BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Microsoft 365 What You're Paying For

Plans, prices, installs, sharing, storage and canceling — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide to your Microsoft 365 subscription

Take your time — looking around your account can't cost a penny

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Microsoft 365 Basic, Personal, Family, Premium & Pro · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the Microsoft 365 subscription: what it includes, what it costs, and how to install, share, change or cancel it. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test, and you can't fall behind. Every chapter explains what something does *for you*, with slow, step-by-step directions. Prices and plans are Microsoft's own as of November 2026. If a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Microsoft 365

What you're actually paying for, what happened to "Office," and how to see in two minutes exactly which plan you have and when it renews.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you use Word for letters, Excel for the household budget or Outlook for email, there's a good chance a charge for **Microsoft 365** shows up on your card once a month or once a year. And there's an equally good chance you've wondered what exactly that money buys, whether you're on the right plan, and whether you could pay less.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped people make sense of their technology, and Microsoft's subscriptions are one of the things I'm asked about most. The names keep changing, the prices changed in 2025, a new Premium plan arrived, Copilot (Microsoft's AI helper) was added to the apps, and in October 2026 Microsoft changed how Family storage works. No wonder folks are confused. I wrote this book the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time.

What this book covers

- **What you get**: the apps, the storage, the extras, and what "Office" is called now.
- **The plans and prices**: Basic, Personal, Family, Premium and Pro, monthly or yearly, and the one-time purchase called Office Home 2024. Plus the free options.
- **Installing** on a Windows PC, a Mac, a phone and a tablet, and the five-device rule.
- **Sharing Family** with up to five other people, and removing someone.
- **Storage**: OneDrive, your Outlook.com mailbox, the 2026 Family storage change, and running out of room.
- **Copilot** in the apps, AI credits and how to turn it off (briefly; my Microsoft Copilot manual has the rest).
- **Renewing, switching, canceling and refunds**, and what happens to your files after you cancel.
- **Scams**: fake renewal invoices, fake "auto-renewal" emails and fake support calls.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll know exactly what you're paying for, whether it's the right plan for you, how to put the apps on every device you own, how to share with family, and how to change or cancel without losing a single file. You'll also be able to spot a fake Microsoft invoice in seconds.

The honest "can't break it" promise

Looking around your Microsoft account, opening the subscription page, reading your renewal date, installing the apps and signing in: none of that can cost you money or lose a file. There are only a few moments that deserve a pause, and I'll flag each one: **canceling** (your storage shrinks), **switching plans**, and **removing someone** from Family (they lose their storage). I'll show you how to do those safely.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Facts current as of November 2026**
>
> Every price, plan name and menu in this book was checked against Microsoft's own pages in November 2026. Microsoft changes its plans often, so if a price on your screen differs, trust the screen, and check your own account page (Chapter 4).

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together. There's no such thing as a silly question about something you pay for every month.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Microsoft 365 Is (and What Happened to "Office")

Microsoft 365 is a subscription. You pay Microsoft every month or every year, and in return you get the full versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and OneNote on your computers, phones and tablets, a large amount of online storage called **OneDrive**, and a handful of extras. As long as you keep paying, the apps stay up to date with every new feature.

For years this was simply called **Office**, and then **Office 365**. Microsoft renamed it Microsoft 365 in 2020. If you still think of it as "Office," you're not wrong: Word, Excel and PowerPoint are the same programs you've always known.

A few words worth knowing

Word	What it means
Subscription	You pay regularly (monthly or yearly) and keep using it as long as you pay. Stop paying and the apps stop letting you edit.
One-time purchase	You pay once and own that version forever, but it never gets new features. Microsoft's current one is **Office Home 2024** (Chapter 7).
Microsoft account	The email address and password you use with Microsoft (often an Outlook.com, Hotmail or Live address, but it can be any email). Your subscription belongs to this account.
OneDrive	Microsoft's online storage. Files and photos you keep there are safe on Microsoft's computers and reachable from any device.
Copilot	Microsoft's AI helper. It's built into Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook for subscribers, and also comes as a free app.
Recurring billing	Microsoft's term for automatic renewal. When it's on, your card is charged automatically each month or year.
Owner	The person whose account pays for a Family or Premium plan. Only the owner can share it, and only the owner gets the AI features.

The name game, sorted out

Microsoft has a habit of reusing names, so here's the short version. The free app on your phone and the website that used to be called **Office**, then **Microsoft 365**, then **Microsoft 365 Copilot**, is now called the **Microsoft Copilot** app. It's a home screen for your documents and for Copilot. It isn't a different subscription, and you don't need to buy

anything extra to use it.

TIP

Same programs, new paint

If someone tells you "you need to buy Microsoft 365 to get Word," that's true for the full Word on a computer. But there are free ways to open and edit documents too (Chapter 8). Don't let anyone rush you into a purchase.

CHAPTER 3

What's Included: The Apps and Extras You Get

Here's what a **Microsoft 365 Personal** or **Family** subscription includes, in plain words. Premium and Pro include all of this too, with more AI and storage on top.

What	What it's for
Word	Letters, cards, newsletters, the family history you've been meaning to write.
Excel	Budgets, lists, Christmas card addresses, anything in rows and columns.
PowerPoint	Slide shows, including a photo slide show for a birthday or memorial.
Outlook	Email and calendar. Subscribers get an ad-free Outlook.com mailbox with 100 GB of room.
OneNote	A digital notebook for recipes, notes and to-do lists.
OneDrive	Online storage: 1 TB for Personal. Family and Premium storage changed in October 2026 (Chapter 18).
Microsoft Defender	A security app that shows the safety of your PC, Mac, phone and tablet in one place. In the U.S. it also offers identity theft and credit monitoring.
Clipchamp	A simple video maker. Subscribers get the premium features, such as 4K export.
Copilot	AI help inside the apps, for the subscription **owner**, with a monthly allowance (Chapter 21).

