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BUSINESS > GOOGLE DOCS

How to Make a Survey With Google Docs Forms

by [Andy Betts](#) 21 Mar 2017Difficulty: Intermediate Length: Long Languages: [Google Docs](#) [Forms](#) [Google](#) [Software](#) [How-To](#)

There's so many ways to create online forms, it can be overwhelming to pick the perfect one for your needs. Arguably the most powerful is one you already have access to for free—it's available inside of Google Drive.

Drive is an integral part of every Google account, and is best known as a cloud storage service and for its Google office suite. One of its lesser known features is Google Forms, a form building tool that is as simple or as complex as you need it to be. Whether you're collecting email addresses, running snap polls on your website, or are building in-depth customer service surveys or questionnaires, Forms is the ideal tool to use.

In this tutorial, I'll show you how to get started with [Google Forms](#). We'll cover the example of how to make a Google Form survey. I'll explain the different types of questions you can create with it, how you can make the questions vary depending on the responses the user provides, and finally how you can access and analyse the data you receive. I'll also provide a short screencast on how to use a survey template. Let's get started.

How to Make a Survey Quickly With Google Forms (Video)

Study this screencast to learn how to customize a Google Forms survey template quickly, so you can start making and sending out your own surveys with Google Docs:

The screenshot shows a Google Forms interface in a web browser. The form title is "Additional feedback on logistics *". Below the title is a "Short answer text" field. The main question is "Which sessions did you find most relevant?". The form is a "Multiple choice grid" with 7 rows and 5 columns. The rows are:

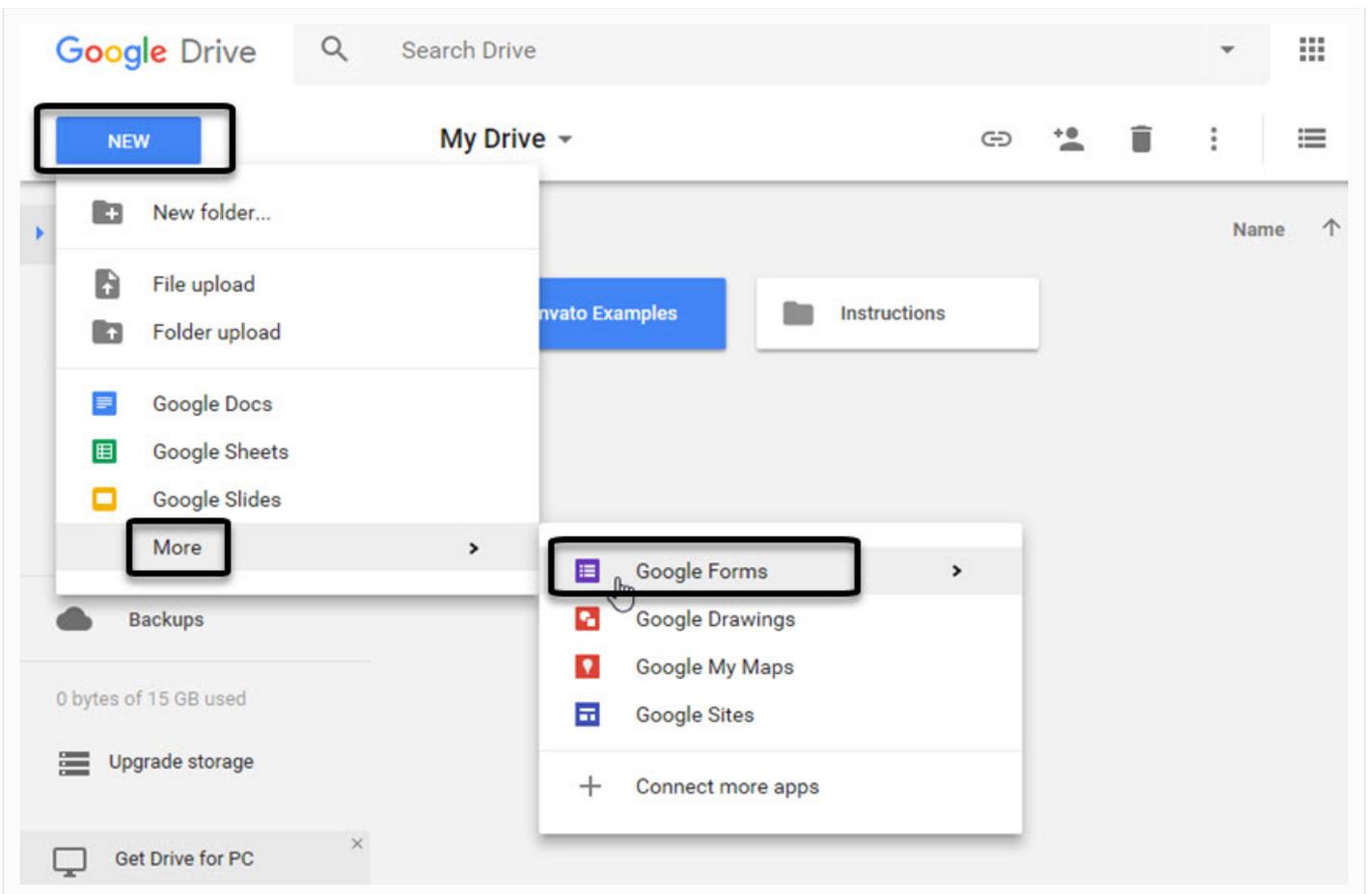
Row	Session	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
Row 1	Welcome activity	X	Not relevant	X		
Row 2	Winning the Sale, Jane Doe	X	Relevant	X		
Row 3	Meet and Greet	X	Very relevant	X		
Row 4	Following Up, Juan Perez	X	Did not attend	X		
Row 5	Teamb	X	Add option			
Row 6	Closing activity	X				
Row 7	Add option					

