

Computer Basics

Bringing Your Files with You



Bringing your files with you

When you're working on a document or other computer file, you can always save it to your computer's **hard drive**. But sometimes you may want to **bring your file with you** and open it on a different computer. In this lesson, we'll talk about two ways to save your files so you can access them from almost anywhere.

- **Flash drive:** Flash drives are **small removable hard drives** that plug into the **USB ports** on your computer. They are relatively inexpensive (usually less than \$20) and can be purchased at any store with an electronics section.
- **Cloud storage:** Cloud storage means you save your files on **servers** on the Internet using an account with a cloud service. With cloud storage, you can access your files from any computer with Internet access without having to keep track of a **physical device**.

✦ Flash drives and the cloud can also be used to **back up** your files. To learn more, check out our lesson on [Backing Up Your Files](#).

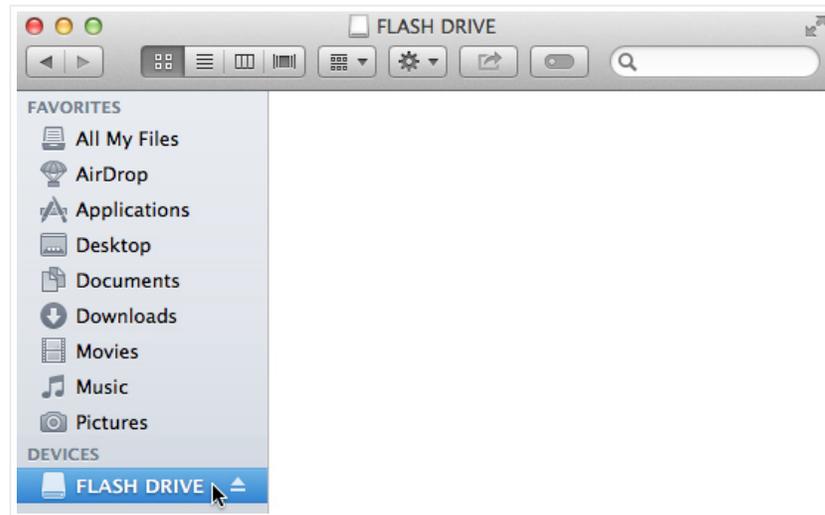
Using a flash drive



Flash drives make it easy to carry your important files and documents with you in a portable form. You should always back up the files on your flash drive elsewhere, however, just in case it gets lost or breaks.

To connect a flash drive:

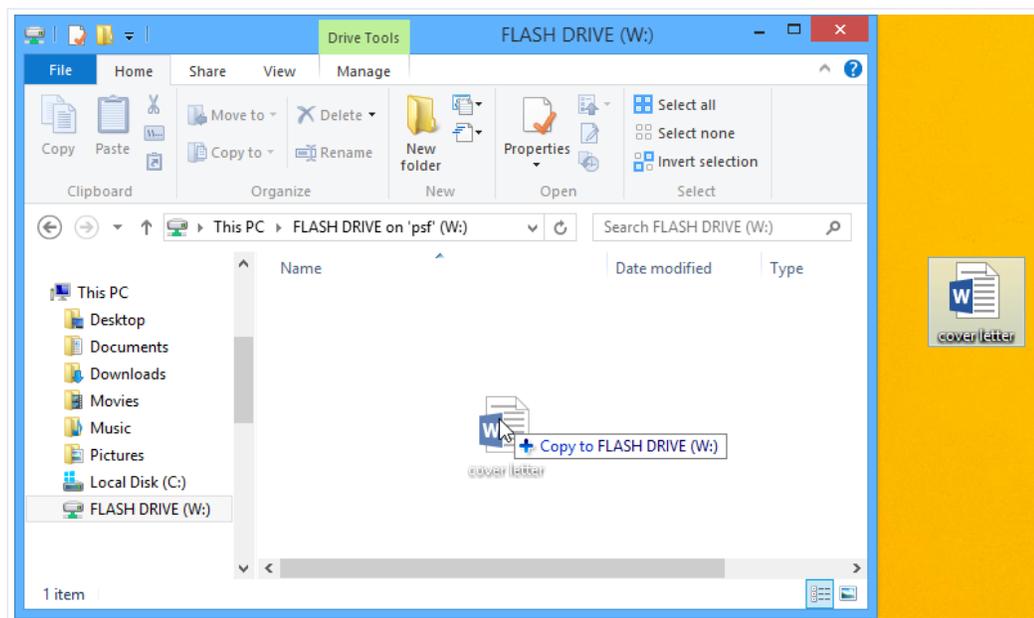
- 1 **Insert the flash drive** into a **USB port** on your computer. You should find a USB port on the front, back, or side of your computer (the location may vary depending on whether you have a desktop or laptop).
- 2 If you're using **Windows**, a dialog box may appear. If it does, select **Open folder to view files**. On a **Mac**, a **flash drive icon** will usually appear on the desktop.
- 3 If a dialog box does not appear, open **Windows Explorer**—or **Finder** if you're using a **Mac**—and select the flash drive on the left side of the window. Note that the **name** of the flash drive may vary.



