

# A Bare Bones Introduction to Gmail Basics

By Shawn Gramiak

# This handout makes some assumptions, such as...

- You have used email at least a little bit.
- You have used your computer (or if YOU prefer, phone or tablet) to receive and read email.
- You are comfortable with using your computer, phone and/or tablet for other things. In short, you don't mind using technology.
- You are curious, adventurous, PATIENT, and willing to try things a few times to learn the skills required.
- You already have a Google account, and you know the Gmail address and password you need to get into that account.

# If you are reading this a handout

- You may new to email altogether
- You might just be new to Gmail
- You may have been moved TO the Gmail system by the organization you work for, or by the people who give you your Internet service (for example, Telus)
- This handout is meant only to take you through the most BASIC Gmail skills.
- If you do not have a Google Account, let the instructor know, and steps can be taken to set you up with one.
- And just so you know Gmail simply means Google Email. So an email message and a Gmail message are the same thing.

# Getting to your Gmail

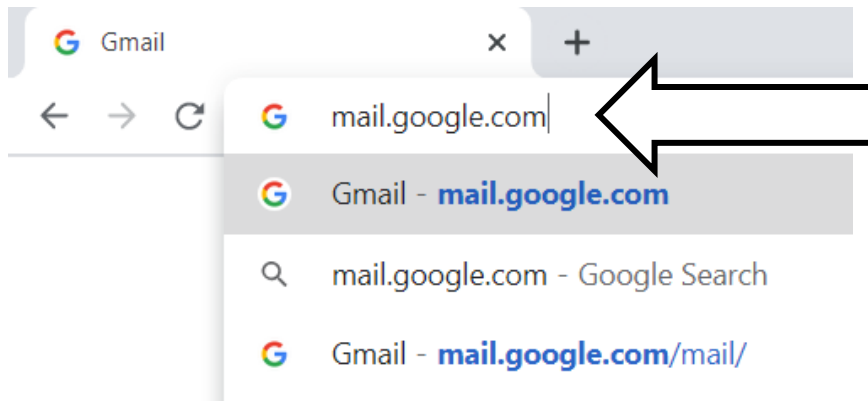
1. Start up whatever app you use to search the Internet. This could be Google Chrome, or Microsoft Edge, or Firefox, to name a few. If you don't automatically go to the Google page, you can click in the Address Bar up top and type in google.ca, then tap the Enter or Return key on your keyboard.

2. Then you can look up to the upper right corner of the Google Page and click on Gmail

The screenshot shows the Google homepage in a web browser. The address bar at the top contains 'google.ca'. In the top right corner, there are links for 'Gmail' and 'Images', and a 'Sign in' button. The main content area features the Google logo, a search bar, and buttons for 'Google Search' and 'I'm Feeling Lucky'. At the bottom, there are links for 'Privacy', 'Terms', and 'Settings', along with a 'Show all' button. The Windows taskbar is visible at the very bottom of the screen.

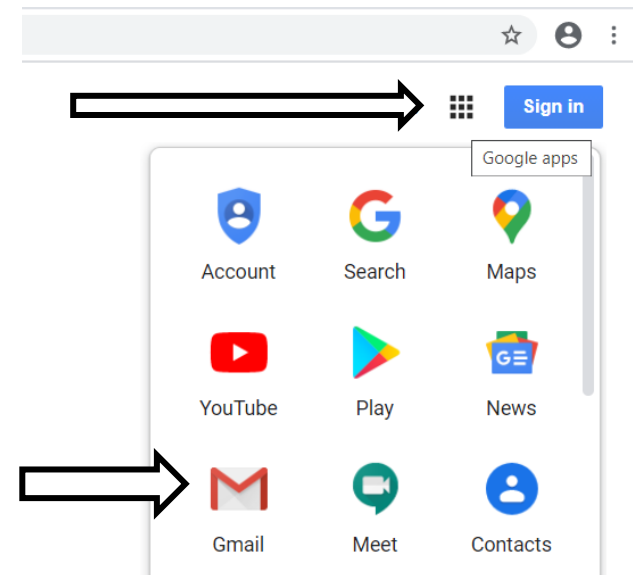
# Two other ways to get to your Gmail

(use whatever method you like from pages 4 and 5)

