Gmail Storage

A Guide to Reducing Your Storage Usage

How to use this guide:

Click on the area you are interested in and the link will place you where you want to be. Feel free to scroll through the document.

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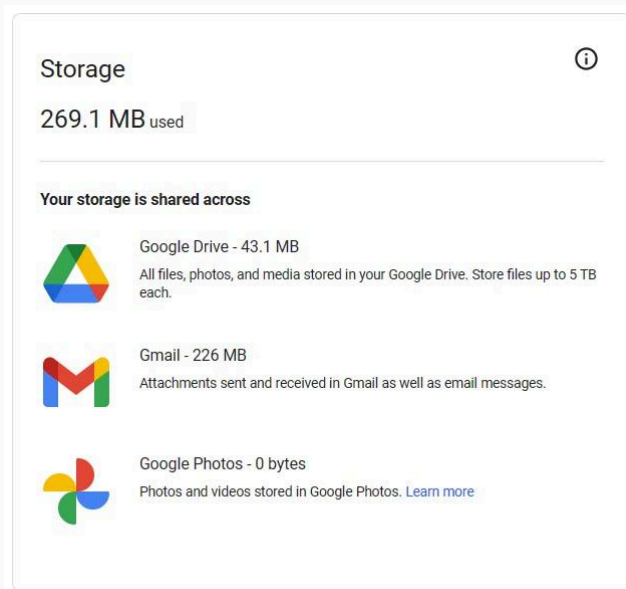

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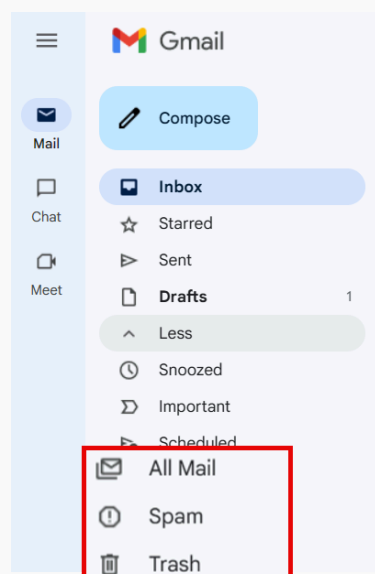
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Confirm Storage Usage

To confirm the total storage you are using and to view a breakdown for Google Drive, Gmail and Google Photos, go to [Drive storage (google.com)](google.com)

Before you get started

Email messages in Gmail are located in three places (selected from the left-hand side panel):

All Mail

Includes every message in the **Inbox** and other labels, plus any message that is **archived** or **muted**.

Spam

Includes messages Gmail identifies as spam and any messages you report as spam.

Trash

Includes messages you delete. These messages **will continue to count** against your Gmail storage until they are **permanently deleted.**

⚠️ **Be cautious** when you permanently delete messages from the Trash. They cannot be recovered.

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Email Management Best Practices

Here are some suggestions on how to manage your Gmail.

- Use **Filters and Labels** to help categorize and organize emails **so regular cleanup is easier**
- **Unsubscribe** from unwanted newsletters or promotional emails
- **Spam/junk emails** should be reviewed and **deleted regularly**
- Regularly set aside time to **review and maintain your inbox**
- Check and **manage email settings** to align with your current needs

Did you know?
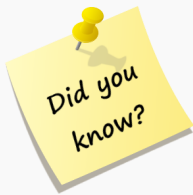
➔ Emails that are in your **Trash** and **Spam** are included in your total used Google Storage until they are permanently deleted. Messages are **automatically permanently deleted after 30 day**s, freeing up account storage.

➔ You cannot **recover a message** that has been permanently deleted.

➔ **Archiving** only removes the message label(s) from the message. It is still available via the All Mail view and will count against Gmail storage.

➔ **Attachments** in email messages cannot be deleted without also deleting the email message it was originally attached to.

What search options are available to review my messages?