The form is displayed in a browser window with the address bar showing "Event Feedback - Google". The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom, showing the time as 5:28 and various application icons.

Google Doc Forms.

1. Getting Started With Google Forms

Let's start with making our Google Doc survey. First, in your web browser, go to drive.google.com and login to your Google account if you haven't already done so. In the top left corner of the screen click **New > More > Google Forms**.

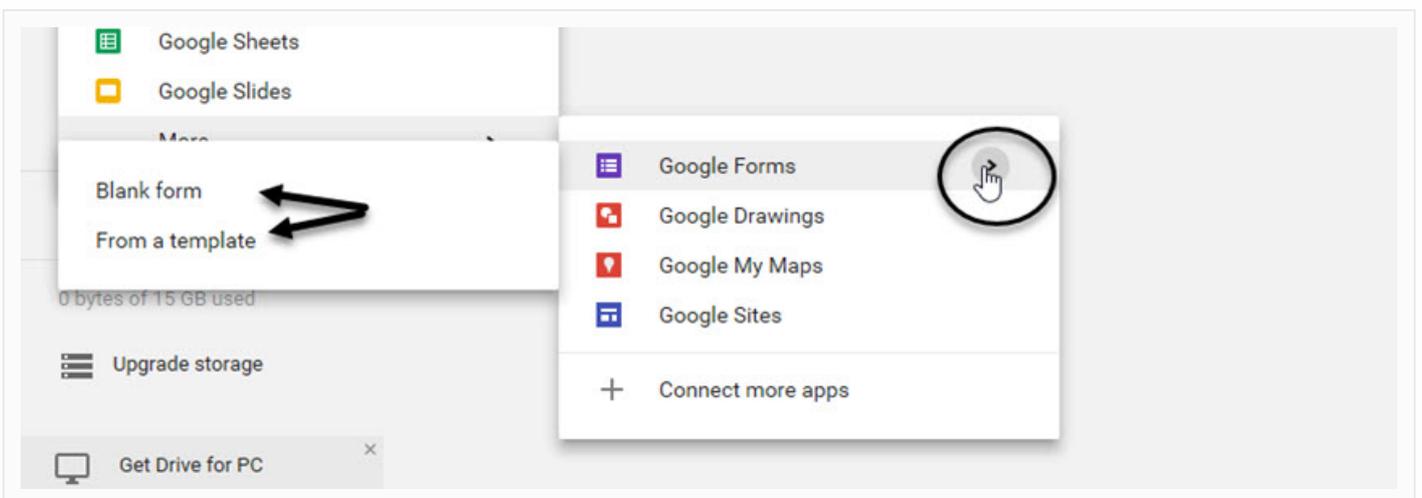


Locate the Google Forms option from the drop-down menu.

