In this guide, we walk you through the steps to protect an PDF using a password.

There is a one-click option. This is useful if the recipient has the most up to date version of Adobe Acrobat or Reader.

The advanced password procedure is helpful if you are unsure of the recipient's Acrobat or Reader compatibility.

_____

Password security basics

You can limit access to a PDF by setting passwords and by restricting certain features, such as printing and editing. However, you cannot prevent saving copies of a PDF. The copies have the same restrictions as the original PDF. Two types of passwords are available:

Document open password
A **Document Open** password (also known as a *user* password) requires a user to type a password to open the PDF.

Permissions password
A permissions password (also known as a *master* password) requires a password to change permission settings. Using a permissions password, you can restrict printing, editing, and copying content in the PDF. Recipients don't need a password to open the document in Reader or Acrobat. They do need a password to change the restrictions you've set.

If the PDF is secured with both types of passwords, it can be opened with either password. However, only the permissions password allows the user to change the restricted features. Because of the added security, setting both types of passwords is often beneficial.

Note:

You cannot add passwords to a signed or certified document.

Add a password to a PDF

One-click option to protect a PDF with a password
1. Open the PDF in Acrobat DC.
2. Choose **File** > **Protect Using Password**. Alternatively, you can choose **Tools** > **Protect** > **Protect Using Password**.
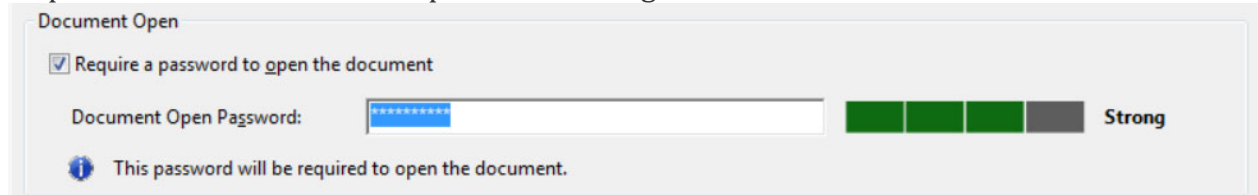3. Select if you want to set the password for Viewing or Editing the PDF.

4. Type and retype your password. The password strength is displayed next to your password to indicate whether the chosen password is weak, medium, strong, or best.

