

# README.md files

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## Overview

README.md files are Markdown files that describe a directory. GitHub and Gitiles renders it when you browse the directory.

For example, the file /README.md is rendered when you view the contents of the containing directory:

<https://github.com/google/styleguide/tree/gh-pages>

Also README.md at HEAD ref is rendered by Gitiles when displaying repository index:

<https://gerrit.googlesource.com/gitiles/>

## Guidelines

**README.md files are intended to provide orientation for engineers browsing your code, especially first-time users.** The README.md is likely the first file a reader encounters when they browse a directory that contains your code. In this way, it acts as a landing page for the directory.

We recommend that top-level directories for your code have an up-to-date README.md file. This is especially important for package directories that provide interfaces for other teams.

## Filename

Use README.md.

Files named README are not displayed in the directory view in Gitiles.

## Contents

At minimum, every package-level README.md should include or point to the following information:

1. **What** is in this package/library and what's it used for.
2. **Who** to contact.
3. **Status**: whether this package/library is deprecated, or not for general release, etc.
4. **More info**: where to go for more detailed documentation, such as:
  - An overview.md file for more detailed conceptual information.
  - Any API documentation for using this package/library.

## Example

# APIs

This is the top-level directory for all externally-visible APIs, plus some private APIs under ``internal/`` directories.

See [\[API Style Guide\]\(docs/apistyle.md\)](#) for more information.

\*TL;DR\*: API definitions and configurations should be defined in ``proto`` files, checked into ``apis/``.

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