

# The Paperless Classroom with Google Docs

by - Eric Curts

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## Overview

Google Docs provides many ways to go paperless through sharing and collaboration options. There is not just one single right way to use Google Docs for a paperless classroom. Rather there are many tools and features that can be used on their own or in combination to meet your varying needs. This guide will cover many of the most common ways that Google Docs can help teachers and students move away from paper and into a digital-only environment.

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## How to name documents and folders

Since many students and staff may be sharing documents and folders with other students and staff, it could get confusing quickly when seeing all of the shared files in Google Docs. One thing that can help is to agree upon a **common naming scheme for files and folders**. A good name should tie the item to a time (year), a class (perhaps period), who created it (your name), and what it is (a certain paper, projector, or turn-in folder).

You may want to come up with your own specific way for files and folders to be named, but if not, below are some helpful recommendations:

For documents and folders, include in the name:

- the **current school year** (four digits such as 2011 for school year 2011-2012)
- your **class period** (two digits such as 03 for 3rd period)
- **your name** (last name then first name)
- the **name of the document or folder**

For example a **document** may be named: **2011-07-Smith John-Research Paper**

A shared **folder** may be named: **2011-02-Doe Jane-Turn-in Folder**

The most important aspect of a good naming system is that the files and folder names should make sense to both the person who created them, and the people they are being shared with.

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## How to choose sharing options: Edit, Comment, and View

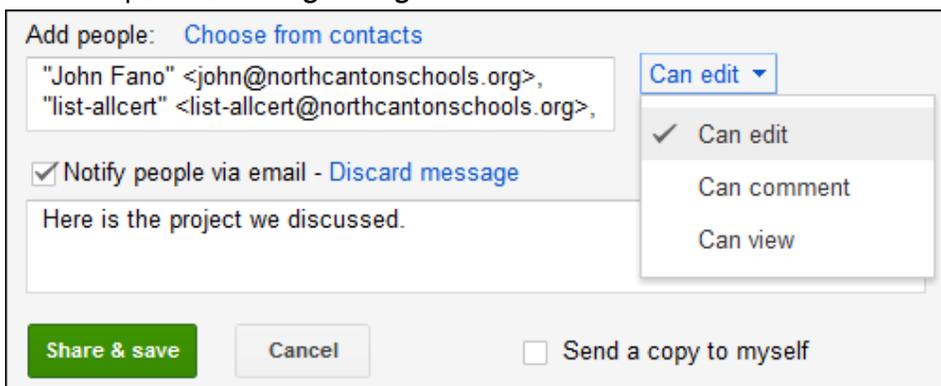
When you choose to share a document through Google Docs, you get to decide how much access that person has to your document. Typically you can choose up to three different options for the level of access you give. The access you choose will depend why you are sharing the document with the person.

- **Can edit** - If you choose this option, then the other person is able to make changes to the document. This is good for group work, where several people are collaborating on the project. This can also be a good match when turning in an assignment to a teacher, if the teacher needs to be able to mark up the document in detail.
  - **Can comment** - If you choose this, then the other person will not be able to edit the document, but they will be able to leave comments in the document. These comments will not print out with the document, but will be visible on screen. This is useful for peer review, such as when a student needs another student to read their work and leave comments on it. This is also a good fit when turning in an assignment to a teacher, if the teacher just needs to leave feedback and grading information as comments.
  - **Can view** - If you choose this option, then the other person is only able to view the document. This is good for material that simply needs to be read (handouts, syllabi, sample work, etc.) or for documents that will serve as templates, where the user will make a copy of the document that they can modify as their own.
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## How to share a document with specific people

Probably the most common and simplest way to go paperless is to share a document with another person or group of people using the **big blue Share button** in the top right corner of a document. This is a good option to use if you are sharing the document with specific people or groups of people that can entered by email address. This is also best for a one-shot or unique sharing need, and not for when you do plan to share a lot of documents with the same people over a period of time. For those situations, see how to use folders for sharing instead.

1. With the document open, click the **Share** button in the top right corner 
2. This will open the **Sharing settings** window



Add people: [Choose from contacts](#)

"John Fano" <john@northcantonschools.org>,  
"list-allcert" <list-allcert@northcantonschools.org>

Notify people via email - [Discard message](#)

Here is the project we discussed.

