



USER GUIDE · VERSION 1.0.0

Every PDF tool, step by step.

The complete guide to PdfForge — the offline PDF toolkit for Windows. Every task explained in numbered steps, with free-plan limits, troubleshooting and FAQ.

Organize

Convert

OCR · English & العربية

Compress

Protect & redact

Sign

Forms

Batch

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CHAPTER 01

Welcome to PdfForge

PdfForge is an all-in-one PDF toolkit for Windows. Every tool runs on your own computer — your documents are never uploaded anywhere.

What you can do with PdfForge

Area	Tools
Organize	Page editor (reorder, rotate, delete), merge, split, extract pages, reverse, duplicate, insert a PDF, replace a page
Page tools	Insert blank pages, resize pages, crop margins, remove blank pages
Layout	N-up (several pages per sheet), booklet
Convert	PDF to PNG/JPEG images, images to PDF
OCR	Scanned PDF to searchable PDF — English and Arabic
Optimize	Compress, compact (lossless), grayscale, strip metadata
Protect	Add / change / remove password (AES-256), permissions, area redaction
Search & redact	Search text, redact every match
Sign	Digital signature with your own certificate
Forms	Fill, flatten, create fields, CSV mail merge, CSV/FDF export, FDF import
Annotate	Watermark, page numbers / headers / footers, image stamp, markup
Extract	Text, images, attachments
Document info	Metadata, bookmarks, table of contents page
Compare	Text comparison, visual comparison
Batch	Run one action on many PDFs at once

Your privacy

- **Everything is processed locally.** PdfForge has no cloud processing. Files never leave your PC.
- **Your original file is never changed.** Every tool writes its result to a new file that you name and place yourself.
- **Internet is only used to activate and re-check a Premium license** — never to send documents.

What PdfForge does not do

To keep expectations clear: PdfForge works **on** PDF files. It does not convert PDF to Word, Excel or PowerPoint, it does not rewrite the existing text inside a PDF, and it does not create PDF/A archive files.

How this guide is organised

Chapters 2–4 cover installation, the free plan and activation. Chapters 5–20 describe every tool as a short task: **what it does**, **numbered steps**, a **tip**, and the **free-plan limit**. Chapter 21 is troubleshooting and chapter 22 answers the most common questions.

CHAPTER 02

Installing & getting started

Install PdfForge, learn the layout of the app, and understand how every tool works.

System requirements

Item	Requirement
Operating system	Windows 10 or Windows 11, 64-bit
Memory	4 GB RAM minimum, 8 GB recommended for OCR and large files
Disk space	About 300 MB for the app and OCR languages
Internet	Only to download the installer and to activate Premium

Install PdfForge

Installs PdfForge and adds it to the Start menu.

- 1 Download the installer from mes-dev.com/apps/pdfforge (or install it from the Microsoft Store).
- 2 Double-click the downloaded file.
- 3 If Windows shows **"Windows protected your PC"**, click **More info** → **Run anyway**. This appears for new apps until Windows has seen enough downloads.
- 4 Follow the installer and click **Finish**.
- 5 Start **PdfForge** from the Start menu.

Tip If your antivirus pauses the first OCR run for a scan, let it finish. PdfForge warms up its OCR engine at start-up so this normally happens only once.

The main window

- **Sidebar (left):** one entry per tool group — Organize, Convert, OCR, Optimize, Protect, Sign, Forms, Batch and more. **Settings** is at the bottom.
- **Home dashboard:** large cards that open each tool group.
- **Tool hub:** groups that contain several tools (for example Page Tools or Forms) first show a hub of large cards. Click a card to open that tool; click **Back** to return to the hub.
- **Free plan banner:** on the free plan, each tool screen shows a gold-bordered card listing its limit and how many free runs are left today and this month. It disappears with Premium.

How every tool works

All tools follow the same three steps, so once you know one, you know them all:

- **1 — Choose the file(s).** Click the file area and pick your PDF (or several PDFs for Merge and Batch). PdfForge shows the page count and thumbnails.
- **2 — Set the options.** Page ranges, quality, password, position, and so on.
- **3 — Run and save.** Click the action button and choose where to save the new file. A green message confirms the result and shows where it was saved.

Page numbers start at 1. Wherever you type pages, you can use single pages and ranges separated by commas, for example **1-3, 5, 8-10**.