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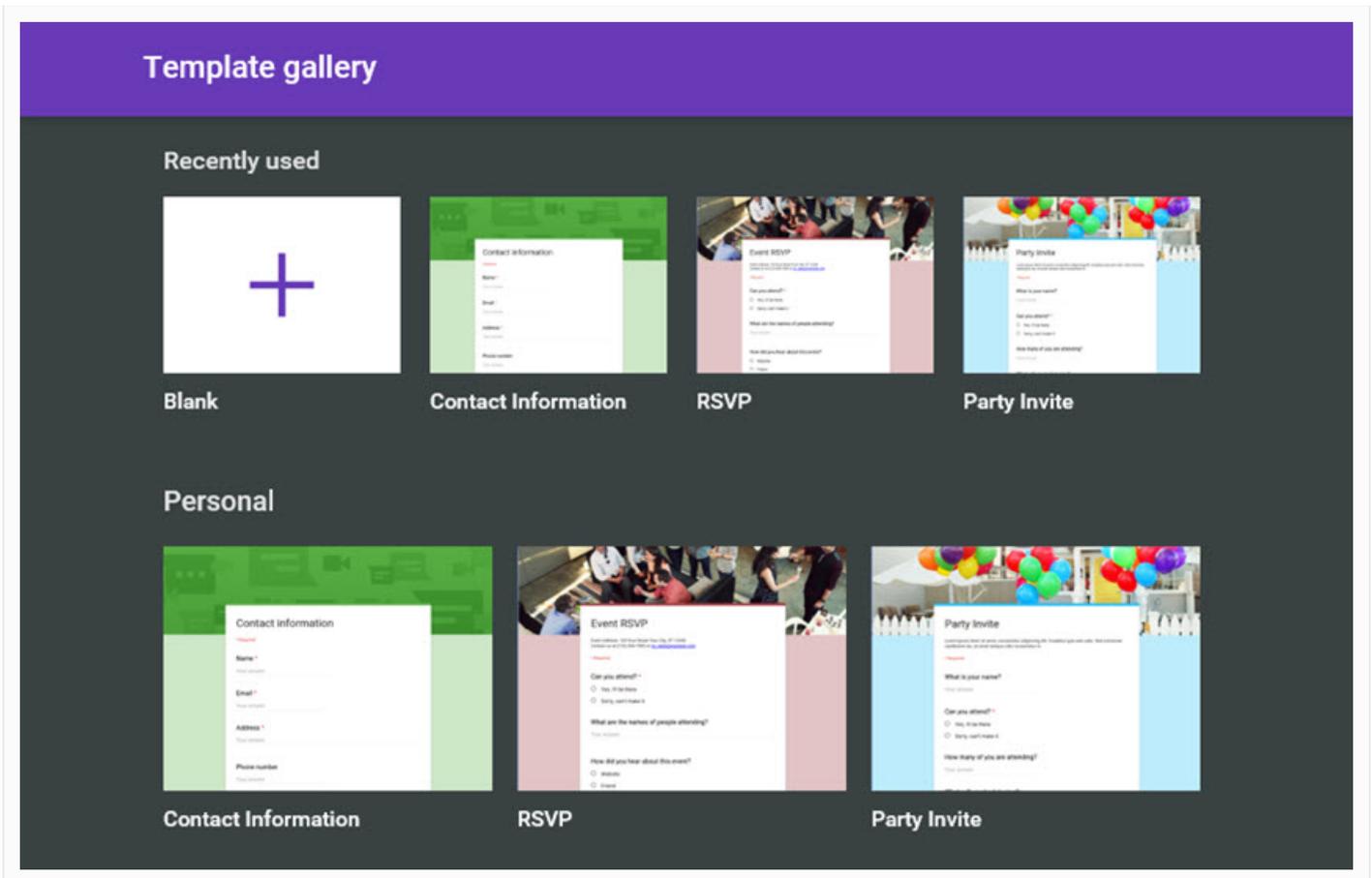
Step 1. How to Create Your First Google Forms Survey

Click the arrow to the right of the **Google Forms** option to choose between opening a blank form or creating a form from a template.



Choose between creating a survey from a blank form or from a template.

Click **Blank form** to create a survey from a blank form. Or, click **From a template** to create a survey from a template. If you find a template you like, then click on it to open the template.

