

# Collaboration Tools in Google Drive

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## Intro

Google apps are based on the concept of a single central copy of a document that is made accessible to the relevant audience, unlike in traditional MS Office where everyone is emailed a separate copy of the document. Because there is single copy and the apps are web-based, incredible collaboration facilities are available, to the extent where several people can edit the same document at the same time and their edits are immediately visible to everyone. It is a completely different paradigm and takes some adjusting to.

## Basics

1. In order to collaborate you have to be granted access to the folder/document
2. When the content is shared, your permissions to the document can be set by the owner to View, Comment or Edit.
3. If a document is in a folder and you've been given permissions at folder level, those permissions apply to all folder content and subfolders and may extend to allowing you to share the content with others

## View rights

As the names suggest you will not have any rights beyond viewing the content. You will notice that many of the menu items and icons disappear

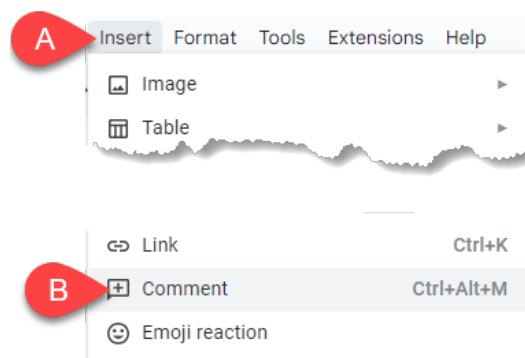
## Comment rights

You can add comments to a document but you cannot directly edit it. There are several ways to add a comment:

From the toolbar:



From the menu:

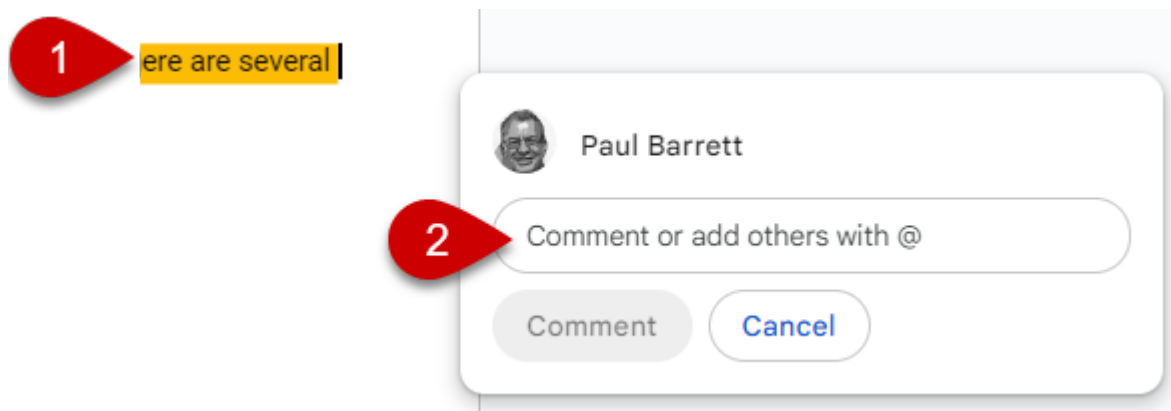


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But the most convenient way is to use the inline tool which you can reveal by hovering near the right hand page margin alongside the paragraph you want to comment on (you can even select a block of text first to really pinpoint your comment)

1. This opens the comment box
2. Allows you to add an emoji reaction
3. Will only be available if you have edit rights. More on that later



1. The relevant text is highlighted and the comment box opens
2. You enter your comment. By default your comments will be emailed to the document owner but you can also call the attention of other people or groups by mentioning them with *@their\_name* in the text - the system will prompt you with known users

## Edit rights

If you have edit rights, then as well as the commenting option described above **you can directly edit the document or you can make suggestions**

## Suggesting v editing v commenting

When you comment, you make no direct difference to the content. Your comment is a marginal note. If the author wants to adopt your comment, they will have to edit the document themselves.

