

Google Basics: Google Search and Gmail



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Google Basics: Google Search and Gmail

Class Objectives

- Signing up for a Google account
- Performing a basic internet search
- Using other Google search tools
- Composing, sending, and organizing emails

What is Google?

Google launched as an internet search engine in 1998. Their free, web-based email service, Gmail, launched six years later, and Google Drive, their cloud-based file storage system, followed in 2012. Google Drive contains Google Documents, Google Sheets, and Google Slides, which are all web-based office products similar to Microsoft's Word, Excel, and PowerPoint software. All of Google's products are free to use, but require signing up for a free Gmail or Google account.

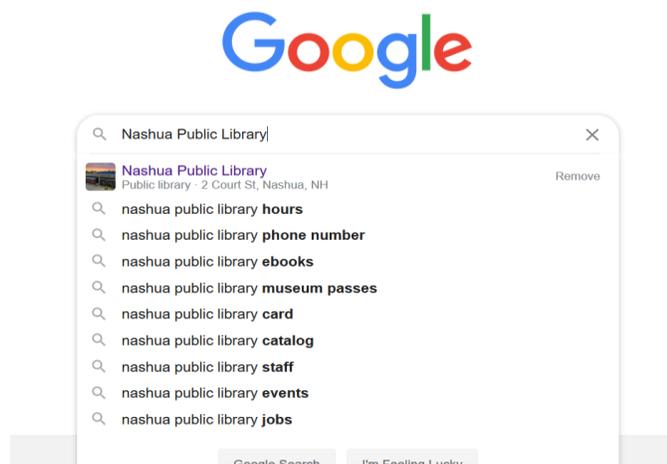
Google Search

Google Search, or simply Google, is a widely-used search engine. You can use it to search for information, and to search for images, news, maps and driving directions, videos, and more. You can go to Google.com by typing the URL into the address bar at the top of your browser window; this will take you to Google's home page, where you can type the keywords you are searching for into the search bar, then hit enter or click one of the buttons. If you are using Chrome or Firefox as your internet browser, you can also skip the Google home page by typing your search keywords directly into the address bar at the top of the page. Some browsers also have a Google search box right at the top of the page.

On the Google homepage, under the search bar, you will see two buttons: **Google Search** and **I'm Feeling Lucky**. If you click the **Google Search** button after typing in your search terms, you will be taken to a list of search results. Clicking the **I'm Feeling Lucky** button will skip the pages of search results and just take you to the result Google thinks is the most likely to be what you're looking for.

As you are typing in your search keywords, Google will automatically suggest things that it thinks you might be looking for. You can click on any of those suggestions to search for them.

For example, in this search, if you are hoping to find information about the museum passes the Nashua Public Library offers, you can click on the words **nashua public library museum passes**, and be taken to a page of search results that are directly related to our museum passes.



When you search on Google, you will notice that, at the top of the page, below the search bar, there are several ways to filter your search results. For example, you can click **Maps** to get a map and directions to a location, or you can click **News** to search for a topic in recent news, or **Images** to look for pictures. Clicking **Shopping** will let you search for an item to purchase online or in stores near you. If you click on **More**, you will get even more options. **Videos** shows you videos of the topic you've searched for. **Books** searches for your search terms in books. **Flights** allows you to search for flights between specific destinations. **Finance** lets you look for financial reports about companies and topics.

To the left of these search filters, you will see **Tools**, and in the upper right-hand corner, you'll see a gear-shaped icon for **Settings**. **Settings** lets you change the language of your search results, hide any explicit results, and do an Advanced Search. You can also see your past searches, learn how Google uses your data to tailor your search results, and access Google's Help page to get help searching Google.

Tools allows you to tailor your search results. In a general Google search, you can tailor the results by time, so you can make sure to get the most recent results, or only get results from a specific time frame. You can also choose to search **verbatim**, meaning that Google will search for the exact phrase you typed, or by **all results**, meaning Google will search for the keywords you used, regardless of word order. Different types of Google searches have different **Tools** settings. For example, when searching under **News**, you can limit your search by date, and sort by relevance. When doing an **Images** search, you can search for images by size, and select to only get results that are available for reuse.