Password-protected PDFs: if a PDF needs a password to open, first remove it in **Protect → Password → Remove password** (free and unlimited), then use the unlocked copy in other tools.

CHAPTER 03

Free plan & Premium

Try every tool for free on small documents. Premium, a one-time purchase, removes every limit.

How the free plan works

- **Clean output.** Free results are never watermarked or blurred.
- **Size limits** are checked before any work starts. If a file is too large you see the upgrade window and nothing is half-processed.
- **Partial tools** (OCR, PDF → images, Extract text, Extract images) process the allowed pages and leave the rest exactly as they were.
- **Analyse free, save with Premium:** Compress, Compact, Grayscale and Remove blank pages show you the full before/after result for any file. Saving is free up to 3 pages.
- **Daily and monthly limits** are counted per tool — using Merge does not use up Split. Only successful runs are counted. Daily limits reset at midnight, monthly limits on the 1st.
- **Batch** uses only its own limit, not the limits of the individual tools.

Free-plan limits by tool

Tool	Free plan	Free runs
Open, view, thumbnails, page count	Unlimited	—
View metadata, bookmarks, form fields	Unlimited	—
Search text	Unlimited	—
Remove a password (with the correct password)	Unlimited	—
Check a signing certificate	Unlimited	—
Page editor (reorder, rotate, delete)	Saves the first 3 pages	—
Reverse order	Documents up to 2 pages	—
Duplicate pages	Documents up to 3 pages, 1 page per run	—
Extract pages	Up to 2 pages per run	1 / day · 5 / month
Split	Documents up to 5 pages, 2 parts	1 / day · 5 / month
Merge	Up to 3 files, 5 pages in total	1 / day · 5 / month

PDF → images	1 file, first 3 pages	1 / day · 5 / month
Images → PDF	Up to 5 images	1 / day · 5 / month
Extract images	1 file, first 3 pages	1 / day · 5 / month
Extract text	First 3 pages	—
Edit metadata	Documents up to 5 pages	—
Add / change password	Documents up to 3 pages	—
CSV / FDF export of form data	Forms up to 3 pages	—
Compress, Compact, Grayscale, Remove blank pages	Analyse any file free; save up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Watermark, page numbers, image stamp	Documents up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Markup	Up to 3 pages, 5 annotations	1 / day · 3 / month
Crop, resize, strip metadata, permissions	Documents up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Insert blank pages	Up to 3 pages, 1 blank page	1 / day · 3 / month
Insert PDF, replace page	Both files up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
N-up, booklet	Documents up to 4 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Bookmarks, table of contents	Up to 3 pages, 3 entries	1 / day · 3 / month
Extract attachments	First attachment only	1 / day · 3 / month
Compare (text or visual)	Each document up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Fill form, flatten form, FDF import	Documents up to 3 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Create form fields	Up to 3 pages, 3 fields	1 / day · 3 / month
Mail merge	Forms up to 3 pages, first 2 rows	1 / day · 3 / month
OCR	10% of each file's pages (min 1, max 10)	1 / day · 3 / month
Redaction (area or search)	Documents up to 2 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Digital signature	Documents up to 2 pages	1 / day · 3 / month
Batch	2 files per batch, each within its tool's limit	1 / day · 3 / month

Premium removes all of these limits: any number of pages and files, and no daily or monthly limits.

Free-plan counters are tied to your PC. Setting the Windows clock back, or editing PdfForge's files, locks the counted tools until the date is correct or until next month.

CHAPTER 04

Activating Premium

Premium is a one-time purchase for a lifetime license. No subscription and no account are needed.

Buy and activate Premium

Unlocks every tool with no limits.

- 1 Buy PdfForge Premium on mes-dev.com/apps/pdfforge (or click **Upgrade to Premium** in the app).
- 2 Your license key is emailed to you straight after payment. Keep this email.
- 3 In PdfForge, open **Settings** (bottom of the sidebar).
- 4 Paste the key into the **License** box and click **Activate**. Your PC must be online for this step.
- 5 The status changes to **Premium** and all free-plan banners disappear.

Tip Lost your key? Go to mes-dev.com/license/retrieve and enter the email address you used to buy.

Use Premium offline

PdfForge keeps Premium active without internet.

- 1 After activation, you can work fully offline.
- 2 PdfForge re-checks the license quietly when you are online. It stays active offline for up to **30 days** between checks.
- 3 If more than 30 days pass without internet, connect once and open **Settings** — the check runs automatically.

