Choosing and Using a Desktop Printer

What to look for when shopping for one and how to make the best uses of the one you have

Introduction: Today's Reality

- With the trend toward "paperless," more and more aspects of life are going online
  - Bill paying
  - Shopping and banking
  - Newspapers and magazines
  - Tickets and boarding passes
  - Websites like **MyErickson** and **myPGCC**
- But there are still situations where paper is required or nice-to-have
- Consider: Riderwood provides printers in the VSQ computer lab and "media lounges" for residents to use
- If you want to buy your own, there are several factors to look at

Part 1: Choosing

We’ve Come a Long Way

Then



Now



Features Available Today

- Multi-function device
  - Prints pages
  - Scans documents
  - Sends and receives faxes (requires a phone line)
- “Just print”
  - Laser vs. ink-jet
  - Color vs. black-and-white only
  - Other features
    - Envelope printing
    - Double-sided printing
    - Automatic document feeder
    - Print from phone
- Cost is directly related to print speed and features installed

Considerations When Shopping for a Printer

- What features do you really need?
- How important is cost?
  - The more features the printer has, and the faster the speed, the higher the cost
- Look at the devices sold by the major manufacturers
  - Brother
  - Canon
  - Epson
  - H-P
  - Lexmark
- Keep in mind that manufacturers make a profit on selling supplies, not on the printer itself

Attachment Options

- Directly to your computer via USB cable
  - Limits you to printing from one device
  - More secure – no one else has access
  - Not all models have USB connections
- Via wi-fi
  - Can access printer from anywhere in the RWV-Resident network
  - Enables you to print from multiple PCs
  - Some models offer this as the only option
  - Potentially problematic: Riderwood residents have occasionally experienced issues with wi-fi connected printers

Laser vs. Ink Jet

- Ink-jet cartridge technology is the basis of most printers sold for home use
- Laser printers are usually larger, faster, and more expensive
  - In addition to HP, Brother, and Canon, laser printers are also available from “laser-only” vendors Lexmark and Xerox
  - They are marketed as having better print quality
  - More suitable for work groups and small businesses
  - The printer in the VSQ computer lab is a laser printer

Sources of Information

- Washington Post article from July, 2023: https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/07/10/printer-home-hacks-tips/

- NY Times “Wirecutter” recommendations in August 2024:

https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-home-printers/

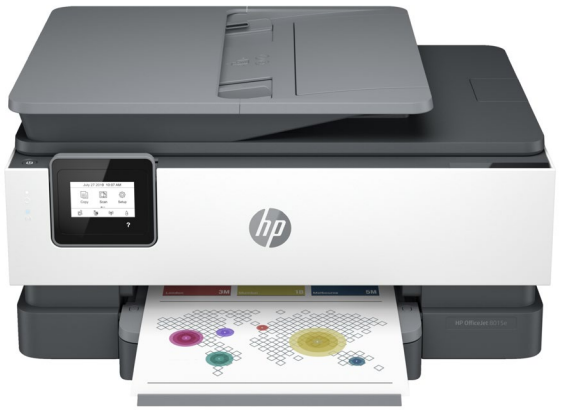
- PC magazine from April, 2024:

https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-laser-printers

https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-inkjet-printers

Recommendations from Erickson I.T.

HP 8015e



- Print, copy, scan
- 18 pages per minute b&w, 10 ppm color
- Wi-fi attachment only
- $99.99

HP 9125e



- Print, copy, scan, fax
- Automatic 2-sided print
- 22 pages per minute b&w, 18 ppm color
- Attach via wi-fi or local cable
- $209.99

Considerations With H-P Printers

- H-P is now offering a *rental* option as an alternative to *purchase*
- Look carefully at “Instant Ink”
  - It’s a monthly contract, with costs ranging from $1.49/month (“up to 10 pages/month”) to $27.99/month (“up to 700 pages/month”)
  - Pages beyond the contract cost extra
  - Printer must be attached via wi-fi so H-P can monitor its use
  - H-P sends ink cartridges based on need (customers do not order directly)
  - H-P claims that these cartridges cost about half as much as comparable ones bought in stores
  - *The instant ink cartridges can **not** be used in printers of the same model that are not enrolled in the instant ink program*
  - *Unused cartridges can **not** be returned for a refund*

Part 2: Using

Software Basics

- Just as you need an operating system to make your computer work, you need a “driver” to make a device work
- Each device (printer, scanner, etc.) has a driver provided by the device’s manufacturer
- You can download the driver from the manufacturer’s website
- The specific driver needed may depend on your computer (e.g. Windows or Apple) and the version of its operating system
- When you buy a new printer, it will come with instructions on how to download the supporting software

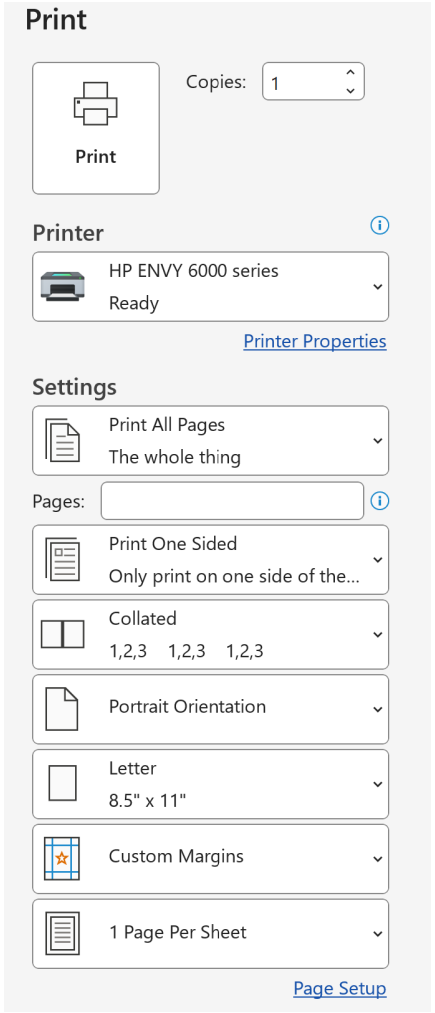
Setting Up Your Printer

- Think carefully about whether to attach your printer via wi-fi or a cable directly to your computer
  - The cable required to attach a printer directly is usually not provided by the printer manufacturer, but one can often be obtained from another resident or purchased for around ten dollars
  - Wi-fi attachment will let you print from other devices on the RWV-Resident network
  - Residents who attached their printers via wi-fi have occasionally seen output from other users appear on their printer
- Remember that a phone line is required to send and receive faxes

What Happens When You Click "Print"

- OK, now your printer is up and running. How do you use it?
- You can print a file, a document, or a webpage in several ways
  - Via **File > Print** from an app like Microsoft Office or Acrobat Reader
  - By clicking the **Print**  icon from a webpage
  - Via **ctrl-P** on Windows or **cmd-P** on a Mac
- The print dialog window that opens has two components:
  - The options available with the currently open application
  - The options available with the specific printer selected
- The application-related options may vary depending on the version of your operating system and the application itself

Example Print Dialog in Microsoft Word in Windows 11

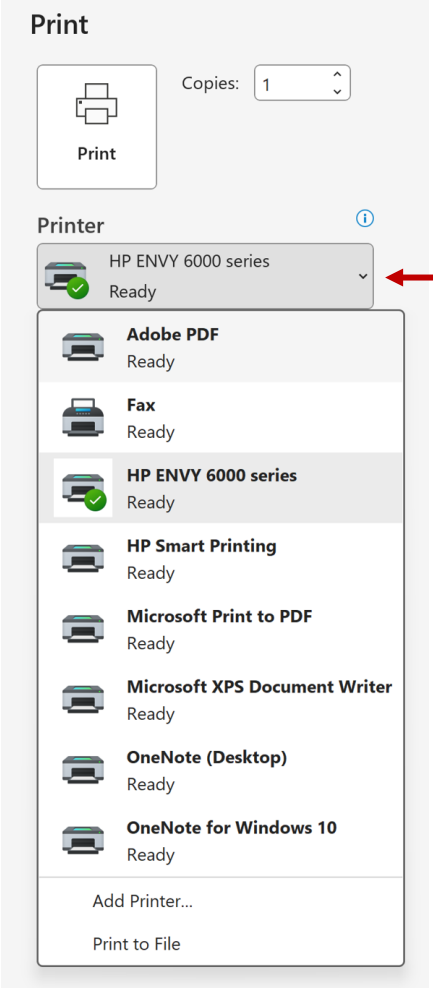


This is the screen that appears when you click **File > Print**

Here you select the output device you want to use and you also provide some basic information:

