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Whether for work or personal projects, word processors are one of the most popular apps for desktops and laptops. Besides native apps like Pages (Mac) and Microsoft Word (Windows), users can choose from a wide range of third-party word processing platforms that have a variety of unique features. Google Docs is one of the top word processing apps for both individual and collaborative use. In our Google Docs review, we'll take a close look at the service's features and help you determine whether it's the best option for you or your business. Make sure to check out our guide to the best online collaboration tools for more information about some of the top apps and websites for productivity currently on the market. You can sign up to Google Docs here. **Google Docs: Plans and pricing** Like the other apps in Google's productivity suite, Google Docs is entirely free to use regardless of the number of users in your organization. While each individual user is limited to 15 GB of free storage, that should still be enough for thousands of pages of text. On the other hand, organizations with a more sophisticated workflow should consider upgrading to a premium Google Workspace subscription. Starting at \$6 per user per month, these plans come with a higher storage limit and extra features such as video meetings, customizable business emails, and group-based security policies. But again, none of these tools are necessary if you just want to use the core functionality of Google Docs. **Google Workspace subscriptions are available from \$6 per user per month** (Image credit: Google) **Google Docs: Features** Like most other word processors, Google Docs has a robust set of tools for editing text. These range from simple options, like font size and type, to more advanced features, such as automatic formatting for citations and a built-in translator powered by Google Translate. While those features are great to have, Google Docs clearly stands out from the other free competitors in its real-time editing and collaboration capabilities. Sharing a document is as easy as clicking the Share button in the upper-right corner, which allows you to either add individual users or copy a shareable link. You can also set up shared folders to easily manage documents that need to be made accessible to multiple users. Once a document has been shared, it can be accessed by as many as 100 users at the same time. Changes made by one user will be reflected on the shared document, and the entire edit history is easily available in case you need to revert to an earlier version. While documents are stored in the cloud by default, you can also download them to your device for offline editing. Google Docs makes it easy to see a document's history and quickly restore a previous version (Image credit: Google) **Google Docs: Interface and in use** Google Docs comes with a simple, clear interface that will be familiar to anyone with experience in Microsoft Word, Pages, or a similar word processing application. The intuitive toolbar provides quick access to fonts, spacing options, bulleted and numbered lists, and other common features. The Google Docs interface makes it easy to find whatever you're looking for (Image credit: Google) You'll also see a document outline on the left side of your work. The outline is populated based on your edits—if you add a subheading under a main heading, for example, it will automatically appear in your document outline. Google Docs also has surprisingly functional apps for iOS and Android devices. They come with many of the features that are available on desktops and laptops, although some are conspicuously absent. For example, you can't insert special characters on a mobile device, so you'll need to copy and paste them into the application or find another workaround. However, on the negative side Google Docs struggles with file conversions, and documents converted from Microsoft Word may lose formatting. Additionally, Google Docs doesn't have the same range of features and functionality that Microsoft Word has. **Google Docs: Support** As mentioned, the Google Docs interface is relatively intuitive and easy to learn. That said, Google also has helpful support options in case you run into any issues. If you're trying to access a particular tool, just click Help in the toolbar and enter the option that you're looking for. The Help function will quickly direct you to any option available in the Google Docs menus (Image credit: Google) If you still need assistance, you can also click through to the Help Center to view support articles on a wide range of topics. There's also a relatively active support community that may be able to help you with more involved questions. Finally, you can contact Google support directly via email for one-on-one assistance with technical issues and other questions. **Google Docs: Security** While Google Docs is generally a secure platform, there are potential weaknesses to be aware of. First, sharing documents via sharing links is an inherently vulnerable practice because anyone who gets access to the link will be able to view the file. If you're concerned about privacy, you should also consider enabling two-step authentication on your Google account under Security. Organizations with a Google Workspace subscription can access more advanced security options and manage policies at the group level. **Two-step verification can be enabled in just a few clicks from the Google Account page** (Image credit: Google) The competition If you're just looking for a way to edit documents, you can access some of the same features as with a competing application like Pages or Microsoft Word, but Google Docs is still limited by comparison. Again, though, the outstanding sharing and collaboration tools are the main draw for many Google Docs users. They're just one of the many reasons that Google Docs is among the best Microsoft Office alternatives. If you're mostly sharing between your own devices, you can also keep your files consistent with an integrated cloud storage platform like OneDrive or iCloud. That said, Google Drive comes with 15 GB of free storage, while iCloud and OneDrive users are limited to just 5 GB. **Final verdict** Overall, Google Docs is an accessible and powerful piece of free office software. While it doesn't have as many features as Microsoft Word, it has more than enough for most users. While some people may prefer the traditional experience of an offline desktop app, Google Docs is designed for more integrated workflows. With that in mind, Google Docs is one of our top recommendations for word processing. Between its generous amount of free storage space, unmatched support for real-time collaboration, and integration with the larger Google Workspace, it has everything you need to manage your documents in a personal or professional setting. You can sign up to Google Docs here. **Find additional menu options** Frequently write repeated text Build your own dictionary Collaborate on a Google Doc Open Docs in additional tabs Insert images the easy way View and edit plain text files Google Docs doesn't have the cluttered ribbon full of features you'll find in Microsoft Office, but it does have quite a few useful tricks up its sleeve. You may never find these features unless you go looking for them. **Google's web-based office suite has matured over the years and now offers everything from offline access to third-party add-on support.