Where the apps run

Personal, Family, Premium and Pro let you install the full apps on **Windows PCs and Macs**, plus the phone and tablet apps for iPhone, iPad and Android, and the web versions in any browser. You can be signed in on up to **five devices at once** (Chapter 12).

HEADS UP

Microsoft 365 Basic is different

The cheapest plan, **Basic**, is mostly a storage plan: 100 GB of OneDrive and an ad-free Outlook mailbox. It does **not** include the full Word and Excel for a PC or Mac. Microsoft's comparison table lists it for the web, iPhone/iPad and Android only. If your card says "Microsoft 365" and the charge is small, check which plan it is before assuming you have Word.

Defender: what it is and isn't

Every Windows 11 computer already has free virus protection built in, called **Windows Security**. The **Microsoft Defender** app that comes with Microsoft 365 is an extra on top: a dashboard that shows the security status of all your devices, including phones and Macs. Microsoft dropped the VPN feature from it in February 2025, but device protection and U.S. identity theft and credit monitoring continue. If you cancel Microsoft 365, Windows Security keeps running.

CHAPTER 4

Check What You Have Right Now

Before you change anything, take two minutes to see what you actually have. One web page tells you your plan, your renewal date, how you pay and whether automatic renewal is on.

Look at your subscription page

1. On a computer, open your web browser and type **account.microsoft.com/services** into the address bar at the top. (Type it yourself; don't follow a link in an email.)
2. Sign in with your Microsoft account email and password if asked.
3. You'll see a card for each subscription, such as **Microsoft 365 Family**. It shows the plan name and a date: either **Renews on** (automatic renewal is on) or **Expires on** (it's off).
4. Select **Manage** on that card to see the price, the payment card and the options to change, share or cancel.

TIP

Nothing there?

If the page is empty, you may be signed in with a different email than the one that bought it, or you may have bought it through Apple or Google. Try your other email addresses, and look on your iPhone in **Settings** > your name > **Subscriptions**, or on Android in the **Play Store** > profile picture > **Payments & subscriptions**. Family members who were invited won't see a subscription of their own; they'll see they're sharing someone else's.

Write these four things down

What to note	Where it shows
Plan name	Basic, Personal, Family, Premium, Pro, or a "Classic" plan.
Renews on / Expires on	The date of the next charge, or the day it ends.
Who pays	Microsoft (your card), Apple, Google, or a store card you bought.
Monthly or yearly	Shown on the Manage page. Yearly is cheaper over a year.

Do you have an older one-time Office instead?

Open Word, then go to **File** > **Account** (on a Mac, **Word** > **About Word**). Under **Product Information** you'll see either "Microsoft 365" (a subscription) or a version such as "Office 2021" or "Office Home 2024" (a one-time purchase).

HEADS UP

Office 2016, 2019 and 2021 are out of support

Microsoft ended support for Office 2016 and 2019 on October 14, 2025, and for Office 2021 on October 13, 2026. The programs still open, but they no longer get security fixes. That's worth knowing before you open email attachments from strangers in them. It isn't an emergency, but it's a good reason to plan a move to a supported version.

PART 2

The Plans and What They Cost

Every home plan side by side, monthly versus yearly, the one-time purchase, the free options, and a simple way to decide which one fits you.

CHAPTER 5

The Home Plans Side by Side

Microsoft sells five home plans in the U.S. Here they are with Microsoft's own list prices as of November 2026. Prices don't include sales tax, and Microsoft often runs first-month or first-year discounts, so the price you're offered may be lower at first and then go up at renewal.

Plan	Price (U.S.)	People	What stands out
Basic	$1.99 a month or $19.99 a year	1	100 GB OneDrive, ad-free Outlook. No PC or Mac apps.
Personal	$9.99 a month or $99.99 a year	1	Full apps, 1 TB OneDrive, Defender, Clipchamp, Copilot with monthly AI credits.
Family	$12.99 a month or $129.99 a year	Up to 6	Everything in Personal for six people. Copilot for the owner only.
Premium	$19.99 a month or $199.99 a year	Up to 6	Family plus much higher Copilot limits and extra AI tools (owner only).
Pro	$99.99 a month (monthly only)	Up to 6	The top AI tier with the highest limits. Most households don't need it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why the price went up in 2025

In January 2025 Microsoft added Copilot to Personal and Family and raised U.S. prices by $3.00 a month, the first increase in the plans' history. Existing subscribers paid the new price from their next renewal. That's why many families saw Family jump from $99.99 to $129.99 a year.

Premium replaced Copilot Pro

In October 2025 Microsoft introduced **Microsoft 365 Premium** and stopped selling **Copilot Pro**. Premium is the Family plan plus the higher Copilot limits that used to need Copilot Pro, plus tools only Premium and Pro subscribers get, such as the Researcher and Analyst helpers in Copilot. Those AI extras are for the owner only; the other five people get the regular Family benefits.

What about "Classic" plans?

When Copilot was added, Microsoft said customers could keep a plan without Copilot or AI credits, called **Personal Classic** or **Family Classic**, at the old, lower price. These were

offered to existing subscribers only, usually as a choice on the cancel screen, and Microsoft has never sold them to new customers. In late 2026 many people report the option no longer appears. If you're offered a Classic plan, it's a legitimate way to pay less; just don't count on seeing it.

