GCFLearnFree.org Curriculum Guide

Microsoft Office

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How to Use Our Tutorials

This guide was created to give teachers and service provider a starting point for using our Microsoft Office tutorials. You may already refer the people you serve to our site for self-paced, independent learning. This guide will help you use our content to supplement your own programs, tutorials, and courses.

How you use our tutorials will depend largely on your organization's capabilities and the needs of the population you serve. We've found that there are as many ways to use our content as there are organizations using it. Some organizations take a largely hands-off approach; others choose to integrate our tutorials into their own instructor-led classes. Here are some examples of ways a group could use our tutorials to provide instruction:

- **The Textbook Method:** Instructor-led classes that include original curriculum but use our site as a textbook for both the teacher and students.

- **Self-Paced Group Study Method:** Students follow a particular course of study at their own pace. At class meetings, the instructor checks assignments and offers help to students who need it.

- **Independent Study with Assignments:** Independent study classes or meetings where the students read our tutorials and complete original assignments, all on their own. At an instructor-led "lab time," students ask questions and get help starting new topics.

These are just a few examples, but the possibilities are nearly endless. Let us know how you use our site by contacting us at www.gcflearnfree.org/educators/share.

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Still have questions?

Check out our Educators' FAQ!

www.gcflearnfree.org/educators/faq

About Microsoft Office

Whenever we talk to service providers, they tell us that Microsoft Office is one of the most common skills the adults they serve want to learn. When a student says she wants to be Office-proficient, she may mean a number of things:

- Most commonly, proficiency means learning the **three most common** Office programs: **Word**, **Excel**, and **PowerPoint**. All three are user-friendly and don't require a great deal of prior knowledge.

- Proficiency can also mean using other "basic" Office programs and services, like **Publisher**, **Outlook**, and **Office Web Apps**. These programs are less powerful than Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. They are not included in the learning plans in this guide, but you can learn about our tutorials on those subjects on page 10.

- For a small group of users, Office proficiency may include **Access**, the database management software. Access is a complex program designed for very specific tasks. It can be quite difficult for many users to understand. For this reason, we don't suggest encouraging your learners to study Access unless they absolutely need it.

Teaching our Office Tutorials

Each of our tutorials is designed to ensure that students build a solid foundation of basic skills before moving onto more complicated tasks. The first lessons cover simple but essential tasks like navigating a program's interface or entering text; later lessons explore more complex, specialized skills.

This means that instructors wishing to teach **only one Office program** can simply follow the tutorial for that program, perhaps omitting later lessons if they'd like to teach a shorter or more basic class.

Alternately, instructors may wish to offer classes that include **more than one Office program**. There are several reasons for this. If there are many students who wish to learn multiple programs, it may be easier for instructors to organize one course with many sessions than multiple short ones. Since many of the Office programs include similar features and tools, instructors may also find that teaching multiple programs in quick succession saves instructors and students the trouble of covering similar material multiple times.

To teach multiple Office programs, instructors can follow our suggested learning plans, which start on page 6 of this guide.

How to Use this Guide

As stated before, our tutorials are structured in a way that anyone wishing to teach a single Office program can simply base a course on the relevant tutorial. This guide explains how you and your students can use **multiple tutorials** to build a more comprehensive proficiency in the Microsoft Office Suite.

The guide includes 3 distinct **learning plans** that you can follow and adapt for instruction in a classroom, with a small group, or with individuals. Each plan addresses a specific set of skills a student may be interested in learning.

The plans are:

- **Word and PowerPoint:** This plan is for learners who wish to become proficient in creating documents and presentations with Office.

- **Excel and Access:** This plan is for learners who wish to manage and analyze data with Office.

- **Word, Excel, and PowerPoint:** This plan is for learners who wish to achieve general Office proficiency.

Each plan has three components:

1. **Objectives:** The goals learners have entering this course of study. The objectives can help you identify the best plan for your class.

2. **Outcomes:** The end skills the learners should have gained after successfully completing the plan.

3. **Learning plan:** A potential sequence of our tutorials. You can find summaries and links for each tutorial on page 11 of this guide.

Using the Learning Plans

To get started, choose the learning plan that best suits your students' needs. Once you've found a plan, you can customize it to make it more relevant to and appropriate for your learners. This could include:

- **Adding your own content.** To get the most out of our tutorials, we strongly encourage you to develop assignments and assessments that are suitable for your students. (You can find more information about creating these on page 9 of this guide.)

