Using Slack in Your Online Classroom

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Creating User Documentation: Code for Nepal

ENGL 3814

Using Slack in the Classroom: A Guide

Overview:

This document will act a user guide for an app called Slack. Slack is a messaging platform that allows users to send direct messages, collaborate on documents, and share images. While there are a variety of uses for this application, the instructions in this guide will be geared specifically towards educators who hope to use Slack in their virtual classroom. Slack allows students to work together either as an entire class or as separate groups by utilizing Channels. Channels are message boards that can be restricted to specific members of the class or they can be open to the entire class per the teacher's preference.

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Overview of How You Can Use Slack in the Classroom

There are a multitude of platforms for communication and education. However, Slack sets itself apart in a variety of ways. Slack allows you to communicate with your students without giving them personal information like a phone number. Students can share ideas, ask questions, and work collaboratively all on one platform! As students work in their respective Channels, you will be able to monitor their progress and provide input as they go. Rather than just being a messaging board, Slack collaborates with several other platforms to personalize your Workspace to suit your needs. For example, you can link Zoom, Google Drive, or other tools to your Workspace! You can also share Word Documents, PDFs, and Google Documents within the Channels. Rather than having to scroll through your entire message board, easily recall messages with Slacks convenient Channel search feature! When it comes to streamlining collaborative efforts, Slack can adapt to fit any user's needs.

Digital Literacy Competencies

By learning to use Slack, you will be increasing your **communication and collaboration** digital competencies. Online classes necessitate an effective means of communication. Because Slack facilitates communication between groups, you will be empowered in your ability to communicate beyond the limitations of a virtual classroom environment.

Helpful Slack Vocabulary and Textual Cues

- *Workspace*—this will be the webpage where your class will be able to collaborate on work and communicate with each other and you. It will have a unique URL and will be private to you and your students. This webpage will hold your Channels, supplemental apps, and Workspace Settings.
- *Channel*—a channel is a message thread. Channels can be open to your entire class or restricted to specific students working in a group
- *Member*--Slack Members are you and your students
- *Emoticons*—photo images intended to convey emotions or reactions without using words
- *Notifications*—a feature that alerts you to new activity in your Workspace (for example, you will get a notification if student sends you a message.
- **Boldfaced Text**—areas in the document that are in bold indicate that you should be using your mouse, finger, or pen to click a button

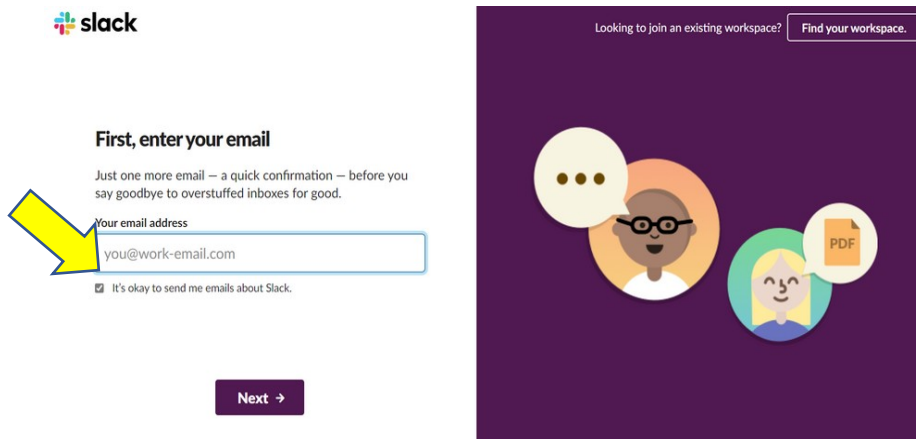- <u>Underlined Text</u>—underlined text indicates that you should be using your keyboard to type

Creating a Workspace

What is a Workspace?

Slack Workspace is a platform that allows groups to communicate and work collaboratively! Workspaces keep communications private to your group and allows you to monitor activity within the various groups. Furthermore, the platform comes with a variety of additional features for your convenience that will be discussed in the *Managing Workspace Functions* section!
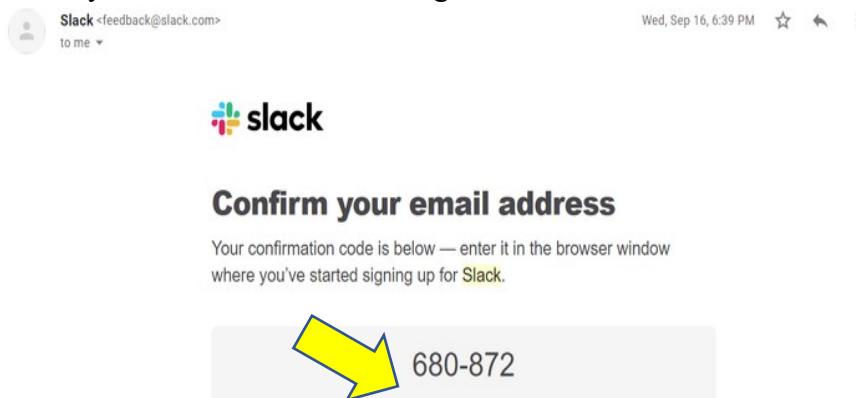
How to Create a Workspace—

