

# Google for Beginners

## INTRODUCTION

Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) is the world's most popular website. Google is primarily known as a search engine (a type of website that people use to search for information on other websites) which handles over 3 billion searches every day. But Google is more than just a website; there are few aspects of everyday life Google hasn't taken over – from the internet, to cell phones, to TV, and even to self-driving cars. Understanding the full capabilities of Google (and how to properly use them) can be a huge benefit to anyone.



In today's lesson we will cover:

- A brief history of Google
- Google as a search engine
- Tips & tricks for successful searches
- More than a keyword search
- Google on the go
- Google owned products & services
- Final thoughts & additional resources

## SECTION I: GOOGLE – A BRIEF HISTORY

Google began in March 1996 as a research project by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Ph.D., who were students at Stanford University. Originally the search engine used the Stanford website with the domain [google.stanford.edu](http://google.stanford.edu). The domain [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) was registered on September 15, 1997. The name "Google" is a play on the word "googol," a mathematical term for the number represented by the numeral 1 followed by 100 zeroes. Page and Brin formally incorporated their company on September 4, 1998.



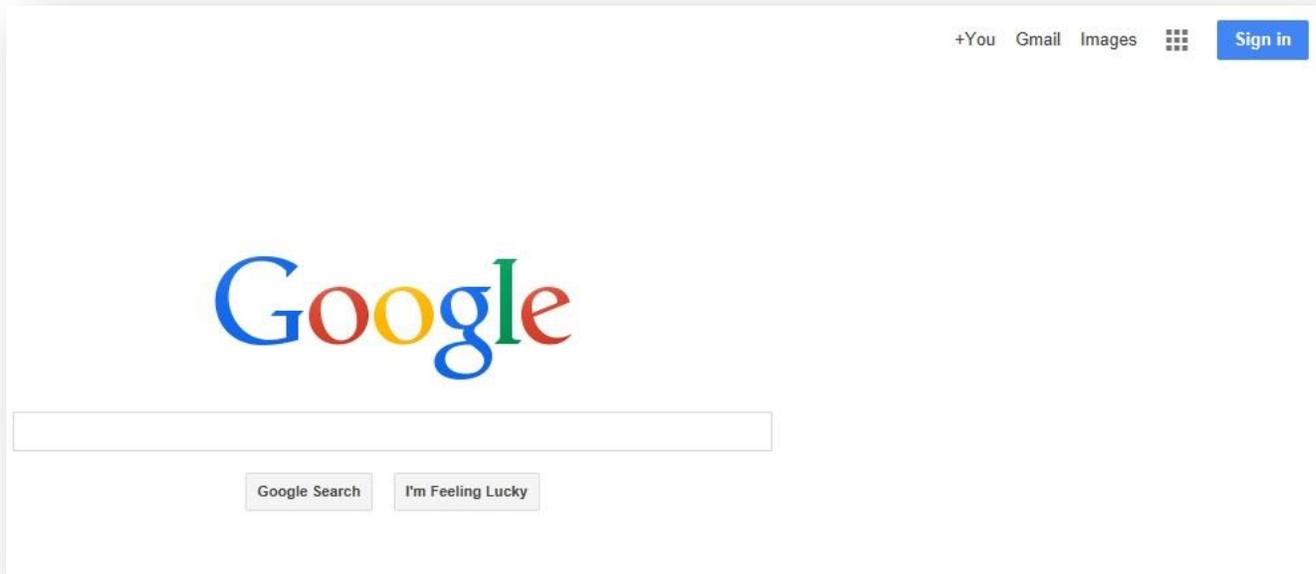
Very quickly Google became a popular web search engine, joining (and quickly surpassing) sites like Yahoo, AOL, Excite, Dogpile, and MSN.

On April 1, 2004, Google launched Gmail, their version of free web based email, meant to compete with AOL, Yahoo, and Hotmail. By the end of 2004, 85% of web searches were done through Google. In February 2005, Google Maps debuted allowing people to get directions and view maps online. In October 2006, Google acquired YouTube, which was quickly becoming the most popular video sharing website in the world. In May 2007, Google Street View debuted allowing users to see and navigate actual streets. In November 2007, Google announced the debut of Android, a smartphone operating system that by 2014 boasted a market share of roughly 80%. In September 2008, Google Chrome debuted as an alternative web browser and by 2014 had over 750 million users and became the most popular web browser in the world. Similar to how the phrases "make a Xerox" or "get a Kleenex" use brand names as a way to describe simple tasks (such as making photocopies or getting a facial tissue), "Google it" has become a common way to encourage someone to "look it up online."

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## SECTION II: GOOGLE AS A SEARCH ENGINE

One thing that many users love about Google is the simple clean interface you see when you go to Google.com. Google features a giant search box, two simple buttons (“Search” and “I’m Feeling Lucky”) a few small links in the upper right hand corner of the screen.



