

# Directions for using Google Docs for an online consultation

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## About this Handout:

This document walks Grand Valley students through the process of using Google Docs (with their student email account) for an online consultation with a writing consultant. This online feature through the Grand Valley Writing Center is meant to simulate a face-to-face consultation; therefore, using Google Docs requires the presence of the writer on their computer. Here is a helpful guide for learning how to login, use the gmail feature, and understand how to get the most of online consultations.

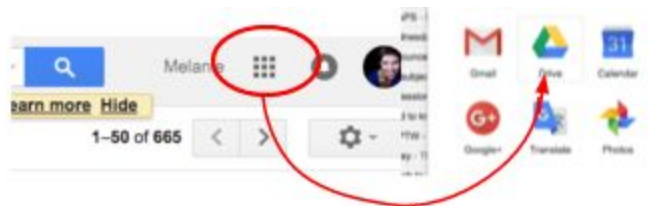
## Directions for Using Google Docs in 10 Steps:

**\*\*Before you begin:** you need to be connected to the internet (so that you can log in) and be present at your computer (so that you can speak with a consultant) in order to receive a consultation. It is best that you are using a computer you trust and a secure trustworthy internet connection. It may be best to plan ahead for technological difficulties (using a strong internet connection and a reliable computer makes difficulties less likely).

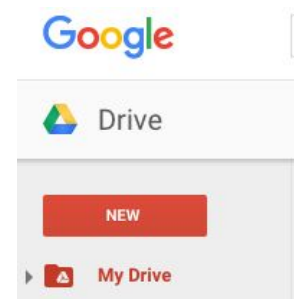
1. Sign in to your GVSU email account.
  - a. If you have another gmail account, feel free to carry on with whichever gmail account you prefer or are most familiar with.



2. Click on "Drive" on the drop-down menu.



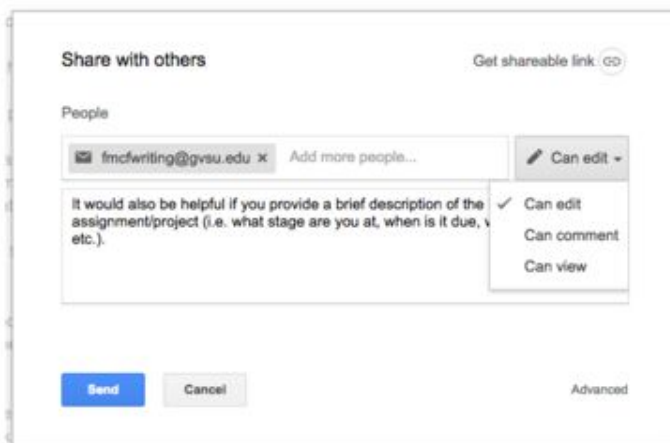
3. If you have been working outside of Google Docs on your specific project, select the "New" icon, then select "Document."



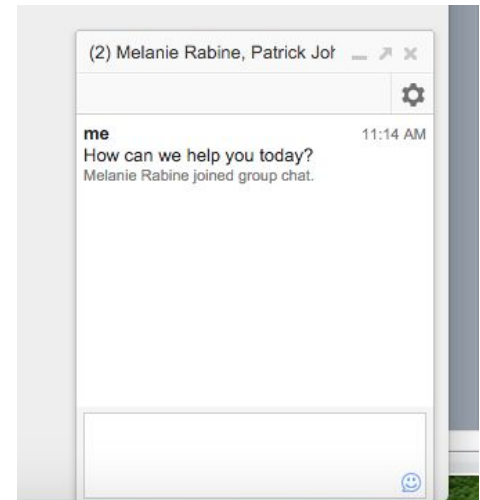
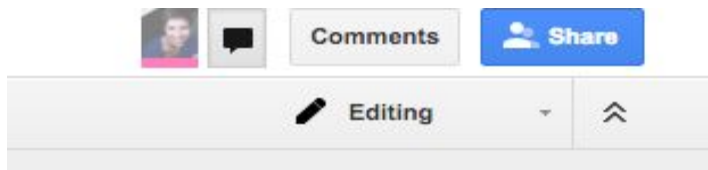
4. Open the file you want to work on, copy all text, and paste into your Google Document
  - a. If you are sharing a document already created in Google Documents, steps 3 & 4 are unnecessary
5. Click “Share” in the right hand corner \*Note: if you haven’t named the document yet, this step will prompt you to add a title