- How many copies
- Which pages to print
- Other device-dependent features

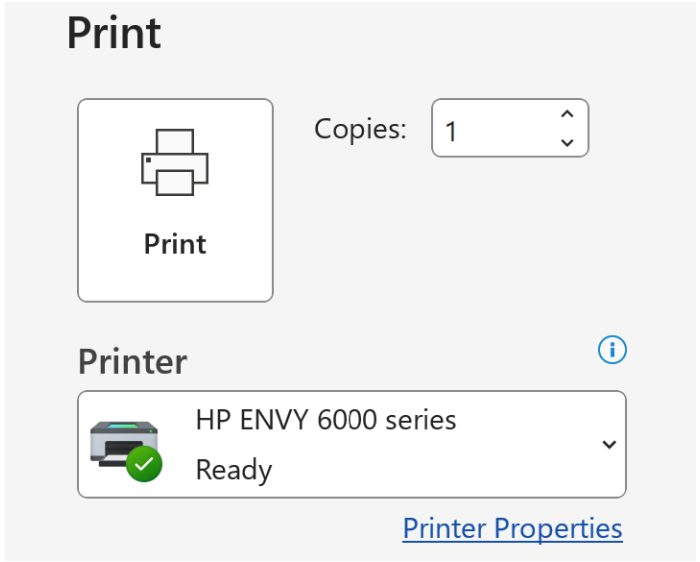
Choosing the Output Destination



Click the down arrow next to the **Printer** box to see the types of output available

You can “Print” a Word document to convert it to a PDF or a file in another Microsoft format such as XPS or OneNote

Options for Selected Destination



Every output destination will have an associated set of **Properties**

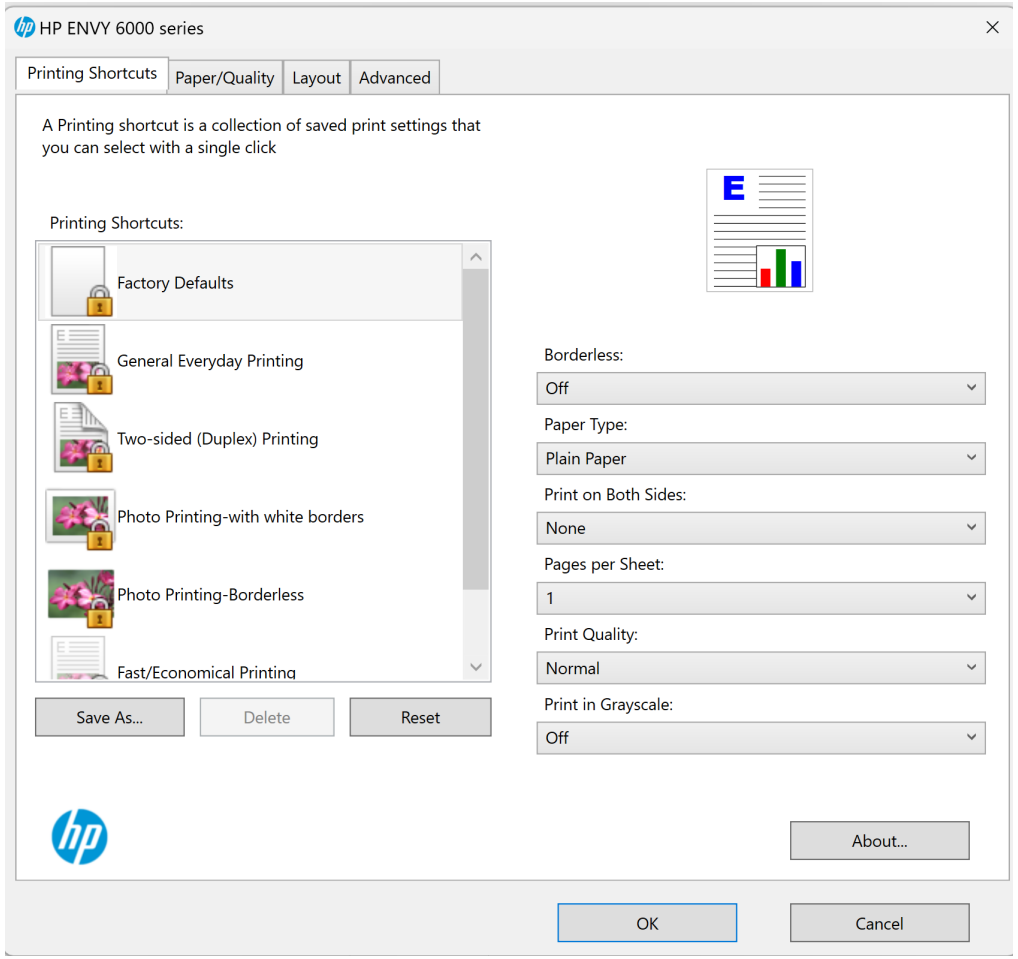
An Example: More details of the Options Available with one Printer

- Just as different software applications will provide print options tailored to their application goals, a printer driver will provide options that support the features of that specific printer
- Many of the **Printer Properties** options are the same as the **Print** options for a specific application
- This is yet another area where no two users will have an identical set of options!
- The following slides show the options provided with an HP6055e
- Look at your printer dialog and see what's available to you!

Printer-Specific Properties

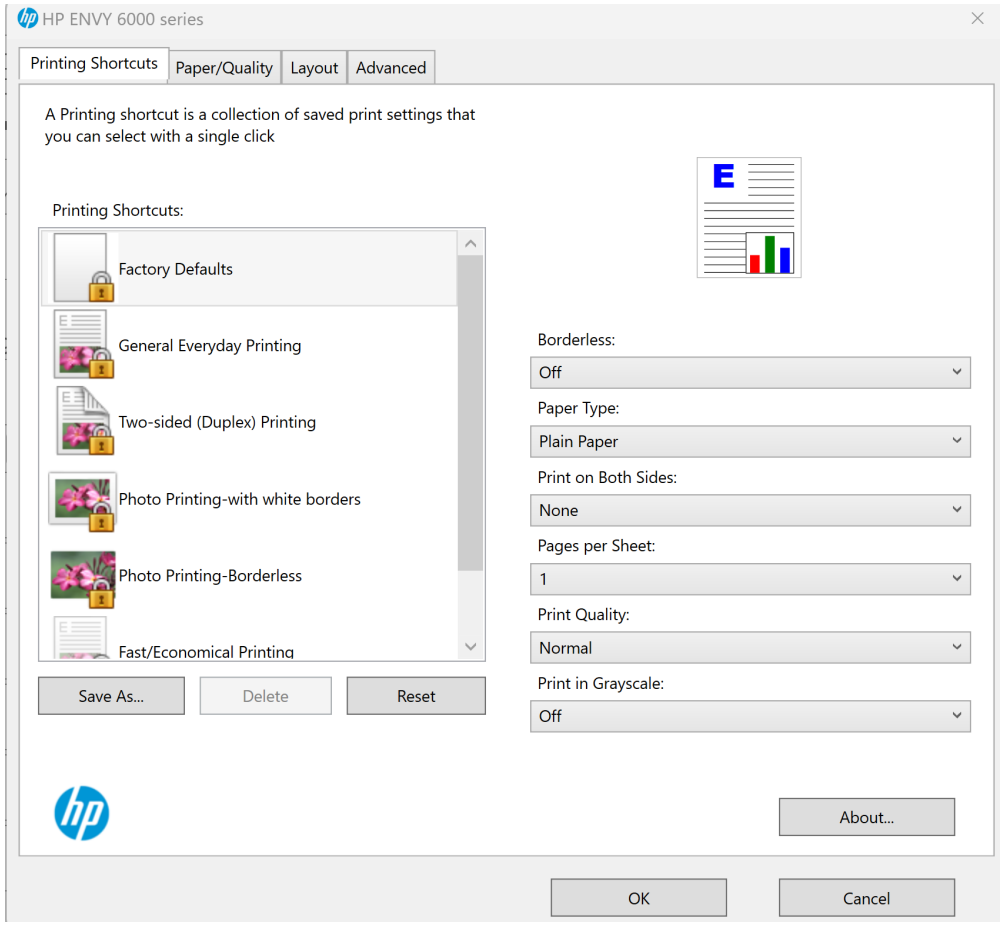


Click on **Printer Properties** to open the dialog box specific to the printer selected



Properties for an HP 6055e

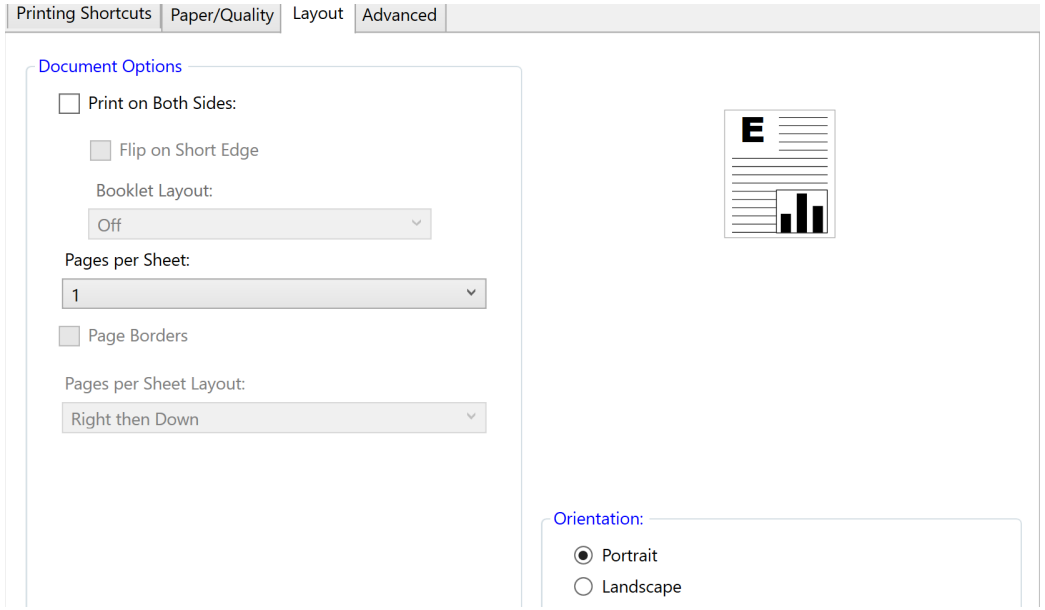
The **Properties** window has multiple tabs