Compared to rival Yahoo, which features a lot of other things (news headlines, trending topics, over a dozen links to other sites and services, advertisements, etc.) Google tends to be a bit more user friendly and less cluttered, especially for newer internet users.



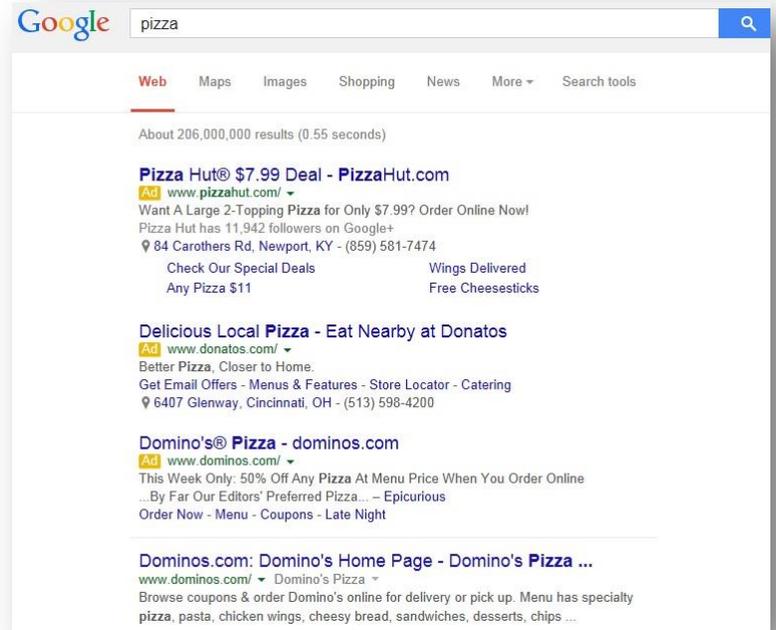
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## Doing a simple search

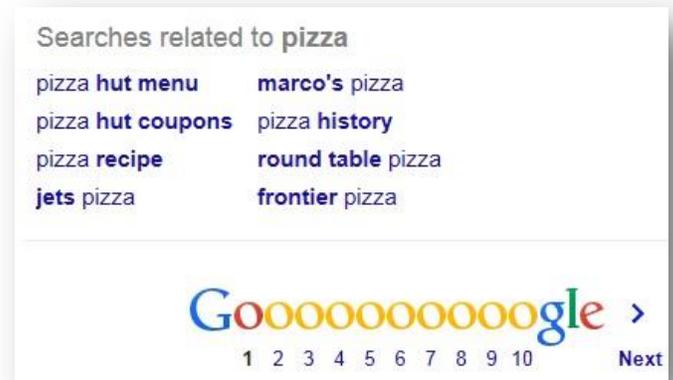
To use Google, type your keyword or search term into the large white box. As you begin typing, Google will begin to autosuggest words or phrases which it thinks you might be searching for. The suggestions become more specific the more letters you type. If you see what you are looking for in the autosuggest drop down feature, click it with your mouse—you don't have to type in the whole entry. You can also perform a search by typing in your keyword(s) and pressing the Enter button on your keyboard.

## Deciphering your search results

Once you do a search, you'll be taken to a new page with results for your search keyword(s). For instance, if you do a search for pizza, in the middle part of the page you will see the list of results for the search "pizza." The title of each result (in blue) is a link to the page (for example, clicking on "Domino's.com: Domino's Home Page – Domino's Pizza..." will take you to [www.dominos.com](http://www.dominos.com)). Just to be extra helpful, immediately under the title is the full web address (in green) so you know exactly what website you will be going to if you click the link. There will also be a brief description of the site in plain text. Sometimes there might even be links to particular parts of a site – for example, instead of just Domino's, a direct link to their menu, employment opportunities, or coupons might be listed here. In many cases, contact information such as a phone number or address might be provided here as well.



At the bottom of your search results page, you may see links to related searches as well as a series of numbers. The numbers are all the different pages of search results. Google will only display around 10-12 sites on a page; in order to view the next group, you will have to click on the next page number of your search results, or the link that says next.



**Tip: Watch out for advertisements! You'll notice the first several results all have a yellow "Ad" tag in front of them – this means companies paid money to get their link placed at the top of this page when someone searches for "pizza." Sometimes these ads link you to the site or information you are looking for – but sometimes they are for a competitor, similar product or service, or even a completely unrelated topic. Always look to make sure you aren't clicking an ad by mistake!**

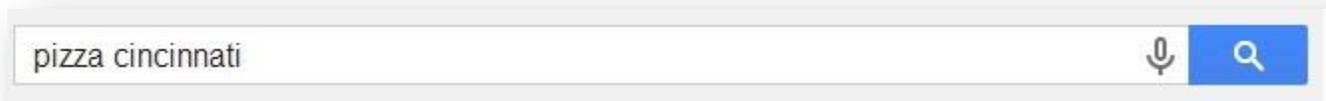
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## SECTION III: TIPS & TRICKS FOR SUCCESSFUL RESULTS

Using Google is easy for the most part – just type in a keyword or phrase and you are good to go. That said, sometimes the information Google provides is just *too* overwhelming. Let's discover some tips and tricks to help make your Googling more effective.