Move Premium to another PC

Frees your license so you can activate it on a new computer.

- 1 On the old PC, open **Settings** → **License** and click **Deactivate**.
- 2 Install PdfForge on the new PC and activate it with the same key.
- 3 If the old PC is no longer available, contact support (chapter 23) with your key.

CHAPTER 05

Organize pages

Rearrange, combine and divide PDF files. Found under **Merge / Split / Pages** and **Page Tools** in the sidebar.

Reorder, rotate and delete pages (page editor)

Shows every page as a thumbnail so you can rearrange the document visually.

- 1 Open **Merge / Split / Pages** and choose the **Page editor**.
- 2 Choose your PDF. All pages appear as thumbnails.
- 3 **Reorder**: drag a thumbnail and drop it at its new position. A gold marker shows where it will land.
- 4 **Rotate**: use the rotate buttons on a thumbnail (90° left or right).
- 5 **Delete**: use the delete button on a thumbnail. It is only removed from the new file.
- 6 Click **Save** and choose a name for the new PDF.

Tip Nothing changes until you click Save — experiment freely.

Free plan Saves the first 3 pages of the edited document. **Premium: no limit.**

Merge PDFs into one

Combines several PDF files into a single PDF, in the order you choose.

- 1 Open **Merge / Split / Pages** and choose **Merge**.
- 2 Add your PDF files (you can select several at once).
- 3 Drag the files into the order you want, or use the up/down buttons.
- 4 Click **Merge** and choose where to save the combined PDF.

Tip To merge only some pages of a file, first use **Extract pages** on it, then merge the result.

Free plan Up to 3 files and 5 pages in total · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Split a PDF

Divides one PDF into several smaller files.

- 1 Open **Merge / Split / Pages** and choose **Split**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Pick a split mode: **Every N pages** (for example every 1 page = one file per page) or **By ranges** (for example 1-3, 4-6, 7-10 → three files).
- 4 Choose an output folder and a base file name. Files are numbered automatically.
- 5 Click **Split**.

Free plan Documents up to 5 pages, 2 parts · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Extract selected pages

Copies chosen pages into a new PDF, leaving the original untouched.

- 1 Open **Merge / Split / Pages** and choose **Extract pages**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Type the pages to extract, for example **2, 5-7**.
- 4 Click **Extract** and save the new PDF.

Free plan Up to 2 pages per run · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Reverse page order

Turns the document back to front — useful for scans made in reverse order.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Reverse**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and click **Reverse**.
- 3 Save the new PDF.

Free plan Documents up to 2 pages. **Premium: no limit.**

Duplicate pages

Inserts a copy of each chosen page directly after the original.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Duplicate**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and type the page(s) to duplicate.
- 3 Click **Duplicate** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 1 page per run. Duplicating a range is Premium. **Premium: no limit.**

Insert one PDF into another

Places all pages of a second PDF at a chosen position.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Insert PDF**.
- 2 Choose the main PDF, then the PDF to insert.
- 3 Choose the position (for example "after page 2").
- 4 Click **Insert** and save.

Free plan Both files up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Replace a page

Swaps one page for the pages of another PDF — for example a corrected or signed page.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Replace page**.
- 2 Choose the main PDF and the page number to replace.
- 3 Choose the replacement PDF.
- 4 Click **Replace** and save.

Free plan Both files up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 06

Page tools

Change the size and shape of pages. Found under **Page Tools** in the sidebar.

Insert blank pages

Adds empty pages — for notes, or to make a double-sided print line up.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Blank pages** → **Insert**.
- 2 Choose your PDF, the position and how many blank pages to add.
- 3 Optionally choose a page size (otherwise the neighbouring page size is used).
- 4 Click **Insert** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 1 blank page · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Resize pages

Scales every page onto a new paper size such as A4 or Letter, without cutting content.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Resize**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and the target size.
- 3 Click **Resize** and save.

Tip Use this before printing a US-Letter document on A4 paper (or the other way round).

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Crop margins

Trims the same margin from every page — great for scans with dark borders.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Crop**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and set the margin to remove.
- 3 Click **Crop** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Remove blank pages

Finds pages that are empty (or almost empty) and removes them. Ideal for scans of single-sided paper made in duplex mode.

