

## *Using Google Tools for Homework*

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

Google has a whole host of tools beyond their well-known email. Many of them are easily applied to our classroom environment and will make it easier to fulfill our task of guiding our students on their language learning adventure. Google Forms provides us with a quick way for students to do homework and for us to check and record their efforts. Google Voice enables quick one-way voice messaging, allowing students to call a unique number and leave a message, which you can then evaluate.

### Google Homework

1. [Use Google Forms for homework in written form](#)
2. [Use Google Voice for recording oral assignments](#)

Mention Google to language teachers and you may hear a groan – we've all seen less-than-accurate translations from Google Translate. But there are tools that Google provides for free that can help engage the digital natives in your classroom. I'd like to propose *Google Homework*: using two applications that will allow your students to submit written and spoken material using their computer, smartphone, or tablet.



#### Use A Google Form for **Written Homework**

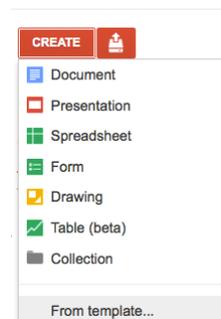
Let's start with the written homework. You can develop a fill-in-the-blanks style form using Google Docs – send the link to students and when they have completed it, you get the responses in an easy – to check spreadsheet format.

Start at <http://docs.google.com>

If you don't already have a Google account, sign up for one. (Use your existing email address to sign up)

Link: <https://accounts.google.com/NewAccount>

Once you're logged in, click on the red "Create" button, and mouse down to "Form."



You'll see this:

A screenshot of the Google Forms editor interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with buttons for 'Add item', 'Theme: Plain', 'Email this form', 'See responses', 'More actions', and 'Save'. Below the toolbar, the form is titled 'Untitled form'. There is a text area for help text: 'You can include any text or info that will help people fill this out.' The main question area is highlighted in yellow and contains 'Sample Question 1'. It has a 'Question Title' field, a 'Help Text' field, and a 'Question Type' dropdown menu set to 'Text'. Below the question type, there is a dashed box for 'Their answer' and a 'Done' button with a checkbox for 'Make this a required question'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Sample Question 2' with an empty text input field.

## Using Google Tools for Homework

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

Fill in the title of the form, then for the first item, write the question. Use the pull-down menu to choose the question type.

**Tarea para el Jueves**

You can include any text or info that will help people fill this out.

Question Title ¿De qué color era la camisa del mae

Help Text

Question Type

- Text
- Paragraph text
- ✓ Multiple choice
- Checkboxes
- Choose from a list
- Scale
- Grid

Option 1

Click to add option

Done  Make this a required question

I've decided to make this a multiple-choice question. I filled in the options and clicked on "Save" in the upper right corner of the page to get:

**Tarea para el Jueves**

You can include any text or info that will help people fill this out.

¿De qué color era la camisa del maestro hoy? \*

- verde
- azul
- rosa
- amarilla

For each question, click on "Add Item" in the upper left corner of the form page.

+ Add Item Theme: Plain Email this form See responses More actions Saved

You can choose the type of question by pulling down this menu:

+ Add Item

Questions

- Text
- Paragraph text
- Multiple choice
- Checkboxes
- Choose from a list
- Scale
- Grid

Other

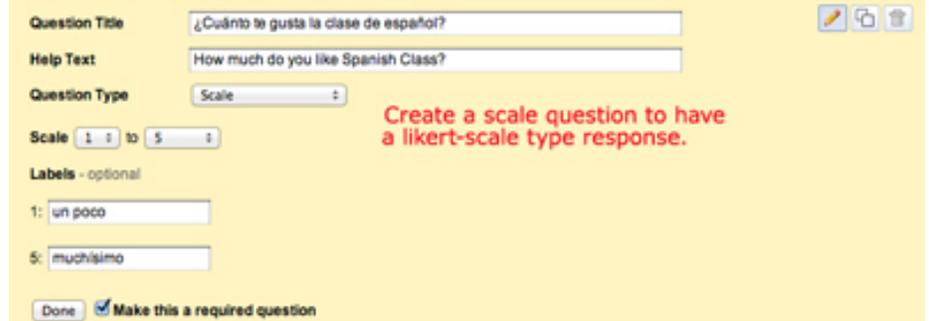
- Section header
- Page break

## Using Google Tools for Homework

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

For a likert-scale question, choose 'scale' and enter the question and words that identify the lower and upper ends of the scale.