- **Removing redundant or unnecessary content.** Not every course or lesson will be useful for every situation. In two of the learning plans, we've already removed lessons that are included in multiple courses. You can do the same. Read the tutorials, and then assess your students' knowledge and needs. You can then omit any content that is obvious, irrelevant, or unnecessary for your learners.

- **Selecting additional tutorials.** In addition to the core tutorials that make up the main sequence, most learning plans also include related optional tutorials that may be useful to students who need additional background or would like to take their learning further. Optional tutorials are marked with a gray dashed outline, as in the key below:

Core Tutorials	Optional courses
Solid black outline	Dashed gray outline

You may also choose to integrate tutorials from any of the other curriculum guides, or from the site as a whole. You can find a complete list of our curriculum guides here: http://www.gcflearnfree.org/educators/guides.

Word and PowerPoint

Objectives

- To be able to create documents for printing and sharing
- To be able to create and share presentations
- To be proficient in important Microsoft Office programs

General Outcomes

- Learner will able to independently create professional-looking documents and presentations.
- Learner will be familiar with advanced Word and PowerPoint functions.
- Learner will understand how to use Word and PowerPoint in a variety of professional, education, and personal situations.
- Learner will be able to claim proficiency in Word and PowerPoint.

Office 2007

Word 2007
Lessons 1-8, 12-19, 21-22
Optional: Lesson 23

PowerPoint 2007
All lessons*

Office 2010

Word 2010
Lessons 1-13,18-21, 23
Optional: Lesson 24

PowerPoint 2010
All lessons **

*Many of the topics learned in lessons 9, 10, 11, 17, 19, and 20 also apply to Word 2007.

** Many of the topics learned in lessons 10- 15, 19, 21, and 22 also apply to Word 2010.
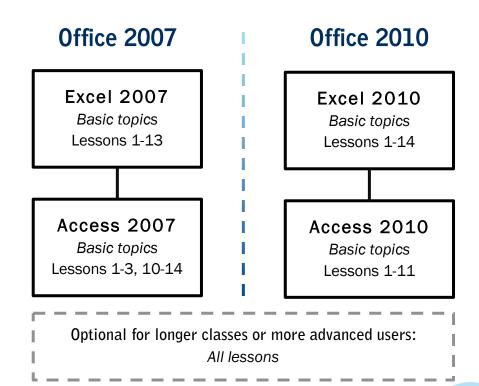
Excel and Access

Objectives

- To store and manage numbers and data
- To be proficient in the "advanced" Office program
- To be able to work with databases and spreadsheets

General Outcomes

- Learner will understand how to input and manage data with a system that fits their needs.
- Learner will understand how to organize data of varying complexity with Excel spreadsheets (simple or numerical data) and Access databases (text or more complex data).
- Learner will be able to add, search, analyze, and organize the information within a database.
- Learner will be able to perform calculations and analyze data with formulas and queries.
- Learner will be able to organize and present data with charts and reports.
- Learner will be able to claim Excel and Access proficiency.

Office 2007

Excel 2007
Basic topics
Lessons 1-13

Access 2007
Basic topics
Lessons 1-3, 10-14

Office 2010

Excel 2010
Basic topics
Lessons 1-14

Access 2010
Basic topics
Lessons 1-11

Optional for longer classes or more advanced users:
All lessons

Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

Objectives

- To know how to use the most common Microsoft Office programs
- To be able to create documents for printing and sharing
- To be able to create and share presentations
- To be able to manage and store data

General Outcomes

- Learner will understand which tasks each of the major office programs can perform.
- Learner will be able to independently create professional-looking documents, presentations, and spreadsheets.
- Learner will be familiar with advanced Office functions, including Mail Merge (Word) and Formulas (Excel).
- Learner will understand how to use Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in a variety of professional, education, and personal situations.
- Learner will be able to claim Office proficiency.

Office 2007

Word 2007
Lessons 1-8, 12-19, 21-23

Excel 2007
All lessons

PowerPoint 2007
All lessons*

Office 2010

Word 2010
Lessons 1-13,18-21, 23
Optional: Lesson 24

Excel 2010
All lessons

PowerPoint 2010
All lessons **

*Many of the topics learned in lessons 9, 10, 11, 17, 19, and 20 also apply to Word 2007.

** Many of the topics learned in lessons 10- 15, 19, 21, and 22 also apply to Word 2010.

Tips for Creating Assignments and Examples

While we can't provide assignments and example files for all of our tutorials, the following tips from our instructional designers can help instructors create these things for their own classes.