Send a copy to myself

[Share & save](#) [Cancel](#)

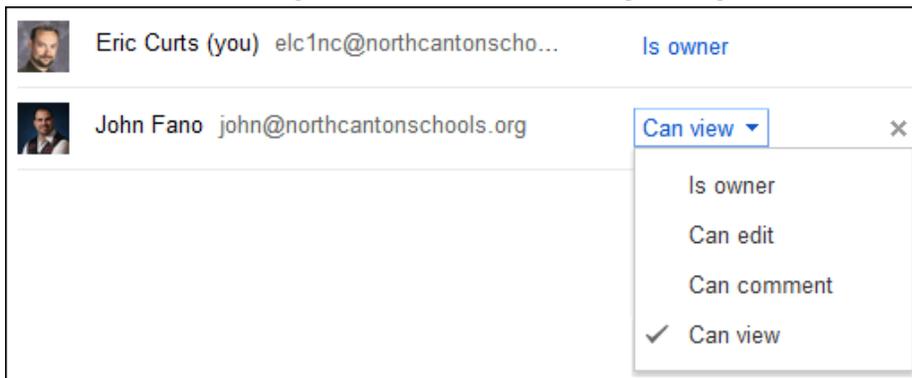
Can edit ▼

- ✓ Can edit
- Can comment
- Can view

3. At the bottom of the window there will be a box labeled **Add people**:
4. Click in that box and **type in the people or groups** that you want to share the document with. This can include individual people or groups of people identified by a Google Group email address. The **address book** will find matches based on what you type.
5. Next click the **Can edit** button to pick whether the users can **edit** or **comment** on or **view** the presentation
6. Optionally click in the **Add message** link to include **directions or additional information** for the recipients
7. Finally, click the **Save & share** button
8. All of the recipients will now get an **email message** indicating that the document has been shared with them
9. For **individuals**, the document will also automatically **show up in their Google Docs** list of documents.
10. For **groups** (Google Group email addresses), users will **only get an email** notification. **Note: The document will not show up in their Docs list until they open it for the first time.**

In the future you can always return to the **Sharing settings** window to **change or remove people**

1. Click the Share button again to return to the **Sharing settings** window.

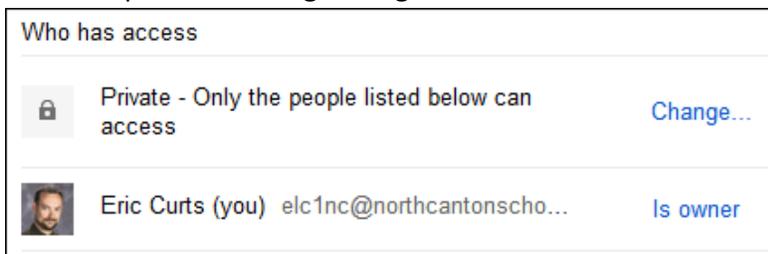


2. Next to each user's name will be a drop-down menu to switch between **Can edit**, **Can comment**, and **Can view**
3. Also there will be an **X** that you can click to **remove that person's access** entirely

## How to share a document as a link

Instead of sharing a document with specific people, you can instead share the document with anyone who has the link to the document. This is useful when you are not sure of everyone in the target audience, or do not have an easy way to include them through an email group. In such a case you will need to be able to share a special link with these people.

1. With the document open, click the **Share** button in the top right corner
2. This will open the **Sharing settings** window.



3. At the top you will see **Private - Only the people listed below can access.**

4. Click the **Change...** link next to that line.
5. A new window will open up where you can change the privacy settings.

### Sharing settings

Visibility options:

-  **Public on the web**  
Anyone on the Internet can find and access. No sign-in required.
-  **Anyone with the link**  
Anyone who has the link can access. No sign-in required.
-  **North Canton City Schools**  
People at North Canton City Schools can find and access.
-  **People at North Canton City Schools with the link**  
People at North Canton City Schools who have the link can access.
-  **Private**  
Only people explicitly granted permission can access. Sign-in required.

Access: **Anyone (no sign-in required)** Can view ▾

Note: Items with any visibility option can still be published to the web. [Learn more](#)

Learn more about visibility

6. You can now pick one of five sharing settings:
  - a. **Public on the web** - Anyone can find and view the document.
  - b. **Anyone with the link** - You will get a web link for the document to share with others (through email or posting online). Anyone who has that link can click it and view your presentation.
  - c. **[your school domain]** - Anyone logged in with their school Google account can find and view the document.
  - d. **People at [your school domain] with the link** - Only people with the link who also are logged into their school Google account can view the document.
  - e. **Private** - Only you can access the document.
7. You can also control whether users can make changes to your document by clicking the **Access** setting at the bottom and choosing **Can view**, **Can comment**, or **Can edit**.
8. Click **Save** when done.
9. You will now return to the **Sharing settings** window but now you will have a link for the document that you can share with others.

