

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Understand cloud storage before using it

Cloud storage keeps files with an online provider. Your device may also hold copies. Synchronisation connects changes between them and is different from an independent backup.

Any device; OneDrive examples | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ A cloud account you own, if you want to practise
- ☐ A harmless file rather than an important original

1. Find the storage service

Identify the actual service, such as OneDrive, Google Drive or iCloud Drive. Your email account and file storage may share a quota. Open its official app or website, rather than a link in an unexpected storage-warning email.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Check where a file is stored

Look at its folder and availability indicator. In OneDrive on Windows, a cloud icon marks an online-only file; a filled green circle marks a file kept on the device. Other services use different indicators.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Prepare files needed offline

Use the service's download or keep-offline option for files you need without internet. Let the download finish and check available device space. Seeing a filename alone does not always mean its contents are stored locally.

- ☐ Done this step

4. Understand changes and deletion

Renaming, editing or deleting synchronised files can affect the online copy and other devices. To remove only a downloaded OneDrive copy, use Free up space rather than Delete. Read the confirmation carefully.

☐ Done this step

5. Keep a separate important copy

For valuable documents or photos, maintain a supported backup or another independent copy. Check recovery and storage limits. If sharing a file, review the link's audience instead of assuming only your recipient can open it.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Check whether one harmless file is online-only or available offline.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Can cloud files disappear if I stop paying?

Terms differ. Check the provider's storage and retention rules, keep within its limits and export important files before changing plans.

Official help and the online guide

Understand OneDrive file availability -

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/onedrive/save-disk-space-with-onedrive-files-on-demand-for-windows>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/understand-online-file-storage/>