Gmail has a robust and versatile search function. Use it to quickly find emails by using keywords, search operators, filters, and advanced search options.

Basic Search Features

You can find an email in your inbox with search terms. To help you search faster, Gmail suggests search terms as you enter words. Suggested search terms are based on information from your Gmail account, like messages, contacts, labels, or past searches.

1. Click in the **Search box** at the top, next type a term to search for then press enter on the keyboard. Enter keywords, phrases, email addresses, etc.
2. Refine the search by applying a **Search filter chip** below the Search box (e.g., From, Any time, Has attachments, and more)
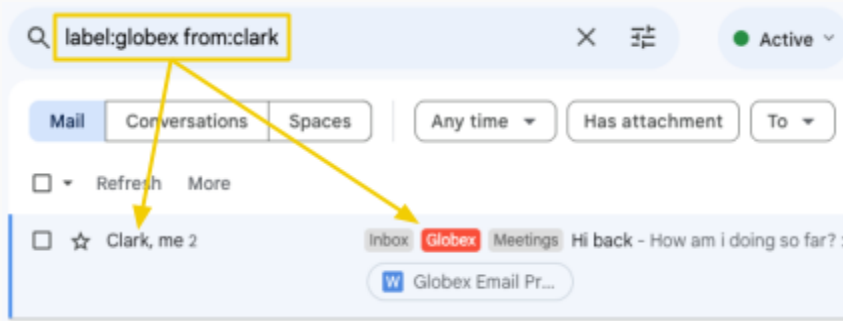
Search in Gmail

3. Refinement of the search can also be performed using **search operators**. These operators allow for more advanced searches right from the search bar and can even be combined in the same search to narrow your results.

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Some commonly used search operators include:

What you can search by	Search operator and example
A specific sender	**From:** Example: **from:amy** *Narrow further by adding the email address* *Example: to:amysmith@company.com*
A specific recipient	**To:** Example: **to:amy** *Narrow further by adding the email address* *Example: to:amysmith@company.com*
Specific word(s) in the subject line	**Subject:** Example: **subject:dinner**
Messages with an attachment	**Has:attachment** Example: **has:attachment** Example: **has:attachment larger:10MB**
Messages sent during a specific time period	**After:** **Before:** Example: **after:2004/04/16** Example: **before:2004/04/18**
Messages that have a certain label	**Label:** Example: **label:friends**
Messages that match multiple terms	**OR** Example: **from:amy OR from:david** Example: **from:amy AND subject:meeting**
Eliminating messages from your results	**-**

|	Example: **dinner -movie** *Will return messages with the word 'dinner'* *but not if the message contains 'movie'.*

Advanced Search Menu

Advanced search options are available through the dropdown search arrow next to the search bar.

1. Click on the menu button right of the search box to open the Advanced Search window.

2. Enter the search parameters into the menu, including searching in a specific label or the Trash or Spam.
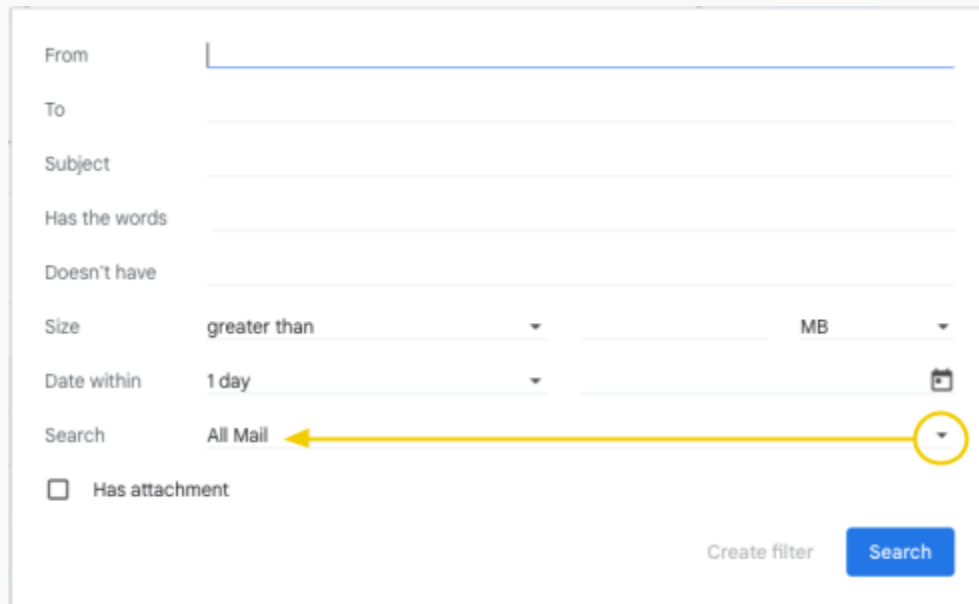
Top Search Recommendations