The screenshot shows the Google Forms editor interface for creating a Likert-scale question. The 'Question Title' field contains '¿Cuánto te gusta la clase de español?'. The 'Help Text' field contains 'How much do you like Spanish Class?'. The 'Question Type' is set to 'Scale'. The 'Scale' is configured from '1' to '5'. The 'Labels' section shows '1: un poco' and '5: muchísimo'. A red text box on the right says 'Create a scale question to have a likert-scale type response.' At the bottom, there is a 'Done' button and a checked checkbox for 'Make this a required question'.

When you've finished editing your form, you can apply a theme, choosing from the templates by clicking on "Themes" in the top menu.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Google Forms editor. It includes a '+ Add item' button, a 'Theme: Plain' dropdown menu with a red arrow pointing to it, an 'Email this form' button, a 'See responses' dropdown menu, a 'More actions' dropdown menu, and a 'Saved' button.

Choose a theme and click "Apply" in the upper left corner.

Here's our sample form with the Classic Books theme applied.



The screenshot shows a completed Google Form titled 'Tarea para el Jueves' with the Classic Books theme applied. The form includes a header with the title and a background image of books. The main content area contains the following questions and options:

- Please complete all the questions and send.
- \* Required
- Su nombre \*
- ¿De qué color era la camisa del maestro hoy? \*  
 verde  
 azul  
 rosa  
 amarilla
- ¿Cuántas ventanas hay en el aula? \*  
Por favor, utilice el menú desplegable.
- ¿Cuánto te gusta la clase de español? \*  
How much do you like Spanish Class?  
1 2 3 4 5  
un poco      muchísimo
-

## Using Google Tools for Homework

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

Now that you've finished editing the form, you can email it to your students. Click "Email this form" in the top menu:



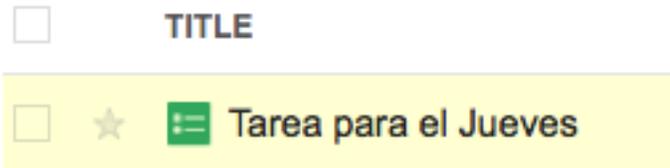
And paste in your class email list. Or, you can preview the form in a browser window by clicking the URL at the bottom of the screen:

**You can view the published form here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/>**

After looking at the form in a browser, you can copy the URL from the browser window and email that to your class through your usual email client.

Now your students can complete the form and submit. Their responses are saved in a spreadsheet that you see in Google Docs.

**To see the results of your survey/quiz**, go to your Google docs, (sign in at <http://docs.google.com> and choose the document with the name you have assigned. If you have a number of other docs, this one will have a green box next to it indicating it's a spreadsheet.



Click on it and it will open in a new tab or window in your browser as a spreadsheet with the responses listed under the questions, next to the time of each response. Note that you should add a question that asks for the student's name so you can know who gave which response.

**Tarea para el Jueves** ☆

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Form (2) Help Last edit was 7 minutes ago