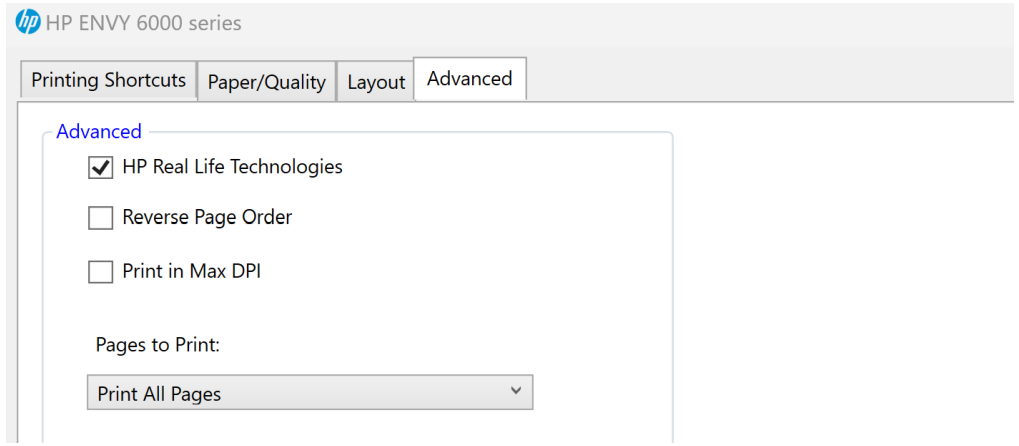
The first tab summarizes many of the options on the other tabs

- One useful option is to select whether or not to print in color
- Another is to print multiple pages per sheet

Printer-Specific Properties – Continued

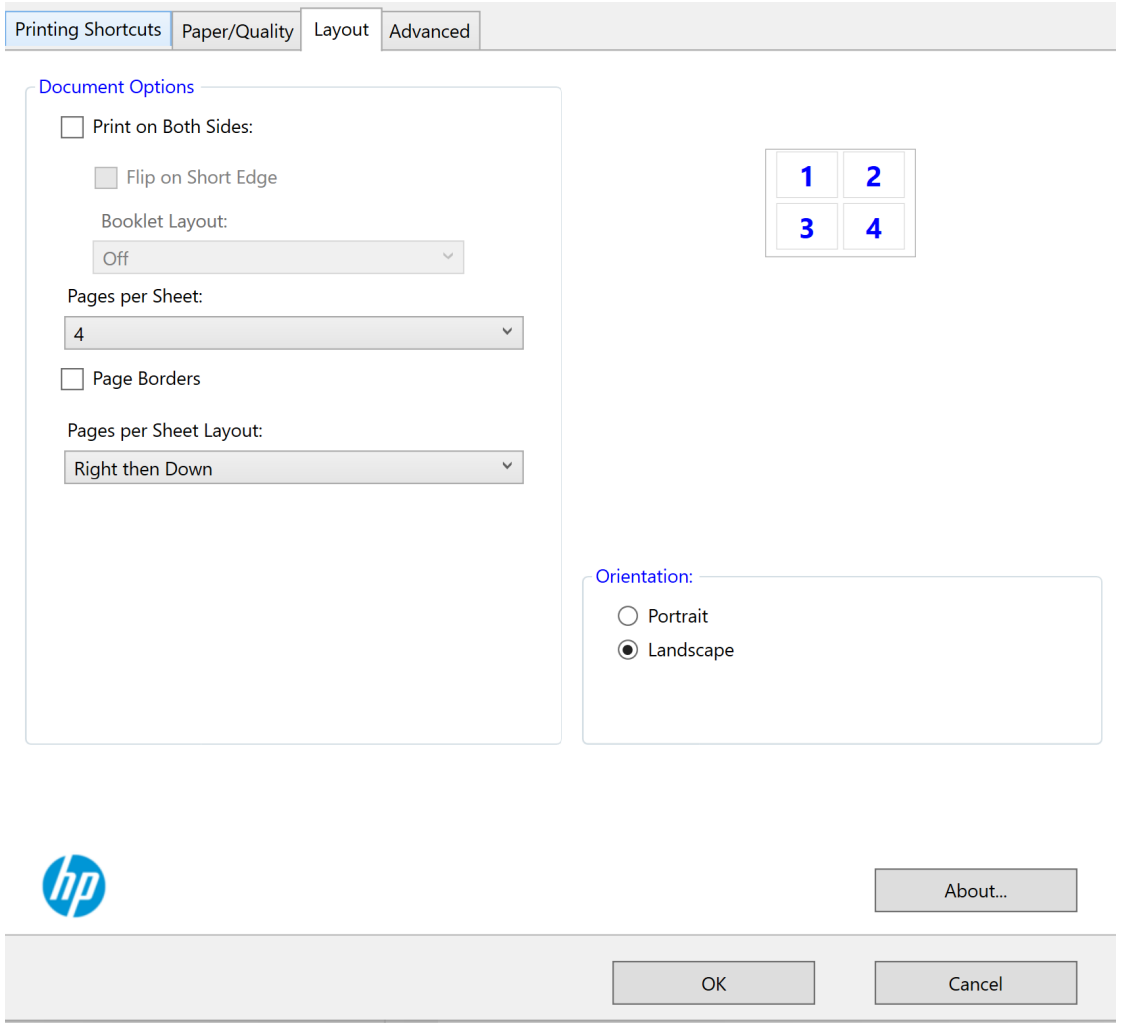


The **Layout** tab lets you print multiple pages per sheet and specify where they go on the paper



