Set Up NotebookLM for Your Class

Now called Gemini Notebook. Your plans in, resources out.

NotebookLM, renamed Gemini Notebook in July 2026, answers from the documents you give it and shows where each answer came from. The app now shows the new name, so this guide uses it from here on. Put a topic's plans in one notebook and it turns them into quizzes, flashcards, slides and audio for that topic, and nothing else.

WHY 01

It answers from your plans

Ask a question and the answer comes from the sources in the notebook, with numbered citations. Click one and it opens the passage it used. Ask it to, and it tells you when your plans don't cover something.

YOU GET
Answers you can check against your own documents in one click.

WHY 02

One notebook per topic

A notebook only answers from its own sources. Keep one for the year's planning and one for each topic, such as Year 4 Romans. Then a quiz on Hadrian's Wall draws on your Romans unit and nothing else.

YOU GET
Resources that match what you're teaching this half term.

WHY 03

It turns plans into resources

Studio, on the right of every notebook, makes quizzes, flashcards, slide decks, mind maps, reports, infographics, and audio and video overviews from your sources. You choose the length, the difficulty and the focus.

YOU GET
A first draft of a resource in minutes, built from your own unit.

THE ONE RULE

A notebook holds your teaching, never your pupils. No names, no personal details, nothing that could identify a child. Page 3 shows where the line sits.

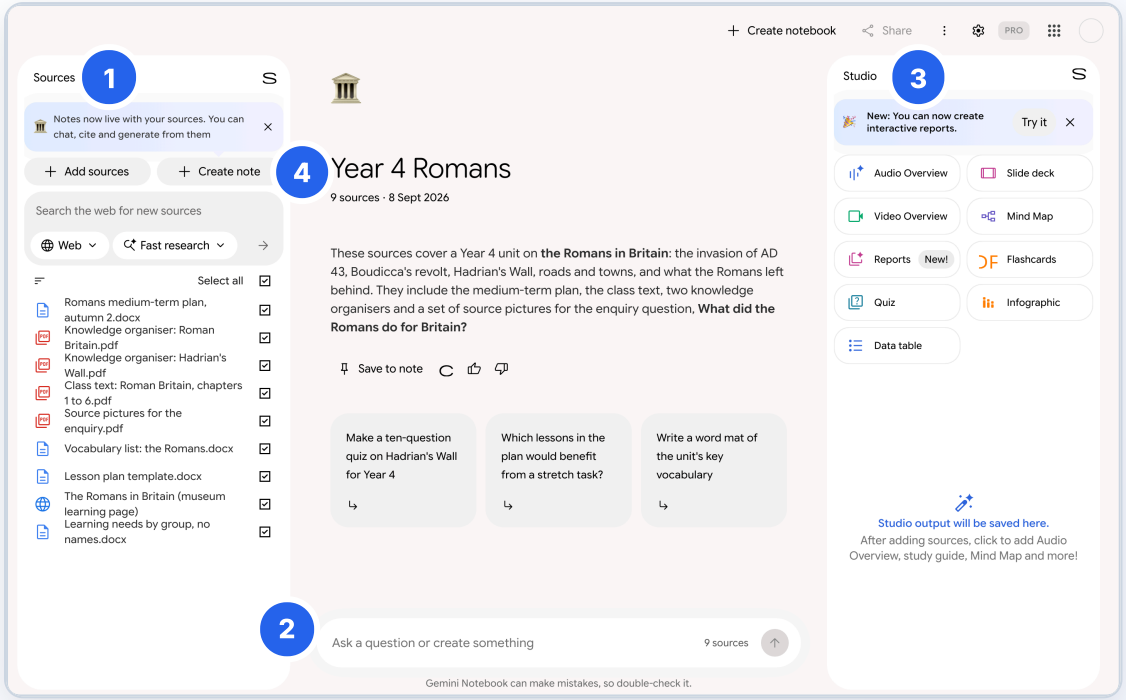
Independent guide, not affiliated with or endorsed by Google. Checked against the Gemini Notebook app and Google's help centre in October 2026. Not legal advice: your school's data protection policy comes first.

