

A COMPLETE GUIDE

# MASTERING GOOGLE FOR THE CLASS ROOM

How to Get the Most out of Your Google Apps  
for Edu Investment

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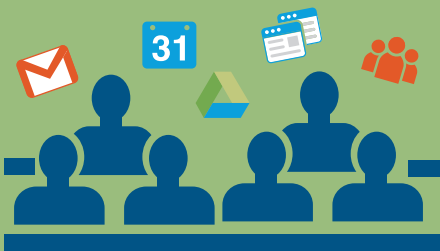
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**D**on't look now but you're surrounded by digital natives. That's right, out there roaming the halls of your school are packs of early-adopting, mobile device-toting, latest application-using students who are wise in the ways of the latest software technology. Chances are that when they tire of Angry Birds and have to get down to some serious schoolwork, they jump on Google Apps.

If your school recently made the switch to Google Apps, congratulations. You're among the thousands (that's right thousands) of schools around the globe adopting Google Apps for Education. Schools are going Google and benefitting from improved collaboration, increased productivity, and just general technology adoption. If you haven't yet made the move, you should consider it so you can keep up with your tech-savvy students.

This guide is designed for any school in the process of making the switch to Google, those that recently made a switch, or even those that have been using Google Apps for awhile but could use a best practice refresher or update on what's new. We've compiled all things Google Apps for Education into a tidy guide focused on key takeaways and lots of helpful, actionable tips sprinkled throughout. Google has put together an abundance of online resources to help with implementation so we'll also provide relevant links along the way. Share this guide with school IT admins, teachers, principals, or anyone interested in learning more about Google Apps for Education.

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## 1. Getting Started

You probably won't find this hard to believe, but Google desperately wants you to use Google Apps and to enjoy a successful experience. As a result, you'll find bitloads of information out there on everything and anything you need to get started. We'll touch on a few things here with links to all the material you could ever need.

### Techy Time

With a massively integrated application like Google Apps, you can expect there to be a whole series of technical I's to be dotted and T's to be crossed. Google will take you through a comprehensive checklist and badger you with questions like:

- What services will be used?
- What domain or domains (can be more than one) will you be using?
- How will users access Google apps?
- How are you going to roll it out to teachers and students?

They'll also ask you about configuring your email (or Gmail, as they will continually remind you) and migrating user data like emails, calendars and contacts. You're also going to have to set up an organizational structure for everyone in the school – think Harry Potter's sorting hat. This will assign users to various groups which you'll use to define who has which services and who gets what kind of access.

As you begin to roll out your Google Apps program you'll want to reach out and touch everyone to let them know what's going on. Start with the basics – design some branding, make announcements, promote throughout the school, shout from the rooftops. Get feedback from your early adopters so you can tweak things as you get going. You want people at your school to be excited so they will embrace the transition. Once they see what they can do with the platform, things will take off. But it's important to get the ball rolling.

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## Learning the Ropes

We know. The idea of training today is to open the application, noodle around to see what you can figure out, and then call someone once you get stuck. That's probably not the best plan for a successful launch of Google Apps.

It's not brain surgery, but to take full advantage of this powerful app you should really start with some basic training. There's a lot you can do with Google Apps, but you have to know what you don't know to use it to the fullest. As expected, Google lays out a comprehensive professional development plan you can follow. The key points are:

- All aboard! Gain support from School Administration
- Assemble Google App Guides (fancy name for individuals from your school who will lead the Google App training for teachers)
- Get feedback and revise your training accordingly
- Visit the Google Learning Center early and often

## Don't Lose It

As you continue to use Google Apps in day-to-day teaching, you will no doubt begin to accumulate massive amounts of data. Just like with any information system, make sure you have a backup policy in place for all that data. Yes, Google Apps is "in the cloud" but in reality your data is ultimately stored in a Google server farm set somewhere firmly on the ground, somewhere on earth.

That's not a bad thing. In fact, Google is one of the safest productivity suites in the world. They wouldn't be one of the largest providers on the planet if they weren't reliable and didn't handle your data with the utmost care. In fact, our research has shown that Google has never lost any customer data. But that doesn't mean data can't be lost.

A user error, security breach, third-party application error, service error, or erroneous account suspension all can put your data at risk. So even though the chances are nothing will ever happen to your data, you should still have a third-party backup just to make sure. You can think of it as a "belts and suspenders" security plan.

## Privacy and Other Legal Stuff

Establish a written policy around the use of Google Apps. Make everyone sign off on a document chock full of legalese that addresses things like privacy, bullying policies, handling sensitive data, and information oversight. Such a documented policy will help you avoid those nasty lawsuits lurking around every bend just ready to pounce.