In the **Advanced** tab, you can have the pages printed in reverse order

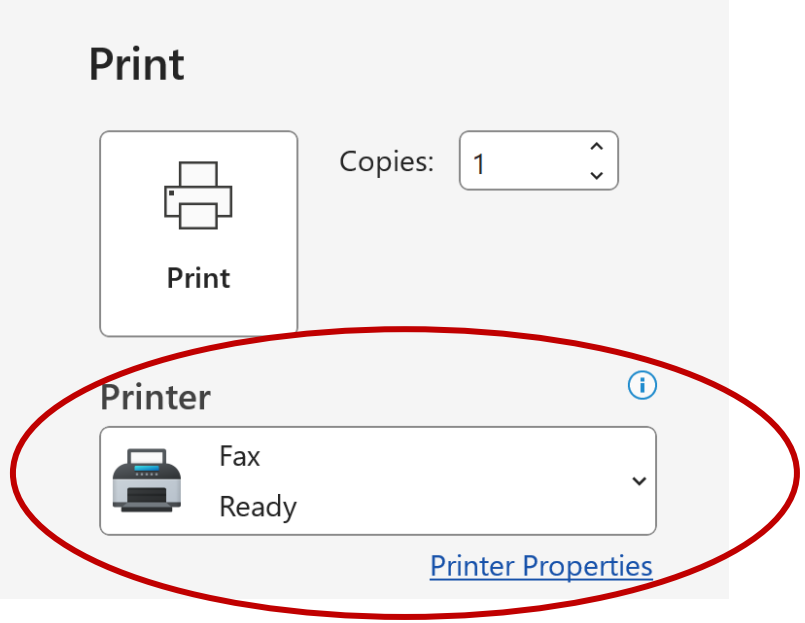
A Useful Option in *Layout*

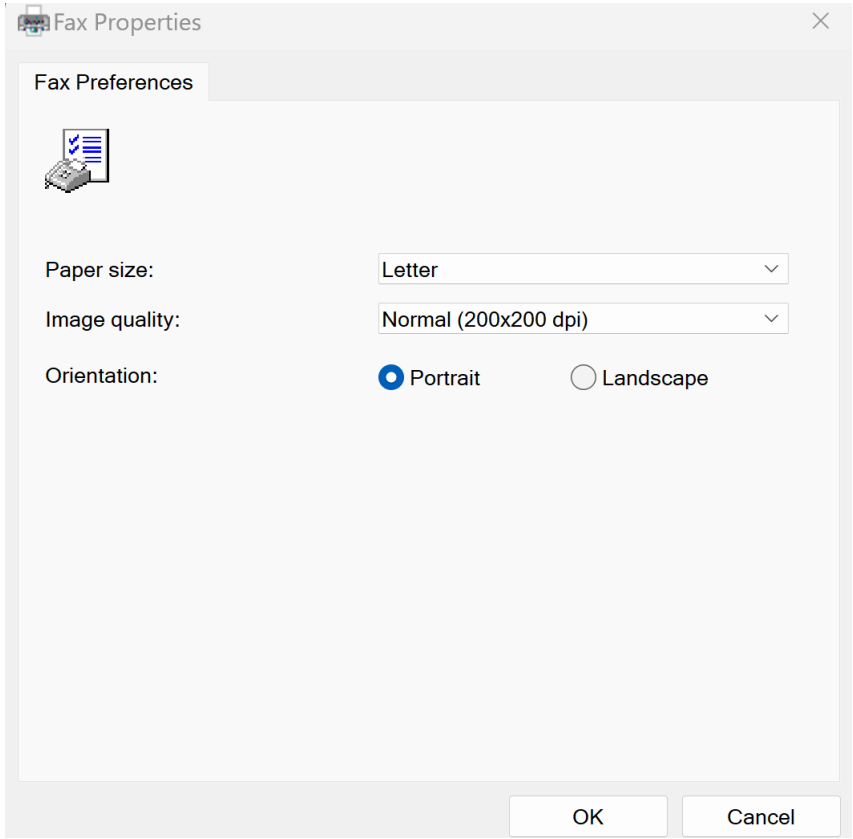


You can print multiple pages per sheet, specify order of pages, and choose landscape or portrait orientation

The screen gives you a preview of where the pages will appear on the sheet

Options for Other Output Formats

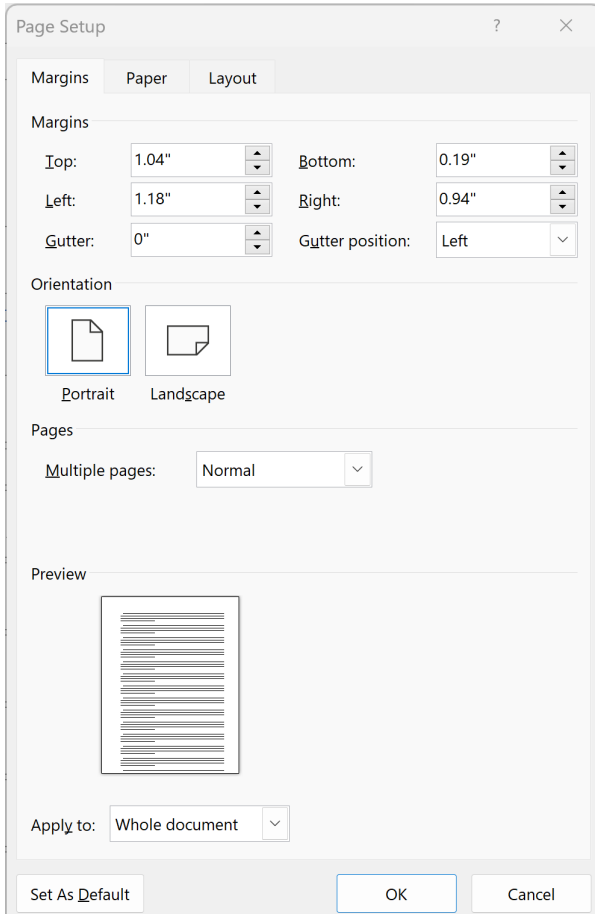


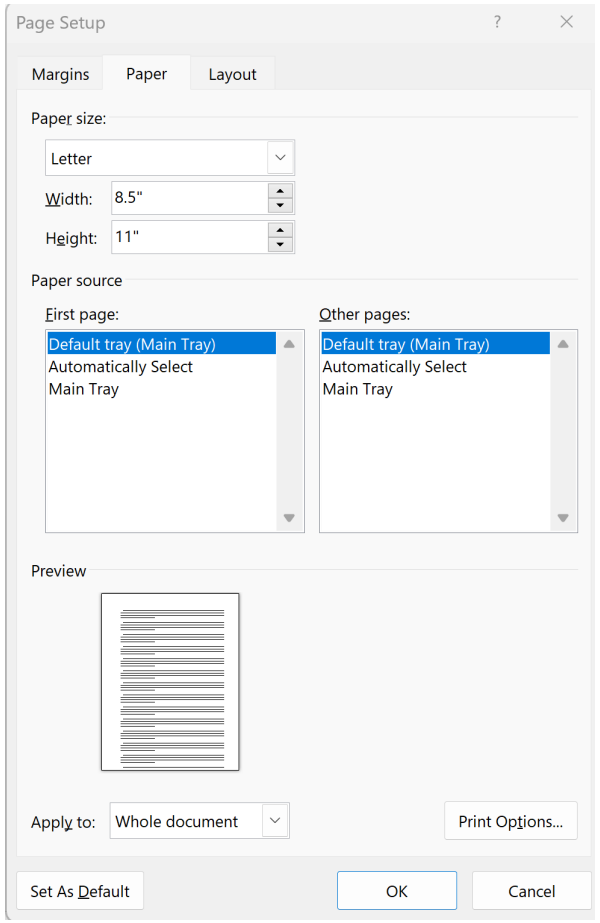


Page Setup contains Word's options

The first two tabs, **Margins** and **Paper**, provide many of the same options as are found in **Printer Properties**

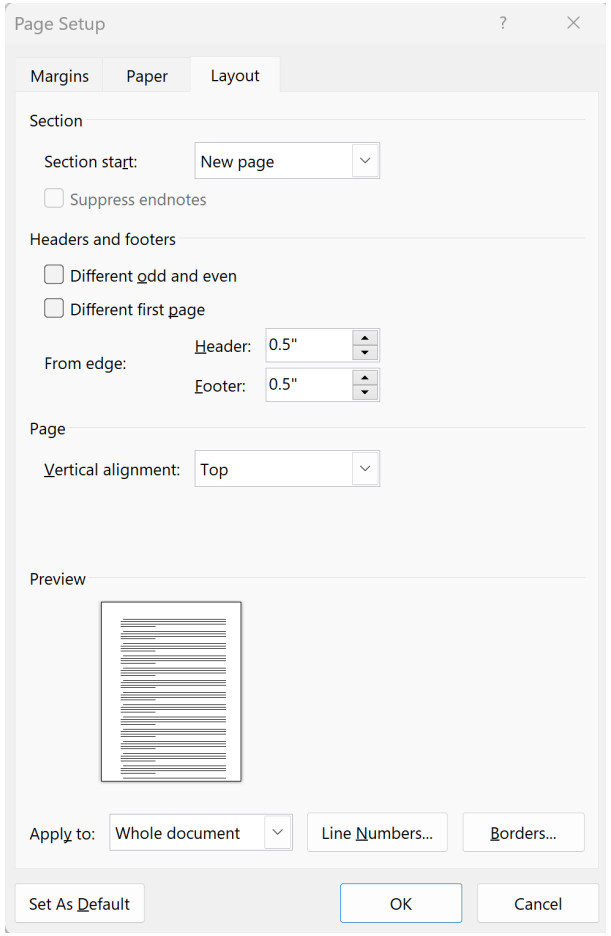
You can see a thumbnail **Preview** of each option

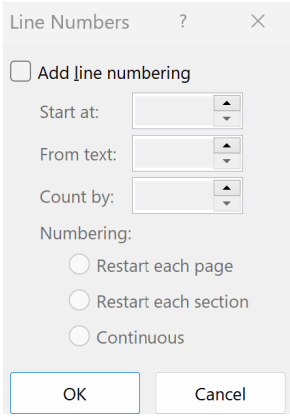


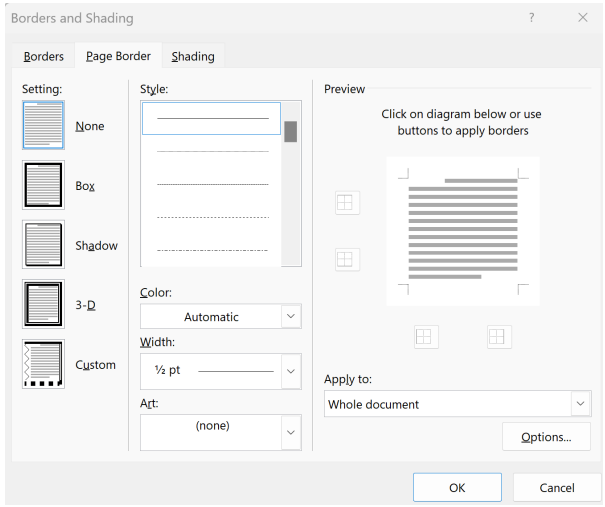


The Third tab in Page Setup

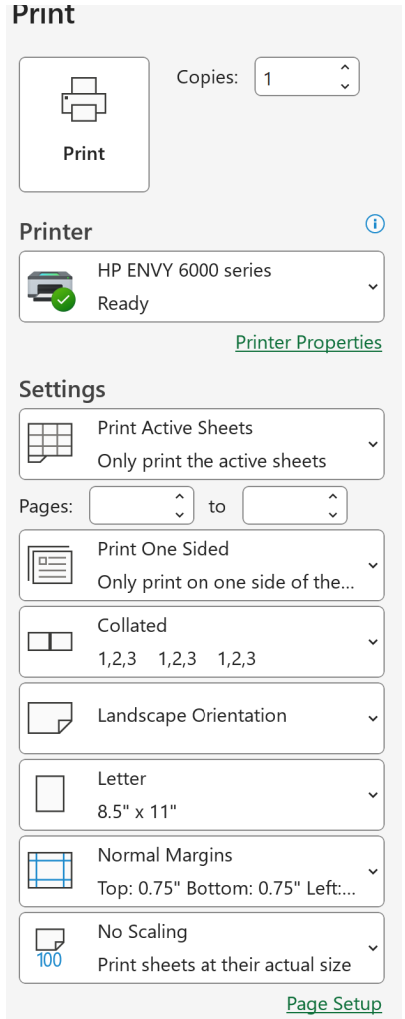
The **Layout** tab lets you add line numbers to the document and also include borders and shading