5. Click **Apply**. Acrobat displays a confirmation message that the file was successfully protected using password.
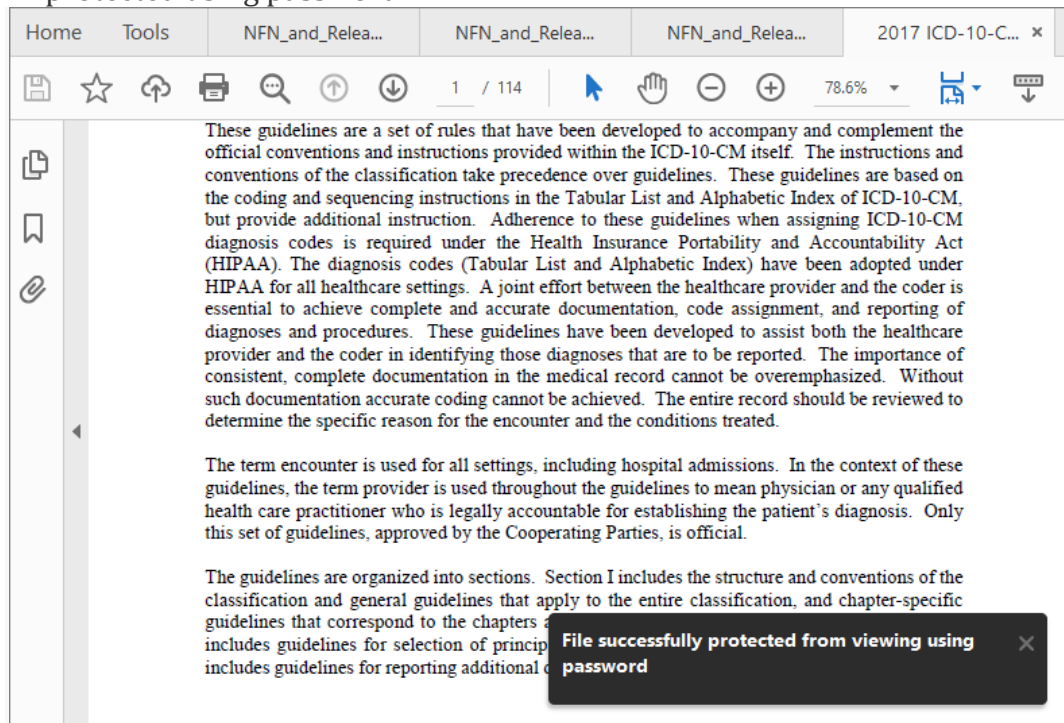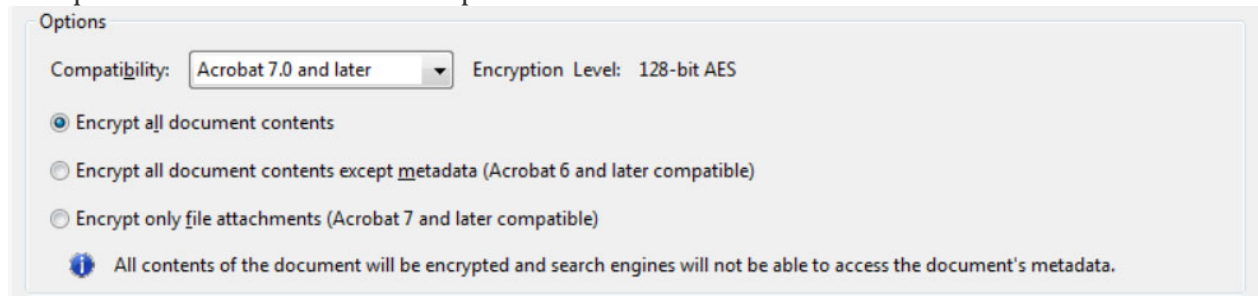
Advanced password protection

1. Open the PDF in Acrobat DC, and do one of the following:

- Choose **Tools** > **Protect** > **More Options** > **Encrypt with Password**.
- Choose **File** > **Protect Using Password**, and then choose **Advanced Password Protection** from **More Options**.

2. If you receive a prompt, click **Yes** to change the security.
3. Select **Require A Password To Open The Document**, then type the password in the corresponding field. For each keystroke, the password strength meter evaluates your password and indicates the password strength.

Password Security - Settings let you set a password to open a PDF

4. Select an Acrobat version from the **Compatibility** drop-down menu. Choose a version equal to or lower than the recipients' version of Acrobat or Reader.

Options control compatibility with previous versions and type of encryption

The **Compatibility** option you choose determines the type of encryption used. It is important to choose a version compatible with the recipient's version of Acrobat or Reader. For example, Acrobat 7 cannot open a PDF encrypted for Acrobat X and later.

- **Acrobat 6.0 And Later** (PDF 1.5) encrypts the document using 128-bit RC4.
- **Acrobat 7.0 And Later** (PDF 1.6) encrypts the document using the AES encryption algorithm with a 128-bit key size.
- **Acrobat X And Later** (PDF 1.7) encrypts the document using 256-bit AES. To apply 256-bit AES encryption to documents created in Acrobat 8 and 9, select Acrobat X And Later.

5. Select an encryption option:

Encrypt All Document Contents
Encrypts the document and the document metadata. If this option is selected, search engines cannot access the document metadata.

Encrypt All Document Contents Except Metadata
Encrypts the contents of a document but still allows search engines access to the document metadata.

Note: The iFilter and the Find or Advance Search commands of Acrobat do not look into the PDF's metadata even when you select the **Encrypt All Document Contents Except Metadata** option. You can use a search tool that takes advantage of XMP metadata.

Encrypt Only File Attachments

Requires a password to open file attachments. Users can open the document without a password. Use this option to create security envelopes.