There are a few searches that would be helpful for everyone to perform when deciding what messages can be removed. Here is a high-level explanation of these search options.

#1	Delete Unnecessary Emails	**Old Emails:** Remove emails no longer relevant or needed, especially those that are several years old. Suggestions: ● Personal emails ● Promotional emails/newsletters ● Old/expired notifications (i.e. away notices, event reminders) ● Routine updates from services or vendors ● Duplicate emails (i.e.. emails forwarded multiple times) ● Emails with file attachments that have been downloaded or are no longer needed ● Unnecessary sent emails ⓘ Use the *Date Within* in the Advanced Search or the *Before/After* basic search operators. Example: *before:2019/01/01* to find email messages older than the year 2019 Too many results, narrow the search with the *after:* operator, type *after:2015/12/31 before:2019/01/01* to find email messages between December 31, 2015 and January 1, 2019 **Promotions and Social Categories:** The labels Social, Updates, Forums, and Promotions are part of Gmail's automatic categorization and can be found in the left-hand menu. Use these to help identify messages in these categories. ⓘ These labels help organize incoming emails based on their content and type. *Social*: Emails from social media platforms and other social networking sites. *Updates:* Emails related to confirmations, receipts, bills, or other transactional messages. *Forums*: Emails from online forums and discussion groups. *Promotions*: Emails related to marketing, newsletters and promotional content.

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#2	Large Attachments	Identify and delete messages with large attachments.

Use the *Size* filter and check the *Attachments* box in the Advanced Search or the *has:attachment larger:10MB* search operator in the Search bar.

narrow the search by replacing **10**MB with **15** or **20** to find email messages with larger attachments.

#3	Specific Sender or Subject	Identify newsletters, emails from groups, or organizational updates that come from the same sender or have a standard subject line.

Examples of operators to enter In the Search box
- **from:hank@globex.com** to find email messages received from Hank
- **list:info@globex.newsletter.com** to find email messages received from the Globex newsletter mailing list
- **subject:technology** to find email messages with the word technology in the subject line

#4	Empty Trash and Spam	Regularly empty the Trash and Spam folders as these messages still take up storage space until they are permanently deleted. Messages in Trash and Spam are kept for 30 days before being automatically deleted permanently.

Click on the **Empty Trash now** option to manually delete the messages. Check your storage usage regularly to see the impact of your cleanup efforts.

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How do I reduce my Gmail storage consumption?

Deleting email will reduce your account storage usage. Depending on the number of emails you have and the attachments that are included, this can have a significant impact.