General Advice

- **Don't be afraid to use available resources.** Most of our lessons contain Challenge questions on the last page, and many include example files students can use to practice. Feel free to use or adapt these things.

- **Pay attention to details.** Learners respond with more motivation to clear, high quality instructions, examples and scenarios.

- **Don't try to demonstrate too many tasks within one example or assignment.** You will get stuck and end up having to undo procedures or accomplish procedures in an illogical way.

Creating Assignments

- **Use a consistent, easily readable style.** Bulleted or number procedures are best. Use consistent language and bold key actions.

- **Break down instructions for assignments into easy-to-follow tasks.** These tasks should be always presented in a logical order. For instance, don't ask students to do tasks in an order that wouldn't make sense in real life. (e.g., applying a complicated change to a document, then immediately undoing it)

- **Don't be afraid to create simple assignments to test basic knowledge.** For instance, at the beginning of a course, you may want to test students on their knowledge of the software's interface.

- **Avoid evaluating assignments based on design, unless you are specifically teaching design techniques.** For instance, if a learner is asked to create a document that shows properly aligned lists and tables, don't evaluate the document on unrelated factors, like font style or color.

- **Make sure assignments are possible to complete within a reasonable amount of time.** Double-check the instructions to make sure that each step is clear and can't be interpreted incorrectly. If possible, test your assignments on a colleague or friend.

- **Assignment questions and instructions should always be easy to understand.** Don't attempt to make an assignment more difficult by making the questions themselves more complex.

- **To make assignments more difficult, create questions and tasks that involve critical thinking.** Challenge your students to use tools in a way that wasn't explicitly covered in the lesson, but still makes logical sense.

Creating Examples

- **Example documents, scenarios, and situations should be applicable to real world tasks and relevant to your learners' needs.** In making assignments "meaningful", learners will be more likely to retain their knowledge and apply the skills they have learned.

- **You may need several versions of your examples.** Start with a document that is fully complete, then move backwards and create versions of your examples that are in various stages of completion. Use the incomplete versions to show procedures and create assignments.

- **When possible, create well-designed, professional looking examples that will inspire your students to aim high with their own work.** When producing examples for Microsoft Office or Google Docs, consider creating some customized themes and graphics to demonstrate creative uses of the available tools.

Tutorial Descriptions

Below are the links to of all the tutorials mentioned in this guide.
For a complete list of our tutorials, go to www.gcflearnfree.org/alltopics.

Word

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to Word, the word processing program in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create professional-looking documents. Upon completion of the tutorial, students will be proficient in Word's most common features, as well as some advanced features like Mail Merge. We currently support Word XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, and 2010.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/word

PowerPoint

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to PowerPoint, the slideshow presentation program in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create and present professional-looking slideshows. Upon completion of the tutorial, students will be proficient in PowerPoint and able to use many of its advanced features. We currently support PowerPoint XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, and 2010.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/powerpoint

Excel

This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to Excel, the spreadsheet software in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to use worksheets to enter, store, and analyze data. Upon completion of this tutorial, students will be proficient in Excel's most commonly used features. We currently support Excel XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, and 2010.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/excel

Access

This tutorial is a thorough introduction to Access, the database management software in the Microsoft Office suite. Upon completion of this tutorial, students will be proficient in Access's most commonly used features. We currently support Access XP, 2000, 2003, 2007, and 2010. Access 2010 focuses primarily on maintaining and using, rather than building, a database.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/access

Publisher

This tutorial teaches students how to use Publisher, the desktop publishing software in the Microsoft Office suite. Students will learn how to create a variety of publications, including newsletters, brochures, and greeting cards. We currently support Publisher 2003 and 2010. We do not plan to offer Publisher courses for Office 2007, as the Office 2007 Publisher was not substantially different from the Office 2003 version. Note that Publisher 2010 offers fewer features than the other programs in the Office 2010 suite. For this reason, we recommend that learners consider using Word for desktop publishing instead.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/microsoftpublisher

Outlook

This tutorial teaches students how to use Microsoft Outlook, the desktop email client in the Microsoft Office suite. We only offer a tutorial on Outlook 2003, and have no plans to support more recent versions.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/microsoftoutlook

Office Web Apps and SkyDrive

Office Web Apps are free, pared-down versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint that users can access online. SkyDrive is a related Cloud storage service where students can save their Web Apps documents and other files. This tutorial teaches students how to get started with Web Apps and SkyDrive, and how to create, upload, manage, and share files.
URL: www.gcflearnfree.org/officewebapps