### Sharing settings

Link to share

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1oY\\_-rmMybQYDEEkzrjES-fdNU1KibWNRtq](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1oY_-rmMybQYDEEkzrjES-fdNU1KibWNRtq)

10. To copy the link, **click on the link** to select it, then **right-click** and choose **Copy**.
11. If you need to **make any changes** to sharing, you can repeat the process above and choose different settings at any time.

Since the link for the document will be very long and confusing, you will need to consider how to share it with others. Options might include:

- **Email** the link to those who need it.
- Post the link on your **website**, blog, forum, or other online source.
- Put the link inside **another document** and share that document (perhaps as a document with a whole list of links).
- Turn the link into a **QR Code**, and then include the QR Code in other media. (A good QR Code generator can be found at: <http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>)
- Use a **URL shortener** to make the link smaller such as: <https://bitly.com/> or <http://tinyurl.com/> or <http://goo.gl/>

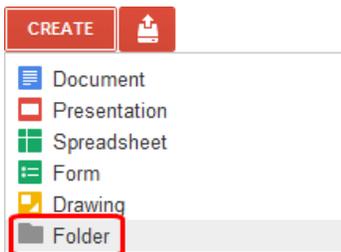
## How to use folders

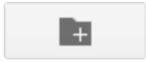
If you need to share documents frequently with the same people over a period of time, you will find that using folders will make the process easier. First, we will cover what folders are and how to manage them, and then we will look at how to use them specifically for sharing documents.

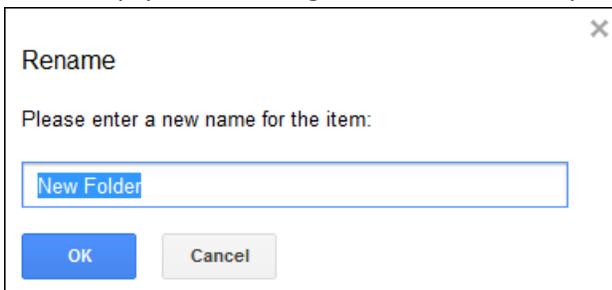
## How to create folders for your documents

In Google Docs, folders can be used to organize your documents. However unlike the normal idea of folders, you can put a document into multiple folders at once in Google Docs (similar to how you can put multiple labels on one Gmail message.) To create a folder, do the following:

1. First go to your main Google Drive screen and select where you wish to create the folder.
2. If it will be a top level folder, simply click on **My Drive** on the left side of the Google Drive screen, and then click the **Create** button, and choose **Folder** from the drop-down menu.



3. Or if it will be a **sub-folder** of some other folder, first drill down through your folders until you have opened the one where the new folder will go. Then click the **New folder** button  at the top of the window.
4. Either way, you will now go to a screen where you can type in the **name of the new folder**.



5. Click **OK** when done and the folder will be created in the location you chose.

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## How to put your documents in folders

Once you have created folders, you can now **put your documents in the folders** to keep them organized. Just like email labels, however, you can put a document in **as many folders as you like**, not just one. There are several ways to put a document in a folder. However, it is important to understand the difference between **moving** a document to a folder and **adding** a document to a folder:

- **Move** - This puts a file into a new folder and removes the document from any folders it is currently in. Basically it strips off all the labels from the file (removing it from all current folders) and puts one new label on it (putting it in the new folder).
- **Add** - This puts the file into a new folder while still leaving it in any existing folders it is currently associated with. Basically you are just adding a new label to the file (for the new folder) while leaving all existing labels for all current folders alone.

Based on the method chosen below you may be able to move, add, or do both in each situation:

### Method #1 - Add to a folder through Ctrl + Drag and Drop

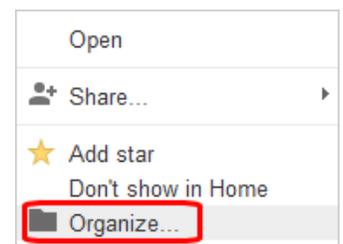
1. Go to your normal Google Drive screen and locate the document in your **My Drive** section, **Shared with me**, **Recent**, **All items**, or such.
2. Also, expand out your folders to expose the destination folder as needed.
3. Press the **Ctrl key** on your keyboard, and then **click and hold down the mouse button** on the document you wish to add to a folder.
4. Now with the Ctrl key still pressed and the mouse button held down, **drag the document** to the destination folder you want on the left side of the Google Drive screen.
5. A pop-up label will read **Add [your document]** so you will know you are in Add mode.
6. Put the document **on top of the folder** you want to add it to, and then **let go of the mouse button**.
7. The document will now be added to that folder.
8. Repeat the process for other folders if you wish to add the document to more than one folder.