Example Print Dialog in Microsoft Excel in Windows 11

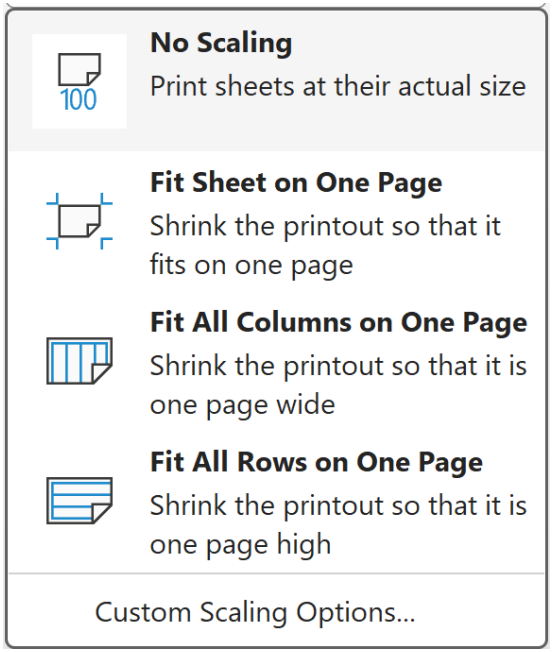


This is the screen that appears when you click **File > Print**

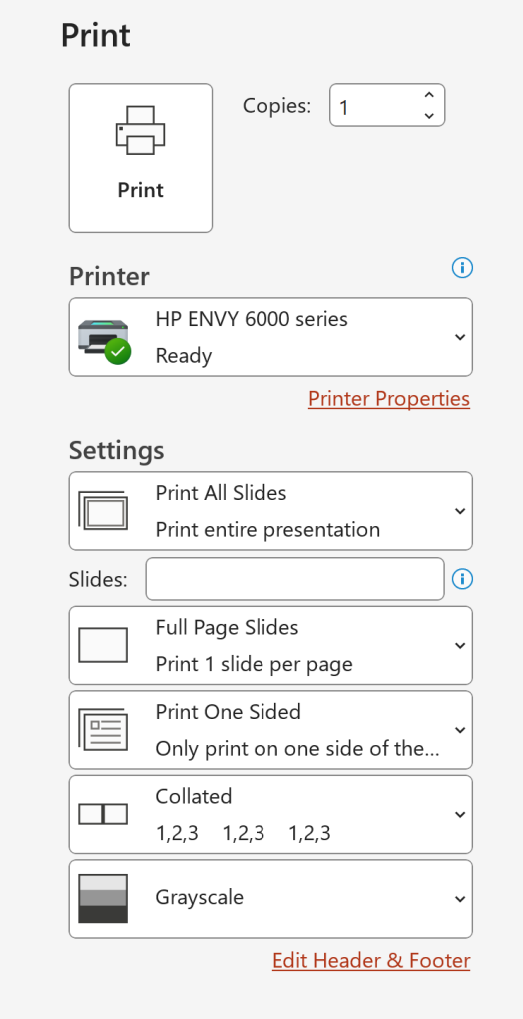
Note the differences from the Print screen in Word:

← Only print active sheets

← Scaling options



Example Print Dialog in PowerPoint in Windows 11

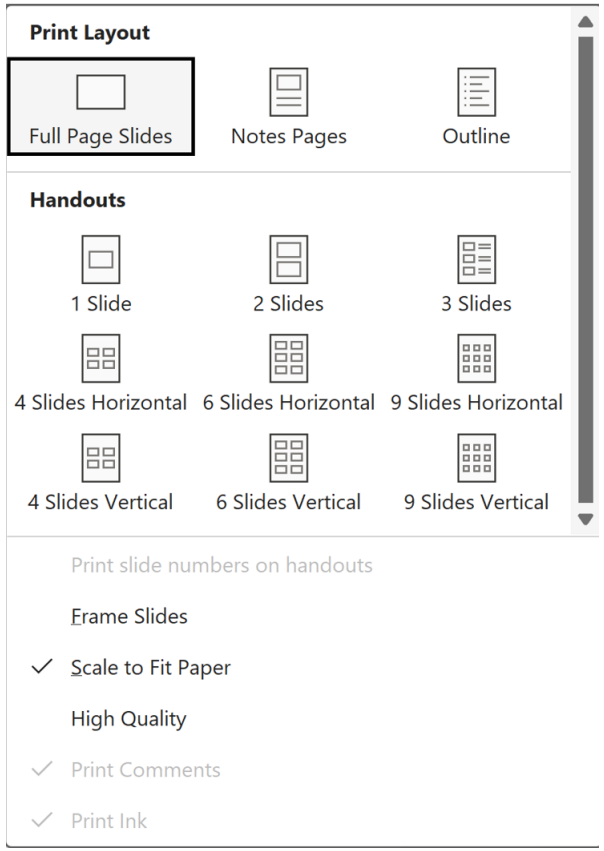


PowerPoint has some unique options

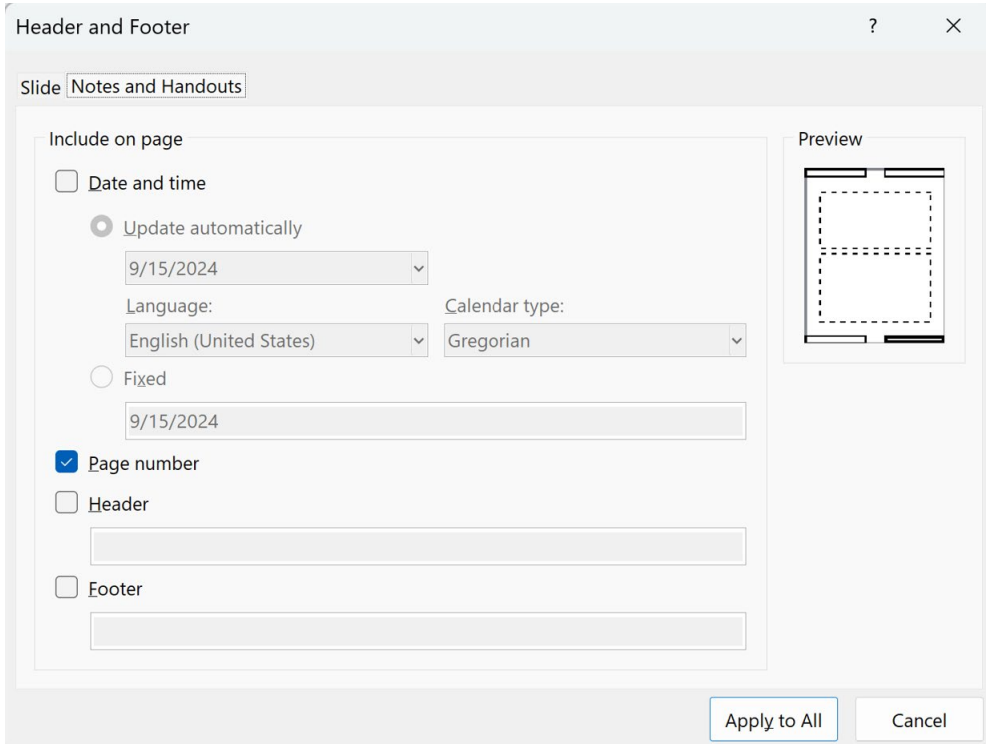
- Printing slides only
- Printing slides and notes pages
- Printing multiple slides per page as handouts, with spaces to write in

Combining these with printer-related options can produce a wide variety of results

