Drive folder.

9.3 Moving Existing Files to Google Drive

Simply drag and drop files from other locations on your computer into your Google Drive folder, or use copy and paste. The files will automatically sync to the cloud.

9.4 Sharing Files and Folders from Your Computer

1. Navigate to your Google Drive folder on your computer.
2. Right-click on the file or folder you want to share.
3. Select "Share with Google Drive" from the context menu.
4. Enter the email addresses of people you want to share with.
5. Choose their permission level from the dropdown menu:
 - Viewer – can only view and download the file.
 - Commenter – can view, download, and add comments (not available for folders).
 - Editor – can view, download, edit, and delete.
6. Click Send.

Recipients will receive an invitation by email to permit them to access the file or folder. Access will be granted once they accept the invitation.

9.5 Sharing Files and Folders via the Web Interface

You can also manage sharing from drive.google.com:

1. Open your web browser and go to drive.google.com.
2. Locate the file or folder (it will match your local folder structure).
3. Right-click and select Share.
4. Follow the same steps as above to add people and set permissions.

Changes made to sharing permissions will be reflected whether you access the file locally or through the web.

9.6 Creating a Shareable Link

1. Right-click on the file or folder in your Google Drive folder.
2. Select Share.
3. Click Copy link at the bottom of the sharing dialog.
4. Before copying, click the dropdown next to "Restricted" to change access:
 - Restricted – Only people you've specifically invited can access.
 - Anyone with the link – Anyone who receives the link can access.
5. Choose the permission level (Viewer, Commenter, or Editor).
6. Click Copy link and share it however you'd like.

9.7 Advanced Sharing Settings

1. Right-click the file or folder and select Share.
2. Click the gear icon (Settings) in the sharing dialog.
3. Configure additional security options:
 - Prevent editors from changing access or adding new people.
 - Disable downloading, printing, and copying for commenters and viewers.
 - Set an expiration date for access.
4. Click Done to save.

9.8 Managing Existing Access

1. Right-click on the shared file or folder and select Share.
2. View the list of people who currently have access.
3. Click the dropdown menu next to anyone's name to change their permission level or remove their access.
4. Click Done when finished.

9.9 Understanding Mirroring and Sharing

When using Google Drive mirroring:

- **Files sync bidirectionally:** Changes made locally or in the cloud are reflected in both places.
- **Shared files remain in your Drive:** When you share a file, it stays in your Google Drive folder and others access it through their web browser or their own Drive.
- **Collaborators' edits sync automatically:** When someone with editor permissions makes changes, those changes will sync to your local copy.

- **Offline access:** You can work on files even without internet, and changes will sync when you reconnect.

9.10 Best Practices

- **Organise before sharing:** Set up a clear folder structure in your Google Drive folder before sharing with teams.
- **Share folders for ongoing collaboration:** Instead of sharing individual files, share entire project folders with your team.
- **Use appropriate permissions:** Default to viewer access unless collaborators need to edit.
- **Monitor the sync status:** Check the Google Drive icon in your system tray (Windows) or menu bar (Mac) to ensure files have finished syncing before sharing.
- **Be cautious with "Anyone with the link":** These links can be forwarded to anyone, so use restricted sharing for sensitive documents.
- **Regularly review access:** Periodically check who has access to important files and folders.

9.11 Sync Indicators

When viewing your Google Drive folder, you'll see icons indicating sync status:

- **Green checkmark:** File is synced and up to date.
- **Blue sync arrows:** File is currently syncing.
- **Cloud icon:** File is available in the cloud but not downloaded locally (if using "Stream files" mode).

Understanding these indicators helps ensure files are fully synced before you share them with others.

10. Using Google Drive with Multiple Google Accounts

This Section explains how Google Drive handles multiple Google accounts and how to manage files across different accounts.

10.1 Multiple Google Accounts

If you have more than one Google account, e.g. a personal account and a work account, you can access both in your web browser simultaneously, but it's important to understand how this works to avoid confusion.

10.2 Switching Between Accounts

When you're signed into multiple Google accounts, you'll see a profile icon in the upper right corner of Google Drive. Clicking this icon shows all your signed-in accounts and lets you switch between them.

Each account has its own separate Drive with its own files, storage quota, and sharing settings. Files in one account are completely separate from files in another account unless you explicitly share them.

10.3 Account Context

When you open Google Drive, you're always viewing the Drive associated with one specific account - whichever account is currently active. If you open a new tab or window, Google will typically use your default account (usually the first one you signed into). This can sometimes lead to confusion if you're not sure which account you're currently using, so it's worth checking the profile icon to confirm.