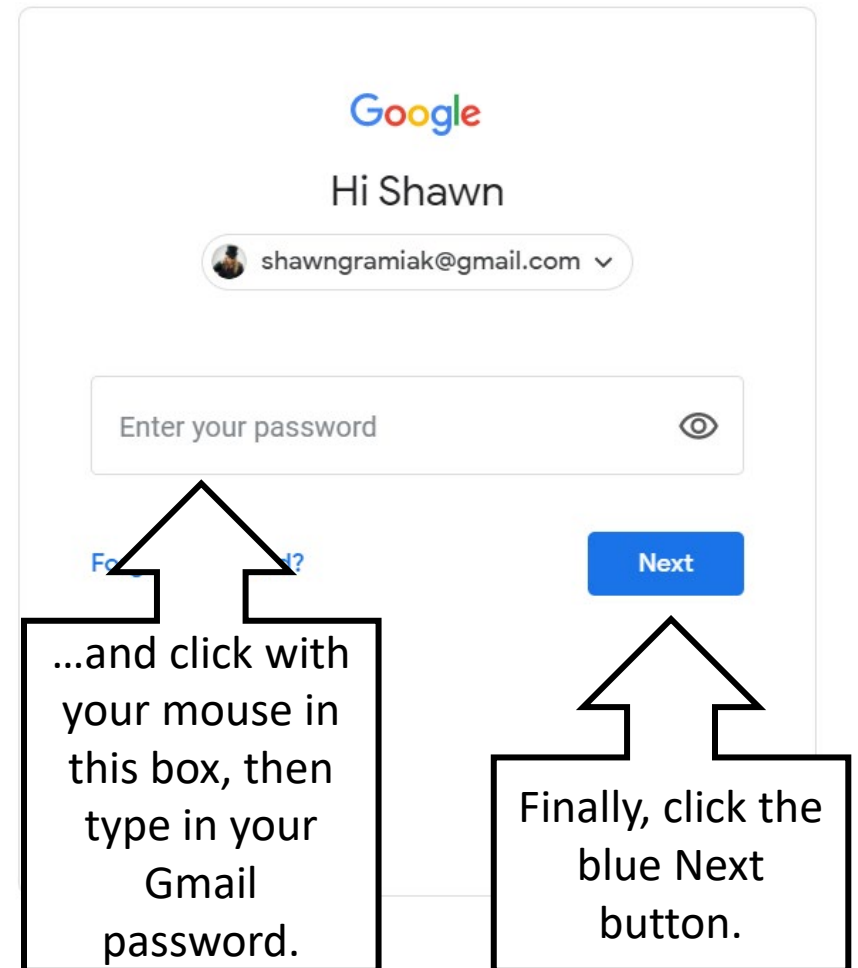
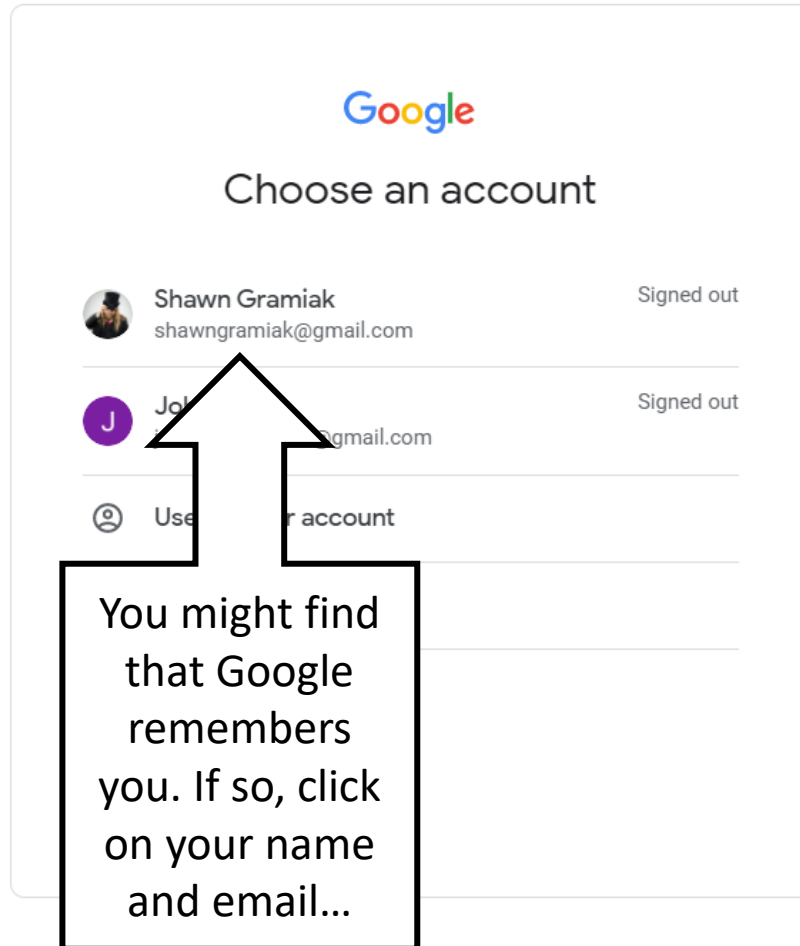


You can also type mail.google.com into the Address Bar of the app you use to search the Internet. Remember to tap your Enter or Return key on your keyboard after you type the address in.

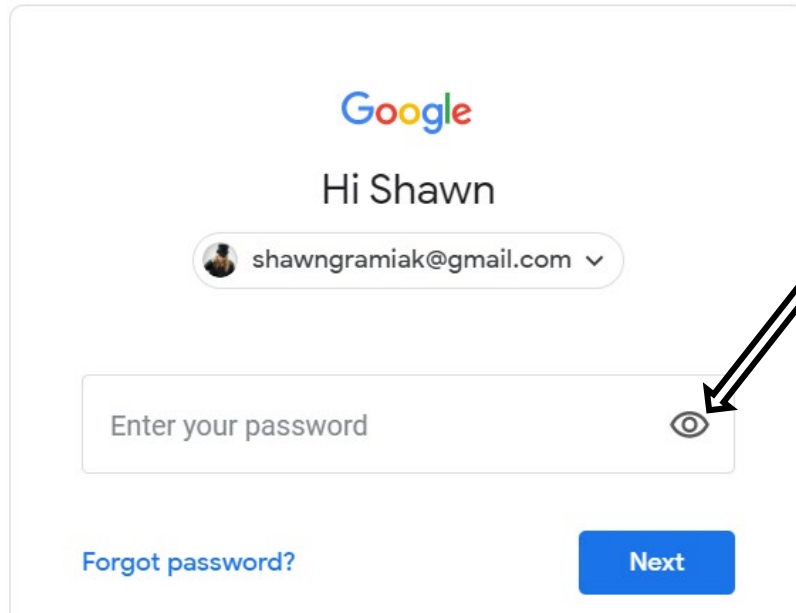
And if you are at the Google page, in the upper right corner there will be a square made of other squares. It is called an Apps Launcher. Click on that square, then click on the Gmail icon from the menu that drops down.