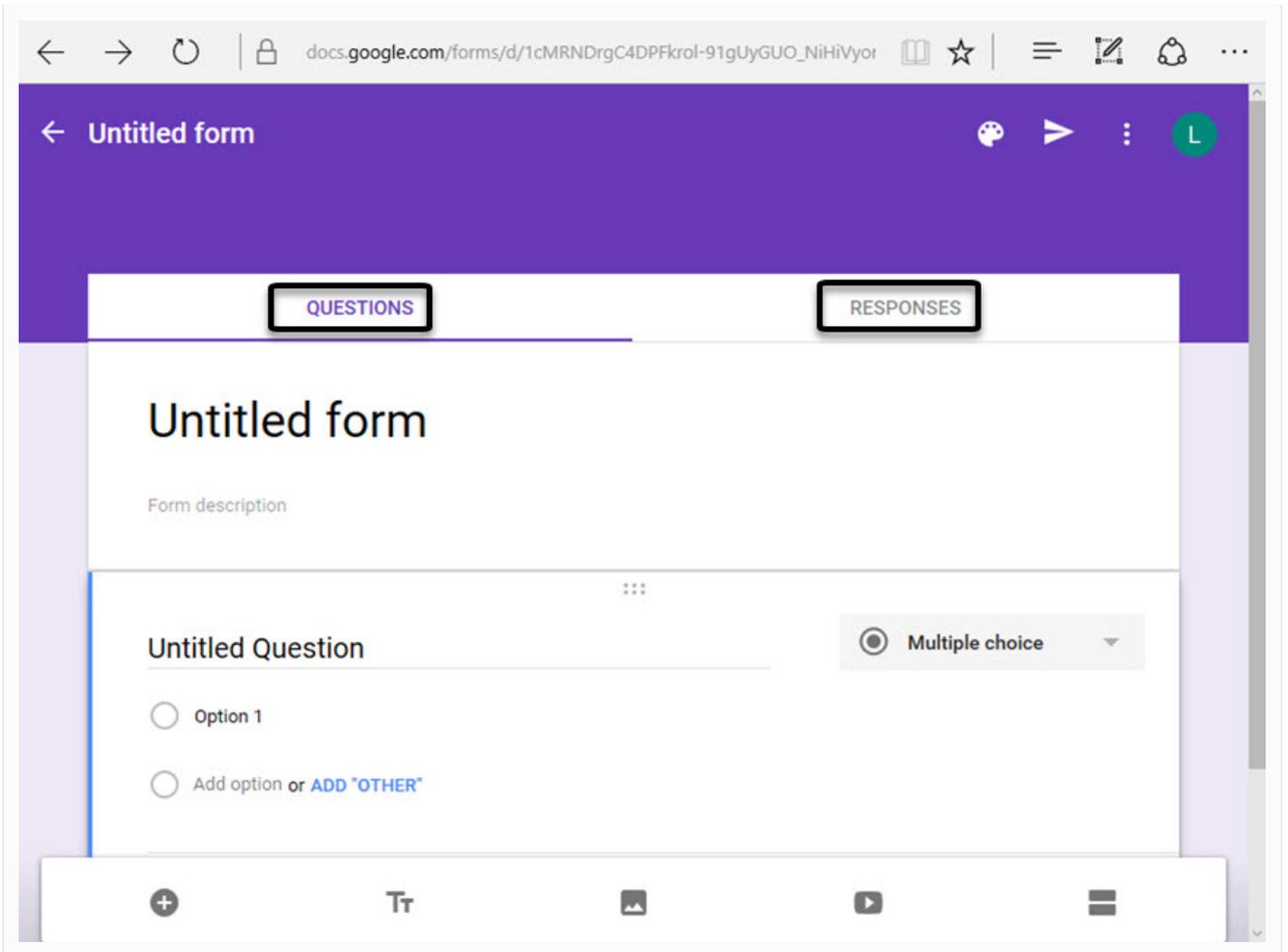


There are some pre-designed templates that you can use.

However, the default theme is suitably neutral if you're planning to embed your survey into your website. To access it, either select the **Blank** option from the **Template gallery** or select the **Blank form** option from the drop-down menu.

Step 2. How to Define Google Forms Settings

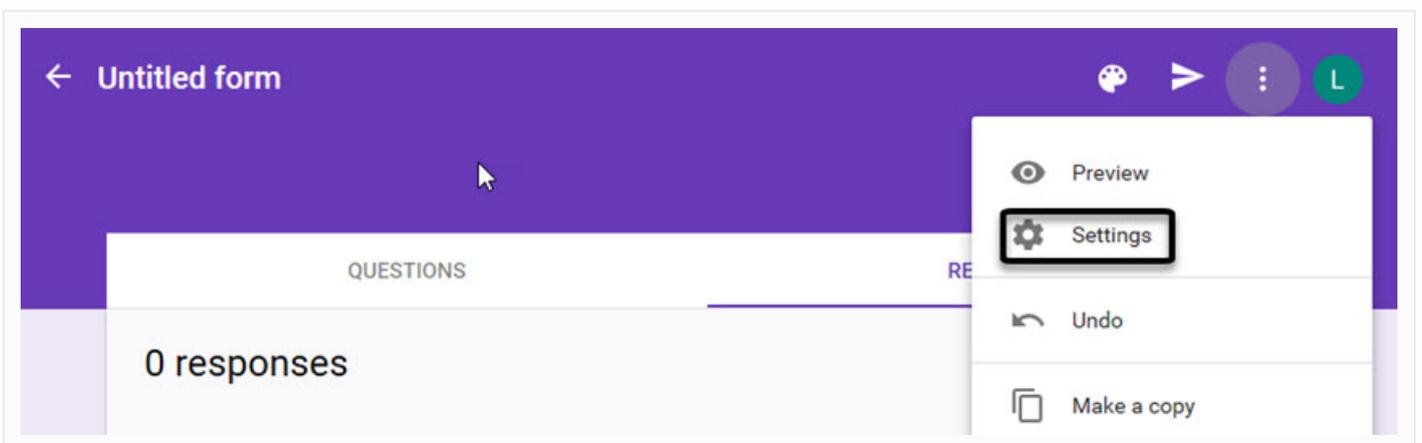
You're now at the main Forms page. You'll see two tabs at the top of the form. One tab is titled **Questions**, the other is titled **Responses**.



Questions and Responses tabs on a blank survey.