10.4 Sharing Files Between Your Own Accounts

If you need to access a file from your work Drive while using your personal account, you'll need to share it between accounts just as you would share it with any other user. You can share a file or folder from one account to your other account's email address, and it will appear in the "Shared with me" section of the receiving account.

10.5 Syncing Multiple Accounts to Your Device

If you're using Google Drive for desktop (the sync application), you can connect multiple accounts to sync files locally to your computer.

Each account will sync to its own separate folder on your device, keeping the files from different accounts organised and separate. For example, you might have a "Google Drive (Personal)" folder and a "Google Drive (Work)" folder, each containing the synced files from the respective account. This prevents files from different accounts from mixing together on your local storage.

10.6 Mobile and Desktop Apps

On mobile devices and the Google Drive desktop app, you can also add multiple accounts, though the interface for switching between them varies by platform. Generally, you'll tap your profile picture or use a menu option to switch accounts or add new ones.

11. File and Folder Ownership

This Section explains how file and folder ownership works in Google Drive and provides instructions for transferring ownership from one user to another.

11.1 Understanding File and Folder Ownership

Every file and folder in Google Drive has an owner. This is the person who created it or who has been designated as the owner.

The owner has complete control over the item, including the ability to share it with others, modify sharing permissions, and permanently delete it. Even if a file is shared with you as an editor, you won't be able to delete it or change certain settings unless you're the owner. This distinction is important in collaborative environments where multiple people work on shared documents.

11.2 Transferring Ownership

To transfer ownership of a file or folder to another user:

1. Open the file or folder and click the "Share" button.
2. In the sharing dialog, find the person you want to make the new owner in the list of people who have access (they must already have at least viewer access).
3. Click the dropdown menu next to their name and select "Make owner."
4. When you confirm the transfer, Google Drive sends an email to the new owner inviting them to accept ownership.
5. Once they accept, that person becomes the owner, and you'll automatically become an editor unless the new owner changes your permissions.

Note that you can only transfer ownership to users within the same Google Workspace organisation for some file types, or to any Google account holder for others.

11.3 Important Considerations About Folder Ownership

When you transfer ownership of a folder, ownership transfers only for that specific folder—it does not cascade down to the contents within it.

Each subfolder and each file inside the folder retains its original owner. This means if you want to fully transfer control of an entire folder structure to another person, you must individually transfer ownership of the top-level folder, then each subfolder within it, and then each file.

This can be time-consuming for folders with many items, but it's necessary to ensure the new owner has complete control. If you only transfer the folder itself, the new owner will be able to manage the folder's sharing settings and organisation, but won't have ownership rights over the individual files and subfolders inside, meaning they cannot delete those items or fully control their settings.

11.4 Impact on Your Google Drive Storage Allowance

When you transfer ownership of a file in Google Drive to another person, the storage allowance changes for both accounts.

How Storage Is Affected:

- Your storage allowance decreases — files you no longer own stop counting against your quota.
- Their storage allowance increases — the transferred files now count against the new owner's quota.

What Stays the Same:

- You can retain access to the files (as an editor or viewer) even after transferring ownership — the new owner just needs to keep you shared.
- The files themselves are not moved or deleted — they stay in the same location in Google Drive.

Important Things to Check Before Transferring:

- Make sure the new owner has enough storage to accommodate the transferred files — especially if they are on a free Google account (15 GB limit).

12. Adding Comments

This Section explains how to add comments about files managed by Google Drive.

The method of adding comments about a file depends on 2 factors:

1. The type of file, e.g. Google Workspace Files (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms), Microsoft Office Files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), PDFs, Images, Videos, Audio.
2. How the files are being accessed: via the web interface or via the synced local drive.

12.1 Google Workspace Files via Web Interface

To add comments to Google Workspace Files (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms) via the Web interface:

1. Navigate to drive.google.com and locate your file.
2. Double-click to open the file.
3. Highlight the text or select the cell/element you want to comment on.
4. Click the comment icon (speech bubble) that appears, or right-click and select "Comment".
5. Type your comment in the box.
6. Click "Comment" to post it.
7. Others with access can view, reply to, or resolve the comment.