When you edit the document, your changes are immediate and direct and no-one can see what you have done (at least, not obviously). **You need to be very careful about editing someone else's document, especially if your changes are radical.** Depending on the group dynamic and trust issues it may vary from completely acceptable to completely

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unacceptable. **The fact you can directly edit, doesn't mean you should.** This is where **suggesting** comes in.

## Suggesting

Feedback entered as a suggestion can be accepted or rejected with one click.

There are two ways to add suggestions. You can add an ad hoc suggestion using option 3 when you highlight some text and hover on the right hand margin.

But if you want to add several suggestions to a document then the best way is to switch into 'Suggesting' mode using the drop down menu that appears at the top right corner of the editor window.

Then all your edits will be treated as suggestions

When you add a suggestion to a document, it will appear as marked up text. For example ~~if~~<sup>id</sup> the author uses an incorrect word and someone corrects it, the original word is shown with strikethrough and the replacement word is shown next to it in a different colour. A box appears in the margin to indicate the presence of the suggestion, and an email is sent to the author.

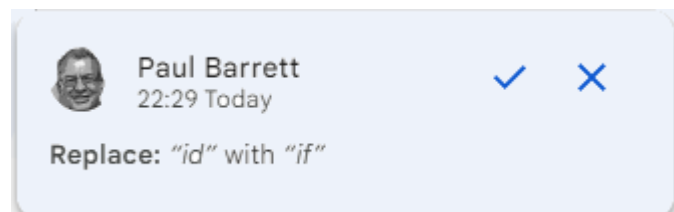
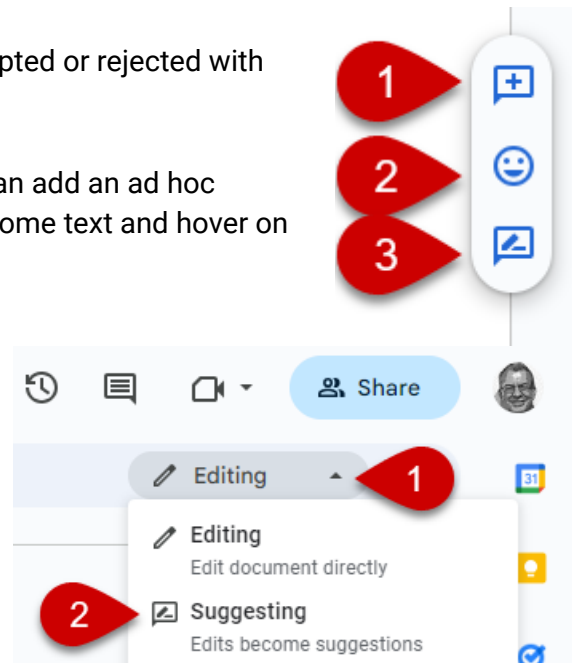
The author can then choose to accept or reject the suggestion. If they click 'accept', the edit will be made by the system and if they click 'reject', the suggestion will be discarded and the original will remain. Either way, the originator of the suggestion will be notified by email.

Suggesting is a really powerful way for a group to collaborate on a document that has been created by one of their members, allowing everyone to have their say without compromising the work of the author.

## Why not just send your feedback by email?

It's not an efficient way to work.

- The author has to review your feedback in Gmail, switch to the document to consider its impact, make the changes, switch back to the email and construct a reply



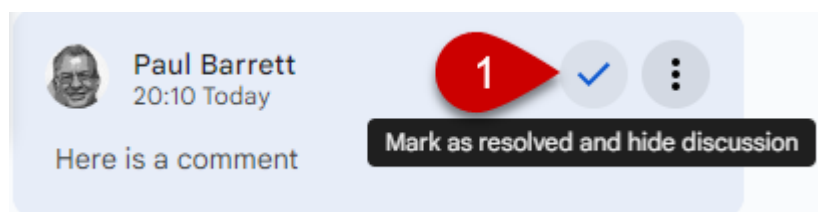
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- Handling emailed feedback from multiple people is exponentially more difficult
- Depending on how you address your feedback email it may not be seen by all members of the team, denying them the opportunity to see it before changes are made to the document - changes they may not agree with
- The collaboration tools put all the feedback **on** the document, **visible** by everyone, suggestions can be one-click merged. Why would you do it any other way?

