



# Curriculum Guide

## Microsoft Office

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# How to Use Our Tutorials

This guide was created to give teachers and service providers a starting point for using our Microsoft Office tutorials. You may already refer people to our site for self-paced, independent learning. This guide will help you use our content to supplement your own programs, tutorials, and courses.

How you use our tutorials will depend largely on your organization's capabilities and the needs of the population you serve. We've found that there are as many ways to use our content as there are organizations using it. Some organizations take a largely hands-off approach; others choose to integrate our tutorials into their own instructor-led classes. Here are some examples of ways a group could use our tutorials to provide instruction:

- **Textbook Method:** Instructor-led classes that include original curriculum but use our site as a textbook for both the teacher and students.
- **Self-Paced Tutorial Method:** Students follow a particular course of study at their own pace, either at home or in a computer lab. At class meetings, the instructor checks assignments and offers help to students who need it.
- **Independent Study with Assignments:** Independent-study classes or meetings where the students read our tutorials and complete original assignments, all on their own. At an instructor-led "lab time", students ask questions and get help starting new topics. This method is a good one to use if you know many or most of your students do not have computer/Internet access outside the classroom.

These are just a few examples, but the possibilities are nearly endless. Let us know how you use our site by [contacting us](#).

## Terms of Use for Our Tutorials:

All of the content on the GCFLearnFree.org website is copyright protected. You may use, print, and download our content for educational purposes, as long as the content is used for noncommercial purposes (and for no personal financial benefit), content is not altered or transformed in any way, GCFLearnFree.org® is acknowledged as the owner and copyright holder of the content, and a link is provided to our website.

Still have questions?

Check out our FAQs!

[www.gcflearnfree.org/support/faqs](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/support/faqs)

## Classrooms without Reliable Internet Access:

If your classroom does not have reliable Internet access, here are two alternative ways you can access our site:

- **Print out the lessons:** Most lessons have a printer icon in the top-right corner of the screen. Clicking this icon will show you all the pages of that lesson on one screen, which you can then print out for yourself or your students. Unfortunately, there is no way to print the entire tutorial at once; you will need to print each lesson separately. It's also good to be aware that some of the tutorials are more than 100 pages long when printed in their entirety, so you may want to be selective about which lessons you print.
- **Contact us to ask about the downloadable version of the site:** We offer a downloadable version of GCFLearnFree.org to organizations that don't have access to the Internet. We update this version yearly; however, you should be aware that, since we continually add new content to the site throughout the year, the downloadable version tends to become out of date quickly. If your organization does not have Internet access, you can follow this [link](#) to fill out a request form for the downloadable version.

## Classrooms Where YouTube is Blocked:

Because our video tutorials are hosted on YouTube, you may not be able to view them from places where YouTube is blocked. If your school or organization blocks YouTube, here are some alternative ways to access our videos.

- **Ask your school or organization to opt into [YouTube for Schools](#):** YouTube for Schools allows teachers and administrators to limit the YouTube videos students can access at school. Once your organization has signed up for YouTube for Schools, students will be limited to videos that either appear on vetted educational channels (like PBS) or ones you choose. YouTube for Schools also allows IT administrators to block commenting and related searches, ensuring that students can access educational materials in a secure environment.
- **Download videos outside the classroom:** If your school doesn't belong to YouTube for Schools, you can download our videos from YouTube using programs like [SaveVid](#) and [KeepVid](#). You'll find additional instructions for downloading videos [here](#).
- **Access the videos through another website:** If you don't want to download the videos or don't have Internet access outside of school, you may be able to view the videos in school by typing their URLs into websites like [Safe Share.TV](#) and [ViewPure](#).
- **Contact us to ask about the downloadable version of the site:** If your organization blocks YouTube, you can also request the downloadable version of our site. We update this version yearly; however, you should be aware that, since we continually add new content to the site throughout the year, the downloadable version tends to become out of date quickly. If your organization does not have access to YouTube, you can follow this [link](#) to fill out a request form for the downloadable version.

# How to Use this Guide

Our tutorials are structured so that anyone wishing to teach a single Office program can simply base a course on the relevant tutorial. This guide explains how you and your students can use **multiple tutorials** to build a more comprehensive proficiency in the Microsoft Office suite. Our Office tutorials do assume a basic familiarity with computers, so students will need to know how to use a mouse and navigate a computer interface in order to be successful.