Options Unique to PowerPoint in Windows 11

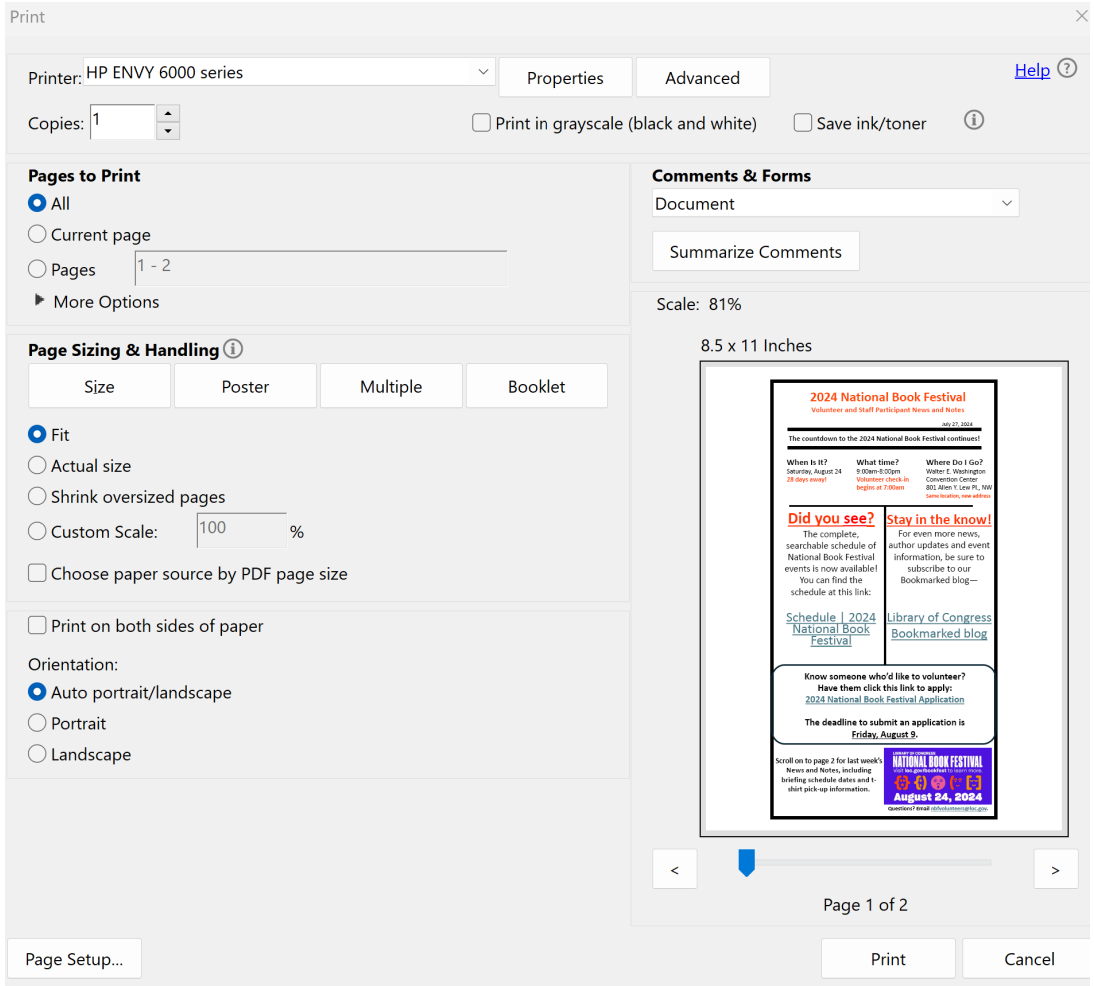


Print from one to nine slides per page



Add or remove date and page number and add header or footer

Example Print Dialog in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) in Windows 11

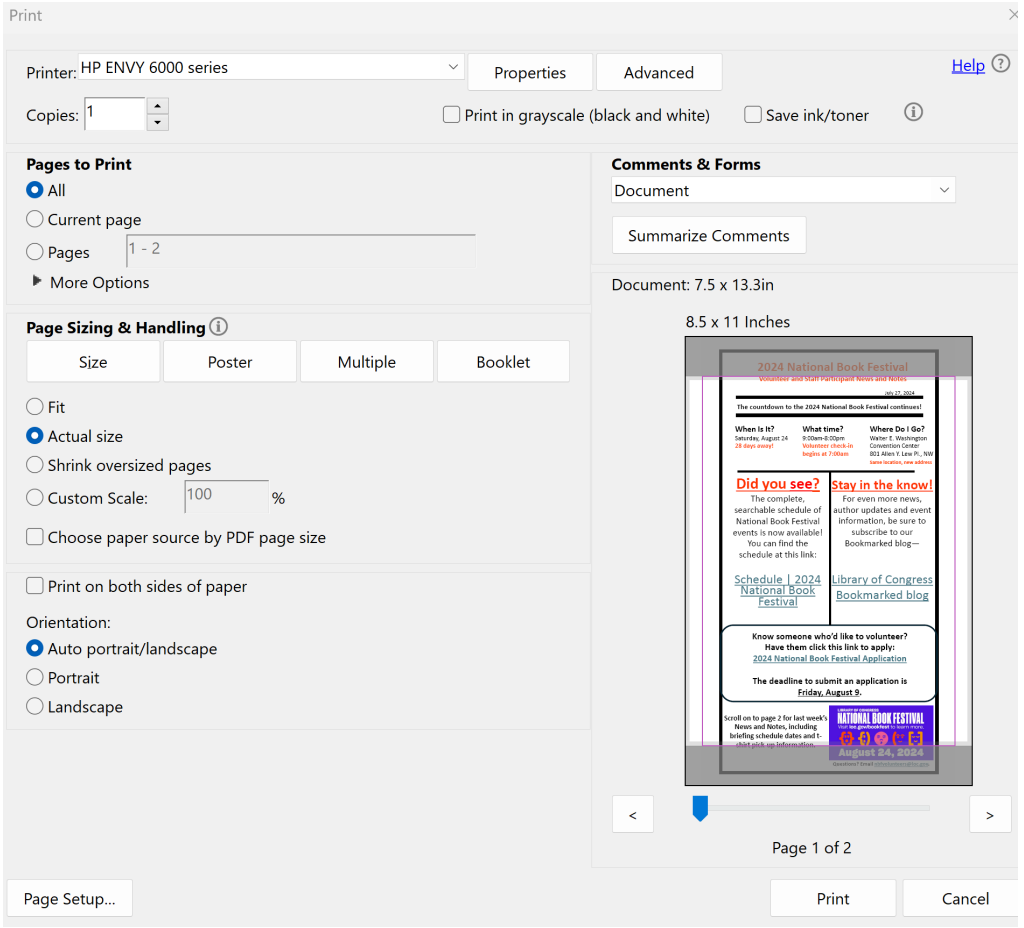


Here you select the output device you want to use and you also provide some basic information:

- How many copies
- Which pages to print
- Specific information about how to format the printout

Here’s a Quirk when Printing a PDF

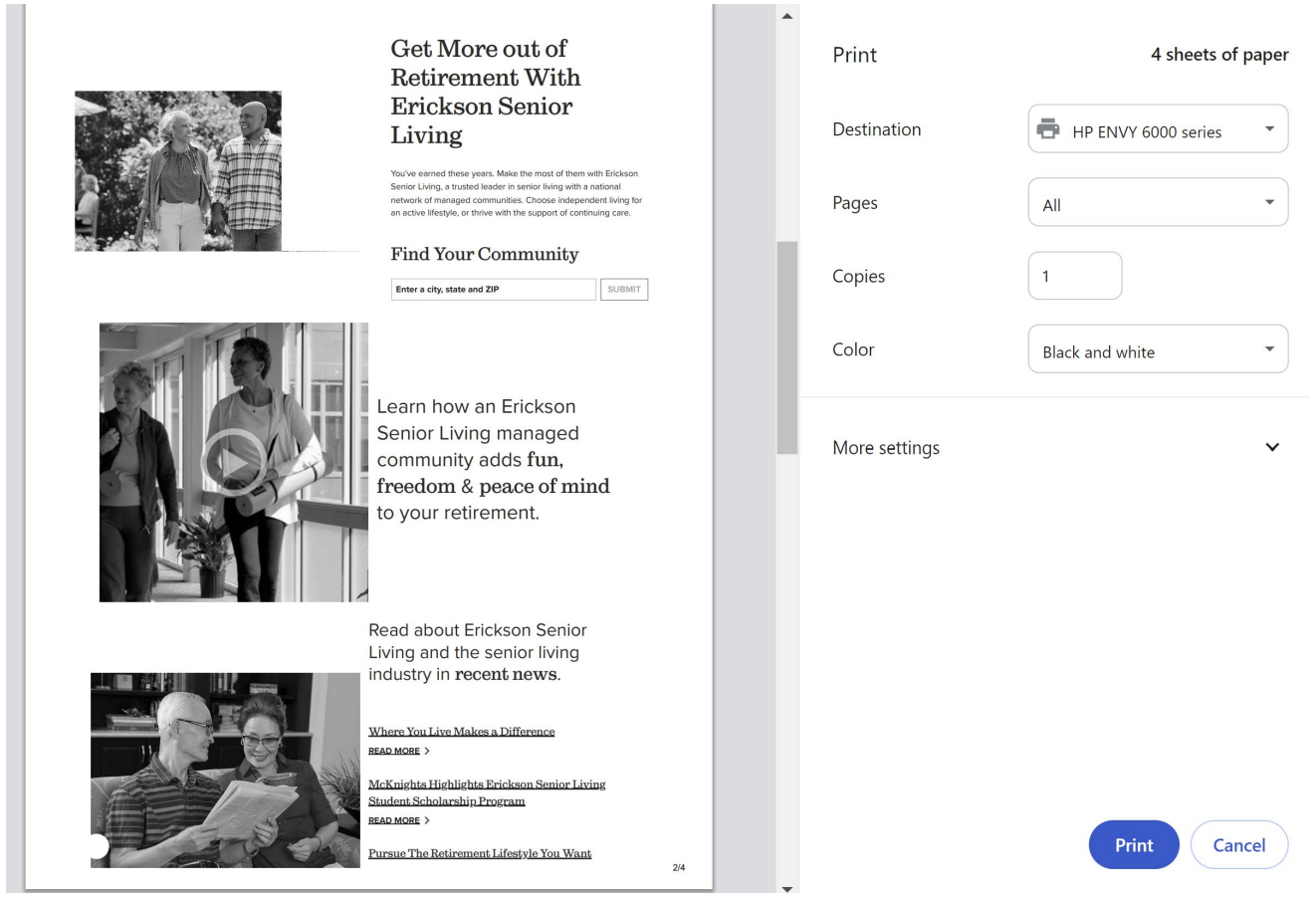
- Double-check your selections for **Page** Size vs. the size of the document to be printed
- It is possible that not all of the information on the page will show up in the printed output
- Gray shading will appear on the preview, showing any area that will not be printed