Gmail

Gmail is Google's free email service. It was launched by Google in 2004, and now has more than 1.5 billion active users worldwide. Gmail is web-based, and free to sign up and use. It includes 15 gigabytes of storage.

Signing Up

To sign up for Gmail, you'll first need to create a Google account. Go to www.gmail.com and click **Create account**. When you click Create account, a small pop-up will appear asking if you want to create an account for yourself, or one to manage your business. Click **for myself** to go on to the next step.

Fill in the required information on the sign-up form: first name, last name, the username you want, and a secure password. If the username you want is not available, suggestions for an alternate username will appear just below the username field:



Create your Google Account

to continue to Gmail

First name Computer	Last name Learner
------------------------	----------------------

Username
computerlearner@gmail.com

That username is taken. Try another.

Available:

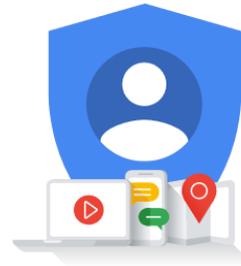
learnercomputer93 computerlearner10
computerlearner345

Password	Confirm	
----------	---------	--

Use 8 or more characters with a mix of letters, numbers & symbols

[Sign in instead](#)

Next



One account. All of Google working for you.

Next, enter your cell phone number. Google uses a two-step verification process for your security. You will receive a text message with a numeric code, which you must enter to proceed. If you don't have a cell phone, you can choose to enter your landline number instead, and Google will call you with the code to input. Enter the code and click **Verify**. (Note: Gmail doesn't always require this step! Be prepared in case it does, though!)



Verify your phone number

For your security, Google wants to make sure it's really you. Google will send a text message with a 6-digit verification code. *Standard rates apply*
🇺🇸 (781) 710-1592

Enter verification code
G- 703123

[Back](#)

[Call instead](#)

Verify



Your personal info is private & safe

Next, you will see a form to enter some of your personal information, like your phone number, an email to use as a recovery email in case you lose access to your account, your birthdate, and your gender. Your phone number and recovery email address are optional; your birthdate and gender are not, although you can choose "rather not say" or the "custom" option.

Google uses this information to further tailor their services to you. For example, some services are age-restricted. Providing your gender allows Google to address you with the correct pronouns, and also gives them data which they use to decide which ads to show you.

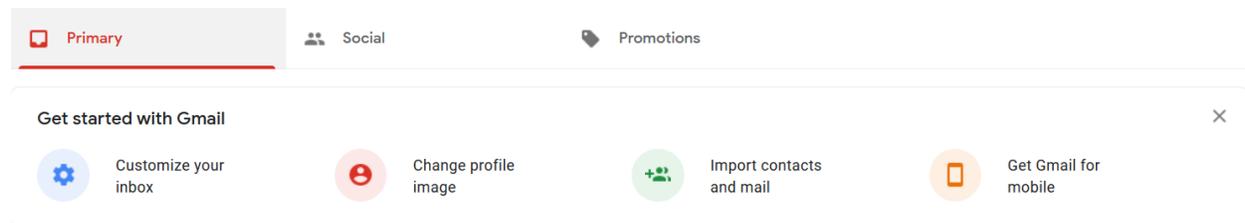
The next screen will ask you if you want to include some extra features by adding your phone number to various other Google services. You can either allow your number to be used across Google’s platforms, or you can click **More Options** to restrict what your number is used for.

Once you have chosen whether you want to use your phone number in this way, click **Done**.

The next screen contains Gmail’s Privacy and Terms of Service. Be sure to read this carefully. Click **More options** to set your preferences on how Google will use your data for ad personalization, as well as whether Google will save your Web, app, and YouTube activity in your Google account. These all pertain to your privacy, so it’s important to take the time to read through this page thoroughly.

When you have finished reading the Privacy and Terms page and setting your preferences, click **I Agree**. Your new Gmail account has been created, and is ready for you to use. Sometimes, when Google adds new features to Gmail, they will be highlighted when you log in. For example, Google recently added **Google Meet** to Gmail. This is a service that allows you to have virtual meetings via video chat, much like Zoom or Facetime. Click **Got It** to dismiss this notice.

