

Fifteen minutes from sign-up to your first useful output.

A compressed first hour with Gemini and NotebookLM — the full guide is at choosewise.education.

Gemini and NotebookLM are two views on one Google account. This page gives you what separates a useful first session from a frustrating one: access to both tools, a prompt that does not waste your time, and the habit of iterating. Skim it once, apply it today, return for depth tomorrow.

1 Sign in to both tools

The same Google account works for both — no separate sign-up. A free personal account is fine for early exploration, but never upload sensitive data (student names, grades, behaviour records, SEN plans). If your school runs Google Workspace for Education, use that domain account instead.

Gemini · gemini.google.com

Generative — drafts, differentiates, researches, ideates. Web, mobile, and the Workspace sidebar.

NotebookLM · notebooklm.google.com

Grounded — answers only from sources you upload, with citations back to the exact passage.

2 Write a prompt that works — the RTF anatomy

Most prompts fail because they are vague, not because the model is weak. A useful prompt names three things: Role, Task, Format.

R

Role

Who Gemini should be. "An experienced Year 4 literacy teacher in a mixed-ability state school" beats "a teacher".

T

Task

Exactly what you want done. "A ten-minute retrieval quiz on persuasive techniques from the past three lessons" beats "help with a quiz".

F

Format

The shape of the answer. Count, question types, word limit, whether to include an answer key. Say it up front.

3 Iterate — the first draft is never the deliverable

Read the first output. Tell Gemini two things to change. Run again. Ask for one more refinement. Two rounds of feedback take three minutes and roughly triple the quality. That iteration loop is the skill — not the perfect opening prompt.

• BAD

Explain the water cycle.

• BETTER

Explain the water cycle for Year 6. Make it easy to understand.

• BEST

Act as a Year 6 Science teacher. Write a 250-word explanation of the water cycle for a mixed-ability class. Include the four stages, one real-world example each, a five-term vocabulary box, and three retrieval questions at the end.

Where the real leverage starts.

Set the tools up once. Benefit every lesson after.

Build one Gem — your persistent teaching assistant

A Gem is a named instruction set with attached files. Build one for your most-planned subject or year, and every future conversation starts with the context loaded. Stop pasting context; start compounding it.

Upload these five:

- Your curriculum or syllabus for the subject and year
- Your scope and sequence or term planner
- Your school's style or communications guide
- An assessment rubric you use regularly
- Three de-identified student work samples

Write one instruction:

"You are an experienced Year 8 English teacher in a mixed-ability state school. Outputs should be classroom-ready, follow the uploaded style guide, never produce more than I asked for, and use British English."

Open NotebookLM — upload three sources, click Audio Overview

NotebookLM turns your uploaded sources into briefings, mind maps, study guides, podcast-style Audio Overviews, and Cinematic Video Overviews — each one cited back to the passage. Three workflows earn their place in week one:

- **Audio Overview** of a unit plan + two readings — excellent for EAL students who listen before reading, and for your own commute review.
- **Mind Map** of a long policy document — share with your department instead of asking colleagues to read forty pages.
- **Briefing Doc** from a meeting agenda + pre-reads — the one-page summary everyone actually reads before the meeting.

Five first wins — pick one this week

- 1 Differentiate a reading passage** GEMINI
Three versions at two years below, at-level, and two years above — same core ideas, shared key vocabulary.
- 2 Generate a podcast from your unit** NOTEBOOKLM
Upload three to five unit documents. Click Audio Overview. 15–25 minutes of classroom-ready audio.
- 3 Run Deep Research on a topic** GEMINI
Background reading for a new unit in fifteen minutes instead of an afternoon — with inline citations. Verify every one.
- 4 Mind-map a policy document** NOTEBOOKLM
Upload the PDF. Click Mind Map. Share with your team as a faster way to align on what the document says.
- 5 Draft a parent email in three tones** GEMINI
Give the context. Ask for warmer, firmer, and neutral versions. Pick the one that fits — edit, send.

• WATCH OUT · AGE-GATES AND DATA

Gemini Live is 18+. Premium Gemini-in-Workspace features (Docs, Slides, Forms, Vids) are 18+. NotebookLM is 13+ in a browser with stricter rules under 18. National guidance on student AI use varies — verify your country's current rules before any student-facing feature. For data: de-identify everything. Never upload student names, grades, health info, SEN plans, or safeguarding notes — not to any account type. If unsure, treat the file as unsafe and ask your DPO first.

Ready for depth? Read the full Gemini & NotebookLM Guide — or download the 40-page premium PDF from the same page.

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