

# Best practices for repositories

## In this article

Create a README file

Favor branching over forking

Use Git Large File Storage

Learn how to use repositories most effectively.

## Create a README file

To make it easier for people to understand and navigate your work, we recommend that you create a README file for every repository.

You can add a README file to a repository to communicate important information about your project. A README, along with a repository license, citation file, contribution guidelines, and a code of conduct, communicates expectations for your project and helps you manage contributions. For more information, see "[About READMEs](#)."

## Favor branching over forking

To streamline collaboration, we recommend that regular collaborators work from a single repository, creating pull requests between branches instead of between repositories. Forking is best suited for accepting contributions from people that are unaffiliated with a project, such as open-source contributors.

To maintain quality of important branches, such as `main`, while using a branching workflow, you can use protected branches with required status checks and pull request reviews. For more information, see "[About protected branches](#)."

## Use Git Large File Storage

To optimize performance, GitHub.com limits the sizes of files allowed in repositories. For more information, see "[About large files on GitHub](#)."

To track large files in a Git repository, we recommend using Git Large File Storage (Git LFS). For more information, see "[About Git Large File Storage](#)."

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