Google Sheets: Spreadsheet basics
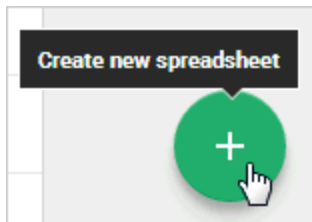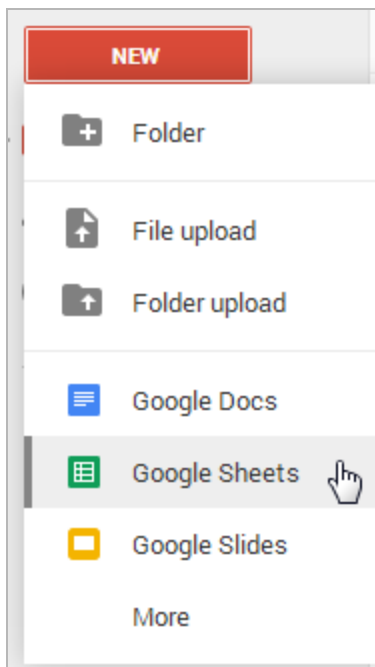
You can find all of your spreadsheets on the Google Sheets home screen or in Google Drive.

Create a spreadsheet

On the Sheets home screen, click **Create new spreadsheet** in the lower-right corner.

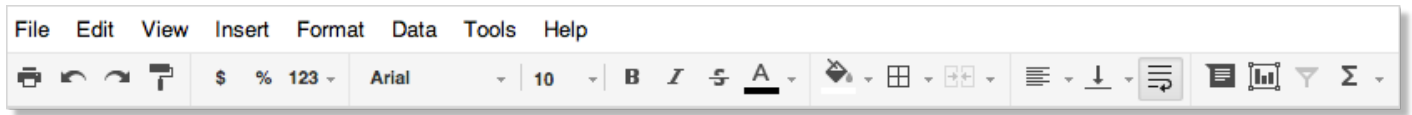Or, in Drive, click **New** and select **Google Sheets.**

To name your spreadsheet, click **_Untitled spreadsheet_**, enter a name, and click **OK**. (You can rename your spreadsheet at any time by clicking the title.)
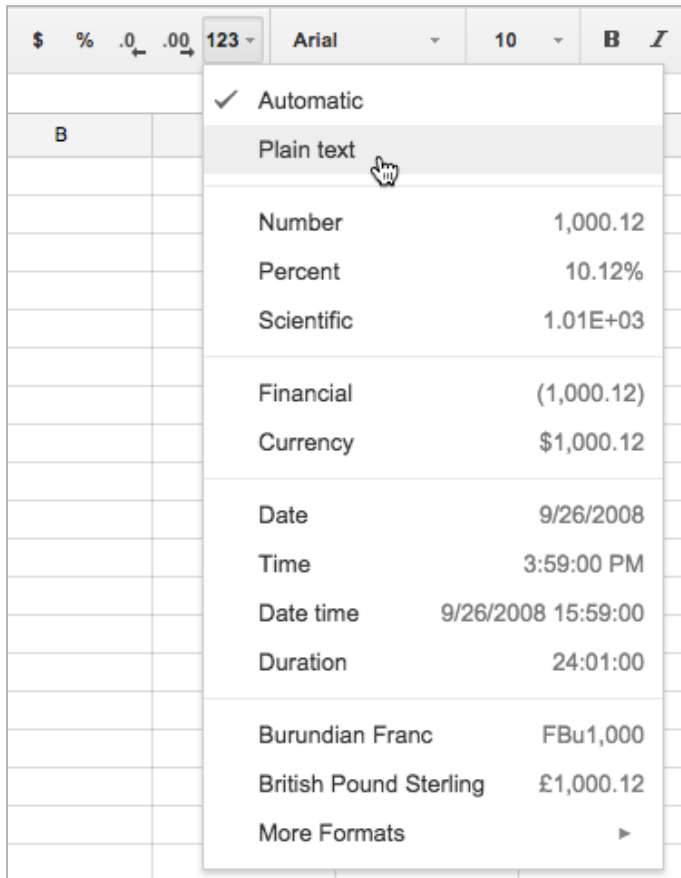
Format data in your spreadsheet

To enter text or data in your spreadsheet, just click a cell and start typing.

You use the menus and toolbar to format selected cells.