# If you have ever been in your Gmail account before...



# If you are having trouble with your password...



Google

Hi Shawn

shawngramiak@gmail.com ▼

Enter your password

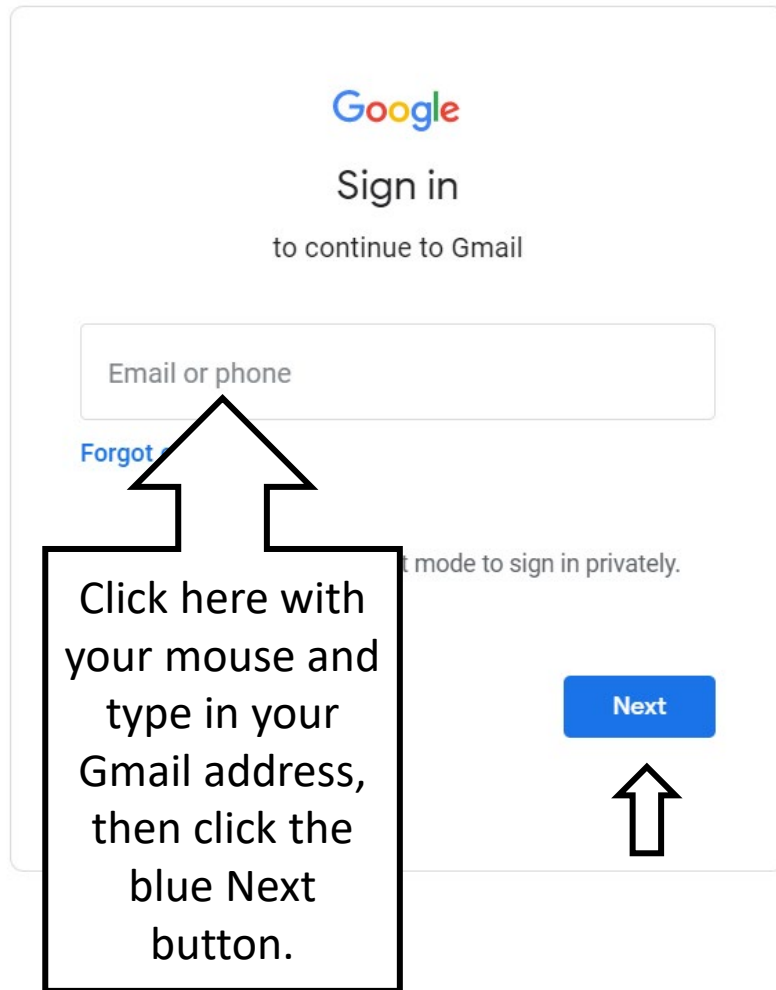
[Forgot password?](#) [Next](#)

Click on the little eyeball in the Enter your password box after you have typed it in. This should show you the password. With passwords becoming longer and more complicated, it is easy to mix up a password.

NOTE: The writer of this handout is old fashioned, and recommends you write down all your passwords and hide that list in a safe place.

NOTE: If you have an ANDROID PHONE (Samsung, LG, HTC etc.) you may have already had a Gmail account set up for you. If this was done by a friend or family member, they might know the password they used. If it was set up by someone at an electronics store, getting that password might be iffy. If you've never used that Gmail address for anything, you can create a new one and start fresh. But you don't want to have a bunch of different Gmail addresses floating about.

# If you have never signed into your Gmail account before...



Google

Sign in

to continue to Gmail

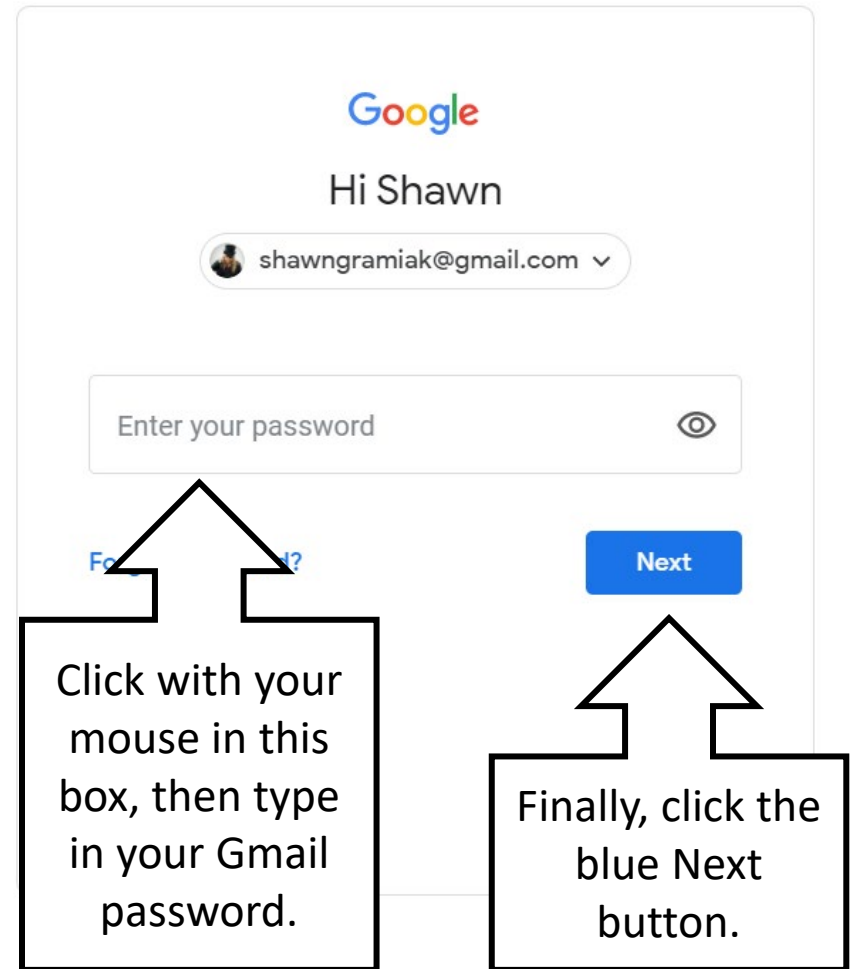
Email or phone

[Forgot email?](#)

Try another mode to sign in privately.


Next

Click here with your mouse and type in your Gmail address, then click the blue Next button.



Google

Hi Shawn

 shawngamiak@gmail.com ▾

Enter your password

[Forgot password?](#)

Next

Click with your mouse in this box, then type in your Gmail password.

Finally, click the blue Next button.



