

How to Use Google Forms: A Step-by-Step Guide

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APA Citation info: Eaton, S.E. (2011). How to Use Google Forms: A Step-by-Step Guide.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Benefits of using Google Forms	5
Step 1: Sign up for a Google Account	5
Step 2: Design Your Google Form	8
Select the type of answer you want your respondents to give.	10
Examples	11
Editing a question	13
How to Add More Questions	13
How to Delete Answer Possibilities	14
How to Go To A New Page Based on a Respondent's Answer	14
How to Redirect to New Pages of Your Form	18
Step 3: Have Some Fun - Choose a Theme	19
Step 4: Edit Your Confirmation	20
Step 5: Check Out Your Finished Form	20
Step 6: Share Your Form	21
Sending the form via e-mail	21
Embedding Your Form on a Website	22
Sending a Link to Your Form	22
Step 7: View Your Responses	23
Conclusion	24

Introduction

I was first introduced to Google forms when I was the adult education manager for a major video conferencing project in Alberta that linked non-profit and community-based organizations across the province together using video conferencing technology. Many of the non-profits we worked used traditional methods of registration for participants in their courses. People would come into the office, fill out a form and that form would go into a folder in a filing cabinet.

With the video conferencing project, suddenly organizations had participants from all over the province registering in their programs. Some of those participants didn't have fax machines and so they couldn't receive a paper copy of the form and then fax it back. We turned to Google forms. Participants received an e-mail inviting them to register in the program with a link to an online form. They followed the link, filled in their information and voilà! They were registered.

From that moment on, I was sold on using online forms for all kinds of business and non-profit uses. I have personally used them in these ways:

- ✓ Registration forms for course participants
- ✓ Sign-up forms for volunteers
- ✓ Evaluation forms for programs
- ✓ Testimonial collection from clients

There are endless ways of using Google forms. I encourage you to explore the ways that appeal to you. With the help of this step-by-step guide, you can get started using Google forms right way in your own webinars, as well as on your website and via e-mail.

Enjoy!

Sarah

Benefits of using Google Forms

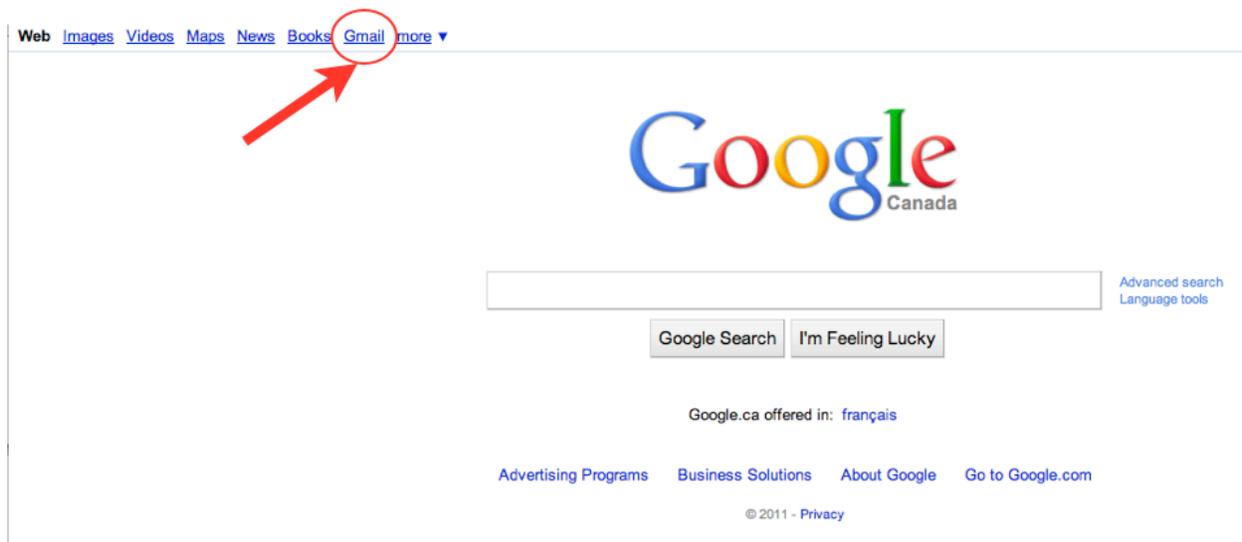
- ✓ Free tool
- ✓ Data are automatically transferred into a Google Docs spreadsheet
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Variety of templates to create a customized look
- ✓ Can be used on websites, via e-mail and in webinars

Step 1: Sign up for a Google Account

You will need a Google account (also known as “Gmail”) in order to use their forms. If you don’t already have an account, you will need to sign up for one.