6. Click **OK**. At the prompt to confirm the password, retype the appropriate password in the box and click **OK**.

In this guide, we walk you through the steps to protect an Office document using a password. In addition, we' also outline the steps to remove the password protection as necessary.
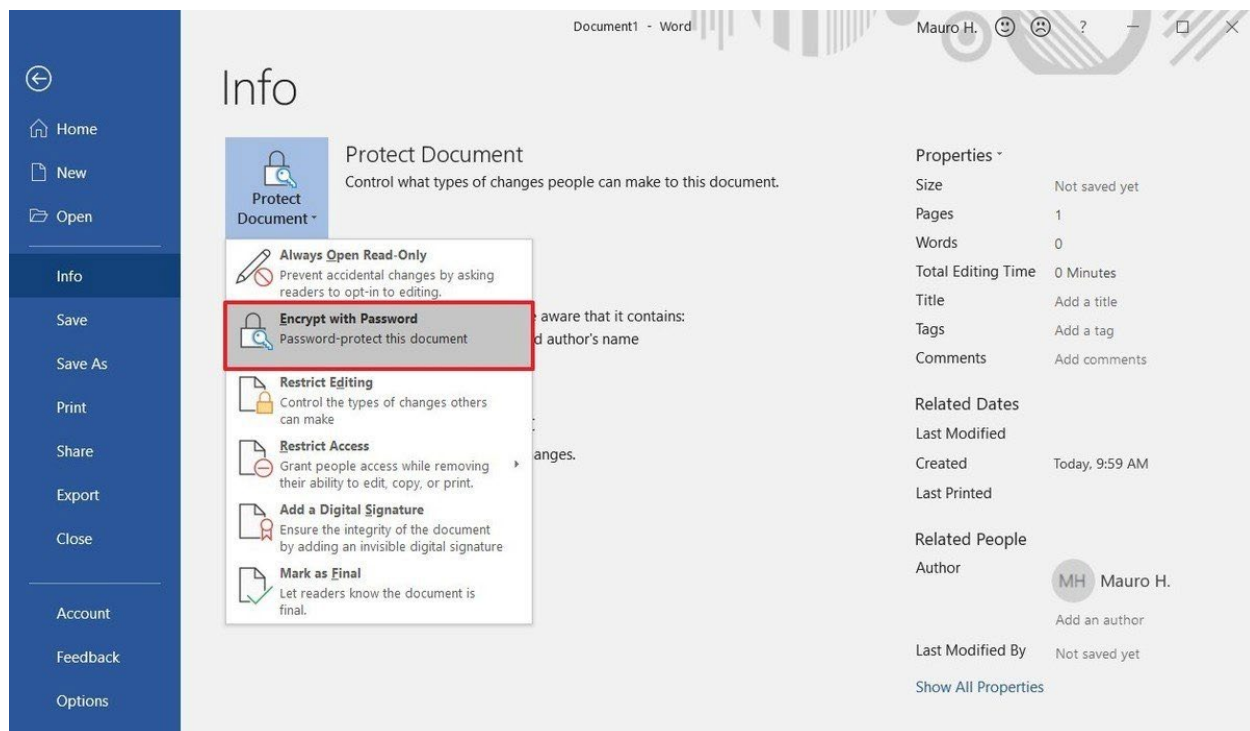
How to set a password for an Office document

