



# Google™ Docs

## Part 1:

Chances are you've probably used or at least heard of Google's email service Gmail. But did you know a Gmail account also gives you access to free tools like a word processor, presentation creator and spreadsheet application?

Google Docs does all the great things you can do with a productivity suite like Microsoft Office, but for free. In fact, you don't have to download anything at all to get started with Google Docs applications because they run right in your web browser. Getting started is as easy as going to [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com) and logging in with your Google account. Don't have an account? No worries—just click “register” and provide the requested information.

Because Google Docs integrates with Google's online storage service Google Drive, you can store any documents you create and access them from any computer or mobile device like a smartphone or tablet. Google gives you 5 gigabytes of free storage space to start out with—more than enough for hundreds of recipes, notes, spreadsheets or presentations.

But sometimes you need to download a file for your own personal storage. Google Docs has that covered, too. Just click on “Download as” under the File menu and select from common file formats like PDF, Excel or PowerPoint.

In the next column, we'll be taking a closer look at Google Docs and how you can use its free services to be more productive. See you then! ■

## Part 2:

Google Docs allows you to do all the great things you can do with a productivity suite like Microsoft Office, but for free. And because Google Docs applications run in your web browser, there's no need to install software on multiple computers or devices.

Since Google Docs integrates with Google's storage service Google Drive, all your work is stored “in the cloud”—on Google's servers—so your documents won't be lost forever just because your hard drive crashed. Google Drive gives you 5 gigabytes of storage for free, which is more than enough for hundreds of documents. But should you need more, there are higher capacity options for a monthly fee.

Need to create an easily editable résumé you can quickly access anywhere? Create a new document in the word processing application and set the margin, font and text size until it's just right. Then try out standard features like spell check, bullets, headings and text alignment to polish it up even more. Or try starting a to-do or shopping list to keep life organized, or save recipes, invoices or notes from school in Google Docs documents for safe keeping.

Once you're done, you can print a hard copy or save your file in popular formats like PDF and Microsoft Word so your work can be emailed as an attachment or loaded onto a USB thumb drive.

Spreadsheets are another option. Just click “Spreadsheet” under the “Create” menu once you log in and you'll find the cells, columns and rows format standard to applications like Microsoft Excel. Keep a personal budget here or keep track of cash flow or inventory in your business for free and right in your favorite browser. Whatever the purpose, Google Docs is a great and free way to make life more productive.

In the next column, we'll look at some different cloud storage options. See you then! ■

**Saving your stuff “in the cloud” (on Google's computers) means you can access it anywhere and don't have to worry about your hard drive dying.**

**Just go to [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com) and log in with your Gmail or other Google account on any mobile device or computer and you're ready to start creating documents, slideshow presentations, spreadsheets and more.**