Free to share, it started here - kierancornwall.com →

What a Notebook Holds

Four parts, each with a job

A notebook is a workspace in Gemini Notebook. Everything in it, from a chat answer to a quiz, is made from the sources you add, and only those.



A notebook in Gemini Notebook, October 2026, drawn with a made-up Romans unit. Layouts change; the four parts don't.

1 Sources

The documents it reads, in the panel on the left: PDFs, Word and Google files, slides, web pages, YouTube videos, audio and pasted text. A free account holds 50 per notebook.

FOR YOUR CLASS Plans, knowledge organisers, the class text, templates, a needs summary by group.

2 Chat

Ask in the box at the bottom. Answers come from your sources, with numbered citations that open the passage. Configure chat, under •••, sets how it answers.

FOR YOUR CLASS Questions about the unit, with the instructions on page 6.

3 Studio

On the right. Each tile makes something from your sources: Audio and Video Overviews, slide decks, mind maps, reports, flashcards, quizzes, infographics and data tables.

FOR YOUR CLASS Practice, slides and explainers for the topic. Pages 7 to 9.

4 Notes

Click **+ Create note**, or **Save to note** under an answer. Notes sit with your sources, and you can chat about them too.

FOR YOUR CLASS An answer you'll use again, such as the unit's word list.

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Keep Children's Data Out

Build notebooks that never need it

The DfE puts it plainly: "It is recommended that personal data is not used in generative AI tools." Under UK GDPR your school decides how pupil information is used, and children's data needs extra care. So build notebooks that never need it. Plan for groups and needs. Leave the names in school systems.

NEVER GOES IN

Who a child is

- Names, initials or nicknames
- Dates of birth, addresses, **photos or recordings**
- **SEND, medical or safeguarding records**, uploaded or pasted
- Assessment data or reports tied to a child
- Exports from your MIS, such as SIMS, Arbor or Bromcom
- Parents' names, emails or messages

FINE TO PUT IN

What you teach

- Curriculum, long-term and medium-term plans
- Knowledge organisers, class texts, your templates
- Staff policies on marking, behaviour, homework
- **Needs by group:** "four pupils new to English"
- Public web pages, such as a museum's learning page
- Questions and examples you've written

CHECK FIRST

The grey areas

- **Work samples with the name removed.** In a class of 30, handwriting and a story about a pet can still say who
- A personal Google account for school work at all
- Sharing a notebook with colleagues, or with pupils through Classroom
- **Feedback on a personal account.** A thumbs up or down can lead to a person reviewing the whole conversation
- Anything you'd not be comfortable showing the child's parents

ACCOUNT

Use the account your school approved. On a Workspace for Education account, notebooks aren't reviewed by people or used to train AI models. The school's data region setting doesn't apply.

PUPILS

You use the notebooks. Pupils only use Gemini Notebook if the school turns it on for their accounts, with stricter rules for under-18s. That's a school decision, not yours.