The guide includes four distinct **learning plans** you can follow and adapt for instruction in a classroom, with a small group, or with individuals. Each plan addresses a specific set of skills students may be interested in acquiring.

## The plans are:

- **Word and PowerPoint:** This plan is for learners who may or may not have used the Office suite but who wish to become more proficient in creating documents and presentations.
- **Word, Excel, and PowerPoint:** This plan is for learners who may or may not have used the Office suite but who wish to achieve general Office proficiency.
- **Working in the Cloud: Microsoft Account:** This plan is for learners who have basic proficiency in at least one desktop Office program but wish to work on Office documents in the cloud using a Microsoft account.
- **Working in the Cloud: Google Account:** This plan is for learners who have basic proficiency in at least one desktop Office program but wish to work on documents in the cloud using a Google account.

## Each plan has three components:

1. **Objectives:** The goals learners have entering this course of study. The objectives can help you identify the best plan for your class.
2. **Outcomes:** The skills learners should have gained after successfully completing the plan.
3. **Learning Plan:** A possible sequence of our tutorials. You can find summaries and links for each tutorial on page 15 of this guide.

## About Microsoft Office:

Service providers tell us that proficiency in Microsoft Office is one of the most common skills adult students want to gain. When a student says she wants to be proficient in Office, she may mean one of a few things:

- Most commonly, proficiency means knowing how to use **the three most common** Office programs: **Word**, **Excel**, and **PowerPoint**.
- Proficiency can also mean being able to use other “basic” Office programs and services, like **Publisher** and **Outlook**. These programs are not included in the learning plans in this guide, but you can learn about our tutorials in those programs on pages 16 and 17.
- For a small group of users, Office proficiency may include knowledge of **Access**, Microsoft’s database-management software. Access is a complex program designed for very specific tasks, and it can be quite difficult for many users to understand. For this reason, we don’t suggest encouraging your learners to study Access unless they absolutely need it.

## Teaching our Office Tutorials:

- Each of our tutorials is designed to ensure that students build a solid foundation of basic skills before moving on to more complicated tasks. The first lessons cover simple but essential tasks like navigating a program’s interface or entering text; later lessons explore using more complex functions of the programs.
- This means if you want to teach **only one Office program**, you can simply follow the tutorial for that program, perhaps omitting later lessons if you’d like to teach a shorter or more basic class.
- Alternatively, you may wish to offer classes that include **more than one Office program**. There are several reasons for this. If there are many students who wish to learn multiple programs, it may be easier for you to organize one course with many sessions than multiple short ones. Because many of the Office programs include similar features and tools, you may also find that teaching multiple programs in one class saves you and your students the trouble of covering similar material multiple times.
- To teach multiple Office programs, you can follow our suggested learning plans, which start on page 11 of this guide.

## Using the Learning Plans:

To get started, choose the learning plan that best suits your students' needs. Once you've found a plan, you can customize it to make it more relevant to your learners. This could include:

- **Adding your own content.** To get the most out of our site, we encourage you to use it in combination with your own assignments and assessments.
- **Removing redundant or unnecessary content.** Not every course or lesson will be useful for every situation. In two of the learning plans, we've already removed lessons that are included in multiple courses. You can do the same. Read the tutorials, and assess your students' knowledge and needs. You can then omit any content that is irrelevant or unnecessary for your learners.
- **Selecting additional tutorials.** You may also choose to integrate tutorials from other sections of our site. You can find a complete list of our tutorials [here](#).

# Teaching Tips

## Creating Assignments and Example Documents:

**Create simple assignments to test basic knowledge.** For instance, at the beginning of a course you may want to find out whether students know how to change the font in Microsoft Word. If you're worried that an assignment will seem too simple, you can explain that you're using it for evaluation purposes.

**Focus on just a few skills at a time.** This will make the material easier for the students to grasp. And if they're struggling with something, it will be easier for you to figure out what is confusing them.

**Try to use example documents, scenarios, and situations that are applicable to real-world tasks.** Students will be more engaged if they can see how a new skill will be useful to them in their everyday lives. They'll also be more likely to remember what they learn that way.

**Use familiar examples.** Documents like flyers, cover letters, and advertisements are probably already familiar to your students, even if they haven't created them in Office before. If your students understand the purpose of a document, it will be easier for them to understand the reasons behind the changes you ask them to make in the assignment instructions.

**Break down instructions for assignments into easy-to-follow steps.** Bulleted or numbered lists will help students identify the information they need to complete an assignment.

