

# How to Create and Share a Google Doc with Comment Access Only

Google Docs makes it incredibly easy to share your writing and get feedback from others. Whether you're working on a project proposal, a blog post, or a report, you can let people read your document and leave comments without worrying about them accidentally changing your work.

Think of comment access like giving someone a copy of your paper with a pen that only writes in the margins. They can read everything and add their thoughts, but they can't mess with your original text. This is perfect when you want feedback but need to stay in control of the final document.

## Why This Matters

When you share a document with comment access only, you get the best of both worlds. Your collaborators can give you detailed feedback by highlighting specific sentences and adding suggestions. But your original work stays safe. No one can delete paragraphs, change your formatting, or accidentally hit the wrong key and mess things up.

This approach works great for getting feedback on drafts, sharing documents with clients for review, or collaborating with people who might not be comfortable with Google Docs yet.

## Creating Your New Google Doc

Let's start from the beginning. Here's how to create a fresh Google Doc that you'll later share:

### Step 1: Go to Google Docs

Open your web browser and go to [docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com). If you're not already signed into your Google account, you'll need to sign in first.

### Step 2: Start a New Document

You'll see a page with document templates. Click the blank document option at the top left. It looks like a white rectangle with a colorful plus sign. This creates a brand new, empty document.

### Step 3: Add Your Content

Start typing your content just like you would in any word processor. You can add headings, format text, insert images, or create lists. Don't worry about making it perfect right now. You can always edit after you get feedback.

### Step 4: Give Your Document a Name

At the top left, you'll see "Untitled document." Click on those words and type in a clear name for your document. Something like "Marketing Plan Draft" or "Project Proposal" works well. This helps you find the document later and makes it clear to others what they're looking at.

## Setting Up Comment Access Only

Now comes the important part. You want to share your document so people can read it and leave comments, but not edit the actual text.

### Step 1: Click the Share Button

Look for the blue "Share" button in the top right corner of your screen. It's hard to miss. Click on it.

### Step 2: Change the General Access Settings

A window will pop up. Look for the section that says "General access" near the bottom. It probably says "Restricted" right now, which means only you can see the document.

Click on "Restricted" to open a dropdown menu. Select "Anyone with the link" instead. This means anyone who has the link you send them can access your document.

### Step 3: Set the Permission Level

Right next to where you just clicked, you'll see another dropdown that probably says "Viewer" or "Editor." Click on this dropdown and select "Commenter." This is the magic setting that gives people comment access only.

### Step 4: Copy the Link

Once you've set it to "Anyone with the link" and "Commenter," click the "Copy link" button. Google will copy the link to your clipboard so you can paste it wherever you need to send it.

### Step 5: Click Done

Click the "Done" button to close the sharing window. Your document is now ready to be shared.

## Sending the Link to Your Collaborators

Now you need to get that link to the people who will review your document.

### Via Email

Open your email and create a new message. Paste the link you copied into the email. Add a brief note explaining what you'd like them to look at. Something like: "Hi! I'd love your feedback on this project proposal. You can add comments to any sections that need work. Thanks!"

### Via Text or Messaging Apps

You can also paste the link into a text message, Slack, or any other messaging platform. Just remember to include a quick explanation of what you're sharing.

## Direct Sharing from Google Docs

If you prefer, you can go back to the Share button and type email addresses directly into the "Add people and groups" field at the top of the sharing window. This sends an automatic email with the link.

## **What Your Collaborators Can and Cannot Do**

Understanding these boundaries helps you set the right expectations when you share your document.

### **What They CAN Do:**

- Read the entire document from start to finish
- Highlight any text by selecting it with their mouse
- Add comments to specific sections by clicking the comment icon that appears
- Reply to existing comments to start discussions
- Suggest edits using the "Suggesting" mode if they know how to switch to it
- Download a copy of the document for their own reference

### **What They CANNOT Do:**

- Delete or change any of your original text
- Add new paragraphs or sentences directly into the document
- Change formatting like fonts, colors, or spacing
- Move or delete images, tables, or other elements
- Share the document with additional people (unless you give them permission)
- See the edit history or previous versions

## **Understanding Comments**

When someone leaves a comment, you'll get an email notification. The comment will appear in a small box on the right side of your document, connected to whatever text they highlighted.

You can respond to comments, resolve them when you've addressed the feedback, or delete them if they're not helpful. All of this happens without changing your original document.

## **Tips for Success**

### **Be Clear About What You Want**

When you send the link, explain what kind of feedback you're looking for. Are you wanting them to check for typos? Do you need feedback on the overall structure? Being specific helps you get better comments.

### **Set a Deadline**

Let people know when you need their feedback by. Something like "I'd love your thoughts by Friday" keeps the project moving forward.

## **Check Your Notifications**

Google will email you when someone adds comments. Check these regularly so you can respond and keep the conversation going.

## **Thank Your Reviewers**

People are taking time to help you. A quick thank you goes a long way and makes them more likely to help again in the future.

## **You're Ready to Collaborate**

Sharing a Google Doc with comment access only is one of the most useful skills you can learn for collaboration. It keeps your work safe while opening the door for valuable feedback from others.

Don't worry if it feels a bit awkward the first time. Most people are familiar with leaving comments, and Google Docs makes the process pretty intuitive. Start with a simple document and one trusted reviewer to get comfortable with the process.

Remember, you're always in control. You can change the sharing settings anytime, stop sharing the document, or make a copy if you want to experiment with suggested changes. The original stays exactly as you left it until you decide to make changes.

Give it a try with your next project. You might be surprised by how much better your work becomes when you get input from others while keeping full control over the final result.