(Approx. 735 words)

“Save" or "Save As?

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Suppose you are editing a document in Word, and now you need to save your changes – should you use the "File" menu choice of "Save" or "Save As"? And what's the difference anyway?

My strong suggestion is to ALWAYS use "Save As."

Microsoft Word, other Microsoft apps, and many other apps may give you two ways to save your work – a quick one-click "Save" option and another called "Save As."

If you have opened an existing file (I will use a "document" file as an example) and have made some changes and then choose the "Save" option to save your changes, the changes will be saved, but your old previous version of your document will be deleted. This is because you save the document as the same file with the same name. If you realize this is what you want to do, that's fine. But using "Save As" is always better.

Here's why --

When you click "Save As" you will get many options for how you want to save your file. If you save your changed file to a different folder, you may click on that folder if you see it in that window or click on "Browse." Either way, you will open a window like Windows File Explorer. It will say "Save As" in the window's title bar at the top. The first advantage to using "Save As" is that you do not have to change anything if you don't want to – and if you choose not to change anything, "Save As" will save your changed file just like you clicked on "Save." But with "Save As," you can visually check and make sure all your save options are what you want – and if not, you can change them.

You can save your changed file to a different folder. After clicking "Save As," you are given a window with some folders (you can click on "Browse" to find any folder). The next window you see will look just like Windows File Explorer. In this window, you can find the folder where you want to save the changed file; click on it, click "Save," – and it will save it there with the same file name. The original file, without your changes, will still be in the original folder.

You can change the NAME of your file just by typing the new name in the File Name box toward the bottom of the window -- check to see that the FOLDER is where you want the file to be saved -- you can change it if you wish or keep the same folder. Your old unchanged file is still there, but your new changed file (document) is also there with the new name.

You can change the FILE TYPE of your file. At the bottom of the window, you will see the "Save as file type:" box. Hit the little arrowhead at the far right of that box to see a list of the different file types. Click on the one you want, then click "Save." You have now saved your file as that file type. Note that you do NOT have to change the text name of the file. You will have created a new file with a different name because the file type is an extension and part of the actual file name. For example, if I have a Word document file named "Letter to Sam," the file extension is ".docx." So if I open that document, make changes to it (or change nothing), and click on "Save As" at the bottom of the window, I can click on the arrowhead in the "Save as file type:" box at the right and select another file type, such as ".pdf." It will save that file in the same folder with the same file name EXCEPT it will be a ".pdf" file, not a ".docx" file type. So it will be "Letter to Sam.pdf" instead of "Letter to Sam.docx." Of course, my original file (document) is still there and unchanged.

There are more "Save As" options, and they can be different with different apps. But my advice is always to use "Save As," which allows you to check and see that everything is what you want. After all, you want to "save your as"!