TIP

Is "Microsoft 365 Pro" for me?

Probably not. Pro is a real home plan, not a business plan, but at $99.99 a month it's meant for people who use Copilot all day long. If you mainly write letters and keep a budget, Personal or Family is plenty.

CHAPTER 6

Monthly or Yearly, Trials and Promotions

Every plan except Pro can be paid monthly or yearly. Microsoft says paying yearly saves up to 17%. For Family, twelve months at $12.99 comes to $155.88, compared with $129.99 for a year, a saving of about $25.

Choose	When
Pay monthly if	You're trying it out, you might cancel soon, or a smaller charge suits your budget.
Pay yearly if	You know you'll use it all year. It's cheaper, and you only have to think about it once a year.

Free trials

Microsoft often offers a one-month free trial. A trial asks for a card and **turns into a paid subscription automatically** unless you cancel or turn off recurring billing. Microsoft says you can cancel a trial within 30 days of signing up and you won't be charged.

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services** and sign in.
2. Find the trial and select **Cancel** (or **Manage**, then **Cancel subscription**).
3. If you see **Turn on recurring billing** instead, it's already off: the trial will simply end on its **Expires on** date with no charge.

> **TIP**
>
> **Set a reminder the day you start**
>
> The moment you begin a trial, put a note on your calendar three or four days before it ends. Then you decide calmly whether to keep it, instead of discovering a charge later.

Discounts that end

Microsoft's store sometimes shows a lower first-month or first-year price for Personal or Premium. That's fine to take, but the regular price applies at renewal. Read the small print under the price before you buy, and note the date it changes.

CHAPTER 7

Office Home 2024: The One-Time Purchase

Not everyone wants another monthly bill. Microsoft still sells a version you pay for once: **Office Home 2024** (it used to be called Home & Student).

Office Home 2024	Details
Price	$179.99, once.
What's included	Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote for a computer. **No Outlook**, no extra OneDrive storage, no Copilot.
How many computers	One Windows PC or one Mac.
Use	Home use only (not for a business).
Updates	Security fixes, but no new features. The next version means paying full price again.
Need Outlook?	Office Home & Business 2024 adds Outlook and business use for $249.99.

Is it cheaper than a subscription?

If you have **one computer**, don't need much online storage, and plan to use it for several years, yes. At $179.99 it costs less than two years of Personal. But if you want the apps on a laptop and a desktop, want 1 TB of storage for your photos, or have family who'd share, a subscription is usually better value.

HEADS UP

Too-good-to-be-true "lifetime" keys

Websites and online marketplaces sell "lifetime Office" keys for a few dollars. Microsoft warns that a key sold separately from the software may well be stolen or fraudulently obtained and then blocked, and that counterfeit copies can bring viruses, lost files and no security updates. Buy from Microsoft or a well-known store.

CHAPTER 8

The Free Options: Office on the Web and the Copilot App

Here's something many people don't know: with nothing more than a free Microsoft account, you can open, edit and create Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents in your web browser, at no cost. These "web apps" are simpler than the full programs, but they cover letters, lists and simple budgets well.

	Free Microsoft account	Paid subscription
Word, Excel, PowerPoint	Web and phone versions	Full computer apps too
OneDrive storage	5 GB	100 GB (Basic) to 1 TB or more
Outlook.com mailbox	15 GB, with ads	100 GB, ad-free
Copilot inside the apps	No	Yes (owner)

How to use the free versions

1. In your browser, go to **microsoft365.com** (Microsoft now sends this to its new address, copilot.cloud.microsoft, on its own).
2. Sign in with your Microsoft account.
3. Choose **Word**, **Excel** or **PowerPoint**, then open a document from OneDrive or start a new one. Your work saves to OneDrive automatically.

GOOD TO KNOW

On a phone or tablet

The free **Microsoft Copilot** app (the one that used to be called Office or Microsoft 365) puts Word, Excel and PowerPoint in one app. You can also install Word, Excel and PowerPoint separately. With a free account you can view and do basic editing; a subscription unlocks the premium features.

TIP

Before you renew, try free for a week

If you only write the occasional letter, try the free web version for a week before your renewal date. If it does everything you need, you might not need to pay at all.

CHAPTER 9

Which Plan Fits You?

Most households land on one of three answers. Find the line that sounds most like you.

If this sounds like you	Consider
I write a few letters and check email. Storage isn't an issue.	The **free** web apps and a free account.
I want more photo storage and an ad-free inbox, but I don't need Word on my computer.	**Basic** ($19.99 a year).
I use Word or Excel on one or two computers, just me.	**Personal**, or Office Home 2024 if it's one computer and you'll keep it for years.
My spouse and I, or the grandkids, all use it.	**Family**. It costs only $30 more a year than Personal and covers six people.
I use Copilot a lot and keep running out.	**Premium**. Only the owner gets the extra AI.

FROM BILL

My usual advice

For a couple, **Family** is almost always better value than two Personal plans. And if you pay for Personal yourself while your spouse pays separately, you're probably paying twice. Chapter 23 shows how to switch.

Two people, two subscriptions?

If you discover you each have a Personal plan, the simplest fix is for one of you to switch to Family and share it with the other, then turn off recurring billing on the second plan so it ends on its own. Microsoft allows only one active home subscription per Microsoft account. If you add a second one to the **same** account, it adds **time** (up to five years in total), not extra devices or storage. So don't buy a second plan on the same account by accident.