When you first log into your new Gmail account, you will see a banner with options for **Getting started with Gmail**. These options include customizing your inbox in various ways, adding a profile picture that will show when you send emails, importing your contacts from any other email accounts you may have, and getting the Gmail app for your cell phone. Click on any of these to see the available options and set your preferences.



You will notice that, just above the Getting started with Gmail options, there is a row of **Tabs**: Primary, Social, and Promotions. These tabs are used to automatically organize incoming email messages according to their content. You can change which tabs are included by clicking the gear icon in the upper right-hand corner of the page, and then clicking **See all settings**.

On this page, click the **Inbox** section and make sure your **Inbox type** is set to **Default**. Then, you can select which tabs you’d like to have your emails sorted into. If you put the mouse cursor over each tab, you will see a description of what each one means. For example, the **Primary** tab, which is required and cannot be removed, is for “person-to-person conversations and messages that don’t appear in other tabs.” **Promotions** is for “marketing, interests, and other promotional emails.” Once you have selected which tabs you’d like to use, click **Save Changes** at the bottom of the page.

Sending Email

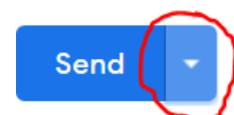
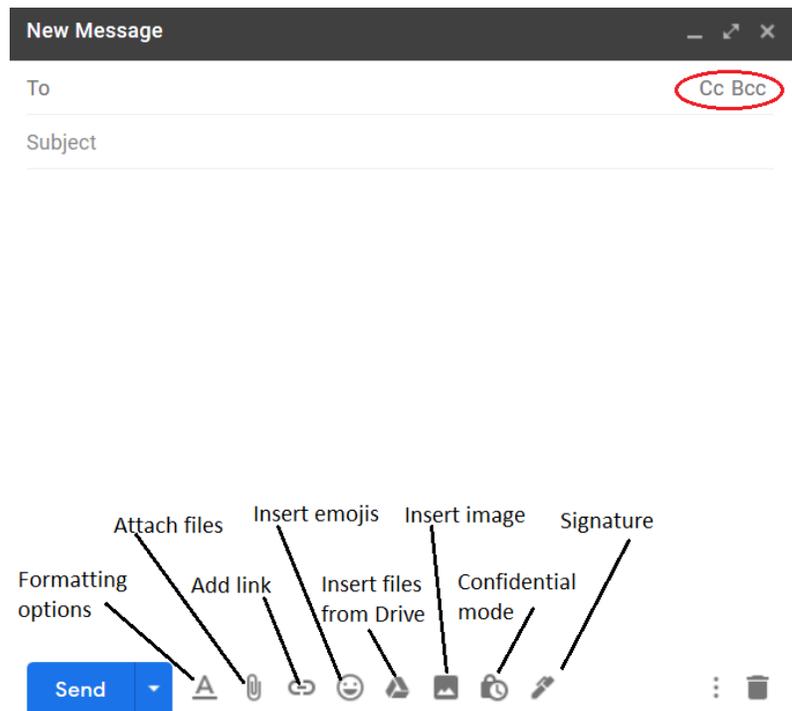
To send an email, click the **Compose** button in the upper left of the page. A popup window will open with a blank message. Type the email address you want to send the email to in the **To** field, and type a subject in the **Subject** field, if you want to include one. You can send your message to multiple people by clicking the **Cc** or **Bcc** option on the right-hand side of the message window, then typing in the addresses you want to send your message to. If you use **Cc**, the recipients will be able to see who else you sent the message to. If you use **Bcc**, recipients' names and emails will be hidden from each other.

Type your message into the section below the **Subject** line. There are several options for adding to your message at the bottom of the window. Clicking **Formatting options** allows you to change the font, text color, text size, alignment, add bulleted or numbered lists, and other options.

Attach files allows you to attach documents, photos, videos, or other files to your message, so you can send them to other people. **Add link** lets you create a hyperlink within your message, to link to a website. **Insert emojis** lets you add emojis to your message. **Insert files from Drive** allows you to share files from your Google Drive account, for easy sharing. **Insert image** lets you insert photos from your computer or mobile device.

