



# Distance Learning Strategies for Educators

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# Use Google tools to address common distance learning challenges

As illness and environmental factors prevent students from attending school in-person, learn how to use Google tools to extend learning to home environments. This guide is intended to show you specific resources that align with distance learning strategies. You'll understand how to address common distance learning challenges through technology. This guide is intended to show you specific resources that align with distance learning strategies. Check out our [COVID-19 Resource Page \(g.co/edu/covid19\)](https://www.google.com/edu/covid19) for more information. Here is the [accompanying deck](#) and [webinar](#) for this resource.

# Increase opportunities for engagement

Virtual learning can be isolating and disengaging for students. Sitting in front of a screen for hours watching videos may compel a student to fast forward or even skip a lesson altogether. Creating engaging experiences during distance learning can be achieved by varying tools, giving opportunities for creation, and interaction with you or their peers. Below are some tools and strategies to help you achieve this goal.

- a. **Hangouts Meet:** Engage students in discussion about learning topics by having them dialogue during lessons in Hangouts Meet chats. Throw out discussion starters in your lesson and allow students to interact with one another through the chat.
  - i. [First Day of Hangouts Meet](#)
  - ii. Best practices for [Hangouts Meet](#)
- b. **Jamboard:** Use the free Google [Jamboard](#) app to collaborate with students from anywhere. *Note: There is a free app or a browser based version of Jamboard.*
  - i. [Get Started with Jamboard](#)
- c. **Interactive Slides and Docs:** Create interactive slides and docs that leverage hyperlinks and media content to vary the activity and content modality.
  - i. [Deliver Interactive Slide presentations](#)
  - ii. [First Day of Google Docs](#)
  - iii. [Getting Started with Google Docs](#)
  - iv. [First Day of Google Slides](#)
  - v. [Getting Started with Google Slides](#)
- d. **Slides Audience Q&A:** Leverage Slides Audience Q&A to invite students to ask questions and share ideas during your lesson - then display some of them for all students to see and react to.
  - i. [How to use Slides Q&A](#)
- e. **Chunking content:** Have 30 minutes of instructional content? Break it into six 5-minute mini lessons to allow students to digest the material, and synthesize it through discussion, journaling, or content creation.
- f. **Pausing often to check for understanding:** Leverage Google Forms Quizzes, Google Classroom assignments, or discussions to check for student understanding throughout learning activities. Since you can't "take attendance" this will allow you to hold students accountable for completing learning tasks, and help you see how well they're progressing.
  - i. [First Day of Google Forms](#)
  - ii. [Getting Started with Google Forms](#)

- iii. [First Day of Google Classroom](#)
  - iv. [Getting Started with Google Classroom](#)
  - v. [Bringing student work online](#)
- g. Integrating hands-on activities
- i. [First Day of Expeditions](#)
  - ii. [Google Arts & Culture](#)
  - iii. [CS First](#) - free program to teach coding to kids. Self-paced and video based, making it ideal for distance learning. [Training on how to teach with CS First](#)
  - iv. Check out the [Chromebook App Hub](#) for more information on what our partners are offering to support Distance Learning
  - v. [Applied Digital Skills](#): Self-directed video lessons, with teacher lesson plans included. Over 80 different lessons on a variety of topics, including skills like personal finance, writing a resume, how to conduct research, and how to use Google Tools
    - 1. [Training on how to teach with Applied Digital Skills](#)
    - 2. [Resources to learn from anywhere](#)

## Frequently assess student learning

When educators aren't able to see their students on a regular basis, checking for understanding must become more frequent and intentional. Gathering regular information about how students are processing and understanding learning can help you know what is working, and what adjustments to make in your distance learning plan.

- h. FormsEdu / Quizzes: Create formative or summative assessments through Google Forms Quizzes, allowing your students to show what they know quickly - and saving you the burden of grading!
  - i. [First Day of Google Forms](#)
  - ii. [Creating Quizzes in Google Forms](#)
- i. Slides Audience Q&A: Leverage Slides Audience Q&A to invite students to ask questions and share ideas during your lesson - then display some of them for all students to see and react to.
  - i. [How to use Slides Q&A](#)

- j. Google Classroom discussions: Engage students in discussions in Google Classroom and assess their participation. You can even provide a rubric for types of participation: sharing a new idea, responding to a prior comment, or posing a question.
  - i. [First Day of Classroom Training](#)
  - ii. [Help center](#)
  - iii. [Community Forum](#)
  - iv. [How Classroom works](#)
  - v. [Create a class](#)
  - vi. [Create an assignment](#)
- k. Google Classroom assignments: Assign creative assignments leveraging G Suite productivity tools to invite students to demonstrate their mastery of a concept through collaborative or creative tasks. For example, a student could publish a slide deck on a new topic, or build a spreadsheet to show a budget for a larger project.
  - i. [Create an Assignment in Google](#)

## Extend your reach with Hangouts Meet

Although you aren't able to see your students in the classroom everyday, they can still see you everyday - through the power of video! The following tools and ideas can enable you to virtually teach your students and even include added opportunities to make your lessons more accessible for all.