### Method #2 - Move to a folder through normal Drag and Drop

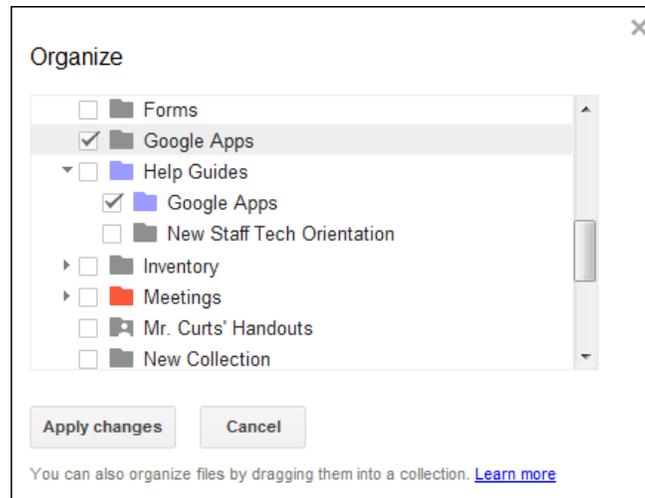
1. Go to your normal Google Drive screen and locate the document in your **My Drive** section, **Shared with me**, **Recent**, **All items**, or such.
2. Also, expand out your folders to expose the destination folder as needed.
3. Click and hold down the mouse button on the document you wish to move to a folder.
4. Now with the mouse button held down, **drag the document** to the destination folder you want on the left side of the Google Drive screen.
5. A pop-up label will read **Move [your document]** so you will know you are in Move mode.
6. Put the document **on top of the folder** you want to move it to, and then **let go of the mouse button**.
7. The document will now be moved to that folder and removed from any of your other folders (but will not be removed from someone else's folder, if it is their document, and they have shared it with you).

### Method #3 - Organize from the Drive Screen

1. Go to your normal Google Drive screen and locate the document.
2. Right-click on the document and then choose **Organize** from the pop-up menu.
3. Or check the checkbox in front of the document name to select it, then click More in the top menu bar, and choose **Organize** from the drop-down menu.



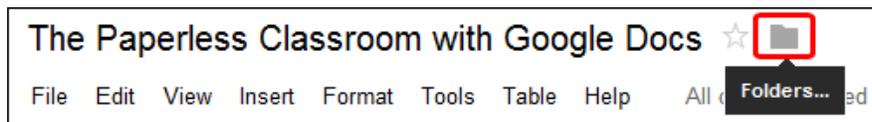
- This will open a window where you can expand all of your folders and check the ones you want to associate with this file.



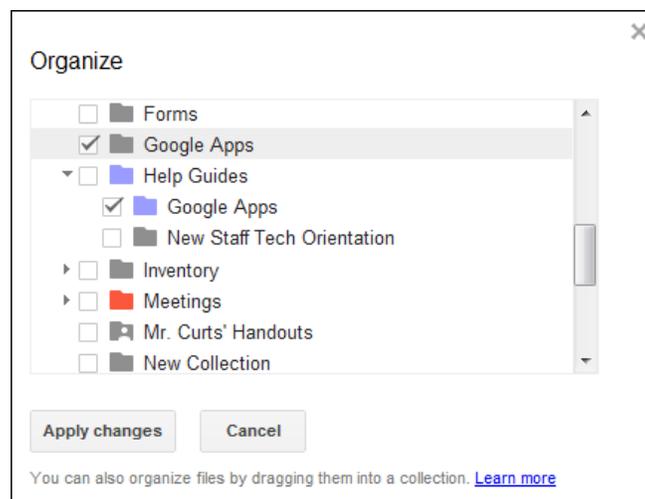
- If you check the box for a folder, you will be adding the document to that folder.
- If you remove a checkbox, you will be removing the document from that folder.
- You can select as many folders as you want for the document.
- Click **Apply changes** when done.

