

Learn any topic faster with NotebookLM

Turn your own sources into study guides, quizzes and audio summaries. With copy-paste prompts and a 7-day learning plan.

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The hardest part of learning something new is not finding information; it is turning a pile of PDFs, videos and notes into something that makes sense. That is exactly what NotebookLM is for: you give it sources, and it builds summaries, study guides, quizzes and even a spoken conversation based only on those sources. In this guide we will set up a notebook properly, use prompts that actually work and follow a 7-day learning plan.

New name: Gemini Notebook

On 16 July 2026 Google renamed NotebookLM to Gemini Notebook. It is the same product; the new name and logo are rolling out gradually, and notebooklm.google plus old share links keep working. If your phone still shows the old name, just update the app. In this guide I will use the name most people know: NotebookLM.

How is NotebookLM different from a chatbot?

Chatbots like ChatGPT or Gemini answer from their general knowledge. NotebookLM **grounds its answers in the sources you upload**. Click a numbered citation in an answer and you see exactly which sentence of which source it came from. That gives you two big advantages when learning:

- **Verifiable:** You can check every claim against the source.
- **Focused:** It talks about the lecture notes, book chapter or report you chose, not the rest of the internet.

It is still not perfect: it can misread a source or skip an important detail. That is why checking citations should become a habit.

What you need

- A Google account (you can start on the free plan)
- 3–10 good sources on the topic you want to learn
- A one-sentence goal for why you are learning it (an exam, a meeting, a video, a career change...)

NotebookLM



A notebook that turns your own documents into summaries, Q&A and audio overviews.

[Open the tool: notebooklm.google.com](https://notebooklm.google.com)

Step 1: Build a notebook with good sources

Go to notebooklm.google, create a new notebook and add your sources. You can add PDFs, Google Docs and Slides, Word files, web links, YouTube videos with captions, audio files, images and pasted text. On the free plan a notebook can hold up to 50 sources.

Three rules for choosing sources

1. **One topic, one notebook.** Not "Marketing" but something narrow like "Introduction to email marketing".
2. **Mix the types.** Combine, say, a textbook chapter, a recent article and an explainer video.
3. **Fewer but reliable.** Prefer official sources, course materials and reputable publications over random blog posts.

Getting answers in your language

Set "Output language" in Settings to the language you want. Even if your sources are in English, chat answers and Audio Overviews will come back in that language. The default comes from your Google Account language preference.

Step 2: Generate a study guide

In the Studio panel, under Reports, you can create a ready-made study guide, briefing doc or FAQ. But a clear prompt in the chat box usually gives you something more useful:

PROMPT 1

```
Using the sources in this notebook, create a study guide for me.  
My goal: [e.g. midterm exam in 2 weeks / being able to explain this topic at my new job].  
My level: [beginner / intermediate].  
Include:  
1. A 5-sentence summary of the topic  
2. The 10 most important concepts with short definitions  
3. How the concepts relate (what I must understand before moving on)  
4. Points where the sources disagree or stay unclear  
Cite a source for every item. Do not add information that is not in the sources.
```

Step 3: Get explanations at different levels

If a concept does not click, do not reread the same explanation; change the level. I think this is the fastest way to learn:

PROMPT 2

Explain [concept] based on the sources at three levels:

- As if to a 12-year-old, with an everyday analogy
- To a first-year university student new to the subject
- To someone working in this field, keeping the technical terms

Then describe the most common misunderstanding about this concept and the correct view.

Step 4: Quiz yourself

Reading makes things feel familiar; testing yourself is what makes you actually learn. The Flashcards and Quiz tools in Studio generate questions from your sources automatically; you can mark cards as known or missed and rerun the ones you got wrong. For a more controlled quiz in chat:

PROMPT 3

Based on the sources, create a 10-question quiz: 4 multiple choice, 3 true/false, 3 short answer.

Ask one question at a time and wait for my answer. After each answer, tell me if it is right and explain the correct answer with a citation.