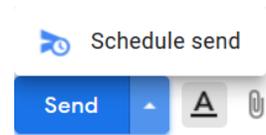
Confidential mode restricts the recipient of your message from forwarding it, copying it, printing it, or downloading it. You can set confidential mode to expire in one day, one week, one month, three months, or five years. You can also require a passcode to open the email, which would be sent to the recipient via text message. **Signatures** are brief snippets of text that you can automatically include at the end of your emails. People often use them in workplace settings, and include their name, job title, address, phone number, and other information.

If you want to compose an email, but send it at a later date, you can either save it as a **Draft** or you can use **Schedule send** to automatically send the email at a time of your choosing. To use this feature, click the down arrow next to **Send** at the bottom of the Compose window:



This will open a small popup window:

Click on **Schedule send**, and choose the date and time that you want to send your email. You can choose one of the preset times, or set your own.



When you click **Compose**, the new message window opens in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. You can enlarge it to full-screen by clicking on the double arrow right above the Cc and Bcc options, or hold **Shift while clicking** to pop the window out into its own separate window -- this makes it easier to multitask while writing emails.

The last thing to note about the **Compose** window are the two icons in the lower-right corner. The **Trash** icon  allows you to delete the email you are composing, if you decide not to send it. If you simply close the Compose window, your email will be saved as a **Draft**. The vertical ellipses  right next to the **Trash** icon opens a menu with a few more options:

You can set the Compose window to always open full-screen, choose a **Label**, switch to **Plain text mode**, which removes formatting, **Print** your email, **Check spelling** to find any spelling errors, or give feedback on Gmail's **Smart Compose** feature (if enabled, this feature uses machine learning to generate suggestions as you type your email. You can find this feature under **Settings**).

Reading and organizing emails

When you click on an email you have received, you will see several icons across the top of the page. We will begin on the left-hand side.

The first icon is the **Back** arrow. This takes you back to your inbox, without deleting or moving the email you were reading.



Next, we have the **Archive** icon. Clicking this removes the email from your inbox, but does not delete it, instead archiving it so that you can find it at a later date.



The third icon is the **Report Spam** button. Click this to report unwanted marketing, scam, phishing, or other unsolicited emails that you do not want to receive.



Next is the **Delete** button. Clicking this will move the email to the trash. Emails in your trash folder will be automatically deleted after 30 days. Once they are deleted, they are gone forever.



The next icon is the **Mark as Unread** button. If you click this, the email you are reading will close, and will be marked as unread in your inbox. This is useful if you want to go back to an email later, and want the visual reminder of the unread message in your inbox.



Next is the **Snooze** button. Snooze allows you to organize your email by setting messages to disappear, or snooze, and then pop back into your inbox, unread, at a later date. It is very useful for busy people, as it allows you to snooze messages until a later date, when you would prefer to handle them.



The next icon is very useful -- **Add to Tasks**. Clicking on this button will open a sidebar on the right-hand side of the page, with a task list. You can use this to create virtual to-do lists, keep track of important things to follow up on, remember appointments, etc.



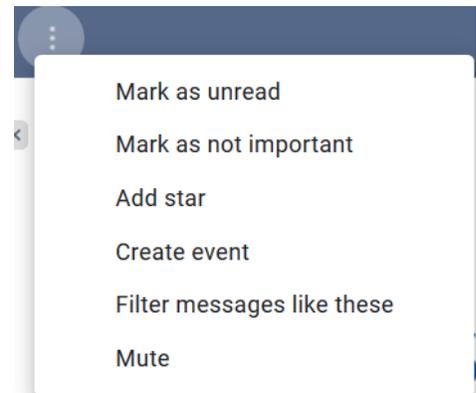
The second-to-last icon is the **Move to** button. You can use this to move emails from one tab to another (for example, from Promotions to Primary) or to move it between different labels.



Finally, we have the **Labels** icon. This allows you to assign a label to a message, and thus organize your inbox. When you click on the button, a menu will open with preset label options, along with the option to create new labels.