#### Method #4 - Organize from inside the Document

- You can also put your document into a folder with the document already opened.
- Look to the right of the document title at the top of the screen, and where you can locate and click on a folder icon.



- This will open a window where you can expand all of your folders and check the ones you want to associate with this file.



- If you check the box for a folder, you will be adding the document to that folder.
- If you remove a checkbox, you will be removing the document from that folder.
- You can select as many folders as you want for the document.
- Click **Apply changes** when done.

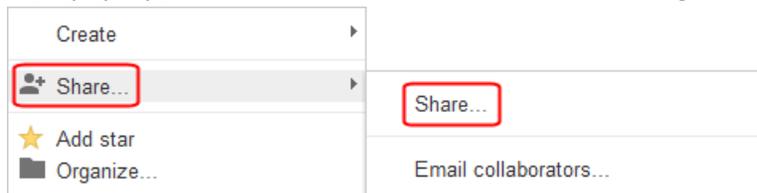
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## How to share a folder

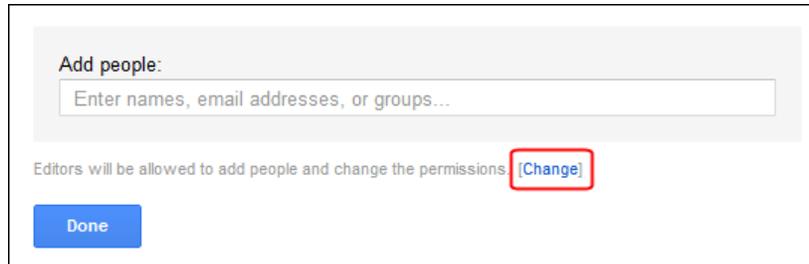
Instead of just sharing individual documents, you can also choose to **share an entire folder** with others. If you do this, then **everything inside the folder** will be automatically shared with those people. If later you add a new file to the folder, it will automatically be shared to those people as well.

Sharing a folder is useful if you plan to share multiple files routinely with the same person or group of people. For example, this could include a **project** you are working on, or a **handouts folder**, or an **assignment turn-in folder**.

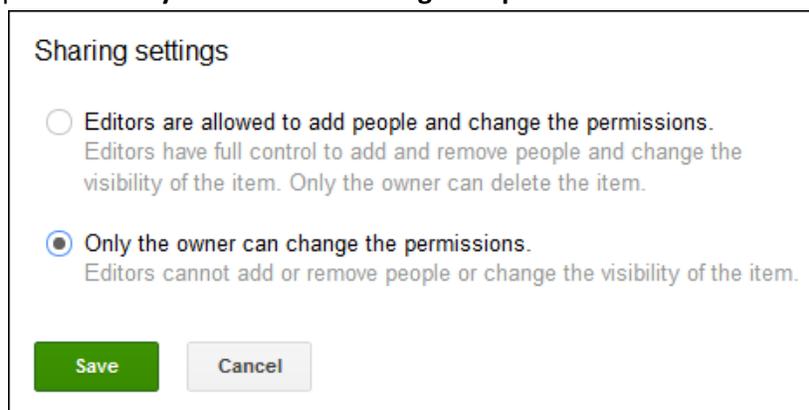
1. To share a folder, first **click on the folder name** on the left side of your Drive screen.
2. Now **click the down-arrow** to the right of the folder name, or **right-click** on the folder name.
3. From the drop-down (or pop-up) menu choose **Share...** and then **Share...** again.



4. This will open the **Sharing settings** window.
5. Now **follow the same instructions for how to share a document** from earlier sections. This includes sharing with people and email groups, changing privacy settings, and giving rights to view, comment, or edit.
6. **Note:** When sharing folders there is **one extra permission setting for editors**. By default editors of a folder are also allowed to add new people to the folder and to change the permissions on the folder. If you do not want editors to have these rights, then you will need to do the following:
7. Click **Change** at the bottom of the **Sharing Settings** window.