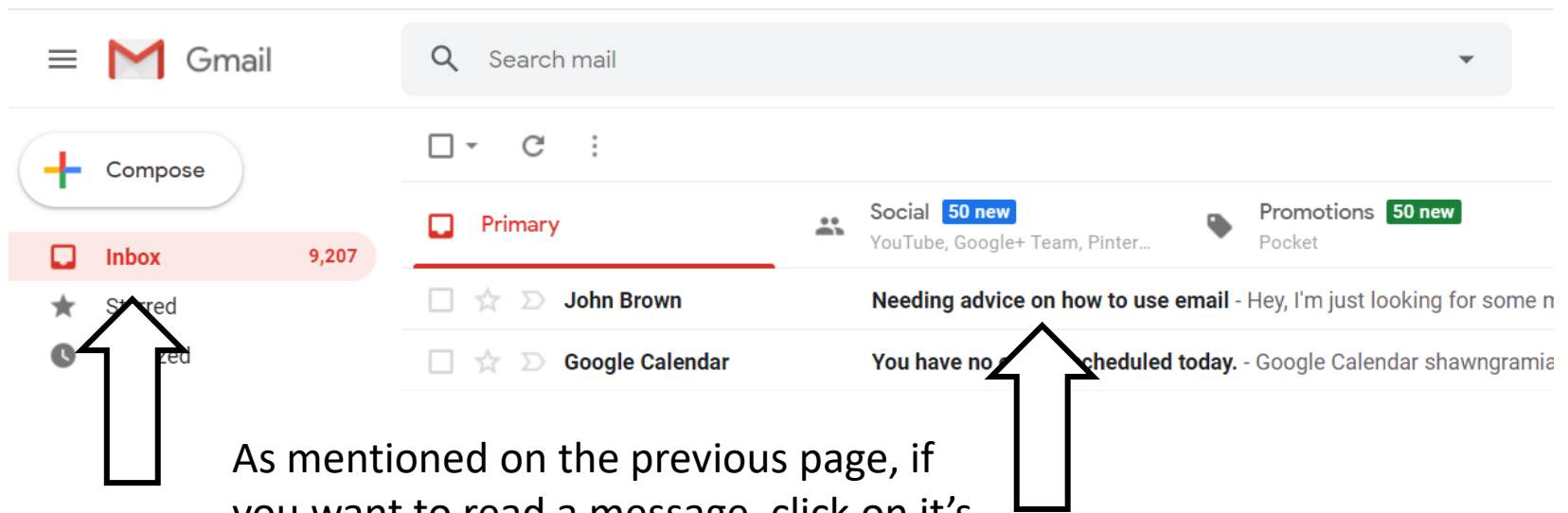
# Whether you used the method on page 6 or 8, if it worked you should be here!

The screenshot shows a Gmail inbox in a web browser. The left sidebar contains navigation links: Compose, Inbox (9,205), Starred, Snoozed, Important, Sent, Drafts (35), Categories, Social (511), Updates (4,284), Forums, Promotions (1,707), Meet, and Hangouts. The main inbox area is divided into tabs: Primary, Social (50 new), and Promotions (50 new). The Primary tab is selected, showing a list of emails. The top email is from Shawn Gramiak with the subject 'Fwd: [Action Required] Delete, download, or upgrade your classic sites to new Google Sites'. A large black arrow points from the right to this email. A text box with a black border is overlaid on the inbox, containing the following text:

This is your Inbox. This is where all the emails sent to you will arrive. Unread email messages will have **BOLD** text, and once you look at a message, the bold will come off as a hint that you looked at it. To read a message, just use your mouse to click on the Subject (title) of the message.

The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with the search bar, taskbar icons, and system tray showing the date and time as 9/9/2020, 2:47 PM, 2020-09-08.

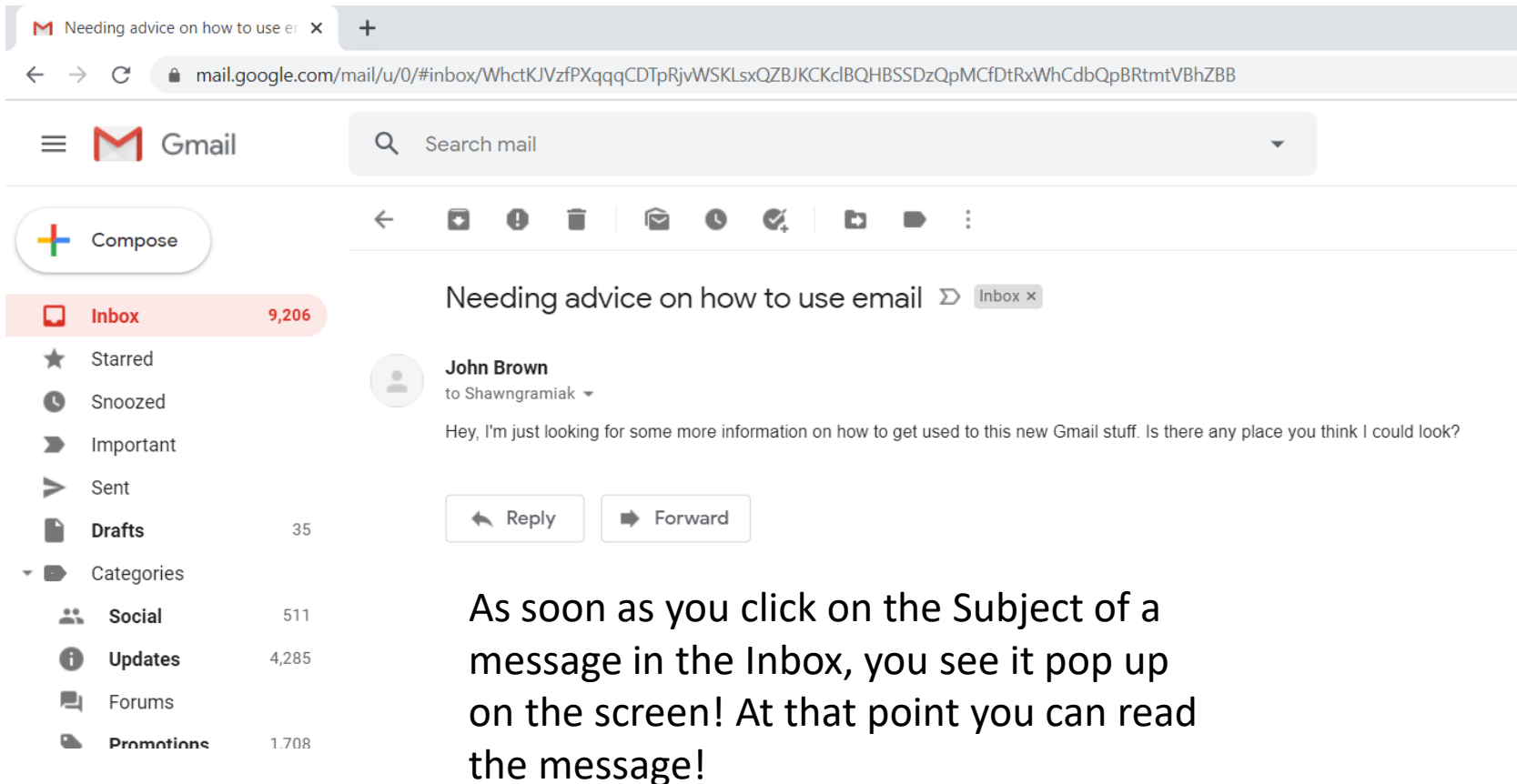
# Reading a message Step 1



As mentioned on the previous page, if you want to read a message, click on it's Subject in the Inbox.