**Be aware that some steps in an assignment may impact other steps.** Sometimes a particular step in an assignment will make it difficult to go back and correct prior mistakes; for example, you might ask students to perform a function in Excel that changes the content of a cell that's referenced in a previous step. In those cases, you may want to warn students to double-check their work before taking that step.

**Make sure your assignment questions and instructions are clear and easy to understand.** Remember that what seems obvious and clear to someone who already has a skill is not always so obvious to a beginner. Try to avoid jargon or "tech-talk".



**Make a few examples ahead of time to show students how the different stages of an assignment should look.** Some students find this kind of visual very helpful. As you go through the assignments yourself, you can take screenshots or copy your file at different stages of completeness.

**Consider providing hints.** In Excel and Access, where some actions should result in particular numbers, you may want to tell students what those numbers should be. This won't tell them how to do the task, but it will enable them to check their work independently.

**Make sure assignments are possible to complete within the time you've set aside for them.** Try doing an assignment yourself and testing it on someone else, if possible, before giving it to your students. Remember that it will probably take your students longer than it will take you to finish the assignment.

**Evaluate assignments based on the skills students are working on.** Not all students come to class with the same background or experience, so try not to evaluate assignments based on knowledge from outside of class. For example, don't evaluate assignments based on design if that's not what you're learning about (although you may want to offer help to students who seem to need it).

## Assessment:

The purpose of assessment is to have students demonstrate that they have acquired the skills you're trying to teach them. Not all assignments are assessments; some may be for the purpose of having students practice a skill or having them experience something new. Here are some good steps to follow when you're creating an assignment you want to use for assessment.

1. **Decide what skill you're assessing.** For example, if your students are working on formatting tables in Excel, you might decide to assess them on that skill.
2. **Design a task.** In this example, you might decide that the best indication of how well students have learned to format a table would be to have them turn an Excel spreadsheet into a table.

3. **Decide what good performance on this task would look like.** What do you want students to be able to do when they're creating a table? Are some of these things more important than others? For example, you might want students to be able to insert new rows and columns in a table and to change the table style, but you might feel that inserting rows and columns is more important than changing the style. You can decide what a good performance on the task must include based on which skills you think are most important.
4. **Decide how you'll apply the criteria for good performance.** In formal assessments, this will probably involve deciding how the criteria will translate into a student's grade. In informal situations, applying the criteria usually means deciding what different levels of performance will tell you about what the student should do next. For example, you might feel that someone who is missing half of the criteria of a well-formatted Excel table should continue to work on creating and formatting tables.

## A Note on Quizzes:

We know teachers often use our quizzes in the classroom, but quizzes aren't available for all of our tutorials. If you want to create quizzes for topics where we don't have quizzes, here are a few tips:

- Try to make sure your questions test knowledge or skills, not how closely the learner reads the question. In other words, make sure your questions are clear and easy to understand—try to avoid “trick questions”.
- When you're writing multiple-choice assessments, the answers are just as important as the questions. Make sure you don't have choices that are meant to be wrong answers that might actually be right in some situations because it can be confusing to the learner.

# Word and PowerPoint

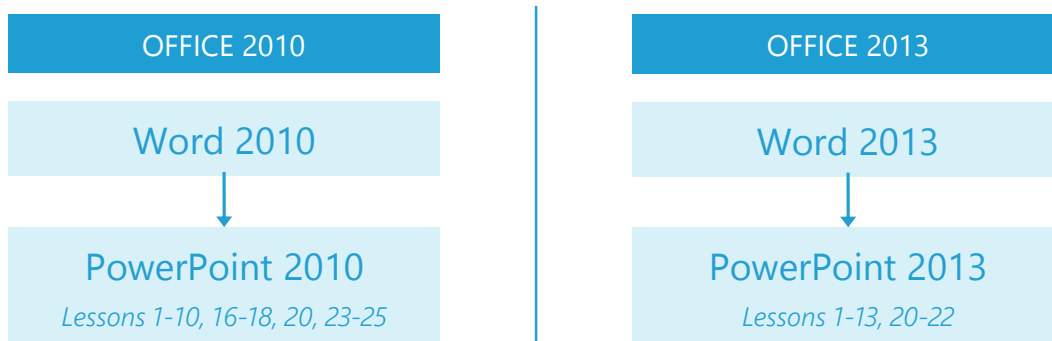
This plan is for learners who may or may not have used the Office suite but who wish to become more proficient in creating documents and presentations.

