



HOW TO - WRITE A GUIDE



WHAT IS THIS GUIDE OR PROCESS?

In a paragraph or so, explain (1) what the feature or goal is, and (2) how the user would use it. The goal is to summarize why someone would read this guide, so they can understand whether it meets their needs. This guide will document how to write documentation about tools and processes for the Engineering team. Use this as a starting point for future documents.

Example:

WHAT IS SLACK?

Slack is a communication and collaboration platform that organizes conversations into topics, groups or private messages. Each topic or group is called a Channel. Hack for LA uses slack to allow teams to connect, discuss and work on projects collectively. There are channels set up for both specific projects, and specific functional roles.

Alternatives or things to know?

Is there anything that a reader should know up front? Are there other alternatives to the process you are describing, or any similar features? This section will not be necessary for all guides.

For this guide, the audience is documenting processes and tools; if you are looking for a guide to documenting projects for external stakeholders, the guide to [One Sheets \(linked\)](#) may be more useful.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE OR PROCESS?

Explain to a user, with illustrations if possible, what the feature or goal is and how to use it. This should be detailed information for users to reference as needed, and should explain the feature so that others can understand and use it.

Guides should be used to document and standardize processes, as well as to share information about how to do specific things. Use this as a template to document future guides or processes, so that future users will have a clear reference.

HOW TO WRITE A GUIDE - TYPES OF GUIDES

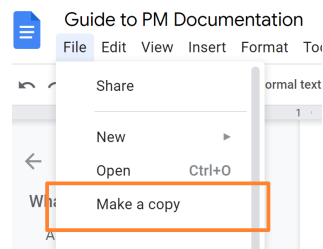
Guides can document features or processes. Documents should be created with the user and the problem in mind, with a goal of solving a problem for that user as easily as possible. Users often have limited time and a specific problem, and the guide should help them get to a solution.

Feature Documentation (How to Create a Guide)

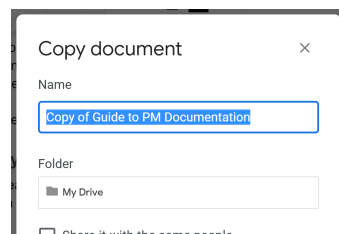
Feature documentation of internal tools should describe the steps needed to produce the desired result. These documents would be used briefly by someone looking to accomplish a specific task, and will be read quickly. These should be clear but should also be brief, since the user's goal will be to read them (often once), do the task described, and continue with their work.

Document the steps to produce the intended result if possible. It may be helpful to approach this as a use case. Include visuals when possible, to make it easier for the user to understand the documentation.

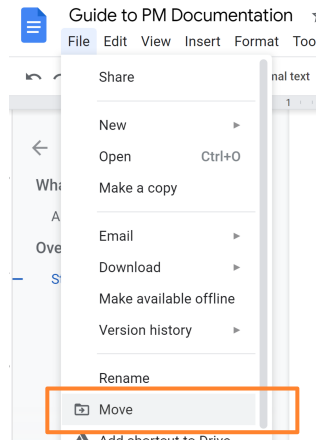
1. Start on this document by tapping on File on the top left of the screen.



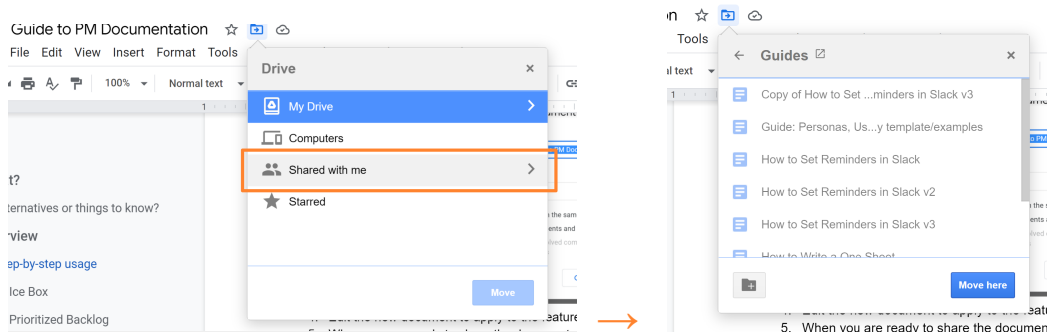
2. You should see the option to “Make a Copy”. Select that option.
3. Set a title for your new document. This can be changed later.