12.2 Google Workspace Files via Synced Local Drive

To add comments to Google Workspace Files (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms) which are stored on your Synced Local Drive:

1. Open your Google Drive folder on your computer (via File Explorer on Windows or Finder on Mac).
2. Locate the file - it will appear as a shortcut with a Google app icon.
3. Double-click the file.
4. Your web browser opens with the file.
5. Highlight the text or select the cell/element you want to comment on.
6. Click the comment icon (speech bubble) that appears, or right-click and select "Comment".
7. Type your comment in the box.
8. Click "Comment" to post it.
9. Others with access can view, reply to, or resolve the comment.

12.3 Microsoft Office Files via Web Interface

To add comments to Microsoft Office Files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) via the Web interface:

1. Go to drive.google.com and find your Office file.
2. Double-click to open it (it opens in Google Drive's preview/editor).
3. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar (speech bubble icon).
4. Type your comment - the comment attaches to the entire file, not specific content.
5. Click "Comment" to post.

Note: These are Drive-level comments, not embedded in the Office file itself.

12.4 Microsoft Office Files via Synced Local Drive - Opening in Microsoft Office

To add comments to Microsoft Office Files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) which are stored on your Synced Local Drive with the file being opened in Microsoft Office:

1. Navigate to your Google Drive folder on your computer.
2. Locate and double-click the Office file.
3. The file opens in Microsoft Word/Excel/PowerPoint.
4. Use Office's native commenting tools:
 - Select the text or content.
 - Go to Review tab ' New Comment (or Ctrl+Alt+M on Windows, Cmd+Option+A on Mac).
 - Type your comment and post.

Note: These Office comments are separate from Google Drive comments and are embedded in the file itself.

12.5 Microsoft Office Files via Synced Local Drive - Opening in Browser

To add comments to Microsoft Office Files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) which are stored on your Synced Local Drive with the file being opened in a browser window:

1. Navigate to your Google Drive folder on your computer.
2. Right-click the Office file.
3. Select "Open in Google Drive" or similar option.
4. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar (speech bubble icon).
5. Type your comment - the comment attaches to the entire file, not specific content.
6. Click "Comment" to post.

Note: These are Drive-level comments, not embedded in the Office file itself.

12.6 PDFs via Web Interface

To add comments to PDFs via the Web interface:

1. Go to drive.google.com and locate your PDF.
2. Double-click to open it in Google Drive's PDF viewer.
3. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar.
4. Click where you want to add a comment on the PDF page.
5. Type your comment.
6. Click "Comment" to post.
7. The comment appears anchored to that location on the page.

12.7 PDFs via Synced Local Drive

To add comments to PDFs which are stored on your Synced Local Drive:

1. Navigate to your Google Drive folder on your computer.
2. Locate the PDF file.
3. Right-click the file and select "Open in Google Drive" (or similar browser option).
4. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar.
5. Click where you want to add a comment on the PDF page.
6. Type your comment.
7. Click "Comment" to post.
8. The comment appears anchored to that location on the page.

Note: If you double-click to open in a PDF reader like Adobe Acrobat, you won't have access to Google Drive comments - you'd use that application's own commenting features instead.

12.8 Other File Types via Web Interface

To add comments to other file types such as Images, Videos, and Audio files via the Web interface:

1. Go to drive.google.com and find your file.
2. Double-click to open the preview.
3. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar (or the "Comments" section on the right side).
4. Type your general comment about the file.
5. Click "Comment" to post.

Note: Comments are file-level only, not anchored to specific parts of the content.

12.9 Other File Types via Synced Local Drive

To add comments to other file types such as Images, Videos, and Audio files which are stored on your Synced Local Drive:

1. Navigate to your Google Drive folder on your computer.
2. Right-click the file.
3. Select "Open in Google Drive" or open in browser.
4. Click the comment icon in the top-right toolbar (or the "Comments" section on the right side).
5. Type your general comment about the file.
6. Click "Comment" to post.

Note: Comments are file-level only, not anchored to specific parts of the content.

Opening the file directly in a local application (image viewer, media player, etc.) won't provide access to Google Drive comments.

12.10 General Tips

1. Resolved comments are hidden by default but can be viewed in the comment history.
2. You can tag people in comments using @ followed by their name/email address.
3. Comment notifications are sent to collaborators automatically.
4. You need at least "Commenter" access level to add comments (not just "Viewer").

13. Google Drive Best Practice

Google Drive is a powerful tool, but many people only scratch the surface of what it can do. This Section provides some practical recommendations to help you use Google Drive more effectively in your daily work.

Following these recommendations will help your team work more efficiently and keep your shared resources organised and accessible.