## Objectives

- To be proficient in important Microsoft Office programs
- To be able to create documents for printing and sharing
- To be able to create and share presentations

## General Outcomes

- Learners will be able to claim proficiency in Word and PowerPoint.
- Learners will be able to independently create professional-looking documents and presentations.
- Learners will be familiar with some advanced Word and PowerPoint functions.
- Learners will understand how to use Word and PowerPoint in a variety of professional, educational, and personal situations.



# Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

This plan is for learners who may or may not have used the Office suite but who wish to achieve general Office proficiency.

## Objectives

- To know how to use the most common Microsoft Office programs
- To be able to create documents for printing and sharing
- To be able to create and share presentations
- To be able to manage and store data in a spreadsheet

## General Outcomes

- Learners will understand which tasks each of the major Office programs can perform.
- Learners will be able to independently create professional-looking documents, presentations, and spreadsheets.
- Learners will be familiar with some advanced Office functions, including Mail Merge (Word) and Formulas (Excel).
- Learners will understand how to use Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in a variety of professional, educational, and personal situations.
- Learners will be able to claim Office proficiency.



# Working in the Cloud: Microsoft Account

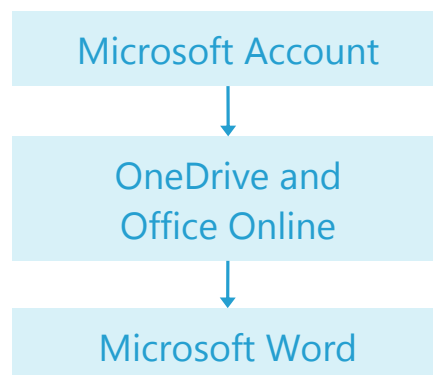
This plan is for learners who have basic proficiency in at least one desktop Office program but wish to work on Office documents in the cloud using a Microsoft account.

## Objectives

- To create a Microsoft account
- To be able to create, upload, and share Office documents via Office Online

## General Outcomes

- Learners will have a Microsoft account.
- Learners will understand the functional differences between regular Office programs and Office Online.
- Learners will be able to create, upload, and share Office documents in the cloud.



# Working in the Cloud: Google Account

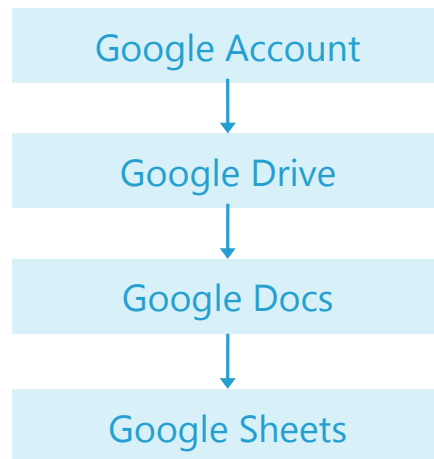
This plan is for learners who have basic proficiency in at least one desktop Office program but wish to work on documents in the cloud using a Google account.

## Objectives

- To create a Google account
- To be able to create, upload, and share documents via Google Drive

## General Outcomes

- Learners will have a Google account.
- Learners will be able to create, upload, and share documents in the cloud.



# Additional Resources

## Office Tutorial Descriptions:

Below are descriptions of the tutorials mentioned in this guide; you can find them by going to [www.gcflearnfree.org/office](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/office) unless another URL is listed. For a complete list of our tutorials, go to [www.gcflearnfree.org/topics](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/topics).

### **Access**

This tutorial is a thorough introduction to Access, the database-management software in the Microsoft Office suite. Upon completion of this tutorial, students will be proficient in Access's most commonly used features. Our tutorials currently cover Access XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

### **Excel**

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to Excel, the spreadsheet software in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to use worksheets to enter, store, and analyze data. Upon completion of this tutorial, students will be proficient in Excel's most commonly used features. Our tutorials currently cover Excel XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

### **Excel Formulas**

This tutorial shows students the basics of creating formulas in Excel, Google Sheets, or any other spreadsheet program, and offers opportunities to practice with real-world scenarios.

### **Google Account**

This tutorial introduces students to Google web apps and shows them how to create a Google account.

[www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googleaccount](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googleaccount)

**Google Docs**

This tutorial covers the basics of creating, formatting, sharing, and managing files in the cloud using the documents featured in Google Drive.