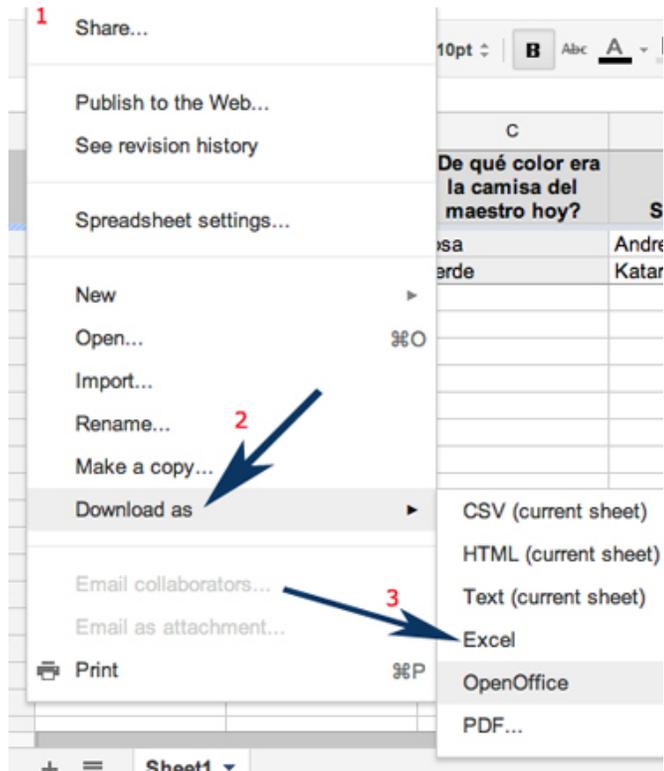
A	B	C	D	E
Timestamp	¿Cuántas ventanas hay en el aula?	¿De qué color era la camisa del maestro hoy?	Su nombre	¿Cuánto te gusta la clase de español?
10/24/2011 1:05:45	tres	rosa	Andres	
10/24/2011 1:05:54	cuatro	verde	Katarina	

## Using Google Tools for Homework

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

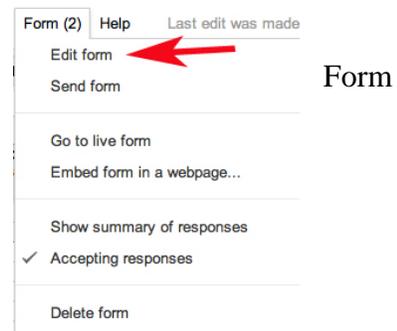
You can download this spreadsheet to use offline. Go to the File menu, then choose Download as... and Excel (or whatever format you choose).



### Tarea para el Jueves ☆

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Form (2) Help

Once you see the spreadsheet, and realize there is something you'd like to add to the form, simply choose from the top menu choose Form: Edit



To change an existing question, click on the pencil to the right of the question.



## *Using Google Tools for Homework*

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

If you'd like to delete the question, click on the trash can. To duplicate the question, click on the icon with two squares to the right of the pencil. You can change the content of the question after you have duplicated it.

I'm certain that you will find some interesting applications for this online form tool. Please email me through NCLRC and let me know how you use it!



### Use Google Voice for **Oral Homework**

How do you ensure that your students produce the target language regularly in a way that you can include in course assessments? This is a challenge with a large class – you can have students do oral presentations, you can ask questions and try to mark performance simultaneously with listening and maintaining classroom order. The beauty of using a tool like Google Voice is that you can listen to the student's performance in a quiet atmosphere (at home in your pajamas, for example) and re-listen as you score it. Google Voice saves your inbox as long as you need the files (unlike mobile phone messages which can be deleted in two weeks to save space). For students who are not in a traditional classroom, this technology can be combined with online learning methods.

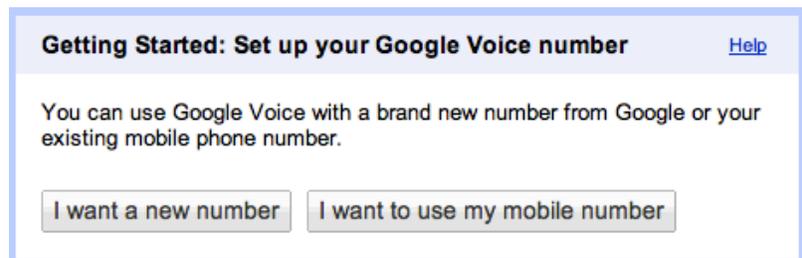
Essentially, Google Voice is an answering service that you access online. The messages you receive on your Google Voice number are saved as sound files that you can listen to and download to your computer, if you want to play them offline. The interface allows you to take notes on the page as you listen, in case you left your gradebook behind. Like most of the Google online tools, you can expect that this service will be improved and expanded in the near future, and soon you'll be wondering what you did without it.

---

Here's how to set up a Google Voice account to receive spoken homework from your students.