Printing from the Internet

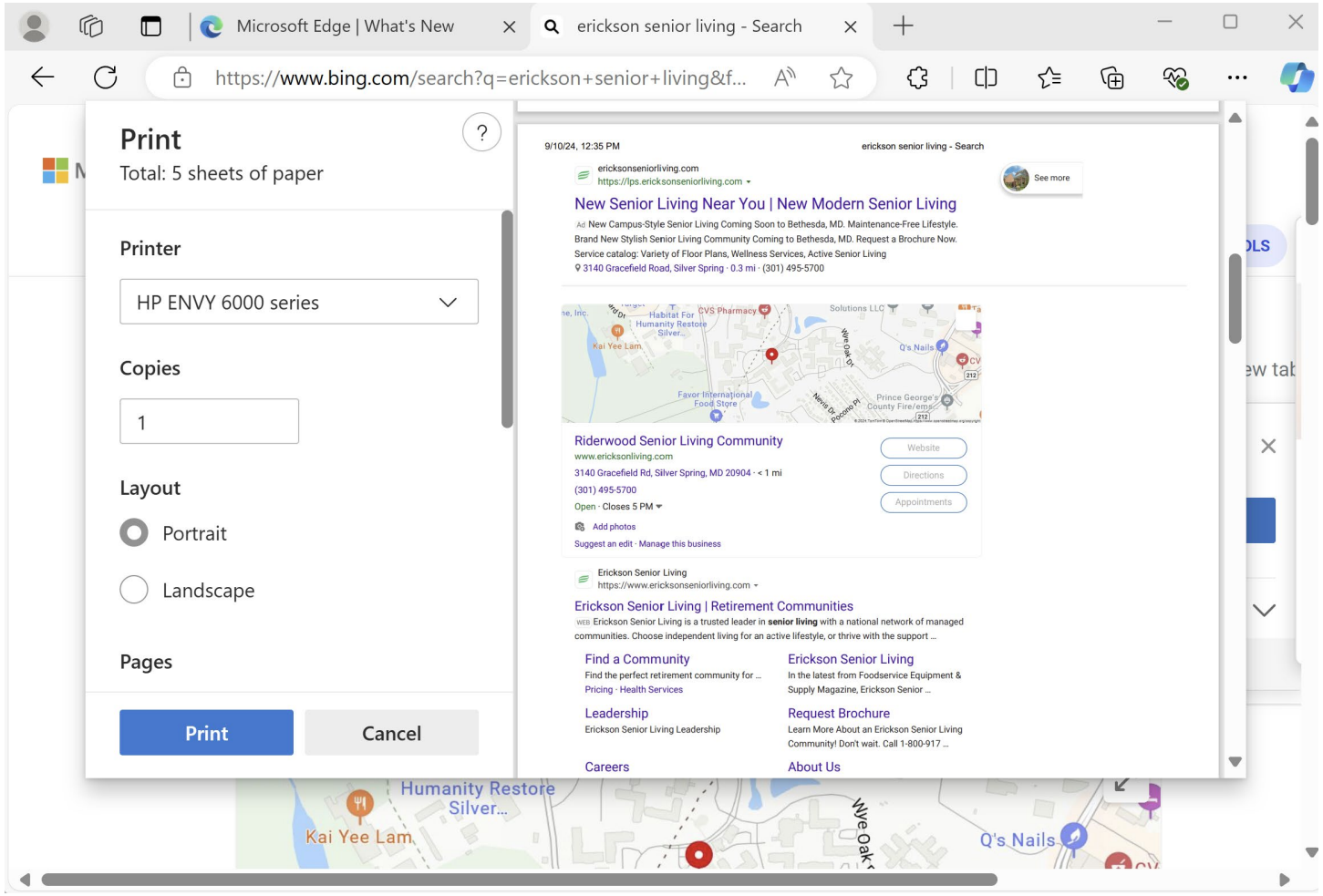
- All Web browsers provide the ability to print the current page
- In Chrome, click the ⋮ icon at the top right of the window and then select **Print…**
- In Firefox, click the ≡ icon at the top right of the window and then select **Print…**
- In Edge, click the ··· icon at the top right of the window and then select **Print…**
- In Safari, click **File** at the top left of the window and then select **Print**
- Remember that the current web page may extend well below what you see on the screen! Printing it all may require several sheets of paper. (The print dialog box lets you limit this.)

The Print Dialog Box in Chrome and Firefox



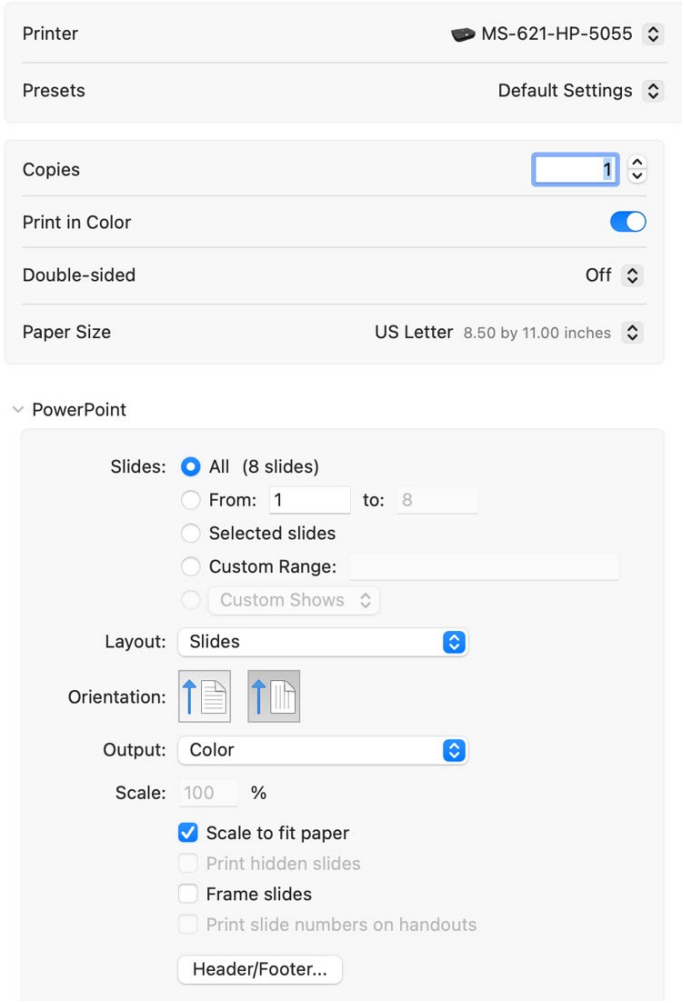
In the dialog, you select a printer (you can even print to PDF!), select the number of copies, specify the pages to print, choose color or black and white, print quality, and more

The Print Dialog Box in Edge



Similar to the dialog in Chrome and Firefox except for the left-and-right panes and the position of the Microsoft output options

The Print Dialog Box in Safari



This dialog box is the same regardless of whether you are printing from an application or printing from a website