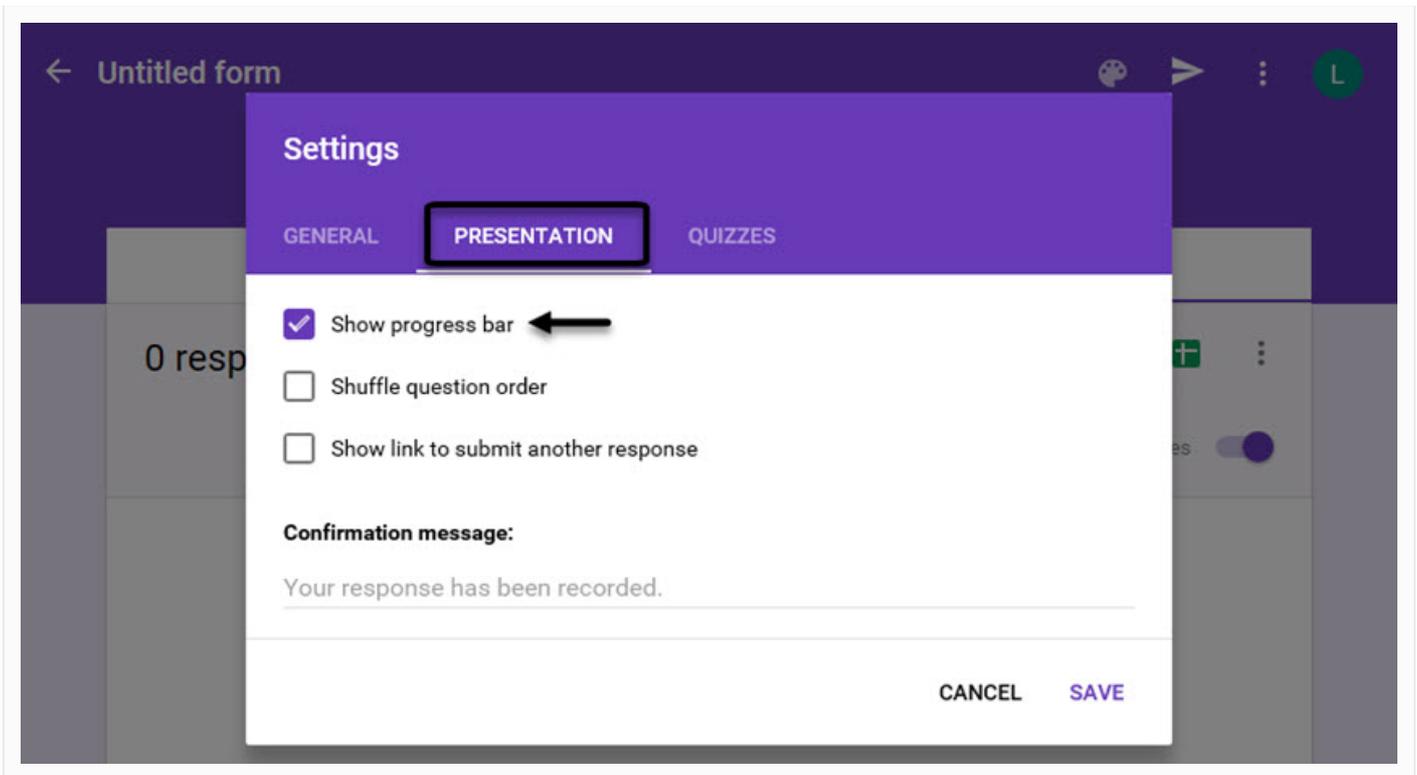
You'll set up formatting independently for **Questions** and **Responses** by clicking on each tab.

Once you've selected a tab, access formatting options by clicking the **More** icon (*it looks like three vertical dots*) in the upper right corner of the screen. From the drop-down menu, select the **Settings** icon.



Use the **Settings** option to define settings for your survey.

The **Settings** dialog box appears.



Use the **Settings** dialog box to define your Google Forms Survey settings.

The **Settings** window has three tabs:

1. **General**
2. **Presentation**
3. **Quizzes**

For the purposes of this example, I'll show you how to change response settings. Click the center tab, **Presentation**, to display the options there.

If your form is going to be two or more pages long, then tick the box labelled **Show progress bar...** to show the respondent how long it will take them to fill out the survey.

You can define other survey settings according to your needs by using the **Settings** screen for either the **Questions** or **Responses** tab.

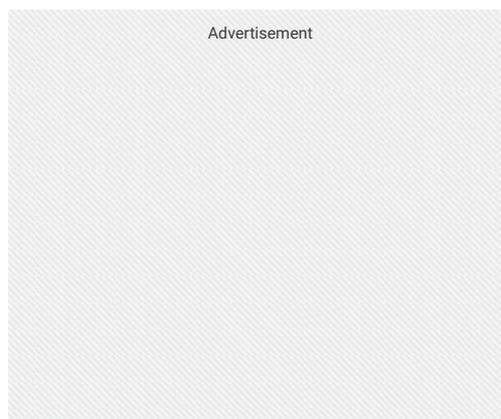
To continue with this example, let's return to the **Questions** tab.

Step 3. How to Name the Google Forms Survey

The Google Forms survey is split into sections, but obviously to begin you'll only have one section. The title of the form and its description are at the top—click on either to type your own text over them.

Click on the **Untitled form** text to type over it.

Your text replaces the default text. Now you are ready to add your first question.



Step 4. How to Add Your First Google Survey Question

Click **Untitled Question** to add your question. Click the **More** icon (*it looks like three vertical dots*) in the lower right corner and add a **Description** if the question needs explaining.

The down arrow on the right of the question brings up the **Question Type** drop-down menu.

The screenshot shows the Google Forms editor interface. At the top, there is a purple header with a back arrow, the title 'My Smartphone Survey', and a status indicator 'All changes saved in Drive'. Below the header, there are two tabs: 'QUESTIONS' (selected) and 'RESPONSES'. The main content area displays the survey title 'My Smartphone Survey' and a description: 'A short survey to find out what consumers like about smartphones.' Below this, there is a question titled 'Untitled Question'. To the right of the question title is a 'Multiple choice' button with a dropdown arrow. Below the question title, there are two radio button options: 'Option 1' and 'Add option or ADD *OTHER*'. At the bottom of the editor, there is a toolbar with icons for adding a new question, text, image, video, and a menu icon.