1. Type <u>slack.com/create</u> into your browser's search engine.
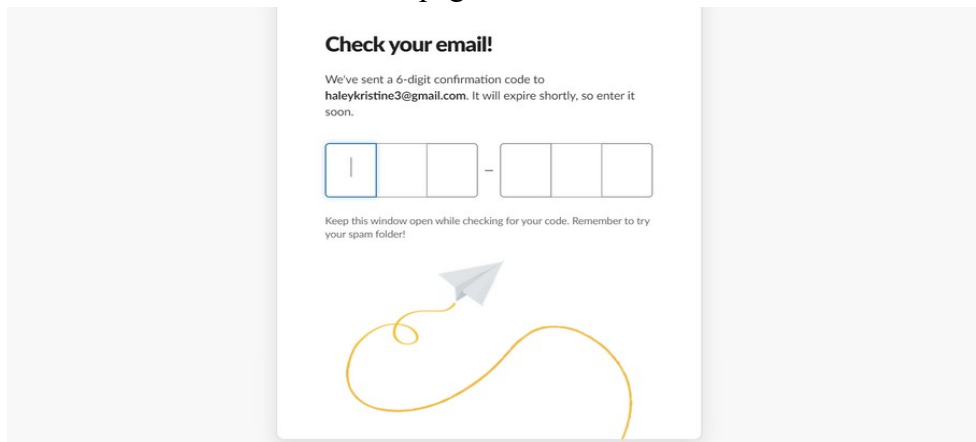2. Enter your <u>email address</u> in the indicated area and then click **NEXT.**

3. Check your email inbox for a <u>6-digit confirmation code</u>.

4. Enter the <u>code</u> on the Slack webpage.

5. <u>Name</u> your workspace. Then, click **NEXT.**
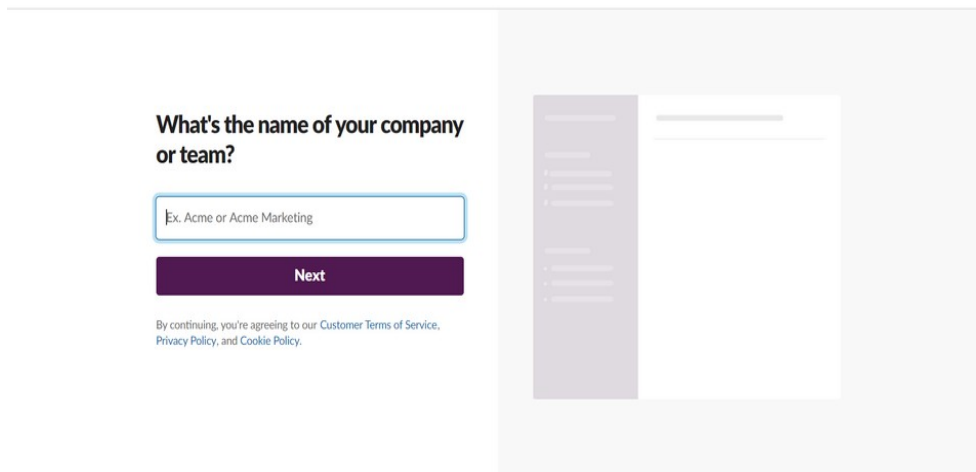
6. Create a Channel* for your Workspace.

   a. Channels are a subgroup within your entire Workspace. The Workspace Administrator can grant and restrict member access to the various Channels. Some uses for Channels are as follows:

      i. Separate by groups

      ii. Separate by project

      iii. And more!

         >type in name of project or group then hit **NEXT**

         slack

         What's a project your team is working on?

         Ex. Q4 Budget, Website Update...

         Next

         Code for Nepal...

7. If ready, type in the <u>email address</u> of the first member you would like to invite; if you have more members to add, click **ADD ANOTHER** and type in the next <u>email address</u>. Repeat this process until you have added all your members. If you're not ready to add members yet, click **SKIP FOR NOW.**

   slack

   Who do you email most about this project?