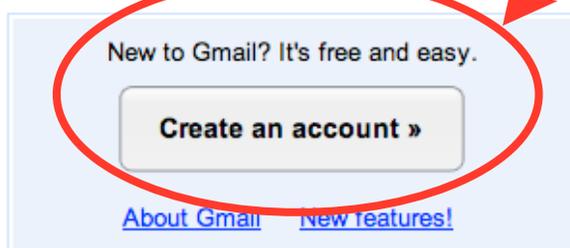
Go to www.google.com

Select Gmail.



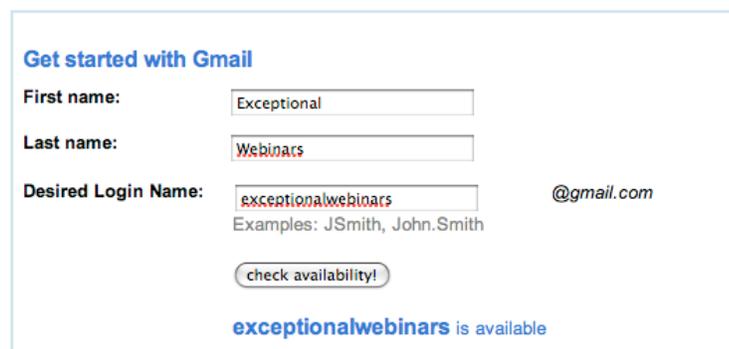


From there, you'll be taken to a new page where you can choose to create your own account.



Create an Account

Your Google Account gives you access to Gmail and [other Google services](#). If you already have a Google Account, you can [sign in here](#).



You'll be taken to a page where you can create your own account.

Here is a screen shot from the page as I was creating an account for Exceptional Webinars.

You'll have to choose your own user name and check its availability.

Choose a strong password to ensure account security.

Once you have successfully created your account, you will see a page that looks something like this.

Click on "Show me my account".



Introduction to Gmail

Congratulations!

You've successfully signed up for Gmail! Here's a quick run through to help you get comfortable.

[Show me my account »](#)



Archive instead of delete

Tidy up your inbox without deleting anything. You can always search to find what you need or look in "All Mail."

Chat and video chat

Chat with your contacts directly within Gmail. You can even talk face-to-face with built-in video chat.

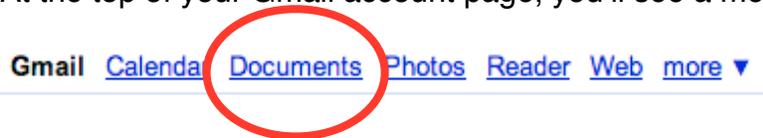
Labels instead of folders

Labels do the work of folders with an extra bonus: you can add more than one to an email.

From there, you'll be taken to your new Google account. Once you've completed these steps, you are ready to set up your form.

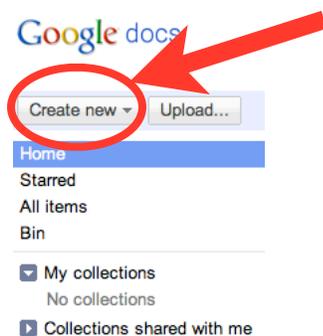
Step 2: Design Your Google Form

At the top of your Gmail account page, you'll see a menu. Select "Documents".

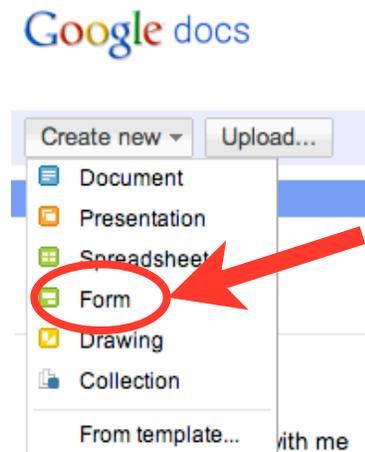


You'll have the option to create a new document or upload an existing document.

Select "Create New".



You'll see a drop-down menu with some selections. Select "Form".



