

Classroom Newsletter Generator



The Classroom Newsletter Generator is a time-saving Google Sheets tool built for real-life teachers juggling all the things. With just a few clicks, it pulls together classroom-wide updates, student-specific notes, photos, attachments, and upcoming events to create polished, personalized weekly newsletters for families—sent directly to their inboxes. It even supports multiple languages and embeds photos straight from your Drive (no downloading or linking required). You can batch-send everything at once, and built-in scripts handle the heavy lifting so you don't have to. It's smart, flexible, and forgiving—and while it's not magic, it comes pretty close for a spreadsheet.

Security Notice: This newsletter tool is designed to work within the security parameters of your Google Workspace. The privacy and protection of student information depend on how securely your Workspace is managed. Please use this tool with caution and in accordance with your district's policies on student data and email communication.

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QUICK START GUIDE

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO TUTORIAL](#)

Get your Classroom Newsletter Generator up and running in just a few steps:

1. **Make a copy of the tool:**

If you haven't already, [click here](#) to make your own copy of the **Classroom Newsletter Generator**.

➤ Click **"Make a copy."**

2. **Organize your files:**

Create a folder in your Google Drive to keep everything together. Move both of these into that folder:

- The **Newsletter Generator** sheet
- The Google Form titled **"Copy of Classroom Newsletter Photos & Attachments"**

3. **Set up the Google Form:**

- Open the form and click **Restore** when prompted about missing upload folders.
- Click the **purple "Publish"** button in the top right.
 - Choose **"Anyone with the link"** for Responder view and publish.
- Click the **link icon** in the top menu bar, check **"Shorten URL,"** and **Copy** the link.
- Go to your **Set Up** tab and paste the copied link into **cell D6**.

4. **Adjust folder permissions:**

Find the folder titled **"Newsletter Photos & Attachments (File Responses)"**

➤ Right-click → Share → Share again → Set to **"Anyone with the link" +**

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“Viewer” → Done.

5. **Authorize the scripts:**

In the **Set Up** tab, click the **“CLICK HERE To Authorize Scripts”** button.

➤ Follow the prompts to [give permissions](#).

6. **Check the Newsletter Safeguards:**

Review the checklist and mark each item to show you're ready to roll.

7. **Customize your sender info:**

- In **cell D4**, enter your weekly email subject line (e.g., *“Mrs. Griffin’s Weekly Update!”*)
- In **cell D5**, enter your name as you'd like it displayed.

8. **Set your script triggers:**

Make sure the following triggers are installed ([linked instructions](#) will help):

- onEditNews
- updatePhotoLinksFromFormorEdit
- onOpenPhotoForm

That’s it! You’re ready to create gorgeous, personalized, photo-rich classroom newsletters—without the Friday afternoon panic.

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Good Copy/Paste Hygiene (and Other Best Practices)

Copy/Pasting indiscriminately will cause issues with the sheet. Be sure to always paste VALUES ONLY. Here are three ways to do that:

1. Copy the target information. Click into the cell where you want to paste the information, but instead of CTRL+V, click **CTRL+SHIFT+V**.
2. Copy the target information. Click into the cell where you want to paste the information, but RIGHT CLICK and choose **Paste special -> Values only**
3. Copy the target information. Click into the cell where you want to paste the information, then click into the **FORMULA BAR** at the top of the spreadsheet and CTRL+V.

Getting into the habit of using good copy/paste hygiene will save you a lot of headaches and will make you feel like a genuine Spreadsheet Nerd!

ONLY TYPE IN DESIGNATED AREAS

Some “empty” cells in this spreadsheet are not actually empty—they contain hidden formulas or helper data.

If you type in the wrong spot, you might break something important. Only type where you're supposed to!

NEVER ADD ROWS OR COLUMNS

It's tempting to add an extra note or column of your own—but don't do it!

The scripts that power this sheet rely on the exact structure.

Adding rows or columns will break the automation. Trust me.

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AUTHORIZING THE SCRIPTS

To unlock all the powerful automation in the Newsletter Generator, you'll need to authorize the scripts the first time you use them.

Click the **"Authorize Scripts"** icon on the Set Up page. A pop-up window will appear asking you to authorize the scripts.

