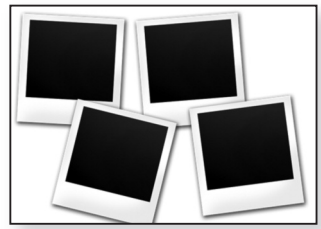
How to Find Photos and Artwork Online to Spice Up Your Own Documents

This article shows you how to:

- Save pictures you find on websites
- Find professional-quality photos you can use for free
- Find clip art pictures to use in informal documents



Greeting cards, invitations, posters, newsletters, and even some more-formal documents can all benefit from pictures to make them more attractive and attention-grabbing. The trouble is, even if you're a dab hand with a digital camera or a graphics program, it's not always possible to create the picture you need.

Well, don't even try! The Internet is teeming with free pictures you can use, and in this article I'll show you the best places to find them.

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Important: The Difference Between 'Free' and 'Royalty Free'!

Looking for free pictures?

If you've ever tried to search for free pictures on the Internet, you may have found it a rather confusing business. A search for 'free pictures' or 'free photos' at a good search engine will yield a large number of promising links, but when you delve into many of those websites you'll find you're expected to pay to use any pictures you like.

Many websites offer photos you'd have to pay to use

Many of the sites you find are actually offering 'royalty free' images; in other words, you pay once for the right to use the picture, and that entitles you to use it in 50,000 copies of a book or a million copies of a magazine without having to pay for each individual copy used. For commercial use these sites are a blessing, but they're not a good choice when you just want a picture to use in a single birthday card or in six copies of a jumble sale poster!

Find pictures for which personal use is completely free

Almost all of the websites I'll point you to in this article offer free – completely free – pictures that you can save to your PC and use in almost any way you like. The only limitations are that you're not allowed to collect and distribute them yourself (by setting up your own 'free pictures' website, for example), and you're not usually allowed to use them for commercial purposes such as in books and magazines or in other business-related activities.

How to Save Pictures from a Website

Pick a category to see the available pictures

The websites we'll be visiting in this article work in approximately the same way. On arrival you'll find a list of categories such as 'People', 'Christmas', 'Buildings', 'Nature', and so on. After clicking a suitable category, you may arrive at a list of sub-categories to choose from;

for example, the 'People' category may lead to a choice of 'Young People', 'Mature People', 'Couples' and 'Family'. After working your way through the categories you'll arrive at a page showing small copies of the pictures in your chosen category.

In many cases you'll find that there's more than one page of pictures in the category. Keep a lookout for a 'Next' link above or below those little pictures that you can click to move to the next page.

When you see an image you like, just click it. That will take you to a page showing a larger version of the picture and, in most cases, some details about its creator.

Click the pictures to reach a full-sized version

This larger copy of the picture helps you decide whether it really will fit the purpose you have in mind, but in most cases it's still not the full-sized copy, and it's always best to save the largest (and therefore most detailed) copy of a picture you can find. Here, websites tend to work in either of two ways:

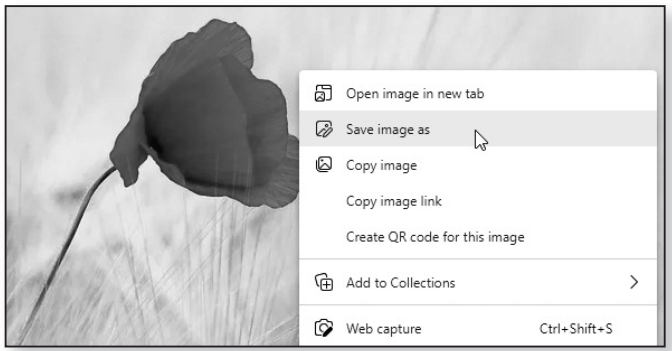
- By clicking this larger copy of the image, you'll be whisked to a full-sized copy (perhaps in a new browser tab).
- Beside or below the larger copy of the picture you'll see a 'Download' link or, perhaps, a collection of links that lead to different sizes of picture. If so, click the link to the largest size.

If it's not obvious what you have to do, always try clicking the picture and seeing what happens. If it takes you somewhere unexpected, you can click the 'Back' button at the top-left of your web browser's window to return to this page and have a closer look at it. If nothing at all happens, you're either already looking at the largest-possible copy of the picture, or there's a link to a larger copy nearby that you haven't spotted.

How to save the full-sized picture

After two or three clicks, you should be looking at a nice, large copy of the picture you want, and all you need to do from here is save it to your PC. Here's how to do that:

1. Right-click somewhere on the picture.
2. On the context menu that appears, choose **Save image as**.



Choose a folder and type a name

3. Now you'll see a Save As dialog of the sort you always see whenever you want to save a file. As usual, choose the folder in which you want to save the picture, type a different name for it from the name suggested if you want to, and then click **Save**.
4. Within a few seconds, the picture will be saved to your PC, ready to use in the documents you create.