99% of the time, you will spend in your Inbox. There are also folders on the left side of your screen that will contain things like Sent messages, but the Inbox is really where the action is. If you are not sure if you are in the Inbox, click the word Inbox on the left side of the screen. If Inbox has some shading behind it, you are certainly in the right place.

# Reading a message Step 2



The screenshot shows a Gmail interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/WhctKJVzfPXqqqCDTpRjvWSKLsxQZBJKCKclBQHBSSDzQpMCfDtRxWhCdbQpBRtmtVBhZBB. The Gmail header includes the logo, a search bar, and navigation icons. The left sidebar lists folders: Compose, Inbox (9,206), Starred, Snoozed, Important, Sent, Drafts (35), and Categories (Social: 511, Updates: 4,285, Forums, Promotions: 1,708). The main content area shows an email from John Brown to Shawngamiak with the subject 'Needing advice on how to use email'. The email body text reads: 'Hey, I'm just looking for some more information on how to get used to this new Gmail stuff. Is there any place you think I could look?'. Below the text are 'Reply' and 'Forward' buttons.

Needing advice on how to use email

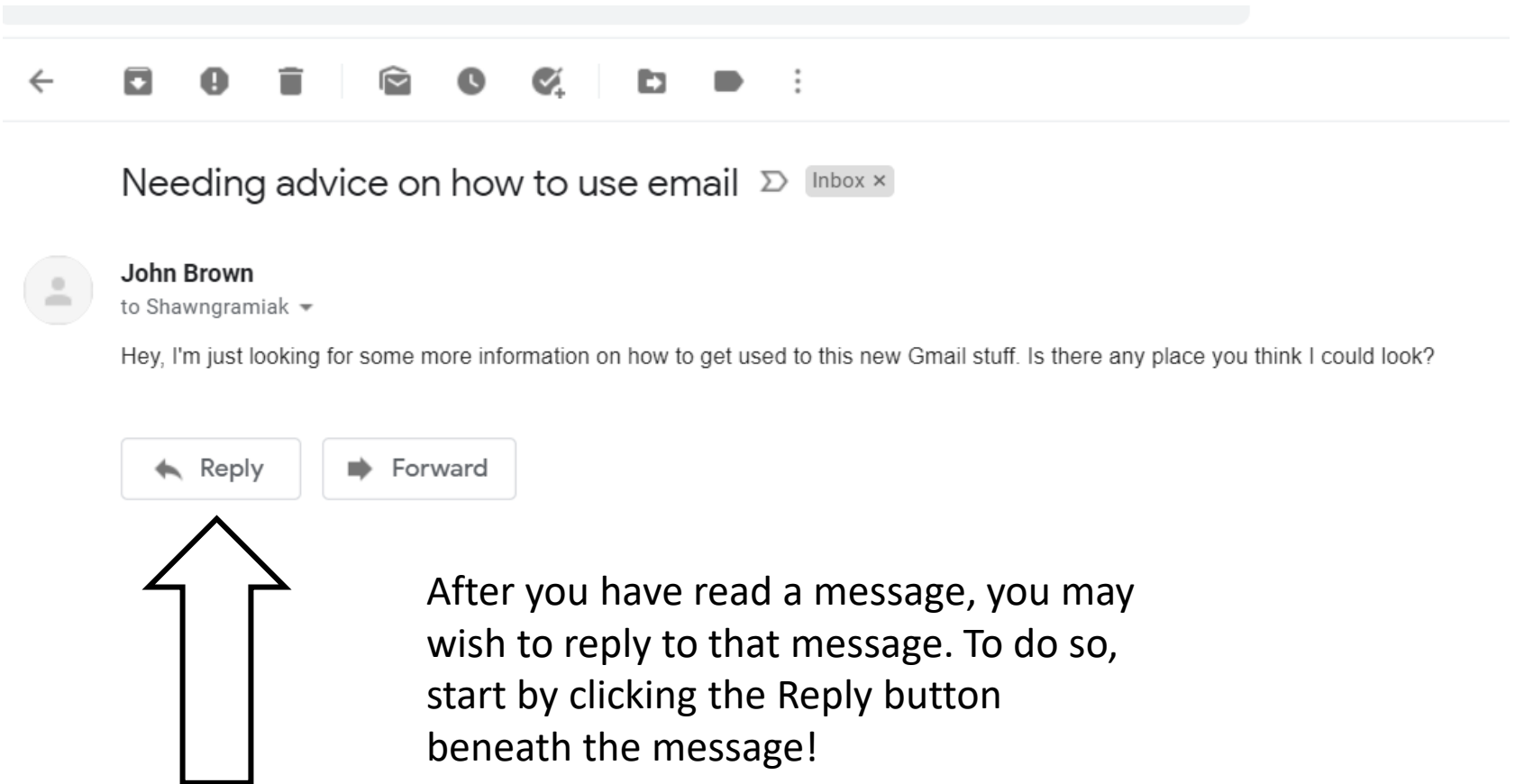
John Brown  
to Shawngamiak

Hey, I'm just looking for some more information on how to get used to this new Gmail stuff. Is there any place you think I could look?