- Click Okay
- Choose your name, click next
- Scroll down and click allow

If you are using a personal google account, you may see a **"This app isn't verified"** warning.

No worries! This message appears because the script wasn't published by Google—**it's safe to use.**

- Click **"Advanced"** at the bottom left of the message
- Click **"Go to Classroom Newsletter Generator (unsafe)"** (It may also say "Go to Untitled project (unsafe)")
- Click **"Allow"**

This just means the script is running within your own Google account, and no one outside your account or domain (if you're in a Google Workspace) can see or use your data. The script only has the permissions it needs to do the tasks you're asking it to do—like sending emails, accessing your photos (if applicable), or reading from a Google Sheet or Form.

To be extra clear:

- **No other person** is getting access to your emails or photos.
- The script only runs with your permission and under your account.
- If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can view or revoke permissions at any time at: myaccount.google.com/permissions.

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SETTING TRIGGERS

To make sure the Classroom Newsletter Generator runs smoothly, you'll need to manually set **three script triggers**. Here's how:

- In the top menu of your spreadsheet, click **Extensions** → **Apps Script**
- In the left sidebar, click the **clock icon** ⌚ (Triggers)
- Click the blue **+ Add Trigger** button in the bottom right
- Set up the trigger using the guide below
- Click the blue **Save** button

Choose which function to run	Choose which deployment should run	Select event source	Select event type
onOpenPhotoForm	Head	From spreadsheet	On open
onEditNews	Head	From spreadsheet	On edit
updatePhotoLinksFromFormOrEdit	Head	From spreadsheet	On form submit

AUTOMATING THE EMAIL: Want your newsletter to send itself every week? Optionally, you can set a trigger to send your weekly email out on a schedule – just set it and forget it!

Choose which function to run	Choose which deployment should run	Select event source	Select type of time based trigger	Select day of week	Select time of day
sendWeeklyEmails	Head	Time-driven	Week timer	Your choice	Your choice

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STUDENT ROSTER

The **Student Roster** tab is where you store your students' key information so the Newsletter Generator knows who to include and how to reach them.

- First name
- Last name
- Student ID
- Grade
- Home language (optional - used to send a translated email)
- Parent email address (you can enter multiple addresses separated by commas)

Columns to Check:

- **Column B:** Check this box to mark a student as **active** in your class. If a student moves or no longer receives the newsletter, simply uncheck it.
- **Column C:** Check this box if the student has a **signed photo release**. If **unchecked**, their weekly email will **not include photos**—even if some were submitted.
- **Column H:** Indicate the **parent's home language**. If filled in, the newsletter will be sent in **English AND the selected language**. Leave it blank if no translation is needed.

Keep the Photo Form Updated

Click the button labeled **"UPDATE NAMES TO PHOTO FORM"** to send your active students' names to the Photo & Attachment Submission Form.

- The list updates **automatically every time you open** the Newsletter Generator
- ...or you can click the button manually at any time for an instant refresh

This keeps everything in sync and ready to go!

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BUILD NEWSLETTER

Here's where the magic happens!

Use this tab to create your weekly classroom newsletter with both whole-class highlights and personalized updates for each student.

GET STARTED

- In **cell F4**, choose the week you want to work on from the dropdown.
 - Fill in this week's **theme and description** in **E7 & E8**, and next week's in **E10 & E11**.
 - Add info about each **subject area**, daily highlights, and any **class-wide reminders** in the designated sections.
-

INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

- Jot down Glow, Grow, and Notes for each student. (Be sure to **SAVE** each time you enter or change information!)
 - You'll see how many photos have been uploaded for each student. If a student **doesn't have a signed photo release**, it will say **NO PHOTOS**, and none will be included in their email—even if some were submitted.
-

UPCOMING CALENDAR EVENTS

- This section is **automatically pulled from the Set Up page** and **can't be edited** directly here.
 - To add or change events, go to the **Set Up** tab.
-

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ATTACHMENTS

- Use the checkboxes to select any documents you want to include.
- Attachments are sent to the student(s) listed in the **“For”** column—or to **ALL STUDENTS** if noted.
- Use the **Photo & Attachment Submission Form** to add attachments (you can’t manually type them into the sheet).
- You can upload up to **60 attachments** at a time. If the attachment section is full, you can clear older or unused files by checking them off and clicking **CLEAR ATTACHMENTS**. This will remove only the selected items, making room for new uploads.