Next to Labels you'll see another vertical ellipses. Clicking on this brings up a menu with a few options. Here, you can mark the message as unread, mark it as important or not important, add a star, create an event in your Google Calendar, filter the message to a folder or to the trash, or **Mute** the conversation. Muting a conversation means that the messages will not appear in your inbox. To view messages in a conversation you have muted, you can click on **All Mail** in the left sidebar, or you can use the search box at the top of the page. Type "is:muted" into the search bar, without the quotation marks, and hit Enter. Any muted conversations will appear in the search results. You can then unmute any conversations you wish by clicking on the messages, clicking the tree dots at the top, and selecting **Unmute**.



In the upper right-hand corner of the message, you will see a few other icons. Click the **Print All** button to print out the email you are reading. The **In new window** button opens the email in its own separate window, which is useful for multitasking. The **Star** icon allows you to mark the message with a star; starring a message marks it as something to follow up on, save, or otherwise keep track of. You can choose several different colors of stars in **Settings**, and use different colors to organize your inbox. The **Reply** arrow opens a message box for you to reply to the email you are reading.



Filter messages like this

Print

Delete this message

Block ". Nashua Public Library"

Report spam

Report phishing

Show original

Translate message

Download message

Mark as unread

The final icon, the vertical-ellipses **More** button, opens a menu with several options. Some of the options are self-explanatory, like **Reply**, **Forward**, **Delete this message**, and **Print**. **Block** allows you to block

the sender of the email -- if you block them, you will no longer receive any messages from them. **Filter messages like this** lets you automatically send messages like this to a specific folder, mark them as read automatically, or set them to bypass your inbox and go straight to the trash. **Report spam** is for reporting unsolicited, unwanted messages, and **Report phishing** is for reporting messages that try to scam you into giving out your personal information, bank account information, or installing malware. **Show original** opens the message in a new window where you can see the HTML coding. **Translate message** lets you translate a message into another language, **Download message** allows you to download a copy of the message to your computer.

Left sidebar

The left sidebar allows you to navigate your email easily. You'll find the **Compose** button there, along with the link to your **Inbox**, the link to find the messages you have **Snoozed**, your **Sent** messages, any saved **Drafts** you have, and the **Trash**, which contains deleted messages. The **Important** link goes to any messages that have been labeled as important. Your **Spam** folder contains any messages that Gmail has filtered as unwanted marketing, phishing, or scam emails. It's a good idea to periodically check this folder to make sure no wanted messages have been filtered into it by mistake. If you do find a wanted message in your spam folder, you can select it, and click **Not Spam** at the top of the page. This will move the message to your inbox, and will help refine Gmail's spam-filtering algorithms.

Below the **Trash** you will see any **Labels** you have created. Clicking on a label will bring up all the messages you have assigned that label to. Clicking on **More** will expand the sidebar to show you more options. **Starred** will bring up any emails that you have added a star to. **Scheduled** will show you any messages that you have scheduled to be sent at a later time. **All Mail** will show you everything in your folders, including archived messages. The **Categories** are the same as the tabs across the top of your Gmail inbox. At the bottom, you will see options to **Manage labels** or **Create new label**.

Searching

Gmail's search feature is one of the things that sets it apart from other email providers. You can easily search your email inbox and folders using the search bar at the top of the screen. Type the search terms you are looking for and hit Enter.

The messages matching your search terms will appear below the search bar. You can refine your search using the suggestions displayed just above the search results, or click **Advanced search** for more options.

Additional resources

The library's Universal Class database includes a Gmail 101 class. You may access the class by going to the eLearning section of the library's website (<https://www.nashualibrary.org/explore/elearning/>) and clicking on Universal Class. You will be prompted to enter your library card number to set up an account, and once you have done that, click on Computer Training and do a search for "Gmail."

Google's "How Search Works" contains a tutorial to teach you how to effectively search Google:
<https://www.google.com/search/howsearchworks/?fg=1>

Gmail has tutorials all about making the most of Gmail:
https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9259748?p=gmail_training&visit_id=637399467562125571-1780788435&rd=1