13.1 Install the Google Drive App

This is often overlooked but makes a huge difference. The app syncs Drive to your computer's file system, so you can access files through Finder (Mac) or File Explorer (Windows) just like any local file. This feels much more natural than constantly opening browser tabs.

13.2 Choose Your Sync Approach Wisely

The app offers two modes: "Mirror files" (stream on-demand) and "Stream files" with selective offline availability. For most people, streaming saves local disk space while keeping everything accessible. Only sync specific folders you truly need offline regularly.

13.3 Work Directly from the Synced Folder

When files are synced, you can open them in native desktop apps—edit a spreadsheet in Excel, markup a PDF in Preview, work on images in Photoshop. Changes sync automatically back to Drive. This is faster and more flexible than browser-based editing.

13.4 Use it for Backup and Easy Uploads

Drop files into your Drive folder and they upload automatically. No need to drag files into browser windows. This makes Drive work more like Dropbox—invisible and automatic.

13.5 Right-click Context Menus are Your Friend

In the synced folder, right-clicking gives you quick access to Drive features: share links, view in browser, make available offline, and more.

13.6 Organisation is Everything

The difference between a useful Drive and a chaotic one often comes down to a thoughtful folder structure from the start. Consider organising by project, client, year, or department—whatever matches how you actually work. Resist the temptation to dump everything in "My Drive" root. A few well-named parent folders with consistent subfolder structures will save you enormous time later.

13.7 Be Intentional about Sharing

Before sharing, think about whether people need to view, comment, or edit. "Editor" access is often over-shared. Also consider whether you want to share individual files or entire folders—folder sharing can be cleaner for ongoing collaborations, but gives access to everything inside.

13.8 Use "Anyone with the Link" Carefully

Be cautious with "Anyone with the link" sharing settings. While convenient, this means the file can be accessed by anyone who has the link—it could be forwarded, posted publicly, or indexed by search engines.

For sensitive team documents, client materials, or anything confidential, always use "Restricted" sharing and invite specific people to share files and folders. Reserve "Anyone with the link" for truly public materials or when you need easy external sharing for non-sensitive content.

13.9 Set up Offline Access Selectively

You probably don't need everything available offline, but marking key files or folders for offline access ensures you can work anywhere.

13.10 Best Practice for Windows and macOS Users

If you are accessing Google Drive from a Windows PC or a Mac computer, it is a good idea to restart your computer every few days. Restarting ensures that Google Drive and other background applications start again cleanly and continue synchronising your files.

14. Guidelines for Document Reviewers

This Section provides a set of guidelines for writers managing team reviews with consistent commenting in Google Drive.

14.1 Establish a Commenting Protocol

- Tell reviewers which file type you're using (Google Docs is usually best for collaborative writing)
- Specify whether you want line-by-line comments, general feedback, or both.
- Set a deadline for when comments should be completed.
- Clarify who resolves comments - typically the writer resolves after addressing feedback, not the reviewers.

14.2 Define Access Levels

- Give reviewers "Commenter" access (not "Editor") if you want to control all changes to the text.
- Use "Suggesting" mode in Google Docs if you want reviewers to propose edits that you can accept/reject.
- Reserve "Editor" access only for people who should directly modify the document.

14.3 Commenting Guidelines for Reviewers

Ask reviewers to:

- Use comments for questions, suggestions, and discussion - not for making direct changes.
- Be specific about what they're commenting on by highlighting the relevant text.
- Tag you (@yourname) in comments that need your direct attention or decision.
- Use a consistent labelling system, such as:
 - "Clarity:" for confusing passages.
 - "Fact-check:" for items needing verification.
 - "Style:" for tone or voice suggestions.
 - "Question:" for things needing clarification.
- Leave comments unresolved - let the writer resolve them after addressing the feedback.
- Reply to existing comment threads rather than creating new ones on the same issue.

14.4 Encourage Constructive Feedback

- Frame comments as questions or suggestions rather than demands.
- Explain the "why" behind feedback, not just the "what".
- Balance critical feedback with what's working well.

14.5 Organise Comment Threads

- Reply to comments to acknowledge them, ask follow-up questions, or explain your decisions.
- Resolve comments only after you've addressed them - this is your signal that the feedback has been handled.
- Add a brief final reply before resolving (e.g., "Fixed, thanks!" or "Decided to keep as-is because...") so reviewers know you've considered their input.
- Use "Comment history" to review resolved comments later if needed.

14.6 Track Your Progress

- Keep comments unresolved while working through feedback - they serve as your to-do list.
- Resolve comments as you address them, or resolve all at once when you complete a revision round.
- Unresolved comments = still needs attention; Resolved comments = has been addressed.