- 1 Open **Page Tools** and choose **Blank pages**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Adjust **Sensitivity** if needed — higher finds pages with small marks or scanner noise.
- 4 Click **Find blank pages**. PdfForge shows how many were found, with thumbnails, and how many pages will be kept.
- 5 Check the thumbnails, then click **Save PDF**.

Free plan Analysing is free for any file; saving is free up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium:** no limit.

CHAPTER 07

Layout & printing

Put several pages on one sheet, or build a folded booklet.

N-up (several pages per sheet)

Places 2, 4 or more pages on every sheet to save paper — handouts, proofs, study notes.

- 1 Open **N-up & Booklet** and choose **N-up**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Choose how many pages per sheet and the sheet size and orientation.
- 4 Click **Create** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 4 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Booklet

Re-orders and places pages two per sheet so that, printed double-sided and folded in the middle, they read as a booklet.

- 1 Open **N-up & Booklet** and choose **Booklet**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and the sheet size (for example A4 landscape for an A5 booklet).
- 3 Click **Create** and save.
- 4 Print double-sided, **flip on short edge**, then fold the stack in half.

Tip Blank pages are added automatically so the page count is a multiple of 4.

Free plan Documents up to 4 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 08

Convert

Turn PDF pages into pictures, or pictures into a PDF. Found under **PDF ⇌ Images**.

PDF to images (PNG or JPEG)

Saves every page as an image file.

- 1 Open **PDF ⇌ Images** and choose **PDF → images**.
- 2 Choose your PDF file(s).
- 3 Choose the format: **PNG** (sharp text, larger files) or **JPEG** (smaller, best for photos). For JPEG, set the quality.
- 4 Choose the resolution (DPI): 72–96 for screen, 150 for documents, 300 for print.
- 5 Choose an output folder and click **Convert**. One image per page is created.

Free plan 1 file, first 3 pages · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Images to PDF

Combines JPG and PNG images — photos, scans, screenshots — into one PDF.

- 1 Open **PDF ⇌ Images** and choose **Images → PDF**.
- 2 Add the images and drag them into order.
- 3 Choose the page sizing: match each image, or fit on a standard paper size.
- 4 Click **Create PDF** and save.

Tip To make the new PDF searchable, run it through **OCR** afterwards.

Free plan Up to 5 images · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 09

OCR — make scans searchable

OCR (optical character recognition) reads the text in scanned pages so you can search, select and copy it.

Turn a scanned PDF into a searchable PDF

Adds an invisible, searchable text layer. The pages look exactly the same as before.

- 1 Open **OCR**.
- 2 Choose your scanned PDF. On the free plan, a note tells you how many pages will be recognised.
- 3 Choose the language: **Arabic** or **English**. For documents that mix both, choose the main language first and add the second one.
- 4 Click **Make searchable** and choose where to save. Progress is shown page by page.
- 5 Open the result and press **Ctrl + F** — you can now find words in the scan.

Note OCR runs entirely on your PC. The first run after installation can take a little longer while Windows and your antivirus check the OCR engine.

Tip Best results: scans at 300 DPI, straight pages, good contrast. Arabic is recognised well on clear printed text; decorative fonts and handwriting are much less accurate.

Free plan 10% of each file's pages (at least 1, at most 10), starting from page 1. The other pages are kept exactly as they were · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

If a PDF already has selectable text, it does not need OCR — use **Extract** → **Text** instead.

CHAPTER 10

Compress & optimize

Make PDFs smaller for email and upload portals, or prepare them for printing. Found under **Optimize**.

Compress a PDF

Reduces file size by downsampling images that have more pixels than their printed size needs. Text and vector graphics stay sharp.

- 1 Open **Optimize** and choose **Compress**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Choose the target quality (image resolution). Lower = smaller file.
- 4 Click **Analyse**. PdfForge shows the size before and after and the percentage saved.
- 5 If you are happy with the result, click **Save PDF**.

Tip Photo-heavy PDFs often shrink by 80–95%. A PDF that is already mostly text may shrink very little — PdfForge never saves a file larger than the original.

Free plan Analysing is free for any file; saving is free up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium:** no limit.

Compact (lossless)

Rebuilds the internal structure of the PDF to make it smaller without touching any page content.

- 1 Open **Optimize** and choose **Compact**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and click **Analyse compaction**.
- 3 Check the sizes, then click **Save PDF**.

