Get Started with Applied Digital Skills:
A Guide for Adult Education

Guide Courtesy of Applied Digital Skills
Visit us: g.co/AppliedDigitalSkills/COABE

Intro to the Guide

Welcome! This guide will prepare you to teach using Applied Digital Skills within 4 weeks.

When we launched Applied Digital Skills in 2017, we were delighted by how many teachers began using the lessons right away in many different types of classrooms. As the curriculum has grown, we have received many requests for a list of best practices for integrating the lessons into the curriculums of adult education organizations. This guide is our answer to those requests.

This guide is intended for any adult education instructor or organization leader wanting to include Applied Digital Skills in their overall curriculum. You may be an experienced Applied Digital Skills teacher, a Program Director who has discovered Applied Digital Skills for the first time, or a new instructor searching for ways to prepare your students for the digital world.

You'll find our recommended step-by-step process for bringing Applied Digital Skills to your adult education organization, from planning to training to growing. This guide is entirely customizable. Add or remove steps, change the timeline, or make changes to meet your specific needs. If you have questions as you go through this process, you can always contact our team directly by emailing us at mailto:applieddigitalskills@google.com or exploring the materials on our website g.co/applieddigitalskills/COABE.

We hope this guide will be a useful resource for you as you plan the next several weeks.

Sincerely,

The Applied Digital Skills Team

What is Applied Digital Skills?

Applied Digital Skills is Google's free, online digital literacy curriculum. Applied Digital Skills has lessons for a wide range of students, from late elementary-school students to independent adult learners. Instead of teaching digital skills with an instructional manual, the curriculum uses a series of videos to guide students through creating a project from scratch. This means that students who complete a lesson leave with a useful project such as a resume, a monthly budget, a project plan, and more.

Why Applied Digital Skills?

Applied Digital Skills has over 40 lessons—some that take only 45 minutes to complete—and are aligned to your community's needs. Office workers aren't the only ones who need digital skills; employees in restaurants, hotels, and warehouses, among others, are increasingly in need of developing digital literacy. The lessons we created are based on the extensive research and focused testing of the in-demand digital skills needed for today's evolving workforce.

Digital literacy, problem-solving, and creativity are often cited as essential skills for jobs of the future, but a report from The Economist's Intelligence Unit reveals that among 18- to 25-year-olds, less than half (44%) believe that their education system is providing them with the skills they need to enter the country's workforce. *

As technology becomes more integrated into our modern lives, it's important to understand how digital skills fit into a wide range of workforce positions and how they will help students succeed in their current jobs and future careers.

Get Started

g.co/applieddigitalskills/COABE

Reference: 2015 EIU report, "Driving the skills agenda: Preparing students for the future"

The Basics:

10 Reasons to Love Applied Digital Skills

1. Free
As part of our commitment to accessibility, the curriculum is entirely free.

2. Online
The curriculum is online, so you can get started on any computer or device connected to the internet.

3. Research-backed
The curriculum is based on extensive research on in-demand job skills and in-person testing at community organizations and community colleges.

4. Video-based
The curriculum is delivered through video-based lessons, so students gather information by listening, reading, and watching instructions for critical reinforced learning.

5. Project-based
The curriculum takes big objectives—like making a budget—and breaks it down into smaller, more manageable steps.

6. Extensive
The curriculum has 40+ lessons so there's something for everyone.

7. Flexible
Lessons are as short as 45 minutes and as long as 10 hours. They're also modular, so you can pick and choose what's right for your students.

8. Self-paced
Students work at their own pace and can get support when they need it.

9. Validated
The curriculum has received multiple awards from leading edtech organizations.

10. Support-oriented
Every lesson includes lesson plans to help instructors get started and offers extensive email support in case any questions come up along the way.

Action Plan

How To Use This Guide

1. **Explore (1-3 days)**
Spend a couple of days exploring the curriculum, setting up practice classes, and digging deep into a few lessons.

2. **Plan (1-5 days)**
Spend a few days identifying when you want to focus on digital literacy with your students and discussing with your colleagues about the objectives you have in bringing digital skills to your curricular offerings.

3. **Train and Schedule (1-2 weeks)**
Whether you're training on your own or in a group, spend time planning which lessons you want to start with, using the free Applied Digital Skills resources in the Help section, and working the lesson into your class schedule.

4. **Implement (1+ weeks)**
Start using the curriculum with your students.