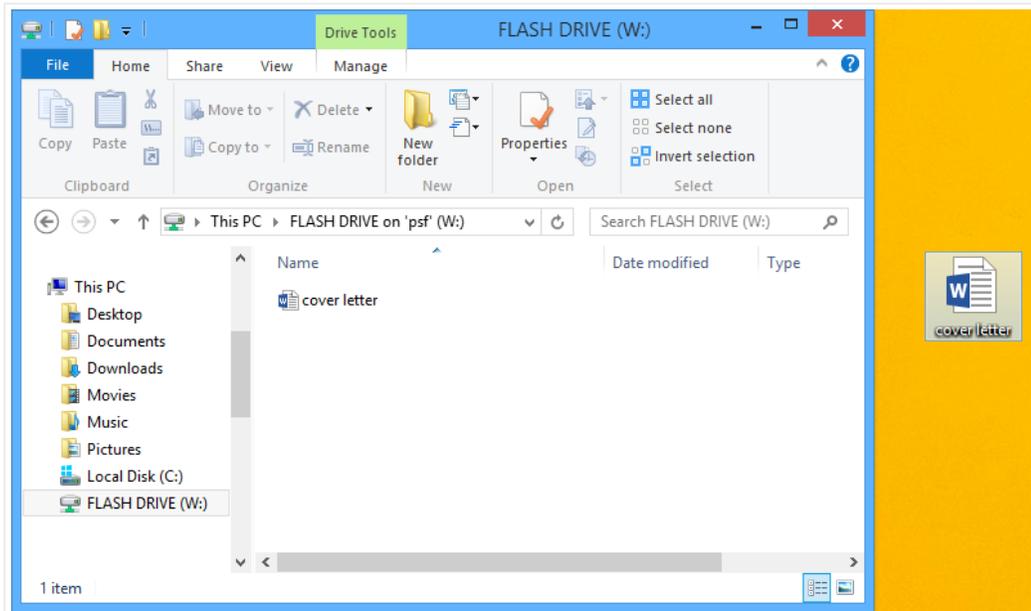
To work with a flash drive:

Once you've connected a flash drive, you can work with it just like any other folder on your computer, including moving and deleting files.

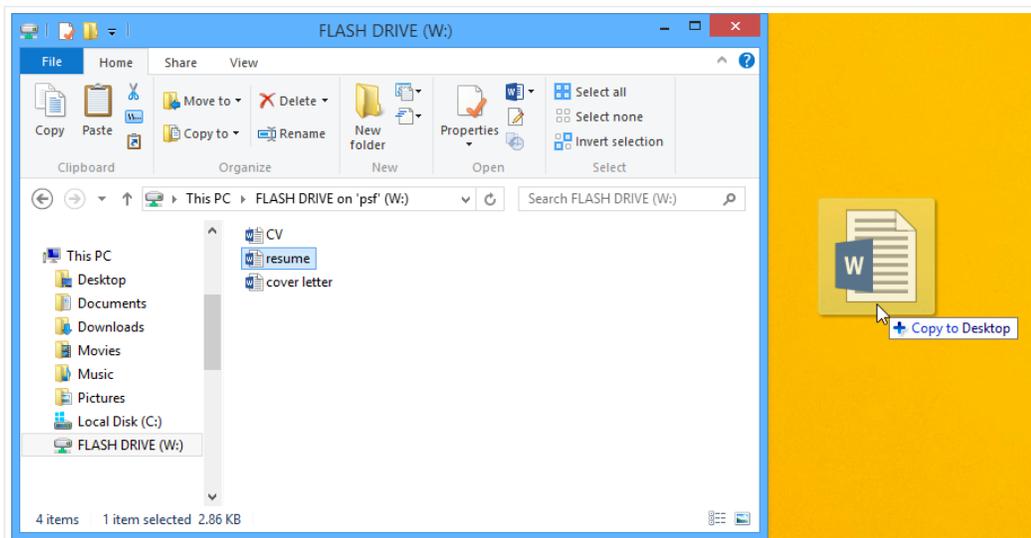
- 1 If you want to copy a file **from your computer to the flash drive**, click and drag the file from your computer to this window.