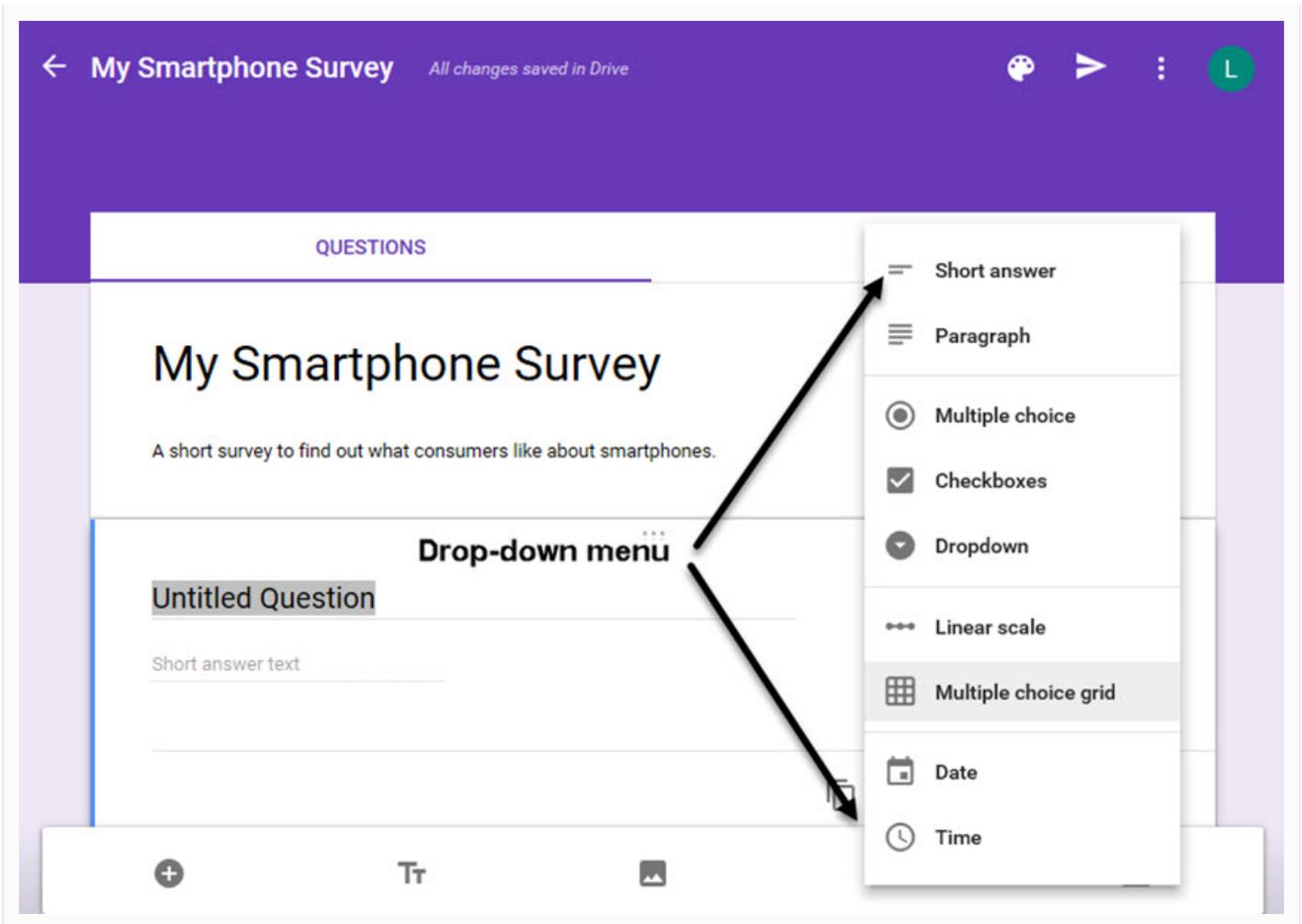
Use the down arrow on the right to change the Google Survey question type.

A multiple-choice question is set up by default, but there are nine different kinds of input you can request by clicking the down arrow next to the default and bringing up a drop-down menu.

We'll look at seven of those question types in this tutorial.

2. Types of Question

In this section, we examine seven types of Google Forms survey questions you can define. The **Question Type** drop-down menu appears below.



Use the **Question type** drop-down menu to select a type of question.

Type 1. Short Answer

This question type requests very short text input from the user, such as their name or email address.

To ensure they enter a valid email address click the **More** icon (*it looks like three vertical dots*) in the lower right corner of the question. Tick **Data validation**. Choose **Text** from the drop-down menu for the first blank and **Email address** in the second. In the **Custom error text** blank type "Please enter a valid email address".

Add data validation to your Google survey Short Answer question.

Make a question a required question by sliding the toggle button to the right next to the word "**Required**" in the lower right corner. A red asterisk appears next to the question in the survey to show that it is required.

Type 2. Paragraph

This type of question requests a longer response, such as for general comments or feedback. Here is an example of a paragraph question.

You can create a Paragraph question that requires a longer answer.

After you select the question type from the drop-down menu on the right, type the question on the left.