Delete One or More Messages by Selection

Select Individual or multiple messages for deletion
1. **Check the box(es)** to the left of each message you want to delete.
2. Click the **Delete** button to move the message into Trash.
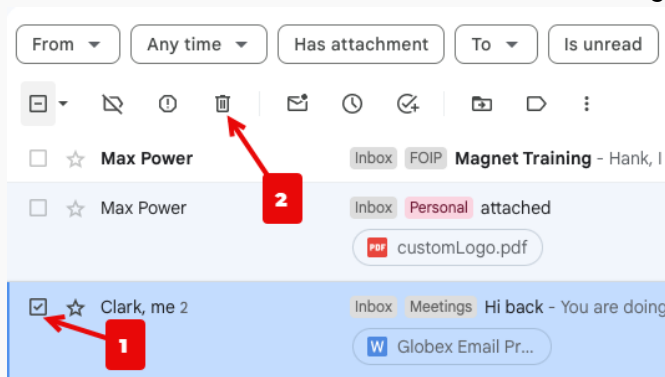
Bulk Delete Messages:

Select all messages being displayed for deletion.
1. To select all messages on the display, on the upper left of the toolbar, **check the box** or **click on the down arrow** beside the box and select **All**. This will select all messages on the display.
   a. To **select all emails in the view, including those that are not currently displayed** (on separate pages listed in groups of 50), click on the **Select all conversations** if it appears on the screen at the top of your email list.

All **50** conversations on this page are selected.   Select all 360 conversations in Inbox

2. Click the **Delete** button to move all the messages into Trash.

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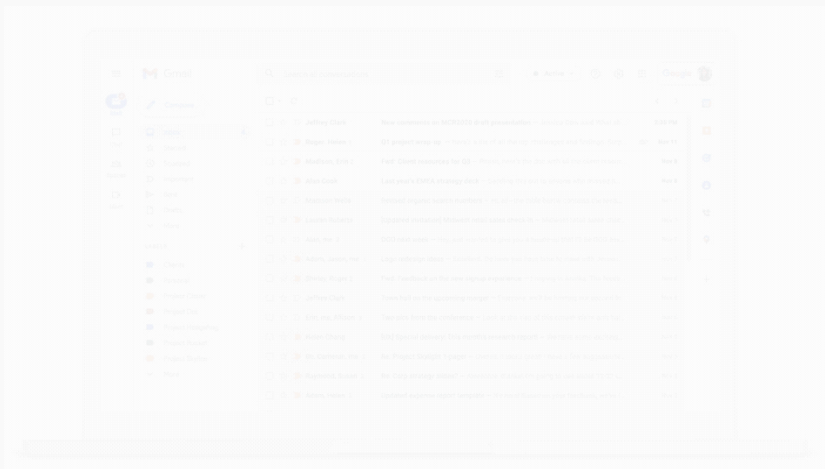
### *Delete a Message with Attachment within a Conversation*

If you want to keep a conversation but there is a large attachment, you have the option to delete the email in the conversation that contains the attachment while keeping the rest of the conversation intact.

