

# Your Guide to NotebookLM

## A Study Companion for Your Business Courses

NotebookLM is an AI-powered study tool from Google that helps you interact with course materials. Think of it as a smart assistant that has read all your assigned readings, lecture slides, and supplementary materials—and can answer your questions about them. This guide will help you get started.

## 1. Getting Started

### Accessing Your Course NotebookLM

I've created a dedicated NotebookLM for each major topic in our course. You'll receive a link to each notebook through Canvas. When you click the link, you'll be taken directly to the relevant notebook with all the materials already loaded.

### Navigating the Interface

When you open a NotebookLM, you'll see three main areas:

1. **Sources Panel (left side):** Shows all the documents I've uploaded for this topic—readings, slides, articles, etc. You can click on any source to view its full content.
2. **Chat Area (center):** This is where you'll type questions and receive answers. It works like a conversation—you can ask follow-up questions based on previous responses.
3. **Notes & Studio Panel (right side):** You can save important responses as notes here, and access Audio Overviews and other study tools.

## 2. Understanding What's Inside

Each NotebookLM contains materials specifically selected for that topic. For example, a notebook on "Time Value of Money" might include the relevant textbook chapter, my lecture slides, practice problems, and supplementary articles explaining real-world applications.

The key thing to understand: NotebookLM only knows what's in its sources. It won't pull information from the internet or other courses. This is actually a feature, not a limitation—it means every answer you get is grounded in your course materials, making it reliable for studying.

To see exactly what's available, browse the Sources panel. Click on any source to read it directly within NotebookLM.

## 3. Asking Questions

The chat area is your main tool for learning. Simply type a question in natural language—no special commands or formatting required. NotebookLM will search through all the uploaded sources and give you an answer with citations showing exactly where the information came from.

### Types of Questions You Can Ask

- **Factual questions:** *"What is the formula for calculating present value?"*
- **Clarification questions:** *"Can you explain what the discount rate means in simpler terms?"*
- **Comparison questions:** *"What's the difference between NPV and IRR?"*
- **Application questions:** *"When would a company choose to use the payback period method instead of NPV?"*
- **Summary requests:** *"Summarize the key points from Chapter 5 about bond valuation."*

## 4. Study Applications

Here are specific ways to use NotebookLM throughout the semester:

### Preparing for Exams

NotebookLM excels at helping you review and test yourself before exams.

#### Sample questions to try:

- *"What are the most important concepts I should know about capital budgeting for the exam?"*
- *"Create a study guide covering the main topics from the financial ratios unit."*
- *"Quiz me on the different types of financial ratios and what they measure."*

### Reviewing Difficult Concepts

When something from lecture or the readings doesn't click, NotebookLM can explain it differently.

#### Sample questions to try:

- *"I'm confused about how to calculate the weighted average cost of capital. Can you walk me through it step by step?"*
- *"Explain the relationship between bond prices and interest rates like I'm explaining it to a friend."*
- *"Give me a real-world example of how a company would use break-even analysis."*

### Generating Practice Questions

NotebookLM can create practice problems to test your understanding.

#### Sample questions to try:

- *"Give me 5 multiple choice questions about stock valuation methods."*
- *"Create a practice problem involving calculating the future value of an annuity, then show me how to solve it."*
- *"Ask me a short-answer question about the efficient market hypothesis, wait for my response, and then tell me what I got right or wrong."*

### Summarizing Readings

Get quick overviews before diving into detailed readings, or consolidate your notes after reading.

#### Sample questions to try:

- *"Give me a brief summary of the main arguments in the article about behavioral finance."*
- *"What are the three key takeaways from the lecture slides on risk and return?"*
- *"Summarize Chapter 8 in bullet points I can review before class."*

### Connecting Ideas Across Sources

One of NotebookLM's strengths is finding connections between different materials.