Type 3. Multiple Choice

The Google Forms multiple choice type of question provides a list of answers, and the user can select only one. Add your first answer over the label **Option 1**, then click over the text for the next option to add the second answer and so on. You can also click **Add "Other"** to add a blank at the end of the list. The user can add their own choice of answer there.

Multiple-choice options in a Google Forms survey.

To remove a multiple-choice option from the question, click on the X to the right of the option.

Type 4. Checkboxes

This is another multiple-choice list, only this time the user can select more than one answer. As with the **Multiple Choice** question, type in your list of answers and use the **Other** option as well if you need to.

You can specify the minimum, maximum or exact number of answers by using the **Data Validation** option found on the drop-down menu of the **More** icon in the lower right corner of the question.

Choose how many responses you want in data validation.

Type 5. Dropdown

This is a multiple-choice style question presented in the form of a drop-down list. The user can only choose one answer, and cannot add their own choice. It's good for absolutes, such as age ranges, rather than opinion-based questions.

Dropdown list questions in a Google Forms survey

You can add an **Add All** option, although this will not make sense for either/or type questions. For privacy's sake, you can also add a **Prefer not to say** option, allowing the survey taker to opt out of the question.

Type 6. Linear Scale

Linear Scale asks the respondent to rank things on a scale of, by default, one to five. You can expand the scale up to ten and you can elect to start the scale at zero instead of one. You should provide labels for

the lowest and highest scores on the scale for guidance. An example question might be “How satisfied were you with the service you received?”. The label for a score of **1** would be “**Very unsatisfied**” and **5** would be “**Very satisfied**”.

The **Linear Scale** option lends itself to multiple questions, but you can only add one at a time. Create multiple questions quickly by clicking the **Duplicate** button at the bottom of the question (it looks like two sheets of paper), then rewrite the **Question Title** in the copy.

Add a scale to questions where there's no absolute perfect answer.

Type 7. Multiple Choice Grid

A multiple-choice grid allows the user to select pre-defined options for more than one choice. This can be good if you want the user to evaluate a list of items using the same choices.

Notice that the **Required** slider text changes from **Required** to **Require a response in each row**.

A multiple-choice survey grid allows the user to choose between the same options for multiple items.

Use the **More** drop-down menu at the bottom of the question to limit the user to one choice for each column.

3. Adding More Questions

When you have finished writing each question click the **Add question** icon (+) in the lower left corner to add it. Then start another question, choosing the question type from the list.

The **Add section** icon (=) in the lower right corner enables you to add a new section (**Section Header**). This helps you organize a longer survey. At the very least it's a good idea to have personal information questions grouped into their own “**About you**” section.

Add new sections to make the Google Forms survey easier to follow.

4. Creating Dynamic Forms

Section breaks are also useful for building more dynamic surveys that will show different questions based on the user's replies.

Here's an example: you're creating a technology survey asking people about their usage of smartphones and tablets. You can make this as relevant as possible by splitting the questions over three sections.

Section 1 contains the multiple-choice question “**Do you own a smartphone?**”. Option 1 is **Yes**; Option 2 is **No**.

From the **More** drop-down menu at the lower right of the question, select the **Go to section based on answer** option. For option 1, select **continue to next section**. For option 2, select **Go to section 3 (About You)**.

You can send users to particular section based on their response.

Section 2 contains your questions about smartphones. Section 3 contains **About You** demographics questions.

In this example, if someone answers **Yes** to the question on section 1 it will take them to the smartphone questions on section 2, which will in turn lead on to section 3.

If they answer **No** on section 1, it will skip the smartphone questions and go straight **About You** questions on section 3.

This method ensures your survey remains relevant to the participant, and helps maintain the integrity of the data you receive in the process.

5. Finishing Up

Re-order your questions and sections by hovering your mouse over them and **dragging** them into place. Click **Preview** on **More** drop-down menu at the top of the screen to test the form at any time.

You can test your Google Forms Survey as you go along.

When you're happy that it all works, edit the **Confirmation** message that the user will see when they complete the survey. You can access the **Confirmation** message from the **More** menu at the top of the screen. Thank the user for taking part and click **Save**.

Adding a closing message and actions to your form.

Once your survey is complete, you're now ready to share it. Click the **Send** icon in the upper right corner of the screen (*it looks like a paper airplane*). The **Send** form displays.

Here are the options you can use to deliver the survey:

1. To send the survey through email, click the **Email** icon. Fill out the fields and click **Send** when you are done.
2. To deliver the survey via a shareable link, click the **Link** icon. Click **Copy** to make a copy of the URL.
3. To put the form on your website, click the **Embed HTML** icon. Change the **Width** and **Height** so that the form will fit your web page (the width is the most important). Click **Copy** to copy the code and paste it onto your website.
4. To share the survey through social media, click one of the social media icons on the right.

Here is an example of the **Embed HTML** dialog box:

Resize your Google Forms survey to fit it to your web page.

Finally, you want to define how you will store your responses. Click the **Responses** tab and click the three vertical dots at the top of the screen. The Responses tab displays:

Choose how your survey data will be saved.