   name@work-email.com

   ⊕ Add another

   Add Teammates

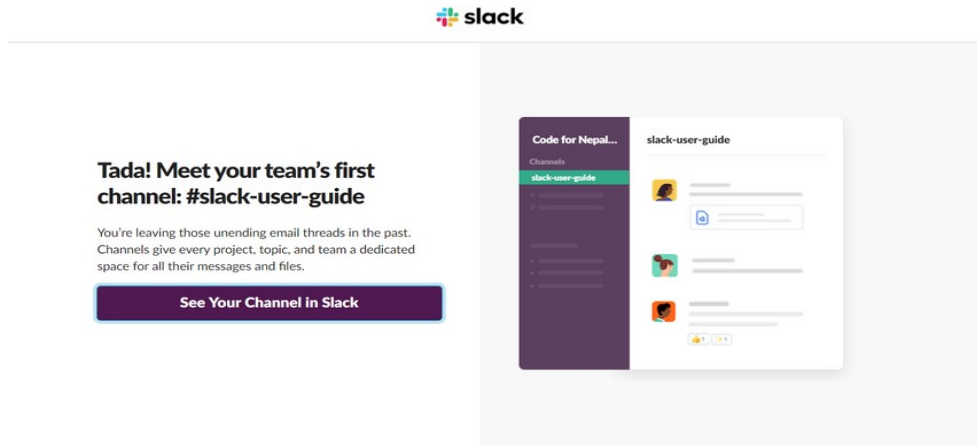   🔗 Get an invite link to share

   Or, skip for now

   Code for Nepal...   slack-user-guide

   Channels
   slack-user-guide

8. Click **SEE YOUR CHANNEL IN SLACK** to see your new Workspace.

Congratulations on creating your new Slack Workspace!

Managing Workspace Functions

Workspaces come with several additional features beyond standard messaging! This section will address how to use these tools, grant function access to your fellow collaborators, and how to turn off certain functions.

1. Make sure you are logged into your account.
2. Click on your **WORKSPACE NAME** in the top left of the page to reveal the **WORKSPACE MENU.**
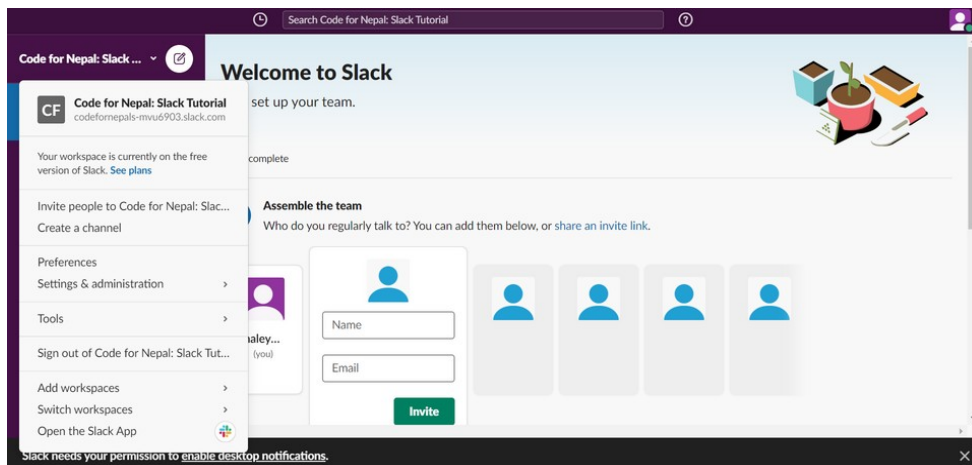
3. Hover over the **SETTINGS AND ADMINISTRATION** tab then click **WORKSPACE SETTINGS** to alter the following features:
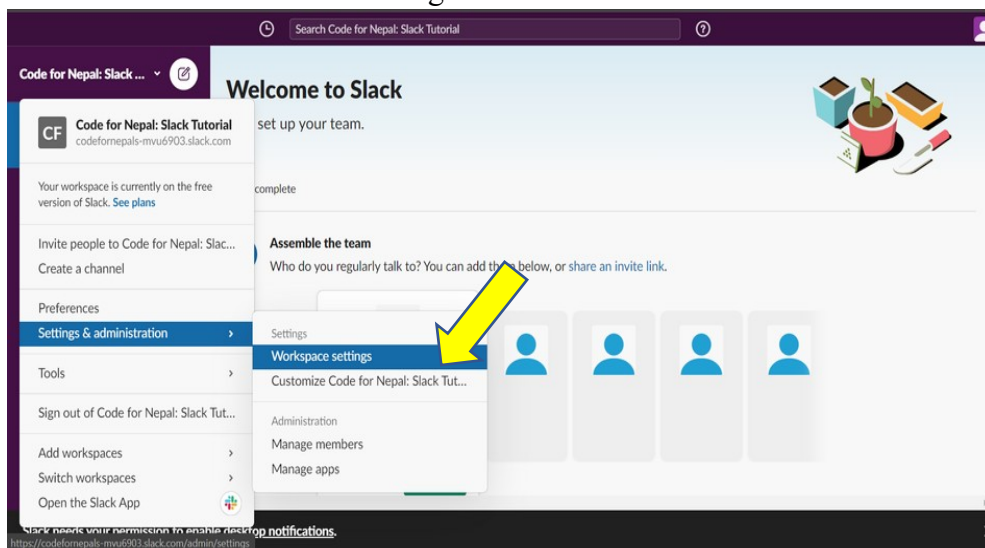
Workplace accessibility—decide how group members can join

- The options for this feature are allowing members to join by email invitation only or by signing up with an email address.