Tip Run Compress first, then Compact, for the smallest possible file.

Free plan Analysing is free for any file; saving is free up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium:** no limit.

Convert to grayscale

Converts all colours to shades of grey — cheaper printing and often a smaller file.

- 1 Open **Optimize** and choose **Grayscale**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and click **Analyse**.
- 3 Check the preview, then click **Save PDF**.

Free plan Analysing is free for any file; saving is free up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium:** no limit.

Strip metadata

Removes hidden information such as author name, software used and creation dates before you share a file.

- 1 Open **Optimize** and choose **Strip metadata**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and click **Strip**.
- 3 Save the cleaned PDF.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium:** no limit.

CHAPTER 11

Protect

Passwords, permissions and area redaction. Found under **Protect**.

Add a password

Encrypts the PDF with AES-256 so it can only be opened with the password.

- 1 Open **Protect** and choose **Password** → **Add**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Type the password twice.
- 4 Click **Protect** and save.

Tip Keep your password safe. There is no way to recover a forgotten password — not even for MES-DEV.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages. **Premium: no limit.**

Change a password

Replaces the current password with a new one.

- 1 Open **Protect** and choose **Password** → **Change**.
- 2 Choose the PDF and type its current password.
- 3 Type the new password and click **Change**. Save the new file.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages. **Premium: no limit.**

Remove a password

Saves an unprotected copy of a PDF you have the password for.

- 1 Open **Protect** and choose **Password** → **Remove**.
- 2 Choose the PDF and type its current password.
- 3 Click **Remove** and save the unlocked copy.

Free plan Always free and unlimited.

Set permissions

Lets anyone open the PDF, but blocks actions such as printing, copying text, editing or filling forms. An owner password protects the settings.

- 1 Open **Protect** and choose **Permissions**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Untick the actions you want to block.
- 4 Type an owner password (needed to change the permissions later).
- 5 Click **Apply** and save.

Note Permissions are respected by standard PDF readers. For truly confidential content, use a password or redaction instead.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Redact an area

Permanently removes everything inside the boxes you draw — text, images and graphics — and fills the area in black.

- 1 Open **Protect** and choose **Redact area**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and go to the page.
- 3 Drag a box over each area to remove. Repeat on other pages.
- 4 Click **Redact** and save the redacted copy.
- 5 Open the result and try to select the removed text — it is gone.

Tip Always share the redacted copy, never the original.

Free plan Documents up to 2 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. Larger documents are blocked completely — PdfForge never produces a partly redacted file. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 12

Search & redact

Find a word, name or number everywhere in a document — and remove every match in one go.

Search text

Lists every occurrence of a word or phrase, with its page.

- 1 Open **Search & Redact**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and type the text to find.
- 3 Set the options if needed (for example match case or whole words).
- 4 Click **Search**. All matches are listed by page.

Free plan Always free and unlimited.

Redact all matches

Permanently removes the text you searched for, on every page.

- 1 Search as described above.
- 2 Tick the matches to remove (or select all).
- 3 Click **Redact selected** and save the redacted copy.

Tip Search for every form of the information: full name, first name, ID numbers, phone numbers and email addresses.

Free plan Documents up to 2 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Search and redaction only work on real text. For scanned pages, run **OCR** first, or use **Protect** → **Redact area**.

CHAPTER 13

Digital signature

Apply a real, cryptographic digital signature that proves who signed and shows if the file is changed afterwards.

A digital signature needs a **certificate file** (.pfx or .p12) and its password. Companies and government bodies usually issue these; you can also buy one from a certificate authority. A certificate you create yourself works, but readers will show the signer as “unknown”.

Check your certificate

Confirms the certificate file opens with your password and shows who it belongs to.

- 1 Open **Sign**.
- 2 Choose your certificate file (.pfx / .p12) and type its password.
- 3 Click **Check certificate**. The certificate owner's name is shown.

Free plan Always free and unlimited.

Sign a PDF

Signs the document with your certificate.

- 1 Open **Sign** and choose the PDF to sign.
- 2 Choose your certificate file and type its password.
- 3 Fill in the optional details (reason, location).
- 4 Click **Sign** and save the signed PDF.
- 5 Open the signed file in a PDF reader: the signature panel shows it as signed and unchanged.

Tip Sign as the **last** step. Any change made after signing — even adding a page — breaks the signature.