Alternative: use copy and paste

Alternatively, perhaps you don't need to bother saving the picture at all. If you have your word processor open and you're looking for a picture to include in the document you're working on, you can do this instead:

1. Having found a large copy of the picture you want to use, right-click it and choose **Copy image**.
2. Switch back to your word processor, click at the point where you want the picture to appear, and press **Ctrl+V** to paste it there.

That's quicker and easier to do, but it means you can't easily use the same picture in other documents: you'd have to find and reopen this document, right-click the picture and choose **Copy**, then switch back to your new document to paste it there.

Keep your pictures organised!

Create a new folder to organise the pictures you download

Before you start saving pictures from websites, it's a good idea to create a new folder inside your 'Pictures' folder to store them in. This keeps them separate from your own photos, making them easier to find and helping to avoid any confusion about where they came from and how you can use them.

Start File Explorer (by pressing **Win+E**) and make your way to your Pictures folder. Right-click a blank space in this folder and choose **New** > **Folder**. Give this new folder an obvious name, such as 'From Websites', and press **Enter** to confirm it. From now on, when you're saving a picture from a website by following the steps above, make your way to this folder when you reach step 3 on the previous page.

The Top 6 Websites for Free Photos

If you're looking for photos, as opposed to hand-drawn artwork, one of the six top free-photos websites below should lead you to exactly what you want.

Pexels

www.pexels.com

Search for pictures by typing keywords

When you arrive at Pexels, you'll see a large search box in the middle of the page. Rather than looking through categories of pictures, you search by keyword, so type something descriptive such as 'balloons' or 'cat' and press **Enter**. All your search results are gathered on a single long page, so just scroll down until you find something you like.

When you find a suitable picture, click it and you'll be whisked to a page showing a larger (although probably not yet full-size) version. If you'd like to save this picture, do one of the following:

- Click the **Free Download** button in the top-right corner of the page and choose where to save the picture.
- Click the picture once to display it at full size, then follow either set of steps on page 4 to save it or copy it.

OpenPhoto
www.openphoto.net

Choose a picture category

At OpenPhoto, begin by clicking the **Browse** link near the top of the page. This takes you to a collection of categories such as Animals, Food, Nature and People. Click a suitable category and you'll arrive at the first of several pages of photos in that category. Near the top of the page, below the name of the category you clicked, you may see several sub-categories listed, and you could click one of those.

If you find a photo that looks promising, click it and you'll arrive at a new page that shows it at a larger size (although not usually full size). If you'd like to use this picture, click the **Download** link to the bottom-left of the picture. This opens the full-size picture in a new browser tab, and you can follow either set of steps on page 4 to save or copy it.

StockVault
www.stockvault.net
Click the word **Categories** at the top of the page and then choose a suitable category from the panel that opens. This leads you to the first of several pages of photos in that category.

Stockvault has an affiliation with another photo site named Shutterstock which offers royalty-based (not free) photos; you'll find sections at the top of some

pages showing examples of Shutterstock's photos. Since it's annoying to find the perfect picture and then realise you have to pay for it, try to avoid clicking the photos in these sections!

Click a picture to see it at a larger size. It's probably not full-size, although you may feel it's large enough to use, in which case you could use one of the methods on page 4 to save or copy it. To ensure you're getting the full-size picture, click the **Free Download** button to the right of the picture to save it.

Wikimedia Commons
commons.wikimedia.org/wiki

An immense collection of pictures …

This oddly-named site is one of the best and most-famous repositories of free media files, with over 70 million pictures, audio files and videos at the time of writing. In the 'Content' box at the right of the page you choose a fairly general category, and then begin digging through ever-more-specific categories to find the type of pictures you're looking for.

.. but saving an image is easy

When you click a small version of a picture, you'll arrive at a much larger one. From here, click that picture to see the full-sized version which you can then save to your PC by following the steps given on page 4.

FreeImages
www.freeimages.com

This is another site that uses keywords rather than categories, so you begin by typing a word or two into the search box on the home page. This leads you to the first of several pages of results.

Like StockVault above, FreeImages also affiliates with a company offering non-free pictures, and you'll see a section containing some of those at the top of each page. Ignore those and look at the collection of free pictures below.

Click any picture to see it at a larger size. If you'd like to use this picture, click the **Download** button below it: this offers you a choice of sizes to download, each with its own 'Download' button, and I recommend choosing the largest (noted as 'Full').

Pixabay
www.pixabay.com

Illustrations as well as photographs

Along with photos, Pixabay also offers 'illustrations' – graphical artwork – and a search here shows both in its search results. When you arrive, just type a keyword or two into the large search box and press **Enter**, and you'll be taken to the first page of results.