Settings | Permissions | Authentication | Attachments

Joining This Workspace   [Close]

Choose how people join your workspace: by accepting an email invitation or signing up with an email address from an approved domain. If you enable the setting to let people with an email address on an approved domain join automatically, Slack will generate a link that anyone with an approved email address can use to confirm their email and sign up.

○ Allow invitations
○ Allow invitations, and approve invitations for any email address from these domains:

If you want to add more than one domain, separate each one with a comma.

Save

Workspace Language

Workspace Language Settings—decide what default language will be used in communications and instructions from the Slack app.

- This setting produces a drop-down arrow where you can choose from the following languages:
  - Dutch
  - English (UK)
  - English (US)
  - Spanish (Spain)
  - Spanish (Latin America)
  - Mandarin

Workspace Language   [Close]

Set the language for your workspace. This affects system notifications, Slackbot messages, and sign-up emails. Your workspace language is currently set to: **English (US)**

English (US)   ▼

Save

Require profiles to display email addresses (or don't)
- Check the box next to **"DISPLAY MEMBERS' EMAIL ADDRESSES"**

Email Display

Choose whether to display members' email addresses in their Slack profiles.

⚠ Email addresses may still be accessible through apps, test tokens, or the API.

☑ Display members' email addresses

Save

Set Do Not Disturb Hours

- ▪ By **clicking the box**, you can set a range of hours during which all notifications will be silenced. On the first drop down menu, **select the time of day** you would like to stop receiving notifications. On the second drop down menu, **select the time of day** you would like to start receiving notifications again.

Do Not Disturb   Close

Set default Do Not Disturb hours for members of your workspace.

☑ Automatically disable notifications from:

[10:00 PM ▼]   to   [8:00 AM ▼]

Save

Change Workplace URL or Name

- ▪ **Click the box** that says "Change Workplace URL"
- ▪ Once redirected, <u>type in the new URL and Workplace name</u>
- ▪ **Click save changes**

≡ Menu   ⌂ Code for Nepal: Slack Tutorial   🚀 Plans   ⊞ Workspaces   ◎ Help   ▦ Launch

⚙ **Change Workspace Name**

Workspace Name

Your workspace name is displayed in menus and headings. It will usually be (or include) the name of your company.

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Workspace URL

You can change your workspace's URL (web address), but out of courtesy to your fellow Slack users, please don't do this often :)

[codefornepals-mvu6903] .slack.com

Your workspace URL can only contain lowercase letters, numbers and dashes (and must start with a letter or number).

Note: If you change your workspace's URL, Slack will automatically redirect from the old to the new address. However, you should still make sure everyone in your workspace knows about the change because the old name will be placed back into the pool and could be used by some other workspace in the future.
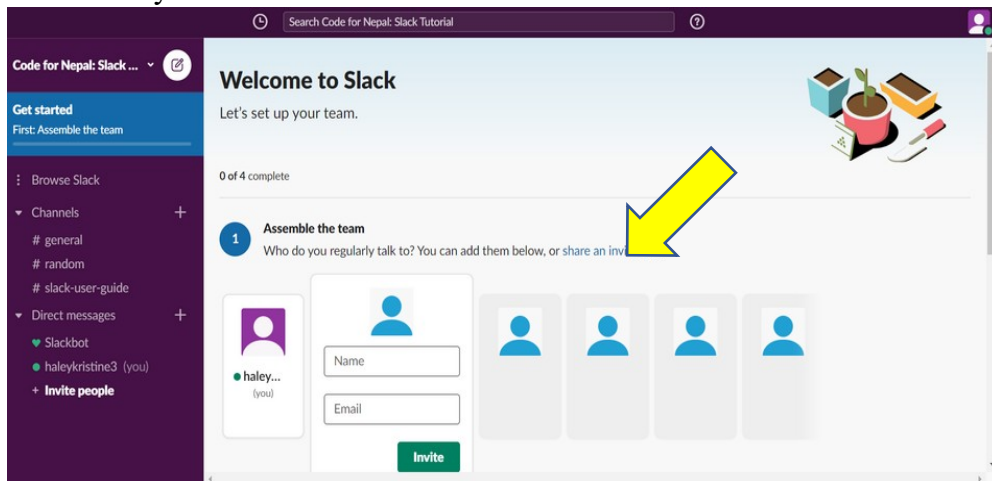
Save Changes

Inviting New Members

You can invite new members even after you set up your Workspace! There are two ways to do this!

