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UNDERSTANDING iCLOUD



ADDITIONAL DEMOS TO PRACTICE AND LEARN

DEMOS 4-9:

Overview

The four foundations

1 Your Apple Account connects your devices

Your Apple Account is the account you use with Apple services. Apple ID is its former name. Use the same account on your own devices to see the same synced information. Each person should use their own account.

1. Open Settings and tap your name at the top.

2. Notice the email address or phone number associated with your account. Compare it privately with your other device, if available.

3. Tap iCloud to see the services connected to your account. On a Mac, open System Settings, click your name, then iCloud.

2 Syncing and backup do different jobs

Syncing keeps selected information current across devices. Edit an iCloud note or delete an iCloud photograph on one device, and that change can appear on the others. iCloud Backup saves iPhone or iPad information and settings that are not already syncing to iCloud so they can be restored to a replacement or erased device.

1. In Settings, tap your name, then iCloud. Tap See All to review apps that use iCloud.

2. Return to iCloud and open iCloud Backup. Notice that backup has its own controls, separate from Photos, Notes, and Drive.

Remember A synced library is not an independent archive. For irreplaceable photographs and documents, keep a separate copy too. iCloud Backup does not back up your Mac; use a Mac backup method such as Time Machine.

Storage and private access

3 Device storage and iCloud storage are separate

Device storage is space inside your iPhone, iPad, or Mac. iCloud storage is space in your account online. A standard iCloud account includes 5 GB free, shared among services such as backups, photos, and files. iCloud+ offers more storage and additional features.

1. Open Settings, tap your name, then iCloud. Read the storage bar. Tap Storage or Manage Account Storage for details.

2. Identify your largest category. Look without deleting anything.

3. To compare, return to Settings, tap General, then iPhone Storage or iPad Storage. This is a different storage total.

Remember Buying more iCloud storage does not increase the physical capacity of your device. Photo optimization can reduce local space use, but it does not reduce the space your originals use in iCloud.

4 Your information is private until you share it

Using the same account on your own devices is different from inviting another person to view an item. Family Sharing can share a storage plan without automatically sharing everyone’s photographs and documents.

1. On your own device, open Safari and type icloud.com directly in the address bar.

2. Sign in to your Apple Account if requested. Complete verification privately. Open an available app, such as Notes or Drive.

3. When finished on a borrowed or shared browser, sign out using the account menu. Do not save your password there.

If web access is unavailable Some account settings restrict access to iCloud data on the web. Use the app on your device for class; you do not need to weaken security settings to complete an exercise.

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

Demo 4 Keep a note in sync

Start a travel packing list that follows you between your own devices. This introduces syncing in an everyday app before you begin sharing with others.

1. Open Settings, tap your name, iCloud, then See All. Tap Notes and check that Sync this device is on.

2. Open Notes. Return to the Folders screen and choose a folder under iCloud. Do not choose a Gmail folder or On My iPhone.

3. Create a note titled Weekend Packing. Add three items, such as reading glasses, charger, and walking shoes.

4. On a second device using the same Apple Account with Notes syncing enabled, open Notes and find the note under iCloud. You may also use Notes at icloud.com.

5. Add one more item on the second device. Return to the first device and watch for the change. If you have only one device, check the note at icloud.com if web access is available.

Check your result The same note shows the added item in both places. If you only have one available view, you can still confirm that the note is in an iCloud folder.

Explore a little further

Use the checklist button to turn your packing items into a checklist. Check off one item and look for that change on your other device.

If the note is missing Check the account, the iCloud Notes switch, the folder location, and the internet connection on both devices. A note stored in another account will not appear in iCloud Notes.

Mac users Enable Notes under System Settings, your name, iCloud. In Notes, choose a folder under iCloud, then create or edit your practice note.

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

Demo 5 Find a misplaced device

Use Find My to locate one of your devices and recognize the difference between a current location and an older report.

1. Open Find My on your iPhone or iPad. Tap Devices.

2. Select one of your own listed devices. Read its name and location information. Notice any timestamp or offline message.

3. If the device is nearby and it will not disturb the class, tap Play Sound or Play. A sound may begin after a short delay.

4. Stop the sound on the located device using its onscreen alert, or use Stop Sound where offered.

5. If the device is offline, notice Sound Pending. The sound may play when it reconnects; cancel the request if the option is available.

Check your result You can identify your device in the list and tell whether its reported location is current or last known. A device may not be locatable if Find My was not enabled before it went missing.

Explore a little further

On your own browser, visit icloud.com/find and locate the same device. This is useful when your phone is the device you cannot find. Sign out afterward if using a borrowed browser.