As always, click a picture to see a larger (although not full-size) copy of it on the next page. If you'd like to use this image, begin by clicking the **Free Download** button to its right. On the menu that appears, click the size you want: as usual, I'd suggest choosing the largest size for best quality, although if you know you'll be using the picture at a comparatively small size you might choose something smaller. Now do either of the following:

- To download and save the image, click the **Download** button.
- To see the image at full size, click the **View** button and then click the picture when it appears. From here, you can use either of the methods on page 4 to download the picture or copy-and-paste it into a document.

3 Sites to Find Hand-drawn Clip Art

Ideal for informal documents

The term 'clip art' refers to hand-drawn (often rather cartoon-like) artwork, and these are the kinds of pictures you'd probably prefer to use in informal

projects such as cards, invitations and posters. Here are three of the best free clip art sites to visit.

Daily Clip Art
www.dailyclipart.net

The top choice for high-quality clip art

The majority of clip art websites concentrate on quantity rather than quality, but Daily Clip Art certainly doesn't. Many of the images you'll find on this comparatively-small site are superb, so always make this your first port of call. After selecting a category from the front page, you'll generally find all the images in that category on the single page you reach next. However, look out for a small **Previous Entries** link near the bottom of the page which (if it's there) will lead to another page of images in your chosen category.

Although the examples you see on these pages are large and clear, they're not usually full-sized, so always click any image you like and then save the full-sized picture that opens in a new browser tab, closing that tab afterwards.

Free-Graphics.com
www.free-graphics.com

The 'Clip Art' category contains many other categories

This website claims to have over 30,000 clip art images, and they're neatly organised into categories you'll find at the left of the page. Some of these lead to further categories. Don't overlook the 'Clip Art' category in this list: this presents a large collection of sub-categories which are where you'll find most of those 30,000 images!

As usual, click any small picture to see it at full size, and follow the steps on page 4 to save that large picture to your PC.

ClipSafari
www.clipsafari.com

Excellent quality clip art

At this website you'll find over 100,000 clip art images, most of which are superb quality. Unusually, these

images can be used absolutely anywhere for free, including for commercial purposes. When you arrive at the site, you can either search for a picture by typing keywords, or you can scroll to the bottom of the page and click one of the 'popular tags' to see pictures tagged with that word.

Click any picture to see it at full size on a new page. From here, you can follow either set of steps on page 4 to save it or copy it, or you can click the **Download as PNG File** button.

Search Through Billions of Pictures at Google

Google indexes pictures as well as web pages

If you need to find pictures for purely-personal use, one of the best places to look is the famous Google search engine. Not only does Google index web pages, but the pictures it finds on them, and the sheer size of the World Wide Web means that billions of pictures are just a few clicks away.

To search for images at Google, follow these steps:

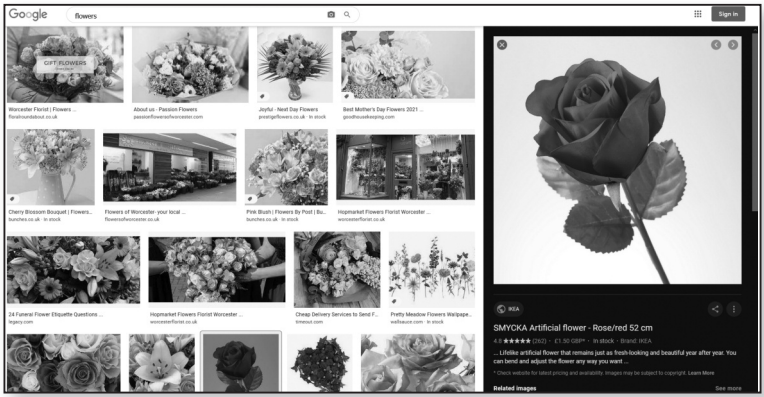
1. Either type images.google.com into your browser's address box and press **Enter**, or visit the usual www.google.com site and click the word **Images** in the top-right corner.
2. In Google's search box, type a word or two to describe the type of picture you want (such as 'birthday cake' or 'flowers') and press **Enter**.

Keep scrolling to see more pictures

3. Now you'll reach the search results, which is a never-ending page: keep scrolling downwards and ever more pictures are loaded. Each picture is captioned with the title of the web page it was found on and the URL of that page's website.

4. When you come across a picture that takes your fancy, click it. A panel will appear at the right of the page showing that picture at a larger size. You'll also see some details and quotes from the web page containing the picture and, below that, some 'Related images' which you may like better – if so, just click one.