8. Now select the option for **Only the owner can change the permissions**. and then click **Save**.



9. When you have finished sharing the folder, the folder will show up for the users under **Shared with me** on the left side of their Google Drive screen

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## How to use folders as staff handout folders

One good use for shared folders is to create a handout folder for your class. This would be a folder where you can put any documents you want your students to have access to, but not be able to change. These would be read-only documents for your students. Examples would include handouts, study guides, and templates that they could make a copy of to edit their own version. To make a handout folder, do the following:

- Create a normal folder.
- Name it something that will make sense to both you and your students. A good format might be year-period-teacher-handouts, such as 2011-03-Curts-Handouts.
- Now go to the sharing settings for that folder.
- Add your students to the **Add people** section at the bottom, and give them only **Can view** rights.
- Your students will now receive an email with a link to the shared folder.
- Have your students click that link to open the shared folder, making sure it has added the handout folder to their list of shared folder.
- Alternately you can change the **privacy** on the folder, and set it to **People at [your school] with the link**.
- Share that link with your students, and again make sure they click the link to open the folder.
- Now anything you add to the folder will automatically be available to the students in the shared handout folder.

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## How to use folders as student turn-in folders

Another good use for shared folders is for students to create turn-in folders for a teacher. Then to turn in an assignment, the student simply adds the document to the turn-in folder and it will be available to the teacher. Here is how turn-in folders are made and managed:

- Have each student create a normal folder. You may want to do this all at once in a lab setting.
- Have the students name the folder something that makes sense to them and to you. A good format might be **year-period-student-turnin**, such as **2011-03-SmithJohn-Turnin**.
- Now the student goes to the sharing settings for that folder.
- The student needs to add their teacher in the **Add people** section.
- To allow the teacher to provide feedback, notes, suggestions, grades, and such, the student should give the teacher **Can comment** or **Can edit** rights.
- This is a one-time process the students will need to do to share their turn-in folders with you.

Now as the teacher, all of the students' shared folders will show up in your list of shared folders under **Shared with me** in Google Drive. If you have a lot of students, this can be quite a mess. So the best thing to do now is to organize the students' folders. This is a one-time process you will need to do at the start of the year.

- Click in your **My Drive** section and make a folder for the current school year, such as **2012**.
- Select that folder and now make sub-folders under it for each of your class periods, such as **Per 1**, **Per 2**, etc.
- Now open up your **Shared with me** section where all your students' shared folders are listed.
- If the students have named the folders as you instructed, you can sort them by name to get them in order by class period (click the **Sort** button in the top right).
- Now select all of the students for a particular period, and then **drag and drop** their folders into the period folder you created for them.

- Repeat for the rest of your students and the periods they are in.
- When done you will have all your students' turn-in folders arranged nicely within period folders inside a year folder.

Anytime a student needs to turn in an assignment, they simply add it to their turn-in folder for your class period and the document will now be available for you to access.

## How to use forms to turn in assignments

Another creative option for managing the submission of documents is to use Google Forms to collect the needed information. The form does not take the place of sharing the documents, but instead helps you as a teacher to manage the shared assignments. Here's how it works:

### Teacher makes a form:

- First, the teacher needs to create a Google Form that will be used to collect the assignment turn-in information.
- The teacher may want to make a form for each class period to help keep things organized.
- Form questions should include: Last Name, First Name, Assignment title (use a **Choose from a list** question), and URL for assignment.
- The teacher may also want to check the options to require the user to be signed into their school Google Apps account, and to automatically collect their school username. This will add another layer of authentication.
- The teacher will now want to share the Form link with your students through any of the normal methods (email, post on website, QR code, URL shortener, etc.)

**2012 - Per 1 - Curts - Assignment Turn-in Form**

\* Required

Last Name \*

First Name \*

Assignment Title \*

URL for assignment \*

Powered by [Google Docs](#)

Note: The teacher can go back in and edit the Assignment title question to add new assignments and remove old ones as needed throughout the year.

### Students submit their assignment information:

- When a student completes an assignment, they need to first share it with their teacher as normal.
- Next the student needs to copy the web address (URL) of the shared document.
- If the document was shared with the teacher directly (through the **Add people** option) then the web link can simply be copied from the browser's URL address bar at the top of the screen when the document is open.
- If the document was shared by changing its privacy settings, then the link can be copied from the **Sharing settings** window.
- The student now accesses the assignment turn-in form, fills in their information, and pastes in the link to their shared document.

### Teacher uses form to manage submitted assignments:

- Now the teacher can open the spreadsheet view of the form to see all of the assignments that have been submitted.