Free plan Documents up to 2 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. The free signature is real and valid.
Premium: no limit.

CHAPTER 14

Forms

Fill in PDF forms, create new ones, and produce many filled copies from a spreadsheet. Found under **Forms**.

Fill a form

Types values into the fields of a fillable PDF.

- 1 Open **Forms** and choose **Fill**.
- 2 Choose the PDF. All its fields are listed (reading fields is free).
- 3 Type or select a value for each field.
- 4 Click **Save** and choose a name. Tick **Flatten** if the values should no longer be editable.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Flatten a form

Turns filled fields into normal page content so nobody can change them.

- 1 Open **Forms** and choose **Flatten**.
- 2 Choose the filled PDF and click **Flatten**. Save the new file.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Create form fields

Adds fillable fields to an ordinary (flat) PDF.

- 1 Open **Forms** and choose **Create fields**.
- 2 Choose the PDF and go to the page.
- 3 Draw a box where each field should be and give it a name.
- 4 Click **Save** and choose a name for the fillable PDF.

Tip Use clear field names such as *full_name* or *date* — they become the column names for mail merge.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 3 fields · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Mail merge from a CSV file

Creates one filled PDF per row of a spreadsheet — certificates, letters, contracts, ID cards.

- 1 Open **Forms** and choose **Export CSV** to create a template: a CSV file whose column headers are the form's field names.
- 2 Open the CSV in Excel, add one row per person, and save it as **CSV UTF-8**.
- 3 Back in PdfForge, choose **Mail merge**.
- 4 Choose the form PDF, the filled CSV file and an output folder.
- 5 Click **Run**. One PDF is created for each row.

Tip Save from Excel as **CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited)** so that Arabic and accented characters come through correctly.

Free plan Forms up to 3 pages, first 2 rows · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Export and import FDF

FDF is the standard file format for form data only. Use it to move answers from one copy of a form to another.

- 1 **Export:** open **Forms** → **Export FDF**, choose the filled PDF and save the .fdf file.
- 2 **Import:** open **Forms** → **Import FDF**, choose the empty form and the .fdf file, then save the filled PDF.

Free plan Export: forms up to 3 pages. Import: up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 15

Watermarks, page numbers & stamps

Brand, number and stamp your documents. Found under **Watermark / Numbers**.

Add a watermark

Places text such as CONFIDENTIAL or DRAFT across every page.

- 1 Open **Watermark / Numbers** and choose **Watermark**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and type the watermark text.
- 3 Set the font size, colour, opacity, angle and position.
- 4 Click **Apply** and save.

Tip An opacity of 15–25% keeps the page readable.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Add page numbers, headers or footers

Adds text at the top or bottom of every page — page numbers, a title, a date, the file name.

- 1 Open **Watermark / Numbers** and choose **Page numbers & text**.
- 2 Choose your PDF.
- 3 Type the text. Use the placeholders offered by the tool to insert the page number, total pages, date or file name automatically (for example "Page 3 of 12").
- 4 Choose the position (top/bottom, left/centre/right), font size and margins.
- 5 Choose which pages to number if you want to skip a cover page.
- 6 Click **Apply** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Add an image stamp

Places an image — logo, APPROVED stamp, scanned signature — on your pages.

- 1 Open **Watermark / Numbers** and choose **Image stamp**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and the image (PNG with a transparent background works best).
- 3 Set the size, position, opacity and the pages to stamp.
- 4 Click **Apply** and save.

Note A scanned signature image is **not** a digital signature. For a legally verifiable signature use **Sign** (chapter 13).

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 16

Markup

Add review notes directly on the page, then make them permanent.

Add markup

Places text notes, arrows and shapes on pages — for reviewing, teaching or pointing things out.

- 1 Open **Markup** and choose your PDF.
- 2 Pick a tool from the toolbar (text, arrow, shape).
- 3 Click on the page to place text, or drag to draw arrows and shapes. Adjust colour, thickness and size in the toolbar.
- 4 Add as many items as you need, on any page.
- 5 Click **Save** and choose a name.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 5 annotations per run · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Flatten markup

Burns annotations into the page so they cannot be moved or deleted and display the same everywhere.

- 1 Open **Markup** and choose **Flatten**.
- 2 Choose the annotated PDF and click **Flatten**. Save the result.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 17

Extract

Take text, images and attached files out of a PDF. Found under **Extract**.