You will see an empty form template that looks like this:



The screenshot displays a form builder interface. At the top, there is a blue header bar with a '+ Add Item' button, a 'Theme: Plain' dropdown, and three buttons: 'Email this form', 'See responses', and 'More actions', followed by a 'Save' button. Below the header, the form is titled 'Untitled form' in a text box. Underneath is a large text area with the placeholder text 'You can include any text or info that will help people fill this out.' The main content area has a yellow background and contains a question titled 'Sample Question 1' in a text box. Below the title is a 'Help Text' field, a 'Question Type' dropdown menu set to 'Text', and a dashed box labeled 'Their answer'. At the bottom of this section are a 'Done' button and a checkbox labeled 'Make this a required question'. Below the yellow section, there is another question titled 'Sample Question 2' in a text box.

This is what you see as the form creator. What your respondents will see in the final version will look different. Consider this the “behind-the-scenes” area that only the form creator(s) have access to. This is where you build your form.

Start filling out your form. You can make changes as you go along, so don’t worry if it is not perfect the first time.

Select the type of answer you want your respondents to give.

There are a variety of different answer types available to you. Think about what kind of choices you want your respondents to have. Select an answer type based on your decision. You can choose from:

✓ Text	Used for short text answers.
✓ Paragraph text	Room for longer text answers.
✓ Multiple choice	Respondents select one choice from several possibilities.
✓ Check boxes	Respondents can check all that apply.
✓ Choose from a list	Respondents are given a set of options from which to choose.
✓ Scale	Build a rating scale, such as “1 to 5” or “1 to 10” and set the parameters for your ratings.
✓ Grid	Respondents fill out a grid to answer the questions.

Examples

Rating scale question

Notice that I've included both the question title and some extra guidance in the "Help text" area to clarify how the respondents should answer the question, based on their opinion.

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a rating scale question. At the top, there is a text box labeled "Sample Evaluation" containing the text: "Please help us to improve our programs by taking a few minutes to fill out this evaluation form." Below this, the configuration area has a yellow background. It includes a "Question Title" field with the text "Please rate the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter." and three icons (edit, copy, delete). The "Help Text" field contains "5 = highest and 1 = lowest". The "Question Type" is set to "Scale". The "Scale" is configured from "1" to "5". Under "Labels - optional", there are two input fields: "1: Lowest" and "5: Highest". At the bottom, there is a "Done" button and a checkbox labeled "Make this a required question".

Paragraph text

This type of question allows respondents give a detailed response in paragraph form.

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for a paragraph text question. It has a yellow background. The "Question Title" field contains "Tell us what you liked most about this program." and has three icons (edit, copy, delete). The "Help Text" field is empty. The "Question Type" is set to "Paragraph text". Below the configuration fields is a large, dashed-bordered text area with the placeholder text "Their longer answer". At the bottom, there is a "Done" button and a checkbox labeled "Make this a required question".

Multiple choice

This type of question asks respondents to choose ONE answer from a variety of possibilities.

The screenshot shows a question editor interface with a yellow background. It includes the following elements:

- Question Title:** A text input field containing "How did you find the instructional pace of this session?". To the right are icons for edit, copy, and delete.
- Help Text:** A text input field containing "Please choose the ONE answer that most applies to you."
- Question Type:** A dropdown menu set to "Multiple choice" and a checkbox labeled "Go to page based on answer".
- Options:** Three radio button options with text input fields: "Too fast", "Just right", and "Too slow". Each field has a small "x" icon to its right. Below these is a "Click to add option" field with a blue link "add 'Other'" to its right.
- Buttons:** A "Done" button and a checkbox labeled "Make this a required question".

Editing a question

On the right-hand side of the question box, you'll see three icons:

Edit
Duplicate
Delete

The “Edit” icon is the pencil, located on the left. Click on that icon to edit your questions.



The screenshot shows a question editing form with a yellow background. The form includes fields for "Question Title" (containing "How did you find the instructional pace of this session?"), "Help Text" (containing "Please choose the ONE answer that most applies to you."), and "Question Type" (set to "Multiple choice" with a dropdown arrow and a checkbox for "Go to page based on answer"). Below these are three radio button options: "Too fast", "Just right", and "Too slow", each with a small 'x' icon to its right. A fourth option is "Click to add option" with a blue link "or add 'Other'". At the bottom left, there is a "Done" button and a checkbox for "Make this a required question". On the right side of the form, there are three icons: a pencil (edit), a document with a plus sign (duplicate), and a trash can (delete). A red arrow points from the text above to the pencil icon, which is also circled in red.