- The date and time are included, which is helpful if there are specific cutoffs for when assignments are due.
- The teacher can click on the assignment links to quickly open the shared documents.
- The teacher can add helpful information in the columns to the right of the data to record grades, notes, or simply an indication that the assignment has been processed.
- Using the filter option in Google Spreadsheets, the teacher can show just the links for specific assignments.
- Old assignment information can be removed (by deleting the rows) or hidden. Simply **right click** on the row header and choose **Delete row** or **Hide row**.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Timestamp	Username	Last Name	First Name	Assignment Title	URL for assignment	Grade	Done
5	4/24/2012 16:50:22	00000	Smith	John	Lab 15	<a href="https://docs.google.com/g...orB1D8WkmzfNxyPOX1C">https://docs.google.com/g...orB1D8WkmzfNxyPOX1C</a>	C	X
6	4/24/2012 16:50:49	00000	Smith	John	Photosynthesis Presentation	<a href="https://docs.google.com/g...">https://docs.google.com/g...</a>	A	X
7	4/24/2012 16:51:18	00000	Smith	John	Research Paper	<a href="https://docs.google.com/g...">https://docs.google.com/g...</a>	B	X

## How to create and use templates

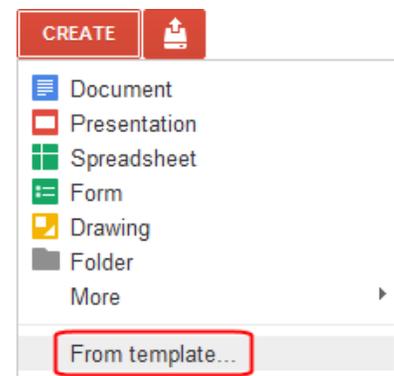
Another great way to go paperless is to take advantage of the Google Docs template gallery. With templates you can create documents, presentations, and other files that serve as starter guides for your students. Students are not able to change your original template, but they can make their own copy of it to edit as they need.

Templates are especially useful in a couple of situation:

- With young or inexperienced students, a template can help them get started on their project without being limited by their lack of proficiency.
- Also, when time is limited, templates can help all users to spend time inserting their content, rather than losing time creating the document layout.

### To create a template, do the following:

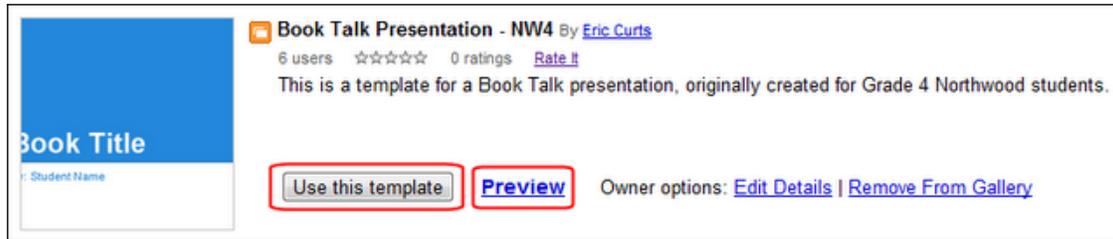
- Create a document, spreadsheet, or presentation as normal.
- Design it with just the basic needed information, leaving space for the users to later insert their own content.
- Perhaps include directions right in the template, which the users can later delete after reading.
- Close the document when done.
- Now go back to your normal Google Drive screen, and click **Create** and then **From template...**
- This will open the Google Docs Template Gallery.
- Click the **Submit a template** link in the top right of the screen.
- Click **Choose from your Google Docs** and navigate to locate and select your template document.
- Enter a **Description** and choose a **Category** for you template.
- Finally click the **Submit template** button.
- Your template is now available in the Gallery.
- Any time you make a change to the original template document, it will update in the Gallery as well.



### For a student (or any user) to use a template, they do the following:

- From the main Google Docs screen, click the **Create** button.

- Then click **From template...** from the drop-down menu.
- The **Template Gallery** will now open. You can choose templates from your school domain, as well as Public templates from all over the world.
- You can narrow your template search by choosing **document type** and **category**, or by entering a **search term**.
- For any template you find you can click **Preview** to see a full size preview of the file.
- If you want to use the template, click **Use this template**.
- A copy of the document will then open up that you can edit and save for your own use.



## How to use comments in the grading process

Google Docs allows you to add **comments** to the a shared document, presentation, and such. This is a useful way to share ideas with other **collaborators**, or to give **feedback to a student** on a document you are grading. Comments that you leave on a student’s document, can be commented on by the student as well, and back and forth. This provides a way to have a conversation about the progress of a term paper, to get clarification from a student about a question, or simply to provide feedback.