Start at <http://www.google.com/voice> and sign in with your Google account.

You'll see this:



The screenshot shows a web page titled "Getting Started: Set up your Google Voice number" with a "Help" link. Below the title, it says "You can use Google Voice with a brand new number from Google or your existing mobile phone number." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "I want a new number" and "I want to use my mobile number".

## Using Google Tools for Homework

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

Choose "I want a new number" and you'll have the opportunity to choose the area code and digits that match a word if they are available.

Assign the area code that your students are in so they won't have to make a long-distance call. If you want to try to create

a mnemonic phrase with the number, type it into the box to the right and see if there is a number close to the phrase you want to use. Or, you can use your classroom number as part of the telephone number. Type it in and click on 'search numbers' to see the combinations available.

### Choose your number [Help](#)

First, we need you to pick a new Google number. When anyone calls this number, it will ring all of your phones.

Area or zip code  and/or Word, phrase, number

Once you've chosen a number, assign a PIN for accessing your voicemail.

Click 'Continue' and you'll be finished with the initial setup.

### Create a new PIN

Google Voice Number:

Choose a 4-digit number to access your voicemail by phone:

Enter PIN

Confirm PIN

I accept Google Voice's [Terms](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

### Congratulations! [Help](#)

You've successfully set up Google Voice!

As a reminder, your Google number is:

You can now:

- give out **one** number that will ring all your phones
- get transcribed voicemails sent to your inbox
- send free text messages & make cheap international calls

To learn more about what Google Voice can do, [watch our videos](#).

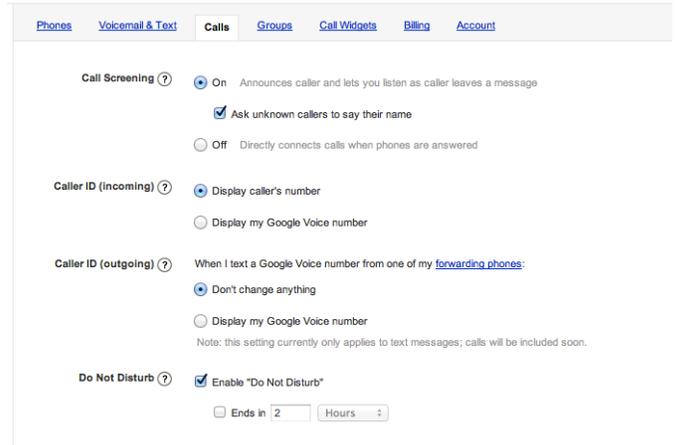
## *Using Google Tools for Homework*

Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Test Developer, Second Language Testing, Inc., Rockville MD

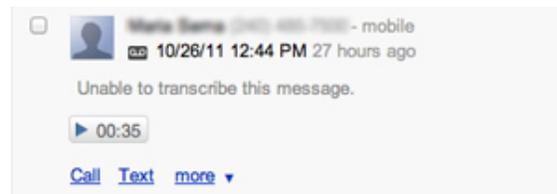
Next, you will see the Google Voice webpage, where you can access the settings. To prevent your Google Voice calls from ringing on your phone, open "Settings" from the gear-shaped icon at the right, then choose 'Calls' and click on "Enable Do Not Disturb."

### Settings



Now, you assign your class some oral homework – students are to answer your questions by call your Google Voice number, stating their name, then leaving their answer as a message.

How does it look when you have received a message via Google Voice? Let's see an example.



You will see the caller's number, the time, and a sound clip icon. Once you have listened to the recording, and know which student has left the message, you can right-click on the telephone number and assign the student's name to that number in your Google Voice contacts. Next time they call, the message will show up with the student's name on it, next to the phone number.

You may notice that the Voicemail inbox screenshot above says, "Unable to transcribe the message." If the message were entirely in English, Google Voice would provide a transcription (sometimes rather humorous in its inaccuracy). Unfortunately, Google hasn't developed the ability to transcribe other languages yet. There's hope, though.

Try these tools to ease your work load and to encourage students to use their language in interesting ways by using their computer and their phones to communicate their ideas and thoughts to you.