WHAT YOU SEND

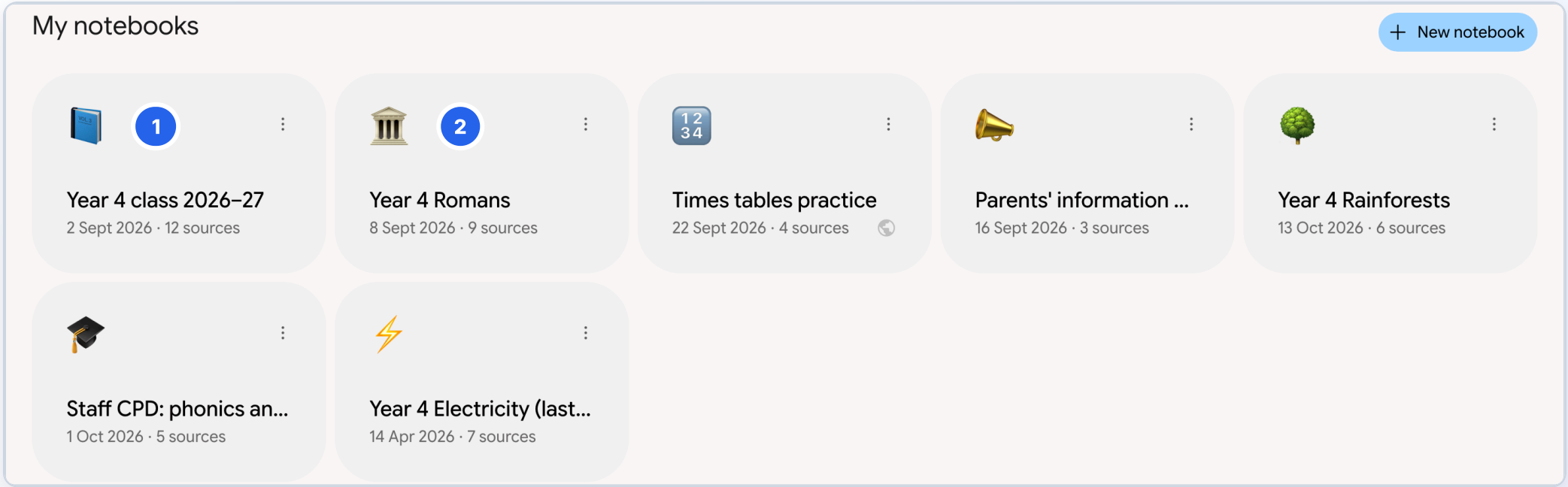
Read everything before it goes out. Gemini Notebook can make mistakes, and it says so under every chat.

Not legal advice. Sources: DfE, Generative AI in education (12 August 2025); DfE, AI and data protection in schools (14 October 2026); Gemini Notebook help centre and Google Workspace admin help, October 2026.

Two Kinds of Notebook

One for the year, one for each topic

A notebook answers only from its own sources, and can't see another notebook's. So two kinds work well together: one that holds the whole year, and one per topic that holds only that topic.



1 The class notebook

Year 4 class 2026–27. The whole year: long-term plan, curriculum overview, timetable, staff policies, templates, needs by group.

USE IT FOR Questions across the year, cover plans, newsletters, planning a new half term.

2 A topic notebook

Year 4 Romans. One unit: the medium-term plan, knowledge organisers, the class text, source pictures, the vocabulary list, a museum's learning page.

USE IT FOR Quizzes, flashcards, slides and audio on that topic, with no other unit mixed in.

+ Files in both

Add your lesson plan template and the needs-by-group document to every notebook. A notebook can only use what's in it.

NAME THEM Year group, then topic, so they sort together on this page.

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Create a Notebook

A name and your sources

STEP BY STEP

HOW

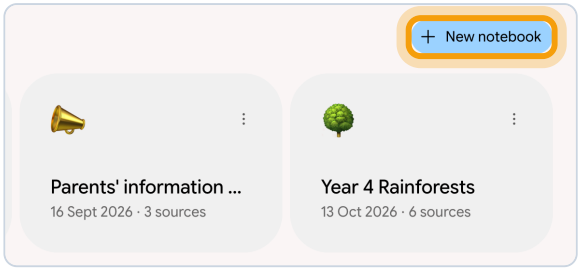
The next two pages happen once per notebook: for the class notebook in September, and for each topic as it starts. Follow the orange rings: each one marks what to click.

Before you start

1. Ask your school which AI tools you're allowed to use for work, and on which account.
2. Go to notebook.google.com in your web browser and sign in with that Google account.
3. Gather the topic's documents. Take out any pupil names first.