You can format your data as currency, percentages, dates, times, plain text (where numbers are treated as text instead of interpreted as numerical values), or another formatting option.
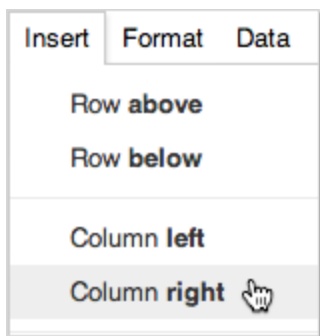

Work with rows, columns, and sheets

The building blocks of a spreadsheet are rows and columns of cells filled with data. Each grid of rows and columns is an individual sheet.
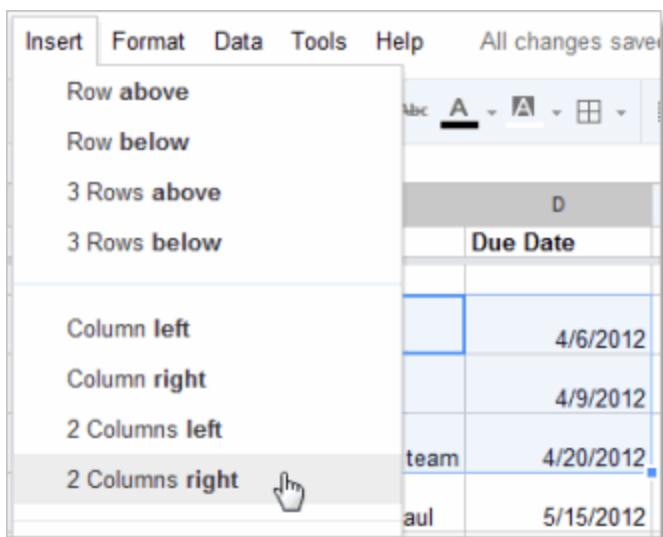
Add a row or column

1. Select any cell that should be next to the new row or column.

2. From the **Insert** menu, select where you want to add the row or column.

Tip: To add multiple rows or columns at one time, select the number of rows or columns you want to add and the Insert menu will reflect your selection. For example, if you select a block of 2 columns by 3 rows, the **Insert** menu shows these options:

Delete a row or column

1. Select one or more cells in the row or column you want to delete. If you select multiple cells, you can delete multiple rows or columns at the same time.

2. From the **Edit** menu, select the rows or columns to delete. For example, if you selected rows 4, 5, and 6 in column C, you'll see these options:
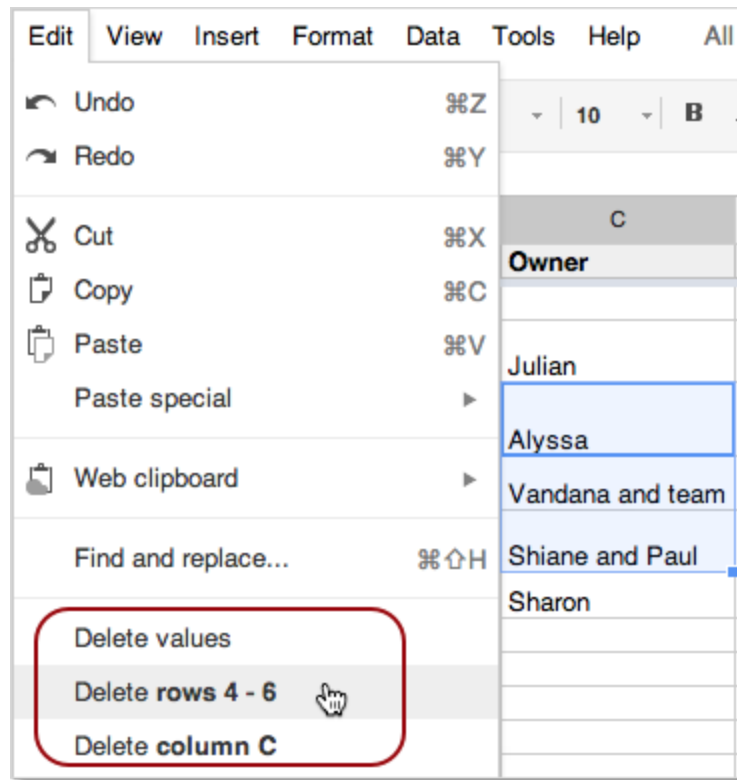
If you only want to delete the data in the cells (but still keep all the existing rows and columns), select **Delete values**.

Move a row or column

You can use **Copy** and **Paste** (on the **Edit** or right-click) menu to move cells, but here's a quicker way:

1. Select the cell or block of cells that you want to move.
2. Move your cursor to the edge of the selected cells, until you see the cursor change into a hand:

3. Drag the cells to their new location.

Alert: Dragging cells over existing data replaces the data.

Keep header rows and columns in place

Your first rows or columns might be headers that you always want to keep in place as you scroll through your spreadsheet. In that case, you should freeze them so they stay put. You can freeze up to 10 rows and 5 columns.

Just click **View > Freeze rows** (or **View > Freeze columns**), and then select the number of rows or columns to freeze.