Be aware of federal, state and local regulations and be sure to include them in the fine print so your institution remains in compliance.

## 2. Teaching with Google Apps

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Once you're up and running with Google Apps, the next step is figuring out all the awesome ways to help teachers teach and students learn. Several components make up the Google Apps suite of tools. We'll go through each one and show you how you can use them in a real-life classroom setting.

### Email (Or Gmail, as we've said before)

Sending messages to students and parents is the simplest use of Gmail and isn't much different from any other email service. Combining it with other Google Apps tools creates some interesting things you can do.

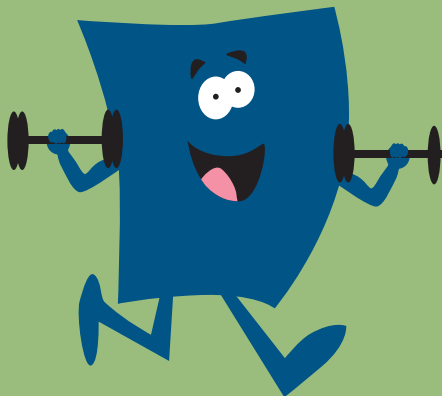
For example, you can use Google Translator to convert emails from non-English speaking parents so that you can respond to them. Teachers can set up pen pals with students in other countries. The students can craft their emails in English then use Translator to translate them into the language of the destination country.

### Calendar

You know that giant calendar that hangs on the bulletin board that teachers use for scribbling assignments and special events? Google Apps Calendar provides the same thing only it's less messy and accessible to everyone at any time from his or her desktop or mobile device.



Think MS Word on steroids. Google Docs can do everything Word (or any other word processing program) can do plus allows you to share created documents with anyone else on the system you choose.



You can use Calendar in the routine way – activities, homework assignments, and your class schedule. You can also use it to set up shared resource calendars for laptops or the library room. Now instead of running around the building to find out who has the projector you need, you can simply check the master Projector Calendar right from your desktop.

You can get fancy with it by setting up Pacing Guides for your students, allowing parents to remotely schedule parent/teacher meetings, or developing Standards Mapping.

## Docs

Think MS Word on steroids. Google Docs can do everything Word (or any other word processing program) can do plus allows you to share created documents with anyone else on the system you choose. For example, you can take notes at your next school meeting and share them with the other attendees.

Group teaching becomes easier with Docs. Working with other teachers on the team, you can develop and share collaborative lesson plans. Any change made by one of the teachers is instantly available to all the others.

Similar to Gmail, Docs helps you better communicate with non-English speaking parents by quickly translating documents using Translator. Docs also gives you the ability to easily develop quizzes and quickly analyze and summarize data from the results.

The real impact of Docs involves collaborative learning by students. You can assign group projects and each student can independently provide their contribution that is then instantly integrated into the whole.

Working more closely with students becomes simpler with Docs. You can tune in to student writing assignments and quickly provide feedback to help guide them during the process.

## Spreadsheets

Google Apps Spreadsheets doesn't reinvent the Excel wheel. The beauty of it is the same as the other Google Apps components: the ability to virtually share your work with anyone with access to the system.

Setting up a simple spreadsheet for scheduling Parent/Teacher conferences (if you don't decide to use that feature in Calendar) is the same as using a paper-based form. What's different is that parents can access the sheet from their Gmail account, see what slots are available, and select the best time for their meeting.

You can use Spreadsheets to track homework assignments, create student-driven vocabulary flashcards, or perhaps even to help students document their science experiments.

## Presentations

We all know how easy it is to create outstanding presentations in PowerPoint. Google Apps Presentations can be just as impressive, but again becomes even more powerful because more than one user can access it.

Students collaborating on a project can each create their own slides for their portion of the assignment, and instantly integrate them into the master presentation. This eliminates the need for someone to fumble through multiple power point files trying to assemble all the slides into a coherent slide show.

## Talk

This component again highlights the remote access power of Google Apps. Invite a guest lecturer and they can regale your class with their brilliant insights from wherever they may be. Remember those parent/teacher conferences you scheduled in either Calendar or Spreadsheets? Well, you can conduct them via remote video using Talk. No pesky snowstorms will get in the way of a serious discussion about junior or junioress.

## 3. The Advanced Google Apps User

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Okay, you've got the hang of Google Apps for Education. Time to step up your game and really take advantage of the features that will make your job easier AND more enjoyable. There are lots of ways to use Google Apps in the classroom to make learning interactive and fun.