1. Type the name(1) of the person you are inviting in the first box and their email (2)in the second box; then, click **invite** (3).
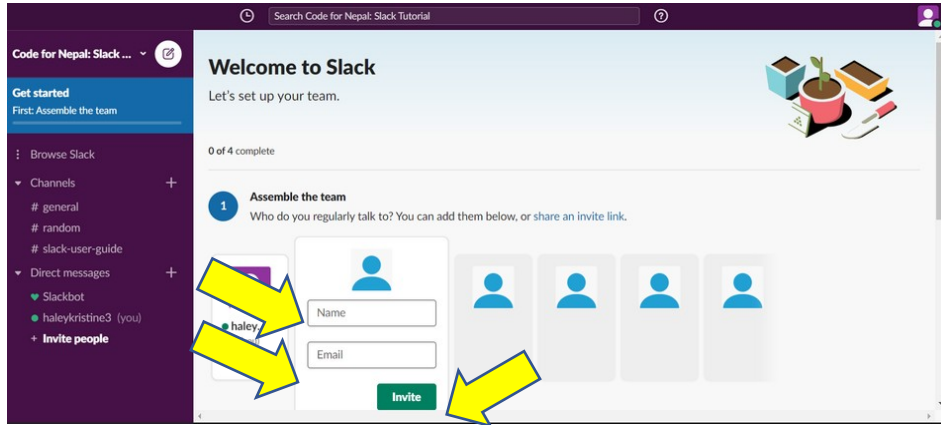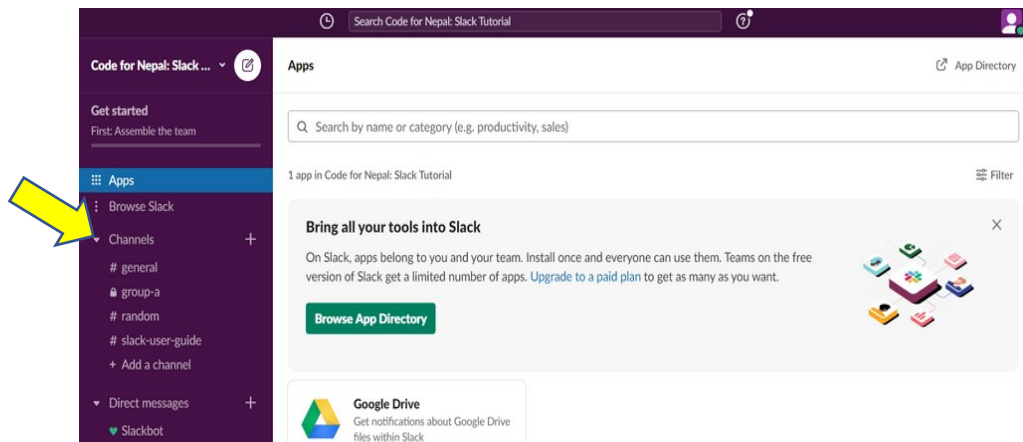

2. OR click **SHARE AN INVITE LINK**, copy the provided link, and distribute it via text or email to your class.
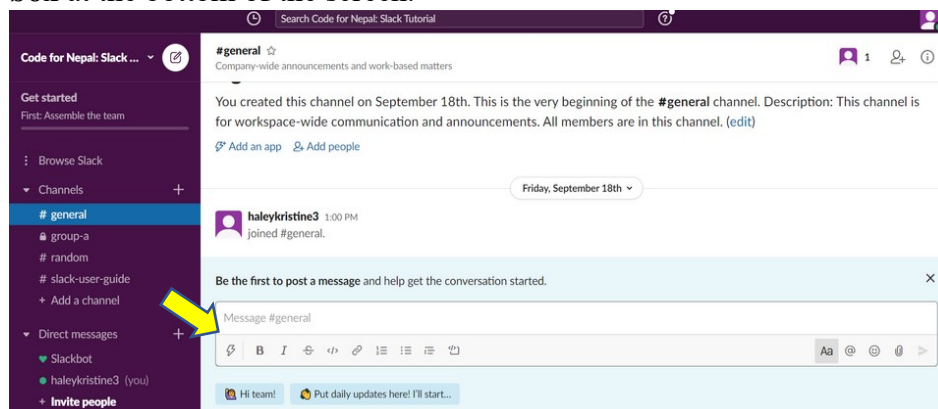

## Sending Messages in Slack

1. Choose which Channel you want to send the message in from the menu on the left of your screen; then, **double click the channel name.**

2. When your screen changes to display the Channel you selected, **click within the text box** at the bottom of the screen.


3. <u>Type your message.</u> When you are done, <u>click enter on your keyboard</u> *or* **click the green arrow at the bottom of the textbox.**
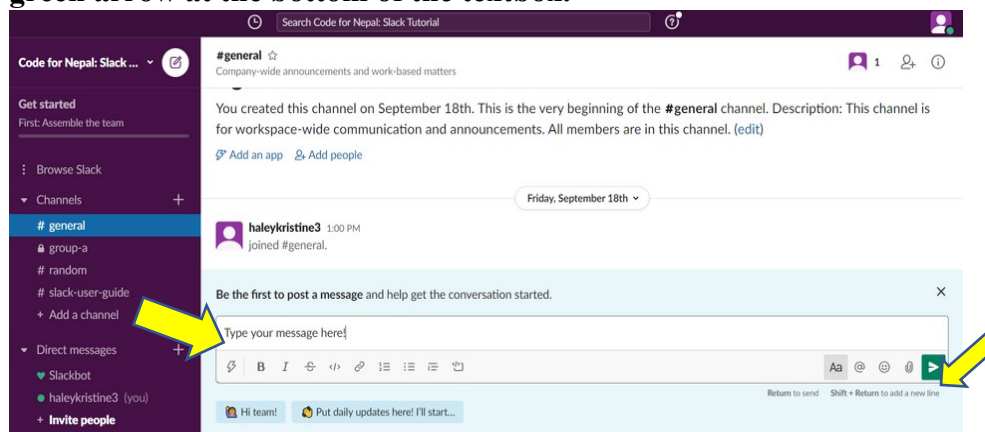