To add an encryption password to Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint, use these steps:
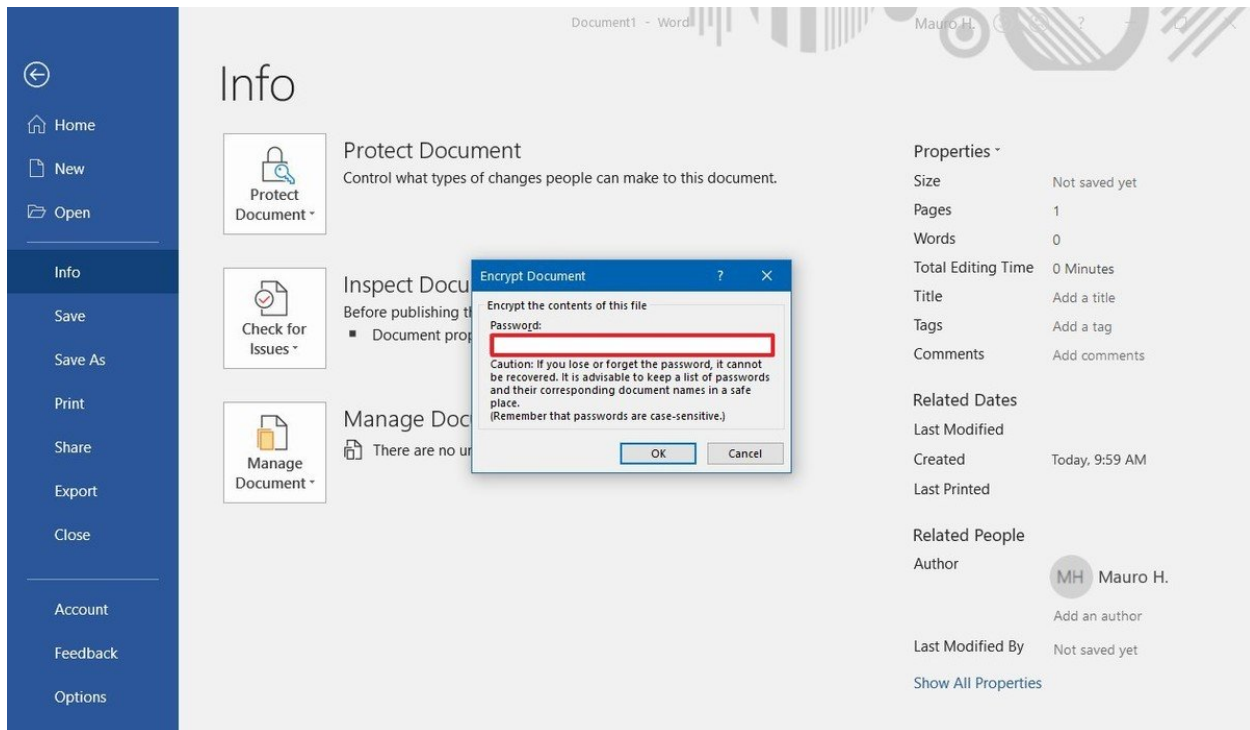
1. Open the **Word** (**Excel** or **PowerPoint**) document.

2. Click on **File**.

3. Click on **Info**.

4. On the right side, click the **Protect document** menu.

Note: In Excel, the option will appear as "Protect Workbook," and in PowerPoint, it'll be displayed as "Protect presentation."