14.7 Managing with Multiple Reviewers

- Consider staggered reviews (one person at a time) for major rewrites to avoid conflicting suggestions.
- Use simultaneous reviews for final polishing when the structure is solid.
- Hold a follow-up meeting to discuss conflicting comments rather than trying to resolve everything in-thread.
- If reviewers disagree, acknowledge both perspectives in the comment thread before resolving.

14.8 Choose the Right File Format

- Use Google Docs for collaborative writing - best commenting experience.
- Avoid Microsoft Word files if possible - commenting works differently and can create confusion.
- If you must use Word, clarify whether reviewers should use Word's commenting or convert to Google Docs first.

14.9 Communication Tips

When inviting reviewers, send a brief message explaining:

- What kind of feedback you're looking for.
- The deadline for comments.
- How to access the document (web interface recommended for consistency).
- Any specific areas where you need extra attention.
- Whether you prefer detailed line edits or big-picture feedback.
- That you'll resolve comments as you address them, so they should leave them unresolved.

14.10 Troubleshooting Common Issues

- **Too many conflicting comments:** Schedule a quick call to align on direction, then summarise the decision in the comment thread before resolving.
- **Comments getting lost:** Remind team to use the comment feature, not just email or chat.
- **Version confusion:** Always work from the web interface, not downloaded copies.
- **Comment overload:** Ask reviewers to prioritise their top 5-10 issues rather than noting everything.
- **Accidentally resolved a comment:** Use the comment history to view it and click "Reopen" if the issue needs further discussion.
- **Reviewer resolved comments prematurely:** Reopen them and remind the team that only the writer should resolve.

14.11 *The Golden Rule*

Consistency comes from everyone using the same access method (web interface), the same file format (Google Docs), understanding their role (commenter vs. editor vs. suggester), and following the same workflow (reviewers comment and leave unresolved; writer addresses and resolves).

15. What Happens if the Google Drive App Stops Running

This Section explains what happens if the Google Drive App stops running and offers advice on the best practice for Windows and macOS users to reduce the possibility of this happening.

15.1 What Happens if the Google Drive App on Windows Stops Running

If the Google Drive app on Windows stops running, here's what happens.

Immediate Effects:

- The Google Drive virtual drive (typically the `G:` drive) disappears from File Explorer. Any files you had open from that drive may become inaccessible or show errors.
- Active uploads or downloads are interrupted and paused until the app restarts.
- Any files you were editing via the Drive that hadn't finished syncing will have unsynced changes.

Your Files are Safe:

- All files already synced to Google's servers remain intact in the cloud — nothing is deleted remotely.
- Files stored in your PC remain on your physical disk, just inaccessible through the Drive letter until the app restarts.

What Doesn't Work While It's Stopped:

- Syncing new or modified files to/from the cloud.
- Accessing Drive files through File Explorer.
- Shared drives and team folders won't be visible.
- Any apps that reference the Drive path will fail to find their files.

When You Restart the App:

- The Drive remounts and becomes available again in File Explorer.
- Syncing resumes automatically, and any pending changes are queued up.
- Interrupted uploads/downloads restart from where they left off (or from the beginning, depending on file size and type).

Common Reasons the App Stops:

- Windows update or restart.
- App crash.
- Signing out or revoking account permissions.
- Resource conflicts or antivirus interference.

In summary, stopping the app is mostly a temporary inconvenience - your cloud data is unaffected, and everything resumes normally once the app is running again.

Some background applications such as the Google Drive app may occasionally stop working properly without you noticing. Therefore, it's a good idea to restart your computer every few days. Restarting ensures that Google Drive and other background applications start again cleanly and continue synchronising your files.

15.2 What Happens if the Google Drive App on MacOS Stops Running

If the Google Drive app on macOS stops running, here's what happens.

Immediate Effects:

- Sync pauses completely — Any local changes won't upload, and cloud changes won't download until the app restarts.
- The Drive volume unmounts — Google Drive disappears from your Finder sidebar and from /Volumes/Google Drive, since it's a virtual FUSE-based volume mounted by the app.
- Menu bar icon disappears — The Google Drive icon in the top menu bar will vanish, as it only exists while the app is running.

For "Stream Files" Users:

- Only files you've pinned for offline access remain available.
- All other Drive contents become inaccessible from Finder until the app is back online.