Sharing Documents in Slack

1. To share a document in Slack, you must first make sure that you have saved the document to your computer or that it is saved in Google Drive so that it may be uploaded.
2. Once your document is saved to your computer, go find the Channel that you want to share the document on and **double-click the Channel name.**
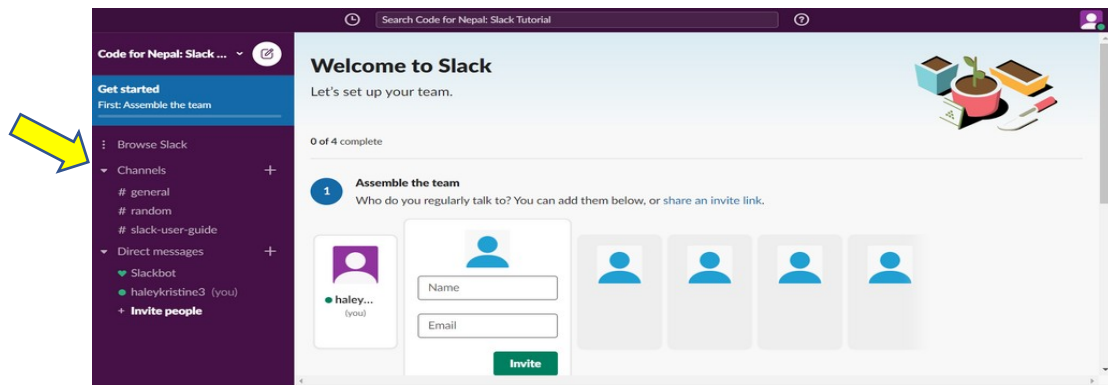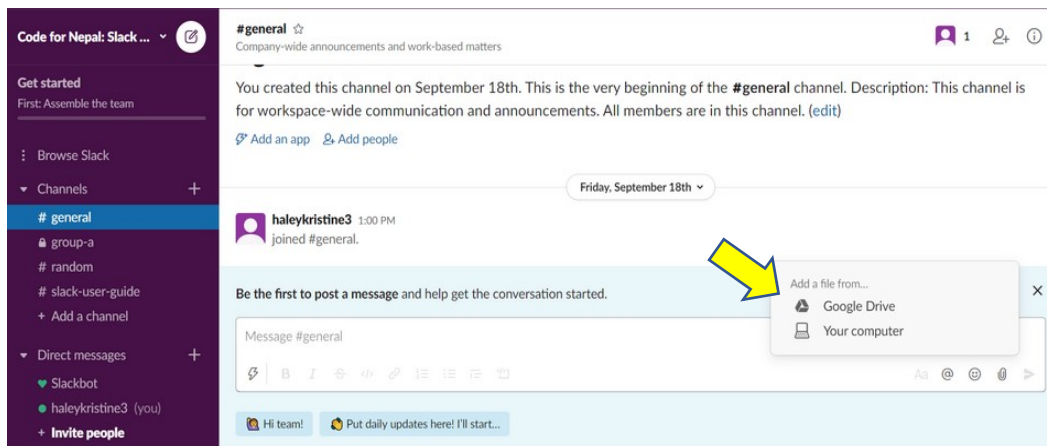
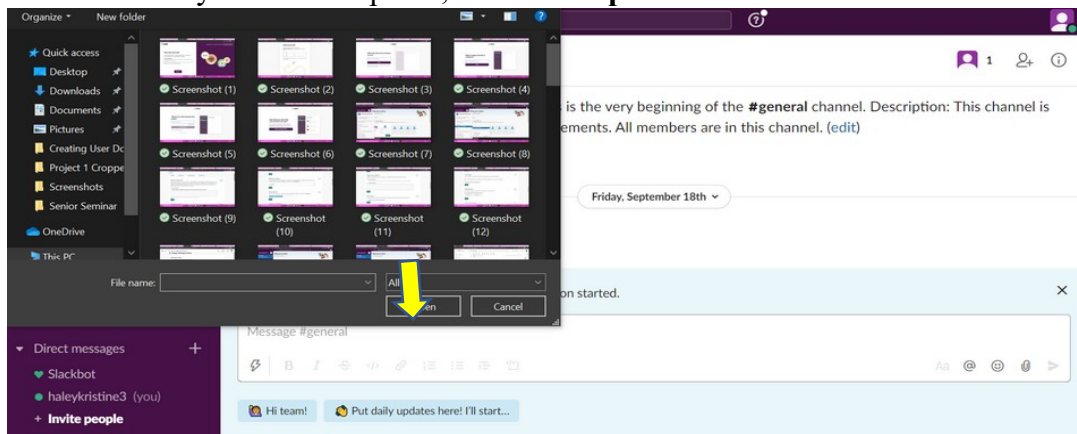3. **Click inside the textbox** at the bottom of the page.
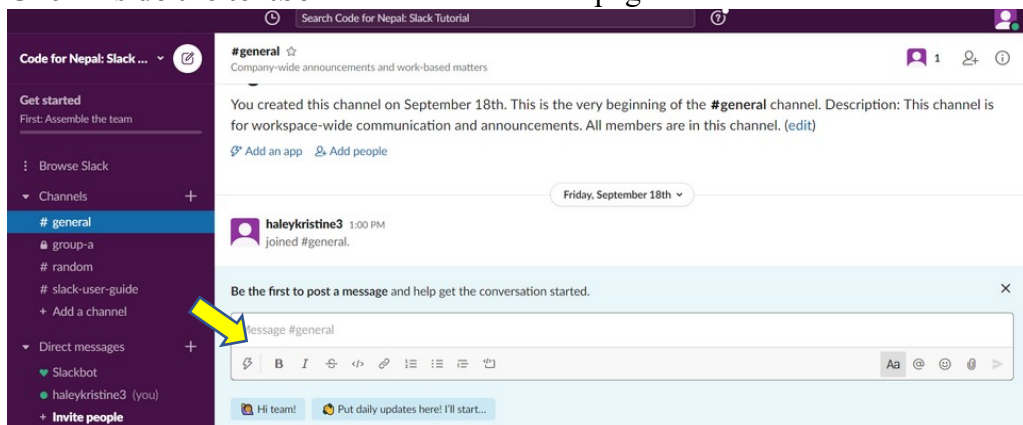