PART 3

Installing and Signing In

Putting Word, Excel and the rest on your computer, phone and tablet, the five-device rule, signing out an old computer, and using a card you bought at a store.

CHAPTER 10

Installing on a Windows PC or a Mac

Many new Windows computers come with the Microsoft 365 apps already on them, waiting for you to sign in. If yours doesn't, or you're setting up a new computer, here's how to install them yourself. Allow 20 to 30 minutes on a typical home internet connection.

On a Windows PC

1. Open your web browser and go to **account.microsoft.com/services** (or **microsoft365.com**). Sign in with the Microsoft account that has the subscription.
2. Find your Microsoft 365 plan and choose **Install** (on microsoft365.com, look for **Install apps**).
3. Your browser downloads a small setup file. Select it to open it (in Edge it appears at the top right).
4. If a box asks **Do you want to allow this app to make changes to your device?**, choose **Yes**.
5. Wait while it installs. When it says it's finished, open Word from the Start menu and sign in if asked.

On a Mac

1. Follow steps 1 and 2 above in Safari or another browser.
2. Open your **Downloads** folder and double-click the installer package.
3. Select **Continue** through the screens and agree to the license.
4. When asked, type the password you use to unlock your Mac, then select **Install Software**.
5. When it finishes, open Word from **Launchpad** or the **Applications** folder and sign in.

HEADS UP

Older Macs

Microsoft supports the apps on the three most recent major versions of macOS. In 2026 Microsoft required an update by July 13, 2026; apps too old to get it drop into a read-only mode where you can open files but not edit them. If your Mac can't update its system, the web versions (Chapter 8) still work in a browser.

TIP

Reinstalling is free

Got a new computer, or something went wrong? You can install again from the same page as often as you need. It doesn't cost anything extra, and your documents in OneDrive are untouched.

CHAPTER 11

Phones and Tablets

On an iPhone, iPad or Android phone or tablet, you download the apps from the app store and sign in with the same Microsoft account. That's what links them to your subscription.

Which apps to get

App	What it's for
Microsoft Copilot	One app with Word, Excel and PowerPoint inside, plus Copilot. Good if you want a single icon.
Word, Excel, PowerPoint	Separate apps, each with its own icon. Many people find these simpler.
Outlook	Microsoft's email app for your Outlook.com or other email.
OneDrive	Your online files and an automatic backup of your phone's photos.

Install and sign in

1. Open the **App Store** (iPhone/iPad) or **Google Play Store** (Android).
2. Search for **Microsoft Word** (or Excel, Outlook, OneDrive). Check that the maker is **Microsoft Corporation**.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**.
4. Open the app and tap **Sign in**. Type your Microsoft account email and password.
5. Once you're signed in, the premium features of your subscription switch on by themselves.

HEADS UP

Don't subscribe again inside the app

If an app offers to "Upgrade" or "Try Microsoft 365," first make sure you're signed in with the account that already pays. Subscribing inside the app bills you through Apple or Google, and you could end up paying twice.

CHAPTER 12

The Five-Device Rule and Signing Out an Old Computer

With Personal, Family, Premium or Pro, you can install the apps on **as many devices as you like**, but each person can be **signed in on five at the same time**, in any mix of PCs, Macs, tablets and phones. On Family, each of the six people gets their own five.

What happens on the sixth device

If you sign in on a sixth device, Microsoft automatically signs you out of the one you've used least recently. Nothing is deleted. On the signed-out device you can still **open and print** documents, but you can't edit or create new ones until you sign in there again.

Sign out of a computer you no longer have

Sold or gave away an old laptop? It's tidy (and safer) to sign it out of Microsoft 365 from the web.

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services** and sign in.
2. On your Microsoft 365 card, select **Manage** (or the **Installs** section, depending on your screen).
3. Under **Devices**, find the old computer.
4. Choose **Sign out of Microsoft 365** (it may say Sign out of Office) and confirm.

GOOD TO KNOW

It can take a few days

Microsoft says it can take up to 72 hours for the old device to notice it was signed out. That's normal.

TIP

Giving the computer away?

Signing out of Microsoft 365 doesn't erase your files from the computer. Before you hand a computer to someone else, reset it so your documents, photos and passwords go with you, not with the computer. My Windows 11 manual walks through it.

CHAPTER 13

Using a Card or Product Key You Bought at a Store

Stores like warehouse clubs and electronics shops sell Microsoft 365 as a card or a box, and it's sometimes cheaper than renewing online. Inside is a 25-character **product key**. Here's how to use it, whether you're starting fresh or adding time to the plan you already have.

1. Find the key. On a card, it may be under a silver strip you scratch off. If you bought online, it's in your email receipt.
2. In your browser, go to **microsoft365.com/setup**. Type it yourself.
3. Sign in with the **same** Microsoft account that has your current subscription (or the one you want it on).
4. Type the key. You don't need the dashes.
5. Follow the prompts. If you already have a plan, the new time is added to it.
6. Check **account.microsoft.com/services** to see your new expiration date.

Good to know	Details
Adds time, not more	A key extends how long you have the plan. It doesn't add devices or storage.
Five-year limit	You can stack keys up to five years ahead. Past that you'll see Redemption Failed.
Same country	A key has to be used in the country where it was bought.
Different plan	Using a Personal key on a Family account lets you choose to stay on Family or switch to Personal.
Recurring billing	If you renew with store cards, you may want to turn off automatic renewal on your card so you aren't charged as well (Chapter 22).