Click a small picture to see it in a side panel



5. If you like the look of the picture shown in that side panel and you'd like to use it, click it. This opens a new browser tab which takes you to the web page where Google found that image. (Of course, you may have to scroll around that page a little to find it.) If you want to use the picture you've found, follow either set of steps on page 4 to download it or copy-and-paste it into a document.

Click the larger picture to go to its web page

As Google notes in that side panel, the picture may be subject to copyright – in fact, it almost certainly is. No-one is likely to object to your using their image in a greeting card or on a poster for your village jumble sale (assuming they knew you were doing so!), but it's wise to ask permission before using the picture for anything more commercial in nature.

Free Images from Microsoft's Online Gallery

Easily find free pictures in Word

If you're working on a document in Microsoft Word, you have access to a huge gallery of free pictures – photographs and clip art. Just click at the point in your document where you want to insert a picture and follow the appropriate steps below for your version of Word.

Word 2019:

Pick a category or type a search term

1. Switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon, and in the 'Illustrations' group click the **Online Pictures** button.
2. In the window that opens, you'll see a 'Search Bing' box at the top and, below it, a collection of categories such as 'Airplane', 'Animals', 'Apple'. If one of those categories seems to fit the bill, click it to see the pictures it contains. Otherwise, click in the **Search Bing** box and type a word or two that describes the picture you want, such as 'balloons' or 'globe' or 'birthday cake', then press **Enter** to search for pictures.

3. The window changes to show all the pictures found in your search (or included in the category you clicked). At the moment you're seeing all types of pictures – clip art, photographs and simple line drawings. If you want to see only clip art pictures, or only photographs, click the little filter icon to the top-left of the pictures and choose your preferred picture type from the menu to hide the other types.

Fine-tune the results

If you want to fine-tune the results further, you can click the filter icon again to reopen the menu and choose other options. Under **Size** you can specify a picture size ranging from Small to Extra Large; under **Layout** you can pick Square, Wide or Tall pictures; and under **Color** you can specify that you want colour or black-and-white pictures, or click a colour swatch to see pictures that predominantly feature that colour.

5. If you find a picture you want to use in your document, just click it once to select it and then click the **Insert** button at the bottom of the window. The window closes and the picture appears in your document. (If you didn't find a suitable picture, type something different in the search box to search again, or click the arrow to the left of the search box to go back to the categories.)

Add a picture to your document

Word 2016 or 2013:

1. Switch to the **Insert** tab on the Ribbon, and in the 'Illustrations' group click the **Online Pictures** button.

2. In the window that opens, click in the search box beside the words 'Bing Image Search' and type a word or two that describes the picture you want, such as 'balloons' or 'globe' or 'birthday cake', then press **Enter.**

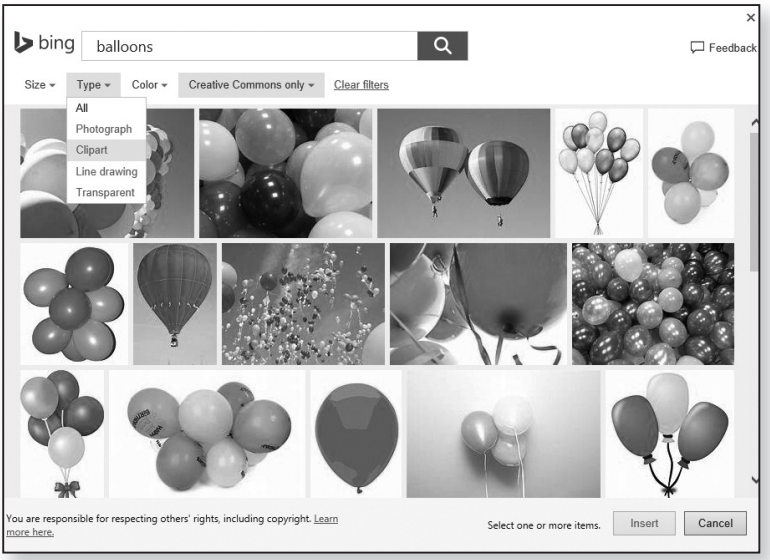
Search for images

3. The window changes to show the results of your search. At the moment you're seeing all the possible

Choose what types of pictures you see

types of pictures – clip art, photographs and simple line drawings. If you want to see only one particular type of picture, open the **Type** menu at the top-left of the pictures and choose your preferred type.

If you choose to, you can fine-tune the results further using the other two menus. The **Size** menu lets you specify the size of the picture, ranging from Small to Extra Large. The **Colour** menu lets you choose between colour and black-and-white pictures, or you can click a colour swatch to see pictures that predominantly feature that colour.



Insert a picture into your document

4. If you find a picture you want to use in your document, just click it once to select it and then click the **Insert** button at the bottom of the window. The window closes and the picture appears in your document. (If you didn't find a suitable picture, you can type something different in the search box to search again.)