4. Then, **click the paperclip icon**.
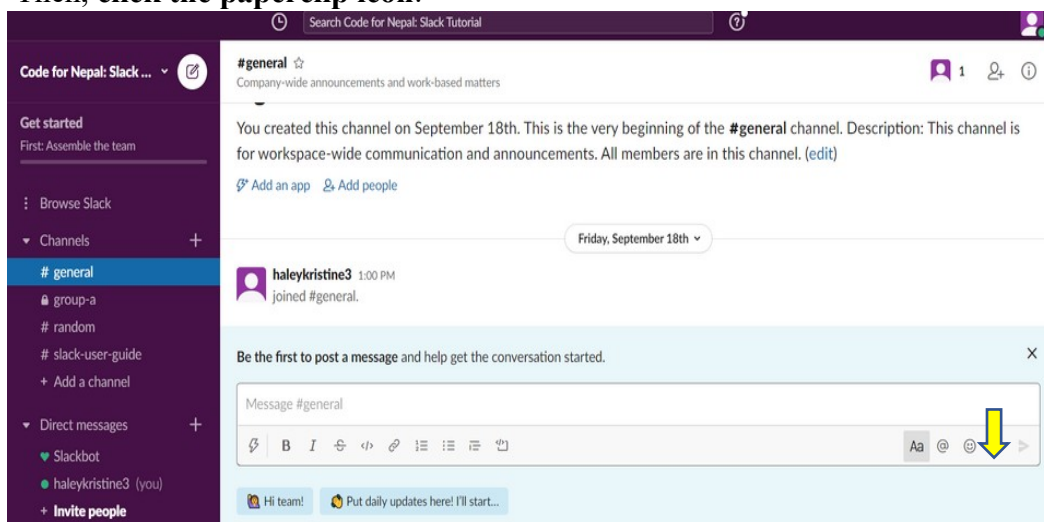
5. The paperclip icon will give you the option to upload from either Google Drive or your computer. **Click the option that indicates where your document is.** For this example, I will click **add file from your computer.**

6. **Select the file** you wish to upload, then **click open.**

7. Once you see your file in the text box, **click Enter** on your keyboard *or* **click the green arrow.**
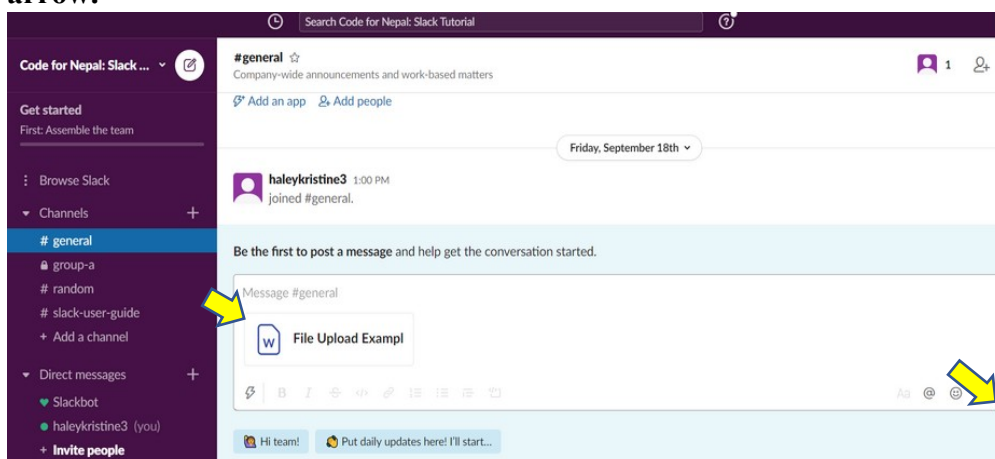
Tips for Working in Slack