You'll need

1. About twenty minutes.
2. Your files as PDF, Word or Google Docs.
3. The example instructions on the next page.

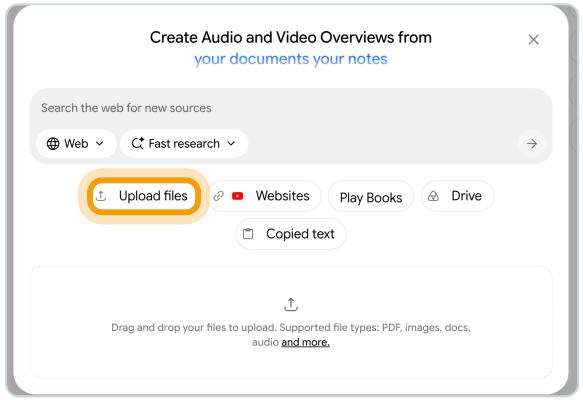


1

Click New notebook

On the home page, click **+ New notebook** at the top right.

Inside a notebook, it's **+ Create notebook** at the top.

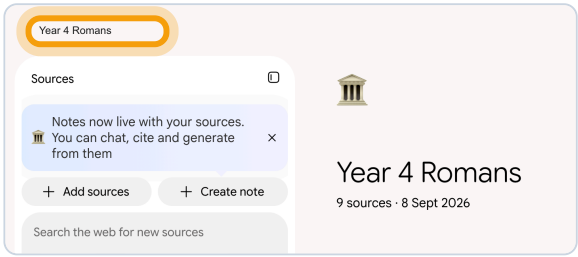


2

Add your sources

A window opens. Click **Upload files** and pick your documents. **Drive** adds Google Docs, **Websites** a web page or YouTube video, and **Copied text** anything you paste.

A source can be up to 500,000 words or 200MB.



3

Name it

A new notebook is called **Untitled notebook**. Click the name at the top left and type the topic, such as **Year 4 Romans**.

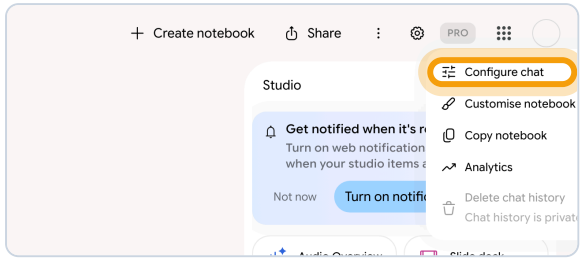
Add more sources at any time with **+ Add sources**.

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Tell It How You Work

Configure chat, once per notebook

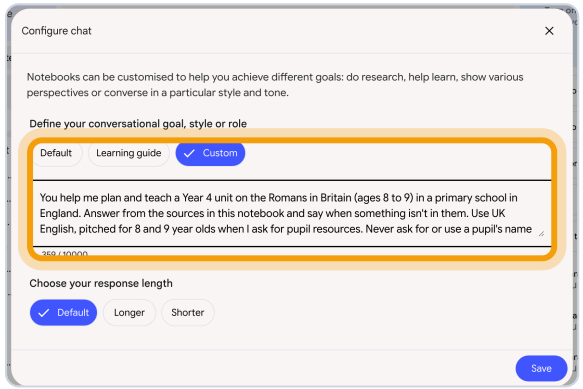
Configure chat sets how the notebook answers in every chat. Choose Custom and write the rules once: the year group, the format, and the rule on pupil data.



4

Open Configure chat

Click the ••• button at the top right, then **Configure chat**.



5

Choose Custom and paste

Click **Custom**, paste the example on the right into the box and change it to fit. Then click **Save**.

The box holds up to 10,000 characters. Response length can be Default, Longer or Shorter.

EXAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

Paste, then make it yours

Year 4 Romans notebook

You help me plan and teach a Year 4 unit on the Romans in Britain (ages 8 to 9) in a primary school in England. Answer from the sources in this notebook and say when something isn't in them. Use UK English, pitched for 8 and 9 year olds when I ask for pupil resources. Never ask for or use a pupil's name or personal details; refer to groups or needs instead.