How to Add More Questions

When the empty template opens, two sample questions are included. The easiest way to add more questions is to duplicate one of the questions you've already made and use that as a base to create a new question. Click on the “duplicate” button on any given question and it will make an exact copy of that question. You can then edit it any way you like to create a new question.

The “Duplicate” button is located on the right-hand side of the question box, in between the “Edit” and “Delete” buttons.



This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the same question editing form. However, a red arrow points from the text above to the duplicate icon (a document with a plus sign) on the right side of the form, which is also circled in red.

How to Delete Answer Possibilities

Let's say you duplicated a question in order to edit it, but question you want to create has fewer possible answers than the one you duplicated. Deleting answer possibilities is easy. Click on the "x" next to the an answer and it will be deleted.



Question Title: How did you find the instructional pace of this session?

Help Text: Please choose the ONE answer that most applies to you.

Question Type: Multiple choice Go to page based on answer

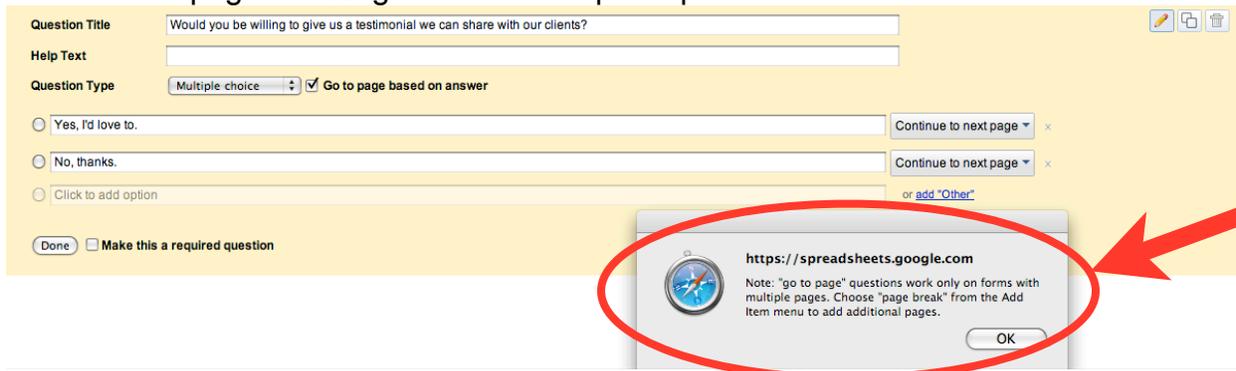
Too fast x
 Just right x
 Too slow x
 Click to add option or add "Other"

Done Make this a required question

How to Go To A New Page Based on a Respondent's Answer

You can customize your form so that respondents will be directed to a new page, based on the answer they have given to a particular question.

Let's say, for example, that I want to ask respondents if they are willing to give me a testimonial that I can use for promotional purposes. If they answer "yes" they will be directed to a new page asking them for their testimonial. If they choose "no", they will be directed to a page thanking them for their participation. Here's how it would look:



Question Title: Would you be willing to give us a testimonial we can share with our clients?

Help Text:

Question Type: Multiple choice Go to page based on answer

Yes, I'd love to. Continue to next page x
 No, thanks. Continue to next page x
 Click to add option or add "Other"

Done Make this a required question

https://spreadsheets.google.com
 Note: "go to page" questions work only on forms with multiple pages. Choose "page break" from the Add Item menu to add additional pages.
 OK

Notice the pop-up box that indicates I need to add additional pages to my form in order to re-direct respondents to a new page, based on the answer they give.

How to Add Pages to Your Form

To add pages to your form, go to the “Add Item” menu. Select “Page Break”.

Sample Evaluation Form

Please help us to improve our programs by taking a few minutes to fill out this evaluation form.

Please rate the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter.
5 = highest and 1 = lowest

1 2 3 4 5

Lowest Highest

Tell us what you liked most about this program.

How did you find the instructional pace of this session?
Please choose the ONE answer that most applies to you.

Too fast
 Just right
 Too slow

Would you be willing to give us a testimonial we can share with our clients?

Yes, I'd love to.
 No, thanks.