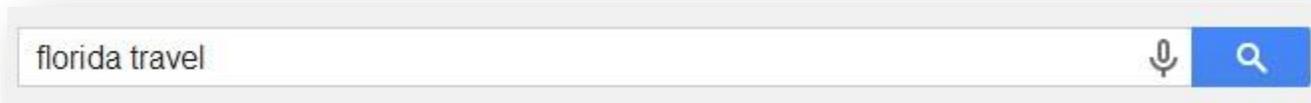
### Start simple

No matter what you're looking for, keep it simple. Start by entering a basic name or word. If you're looking for a place or product in a specific location, enter the name along with the city or zip code.



### Less is more

Simple, one or two word search terms will usually give you the broadest results. Start with short search terms and then refine your results by adding more words.



### Don't worry about punctuation

Search ignores punctuation. This includes @#%^\*()= []\ and other special characters (no need to put in a question mark).



### Ignore spelling

Google's spell checker automatically defaults to the most common spelling of a given word, whether or not you spell it correctly. This is great for the spelling impaired among –as long as you come somewhat close, Google will help you.



**Tip: Did you notice the small microphone icon at the end of the search box? If your computer or tablet has a mic, you can actually click the icon and speak your search terms – no typing required!**

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## Search with an exact phrase

Put quotation marks around words "*any word*" to search for an exact phrase in an exact order. Keep in mind that searching with quotes might exclude relevant results. For instance, a search for "Pete Rose" will miss pages that refer to "Peter Edward Rose."

"this one belongs to the reds"



## Use descriptive words

The more unique the word, the more likely you are to get relevant results. So *Beyoncé ringtones* is probably better than *Beyoncé sounds*. Keep in mind though, that even if the word has the correct meaning, if it's not the one most people use, it may not match the pages you need. For example, *Cincinnati Library* is a better search than *Library of Cincinnati*.

Beyonce ringtones



## Don't worry about cases

Search isn't case sensitive. A search for *martin luther king jr* is the same as a search for *Martin Luther King Jr.*

martin luther king jr



## Include or ignore words and characters in your search

Highlight common words and characters such as *the*, *and*, &, if they are essential to your search (as in a movie or book title) by putting quotation marks "the" around them. You can also use the minus - sign to specify particular items you *don't* want in your results, like ingredients in a recipe.

breakfast casserole -sausage



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## SECTION V: MORE THAN JUST A KEYWORD SEARCH

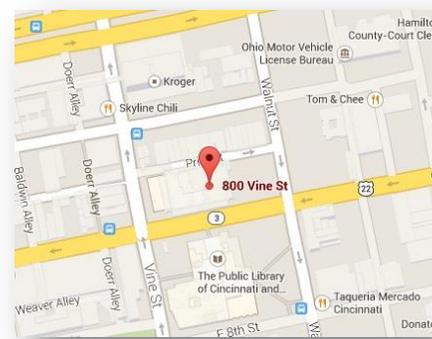
You probably noticed when you do a Google search that there are some additional options across the top of your screen – things like **Maps**, **Images**, **Shopping**, **News** and **More** (which includes options for **Videos**, **Books**, **Flights**, and **Apps**). These provide another great way to find what you are looking for online.



Click on the *Images* button – if you still have pizza as your search term, you will now get thousands of pictures of pizza. Clicking *Maps* and searching for pizza will show you locations of nearby pizza places. The *News* option will show you news about pizza and so forth. These additional search tools are just another way Google allows you to narrow your search and return more accurate results.

### Google Maps

One of the most popular Google services is Maps ([maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com)) which allows you to see the world (literally) in a whole new way. Try typing in your home address in the search field in Google maps. You will get a nice map of your neighborhood with a pinpoint showing your home's exact location. Satellite views are also available on the Maps page. You can use Maps to get directions to a location (or locations) via five different methods – car, bike, flights, walking, and public transit. Estimated mileage and travel times are given whenever you do a directional search using Google Maps. (Note: Maps might not always be 100% accurate; if streets are closed due to construction for example, you might find the suggested route to be inaccurate).



Perhaps the most interesting option is **Street View**, which allows you to explore world landmarks, discover natural wonders, and step inside locations such as museums, arenas, restaurants and small businesses with 360-degree images. The images are taken by a fleet of specially adapted cars which feature nine directional cameras for 360° views.



