Tips to edit and collaborate on files

Google Workspace productivity guide

Tips for authoring & editing

Use shortcuts to create new files

Constantly creating new files to make edits using Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms?
Skip the multiple clicks and use a shortcut URL instead.

Open a new Google file in your browser

In your browser, enter one of these URLs:

- docs.new
- sheets.new
- slides.new
- forms.new

A blank file opens and you can start adding your content.

Add text with your voice

Chrome Browser only, microphones required

You can type and edit by speaking in Google Docs or in Google Slides speaker notes. Anything
you say turns into text.

Start voice typing in a document

1. Check that your microphone works.
2. Open a document in Google Docs with a Chrome browser.
3. Click Tools ❯ Voice typing. A microphone box appears.
4. When you're ready to speak, click the microphone.
5. Speak clearly, at a normal volume and pace (see below for more information on using
   punctuation).
6. When you're done, click the microphone again.

Start voice typing in Slides speaker notes

1. Check that your microphone works.
2. Open a presentation in Google Slides with a Chrome browser.

3. Click Tools ＞ Voice type speaker notes. The speaker notes open, and a microphone box appears.
4. When you're ready to speak, click the microphone.
5. Speak clearly, at a normal volume and pace (see below for more information on using punctuation).
6. When you're done, click the microphone again.

Share "Make a copy" links to your files

Want to let people make copies of your Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, or Forms files with a single click? Just make a simple change in the link you share.

- Create templates for files, such as Docs proposals, Sheets project plans, Slides pitch decks, and more. Your teammates can quickly copy them to keep your organization's branding consistent.
- Allow colleagues to create personal copies of your files—such as presentations, reports, or designs they like—so they can adjust it for their own purposes.

Email your collaborators

Not available if you use Office Editing for Docs, Sheets, & Slides

Email collaborators right from a Google Docs, Sheets, or Slides file. If you're working on a shared drive file, you can email all members of the shared drive at once.

1. In Docs, Sheets, or Slides, open the file.
2. Click File ☐ Email ☐ Email collaborators.
3. (Optional, shared drive files only) To email all members of the shared drive, check the Members box.
4. (Optional) Change the email recipients or add a subject.
5. Add a message.
6. (Optional) To send a copy of the email to yourself, check the Send yourself a copy box.
7. Click Send.

Insert smart chips & building blocks

Insert smart chips in your Google Doc to include information about:
- Other users with Gmail or Workspace email addresses
- Other Google Docs, Sheets, or Slides files
- Dates or Google Calendar events
- Places and map directions

Where there's a smart chip in your document, you and other users can hover or click on a chip to get more information.

You can also insert dropdowns, or use building blocks to keep track of projects, such as product roadmaps or review trackers.

Add smart chips for people, files, dates & events

1. On your computer, open a document in Google Docs.
2. Type "@".
3. To narrow your suggestions, select from the list of suggestions or enter letters, numbers, or symbols.
      Tip: To add a people smart chip, start typing the name or email address of the person you want, or type `@me` to add yourself.
      Tip: To add a file smart chip, enter the file name or related keywords.
4. Hover over the chip to view related information.

Important: When you mention another user in a smart chip, they don't automatically get access to your document. To grant access to another user, you must share your document.

With Google Docs, you can add and customize dropdown chips that display multiple options. You can also use building blocks to insert table templates that help you track projects, files, and more.

Track file updates & comments

See who changed what

Not available if you use Office Editing for Docs, Sheets, & Slides

If you're collaborating with several people on a single file, it can be difficult to pinpoint who made certain changes and when. Keep track of changes in shared files by identifying changes and who made them.

See who's viewed your file or who you've shared it with

Availability of this feature depends on your edition of Google Workspace and permissions set up by your administrator.

1. In Docs, Sheets, or Slides, open the file.
   Note: You will need to have edit access for the file to see the Activity dashboard data.
2. Click Tools ⬜ Activity dashboard.
3. You can see information about the activity on your file, including:
      Shared with tab: Shows people you've shared the file with. You can also email collaborators.
      All viewers (organization) tab: Shows people in your organization who have viewed the file.
      Viewer trend tab: Shows a chart of viewers over time.
4. (Optional) If you don't want your view history to appear in Activity dashboard, click Privacy Settings and choose an option:

Turn off view history for all files: Under Account setting, turn off Show my view history for all Docs, Sheets and Slides files.
Turn off view history for one file: Under Document setting, turn off Show my view history for this document.

5. Click Save.

See who commented, edited, moved, or shared a file

You can see activity on files in My Drive or in a shared drive.

1. On your computer, go to drive.google.com.
2. On the left click My Drive.
3. In the upper right, click Info ⓘ .
4. To access recent changes, click Activity.
5. To access the activity of a specific file or folder, click the file or folder.
6. To access older changes, scroll down on the right side.

Check or revert to earlier versions

In the past, you might have kept multiple drafts of your files in case you needed to refer or switch to earlier versions. Google Drive keeps all your drafts in one file. You can easily view or restore earlier versions.

View, delete, download, or revert to previous versions any time
Access any version of your file anytime, from any device
Refer back to existing comments in a previous version
Keep your folders clean—there's no need to keep multiple drafts of your files anymore

View or revert to earlier versions of Docs, Sheets, and Slides files

Note: You need Owner or Editor access to see the version history.

1. In Drive, open your file.
2. Click File ☐ Version history ☐ See version history.
3. Click a timestamp to see a previous version of the file. Below the timestamp, you'll see:
   Names of people who edited the document.
   A color next to each person's name. The edits they made appear in that color.
4. (Optional) To revert to this version, click Restore this version.

Upload a new version of a file to Drive

1. On your computer, go to drive.google.com.
2. Click on the file you want to replace.
3. At the top right, click More ⋮ .
4. Click Manage versions.
5. Click Upload new version.

Get notifications of file activity in Chat or Gmail

In Google Chat and Gmail, you can use apps to connect with services. To get notifications in Chat about activity in your Drive, use the Google Drive app.

Turn on Drive notifications in Chat or Gmail

Normally, app notifications are turned on. If you previously turned them off:

1. Go to Chat or Gmail.
2. Send any direct message (such as "hello") to the Google Drive app.
3. In the response, click Turn On Notifications.

After you turn on notifications, you get direct messages about Drive events, such as:

A new file or folder has been shared with you
A new comment or action item mentions you or is assigned to you
Someone has requested access to a file you own
You're close to running out of storage

Note: If you want to delete an app message, in the conversation, point to the message and click Delete ☐ .

Turn off Drive notifications in Chat or Gmail

1. Send any direct message (such as "hello") to the Google Drive app.
2. In the response, click or tap Turn Off Notifications.

To turn notifications back on, send another direct message to the Google Drive app.