Click **Select response destination**. The survey data is saved to a spreadsheet, so enter a relevant title then click **Create**. Google Forms creates a Google Sheets spreadsheet and links it to your survey.

Check also that the **Responses** tab says **Accepting responses**—if it does your survey is live.

6. Getting Responses

You can check the results at any time. If you chose to export data to a Google Sheets spreadsheet, open the associated spreadsheet from your Google Drive account.

Raw Google Forms survey data, once it's finished.

You may need to tweak the appearance of the survey data in your Google Sheets spreadsheet.

Google Sheets can also be set up to send you real-time notifications when a new survey response comes in. Click **Tools > Notification Rules**. The **Set notification rules** dialog box displays:

You can set up real-time notification.

Click the toggle button next to **A user submits a form** and click **Save**. You'll receive a real-time email notification each time a user submits a new survey form.

You can also view your responses from within the Google Doc survey. Click the **Responses** tab. Click **Summary** to view all the data displayed in easy to read charts and graphs.

View the results from your Google Forms survey.

Alternatively, click **Individual** to see each individual completed survey.

If you've saved your survey results to a Sheets spreadsheet, you can see the results by going to your Google Drive and finding the spreadsheet associated with the survey.

It's best not to edit that spreadsheet directly, but you can copy and paste the data into another spreadsheet or other document for further analysis. Here's what your spreadsheet might look like after you format it.

You can format your Google Sheets results spreadsheet.

When you have received enough responses you can close the survey down. On the **Responses** tab, slide the **Accepting Responses** toggle to the left and it will change to **Not accepting responses**. You can add a brief message indicating that the survey is now closed, and you can, of course, turn the form back on at any time.

Conclusion

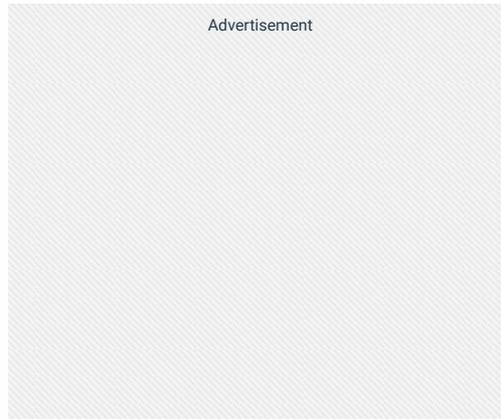
The Google Forms feature in Google Drive is an extremely powerful tool capable of creating the most complex surveys. It's also intuitive enough that if you want to run a quick poll or competition you can throw one together in just five minutes.

What lifts it above other survey creation tools is the way it fully integrates with Google Docs and the rest of your Google services. This means you can collaborate with others on creating your surveys, or share the finished product with select people, and then use the power of a spreadsheet to analyze your responses.

Best of all, it is suitable for use in any scenario, just as helpful with powering a vital customer feedback form for your business as it is for sending out your wedding invitations. Give it a try, and let us know in the comments below if you have any trouble with it.

Editorial Note: This post was originally published in 2014. It has been comprehensively revised to make current, accurate, and up to date by our staff—with special assistance from [Laura Spencer](#).

Resources: [List](#) icon via [iconoci](#) from the [Noun Project](#).



Andy Betts

Andy Betts is a tech journalist with more than a decade of experience.

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OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS **Bart** • 6 years ago

It's easy enough to use, for a free tool. To call it 'powerful' tells me you have no experience whatsoever on which to comment. Seriously. No one would use this for any extensive research (besides the obvious concerns over privacy from storing your data on a glorified advertising company's db.

2 ^ | ▾ 4 • Reply • Share ›

**Matthew Guay**  Bart • 6 years ago

As editor, I allowed the inclusion of the word "powerful" because Google Forms both includes the majority of features that most form tools offer (including logic to send users to specific questions or pages based on their responses, something typically only offered in paid accounts on other form solutions), and it's based on a spreadsheet so you can analyze your results right inside the same app. With almost every other form tool, you'll need to export your results in CSV format and import them into your spreadsheet to analyze them. Google Forms, by being built into a spreadsheet tool, takes one step out of that equation and makes its form app more powerful as a result. I've reviewed most of the major form tools in my time as web editor at AppStorm, and thus feel authoritative in stating that.

Google Docs as a whole is free and ad supported. That's well known, and part of the equation. If you prefer a non ad-supported tool, there's tons of other great options including Typeform (which is another form tool we've covered here). But being ad powered and a Google product doesn't inherently make Google Forms a less powerful tool. It might make it less attractive from a privacy perspective depending on what you're using it for, but if you trust Google at all for any service, it's no worse than any of their other products.

6 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Puvvada Satya Swaroop** • 2 years ago

How to highlight font in google form?? Any addons??

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Patricia Adams** • 5 years ago

I find online survey tools like SoGoSurvey much better.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**Mel** • 6 years ago

Is there a way to create a google survey where a pair of questions' answers must total 100% ie. Decisions made by Staff 60% Decisions made by Group Leaders 40%

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›

**bala** • 6 years ago

can anyone help me, how i can collect user email id's who fill the form(survey). awaiting for your reply

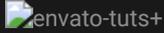
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