SCAM ALERT

A key is like cash

Never read a product key to someone who phones you, and never buy one because a caller or pop-up told you to. A real Microsoft renewal never requires a gift card or a store card bought on someone else's instructions.

PART 4

Sharing with Family

How Family and Premium let five other people use your subscription, how they accept, what stays private, and how to remove someone kindly.

CHAPTER 14

Sharing Family or Premium with Up to Five People

A **Family** or **Premium** subscription is meant to be shared. The owner can invite up to **five other people**, so six in all. Each person uses their **own** Microsoft account, gets the full apps on their own devices, and gets their own storage space. They don't have to live with you: a sister in another state or a grandson at college counts just the same.

What each person gets, and what they don't

	Details
They get	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and OneNote on their own devices; their own OneDrive space; an ad-free 100 GB Outlook.com mailbox; Defender and the other extras.
They don't get	Copilot and AI credits. Microsoft says AI features are for the subscription owner only and can't be shared.
They can't see	Your files, your email or your documents. Everything stays private unless someone deliberately shares a file.

Send an invitation

1. On a computer, go to **account.microsoft.com/services** and sign in as the owner.
2. On your Family or Premium card, choose **Sharing** (the direct address is account.microsoft.com/services/office/sharing).
3. Select **Share** (on some screens, **Start sharing**).
4. Choose **Email invite** and type the person's email address, or choose **Create link** to copy a link you can text them.
5. Tell them to watch for it and accept soon; invitations don't last forever.

HEADS UP

Don't share by handing out the product key

Sharing works only through invitations. Microsoft says product keys can't be used to share a subscription. And never share your own password: each person should sign in with their own account.

TIP

No Share button?

If you don't see **Share** or **Start sharing**, you're probably signed in with an account that isn't the owner, or the plan is Personal (which can't be shared). Switching Personal to Family is in Chapter 23.

CHAPTER 15

Accepting an Invitation (for the Person Invited)

If a family member invited you, this chapter is for you. Accepting takes a couple of minutes and costs you nothing.

1. Open the invitation email (or the link they texted you). Make sure it came from the person you expect.
2. Select **Accept**.
3. Sign in with **your own** Microsoft account, or create a free one if you don't have one.
4. Follow the steps on screen. You'll then see the shared subscription on your own **account.microsoft.com/services** page.
5. Install the apps on your devices (Chapters 10 and 11).

HEADS UP

Already paying for your own?

If you have your own Personal plan and accept a Family invitation, turn off recurring billing on your own plan so you don't keep paying for something you no longer need (Chapter 22).

SCAM ALERT

Invitations from strangers

A real invitation names someone you know. An email saying "You've been added to a Microsoft 365 Family plan" from a stranger, asking you to sign in through a link or call a number, is a phishing trick. Delete it.

CHAPTER 16

Removing Someone, or Leaving a Shared Plan

Life changes. A grandchild gets a job with its own Microsoft 365, or you need a spot for someone else. Removing a person is simple, but it deserves a moment's thought first.

HEADS UP

Before you remove anyone

When you stop sharing with someone, they get an email, lose the apps' editing features and lose the **extra storage**. Their files and mailbox stay private and aren't deleted, but if they're using more than the free 5 GB of OneDrive they'll need to clear space or get their own plan. Give them a friendly heads-up first.

Stop sharing with someone (owner)

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services**, sign in as the owner, and open **Sharing** on your Family or Premium card.
2. Under the list of people you share with, find the person.
3. Select **Stop sharing** and confirm.

They may also be in your Microsoft family group

Stopping sharing doesn't remove someone from your Microsoft **family group** (the group used for Family Safety and screen-time settings). That's a separate step, and only a family organizer can do it:

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/family** and sign in.
2. Select the three dots next to the person's name.
3. Choose **Remove from family group** and confirm.

Leave a plan someone shared with you

If you're the person invited and want to leave, go to **account.microsoft.com/services**, find the shared subscription, choose **Stop using this shared subscription**, then **Leave**.

GOOD TO KNOW

If the owner stops paying

When the owner's subscription ends, everyone sharing it loses the benefits too. They can still view and print their documents, but not edit, and their files remain intact in OneDrive.

PART 5

Your Storage

How much room you really have in OneDrive and your Outlook.com mailbox, the big Family storage change of October 2026, and what happens if you run out.

CHAPTER 17

OneDrive and Your Mailbox: How Much Room You Have

Microsoft gives you two separate buckets. One holds your **files and photos** (OneDrive, plus attachments in Outlook.com). The other holds your **email messages**. A subscription makes both bigger.

Plan	OneDrive (files and photos)	Outlook.com mailbox
Free account	5 GB	15 GB
Basic	100 GB	100 GB, ad-free
Personal	1 TB (1,000 GB)	100 GB, ad-free
Family or Premium, started before Oct. 8, 2026	1 TB for each person	100 GB each
Family or Premium, started on or after Oct. 8, 2026	2 TB shared by everyone	100 GB each
Pro	5 TB shared	100 GB each

How big is a terabyte?

A terabyte (TB) is 1,000 gigabytes (GB). For most families, 1 TB holds many tens of thousands of photos plus every document you'll ever write. Videos use far more room than photos, so if you're filling up fast, videos are usually why.

See how much you're using

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com** and sign in.
2. Look for **Microsoft storage** (or **Storage**). It shows how much you've used and what's taking the space: files, photos, email and attachments.
3. On a Family or Premium plan with shared storage, you'll see the total used by everyone, but never anyone else's files.