Plans: use the lesson plan template in the sources. Objective, starter, main activity, plenary, resources, adaptations.

Resources: use the words in the vocabulary list. Give a core and a stretch version where it helps.

Pupil data: if I paste anything that identifies a child, say so and don't use it.

Two lines do the most work. "Say when something isn't in them" keeps it honest about gaps in your plans. The last line turns the data rule into something it checks for you.

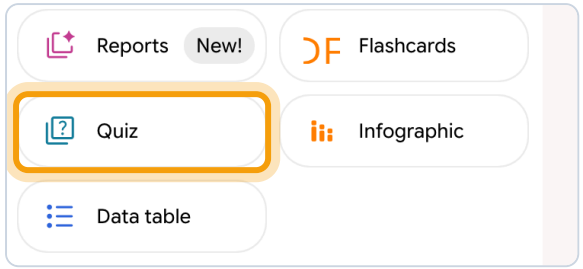
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Quizzes and Flashcards

Practice made from your own unit

STUDIO
HOW

Quizzes and flashcards come from the notebook's sources, so the questions use your unit's facts and your vocabulary list. Each Studio tile opens a window of options first.

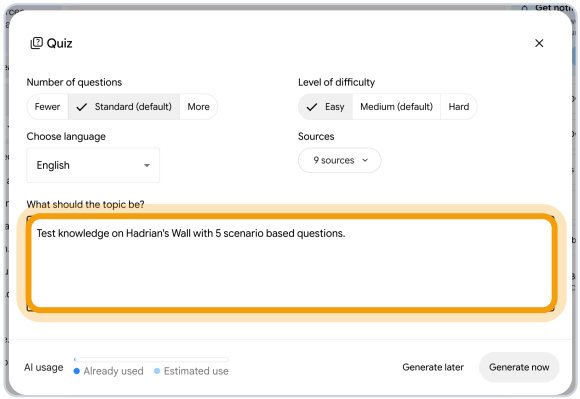


6

Click Quiz in Studio

In **Studio**, on the right of the notebook, click **Quiz**.

Every Studio tile works the same way: choose the options, then **Generate now**.

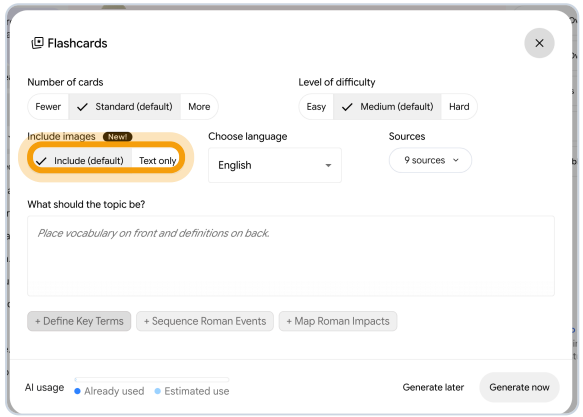


7

Set it up

Choose **Fewer**, **Standard** or **More** questions, and **Easy**, **Medium** or **Hard**. Say what the topic should be, then click **Generate now**.

Every answer comes with an explanation of why it's right or wrong.

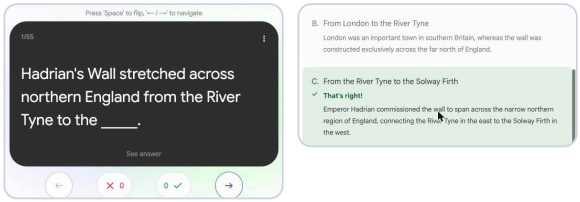


8

Make flashcards

Flashcards has the same options, plus **Include images** or **Text only**. Try: **"Vocabulary on the front, the meaning on the back."**

Flashcards download as a spreadsheet file (CSV).