4. Edit the new document to apply to the feature or process you are documenting.
5. When you are ready to share the document, move the new document into the [Guides folder in the Engineering drive \(linked\)](#) by going to File and selecting Move.



- a. A menu will pop up with options. Go to Shared with Me, and select the Engineering drive.
- b. Select the Guides folder and tap Move to save your guide to the shared drive.

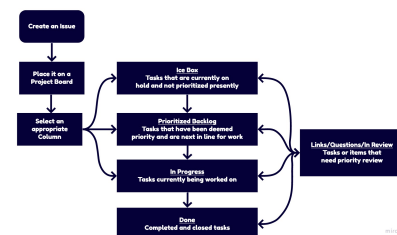


Process documentation (How to Update Github)

Process documents should be detailed. These guides would be a way to onboard new teammates and should serve as a reference for that process. These may be referenced on an ongoing basis and should be reviewed as often as possible to ensure that they are current.

Process documentation should detail how to implement the process and how to handle typical deviations. The goal should be to allow the reader to use the process to further their goals.

For reference, workflow documentation would be an example of this type of document.



1. Create the file for the guide
 - a. Copy an existing file to easily copy the style guide

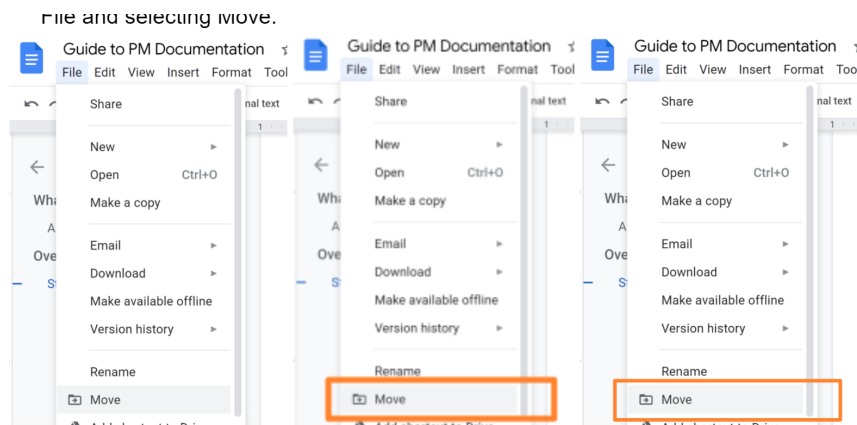
2. Save the guide to the shared folder
 - a. See the steps above for details on how to move the file to the shared folder.
3. Write the guide to document how the user should approach the process.
 - a. Guides should be clear overviews of the process.
 - b. Write with a clear idea of the user's problem and goal in mind.
 - c. Aim to give users enough information to be able to move forward.
 - d. If there is detail that a user might need but is a fringe case, add an Additional Reference Material or Glossary section at the end to include the information.
4. Update the ticket in Github to alert users that the document is ready for review.

Additional Reference Material:

Style Guide

1. Use this document as a starting point to easily copy the style and formatting.
2. Main headings should be in all caps, with the first word in bold.
3. The page heading for pages 2+ should be an embedded image. [This \(linked\)](#) is the raw image used for this guide, and can be copied and updated for future guides.
 - a. Follow the Image Troubleshooting directions below in order to avoid a pixelated image.
4. Use header settings for the structure of the guide, to make it accessible to screen readers. Do not just change the font size.
5. For images, add a box or an arrow to highlight the points of interest
 - a. Use hex code `#ff832e` for the arrow or box
6. Keep the guide as brief as possible while still communicating the necessary information.
 - a. Users may not read the full guide.
 - b. Use bullet points where possible; studies show that readers are more comfortable with short lines than long paragraphs, even if the information is the same.
7. Include illustrations wherever possible.

Illustration Troubleshooting



1. To embed the image, either use a photo editor or use Google Drawings.
2. If using Google Drawings, create each image as a Google Drawing.
 - a. Paste the screenshot or image into the Google Drawing
 - b. Crop the canvas to the size of the image

- c. Embed the image into the Guide by Inserting the Drawing. If the image is fuzzy, go to Page Options in the Drawing and increase the canvas size (suggested 10x), then update the embedded drawing.
3. [This \(linked\)](#) is an example of Google Drawing image embedded in this guide.

Peer created guides are an important part of Hack for LA's Culture. Help us to make it better by posting any comments directly next to the content.

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