5. **Sustain and Grow (ongoing)**
Reflect and revise as you start developing your own best practices. Share the knowledge with your colleagues and get input from your students.

6. **Share (optional)**
Share your story and experiences with Google's Applied Digital Skills team so we can continue to improve the curriculum.

5-Step Plan

This guide consists of a 5-step plan (plus an optional sharing session) to bring Applied Digital Skills into your curriculum. It is a recommendation that we suggest you review and adapt as necessary for your classroom.

We recommend starting this process by exploring the curriculum on your own. While you don't need to be an experienced instructor to teach these lessons, before you can share it with others, it's important to experiment with it yourself.

Spend a couple hours completing the following checklist of activities:

Click around the website: g.co/applieddigitalskills/COABE.

Click on the Curriculum page, explore the topics and Apps filters, and filter for the skills your students need. Explore the various lessons and watch a few videos to experience the learning style yourself.

Sign into the website, complete your profile, and create your first class as an instructor. You can find step-by-step instructions in this guide.

Find answers to any questions you have by clicking the Help link at the bottom of the website and reading the FAQs. Figure out how to change your role from a teacher to a student; then, experiment with the student view. Change it back to a teacher role when you're finished.

Establish an understanding of the basic computer and digital skills students will need to know to complete the lesson.

Click through the resources in the Teacher Prep Kit on the Applied Digital Skills website. Print any materials you'd like to show your colleagues, like the classroom poster or quick-start guide.

Step 1–Explore (1-3 days)
Tip: The main difference between the teacher and student views is that the former has access to a dashboard showing student progress.

Consider developing a cohort of teachers or administrators who see a need for greater technology integration in your curriculum. Put a call out to your colleagues and set a date to meet with them for a two-hour period to plan how you'll bring Applied Digital Skills to your instruction.

Step 2–Plan (1-3 days)
Think through and discuss the following questions:

- What is the problem this curriculum solves for us and our students?
- What outcomes are we interested in achieving?

- How will we share this curriculum within our existing classes or as a new class?

Pick one or more lessons from Applied Digital Skills to begin with and set a day to introduce it to your students. To start, we recommend one of the following lessons:

Digital Tools for Everyday Tasks: Learn to communicate through email, use internet search, and create documents. 4-9 hours

Start a Résumé: Select a résumé template from Google Docs and add your information and work history. 45-90 minutes

Connect and Collaborate Anywhere with Digital Tools: Improve your workplace collaboration and communication. 45-90 minutes

Tip: The Applied Digital Skills team is available to brainstorm with you at applieddigitalskills@google.com.

Once you've set a date to start using the curriculum, it's time to train yourself and your colleagues! We recommend learning together in a group and using a projector to share your screen. The website's Help section comes with a customizable presentation and other training resources that you can leverage.

Spend the bulk of the time holding a facilitated planning session. Plan for how you want to bring Applied Digital Skills to your organization. Some possibilities to explore are:

Use "Start a Résumé" and "Track Your Monthly Expenses" to improve growth potential. After completing the lessons, hold mock job interviews, research salaries for potential careers, and decide how to budget monthly earnings. Then, encourage your students to understand their value at work with "Negotiate Your Salary."

Help students use digital tools to communicate and collaborate with others in the workplace more productively with "Plan Effective Meetings."

Step 3–Train and Schedule (1-2 weeks)
Check out how the Literacy Assistance Center uses Applied Digital Skills with professional development workshops for adult ed teachers, who then bring the curriculum to their students.

"We've found that teachers use Applied Digital Skills for their own learning, and then they take what they've learned and use it to integrate Google tools and apps into their instruction. For example, we've seen examples of instructors taking the "If-Then Adventure Stories" lesson, where they learn how to make interactive slides to tell stories and using their new digital skills to help students demonstrate their learning in a science subject by simulating cycles." - Nell Eckersley, Literacy Assistance Center | New York, NY

Once you've introduced your cohort of teachers to the skills students will gain using the

curriculum, encourage them to try it out themselves.

Register for Applied Digital Skills as a teacher and create a class for training. Ask your colleagues to sign up as students and join your class using your class code.

Assign a specific lesson or set of lessons you think will suit a large number of students in your community or organization. Or, ask each teacher to complete a different lesson so the team is exposed to the variety of topics, apps, and digital skills. This is your chance to give you colleagues homework!