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Encourage your students into reading more by setting up a form where they can submit their reading records. For example, they can track how many minutes they read each week.



## Forms

A powerful tool within the Docs application is Forms. This function allows you to quickly create a survey or form that can be sent to parents and students to fill out online. The beauty of Forms is that you no longer have to spend hours tabulating the results. All the answers are immediately collected in one Google Apps spreadsheet that can be shared with all users.

These forms can be sent outside your school domain, so you're not limited to just colleagues inside the school. You can touch base with teachers in other schools if necessary. They can respond through Gmail (okay they finally got us), through a published web page, or simply embedded on a site.

The result of any forms project are neatly summarized with charts, graphs, bells, whistles, and statistics about all your responses.

### So what kinds of things can you do with Forms?

Start by giving a pre-assessment test to your students at the beginning of the year. This will give you a good idea of the knowledge level of your class. If the majority of your students say Bill Clinton was one of the country's Founding Fathers, you know you're in for a long year.

At the end of each marking period, you can do another assessment to see how much progress they've made. (Hopefully a lot based on that first example.)

Do a survey on your students' interests so you can try to tie that into your daily work lessons. (Although working zombies into your Algebra class might be a stretch.)

Forms can be used on your mobile device so you can do teacher or student evaluations on the go. The collected data will automatically be summarized in a spreadsheet.

Encourage your students into reading more by setting up a form where they can submit their reading records. For example, they can track how many minutes they read each week.

You can create quizzes with Forms and then automatically grade them by using an Apps script like Flubaroo. (More on scripts later).

On the not-so-positive side, you can use Forms to keep track of discipline referrals across the entire school. This will provide patterns of behavior that you might want to address.

## Sites

You can use Google Sites to build interactive sites for students to share information and collaborate on documents, videos, schedules, and more. This is a powerful teaching tool since surfing web sites is an online environment with which they are extremely familiar.

The first thing you can do is create a site for your class. Include a class calendar with special events and homework assignment. There goes the “Gee, I didn’t know it was due,” excuse. You can add videos and other presentations that tie in with your lesson plans.

From there move on to create a curriculum portal that contains lesson plans and other resources that tie into your day-to-day teaching plan.

Create ePortfolios for each student. This will allow them to show off their work and continue to build on it as they pass it on from year to year.

Sites is also a great tool for student projects. Whether they are working solo or in combination with other students on group projects, Sites provides an interactive way for them to create and consolidate their work. Nothing like a little peer pressure to get the work done.

## Video

You have a much better shot of getting through to today’s micro-attention-span student with video than with the so 1990’s printed textbook. With Video, you can upload approved clips related to that day’s topic to share during class time.

As part of your lesson plan, allow students to create their own videos on relevant topics but give them the ability to keep videos private to their teacher, class, or school.

Teachers can share professional development videos. You can record your Rock Star Teachers as they demonstrate different types of instructional tactics and then share those best practices within the school or district.

## Groups

With Groups, you can create classroom placement groups so you can distribute different levels of materials and resources appropriate to each student's needs. Groups also encourages discussion among peers.

You can also include parents by setting them up in a group. This will allow them to easily communicate with each other to share updates and news.

## Scripts

As if you couldn't already do enough, this killer JavaScript Cloud scripting tool enables you to supercharge the functionality of Google Apps for Education. There are hundreds of scripts that you can use to make your life easier or to enhance the learning experience of the students.

Here are some of the top scripts being used today.

- **Doctopus** – This is a document management script to use for student projects. It allows you to auto-generate, pre-share, and manage grading and feedback on group and individual projects
- **Flubaroo** – This script allows you to automatically grade multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank assignments using Forms. It also computes average assignment scores, average score per question, and highlights low scoring questions (like the Bill Clinton/Founding Fathers example).
- **gClassFolders** – Based on Spreadsheets, this add-on creates class folders for students and teachers.

## Blogger

You can structure and run your lessons using Blogger. Students can access their individual assignments as well as share posts from other students. This can be a powerful tool since students enjoy blogging and will be more engaged with the subject matter if they are involved. It also helps with their writing skills as long as you prohibit text speak like BRB and CU2moro.

## Moderator

This is an excellent tool to help extend classroom discussions. Students are able to think about their daily lessons and read each other's thoughts on the material. You can then have them vote on the best responses.

## Google Apps Marketplace EDU

Once you really start rolling with Google Apps for Education, you'll quickly find that there is almost no limit to what you can do with it. Specific applications for education are being developed daily. Be the first on your corridor to get one of these apps.

