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## Using Google Docs for Assignments

While Google Docs is a convenient web-based platform for word processing, Microsoft Word is the standard software for word processing at university. Laurier students have [free access to Office 365](#), which includes Word.

There are several important differences between Google Docs and Word to keep in mind when preparing assignments. In this resource, we will look at these differences so you can navigate word processing between Google Docs and Word, be better prepared to format and submit assignments, and avoid some common pitfalls.

### Advantages of Google Docs

- It is excellent for collaborative writing in a remote learning environment and during group assignments. Be sure, however, to practice academic integrity when working collaboratively on assignments: acknowledge who wrote what and respect other people's writing by consulting on revisions.
- It automatically saves.
- Documents can be made available offline.
- It is a useful platform for sharing to get feedback from instructors.
- Documents can be exported as Word documents and PDFs for submission to My Learning Space.
  - To keep your formatting from Google Docs to Word, be sure to "download" the document by visiting "File," then "Download," then "Microsoft Word Document."
  - To create a more seamless transition from Google Docs to Word, be sure to use the "page break" feature instead of pressing enter until your text is on a new page.
  - The exporting process should be almost instant but be sure to leave a bit of extra time in case the downloading process takes longer than usual. Also be sure to read over the Word document at least once, just in case some of the formatting was lost in the transfer.
- Google Docs also offers a citation creation tool for a limited number of documentation styles: MLA, APA, and Chicago Author-Date.
  - To add an in-text citation, visit "Insert" in the top bar, then "Citation." A sidebar will then pop up on the right with a dropdown menu of which citation style you would like to use. Click "+ Add citation source" and select the type of source you are using and whether you are using a print, website, or online database source. Fill in the text fields with as much information as you can and click the "add citation source" button when you're done. When you're ready to use that in-text citation, be sure that you have clicked where you want the in-text citation to be, hover over the source in the sidebar, and click "Cite."
  - To create a Works Cited, Reference List, or Bibliography, go to the end of your document, click "Insert" in the top bar, press break, then press "Page Break." A blank page will appear at the end of your essay, then you can click "Insert works cited/reference list/bibliography" to create your final list of sources.

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- Google Docs does not currently have a tool to help with Chicago Notes style citations, but you can input your citations manually. To insert a footnote, click “Insert” on the top bar, then click “Footnote.”
  - Finally, Writing Services uses Google Docs for writing appointments so students can share their work with the writing tutor.

### **Additional points of consideration**

- Prior to submission to My Learning Space, a document on Google docs must be exported in an acceptable file format (e.g., Word doc., PDF). Give yourself time to export the file in case there are technical glitches.
- Exporting the file may alter the formatting of the document, so proofread for consistency and accuracy, especially in implementing citation styles.
- Although Google Docs has a citation creation tool for three documentation styles, the generated citations may not necessarily be accurate: double check the in-text citations and bibliography against the relevant style guide prior to submission.
  - All three of the major citation styles have online resources to help you double-check your citations. Visit your citation style’s website, the Purdue OWL, or Laurier Writing Services to make sure your citations are correct before submitting your assignment.
- Anticipate that not all formatting features may be available in Google Docs and may need to be implemented in Word.