SAVE YOUR WORK

- Anytime you add or change information, **click the SAVE DATA button**.
- If you switch to a different week before saving, your updates will be **lost forever**.

READY TO SEND?

- Click the **SEND THIS WEEK’S NEWSLETTER** button to email this week’s newsletter to families.
- This sends the newsletter for the **current week**, *not necessarily the week you’re currently viewing*.
- If you’ve set a trigger for **sendWeeklyEmails**, it will go out automatically on the scheduled day!

Pro Tip:

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You can **work ahead** by selecting a future week in the dropdown—great for planning ahead or queuing reminders!

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SET UP

This tab holds key settings and inputs that help the Newsletter Generator run smoothly.

General Information

- **Subject Line:** Enter the subject line for your weekly email at the top. You can update this each week or keep it consistent all year.
- **Your Name:** Enter your name in the space provided.
- **Photo Form:** Paste the URL to the editor view of your *Photo & Attachment Submission Form* here.
- **Photo Response Form:** Paste the responder view link to your *Photo & Attachment Submission Form*.

Script Authorization

Click the **“CLICK HERE To Authorize Scripts”** button to activate the tools that power this generator.

Important: The Newsletter Generator will not function until the scripts are authorized.

Clear All Data

Use the **CLEAR ALL DATA** button to erase:

- Photo & Attachment Submission Form entries
- Weekly newsletter data
- The student roster

This is especially helpful at the start of a new school year or after a practice run.

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Calendar Events

Enter key dates from your school or classroom calendar (e.g., field trips, spirit days, picture day).

- Events do **not** need to be in order—the tool will sort them in the email automatically.
- Use the **CLEAR CALENDAR DATA** button to reset this section when needed.

Weekly emails will include any upcoming events listed here.

Newsletter Safeguards

This checklist ensures you've completed the essential setup steps and understand key guidelines.

The tool will remain inactive until all items are checked off.

Help & Support

- View the **User Manual** for detailed instructions.
- Watch the **Instructional Video** for a guided walk-through.
- Still stuck? Email me directly at **krismaas@krismaas.com** — I'm happy to help!

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PHOTO & ATTACHMENTS SUBMISSION FORM

This form allows you to upload student photos, images of student work, and documents (like permission slips or schedules) for inclusion in your weekly newsletters.

The form is already connected to your Classroom Newsletter Generator.

You can access the form by clicking the link at the top of the **Build Newsletter** tab, or email the link to yourself and save it to your phone's home screen for quick access when using your phone to submit.

Do not change the form structure. Please avoid editing the questions, reordering them, or adding new ones. The list of student names will automatically update every time you open the Classroom Newsletter Generator or click **UPDATE NAMES TO PHOTO FORM** on the Student Roster tab.

Photos and attachments **must be submitted through this form**. Uploading them directly into the spreadsheet will not work. If you select **ALL STUDENTS**, the file will be sent to every student's family (except those without a signed photo release).

How to Upload Photos:

1. Select the student(s) the photo is for.
2. Choose **Photo(s)** and click **Next**.
3. Enter the date the photo was taken. *(Only photos from the current week will be included in the newsletter. To include an older photo in this week's email, just enter today's date.)*
4. Click **Add File** and upload up to 5 photos. *(All selected photos will go to the student(s) from step 1.)*

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5. Click **Submit**.

How to Upload Documents:

1. Select the student(s) the document is for.
2. Choose **Attachment** and click **Next**.
3. Enter a clear description of the attachment. For example: “Jeremy’s Band Schedule”. This will appear as the link title in the newsletter.
4. Click **Add File** and upload your document. *(Only the student(s) selected in step 1 will receive this attachment. If you need to send it to others later, you’ll need to re-upload it unless it was marked as ALL STUDENTS.)*
5. Click **Submit**.

Managing Attachments in the Newsletter:

Go to the **ATTACHMENTS** section of the **Build Newsletter** tab.

Select the current week from the dropdown and check off which attachments you'd like to include.

You can upload up to **60 attachments** at a time. If the attachment section is full, you can clear older or unused files by checking them off and clicking **CLEAR ATTACHMENTS**. This will remove only the selected items, making room for new uploads.