6. Enter “[fmcfwriting@gvsu.edu](mailto:fmcfwriting@gvsu.edu)” in the “Share with others - People” text box \*Note: MAKE SURE THIS EMAIL (the writing consultant) CAN EDIT THE DOCUMENT - you’ll have to select this option. \*\*Note: IMPORTANT -- make sure to select “notify people via email.” In the message section, please indicate the areas of the paper you would like to focus on during your 30 minute consultation. It would also be helpful if you provide a brief description of the background on the assignment/project (i.e. what stage are you at, when is it due, what class is it for, etc.).



7. Click “Send”
8. When the a writing consultant is ready to work with you, they will start a chat. \*Note: DO NOT LOGOUT OF GOOGLE DOCS, CLOSE YOUR TABS, OR RESHARE THE DOCUMENT. A consultant will begin the chat as soon as they receive an invitation to view/edit your draft. They may inform you that there is a wait, and that they will get to you as soon as it is your turn.
9. The chat feature will appear in the bottom right hand side of your browser, and if you are not there to respond, the consultant may move on to the next writer in line. If you need to step away from your device while you wait, it may be best to set up your audio alert system, which requires the volume to be turned on in your computer.



10. Consultations normally last for 30 minutes, and the consultant will keep track of the time for you. They may give you a “nearing the end” warning during your conversation.
  - a. When the consultation is over, the consultant will send you a link to an online survey, which will document your experience and your overall feelings about your writing. They will send you this link either in the the document you two are sharing or in the email associated with the consultation.

#### Making The Most Of Your Consultation:

While waiting for your session to begin (or before you share your document), you should read through your essay and insert comments where you have questions or concerns. The more you communicate about your needs, the more capable the peer consultant is at helping you complete your paper the way you’d like it to be.

1. You can chat with the peer consultant by opening a “chat” box. The “Chat” button is the dialogue box icon next to the “Comments” button. NOTE: The conversation will not be saved after you exit your document.
  - a. If you are interested in saving any part of the chat conversation (perhaps there’s a thought or comment you’d like to save/remember while making your changes), there are a couple of options:
    - i. Insert into your draft as a comment (by highlighting a section and inserting the chat comment into a document comment)
    - ii. Type it into the actual document, and separate it with a different font color
    - iii. Open a separate document and save the entire chat conversation by highlighting it within the chat box, copy it, and paste it wherever you’d like to save it
2. You can add comments on specific parts of your document. This will provide examples of concerns, questions, or praise about your document for your consultant.
  - a. To add a comment, select the specific part of your document (highlight the text), right click on the selected text, and then select “Comment.” At this point you can add your thoughts in the sticky-note comment on the side of the document. The comment will be visible to the consultant when you click “Comment.”

- b. When you feel like your comments have been thoroughly discussed, you can *resolve* the issue by deleting the comment. To do this, click on the comment, and then click “Resolve” in the upper hand corner of the command box. The comment should disappear as should the highlighting over the text in your document.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

**What is Google Docs?** Google Docs is a feature within the cloud space of Gmail -- this allows for writers to compose or replicate documents in a sharing space online, which can be accessed anywhere one can log in to their email account. These documents, after being saved in the cloud, can also be shared virtually with other gmail accounts -- by sharing these documents, writers can compose, edit, and discuss documents together synchronously (using the chat feature) or asynchronously (using the comments feature).