1. To insert a comment, click in the document or select the words where you want the comment to be linked
2. Next click **Insert** in the top menu bar, then click **Comment** (*you can also press Ctrl - Alt - M on your keyboard if you prefer*)
3. A comment box will appear to the right of the document, where you can type in your comment
4. This comment will now be visible to others who share the document (*such as your collaborators or the student who turned in the assignment*) although the comment(s) will not display when the document is printed.
5. Collaborators (students, you, etc.) can reply to any comment by typing in the box labeled **Reply to this comment...**
6. You can also click the links to **Edit** your existing comment, or to **Delete** it.
7. Finally you can click **Resolve** to close the comment from further replies.
8. Note: You can also leave general comments that are not tied to a specific part of the document by clicking the **Comments** button in the top right corner of the document or presentation.

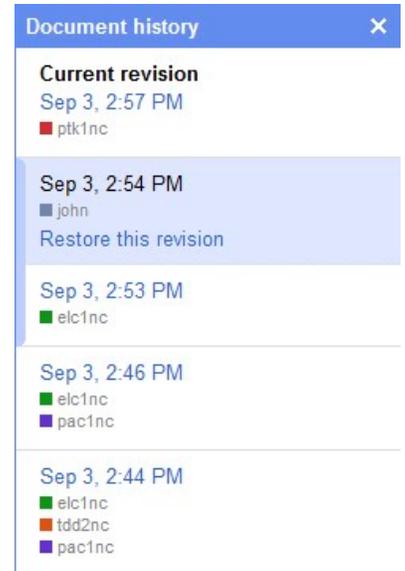


## How to use revision history

When going paperless, one result is that you typically will only have one copy of a document or presentation, instead of several paper copies that may show the changes over time (such as rough drafts). It can be very beneficial to see how a student has revised a document (seeing if they have taken your suggestions), and to see which students in a group did which portions of the assignment.

Google Docs allows you to see the **full revision history** for a document and revert back to any earlier version if needed.

1. Click **File** and then **See revision history**
2. This will open a **side bar** on the right side of the screen where a **history of changes** will be listed by user
3. If you click on any **time stamp** on the right, the document will **show what changes** were made, highlighting the changes by color based on the user
4. If you want to go back to an earlier version of the document, click **Restore this revision** on the time stamp for the version you want
5. If you need to see smaller, more detailed changes, you can click the button at the bottom that says **Show more detailed revisions**
6. To exit the revision history mode, just click the **X** next to **Document history** at the top of the side bar



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## Use Voice Comments

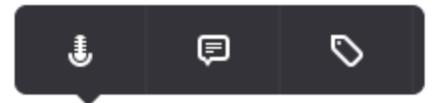
Kaizena is a third-party app that allows you to highlight text, then record and attach voice comments to any shared Google Doc. You can also add text comments and links to helpful websites. This is a powerful way to provide personalized feedback to students on the documents they share with you.

You can access Kaizena in two ways:

- Go to the **website** at <https://kaizena.com>
- Install the **Chrome Web App** - [link](#)

To use Kaizena do the following:

1. Open a shared document from your docs list on the Kaizena website.
2. On the left side of the screen you will see the users who have access to the document. **Click on the user** you wish to share the comments with (such as the student who shared the document with you).
3. Next **highlight any text** in the document you wish to leave a comment for.
4. You will get a pop-up menu with three options:
  - a. **Voice comment** - Click to record a voice comment. You may need to grant Flash permission to your microphone.
  - b. **Text comment** - Click to type in a text comment.
  - c. **Resource** - Click to add a helpful web link.
5. Repeat as needed for other text in the document.
6. When you are done adding comments, click the **Send Feedback** button on the left side of the screen.
7. You can choose to alert the user of your comments in two ways:
  - a. **Share via Comment** - Click this to add a traditional comment to the Google Doc which will contain a hyperlink for the user to click to open the doc in Kaizena and access the comments.
  - b. **Send Email** - Or click this to send the user an email with a hyperlink for the user to click to open the



doc in Kaizena and access the comments.

**Note:** As a user makes changes to the shared document, you can access the different versions of the document and leave comments specific to any particular version. Simply click **Versions** in the top right corner of the doc when opened in Kaizena to see the different versions.

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For more resources see:

- The Paperless Classroom with Google Docs training video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ijAyGfaGxs>
- The Paperless Classroom with Google Docs site:  
<http://www.appusergroup.org/presentations/paperless-classroom>

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