For this exercise Use only your own device. Leave Mark As Lost, Erase, and Remove This Device untouched; those controls serve different purposes.

Mac users Open Find My, click Devices, select your device, and open its information to see the sound option.

Finding a device and sharing your location with another person are separate choices. This exercise does not require you to share your location with classmates.

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

Demo 6 Recover a deleted practice file

Learn where a deleted iCloud Drive file goes and how to bring it back. Use only the harmless file copy you created in Demo 3.

1. Open Files, then Browse, iCloud Drive, and iCloud Class. Verify that your practice file is present.

2. Touch and hold the practice file and choose Delete. Delete only this expendable copy.

3. Return to Browse and open Recently Deleted under Locations.

4. Find the practice file. Touch and hold it and choose Recover. If necessary, use Select, select the file, then Recover.

5. Return to iCloud Drive and the iCloud Class folder. Open the recovered file.

6. For another recovery route, visit icloud.com/iclouddrive on your own browser. Open Recently Deleted, select an eligible file, and choose Recover. There is no need to delete your file a second time.

Check your result The recovered practice file opens from its original folder. Check on your second device if available.

Remember Eligible deleted iCloud Drive files can normally be recovered within 30 days. Permanently removed files cannot be recovered this way. Do not select Delete Permanently or empty Recently Deleted during practice.

Explore a little further

Visit icloud.com/recovery and look at the available recovery categories without restoring them. Restoring contacts or calendars can affect much more information than recovering one file.

If the file is missing Confirm that it was saved in iCloud Drive and that you are using the same account. Allow time for syncing. Avoid editing or deleting Drive items while a web recovery is in progress.

Mac users Use the iCloud.com recovery route for this exercise. Deleting an iCloud Drive item on your Mac can affect your other synced devices too.

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

Demo 7 Build a shared packing list

Invite one person to work on a living note. Each person uses their own Apple Account; you never need to share a password.

1. Open the Weekend Packing note from Demo 4. Confirm that it is in an iCloud folder and is not locked. Your partner should have iCloud Notes enabled too.

2. Tap Share. Choose Collaborate or Share a Link from the menu under the note title. Avoid Send Copy for this exercise.

3. Open the access and permission options. Choose Only invited people or People you choose, and allow editing. Turn off permission for others to invite people if that option appears.

4. Use Messages or Mail to invite your willing partner using the email address or phone number they use with their Apple Account.

5. Ask your partner to open the invitation, join the note, and add a harmless item. Confirm that you both see it.

6. Tap the collaboration or participants button in the note, then Manage Shared Note. Review the participants.

7. When practice is complete, choose Stop Sharing if you do not want the note to remain shared.

Check your result You see your partner's addition in the same note. A separate copy sent by email does not demonstrate live collaboration.

Explore a little further

Review View Only or the equivalent permission. Consider when a family itinerary should be viewable but editable only by its organizer.

Remember Stopping sharing removes other people's access to the live note. It cannot retrieve screenshots or copies they already made. For the simplest practice, use a partner with an Apple device and current software.

Mac users Open an iCloud note in Notes, click Share, and choose collaboration. Review access and editing permissions before sending the invitation.

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

Demo 8 Share a folder with control

Create a small shared folder for trip plans, club documents, or household information. Learn how folder permissions affect everything inside it.

1. Open Files, Browse, iCloud Drive. Create a new folder named Shared Class Practice. Keep it separate from personal folders.

2. Place a copy of your harmless practice file inside the new folder. Confirm that it contains nothing private.

3. Touch and hold the folder and tap Share. Choose Share a Link or Collaborate, depending on your software.

4. Open sharing options. Choose People you choose or Only invited people. Choose View and Download Only or View Only. Turn off Access Requests and permission to invite others if those options appear.

5. Send the invitation to one willing partner through Messages or Mail. Have them open it and confirm that they can view the practice file. They may need to sign in to their own Apple Account.

6. Touch and hold your folder again and choose Manage Shared Folder. Review the people and permissions.

7. Choose Stop Sharing when you finish practicing, unless you intend the sharing to continue.

Explore a little further

Add one more harmless file to the folder. Ask your partner to look again. New items inside a shared folder are shared too, so review its contents before adding anything.

Remember View only can still allow downloading. Stopping sharing ends access to the live folder but cannot recall downloaded copies. Sending a copy and sharing a live folder have different results.

Mac users *In Finder, use iCloud Drive. Control click your practice folder and choose Share, then collaboration. Check access and permissions before inviting anyone.*

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE WITH ICLOUD PLUS

Demo 9 Protect your email address

Create a unique Hide My Email address for a newsletter or other signup. Mail sent to that address forwards to your personal inbox.