## Responding to comments and suggestions

Anyone who has rights to a document can see the comments made by others. It's important you know how to respond and it's essential to know what NOT to do.

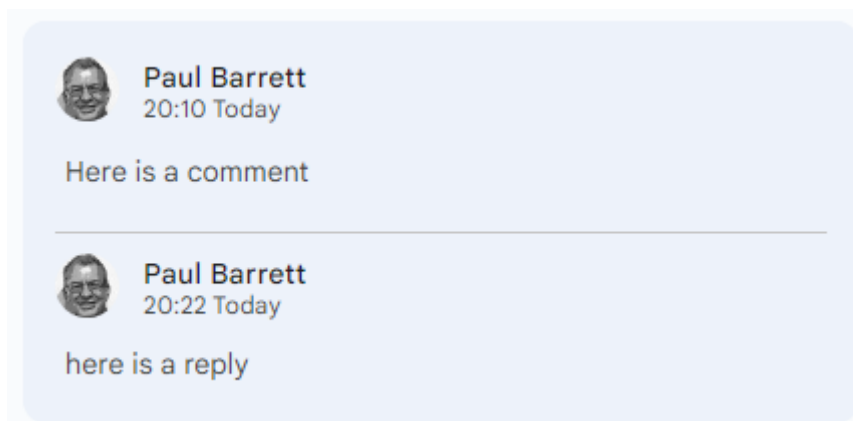
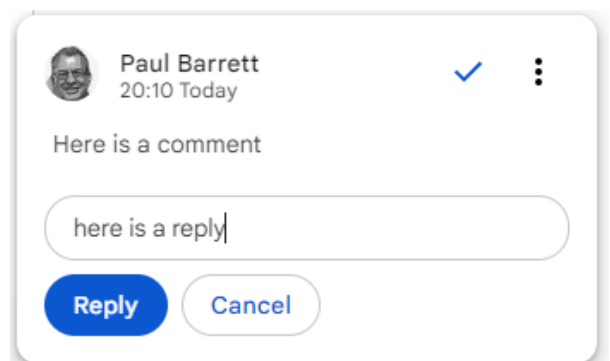
When you view a document that has feedback on it, you will see marginal notes like this one. You need to understand what the tick mark is for (the hover text explains it). Unless you are the author, it is NOT your opportunity to say I have seen this and agree with it. If you do that the comment will be closed and no more replies can be added.



**IF you have a comment to make**, click on the comment text and a reply box will appear.

You can enter your message and optionally mention people with the *@their\_name* technique.

When you reply, a thread starts to appear and the author, original commenter and anyone who is mentioned will receive an email notification



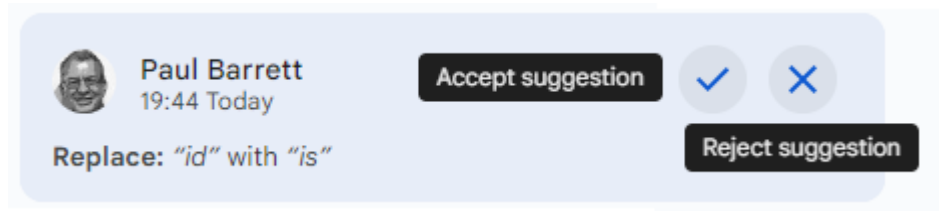
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## Accepting/rejecting suggestions

When the feedback comes in the form of a suggestion the controls in the marginal box produce different results.

The tick now not only closes the item, it accepts the change and applies it automatically. An X appears and it will close the item and remove the suggestion from the text, preserving the original



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