In the example below, the top 2 rows are frozen. You can tell by the thicker line beneath row 2.

You can also drag the line to quickly change the number of frozen rows or columns.

After you freeze any rows or columns, the headers stay in place as you move around the spreadsheet, and any data in the columns isn't sorted.

Add and name sheets

You might have multiple spreadsheets for a given project. For example, a travel company planning a tour might create separate spreadsheets for tour dates, customers, transportation, hotels, excursions, and so on.

Instead of creating multiple spreadsheets, you can add sheets to an existing one and jump back and forth between the related sheets, similar to how you might use tabs in a browser to move between different websites.
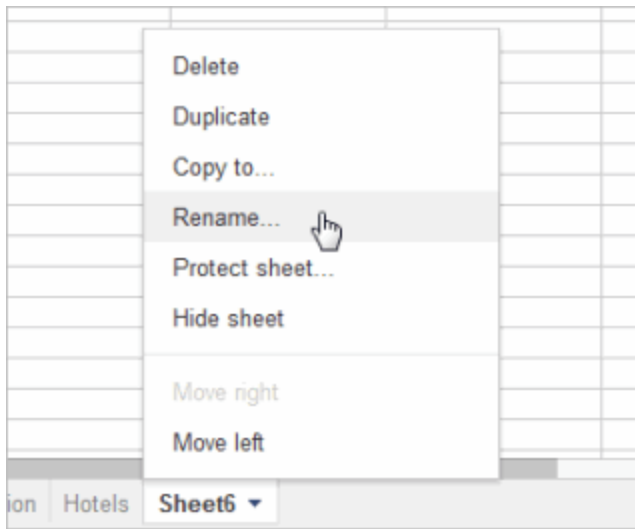
To add a new sheet:

1. In the bottom-left corner of your spreadsheet, click **Add Sheet**.
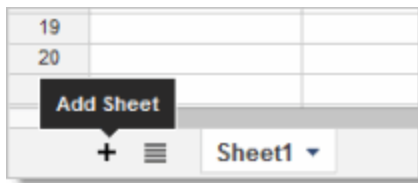
   By default, sheets are named Sheet1, Sheet2, Sheet3, and so on.
2. To rename a sheet, select the tab, click the drop-down arrow, and select **Rename**.

3. Enter a name for the sheet and press **Enter**.

   The quickest way to re-order sheets is to drag the tab to a new location. Also, note that when you open a spreadsheet, it always opens to the first sheet. If you want a different sheet to open first, drag it to be the first sheet.

Get started with functions

Functions make calculations easy and automatic. Access functions by clicking **Functions** on the toolbar or from the **Insert** menu to get immediate access to some common formulas such as sum and average. To learn about all formulas that you can use, click **More functions**.
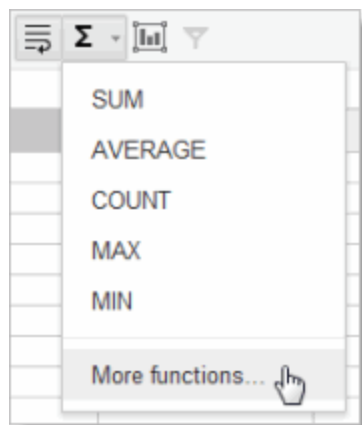

To use data from other cells in your functions, refer to the cells by column letter followed by row number (A6, C2, and so on). For example, here's how to use the SUM function to add cells in a column:

1. Select the cell to contain the sum.
2. Click **Functions** and select **SUM**.
   The SUM function is inserted in the cell.
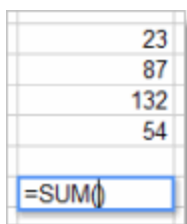
3. Select the range of cells you want to add. The cell range (D2 to D5 in this example) is added to your SUM function.
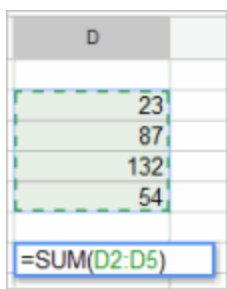
4. Press **Enter** or **Tab** to see the result.

Share and collaborate

Take advantage of the collaborative features in Sheets by sharing your spreadsheet with others. Multiple people can edit the same spreadsheet at the same time. Any updates are made in real time so you'll always have the most up-to-date version at your fingertips.

To get started sharing a spreadsheet, click **Share** in the top-right corner of the spreadsheet. See Share and collaborate to learn more about sharing settings.

Collaborating in Sheets is slightly different than in Google Docs—only one person can edit a cell at any given time, and comments are stored with individual cells.

Collaborate with joint edits

A cell that you've selected is outlined in blue. When someone else is editing your spreadsheet, a cell they've selected has a different color border. If you want to see who has selected a cell, just hover over the cell.