For "Mirror My Drive" Users:

- Your mirrored files stay fully accessible in Finder since they're real local copies in ~/Library/CloudStorage/GoogleDrive-[your email]/.
- Changes made offline will sync automatically once the app restarts.

What You Can Still Do:

- Access everything via drive.google.com in Safari or any browser — your cloud files are untouched.
- Continue working on any locally mirrored files.

Common Mac-Specific Causes:

- macOS update requiring a restart.
- System Integrity Protection or security settings blocking the FUSE extension.
- Conflicts with other cloud storage apps (Dropbox, OneDrive).
- The app being force-quit or crashing after sleep/wake.

In summary, stopping the app is mostly a temporary inconvenience - your cloud data is unaffected, and everything resumes normally once the app is running again.

Some background applications such as the Google Drive app may occasionally stop working properly without you noticing. Therefore, it's a good idea to restart your computer every few days. Restarting ensures that Google Drive and other background applications start again cleanly and continue synchronising your files.

15.3 What Happens if the Google Drive App on an iPhone or iPad Stops Running

If the Google Drive app on an iPhone or iPad stops running, here's what typically happens.

Files and Data:

- Your files remain safely stored in Google's cloud — nothing is deleted or lost.
- Any files you had downloaded for offline access remain available on your device until you clear them.
- Files that weren't synced/uploaded before the crash may not be saved if they were mid-upload.

Active Tasks:

- Uploads or downloads in progress will be interrupted and will need to be restarted when you reopen the app.
- Any unsaved edits made within the app (like in Google Docs/Sheets opened via Drive) could potentially be lost, though Google's auto-save usually handles this.
- Shared link activity or ongoing collaboration won't be affected — others can still access shared files.

When You Reopen the App:

- The app will reload from scratch, usually returning you to where you last were.
- Interrupted uploads will typically show an error or prompt you to retry.
- The app will re-sync with Google's servers to reflect any changes made elsewhere.

Common Reasons it Might Stop:

- iOS killed it to free up memory (very common on older devices).
- An app crash due to a bug.
- A software conflict or outdated app version.
- Insufficient storage on the device affecting app performance.

What You Can Do:

- Force-quit and reopen the app.
- Check for app updates in the App Store.
- Restart your iPhone or iPad.
- Reinstall the app if crashes are frequent (your cloud data is unaffected).

In summary, stopping the app is mostly a temporary inconvenience - your cloud data is unaffected, and everything resumes normally once the app is running again.

15.4 What Happens if the Google Drive App on an Android Phone or Android Tablet Stops Running

If the Google Drive app on an Android phone or tablet stops running, here's what typically happens.

Access to Files:

- You lose the ability to browse, upload, or manage files through the app.
- Files that were previously downloaded for offline access remain available on your device.
- Files not marked for offline use become inaccessible until the app is restored.

Syncing:

- Any pending uploads or downloads are paused immediately.
- Changes made to files while offline won't sync to the cloud until the app is working again.
- If you were editing a Google Doc, Sheet, or Slide, auto-save may fail for new changes.

Other Google Services:

- Gmail, Google Photos, and other apps that rely on Drive storage continue working independently.
- Apps that use Drive as a file picker (like email attachments) may lose that functionality temporarily.

What You Can Do:

- Force-stop the app and reopen it (Settings ' Apps ' Drive ' Force Stop).
- Clear the app cache (Settings ' Apps ' Drive ' Storage ' Clear Cache).
- Check for and install any pending app updates in the Play Store.
- Restart your device, which often resolves temporary crashes.
- Uninstall and reinstall the app if problems persist.
- Access your files via a web browser at drive.google.com as a workaround.

Data Safety:

- Your files stored in Google's cloud are completely safe — they are not affected by the app crashing on your device.
- No data is lost from the cloud; the issue is purely with local app access.

In summary, stopping the app is mostly a temporary inconvenience - your cloud data is unaffected, and everything resumes normally once the app is running again.

15.5 Best Practice for Windows and macOS Users

If you are accessing Google Drive from a Windows PC or a Mac computer, it is a good idea to restart your computer every few days. Restarting ensures that Google Drive and other background applications start again cleanly and continue synchronising your files.

This is particularly important with laptops where it's common practice for the user to just close the laptop lid and put the computer to sleep instead of closing down the computer and restarting it later.

Some background applications may occasionally stop working properly without you noticing. This can sometimes happen with Google Drive for Desktop, which is responsible for synchronising files between your computer and Google Drive.

If the Google Drive app stops running, synchronisation will stop and access to the Google Drive files on the device may disappear until the app starts again.