GOOD TO KNOW

Trials don't get the big mailbox

Microsoft says the 100 GB mailbox isn't available during a free trial. It appears shortly after a paid subscription starts.

CHAPTER 18

The 2026 Change to Family and Premium Storage

This is the newest change, and it matters if you have Family or Premium. For years, every person on a Family plan got their **own 1 TB**, up to 6 TB in all. Microsoft is changing that to **one shared pool of 2 TB** for the whole plan.

What	What it means
New plans from Oct. 8, 2026	New and upgraded Family and Premium subscriptions get 2 TB of shared storage from the start.
Plans you already had	Keep 1 TB per person for now. They switch to 2 TB shared when they renew on or after **May 2, 2027**.
Personal and Basic	No change. Storage stays with the one account holder.
Privacy	Unchanged. Each person can open only their own files and mailbox. Others see only the total used.
Need more?	Microsoft lets you add storage to a subscription, up to 10 TB in total, at extra cost.

Will this affect you?

For most families, no: few people come close to 1 TB, and a shared 2 TB means one heavy user can use more than 1 TB if others use little. But if **several** people on your plan each store hundreds of gigabytes of photos and video, the total could pass 2 TB. Check the total now (Chapter 17), well before your renewal date in 2027.

HEADS UP

Over the shared limit after the switch?

Microsoft says that if a shared plan goes over its limit, members can keep accessing their files for up to one year while they sort out storage. Use that time to move old videos to an external drive, or to buy more storage. Don't wait until the last month.

FROM BILL

A storage check-up

If you're not sure what's filling your family's space, this is a good thing to look at together. I'm glad to help you sort it out and set up a second copy on a drive at home.

CHAPTER 19

Running Out of Space, and What "Over Quota" Means

When you go over your Microsoft storage limit, things stop in stages. Here's what Microsoft says happens, so a warning email doesn't catch you off guard.

When	What happens
As soon as you're over	OneDrive stops taking new files, edits and syncing, including phone photo backups. Existing files are read-only. You **can't send or receive email in Outlook.com**, even if the mailbox itself isn't full.
After three months over	Your OneDrive can be **frozen**. You must get under the limit to use it again.
After six months over	Microsoft may delete your OneDrive and everything in it. Deleted files can't be recovered.

How to get back under

1. Check what's using the room in **Microsoft storage** on account.microsoft.com (Chapter 17).
2. Copy big videos and old photo folders to a computer or external drive first, so you have them safe.
3. Then delete them from OneDrive, and empty the OneDrive **Recycle bin** (deleted files still count until it's emptied).
4. In Outlook.com, delete old emails with large attachments, and empty **Deleted Items**.
5. Or upgrade to a plan with more storage.

Microsoft says changes can take up to 24 hours to show. If OneDrive is still frozen after 48 hours, contact Microsoft support.

SCAM ALERT

"Your storage is full" messages

Scammers copy Microsoft's storage warnings, with a link to "add storage" or "keep your photos," to steal card details and passwords. Don't click the link, however real it looks. Check your storage yourself by typing account.microsoft.com into your browser.

PART 6

Copilot and AI Credits

What the Copilot buttons in Word, Excel and Outlook are, who on your plan gets them, the monthly AI credit allowance, and how to turn Copilot off if you'd rather not have it.

CHAPTER 20

Copilot in the Apps: The Short Version

Since January 2025, Personal and Family subscriptions include **Copilot**, Microsoft's AI helper, inside Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and Outlook. You'll see a Copilot button on the ribbon or beside your text. It can draft a letter, summarize a long document or suggest a reply to an email.

Who on your plan gets it

Plan	Copilot in the apps
Personal	You, with a monthly allowance of AI credits.
Family	The **owner only**, with the same monthly allowance. The other five people don't get Copilot in the apps.
Premium and Pro	The owner, with much higher limits and extra tools such as Researcher and Analyst.
Basic, Classic plans, Office Home 2024	No Copilot in the apps.

GOOD TO KNOW

This book keeps Copilot short on purpose

How to actually use Copilot, what it's good at, privacy and its mistakes are all in my **Microsoft Copilot** manual. This chapter is just about what your subscription includes.

HEADS UP

Check its work

Copilot can be wrong, and it can sound sure of itself when it is. Read anything it writes before you send or print it, and never rely on it for medical, legal or money decisions.

CHAPTER 21

AI Credits, and How to Turn Copilot Off

AI credits, in plain words

On Personal and Family, Copilot use in the apps is measured in **AI credits**. Microsoft gives the owner **60 credits a month**. Each Copilot action, such as drafting text or summarizing your inbox, uses credits. They reset at the start of each month and **don't carry over**. Microsoft notifies you when you have 5 left and when you run out.

TIP

Running out isn't a problem

If you use up your credits, nothing else stops working. Word, Excel and Outlook carry on exactly as before; only the Copilot features pause until next month. You don't need to upgrade unless you genuinely want more AI help.

Turn Copilot off in Word, Excel or PowerPoint (Windows)

1. Open the app, for example Word.
2. Select **File**, then **Options**.
3. Select **Copilot** in the list on the left.
4. Clear the box called **Enable Copilot**, then select **OK**.
5. Close and reopen the app.

On a Mac

1. In the app, select the app's name in the menu bar (for example **Word**), then **Preferences**.
2. Select **Authoring and Proofing Tools**, then **Copilot**.
3. Clear **Enable Copilot**, then close and restart the app.