What comes back

Both open in the notebook and stay saved in Studio. Flip a card, check an answer, count what you knew.

Check every question against the unit before a class sees it.

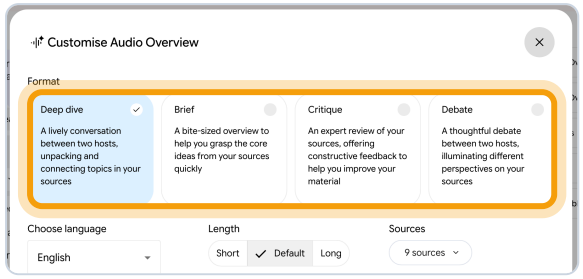
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Audio and Video Overviews

Your unit, explained out loud

An Audio Overview is a conversation between two AI hosts about your sources. A Video Overview is a narrated video made from them. Both suit explaining a topic to colleagues or parents. Hear or watch each one in full before anyone else does.

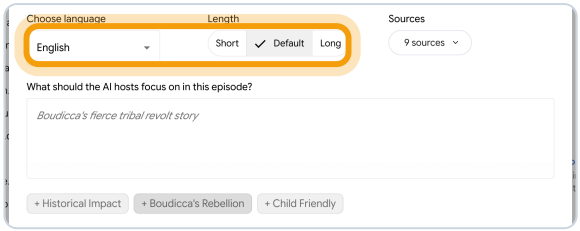


9

Choose an audio format

Click **Audio Overview** in Studio. Choose **Deep dive**, **Brief**, **Critique** or **Debate**.

Brief suits a parents' explainer. Critique reviews your material, useful for checking a plan.

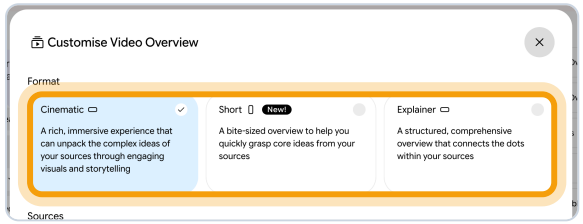


10

Language, length, focus

Choose a language, and **Short**, **Default** or **Long**. Tell the hosts what to focus on in the box below.

There are over 80 languages. Ask a speaker to check a version before families hear it.

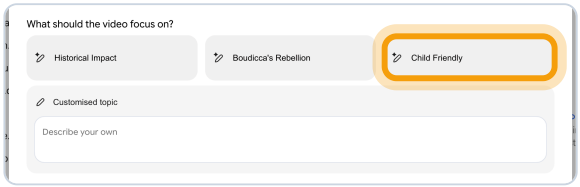


11

Choose a video format

Click **Video Overview**. Choose **Cinematic**, **Short** or **Explainer**.

A video can take a while to make. Studio can let you know when it's ready.



12

Set the focus

Click a suggested focus, such as **Child Friendly**, or describe your own under **Customised topic**.

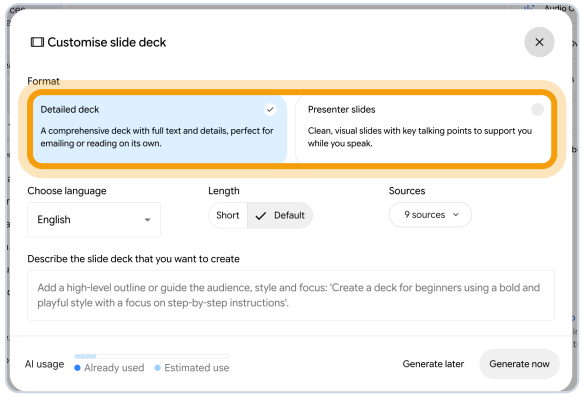
Audio Overviews can be downloaded to play anywhere.

Independent guide, not affiliated with or endorsed by Google.