You will need An iCloud+ subscription of your own or access through Family Sharing. If unavailable, read through the steps without purchasing anything.

1. Open Settings, tap your name, then iCloud, then Hide My Email.

2. Tap Create New Address. Follow the prompts to create an address.

3. Give it a recognizable label such as Class Practice. Add a note about its intended use, then save it.

4. Open the entry and copy the generated address. Paste it into your private practice note so you can recognize it; do not sign up for an unwanted service.

5. Check Forward To in Hide My Email settings to see which personal inbox receives forwarded messages. Leave it unchanged unless you intend to change it.

6. For a test, ask a willing partner to send a harmless message to the generated address. Look for it in your forwarding inbox, including Junk if needed.

7. Return to the practice address in Hide My Email. Choose Deactivate Email Address when you no longer need it.

Explore a little further

Consider using a different labeled address for each newsletter or service. Keep an address active if you still need it for account access, receipts, or password resets.

Remember Hide My Email is an email forwarding feature. It does not make browsing anonymous, and it is different from iCloud Private Relay.

Mac users *Open System Settings, your name, iCloud, then Hide My Email to create and manage addresses.*

Mac overview and backup

Use these pages for hands on practice on a Mac. The earlier demonstration pages explain the purpose, expected result, and additional practice. Follow the steps for your device; you do not need to complete both versions.

Review the four foundations on a Mac

1. Choose Apple menu, System Settings, then your name. Check your Apple Account privately. Click iCloud and review the apps that sync.

2. Read the iCloud storage bar. Click Storage or Manage for details without deleting anything. Compare this with System Settings, General, Storage, which describes space on your Mac.

3. In Safari, visit icloud.com, sign in privately, and open an available app. Sign out when finished on a borrowed browser.

4. Remember that changes to synced items can reach your other devices. Family storage sharing does not automatically share personal files.

Demo 1 Check your Mac backup separately

iCloud syncs selected Mac information, but it does not create a complete Mac backup. This short check shows where a separate Mac backup belongs.

1. Open System Settings, click your name, then iCloud. Identify Photos, Drive, or Notes as synced services.

2. Go to System Settings, General, Time Machine. Inspect the backup status and any latest backup date displayed.

3. If a backup disk is already configured and connected, you can use the Time Machine menu in the menu bar and choose Back Up Now. If that menu is absent, ask for help locating it in your version of macOS.

4. If no backup disk is configured, note that a separate backup still needs setup. Do not format a disk or start a new disk setup during this exercise.

Check your result You can distinguish iCloud syncing from a separate Mac backup. If you also have an iPhone or iPad, follow Demo 1 on that device to check its iCloud Backup.

Mac photographs and files

Demo 2 Find your iCloud photographs

1. Open Photos. Choose Photos in the menu bar, then Settings, then iCloud. Check whether iCloud Photos is enabled. Review available iCloud space before enabling it because it uploads the library, not just one image.

2. In Photos, choose Library, then All Photos. Scroll to the bottom to read the sync status.

3. Locate a harmless photograph already in your library, or use File, Import to add a harmless practice image from your Mac. If your iPhone uses the same iCloud Photos account, you may take the practice photograph there instead.

4. Find the photograph on another synced device or at icloud.com/photos. Mark it as a favorite and check for that change in the other view.

5. Return to Photos, Settings, iCloud. Read Optimize Mac Storage and Download Originals to this Mac. Leave the choice unchanged unless you intend to change local storage use.

Demo 3 Save and find a document

1. Open System Settings, your name, iCloud, then Drive or iCloud Drive. Check that Sync this Mac is enabled.

2. Open Finder and select iCloud Drive in the sidebar. Choose File, New Folder and name it iCloud Class.

3. Find a harmless file on your Mac. Select it and choose Edit, Copy. Open iCloud Class and choose Edit, Paste Item to create a copy.

4. Select the copied file and press Return to rename it Class Practice, retaining its file extension. Press Return again to finish.

5. Close the folder, reopen Finder, and find the file in iCloud Drive. Open it. Look for it on another synced device or at icloud.com/iclouddrive if available.

Check your result Your practice copy opens from iCloud Drive. Keep it for Demo 6. The original outside this folder remains separate.

Mac notes and device finding

Demo 4 Keep a note in sync

1. Open System Settings, your name, iCloud, then Notes. Enable Sync this Mac if you want your iCloud notes here.

2. Open Notes. Choose View, Show Folders if the sidebar is hidden. Select a folder in the iCloud section.

3. Click New Note and title it Weekend Packing. Add three harmless packing items. Use the checklist button if desired.

4. Open the same iCloud note on your other device or at icloud.com/notes. Add another item there.

5. Return to Notes on the Mac and check for the addition. If it is missing, check the account, folder, internet connection, and sync setting.