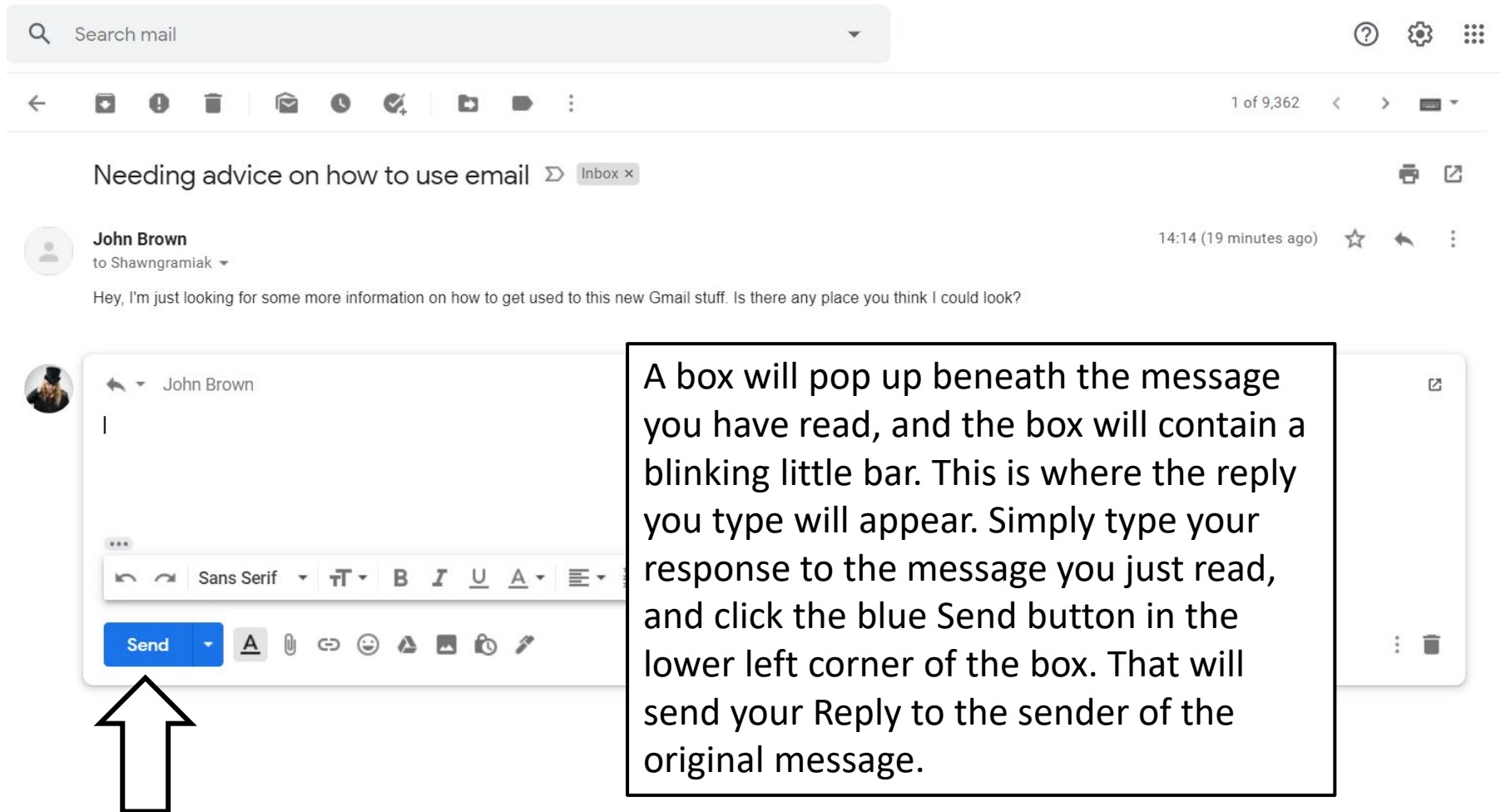
Reply Forward

As soon as you click on the Subject of a message in the Inbox, you see it pop up on the screen! At that point you can read the message!

# Replying to a message Part 1



# Replying to a message Part 2



The screenshot displays a Gmail inbox with an email from John Brown. The email content is: "Hey, I'm just looking for some more information on how to get used to this new Gmail stuff. Is there any place you think I could look?". Below the email, a reply box is open, showing a text input area with a cursor, a rich text editor toolbar, and a blue "Send" button. A large white arrow points to the "Send" button. A callout box with a black border contains the following text: "A box will pop up beneath the message you have read, and the box will contain a blinking little bar. This is where the reply you type will appear. Simply type your response to the message you just read, and click the blue Send button in the lower left corner of the box. That will send your Reply to the sender of the original message."

Search mail

1 of 9,362

Needing advice on how to use email Inbox x

**John Brown**  
to Shawngramiak

14:14 (19 minutes ago)

Hey, I'm just looking for some more information on how to get used to this new Gmail stuff. Is there any place you think I could look?


John Brown




I











Send


A box will pop up beneath the message you have read, and the box will contain a blinking little bar. This is where the reply you type will appear. Simply type your response to the message you just read, and click the blue Send button in the lower left corner of the box. That will send your Reply to the sender of the original message.