- Address group members by typing an @ symbol followed by the individual's display name.
  - For example, if you wanted to address someone named Manish, you would type "@Manish" followed by your message.
- Use emoticons to react to messages within the chat. This is an option that will allow you to minimize nonessential dialogue within the Channel.
  - For example, if you want to ask your class if they read the chapter, you could post the following:
   "Did you read the chapter? If yes, react using a ✅. If not, react using 👀."
    Your students can then respond to your inquiry without crowding the Channel with various "Yes" and "No" responses in the thread.

- Add apps to your Workspace so all your tools are in one place. Here is a list of useful classroom apps that can be linked to Slack and a tutorial on how to add them to your Workspace:
  - Zoom- this app can be used for video meetings with your class
  - Google Docs- this app allows your students to work collaboratively on a single document at the same time.
  - Google Calendar- this app will help your students keep track of due dates and class meetings.

To add these apps to your Workspace, follow the following steps for each individual app you wish to add. For the purpose of this example, I will add Google Calendar.

1. Click the **BROWSE SLACK** button on the Workspace guide to reveal the drop-down menu. Then, click the **APPS** button.
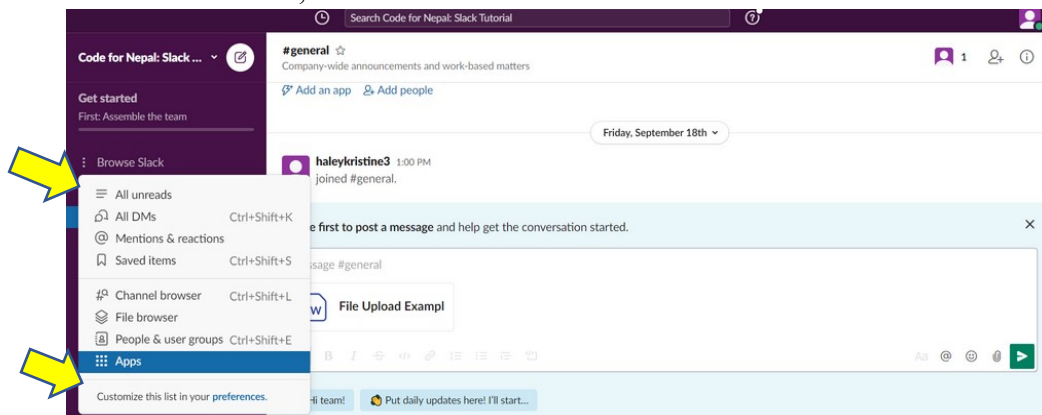
2. Find the app you wish to connect (in this case, Google Calendar) and click **ADD.**
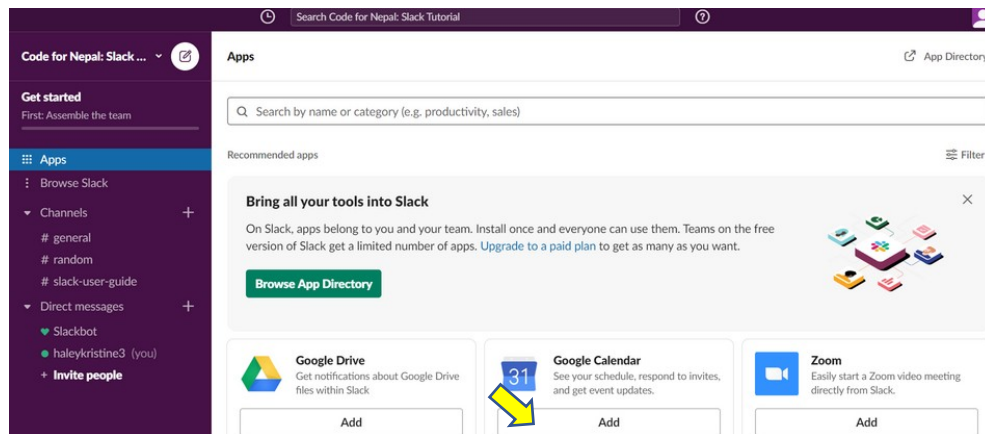
3. Once you are redirected, read the instructions and terms that are specific to the app you wish to add. Once you are sure you still want to integrate the app, click **ADD TO SLACK** button on the left side of the page.