Demo 5 Find a misplaced device

1. Open the Find My app on your Mac. Select Devices.

2. Select one of your own devices. Read the map and any timestamp or offline message.

3. Click the information button for the device if its controls are not visible. If your device is nearby and it will not disturb class, choose Play Sound.

4. Stop the sound on the found device using its alert, or use Stop Sound where offered. An offline device may show a pending sound instead.

5. For another route, use Safari to visit icloud.com/find. Sign in to your own account and select the device. Sign out afterward on a borrowed browser.

Check your result You can identify the device and judge how recent its location report is. Leave erase, lost mode, and device removal controls untouched during practice.

Find My must have been enabled before a device goes missing for it to be findable through this service. This exercise does not require location sharing with another person.

Mac recovery and collaboration

Demo 6 Recover your practice file

1. In Finder, open iCloud Drive and iCloud Class. Confirm that the harmless Class Practice copy is there.

2. Control click that practice copy and choose Move to Trash. This deletes the synced file from iCloud Drive, so use only the expendable copy.

3. In Safari, visit icloud.com/iclouddrive and sign in to your account. Select Recently Deleted.

4. Select the practice file and click Recover. Allow time for the change to sync.

5. Return to the original folder in Finder and open the recovered file. Do not permanently delete it or empty the Trash during practice.

Demo 7 Build a shared packing list

1. Open Notes and the Weekend Packing note under iCloud. Use an unlocked practice note. Your partner should have iCloud Notes enabled.

2. Click Share and choose Collaborate or Share a Link rather than Send Copy.

3. Open access and permission options. Choose Only invited people or People you choose, with editing allowed. Disable inviting others if that option appears.

4. Invite your willing partner through Messages or Mail using their Apple Account email address or phone number. Have them open the invitation and add a harmless item.

5. Confirm the addition on your Mac. Click the collaboration or participants button, then Manage Shared Note, to review access.

6. Choose Stop Sharing when you finish if you do not want to continue sharing the note.

Check your result Both participants see the same updated note. Stopping sharing ends live access but cannot retrieve copies or screenshots.

Mac sharing and email privacy

Demo 8 Share a folder with control

1. In Finder, open iCloud Drive. Choose File, New Folder and name it Shared Class Practice.

2. Copy a harmless practice file into it using Edit, Copy and Edit, Paste Item. Check that the folder contains nothing private.

3. Control click the folder and choose Share. Choose Collaborate or Share a Link. Open access and permission options.

4. Choose Only invited people or People you choose, and View Only or View and Download Only. Disable access requests and inviting others if offered.

5. Send the invitation to your willing partner using Messages or Mail. Have them open the folder and confirm that the file is visible.

6. Control click your shared folder and choose Manage Shared Folder, or open its sharing controls through Share. Review participants and choose Stop Sharing after practice.

Demo 9 Create a Hide My Email address

This exercise requires iCloud+ access. If you do not have it, read the steps without buying a plan.

1. Open System Settings, your name, iCloud, then Hide My Email.

2. Click the Add button or Create New Address. Follow the prompts, label the address Class Practice, and save it.

3. Open the entry and copy the generated address into a private practice note. Review Forward To without changing it.

4. Ask a willing partner to send a harmless message to that address. Check your forwarding inbox and Junk folder.

5. Return to the practice address in Hide My Email settings. Choose Deactivate Email Address when you no longer need it.

TAKE HOME REFERENCE

Questions and further practice

Questions to bring to the discussion

Can I explain the difference between syncing and backup?

Where is my last successful backup date?

Do I know whether a file is in iCloud Drive or only on my device?

What happens if I delete a photograph from iCloud Photos?

Which items have I shared, and where can I stop sharing them?

When something does not appear

Check your internet connection, the Apple Account on each device, the relevant iCloud app switch, and available iCloud storage. Confirm that the item is in an iCloud location. Large photo libraries and first backups can take much longer than a classroom exercise. Read any sync status message before changing settings.

Apple instructions for continued learning

Menu names can change. These Apple guides support the exercises and provide additional device specific details. Instructions checked November 1, 2026.

Mac backup with Time Machine
iCloud on iPhone
Back up an iPhone or iPad
What iCloud Backup includes
Set up iCloud Photos
Set up iCloud Notes
Find a lost device
Recover deleted iCloud files
Share notes
Share iCloud Drive items
Use Hide My Email