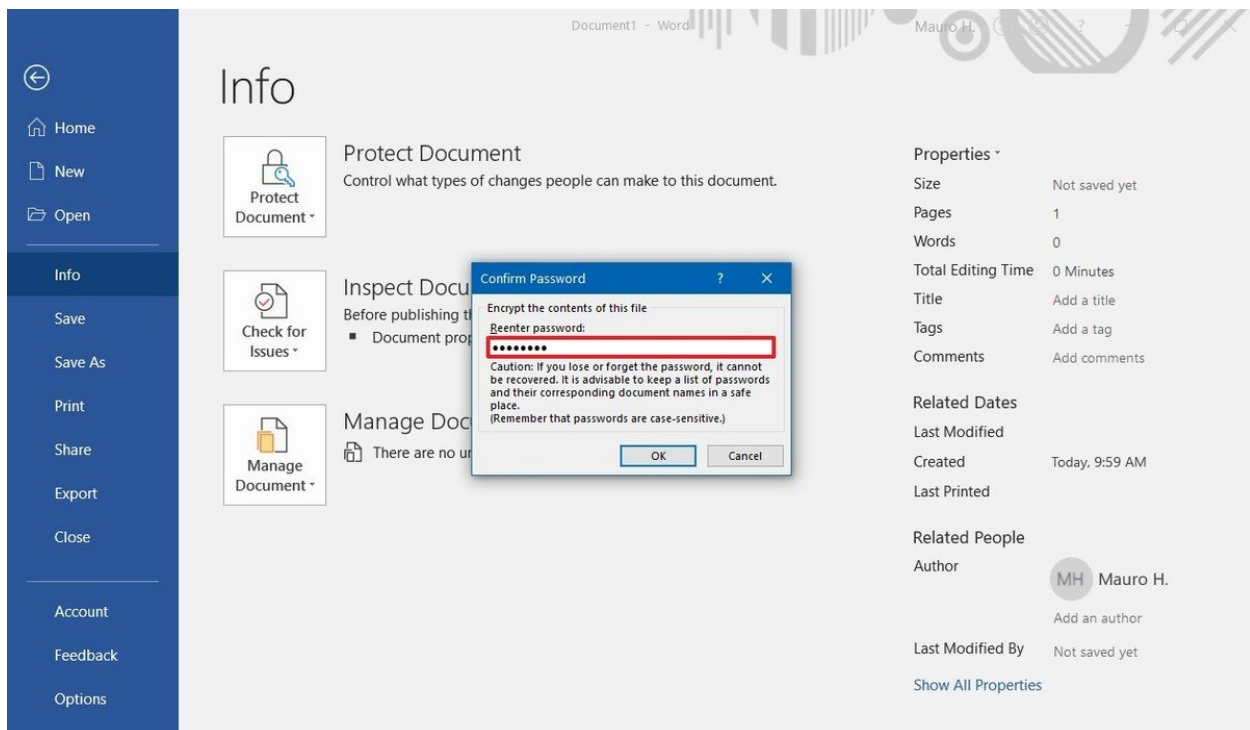5. Select the **Encrypt with Password** option.