The new page you have created will look something like this:

Page title (optional)

Description (optional)

Done

Give your page a title and add a description. If you want to add additional questions, go back to the “Add Item” menu in the upper left hand corner and choose the type of question you would like to add.

The drop down menu looks like this:

+ Add Item Th

Questions

- Text
- Paragraph text
- Multiple choice
- Checkboxes
- Choose from a list
- Scale
- Grid

Other

- Section header
- Page break

Examples of Additional Pages

Here are two examples of “re-direct pages”. If respondents agreed to provide a testimonial, they would be redirected to Page 2, which looks like this:

Page 2 After page 1 [Continue to next page](#) Note: "Go to page" selections will override this navigation. [Learn more.](#)

Testimonial
Thank you for helping us out by providing us with a testimonial. As you know, client testimonials are very important to small businesses to help us continue to succeed.

Write your testimonial here.
Write a few sentences that you are OK with us sharing with the world.

Name *
In order for a testimonial to be credible, we'll need to know your name

Organization *
Please indicate the name of the organization you work for. If you prefer not to have the organization mentioned, just leave this question blank.

Where do you live?
Please tell us which city and country you live in. If you prefer not to include this information, just leave it blank.

E-mail address
In case we need to contact you.

I hereby grant you permission to use my testimonial for promotional purposes in print or electronic form. *
We need your permission to use your testimonial publicly.

Yes, of course!
 No

You can see that I've added in several additional questions including long answer, short answer and a Yes/No question at the end, which is really just a multiple choice question with only two possible answers.

Also notice that it says “Page 2” in the upper left hand corner. This is the second page of my form.

If a respondent chose not to give a testimonial, they'd be directed to Page 3, which I designed using the same principles, but it is much shorter. It looks like this:

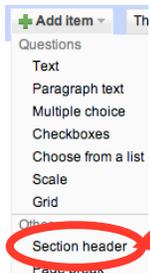
Page 3 After page 2 | Continue to next page

OK, no problem.

Any further feedback for us?

If you have a multiple page form, it is a good idea to have a final page that thanks your respondents for taking the time to fill out your form. Have other pages redirect to this page as a way to close your form. Respondents will see a “submit” button on the last page of their form.

How to Add a Section Header

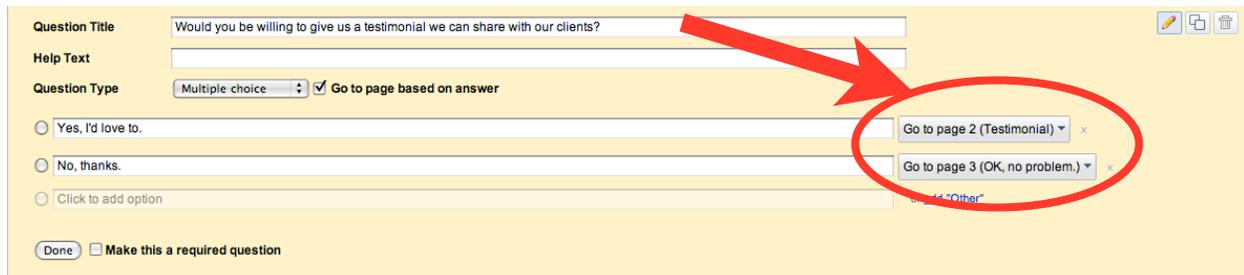


Adding a section break to a page allows you to write additional text that isn't related to a question. In the example above, I used it to thank respondents for taking part in the evaluation and to let them know that their responses would be kept confidential.

To add a section break, go to the upper left hand corner of your form and click “Add Item”. At the bottom of the drop-down menu, you will see the “Add Section Header” option.

How to Redirect to New Pages of Your Form

You will need to indicate what pages of your form to re-direct to based on your respondents answers. Once the new pages have been created, you will be able to go back to your question and select the re-direct page from a drop-down menu next to the question.



The screenshot shows the Google Form editor interface. The question title is "Would you be willing to give us a testimonial we can share with our clients?". The question type is set to "Multiple choice" and the "Go to page based on answer" checkbox is checked. The options are "Yes, I'd love to.", "No, thanks.", and "Click to add option". To the right of the options, there are two drop-down menus for redirection: "Go to page 2 (Testimonial)" and "Go to page 3 (OK, no problem.)". A red arrow points from the question title to the redirection options, and a red circle highlights the redirection options.