**Why would I seek out an online consultation?** An online consultation is a great alternative to face-to-face support.

- If you are unable to make it to a physical campus location, then an online consultation is writing support wherever you are. This makes seeking support an easier task to approach. This makes getting support an easier experience.
- Furthermore, when consultants rely on written chat-communication, they often provide more conscious feedback. If you're looking for specific support and you don't need that social aspect of a consultation, consultants are able to provide you virtual feedback, and it's sometimes more eloquently worded than in spoken conversation.
- You'll also have a permanent collection of the consultant's feedback, the advice they give, the ideas you come up with, and the outside support they recommend.
- In regards to outside support, a convenient feature about online consultations is the proximity of internet resources. Online consultants provide a seamless transition between mentioning a helpful source (like Purdue OWL) and directing your attention right there (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>).

**What are alternative options to working online?** If working online isn't for you, here are some other options:

- 30-minute drop-in consultations at any of our locations (Allendale: LOH 120 & Mary Idema Pew Library Knowledge Market; Pew Campus: Eberhard Center 101, CHS 100 & Steelcase Knowledge Market).
- 30-minute appointment consultations at any of our locations (Allendale: LOH 120 & Mary Idema Pew Library Knowledge Market; Pew Campus: Eberhard Center 101, CHS 100 & Steelcase Knowledge Market).
- 1 hour-long appointments for Graduate Students, Multi-Lingual Writers, and students with specific requests (per conversation with the Writing Center Director) at any of our locations (Allendale: LOH 120, Mary Idema Pew Library Knowledge Market; Pew Campus: Eberhard Center 101, CHS 100 & Steelcase Knowledge Market).

**Can I just email my paper to a consultant and get it back when they're done reading it?** If you are a Graduate Student, enrolled in classes at a satellite campus, or a student taking online/hybrid classes, then yes, you can email your paper to a consultant using this web form: <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/form.htm>. This process involves a 72 hour waiting period, which provides our consultants time to adequately respond to your work. This service implies that your writing piece is longer than what can be discussed in a typical appointment. The wait time, therefore, allows for consultants to respond thoroughly and thoughtfully. If you ARE NOT any of those types of students, then you are not privy to the email service.

**How long is the wait for working with a consultant?** If you are dropping in to the online synchronous service, the wait time is dependent on how many students are also using the service. When asking to work with a consultant via online Google Docs, the service runs on a first-come/first-serve system. Your wait time, therefore, is dependent on how many students need help and have arrived before you. When you submit your paper, the consultant on staff will inform you of an approximate wait time.

**What if my internet goes out halfway through my consultation?** If you experience any kind of technical difficulty, just know that we have not forgotten you. Consultants are trained to expect technical difficulties to happen, and they are trained to handle these issues with patience and grace. If you somehow get logged off, please do not panic. When your internet works again, feel free to log back in and reestablish your conversation. If the consultant has to move on to someone else in line while you are still trying to fix your technical issue, the consultant will stay in communication with you about how they will be able to help you. You may have to wait, but they will inform you of how long.

**Can I work with a consultant online for longer than 30 minutes?** It may be important to know that online consultations typically take a little bit longer than 30 minutes. They sometimes last for 45 minutes, since there is a lot of logistical communication that takes place online that does not have to happen face-to-face (setting up context for the assignment, getting to know each other, technical delays, etc.). We try to limit consultations to 30 minutes, however, because there may be other students waiting. We try to help as many students as we can. In that case, your consultation may take longer than 30 minutes for logistical reasons, but we try to keep them as close to 30 minutes as possible so as to help other students as well.

**Can I have more than one consultation per day?** Officially, no. We make it a priority to help as many students as possible, and if we allow for students to seek as many consultations as they want in a day, we may be denying another student the opportunity to receive support. That being said, if you feel that your reasons for an additional consultation are justifiable, feel free to contact the writing center and explain your concerns. Feel free to call 616-331-2922.