Watch the introductory video together to learn the basics of using the curriculum. Encourage your cohort to complete a lesson from start to finish on their own and review the lesson plan. They can share their completed projects with the group so everyone has an idea of what the finished product will look like for students. You can even use these examples in your classrooms.

Show them how you can view their progress as "students" in the teacher dashboard. Create a document or spreadsheet, share it with the group, and use it for feedback, questions, or ideas for customizing the lessons to a specific class or task.

Check out how the Ogden City School District uses Applied Digital Skills.

"Put yourself in the student's perspective. Before we taught the curriculum, our team completed all the lessons as students. As a student, you can get a better sense for the educational capabilities of Applied Digital Skills." -Du Bui, Digital Learning Specialist | Ogden, Utah

You and your colleagues are now ready—with a plan and training—to bring Applied Digital Skills to your adult learners. Pick a lesson and get started.

Get students excited about the new curriculum! While they can register on the Applied Digital Skills website and get started right away, you might also:

Step 4–Implement (1+ weeks)

Advertise your new classroom focus in your community. Post flyers on local bulletin boards and send out an email to any current or potential students about the new curriculum.

Create a presentation in Google Slides to introduce the curriculum or the lesson. Include a schedule for when each lesson will be completed and what the culminating project or event will be.

Set aside classroom time for registering for Google accounts, if necessary, and signing up on Applied Digital Skills. Or assign this task as homework so that each student can attend the first day of the curriculum prepared to start.

Follow up with fellow teachers and students. Compile notes and feedback, and report back to the head of the organization on the status of the curriculum, if needed.

Step 5–Sustain and Grow (ongoing)

Once you've implemented the lessons in your organization, reevaluate the process you use so that it's most effective for student learning.

Schedule regular meetings with your team of teachers and administrators. There, you can discuss problems, celebrations, and general tips for success. These may need to be every month at first, until everyone feels comfortable giving feedback and adjusting their plans on their own but plan to meet at least once per term.

Invite feedback from students as well. What do they love about the curriculum and the skills learned? What do they have questions about? Even if you believe your lesson or course provides for every situation, be open to taking suggestions or addressing areas of confusion. Hold a Q&A session, send out a survey using Google Forms, or create a shared spreadsheet where you can address questions in real time.

Once students have mastered a skill set, review the entire curriculum and decide whether there are new lessons you'd like to explore. Maybe you began by wanting students to master formatting in Google Docs or creating presentations in Google Slides, and now they're interested in learning to code with Apps Scripts or write formulas and functions in Google Sheets! Keep adding new lessons to build on the digital skills they acquire.

Meet with your team at the end of the year to decide what new problems you want to address or goals you want to meet in the coming months and years. Plan how you will add more lessons from Applied Digital Skills into your classes next year or create new courses with a focus on digital skills with real-life applications.

Continue to explore, adapt, and change the curriculum to meet the needs of your students and community.

Share (optional)

Engage directly with the Applied Digital Skills team! Share your feedback or your story.

After you've begun using Applied Digital Skills in your organization's curriculum, send us your feedback. We love to hear from our teachers and administrators to learn what is working for you—and what isn't. We use your experiences to make the curriculum better for you and for others. Or, if you have a great story about an experience with Applied Digital Skills, share it with us by emailing us or tweeting! You could be featured on the website in the future.

Email us: mailto:applieddigitalskills@google.com
Find us on Twitter: @GoogleforEdu #AppliedDigitalSkills #GrowWithGoogle

Quick Guide

STEP 1:
Sign into the website g.co/applieddigitalskills/coabe

STEP 2:
Choose your role as a teacher.

STEP 3:
Set up your profile. Tell us a bit about yourself and your organization.

STEP 4:
Create a class and share class code with students.

Use the blue plus button to add a class to your dashboard. A unique code will be provided for you. This is the code the students will use so they can join your class.

STEP 5:
Start using the curriculum!

Browse the lessons and choose the one(s) you'd like to teach.

STEP 6:
Add lessons to your class

Click the "Add to class" button the curriculum page or the "Add lessons" button on your teacher dashboard to add lessons to your class.

Your students will see a list of added lessons after they sign in and join your class.

Thank you!

Guide Courtesy of Applied Digital Skills
g.co/AppliedDigitalSkills/COABE
mailto:applieddigitalskills@google.com

We created this guide to help you implement Applied Digital Skills into your adult education organization, but we wouldn't have been able to do it without your generous feedback, stories, and experiences in the classroom. Thank you.