Extract text

Shows all text of the PDF on screen, page by page, and saves it as a .txt file.

- 1 Open **Extract** and choose **Text**.
- 2 Choose your PDF. The text appears on screen.
- 3 Copy what you need, or click **Save as .txt**.

Tip If no text appears, the PDF is a scan — run **OCR** first.

Free plan First 3 pages. **Premium: no limit.**

Extract images

Saves every picture embedded in the PDF as a separate image file, at its original quality.

- 1 Open **Extract** and choose **Images**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and an output folder.
- 3 Click **Extract**.

Free plan 1 file, first 3 pages · 1 per day, 5 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Extract attachments

Saves files that are attached inside the PDF (spreadsheets, invoices in XML, other PDFs).

- 1 Open **Extract** and choose **Attachments**.
- 2 Choose your PDF and an output folder.
- 3 Click **Extract**.

Free plan First attachment only · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 18

Metadata & bookmarks

Document properties, the bookmarks panel and a clickable table of contents.

View and edit metadata

Title, author, subject and keywords are shown by PDF readers and used by search engines and document systems.

- 1 Open **Metadata** and choose your PDF. The current values are shown (free).
- 2 Change the fields you want.
- 3 Click **Save** and choose a name.

Free plan Viewing is unlimited; editing: documents up to 5 pages.

Create or edit bookmarks

Bookmarks appear in the side panel of PDF readers and let readers jump to a section.

- 1 Open **Bookmarks** and choose your PDF. Existing bookmarks are listed (free).
- 2 Click **Suggest** to create one bookmark per page from each page's first line — then rename or delete as needed.
- 3 Or add bookmarks manually: a title and the page number.
- 4 Click **Save** and choose a name.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 3 bookmarks · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Generate a table of contents page

Adds a contents page at the start of the document, built from your bookmarks.

- 1 In **Bookmarks**, prepare the list of entries.
- 2 Type a heading (for example "Contents").
- 3 Click **Generate table of contents** and save.

Free plan Documents up to 3 pages, 3 entries · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 19

Compare two PDFs

See exactly what changed between two versions of a document.

Text comparison

Lists the words and lines that were added, removed or changed.

- 1 Open **Compare** and choose **Text**.
- 2 Choose the original PDF (A) and the new version (B).
- 3 Click **Compare**. Additions and deletions are highlighted, page by page.

Free plan Each document up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

Visual comparison

Compares how the pages look — catches moved images, logos, layout and signature changes that text comparison cannot see.

- 1 Open **Compare** and choose **Visual**.
- 2 Choose the two PDFs and an output folder.
- 3 Click **Compare**. Changed areas are highlighted on each page, and images of the differences are saved.

Free plan Each document up to 3 pages · 1 per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 20

Batch processing

Run one action on dozens or hundreds of PDFs in a single step.

Available batch actions: **Watermark**, **Page numbers**, **Compress**, **Strip metadata**, **Crop**, **Remove blank pages**, **Password-protect**, **Flatten forms**, **OCR** and **Convert to images**.

Process many PDFs at once

Applies the chosen action to every selected file and saves the results in one folder.

- 1 Open **Batch**.
- 2 Add the PDF files (you can select a whole folder's worth at once).
- 3 Choose the action and set its options.
- 4 Choose the output folder.
- 5 Click **Run**. A progress bar shows each file; at the end, a summary lists every file as succeeded, failed (with the reason) or locked.

Tip Output files get the action added to their name (for example *report-compressed.pdf*), so originals are never overwritten.

Free plan 2 files per batch — extra files are listed as locked. Each file must also fit its tool's limit · 1 batch per day, 3 per month. **Premium: no limit.**

CHAPTER 21

Troubleshooting

Quick fixes for the problems users meet most often.