1. Click the email conversation and select the message with the attachment that you want to delete. These messages will show a paperclip once the conversation thread is opened.
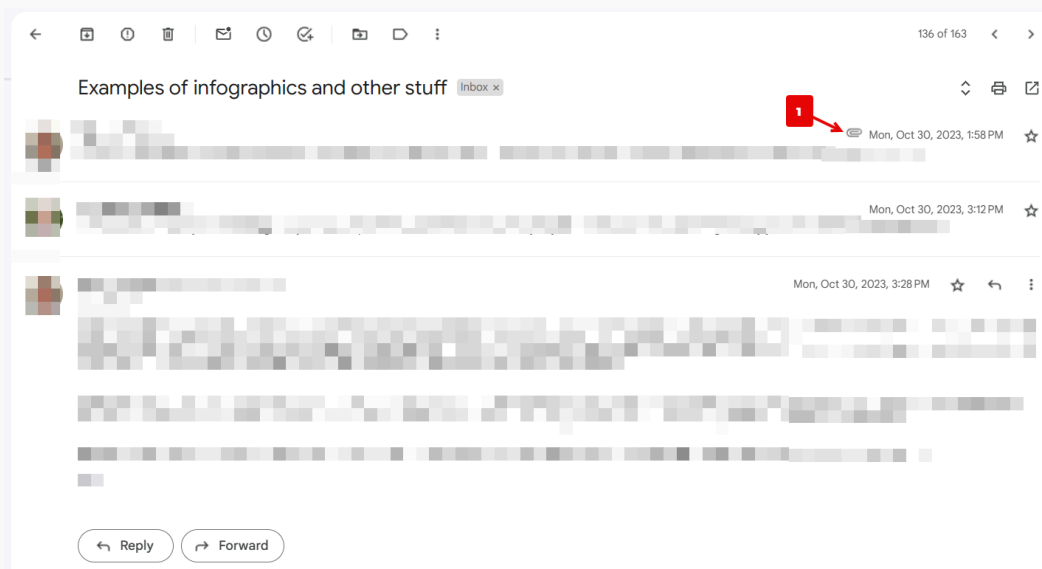
2. Click the three dots on the right side of the message window to display a menu of options.
3. Click Delete this message from the menu. The message will be removed but the rest of the conversation will stay intact.
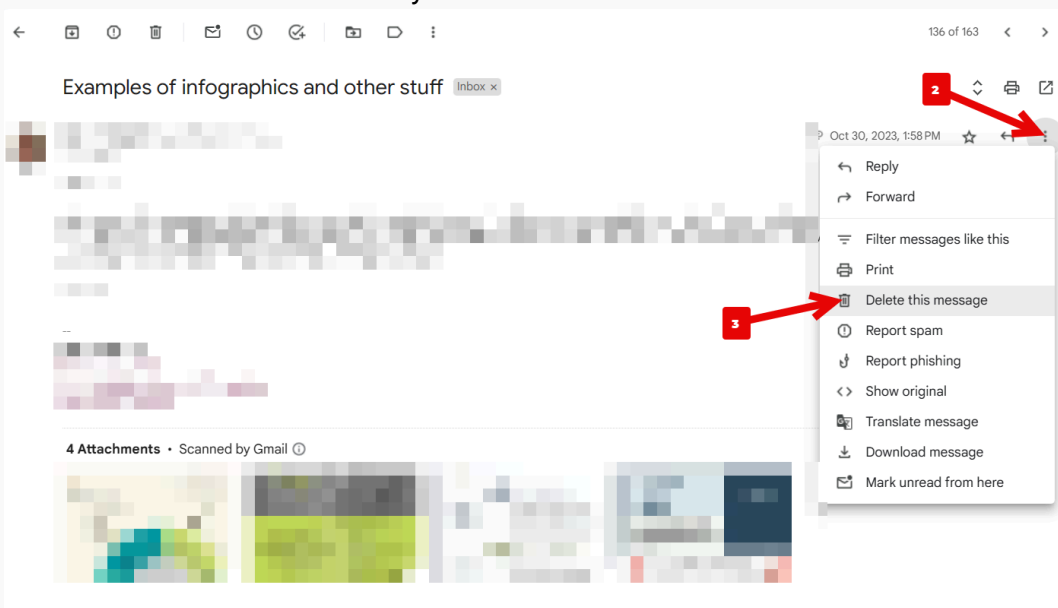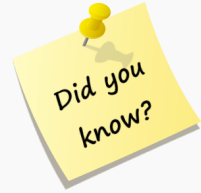
➔ **All Personal correspondence** should be removed.
➔ **Attachments** cannot be deleted from a message. However you can delete the message with the attachment and keep the rest of the conversation.
➔ **Attaching a Google Drive file** to a Gmail message sends a link to the file. This eliminates duplicates and is a practical approach when saving both the sender and recipient storage space. It also ensures the recipient has access to the latest version of the file.
➔ When you **delete a message**, it stays in your trash for **30 days**. The message is permanently deleted from your account and **can't be recovered after 30 days**.
➔ To **permanently delete all messages in Trash**, in the notification bar click **Empty Trash now**.

Where do I find guidelines regarding unit records or research data?

Review the University Records Office guidance and resources to help you manage unit records, including transitory records and the disposition of records.

Specific to research data, review the U of A Library Services guidance and tools that help to manage and preserve research data.