HEADS UP

One app, one device at a time

This setting is **per app and per device**. Turning it off in Word doesn't turn it off in Excel, and turning it off on your desktop doesn't change your laptop. Just removing the Copilot icon from the ribbon doesn't turn Copilot off either.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turning it off doesn't lower the price

Switching Copilot off just hides it. You still pay the same. To pay less, you'd need a cheaper plan: Basic, a Classic plan if Microsoft offers you one (Chapter 5), or Office Home 2024.

PART 7

Renewing, Switching and Canceling

How automatic renewal works, changing your payment card, moving between plans, canceling and refunds, and exactly what happens to your files afterward.

CHAPTER 22

How Renewal and Recurring Billing Work

When you buy Microsoft 365 directly from Microsoft, **recurring billing** is usually on. That means Microsoft charges your card automatically each month or year so the apps never stop. It's convenient, but it's also why a charge can surprise you.

Turn recurring billing off (or back on)

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services** and sign in.
2. Find your subscription and select **Manage**.
3. Select **Turn off recurring billing** (or **Cancel subscription**) and follow the prompts.
4. Your plan keeps working until the date shown. It then ends instead of renewing.
5. Changed your mind? Return to the same page and select **Turn on recurring billing**.

TIP

The button isn't there?

If you don't see a way to turn off recurring billing, it may already be off, which is common if you renewed with a store card. And if you bought through Apple or Google, it's managed there instead (Chapter 24).

Update the card Microsoft charges

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services**, find the subscription and select **Manage**.
2. Select **Change how you pay**, then choose a card or add a new one.
3. To edit a card's details, go to **account.microsoft.com/billing/payments**.

GOOD TO KNOW

If a renewal payment fails

When a card expires, the renewal can fail and the subscription becomes past due. Microsoft shows a **Pay now** option on the subscription page. Gift cards and store cards can't pay a past-due amount. After fixing it, restart Word or Excel.

CHAPTER 23

Switching Plans

Moving between Personal, Family and Premium doesn't mean starting over. Your files, email and installed apps all stay put; only the plan changes.

Moving up, for example Personal to Family

1. Sign in with the **same** Microsoft account that has your current plan.
2. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services**, select **Manage** on your plan, and look for **Upgrade** or **Change**. Or simply buy Family from Microsoft's store while signed in.
3. Microsoft converts the unused time on your old plan into extra days on the new one, at a reduced rate since the new plan costs more. The exact number of days is shown before you confirm.
4. Once you're on Family, invite your family (Chapter 14).

Moving down, for example Family to Personal

Choose the smaller plan from **Manage**. Microsoft says the change may not happen right away; your plan usually switches when it next renews. Before you move down from Family, stop sharing with others (Chapter 16) and warn them, since they'll lose their storage.

HEADS UP

Bought through Apple or Google?

Then the switch has to happen there. You cancel in the store (Chapter 24) and then buy the new plan. Microsoft notes that an App Store cancellation isn't fully complete until about 15 days after the renewal date.

TIP

Monthly to yearly

The same **Manage** page lets you change how often you're billed, such as monthly to yearly, which saves money if you know you'll keep it.

CHAPTER 24

Canceling, and Getting a Refund

Canceling is your right, and Microsoft doesn't make you call anyone. The key is to cancel **where you paid**.

If you paid...	Cancel here
Paid Microsoft directly	account.microsoft.com/services > Manage > Cancel subscription.
Paid through an iPhone or iPad	Settings > your name > Subscriptions > Microsoft 365 > Cancel Subscription. Refunds come from Apple.
Paid through Google Play	In the Play Store app, open your subscriptions list (under your profile picture). Refunds follow Google Play's rules.
Bought a card at a store	Nothing to cancel: it simply ends unless you renew.

Cancel on Microsoft's site

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/services** and sign in with the account that pays.
2. Find Microsoft 365 and select **Manage**, then **Cancel subscription**.
3. Read each screen. Microsoft may offer a cheaper plan or a discount instead; you can say no.
4. During the cancellation, Microsoft tells you whether you qualify for a refund.
5. Look for the confirmation, and keep the email Microsoft sends.

Microsoft's refund rules, in plain words

- You must **cancel first**; a refund is decided during cancellation.
- In most cases you can get a refund if you cancel **within 30 days of your first purchase**, or before your first renewal, whichever comes sooner.
- For a renewal charge, Microsoft's policy says you can get the most recent recurring charge back if you cancel **within 30 days after that payment**, but only **once** per Microsoft account per product.
- Partial (prorated) refunds for Basic, Personal and Family aren't offered in most countries; Microsoft lists only a few exceptions, such as Canada and France.
- If you don't get a refund, you keep using the plan until the end of the period you paid for.

TIP

Surprised by a yearly renewal?

If a yearly charge just came through and you didn't mean to renew, act within 30 days. Cancel on account.microsoft.com/services and see if a refund is offered. If you're stuck, Microsoft's contact page is **support.microsoft.com/contactus**.

CHAPTER 25

What Happens to Your Files After You Cancel

This is the question I hear most: "If I cancel, do I lose my documents?" **No.** Your files aren't deleted when a subscription ends. But some things change, and one of them needs planning.

What	After the subscription ends
Word, Excel, PowerPoint on your computer	Reduced functionality: you can open, view and usually print, but not edit, create or save.
Your documents	Kept, on your computer and in OneDrive.
OneDrive storage	Drops to the free **5 GB**. If you have more than that, OneDrive stops syncing and taking new files.
Outlook.com mailbox	Back to 15 GB with ads. If OneDrive is over 5 GB, email can stop sending and receiving (Chapter 19).
Family members	Lose the benefits too.

