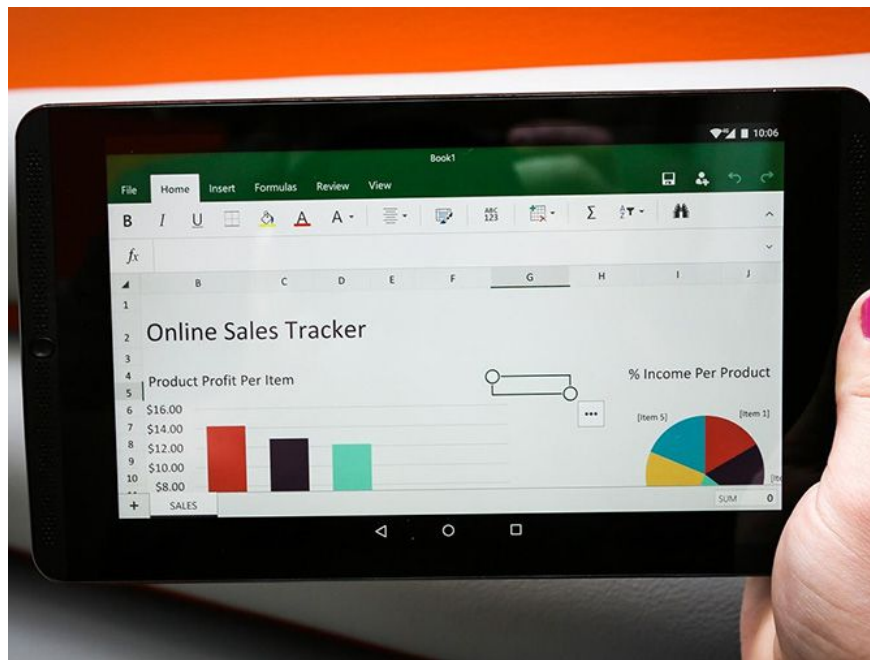


Microsoft Office is now Microsoft 365. Here's how you could get it for free

Anyone can use Microsoft's Word, Excel and PowerPoints apps without spending a cent. Here's how.

If you're staying home more often due to the coronavirus pandemic, you might be in need of some basic tools on your personal or work computer, like Microsoft Office 365. And if you don't want to shell out the cash, there are a few ways you can get Office 365 and its apps for free.

Microsoft's subscription service suite of productivity software -- including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Microsoft Teams, OneDrive and SharePoint -- typically costs \$150 for a one-time installation, or between \$70 and \$100 every year for access across devices and family members.



Changes are coming soon: In March, Microsoft announced that Office 365 is becoming Microsoft 365, a new service that adds more features to the office software. Microsoft 365 will be available starting April 21, at \$7 a month for an individual plan and \$10 for a family plan for up to six people.

In the meantime, here are the versions of Office 365 and its apps that you can find online for free right now.

For students and teachers

If you're a student, teacher or faculty member with a school email address, you are likely eligible to get access to Office 365 for free through Microsoft -- including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Microsoft Teams and additional classroom tools.

All you have to do is enter your school email address on this page on Microsoft's website: Get started with Office 365 for free. In many cases, you'll be instantly granted access thanks to an automated verification process. If you attend an institution that needs to be verified, it might take up to a month to confirm your eligibility. Recent graduates who want to stick with Office 365 can also get Office 365 Personal for \$12 for 12 months, with a valid school email address.

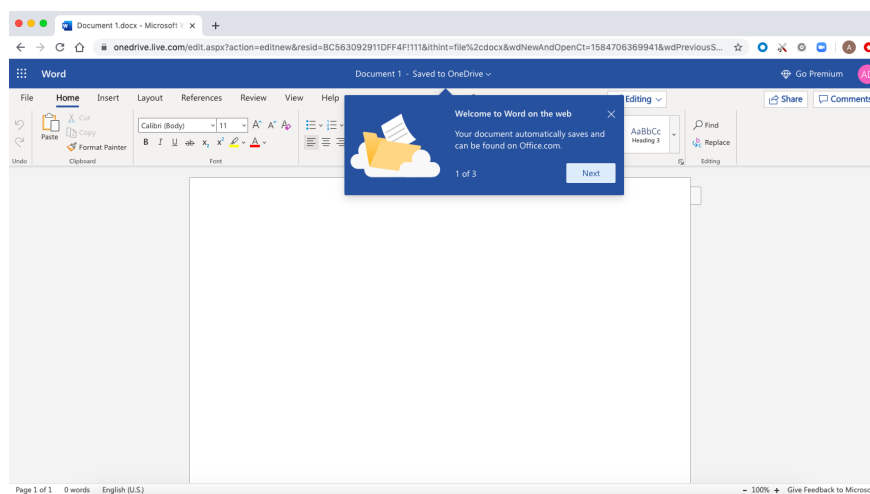
For everyone else

Anyone can get a one-month free trial of Office 365 to try it out. However, it does require you to enter a credit card, and if you don't cancel before the month is up, you'll be charged \$100 for a one-year subscription to Office 365 Home.

The good news is, if you don't need the full suite of Office 365 tools, you can access a number of its apps online for free -- including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneDrive, Outlook, Calendar and Skype. Here's how to get them:

1. Go to Office.com.
2. Login to your Microsoft account (or create one for free). If you already have a Windows, Skype or Xbox login, you have an active Microsoft account.
3. Select the app you want to use, and save your work in the cloud with OneDrive.

Picture 2 of Microsoft Office is now Microsoft 365. Here's how you could get it for free



So what's the catch for the free version?

You may be saying, wait a minute -- if I can get all of those apps for free, why pay for Office 365 in the first place? The reason is that the functionality of these apps is limited: They only run through your web browser, and you can't use them if you aren't online. There are also fewer features than the full Office 365 versions.

However, there are still a number of benefits, including the ability to share links to your work and collaborate in real time, similar to G Suite tools. If you're looking for basic versions of each of these apps, the free version should work well for you.

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