

Attention English majors: now you can add handwritten notes to Google Docs

For anyone who has ever wished for the ability to hand annotate directly on a Google Doc, Google announced on Tuesday it's rolling out a new markup feature for Google Workspace customers, Google Workspace Individual subscribers, and personal Google accounts that will allow users to write directly on a Google Doc with a stylus or their finger. The new feature includes a few standard pen and highlighter colors (black, blue, red, green, yellow), and an eraser. If you don't like any of those colors, you can add your own.

There are so many use cases for a feature like this, across age groups, industries, and professional and personal work. Google calls out some good ones in its announcement, especially for "educators giving students feedback on their essays, reports, short stories." Anecdotally, I cannot understate how useful this feature could be for creative writing students and professors, specifically.

It melds the old-school way of handing out hard copies of your work with current computing technologies and classroom management platforms that can integrate with Google Drive, like Canvas or Blackboard. But you'll never have to worry about lugging a massive stack of paper to class on your workshop day – or running out of print credits at the library. (Flash back to undergrad, circa 2006, when my alma mater started charging students for printing coursework at the library.)