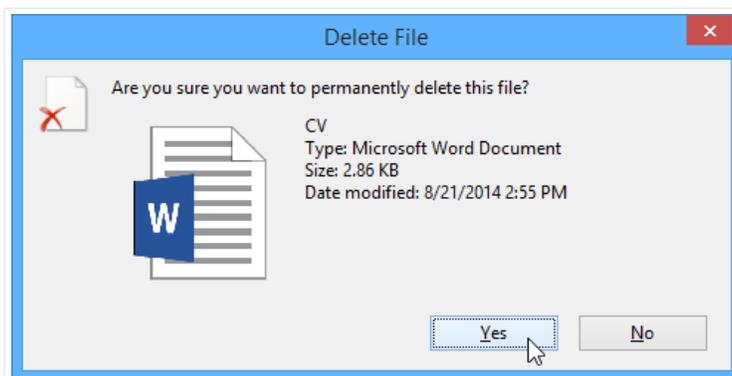
- 2 The file will be **duplicated**, and this new version will be saved to the flash drive. The original version of the file will still be saved to your computer.



- 3 If you want to copy a file **from your flash drive to your computer**, click and drag the file from this window to your computer.



- 4 If you want to **remove a file from your flash drive**, click and drag the file to the **Recycle Bin** on a PC or the **Trash can** on a Mac. A dialog box may appear. If it does, click **Yes** to confirm that you want to permanently delete the file.

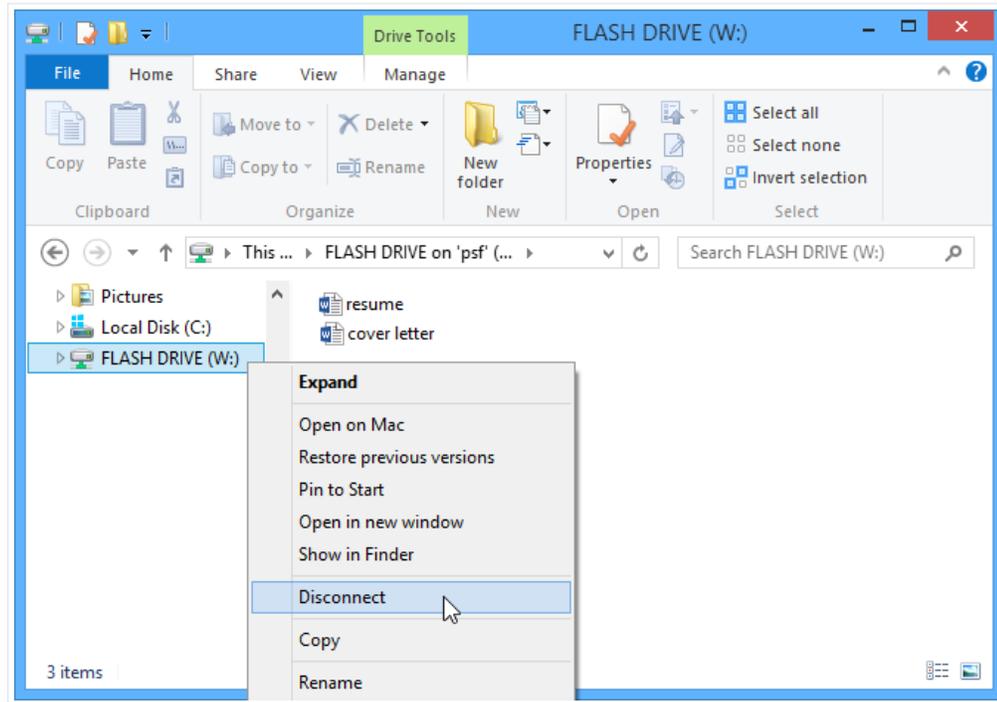


- * If a dialog box does not appear, you may need to **empty the Trash can** to permanently delete the file.