6. Type a password to protect the document.

7. Click the **OK** button.

8. Retype the password.

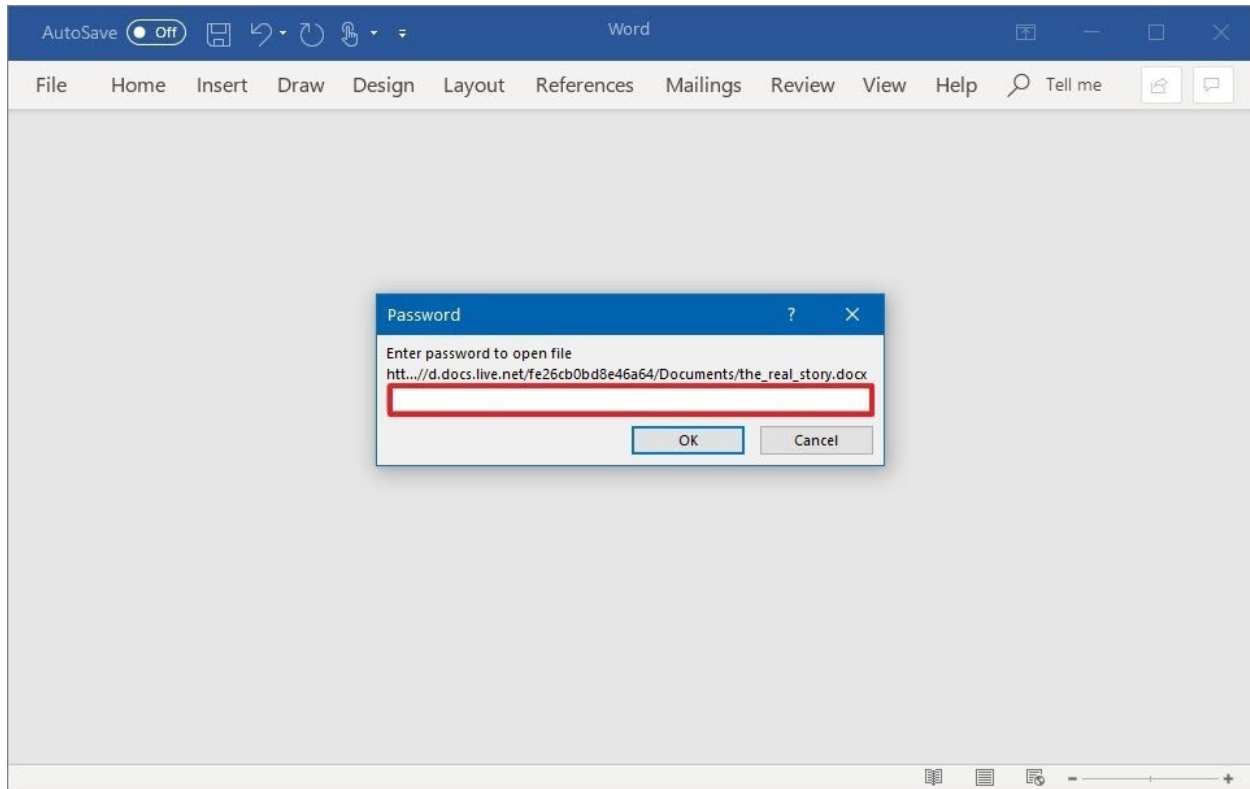

9. Click the **OK** button.

Once you complete these steps, every time you open the document, you'll be prompted to enter a password to decrypt its contents.

When setting up a password for an Excel, PowerPoint, or Word document, consider that without a password it'll be virtually impossible to open the document, so make sure to keep the password in a safe place.

How to remove a password from an Office document
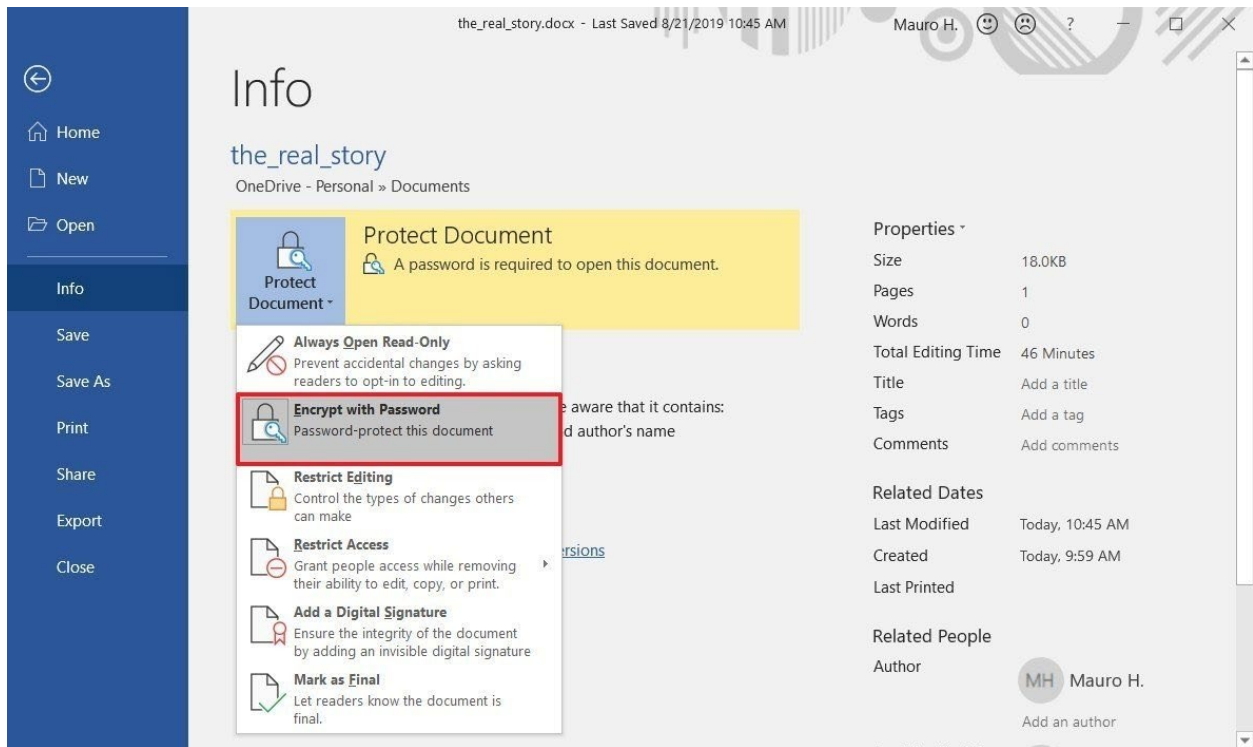
To remove the password of an Office document (Word, Excel, or PowerPoint), use these steps:

1. Open the **Word** (**Excel** or **PowerPoint**) document.
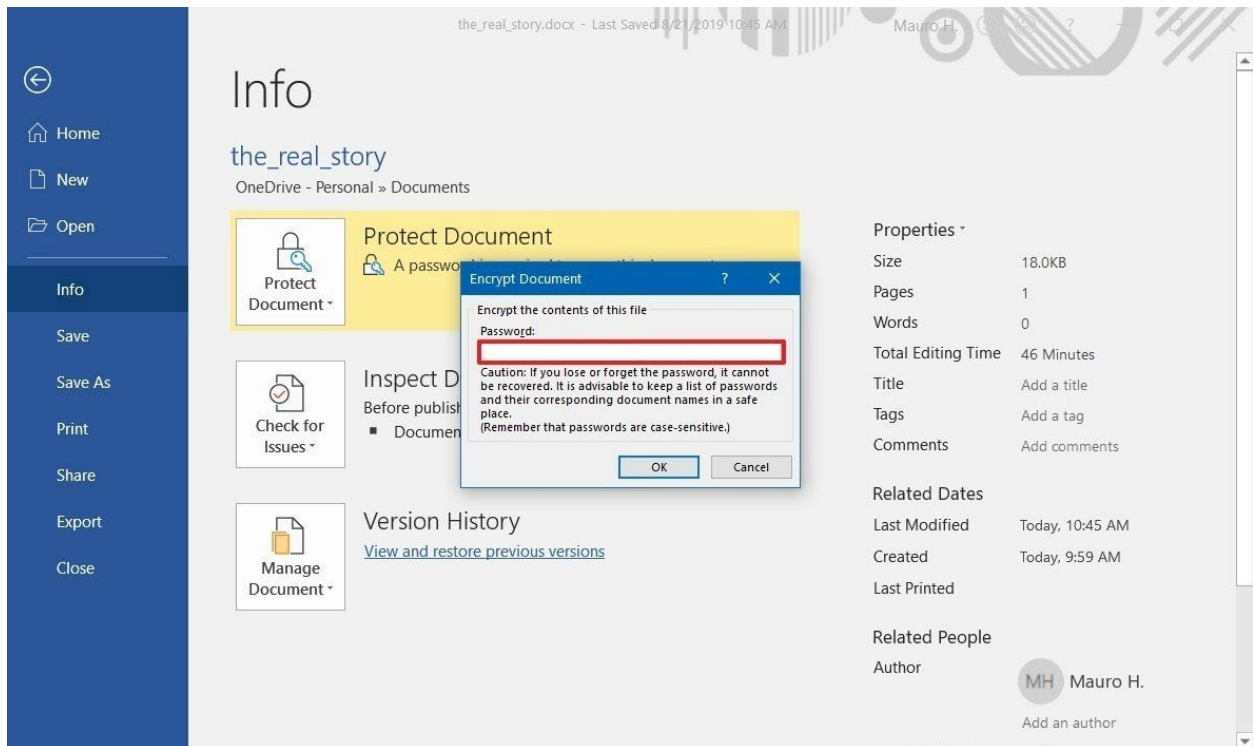2. Type the current password to access the file.

3. Click the **OK** button.
4. Click on **File**.
5. Click on **Info**.
6. On the right side, click the **Protect document** menu.
7. Select the **Encrypt with Password** option.

8. Clear the current password.

9. Click the **OK** button.

After completing the steps, anyone without a password will be not able to open and edit the Office document.