Slides, Reports and More

The rest of Studio

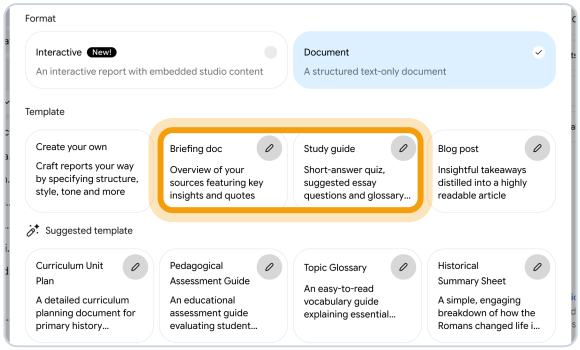
The other Studio tiles work the same way: choose the options, describe what you want, then Generate now. Each result is saved in Studio, under the tiles, for the whole topic.



13

Slide deck

Detailed deck reads on its own, ready to email. **Presenter slides** keep to the key points for you to talk over. Choose **Short** or **Default**.

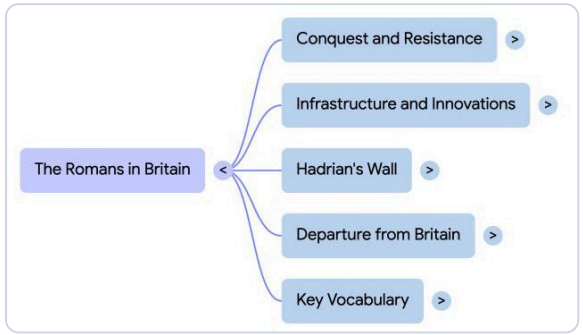


14

Reports

Click **Reports**, then **Document**. A **Study guide** has short-answer questions and a glossary. A **Briefing doc** sums up the unit for a cover teacher.

Reports export to Google Docs, data tables to Google Sheets.

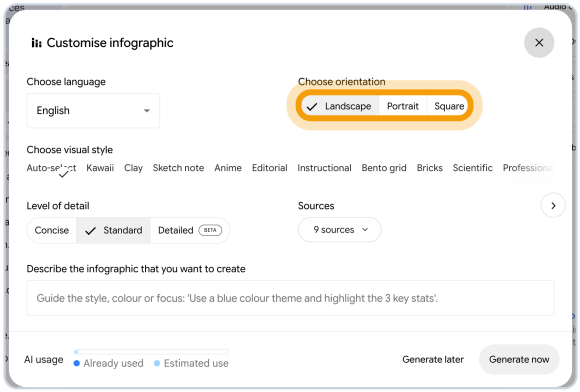


15

Mind Map

Draws the unit's big ideas as branches. Click a branch to open it, zoom in, or download the map.

A quick recap at the start of a lesson, or a plan for a display.



16

Infographic

Choose **Landscape**, **Portrait** or **Square**, a visual style and how much detail. Describe the focus in the box.

Check every fact and spelling before it goes on a wall.

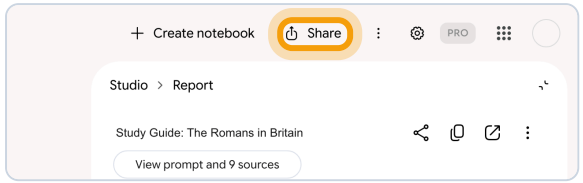
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Share a Notebook

With colleagues, on your school's terms

STEP BY STEP
HOW

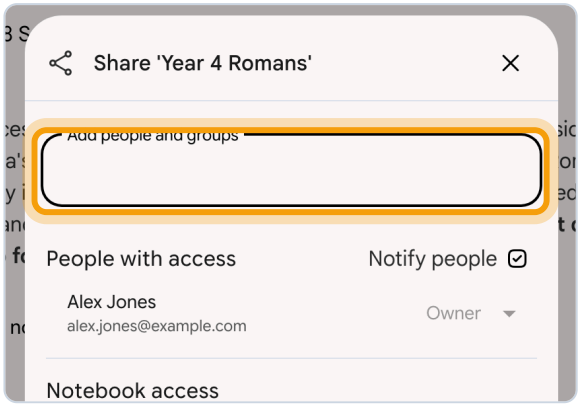
Sharing gives a colleague the same sources and the same Studio results. Each person's chat stays private to them. Share a topic notebook with the year group team and everyone plans from the same unit.



