

# Task 1: Getting started with the class discussion on Slack

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We will be using Slack to communicate with each other as a class. Slack is a communication platform that is commonly used by software developers (and many other teams!). We will use Slack as a way for you to get quick answers to questions or kick off discussion on a given topic. You can receive help from both me (as the instructor), or collaborate with other classmates who might be struggling with the same problem or idea. Let's get started!

## Getting a free Slack account

To get started, you will need to establish a free Slack account. To do this, go [here](#) and create a new account using your university email.

## Downloading Slack

Next, you will need to install Slack on your computer and login. Download the PC version [here](#), and the Mac version [here](#). You can also download these applications from slack.com by navigating to "Product" in the menu bar and selecting "Download Slack". Once you have downloaded the application, go through the installation process and login using the account you just established.

## The 2023 Biosystems Analytics Workspace

As part of this class, we will all work together transparently in the 2023 Biosystems Analytics Slack Workspace. You will receive an invitation to this workspace at the beginning of the semester under your university email (that you used to create your Slack account). From the Slack menu bar, you can add this workspace by selecting "File" -> "Workspace" -> "Sign in to another Workspace". Alternatively you can click on the "+" sign on the left side of the Slack application.

## Use channels for getting help on specific topics

In Slack, work happens in channels, which are key to organizing our work into focused, easy-to-find conversations. A channel is the dedicated home for a particular topic, team, or project. In this class, we will use channels for conversations and questions related to set up, homework, and python in general. I also created a "general" channel for questions about the class, and "random" for anything else you want to discuss! Think of channels like small meetings open to anyone, where you can get help, and also help each other. In channels, anyone can ask questions or submit ideas.

Channels can also be easily searched by anyone in our workspace. So if you have a question, you can see if it has already been asked/discussed elsewhere. In this case, you can "join the thread" and continue to ask additional questions about this topic. Everyone benefits from seeing all of the context of the conversation and feel free to chime in when you know the answer!

You can also use an @mention, to ping a particular classmate or me (your instructor; @bhurwitz). This will notify the @mention person that you have a specific question for them.

## Etiquette tips for using Slack

[Here](#) are some quick etiquette tips for using Slack and making your communication with our class effective!

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