# Replying to a message Part 3


 Search mail











1 of 7,928 < > 

Needing advice on how to use email > Inbox x 

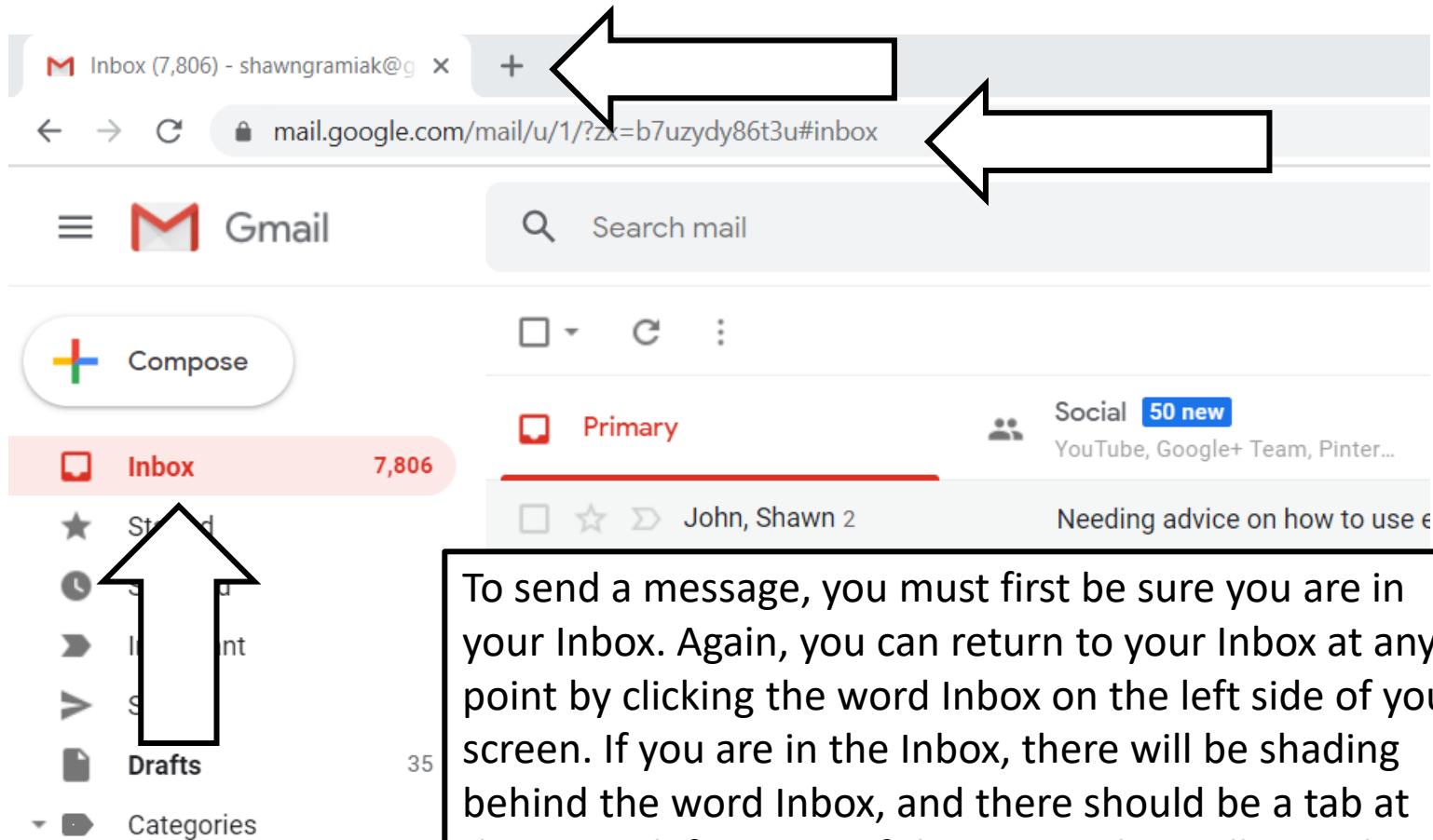
**John Brown** 14:14 (34 minutes ago) ☆  
Hey, I'm just looking for some more information on how to get used to this new Gmail stuff. Is there any place you think I could look?

**Shawn Gramiak** <shawn@gruntmulti.com> 14:43 (6 minutes ago) ☆    
to John ▾  
Well, you could use Google itself. Just go to [google.ca](https://www.google.ca) and type in Gmail tutorials. You will find thousands!  
  
Or you could go to YouTube and search for Gmail tutorials, and you will find thousands of tutorial videos there too!  
  
Or if this seems daunting, drop me a line a [shawn@gruntmulti.com](mailto:shawn@gruntmulti.com) or check out his website at [shawngramiak.com](https://shawngramiak.com)  


 Reply  Forward

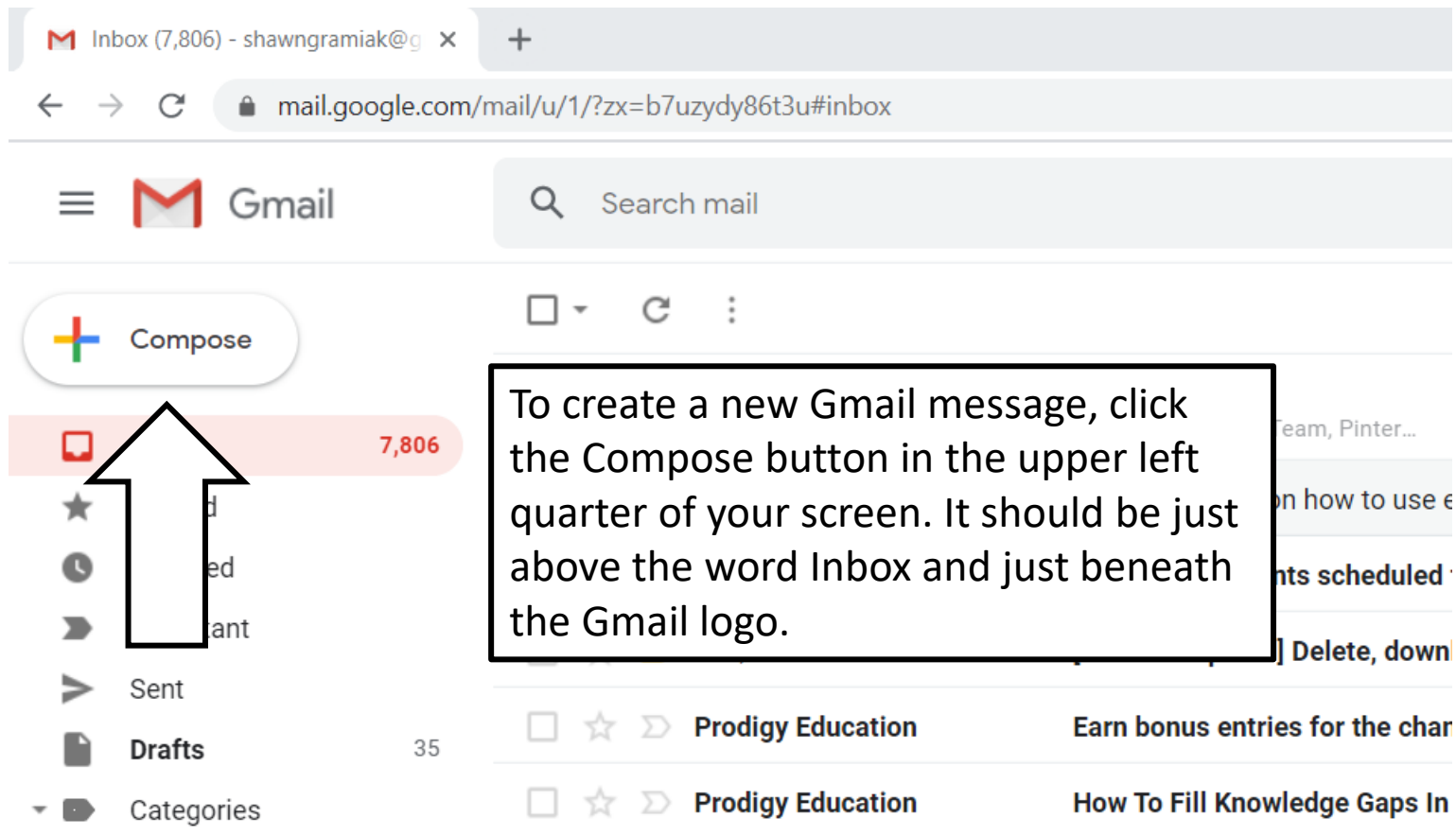
You will see that after you send your Reply, your response will stay on the screen. If the person who you sent your reply to replies back, their reply will be added. So over time, you can reply to the same message back and forth numerous times, and this creates what is called a conversation thread. This is great for when you are planning something over a long period of time, as you will have a historical record of all the messages that went back and forth.