This should be straight forward, but the trick is to have your new pages already created. They will not appear as options until after they have been created.

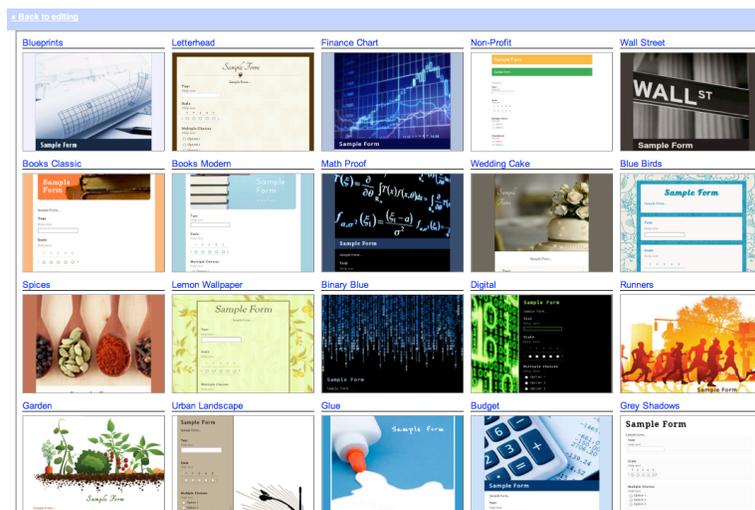
These are the basics of how to design a Google Form. There are a few other things you'll want to know how to do, too. Keep reading.

Step 3: Have Some Fun - Choose a Theme



Next to the “Add Item” button in the upper left-hand corner, you’ll see a button that says “Theme”. Click on it.

You’ll be redirected to a page with a variety of themes to choose from. There are lots to choose from:



Pick a theme you like and that reflects the nature of your form. Once you’ve chosen your theme, click “Apply”.

When you’re done, click on “Back to editing” in the upper left-hand corner.

Step 4: Edit Your Confirmation

Google provides a standard confirmation to let respondents know that you've received their feedback.

In the upper right-hand side of your form, you'll see some options. Click on "More Actions" and then choose "Edit confirmation".



A pop-up box will pop up with some default text. Change that to whatever you like and click "Save."

Step 5: Check Out Your Finished Form

Now that you've designed your form and edited the confirmation, it is almost ready to share. Before you send it out to the world, you will want to ensure that it looks the way you want it to.

To do this, go to the very bottom of your form. You should see a box with the URL of your form. Every form you make will have its own unique URL. Click on the URL shown in the box at bottom of the page.

You can view the published form here: <https://s>

You'll be redirected to your finished form. What you see is what your respondents will see. Read it over and make sure everything is how you want it. If it is not, go back and edit it. It is normal to make some edits before you're happy with the final product.

It is a good idea to test the form out yourself to ensure that the pages and questions flow the way you expect them to.

Step 6: Share Your Form

There are two main ways to share a Google Form. You can either share a link directing respondents to the online form or you can embed the form on a website.

Sending the form via e-mail

To send your form via e-mail, click on “Email form” from the options in the upper right-hand corner.



A pop-up box will appear, asking you to write in the e-mail addresses of the recipients.

A screenshot of the 'Send this form to others' pop-up box. The box has a title bar with a close button (X). Inside, there is a 'to:' field with a text input area and a 'Choose from contacts' link below it. The 'from:' field is pre-filled with 'Exceptional Webinars <exceptionalwebinars@gmail.com>'. The 'subject:' field is pre-filled with 'Sample Evaluation'. There is a checked checkbox for 'Include form in the email' and a note below it: 'Note: the form description will always be included in the email'. At the bottom, there are 'Send' and 'Cancel' buttons.

In the “To” field, type in the e-mail addresses of the recipients. Then click “send”. Your form will be e-mailed to the participants.

Embedding Your Form on a Website

To embed the form on a website, you'll need the html code. To get that, go to “More actions” on the right-hand side of your form.



Choose “Embed” from the drop-down menu. A pop-up box will appear with some code in it. Copy the code. Paste the code into your website or blog on the coding page or using an html widget.

Every website design program is a little different, so you may need to look at your own design program to find out how you use the code that Google provides.

Sending a Link to Your Form

An easy way to share your form is simply to send respondents a link to it. You can do this by selecting the URL at the very bottom of your page and copying it.

