An Introduction To Google Colab

THE MCGRAW CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Google Colab is a document that allows you to write, run, and share Python code within your browser. It is a version of the popular Jupyter Notebook within the Google suite of tools. Jupyter Notebooks (and therefore Google Colab) allow you to create a document containing executable code along with text, images, HTML, LaTeX, etc. which is then stored in your google drive and shareable to peers and colleagues for editing, commenting, and viewing.

Starting a document

In order to create a new document, access Google Colab at colab.research.google.com. Once here, you can begin a new document, or "notebook," in one of two ways. Upon visiting the site, a box with your recently visited Colab documents will appear. Select "**New Notebook**" to begin a new document. Alternatively, to create a new document from any screen, select "**File**" in the top left corner, then select "**New Notebook**" from the dropdown box.

Basic Functions

After you have created a new notebook, you will see an empty code cell. Python code can be entered into these code cells and executed at any time by either clicking the **Play button** to the left of the code cell or by pressing **Command/Ctrl+Enter**. On your keyboard..
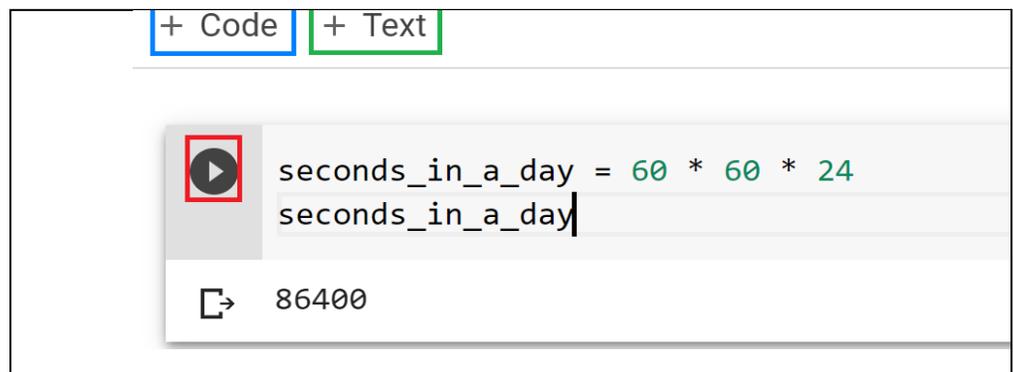
At the top of your noteboo, you will find two buttons: **+Code** and **+Text**

Add a new code cell by clicking the "+ Code" button in the top left corner of the document.

Add a text cell by clicking the "+ Text" button in the top left corner of the document.

When a cell is selected, a **toolbar** will appear in the top right corner of the cell. This toolbar contains functions specific to that cell. Options include moving the cell up and down, adding comments, and deleting the cell.

Sharing a Colab notebook

As with other Google Apps, Colab Notebooks can be shared. Look for the "share" button in the top right-hand corner of the window. Google Colab documents can also be shared in Google Drive, just you do with other types of documents.