#### Sample questions to try:

- *"How does the concept of time value of money connect to what we learned about bond pricing?"*
- *"What themes appear in both the textbook chapter and the case study about Tesla's financing decisions?"*
- *"How do the concepts from our risk management unit apply to the capital budgeting methods we learned?"*

### Preparing for Class Discussions

Come to class ready to contribute by preparing thoughtful questions and talking points.

**Sample questions to try:**

- *"What are some potential criticisms of the dividend discount model that I could bring up in class?"*
- *"What questions might Professor ask about this week's reading on corporate governance?"*
- *"Help me develop an argument for why a company should prioritize stakeholders over shareholders, based on what's in the sources."*

**5. Audio Overview Feature**

One of NotebookLM's most useful features is Audio Overview—it creates podcast-style audio summaries of your sources. Two AI hosts discuss the material in a conversational way, which can be a refreshing alternative to reading and great for auditory learners.

**How to Generate an Audio Overview**

1. Look for the "Studio" panel on the right side of the screen.
2. Click "Audio Overview" or "Generate" under the audio section.
3. Wait a few minutes while NotebookLM creates the audio (this can take 2-5 minutes depending on the content).
4. Once ready, you can play it directly in the browser or download it to listen offline.

**Best Uses for Audio Overview**

- Review while commuting, exercising, or doing chores
- Get a "big picture" understanding before reading detailed materials
- Reinforce concepts you've already read about
- Prepare for class when you're short on reading time

**6. Video Feature**

NotebookLM can also generate short video summaries of your sources. These videos combine visual slides with narration to explain key concepts—think of them as auto-generated mini-lectures based on your course materials.

**How to Generate a Video**

1. In the Studio panel on the right, look for the "Video" option.
2. Click to generate a video summary. You may be able to customize the focus or length.
3. Wait for the video to render (this may take several minutes).
4. Watch directly in the browser or download for later viewing.

**When Videos Are Helpful**

- Visual learners who prefer seeing concepts illustrated
- Quick review of a topic when you don't have time to re-read
- Getting an alternative explanation of concepts that are confusing in text form

**7. Best Practices**

Getting great answers from NotebookLM is a skill. Here's how to make the most of it:

**Writing Effective Questions**

- **Be specific.** Instead of "Tell me about stocks," try "What factors affect stock prices according to the lecture slides?"

- **Ask follow-up questions.** If an answer isn't clear, ask "Can you explain that differently?" or "Can you give me an example?"
- **Specify what you want.** If you want a simple explanation, say so. If you want details, ask for them. For example: "Explain the Gordon Growth Model in simple terms, then show me the formula."
- **Use the sources.** You can ask about specific sources: "According to the Week 3 slides, what are the three main capital budgeting methods?"
- **Check the citations.** NotebookLM shows where answers come from. Click citations to verify information and read more context.

## 8. Limitations

NotebookLM is a powerful tool, but understanding its limitations will help you use it appropriately:

- **It only knows what's in the sources.** NotebookLM cannot access the internet, other courses, or information outside its uploaded documents. If you ask about something not in the sources, it will tell you it doesn't have that information.
- **It may occasionally misinterpret.** Like any AI tool, NotebookLM can sometimes misunderstand questions or make minor errors. Always verify important information against the original sources, especially for calculations.
- **It won't do your homework.** Using NotebookLM to complete graded assignments (rather than to study and learn) violates academic integrity policies. Use it to understand concepts, not to generate answers you'll submit as your own work.
- **It can't replace reading and engagement.** NotebookLM is a supplement, not a substitute. Deep learning still requires engaging directly with readings, attending class, and wrestling with difficult concepts yourself.
- **Complex calculations may need verification.** While NotebookLM can explain formulas and walk through examples, double-check any numerical calculations it provides, especially for multi-step finance problems.

Questions about NotebookLM? Don't hesitate to ask me during office hours or send me an email. I'm happy to walk you through any features or help troubleshoot issues.

*Happy studying!*