When the quiz is over, list the topics I am weakest in.

Step 5: Compare sources

When you have several sources, the real value is seeing where they agree and where they differ. You can narrow the chat by ticking which sources to use in the source list on the left.

PROMPT 4

Compare the selected sources and build a table.

Columns: Topic | What [Source A] says | What [Source B] says | Do they agree?

Below the table, summarise the core difference in perspective in 3 sentences and say which one seems more current or evidence-based, and why.

If you think visually, the Mind map in Studio shows the main topics and their connections as a branching diagram; click a node to ask about that topic.

Step 6: Listen on the go with Audio Overviews

An Audio Overview turns your sources into a podcast-style conversation between two hosts. It works in more than 80 languages. There are several formats: **Deep Dive** (the default, two hosts), **Brief** (one speaker, a few minutes), **Critique** and **Debate**. Download it for your commute or a walk; in interactive mode you can even jump in and ask the hosts a question by voice.

Writing a short instruction in the Customize box before generating makes a noticeable difference:

PROMPT 5

The listener is new to this topic. Start by explaining the core concepts with everyday examples, then spend extra time on [the hardest part]. End with 3 questions the listener can ask themselves.

In the same Studio panel you can also create a Video Overview (a narrated, slide-style explainer of your sources), an infographic or a slide deck, which are great for review if you are a visual learner.

A 7-day learning plan

A sample plan for a topic you can give 30–45 minutes a day:

Day	What you do	Tool
1	Gather sources, set up the notebook, set the output language	Adding sources
2	Generate the study guide, read the 10 concepts	PROMPT 1
3	Get 2–3 confusing concepts explained at different levels	PROMPT 2 + Mind map
4	Listen to the Audio Overview on the go, write down what stuck in the evening	Audio Overview
5	Take the first quiz, note weak topics	PROMPT 3 + Flashcards
6	Compare sources, go back to weak topics	PROMPT 4
7	Explain the topic in your own words, take a second quiz	Note + Quiz

The trick on day 7: write the explanation yourself first, then paste it into NotebookLM and ask, "According to the sources, what did I miss or get wrong?"

Who can use it, and how

Students

Put lecture slides, book chapters and your own notes in one notebook. Use flashcards and quizzes during exam week, but use it to understand, not to write your assignments for you.

Professionals preparing for a meeting

Add the reports, decks and email threads relevant to the meeting (with sensitive details removed):

PROMPT 6

Tomorrow I have a meeting with [who] about [topic]. Based on the sources:

1. The 5 key facts I need to know
2. 5 tough questions the other side might ask, with short source-based answers
3. 3 questions I should ask

Use bullet points.

Content creators researching a video

Add articles and YouTube videos on the topic, then fact-check yourself before you film:

PROMPT 7

Based on these sources, create research notes for a 60-second video about [topic]:

- 3 facts that could surprise viewers (each with a citation)
- 2 common misconceptions and the truth
- Claims that are NOT supported by the sources and that I should not say in the video

Privacy warning

Your sources are processed on Google's servers. Think twice before uploading customer data, personal information, contracts or confidential company documents; if you use a work account, check your company's AI policy. When sharing a notebook, review who has access.

Common mistakes

1. **Dumping everything into one notebook.** When topics mix, answers get blurry.
2. **Never checking citations.** Especially for numbers and dates, click through and verify.
3. **Only reading summaries.** Summaries create a feeling of familiarity; do not assume you have learned it until you test yourself.
4. **Adding weak sources.** NotebookLM does not fix source quality; bad sources make bad study guides.
5. **Not setting the output language.** If answers come back in the wrong language, check the output language in Settings first.

Next step

Pick one topic today, add 5 sources and start with PROMPT 1. Tomorrow, test yourself with PROMPT 3. For more guides on working faster with AI, [browse the resources](#); to hear when new guides come out, [join the newsletter](#).

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