To safely remove a flash drive:

When you're done using a flash drive, don't remove it from the USB port just yet. You'll need to make sure to disconnect it properly to avoid damaging files on the drive.

- 1 Right-click the flash drive and select **Disconnect** (or **Eject**).



- 2 You can now safely remove the flash drive from the USB port.

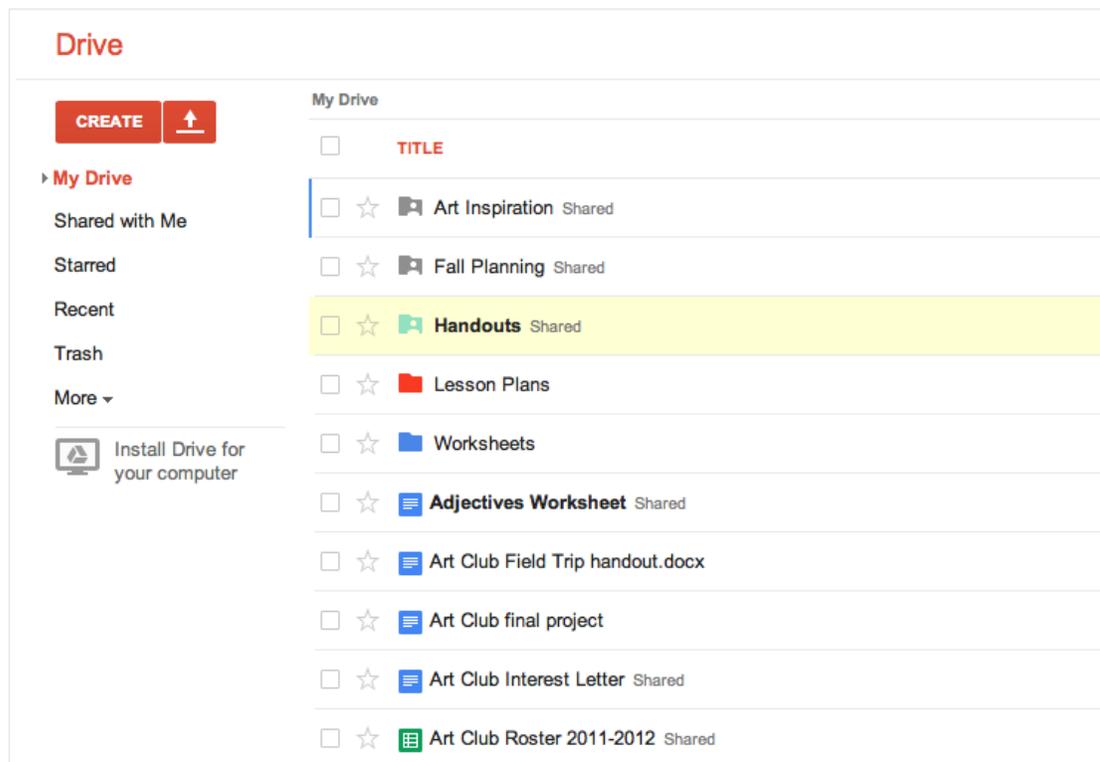
- * If you're using a **Mac**, you can also click the **Eject** button next to the flash drive in **Finder** to eject it.



Saving files to the cloud

There are many services that allow you to create a **free account** and save documents, images, and other files **to the cloud**. Some of the most popular are [Google Drive](#), [OneDrive](#), and [Dropbox](#). The **free storage space** that comes with these accounts (usually around **15GB**) should be plenty if you're using your account for regular personal, work, or school purposes. If you own a business and want to keep all of your documents in the cloud, you may want to pay your cloud service for more storage.

Unlike **physical media**, the cloud can't break or get lost, so you don't necessarily need to back up the files you keep on it. Files in the cloud are also easier to **share** so you can **collaborate** with friends and coworkers. However, when you save something online, there's always a risk that **unauthorized** users will try to gain access to your **personal information**. To protect your files, create a **strong password** and pay attention to the **privacy settings and policies** of the cloud service you're using.



 To learn more about services that allow you to store your files in the cloud, check out our tutorials on [Google Drive](#) and [OneDrive and Office Online](#).