

Making text boxes in a google docs document

Google docs does not have the concept of a text box, but there is a fairly easy way to fake it using a single-cell table. There is a video to accompany this guide at [Simple, attractive text boxes in Google Docs - YouTube](#).

Creating the text box

First, create the table using the menus or key shortcuts. Any of the following actions will insert a single cell table:

- Click Insert > Table > 1 x 1
- Click Table > Insert table > 1 x 1
- Press Alt + B > I > Enter (if you are using Google Chrome)
- Press Shift + Alt + B > I > Enter (if you are using a different browser)

The basic table will be plain white with a black outline, like this.
--

You can click inside the table and type text just like you would anywhere else in the document, and it will expand to fit what you type.
--

Styling

A plain box with a black outline that is as wide as your page might be all you need, but there are several options to change the layout and appearance to suit other needs.

Table properties

Each of the following properties can be changed in the Table properties dialog box. To open the dialog box, first click on the table to make sure the cursor is focused on it, then do one of the following actions:

- Click Table > Table properties
- Press Alt + B > T (if you are using Google Chrome)
- Press Shift + Alt + B > T (if you are using a different browser)

Background colour

To make your text box stand out and be visually distinct from your main text, you can change the background colour of the table. This is more effective than changing the highlight colour on the text since the colour will fill the whole box and give an even shape.

To change the background colour, open the table properties as shown above, then look for **Cell background color** and click the associated dropdown to select the colour you want.

This text box has a distinctive colour so it stands out and is easy to visually separate from the surrounding text.

This text has a highlight using the same colour. Notice that it does not fill the text box, so it doesn't look as neat or have the same impact.

Border

Once you have added a background colour to a text box, the border is no longer required to separate your text from surrounding text. A border that is the same colour as the text can take attention away from the text itself, making reading more difficult.

To change the border colour or thickness, open the table properties as shown above, then look for **Table border** and use the associated dropdowns to pick a colour and thickness you are happy with.

I have made the border of this text box a light grey, with thickness 4.5pt. Since it is lighter and a different thickness from the text, it is much easier to focus on the text.

To remove the border completely, set the thickness to **0pt**.

I have removed the border from this text box, since it already has a background colour to distinguish it from surrounding text.

I could also have just set the border to the same colour as the background, but that would give me more to change if I decide to use a different colour.

Padding

Text boxes can look a bit crowded and be harder to read if the text is too close to the edge of the box. Padding increases the space between the edge of the box and the text, making the text stand out more and seem less crowded.

To change the padding, open the table properties as shown above, then look for the **Dimensions** section and change the number for *Cell padding*.

I have increased the padding in this text box to 0.8cm, from the default of 0.176cm, giving a lot more space around the text.

Width and height

I often want to make my text boxes narrower than the rest of the text to make them more visually distinct.

There are a few ways to change the width of a text box:

The simplest is to move the cursor over one edge of the box until it changes to a resizing cursor, then hold down the left mouse button and drag the edge to where you want it. You can do this with both sides to get the positioning just right.

I have dragged the right side of this text box across to make it narrower.

I have dragged the left side of this text box across to make it narrower and have it aligned on the right.

I have dragged both sides of this text box in to try to position it in the center. See below for a more accurate way to position a text box in the center.

The other way to change the width of a text box is to open the table properties, and change the value for *Column width* in the **Dimensions** section. You can always make the text box go back to full width by un-checking the checkbox next to *Column width*.

I have changed *Column width* setting of this text box to 10cm. This setting can be a bit fiddly because the width does not change until you click **OK**.

Alignment

You can align text boxes more accurately using the **Table alignment** settings. These settings are updated automatically when you drag the sides of the text box to change the width, but it is easier to align a text box in the center of the page by changing the settings directly.

To change the alignment, open the table properties as shown above, then change the dropdown in the **Table alignment** section to *Left*, *Centre* or *Right*.

This text box is aligned *Right*, and has its *Column width* reduced to 12cm to allow it to move across.

This text box has its alignment set to *Centre* and has a *Column width* of 12cm. Note that if I drag the sides of the textbox to resize it, it remains in the center.

If the alignment is set to *Left*, you can set a *Left indent* value to move it across.

This text box is aligned *Left* but has 2cm *Left indent* which moves it away from the left edge. This is the same effect as setting the alignment to *Right* and changing the *Column width*.