[www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googledocuments](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googledocuments)

**Google Sheets**

This tutorial covers the spreadsheets application in Google Drive. Topics include cell references, formulas, functions, and saving and sharing spreadsheets in the cloud.

[www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googlespreadsheets](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/googlespreadsheets)

**Microsoft Account**

Microsoft Account is a free, cloud-based account that gives users access to Microsoft services like OneDrive and Skype. This tutorial shows students how to set up a Microsoft account and manage their contacts and privacy settings.

[www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/microsoftaccount](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/microsoftaccount)

**OneDrive and Office Online**

Office Online contains free, pared-down versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint that users can access online. OneDrive is a related cloud-storage service where students can save their Office Online documents and other files. This tutorial teaches students how to get started with OneDrive and Office Online, as well as how to create, upload, manage, and share files.

[www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/onedrive](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/usingthecloud/onedrive)

**Outlook**

This tutorial teaches students how to use Microsoft Outlook, the desktop email client in the Microsoft Office suite. We only offer tutorials on Outlook 2003 and 2010, and have no current plans to support more recent versions.



## PowerPoint

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to PowerPoint, the slideshow presentation program in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create and present professional-looking slideshows. Upon completion of the tutorial, students will be proficient in PowerPoint and able to use many of its advanced features. Our tutorials currently cover PowerPoint XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

## Publisher

This tutorial teaches students how to use Publisher, the desktop-publishing software in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create a variety of publications, including newsletters, brochures, and greeting cards. Our tutorials currently cover Publisher 2003 and 2010. We do not plan to offer Publisher courses for Office 2007, as the Office 2007 Publisher was not substantially different from the Office 2003 version. Note that Publisher 2010 offers fewer features than the other programs in the Office 2010 suite. For this reason, we recommend that learners consider using Word for desktop publishing instead.

## Word

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to Word, the word processing program in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create professional-looking documents. Upon completion of the tutorial, students will be proficient in Word's most common features, as well as some advanced features like Mail Merge. Our tutorials currently cover Word XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

## Other GCF Learning Tools:

- **[GCF Projects App](#)**: The GCF Projects app allows users to create playlists of YouTube videos and share them with friends. This can be a good way of having students watch Office tutorials, including ours. Have students with smartphones download the free app and view the playlists you create. (Available on Android)

- **[GCF Quiz App](#)**: Our free quiz app allows users to quickly create, take, and share quizzes wherever they are. You can have students use the app to take quizzes you create, or, even better, create quizzes for each other. (**Note:** The quizzes you create on this app are intended more as a study resource; you will not be able to grade quizzes within the app). (Available on Android)
- **Office 2010 Tutorial Apps**: If your students are using Office 2010 in class, they can take our tutorials on [Word](#), [PowerPoint](#), [Excel](#), [Access](#), and [Publisher](#) with them on their smartphones or tablets. All tutorial content except for the videos is available on the apps even when a student is offline, so this could be especially handy for students without Internet access at home. (Available on Android, iPhone, iPad, and Kindle Fire)
- **GCF Answers Apps**: These apps may be a handy reference for students who are already familiar with [Word](#), [Excel](#), or [PowerPoint](#), or who have just finished a class on one of these programs. Unlike the tutorial apps, the Answer apps are designed to provide quick answers to users who are already somewhat experienced. Programs covered include the 2007, 2010, and 2013 versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. All nonvideo content can be viewed offline, so students without home Internet access may find these apps particularly useful. (Available on Android)
- **[GCFaprendeLibre.org](#)**: Our Spanish-language sister site offers tutorials in ESL, math, technology, and life skills. Their lessons aren't direct translations of ours, but they do cover many of the same topics, so students whose first language is Spanish may find this site very helpful.

## Additional Online Resources:

- **[office.microsoft.com/en-us/support/training-FX101782702.aspx](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/support/training-FX101782702.aspx)**: On this website, you'll find Microsoft's own free video tutorials on Office programs. If one of your students wants to learn how to use a function we don't cover, this is a good place to start. This site also has tutorials on additional Microsoft programs, like SharePoint and OneNote.
- **[digitalliteracyassessment.org/index.php](http://digitalliteracyassessment.org/index.php)**: The Northstar Digital Literacy Project provides interactive assessments in basic computer skills like Internet usage and word processing. Activities are essentially guided software simulations and can be a good source of practice and self-assessment for students.