HEADS UP

Before you cancel, check your storage

If you have more than 5 GB in OneDrive, copy what you want to keep to your computer or an external drive **before** the plan ends, then trim OneDrive below 5 GB. Otherwise, after months over the limit, Microsoft can freeze and eventually delete your OneDrive (Chapter 19). This is the one step people forget.

Keep editing for free

After you cancel, you can still create and edit documents in the free web versions of Word, Excel and PowerPoint (Chapter 8), signed in with the same Microsoft account.

GOOD TO KNOW

The apps must check in now and then

Even with a paid plan, the apps need to connect to the internet at least every 39 days to confirm your subscription. If a computer sits offline longer, it drops into the same read-only mode until it reconnects and you sign in.

PART 8

Scams, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

The fake invoices, fake renewal notices and fake support calls that borrow Microsoft's name, an honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary.

CHAPTER 26

Microsoft 365 Scams: Fake Invoices, Renewals and Support Calls

Because so many people pay for Microsoft 365, scammers love to use its name. The tricks change their wording, but they nearly always want one of three things: for you to **call a number**, **click a link**, or **let them onto your computer**. Here are the ones to know.

SCAM ALERT

The fake renewal invoice

An email says your Microsoft 365 (or "Microsoft Defender" or "Office Premium") subscription auto-renewed for a few hundred dollars, such as $299.99, and gives a number to call "if you didn't authorize this." There was no charge. The FTC warns that when you call, the "refund" agents ask to get onto your computer or into your bank account, then claim they refunded too much and ask you to send money back or buy gift cards.

SCAM ALERT

"Your subscription has expired, update your payment"

An email or text with a link to "keep your files" or "update billing" leads to a fake sign-in page that steals your password and card. Microsoft says it will never ask for your password by email.

SCAM ALERT

The pop-up or phone call from "Microsoft"

A screen says your computer is infected and to call Microsoft, or someone phones saying they're from Microsoft. Microsoft says its error and warning messages **never include phone numbers**, and it doesn't make unsolicited calls to offer tech support. Caller ID can be faked. Hang up.

The two-minute check that settles it

1. Don't use any link or number in the message.
2. Open your browser and type **account.microsoft.com/services** yourself.
3. Look at what you really have and when it really renews. Also check your card or bank statement.

4. If there's no such charge, the message was a scam. Delete it. In Outlook you can report it as phishing.

Warning signs

- A big, unfamiliar charge with a phone number to "cancel."
- Pressure: "within 24 hours," "to avoid further charges."
- Any request for gift cards, cryptocurrency or a wire transfer. Microsoft says it will never ask you to pay for support that way.
- A request to install a program so someone can "help" from afar.
- A sender address that looks almost right. Real Microsoft account security emails come from **@accountprotection.microsoft.com**, but even a real-looking address can be faked, so the two-minute check is what counts.

TIP

Already called, paid or let someone on?

Don't be embarrassed; these are professional criminals. Call your bank or card company using the number on your card. Change your Microsoft account password from a different, trusted device. Report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov** and to Microsoft at **microsoft.com/reportascam**. Then have your computer checked, because remote-access software may still be on it.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this book so you can handle your Microsoft 365 subscription on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or money, so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **You're not sure what you're paying for**, or you suspect you're paying twice. We'll look at every account together and find the right single plan.
- **A new computer** that needs Microsoft 365, OneDrive and your old files moved over.
- **Setting up Family sharing** for a spouse, children or grandchildren on their own devices.
- **Storage problems**: a "storage full" warning, email that stopped sending, or the 2027 switch to shared Family storage.
- **Canceling safely** without losing photos or documents stored in OneDrive.
- **A message, call or pop-up you're not sure about.** Ask before you click or call.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace: no rushing, no talking down, and no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly when a plan or upgrade isn't worth your money. I serve Portage County, Ohio, and I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. If I'm with another customer, my AI receptionist, Sophie, will answer and make sure I get back to you. No question is too small.

Thank you for letting me help you make sense of Microsoft 365. Now you know exactly what you're paying for, and you're the one in charge of it.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Microsoft 365 Cheat-Sheet

Print just this page and keep it by your computer. The whole book, boiled down.

Where things are

I want	Go here
My plan and renewal date	**account.microsoft.com/services**
Install the apps	account.microsoft.com/services > **Install**, or microsoft365.com
Share Family or Premium	account.microsoft.com/services > **Sharing**
Free Word and Excel online	**microsoft365.com**
Use a store card or key	**microsoft365.com/setup**
My storage	account.microsoft.com > **Microsoft storage**
My payment card	account.microsoft.com/billing/payments

Everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Stop automatic renewal	Services > Manage > **Turn off recurring billing**.
Sign out an old computer	Services > Manage > Devices > **Sign out**.
Remove someone from Family	Services > Sharing > **Stop sharing**.
Turn off Copilot (Windows)	In the app: File > Options > Copilot > clear **Enable Copilot**.
Cancel	Services > Manage > **Cancel subscription** (or Apple/Google if you paid there).

Keep handy

Item	
My Microsoft account email	_____
My plan (and monthly or yearly)	_____
Renews on	_____
Who I share with	_____

Safety, in three lines

- Never call a number in a Microsoft "invoice" or pop-up. Check account.microsoft.com yourself.
- Microsoft never asks for gift cards, and never calls you out of the blue to fix your computer.
- Before canceling, copy anything over 5 GB out of OneDrive.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You know what your subscription includes, how to put it on every device, how to share it, and how to change or cancel it safely. When you'd like a hand, call (330) 200-8042.