Problem	What to do
"This PDF is password protected"	Remove the password first in Protect → Password → Remove , then use the unlocked copy.
The upgrade window appears	The file or run is above the free-plan limit shown in the window. Use a smaller file, wait for the daily limit to reset, or upgrade to Premium.
"Used up today" / "used up this month"	That tool's free runs are used. Daily limits reset at midnight, monthly limits on the 1st. Other tools still have their own runs.
Message about the PC date and time	Your Windows clock is earlier than the last time PdfForge was used. Set the correct date and time (Settings → Time & language → Set time automatically).
OCR is slow the first time	Windows or your antivirus is checking the OCR engine. Let it finish; later runs are faster.
OCR text has mistakes	Scan at 300 DPI, straighten pages, choose the correct language, and put the main language first for mixed documents.
Compress saves almost nothing	The PDF is mostly text or its images are already small. Try Compact for a lossless reduction.
Search finds nothing in a scan	Scanned pages have no text until you run OCR .
Signature shows "signer unknown"	Your reader does not trust the certificate's issuer (normal for self-made certificates). The signature itself is still valid.
Signature shows as invalid	The file was changed after signing. Sign again as the very last step.
Arabic text in mail merge looks wrong	Save the CSV from Excel as CSV UTF-8 .
Cannot save — file in use	Close the file in your PDF reader, or save the result under a different name.
Premium shows as Free again	Connect to the internet and open Settings so the license can be re-checked (needed at least every 30 days).

CHAPTER 22

Frequently asked questions

Short answers to the questions we are asked most.

General

Q Does PdfForge upload my files?

No. Every tool runs on your own PC. Your documents are never sent to MES-DEV or to any server. Internet is only used to activate and occasionally re-check a Premium license.

Q Does it work without internet?

Yes. All tools work offline. Premium stays active offline for up to 30 days between license checks.

Q Is my original file changed?

No. Every tool saves the result as a new file. Your original is never modified.

Q Can PdfForge edit the existing text of a PDF?

No. PdfForge works on pages, security, forms, OCR and layout. To add text, use page numbers, watermarks or markup.

Q Can it convert PDF to Word or Excel?

No. PdfForge converts between PDF and images only.

Q Which languages does OCR support?

English and Arabic, including documents that mix both.

Q Which Windows versions are supported?

Windows 10 and Windows 11, 64-bit.

Free plan & Premium

Q Is the free plan really free?

Yes. There is no trial period and no time limit. Every tool works on small documents, and results are clean — no watermark and no blurred pages.

Q What does Premium unlock?

Everything: any document size, any number of files, no daily or monthly limits, full OCR, full batch processing.

Q Is Premium a subscription?

No. It is a one-time payment for a lifetime license.

Q How many PCs can I use Premium on?

One PC per license. You can move it to a new PC at any time with **Settings** → **License** → **Deactivate**.

Q I lost my license key.

Go to mes-dev.com/license/retrieve and enter the email address you bought with. The key is also in your purchase email.

Q Why do some tools say “used up today”?

On the free plan, some tools can be used once a day and a few times a month. Each tool has its own counter, and only successful runs count.

Q Why can I analyse a big file with Compress but not save it?

Compress, Compact, Grayscale and Remove blank pages show you the full result for free so you can see the benefit. Saving files over 3 pages needs Premium.

Security & signatures

Q How strong is the password protection?

PdfForge uses AES-256, the strongest encryption in the PDF standard.

Q Can you recover a forgotten password?

No. Nobody can — keep your passwords in a safe place.

Q Is redaction permanent?

Yes. Redacted content is removed from the file, not just covered. It cannot be selected, copied or recovered.

Q Is a PdfForge signature legally valid?

PdfForge applies a standard cryptographic PDF signature with your certificate. Its legal value depends on the certificate you use and the rules in your country or organisation.

Q Where do I get a certificate?

From your employer or government e-signature service, or from a commercial certificate authority. It comes as a .pfx or .p12 file with a password.

Files & results

Q Is there a maximum file size?

No fixed maximum with Premium. Very large files simply take longer and need more memory.

Q Why is my compressed file not much smaller?

Compress reduces oversized images. Text-only PDFs are already small; try Compact for extra savings.

Q Can I process a whole folder?

Yes, with Batch. Add all files from the folder and choose the action.

Q Can I undo a change?

Your original is never changed, so you can always start again from it.

CHAPTER 23

Support & contact

We are a small team and read every message.

Website	mes-dev.com/apps/pdfforge
Email	contact@mes-dev.com
Live chat	On mes-dev.com (bottom-right corner)
Lost license key	mes-dev.com/license/retrieve
Privacy policy	mes-dev.com/privacy-policy

When you contact us about a problem, please include: your PdfForge version (shown in **Settings**), your Windows version, the tool you used, and the exact message shown. If you can, attach a sample file that shows the problem — only if it contains nothing confidential.