You can view the published form here: <https://s>

Every form has its own unique web address, so it is easy to share via a link.

I like to use a URL shortener such as [Bit.ly](https://bit.ly) to make the links more manageable to send.

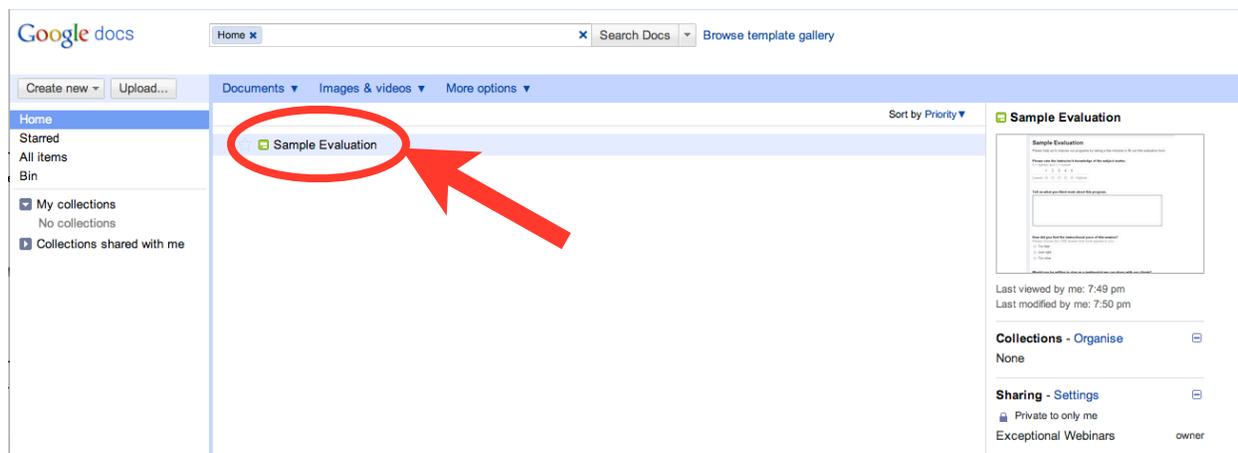
Shortened URLs are easy to share with webinar participants, too. You can either put a link on one of your slides, or share the link in the chat box. If it is a shortened URL, you can even say the link aloud to the participants in order to reinforce the information.

Step 7: View Your Responses

Once people have filled in your form, you will want to see what they wrote. To do this,

[Gmail](#) [Calendar](#) [Documents](#) [Photos](#) [Reader](#) [Web](#) [more](#) ▼

go back to your Gmail account. Once you are in your account, select Documents. You will see your new form at the top of your list of documents. It should look something like this:



Click on your form. You'll be taken to a spreadsheet. The data in the spreadsheet are the responses from those people who filled out your form.

The spreadsheet will look something like this:

[Gmail](#) [Calendar](#) [Documents](#) [Photos](#) [Reader](#) [Web](#) [more](#) exceptionalwebinars@gmail.com | [Settings](#) | [Sign](#)

Google docs ☆ Sample Evaluation Private to only me Updated seconds ago by exceptionalwebinars [Saved](#) [Share](#)

File Edit View Insert Format Form (1) Tools Help

Formula: Timestamp Show all formulas

	A	D	E	F	G	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Timestamp	Please rate the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter.	Tell us what you liked most about this program.	How did you find the instructional pace of this session?	Would you be willing to give us a testimonial we can share with our clients?	Name	Organization	Where do you live?	E-mail address	I hereby grant you permission to use my testimonial for promotional purposes in print or electronic form.	Write your testimonial here.
2	2/21/2011 20:32:29		Liked the step-by-5 step instructions.	Just right	Yes, I'd love to.	John Doe	XYZ Widgets Inc.	Anytown, Canada	nonameemail@nom	Yes, of course!	Loved this program. Would recommend it.

Conclusion

Google forms can be used for a variety of purposes. I particularly like them for webinar evaluations because they are free to use, easy to set up and easy to share with participants.

It doesn't take long to learn how to set up a form. Once you get the hang of it, you'll find yourself using them often.

Have fun and enjoy!

About the Author



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- ✓ Educator since 1994 - University of Calgary, Mount Royal University, Idaho State University (ISU - Workforce Training) and Chinook Learning (Calgary Board of Education).
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