- l. Hangouts Meet set up: While you are still face to face with students, set up Hangouts Meet ahead of time and model how to log on, troubleshoot common issues, and set reminders for lessons. If your students are already away from school, provide them with video links to learn these processes.
  - i. [Use Google Hangouts to Connect and follow these best practices](#)
  - ii. Alternatively, you can [Record videos with your Chromebook](#)
- m. Hangouts Meet closed captioning: Take advantage of this feature to give students with hearing disabilities the opportunity to engage with spoken learning content during your lesson. This could also support students for whom English is not their first language.
  - i. [How to use closed captioning in Google Slides](#)
  - ii. [How to use closed captioning in Google Meet](#)

- n. Appointment Slots: Use Google Calendar Appointment slots to hold “office hours” and allow students (and parents!) to sign up for 1:1 or small group times to meet with you.
  - i. [How to create appointment slots in Google Calendar](#)
- o. Recording a Meet: Record your Meet to provide access for students who couldn’t log on in real time, or allow students who need to review concepts a second chance to experience your lesson.
  - i. [Admin support article for recording in Hangouts Meet](#)

## Include SEL in your design

Social Emotional Learning can continue in a distance learning setting as well. Just as you can use Hangouts Meet to “be” there for your students and maintain your classroom culture, you can provide other ways for students to share and process their emotions while away from school.

- p. Google Forms mood check-ins: Create a Google Form to check in on students’ wellbeing. Ask them to fill out the form on a daily basis to share their emotional state, a goal for the day, what they’re proud of, and what they’re struggling with. You can set up conditional formatting or use add-ons to alert you when students respond with concerning statements - then leverage Hangouts Meet to have a 1:1 check in with these individuals.
  - i. [First Day of Google Forms](#)
- q. Blogger for personal journaling: Invite all students to keep a private / personal blog during their time away from school to process their experience and feelings. If they feel comfortable, they can invite you and their parents to also be a reader.
  - i. [Use Blogger to Gather and Share Ideas](#)

## Think beyond the clock

With distance learning, you don’t have to worry about time constraints of the normal school day: rushing students into the classroom or hurrying to finish your lesson before the bell rings. Students can take more time on some activities and breeze through lessons that come naturally to them.

Take advantage of this opportunity and design your lessons to include more “choose your own adventure” activities rather than a fixed schedule of lectures and lessons.

- r. **PBL in Classroom:** Take advantage of the flexibility of distance learning by assigning larger-scale project based learning activities. Students can engage in cross-subject collaborative projects, applying prior knowledge and inspiring them to explore new topics.
  - i. [Training on how to facilitate group work](#)
- s. **Go on a Virtual Field Trip with Google Expeditions:** Use the free Google Expeditions app on any phone or device to explore the world (and get “out” of the house)
  - i. [Get Started with Google Expeditions](#)
  - ii. [List of AR and VR Experiences](#) (You will need the Google Cardboard for the Google VR experiences, but you can do the AR experiences by printing out these [AR markers](#) and placing them on the floor)
  - iii. [Training on how to use Google Expeditions to create a Virtual Field Trip](#)
  - iv. [Training on how to use Google Maps to create a Virtual Field Trip](#)
- t. **Choose your own adventure in Classroom:** Set up your Google Classroom assignments so students can choose from different activities to meet the same goal. This gives them choice and voice in their learning experience and can increase engagement and buy-in for struggling students.
  - i. [Training on How to Create Personalized Learning](#)

## Distance learning without Internet access

As we know, not all students have home access to the Internet. To ensure that there is equitable access to learning opportunities, educators are exploring ways to offer distance learning for those with intermittent or limited access to WiFi. Below are some strategies that might help.

- u. **Sharing recordings for make-up work:** If students cannot attend a lesson in real-time, record the Hangouts Meet and upload to Drive for when they do gain access to WiFi. They can then download the recordings to watch from home.
- v. **Offline slides:** Likewise, teach students how to enable offline slides, so they can get access to learning materials before they leave school or an active Internet connection. They can

then view content while offline -and even create new content that will be uploaded when they regain access.

- i. [How to use Offline mode for Google Docs, Sheets, Slides](#)
- w. **Pre-recording lessons and sharing through Drive:** Pre-record your lessons and save them to Google Drive ahead of time, so students can download before they leave school.

## Communicate your plan with families

Families can be an invaluable support system when embarking on distance learning. Be sure to make them feel part of the team by creating clear and up-to-date channels to stay informed and connected.

- x. **Guardian's Guides:** Use these guides to send home with families to help inform them about Google technology, and customize this email template to share your tech choices.
  - i.
- y. **Google Sites:** Create a Google Site to be the main source of information during school closure. You can embed a calendar, post updates, and share helpful resources.
  - i. [First Day of Google Sites](#)
  - ii. [Getting Started with Google Sites](#)
- z. **Google Groups:** You could also create a Google Group for families in your class(es) to stay in touch throughout closure.
  - i. [Google Support Article for setting up and managing Google Groups](#)
- aa. **Hangouts Meet for parent meetings:** Appointment slots are also useful to provide parents a chance for parent/teacher conferences while away - or to help them get some useful tech tips if they aren't as familiar with these tools
  - i. [Connect with Guardians](#)
  - ii. [How to create appointment slots in Google Calendar](#)
  - iii. ["First Day Training" for Google Hangouts Meet](#)
  - iv. [Training on Connecting with Guardians](#)
- bb. Share [Be Internet Awesome](#) - Digital Citizenship and Online Safety guides with families