You don't have to worry about overriding edits made by someone else. A cell is gray while it's being modified by someone else. Any changes you make to a gray cell won't be saved.

Collaborate with comments

If you have editing access to a spreadsheet, you can add comments to individual cells:
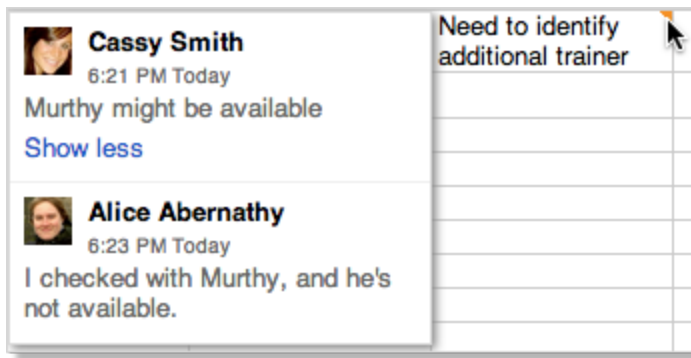
1. Select the cell you want to comment on.
2. Click **Insert > Comment** (or use the right-click menu).
3. Enter your comment and click **Comment**.
    The comment automatically has your name and the date.
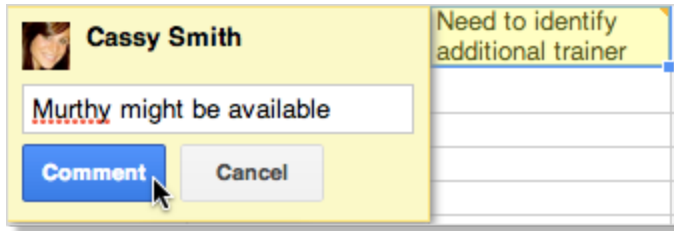
4. Click another cell. Notice that the cell you commented on now has a triangle in the upper-right corner.
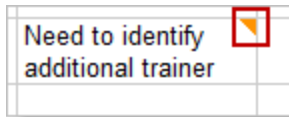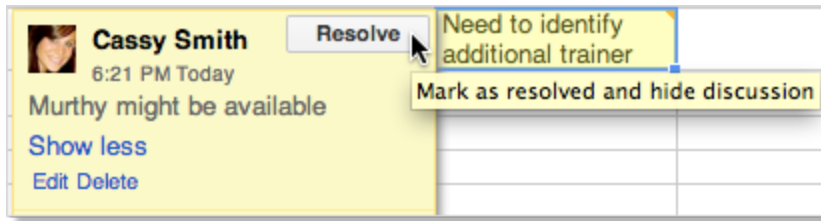

5. To see any comments, just hover over the cell.

6. If you want to modify your comment:

    a. Click the cell that has the comment.

    b. Click ⋮ and select **Edit** or **Delete**.

7. To reply to a comment:

    a. Click the cell that has the comment.
    b. In the Reply box, enter a comment and click **Reply**.

8. To remove a thread of comments, click the cell and click **Resolve**.

To see any resolved or deleted comments, click **Comments** in the upper-right corner of the spreadsheet.

Restrict changes

If there's content in your spreadsheet that you don't want people to change, you can restrict who can edit a specific range of cells or an entire sheet.

Note: You must be an owner or have edit access to restrict access.

To protect a range of cells:

1. Select the cell or range of cells you want to protect.
2. Click **Data** > **Protected sheets and ranges**.
3. (Optional) Click **Add a sheet or range**.
4. Enter a description.
5. (Optional) If you need to change the range of cells to protect:

   a. Click ⊞ .
   b. Drag to select the cells to protect.
   c. Click **OK**.

6. Click **Set permissions**. If you're changing an existing protection, click **Change permissions**.
7. Choose one of the options for who to give permission to, then click **Save**.

   - If you want to enter specific people who can access the range, click **Custom**.
   - If you're editing an existing range, click **Done**.

To protect a sheet:

1. Click the arrow in the sheet tab at the bottom of your spreadsheet and select **Protect sheet**.
2. Enter a description.
3. (Optional) To exclude cells from protection, check the **Except certain cells** box and add the cells you want people to be able to edit.
4. Click **Set permissions** or if you're editing an existing sheet, click **Change permissions**.

   Note: If you have protected ranges in sheet you are trying to protect, you'll need to remove them before you can protect the entire sheet.

5. Select who to give permission to:

- If you want to enter specific people who can access the range, click **Custom**.
- If you're editing an existing range, click **Done**.

6. Click **Save**.

For people who don't have access, protected ranges appear with a gray striped background, and protected sheets have a padlock next to their name.