- **Engrade Grade Book** – This flexible grade book, attendance tracker, and lesson plan builder securely integrates with Google Apps
- **OpenClass** – This is a new kind of learning environment that goes beyond LMS and encourages social learning and exchange of content.
- **Aviary Design Suite for Education** – This provides design tools and templates to create, modify, and share images, presentations, audio tracks, podcasts and more. It allows your students to collaborate on multimedia projects and works directly in Docs.

## 4. Resources: Stay Current and Keep the Learning Going

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There are a ton of resources out there to help schools, IT admins, and teachers no matter what stage of adoption they're at. The key to making the most out of your Google Apps program is to connect with other users and continue to find new ways to make it a success at your school.

## User Groups

Google makes it easy to find groups for you to join to maximize your use of Google Apps. Their aim is to connect Google Apps users everywhere to discover and share best practices, custom solutions, and resources from each other through discussion forums, events, and webinars. A good

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place to start is with the Apps User Group, which contains resources for implementing and using Google Apps, news from the Google blogs, links to schools that use Google Apps, and a discussion forum.

## Conferences

Google sponsors Regional Conferences in many states including California, Wisconsin, and Ohio.

In addition, EdtechTeam sponsors dozens of Google in Education Summits every year. In 2013 alone, conferences were held in Hawaii, Australia, Canada, and the Middle East.

## Associations

Another way to learn more about Google Apps for Education is through the many technology associations around the world. Some of the more popular ones are:

- [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#) – An organization focused on improving learning and teaching through promoting the effective use of technology in PK-12 and teacher education.
- [Association for Educational Communication and Technology \(AECT\)](#) – A professional association of educators dedicated to improving instruction through the use of technology up through the college level.
- [State Educational Technology Directors Association \(SETDA\)](#) – National association that supports the interests of US states in educational technology leadership.

## Other Resources

- [What's New in Google Apps Site](#) – Site set up by Google specifically to highlight the latest developments surrounding the platform.
- [Google Apps for Education Resource Page](#) – This site provides links to webinars, user groups, on line training, and Google in Education Forums.

Need more help? Just google “Google Apps for Education” and you’ll get pages of search results for all the help you could possibly want.



## 5. A Summary - Ten Golden Rules

So there you have it- the shock and awe of Google Apps for Education. There's obviously a lot to do and a lot you can do with this powerful platform. We'll leave you with the 10 Golden Rules for implementing and using Google Apps.

1. **ENERGIZE** everyone in your school community with a compelling internal marketing plan. Help lead the charge to have everyone be a part of this exciting new technology. Get everyone on board.
2. **EXPAND** your knowledge by taking advantage of the training that Google offers. You can't fully utilize the program if you're not aware of what it can do.
3. **PROTECT** your data with a reliable third party backup partner. Google is secure, but you'd rather be safe than sorry when it comes to safeguarding all the information you'll be pouring into Google Apps.
4. **INVITE** parents to participate through interactive components like Gmail, Calendar, Spreadsheets, and Sites. Make it easy for them to be a part of their students' educational experience.
5. **COLLABORATE** with other teachers in your school or district with Docs. Share lesson plans and notes from meetings quickly and easily.
6. **ENCOURAGE** your students to work cooperatively with their peers through group projects using Presentation. Each student can add his or her own contribution seamlessly to create a dynamic group presentation.
7. **INSPIRE** your students by inviting guest speakers to address your class remotely through Talk or Video. Bring your subjects to life in a way your students can understand.
8. **UNDERSTAND** your students better using the survey feature in Forms. Assess their current needs and what they are interested in to help you better set up your lesson plans.
9. **CONNECT** with administrators, teachers, and other educational professionals in your city, state, and around the country through User Groups. Learn from each other about the awesome power of this program.
10. **EXPLORE** the many ways you can use Google Apps for Education. The number of resources available to help you find ways to incorporate this powerful platform into your educational planning is growing every day. Take advantage of as many of them as you can to make your program the best that it can be. Never stop learning.

As you can see by now, Google Apps for Education is a truly awesome platform that is revolutionizing the way teachers teach and students learn. Using the power of interactive, cloud based technology, school administrators and teachers can now connect with students in a truly meaningful way that enhances both the teaching and learning experiences.

Social media, on line games, and the Internet dominate student lives outside the classroom. Google Apps for Education allows you to bring that environment into the classroom to make the students' educational experience more relevant and to better mirror their day-to-day life. It's a giant leap forward for those who choose to take advantage. Go for it and good luck.