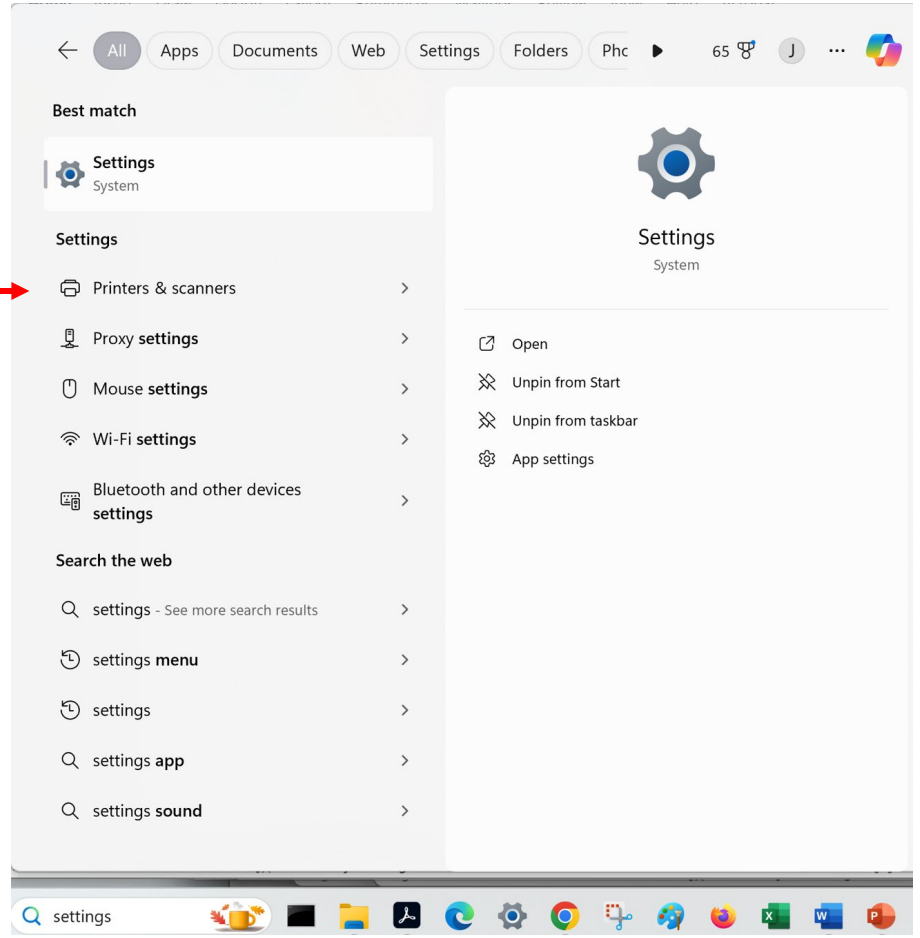
It allows you to select the pages you want to print, the paper size to use, whether or not to print in color, and other options

Troubleshooting

- Look at your printer dialog and see what's available to you!
- The printer dialog is found in **Settings**
  - Click on the Windows logo  or  at the bottom left of your screen
  - On the window that opens, search for **Settings**

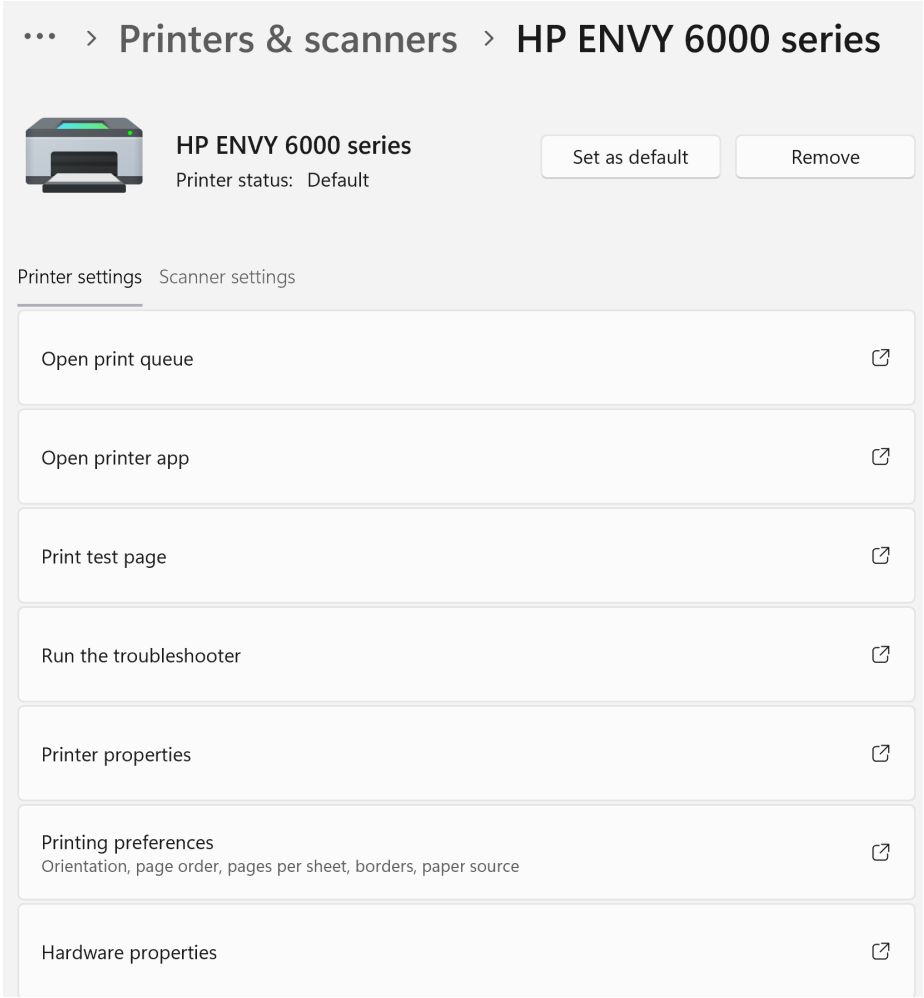
Settings in Windows 11

… then select **Printers & Scanners**



Type **Settings** to open the Settings window…

Sample Print Dialog



The specific dialog will depend on your printer model

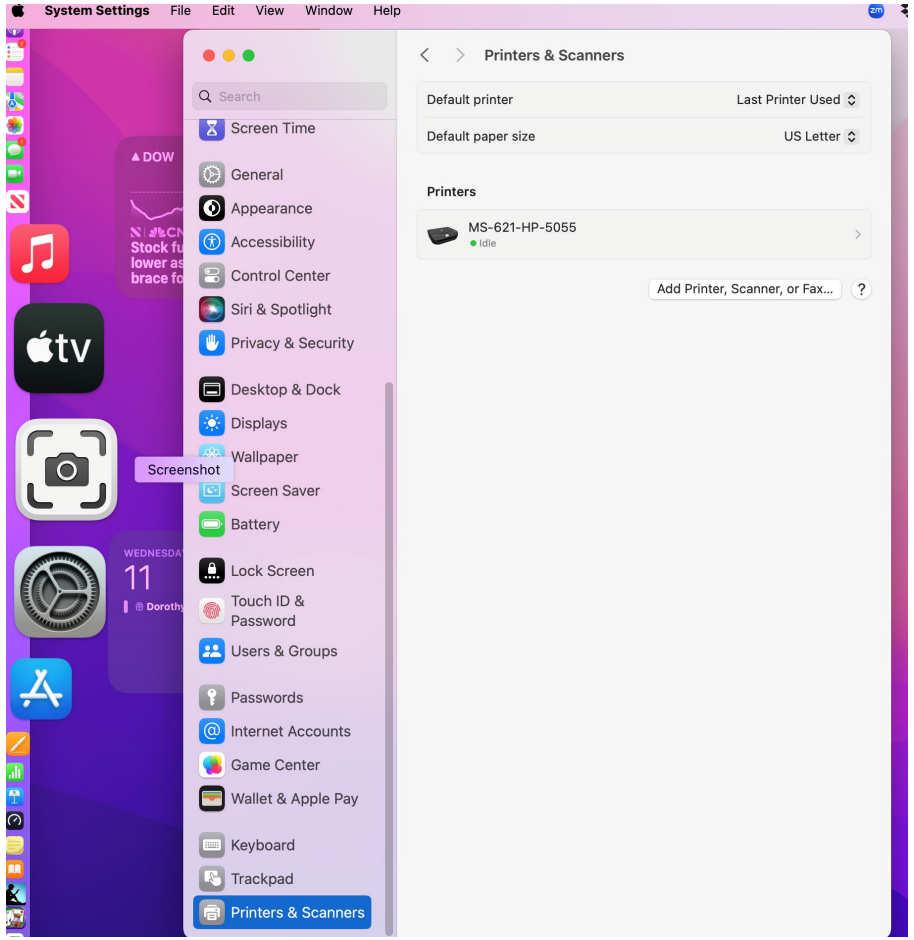
Most dialogs will look like this

The dialogs usually include a ***troubleshooter*** option which can be useful if the device fails to print

Troubleshooting on an Apple device with iOS 15.0

Click on the *Apple*, select **System Settings**, and then select **Printers & Scanners**

Select the desired printer and then use the tabs in the window that opens to see printer information and status



Summary

- Desktop printers come in many models with a variety of features and price points
- Do some research to decide which is best for you
- Each printer comes with its own print driver that supports its hardware features
- Every application has a **Print** option that provides options relevant to that application and shows options available with the selected output device
- Experiment with your printer and your applications to find some options that are useful to you!