## SECTION VI: GOOGLE ON THE GO

Google is also a powerful force in the world of mobile computing. Not only is Google behind the Android operating system, which powers nearly 80% of mobile devices, but they also offer a plethora of mobile apps for their various products and services. Many popular Google applications like Gmail, YouTube, Drive, and Maps are available in mobile versions (for free). These apps, designed for smartphones and tablets, allow Google users to access and sync their information from device to device anywhere and everywhere they go.



## SECTION VI: GOOGLE OWNED PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Did you know that Google owns YouTube? Or that Google offers online file storage through Drive? Google is much more than a search engine, as this list of products and services owned by Google clearly demonstrates.

### Web

- **Web Search** | Search billions of web pages
- **Google Chrome** | A browser built for speed, simplicity and security
- **Toolbar** | Add a search box to your browser
- **Helpouts** | Get help on a wide range of topics from experts over live video
- **Bookmarks** | Access your bookmarks and starred items

### Mobile

- **Mobile** | Get Google products on your mobile phone
- **Maps for mobile** | View maps, your location and get directions on your phone
- **Search for Mobile** | Search Google wherever you are

### Media

- **YouTube** | Watch, upload and share videos
- **Google Play** | Your music, movies, books, and Android apps available anywhere
- **Books** | Search the full text of books
- **Image Search** | Search for images on the web
- **News** | Search thousands of news stories
- **Video Search** | Search for videos on the web
- **Picasa** | Find, edit and share your photos

### Geography

- **Maps** | View maps and directions
- **Earth** | Explore the world from your computer
- **Panoramio** | Explore and share photos of the world

### Specialized Search

- **Blog Search** | Find blogs on your favorite topics
- **Custom Search** | Create a customized search experience for your community
- **Patent Search** | Search the full text of US Patents
- **Google Shopping** | Search for stuff to buy

- **Finance** | Business info, news and interactive charts
- **Scholar** | Search scholarly papers
- **Alerts** | Get email updates on the topics of your choice
- **Trends** | Explore past and present search trends

### Home & Office

- **Gmail** | Fast, searchable email with less spam
- **Drive** | Create, share and keep all your stuff in one place
- **Docs** | Open, edit, and create documents (similar to Microsoft Word)
- **Sheets** | Open, edit, and create spreadsheets (similar to Microsoft Excel)
- **Slides** | Open, edit, and create presentations (similar to Microsoft PowerPoint)
- **Forms** | Build free surveys
- **Drawings** | Create diagrams and flow charts
- **Sites** | Create websites and secure group wikis
- **Calendar** | Organize your schedule and share events with friends
- **Translate** | Instantly translate text, web pages, and files between over 50 languages
- **Voice** | One number for all your phones, online voicemail and cheap calling
- **Google Wallet** | Make your phone your wallet
- **Google Cloud Print** | Print anywhere, from any device
- **Google Keep** | Save what's on your mind

### Social

- **Google+** | Real-life sharing, rethought for the web
- **Blogger** | Share your life online with a blog - it's quick, easy and free
- **Groups** | Create mailing lists and discussion groups
- **Hangouts** | Conversations that come to life. Anytime, anywhere, for free.
- **Orkut** | Meet new people and stay in touch with friends

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## SECTION IV: FINAL THOUGHTS

As we have discovered, Google is a huge company that does a lot more than just work as a search engine. From web browsers and mobile operating systems to image searching and turn by turn directions, Google is impacting and infiltrating our lives more and more each day. Which begs the question, what could be next for Google? Would you believe GPS powered cars that drive themselves? (visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqSDWoAhvLU> for more info!).

## SECTION V: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The TechCenter at the Main Branch of the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County hosts over two dozen technology related classes each month. Ask your instructor today for a calendar of upcoming events or visit our website at [www.cincinnati.org/programs/](http://www.cincinnati.org/programs/) for a complete list of all Library events.

If you are liked our *Google for Beginners* class, you may also find these related classes of interest:

- *Internet for Beginner, Part II*
- *Facebook for Beginners*

Feel free to ask for a copy of any class handout at the Technology Center desk or talk to your instructor today.

### Online

The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County offers a variety of databases to all card holders which provide excellent learning opportunities on a variety of topics, including computers and technology.

**Learning Express Library** offers a wide variety of interactive computer classes (Complete Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe CS3, Windows, and Mac OSX). Videos and screencasts make learning easy while quizzes help assess your progress. Free with your library card. From <http://www.cincinnati.org>, click on Research & Homework > Research Databases > Education > Learning Express Library.

**Universal Class** offers more than 500 classes on many topics. These classes are instructed by real teachers who guide your learning and provide feedback on your work. Learn about Microsoft Office, Web Design, Computer Basics, Business Applications, and more! Free with your library card. From <http://www.cincinnati.org>, click on Research & Homework > Research Databases > Education > Universal Class.