** It's still an easy-to-use office suite that works everywhere with excellent real-time collaboration features. **Enable Offline Access** RELATED: **No More Upgrade Fees: Use Google Docs or Office Web Apps Instead of Microsoft Office** Google Docs can work offline. This allows you to create new documents, continue working on current documents, and even just view your documents while you don't have an Internet connection. When you connect to the Internet again, your changes will be synchronized online. This feature requires Google Chrome, so it works on Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, and Chromebooks. To set this up, open the Google Drive website, click the gear button at the top-right corner of the site, and click Settings. On the General pane, ensure the "Sync your work to this computer so that you can edit offline" option is enabled, and click Done. To use Google Docs while offline, just return to the Google Drive website in Chrome when you don't have an Internet connection. **Collaborate in Real Time** RELATED: **How to Collaborate on Documents** Over the Internet Google Docs has better collaboration features than the desktop version of Microsoft Office. You can collaborate in real time, and everyone with access to the document will be able to edit it at once. You'll see other people's cursors in the document and can watch them type in real-time. Click File > Share to start sharing the document. You can invite individual people by their email addresses or allow anyone with a special link to the document to edit it. Sharing isn't just about editing — the Share feature can allow you to share a document with a one or more people so they can view it. They'll always have the most recent copy, so this may be more convenient than emailing a file. You can also give people the ability to leave comments on a document so you can get their input without allowing them to modify your document. Publish a Document Google Docs allows you to quickly publish a document online. Just click File > Publish to the web and click the Start publishing button. You'll receive a public link to the document in published form, so you can share it with other people and they can view it. You don't have to host the document on your own servers somewhere. This feature is separate from the sharing feature. When a document is published, anyone with the link can view it. When it's shared, it can be shared only with a handful of people. When people access a shared document, they'll see the document as a typical web page. Go to Next Typo / Previous Typo For quick correction of mistakes, use the Ctrl + ' keyboard shortcut to go to the next typo in the current document and Ctrl + ; to go to the previous typo. This allows you to quickly correct typos without scrolling through the current document and looking for those red underlines. Google Docs also recently gained a Spell Check feature that allows you to quickly skim through the problems in a current document, a feature it lacked for a long time — just click Tools > Spell Check to use it. Search For and Insert Links Google Docs incorporates the power of Google search to help you easily insert links into your current document. Rather than opening a new browser tab and searching for a page you want to link, you can search right from the link dialog. To do this, click the Insert > Link option. Type a search into the dialog and Google will display pages that match your search — click one to create a link to the selected address. **Configure Your Text Styles** Rather than manually formatting every bit of text in your document, you should format your text using styles instead. This means that rather than setting all your headlines to a certain font size and bold text, you should just click the style box and set them to "Heading 1." You can also easily edit the font settings used for different styles. First, format some text to use the type of formatting you want to use for a style. Select that text, click the style box at the top of the screen, and click the arrow to the right of the style you want to modify. Click the "Update 'Style Name' to Match" option and that style will now use the type of formatting you selected. To save these customized styles and use them in other documents, click the Options menu at the bottom of the list here and select "Save as my default styles." **Manage Your Personal Dictionary** If Google Docs thinks a word is a typo but you know it's correct, you can right-click the underlines word and select Add to personal dictionary. You can then click Tools > Personal Dictionary and edit the list of words in your personal dictionary. If you accidentally add a misspelled word to this list, you'll have to remove it from here before Google warns you about it again. This option is a fairly recent feature — previously, Google Docs wouldn't allow you to remove words you added to this list. You may want to give the list a look and ensure you didn't accidentally add incorrect words to the list in the past. **Copy and Paste With the Web Clipboard** Google Docs has a web clipboard feature it shares across Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. This clipboard is associated with your Google account, so it will follow you across all the computers you use. Unlike your standard operating system clipboard, the web clipboard can contain multiple items. The clipboard supports, text, images, drawings, and other bits of data from Google documents. **To use this feature, select some text, click Edit, use the Web Clipboard menu.** This is the best way to copy some types of data, such as drawings, between different types of Google documents. Items you save to your web clipboard will be cleared after 30 days if you don't interact with them. Use the Research Tool Google Docs contains a sidebar designed for researching — open it by clicking Tools > Research. This sidebar allows you to search for images, quotations, and web results so you can easily insert them into a document. It also makes it easy to search for academic studies and quickly insert the appropriate footnotes or citations for MLA, APA, or Chicago citation formats. You can quickly insert citations to web results, too — it can be an easy way to build a bibliography for a school paper. **Install Add-ons** Add-ons are a fairly new feature. These are third-party bits of software made with Google Apps Script. You can install them by clicking Tools > Manage Add-ons. They can then be used from the Add-ons menu. For example, you can install a Thesaurus add-on that allows you to select any word and click Add-ons > Thesaurus > Find Synonyms for Selected Word to view synonyms while writing a document. Other add-ons include an easy bibliography creator, diagramming tool, and table of contents generator. Google Docs has more tricks up its sleeve, too. **The File > Download** as menu is particularly useful, allowing you to download your document in many different formats. You can download it as a PDF or a Microsoft Office document if you need to submit or email the document in a specific file format. can you open google doc without gmail. can't open google doc on iphone. can't open google docs on android. can you open google doc in word. can't open google docs in chrome. can't open google doc link. can't open google docs on mac. can't open google docs file

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