17

Click Share

At the top of the notebook, click **Share**.

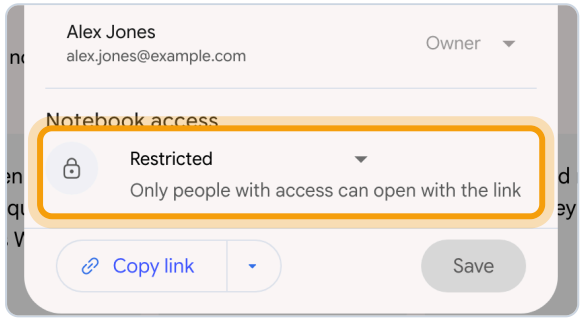


18

Add your colleagues

Type a colleague's school email address under **Add people and groups**. Choose **Viewer** to let them read and chat, or **Editor** to let them change sources too.

A personal account can share with up to 50 people.



19

Keep it Restricted

Leave **Notebook access** on **Restricted**, so only the people you've added can open it. Then click **Save**.

Anyone with a link isn't offered on school accounts.

Pupils, through Google Classroom

You can attach a notebook to classwork in Google Classroom, on Education Fundamentals, Standard or Plus, once your school's admin has turned it on.

Pupils' accounts get stricter content rules and fewer features.

Before you do

1. Check your school's policy allows it.
2. Share only notebooks whose sources you'd be happy for pupils to read.
3. Try it on your own account first, as a pupil would see it.

Independent guide, not affiliated with or endorsed by Google. Sharing and Classroom: Gemini Notebook help centre and Google Workspace Updates, checked October 2026.

Use It All Year

When the plan changes at 8.15am

The notebooks already hold the plans, so a request needs one line. Ask in the class notebook for anything across the year, and in a topic notebook for anything about that topic.

SUPPLY COVER · CLASS NOTEBOOK

You're off tomorrow

> *Make a cover plan for Thursday from this week's plans: the timetable, three lessons a non-specialist can teach, and the sheets to print.*

It comes back in your plan template.

CHECK THE PLAN · TOPIC NOTEBOOK

Where's the gap?

> *Which lessons in the medium-term plan don't have a stretch task yet? List each one with its objective.*

Click a citation to open the lesson it means.

TWO LEVELS · TOPIC NOTEBOOK

One text, every reader

> *Rewrite the Hadrian's Wall chapter of the class text as a core and a stretch version, with the same five questions for both.*

It works from the class text in your sources.

VOCABULARY · TOPIC NOTEBOOK

A word mat

> *Write a word mat of the unit's key vocabulary, with a meaning an 8 year old would understand for each word.*

Save it to a note, then make flashcards of the same words.

OBSERVATION · TOPIC NOTEBOOK

It's tomorrow now

> *My observation is tomorrow, the Hadrian's Wall lesson. Give me one clear objective, a hinge question and adaptations for Group B.*

Group B is already described in your needs file.

PARENTS · STUDIO

A topic explainer

> *Brief Audio Overview: explain what Year 4 will learn about the Romans this half term, for parents.*

Listen to all of it before you share it. What you send is your responsibility.

KEEP IT CURRENT

Ten minutes a half term

Each new topic
Make its notebook, add the plans, and set Configure chat.

When plans change
Remove the old version of a source, so out-of-date plans don't creep into answers. Untick a source to leave it out without deleting it.

When you correct the same thing twice
Add it to Configure chat, under •••.

End of the year
••• then Copy notebook gives you a copy of a topic to update for next year's class.

Your plans in. Resources out.

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