# Sending a message Part 1



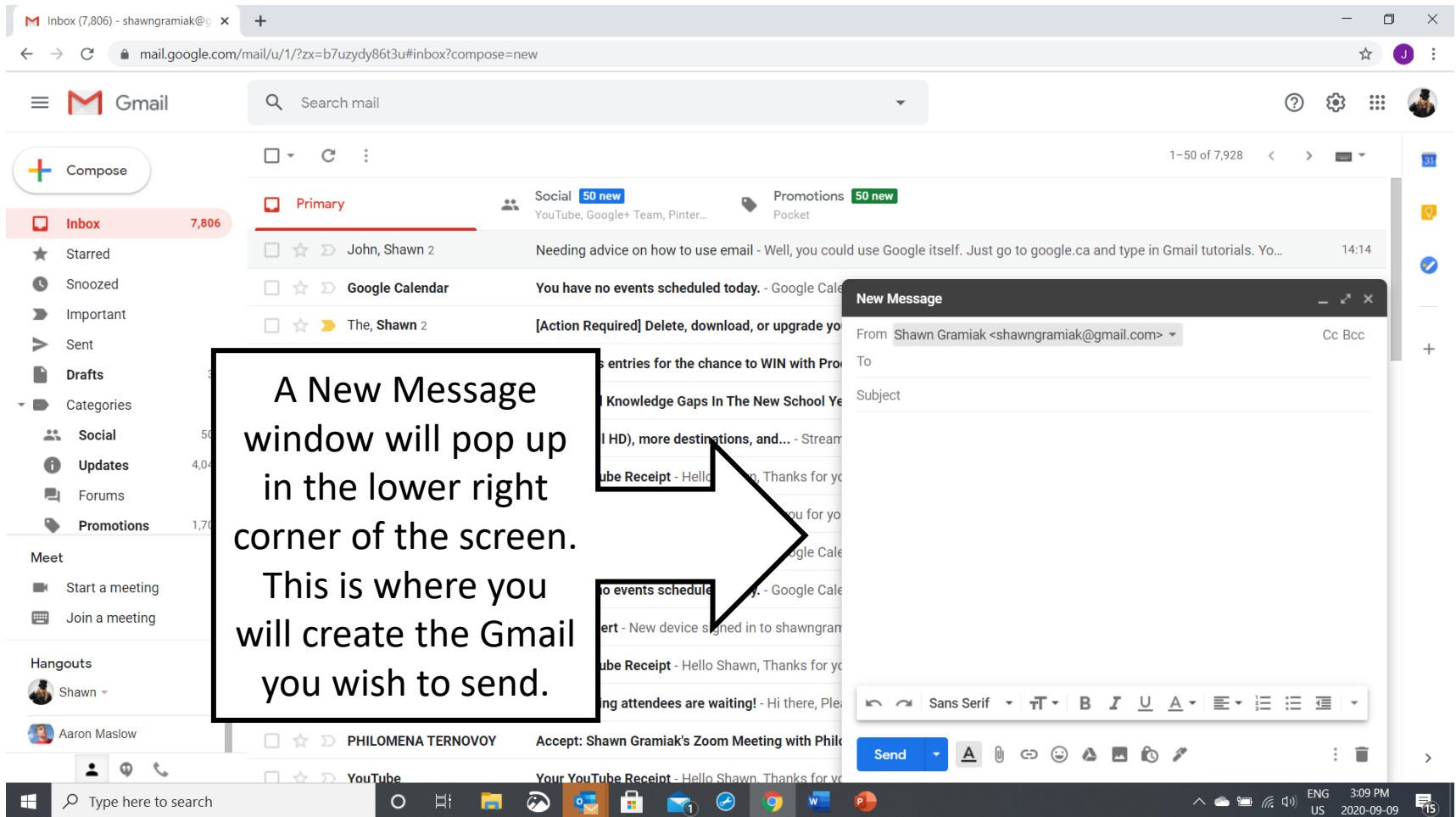
To send a message, you must first be sure you are in your Inbox. Again, you can return to your Inbox at any point by clicking the word Inbox on the left side of your screen. If you are in the Inbox, there will be shading behind the word Inbox, and there should be a tab at the upper left corner of the screen that will say Inbox.

# Sending a message Part 2





# Sending a message Part 3



# The Parts of the New Message window

1. The From line simply shows that the message is coming from you. If you don't see it, don't worry, the message carries your email address automatically, you don't have to type it into the message anywhere.

2. The Cc and Bcc buttons are used to send one message to more than one person.

3. The To line is where you click with your mouse and type in the email address of the person you are sending your Gmail to.

4. The Subject line is where you click with your mouse and type in the Subject (Title) of the email. DO NOT TYPE YOUR WHOLE MESSAGE HERE.

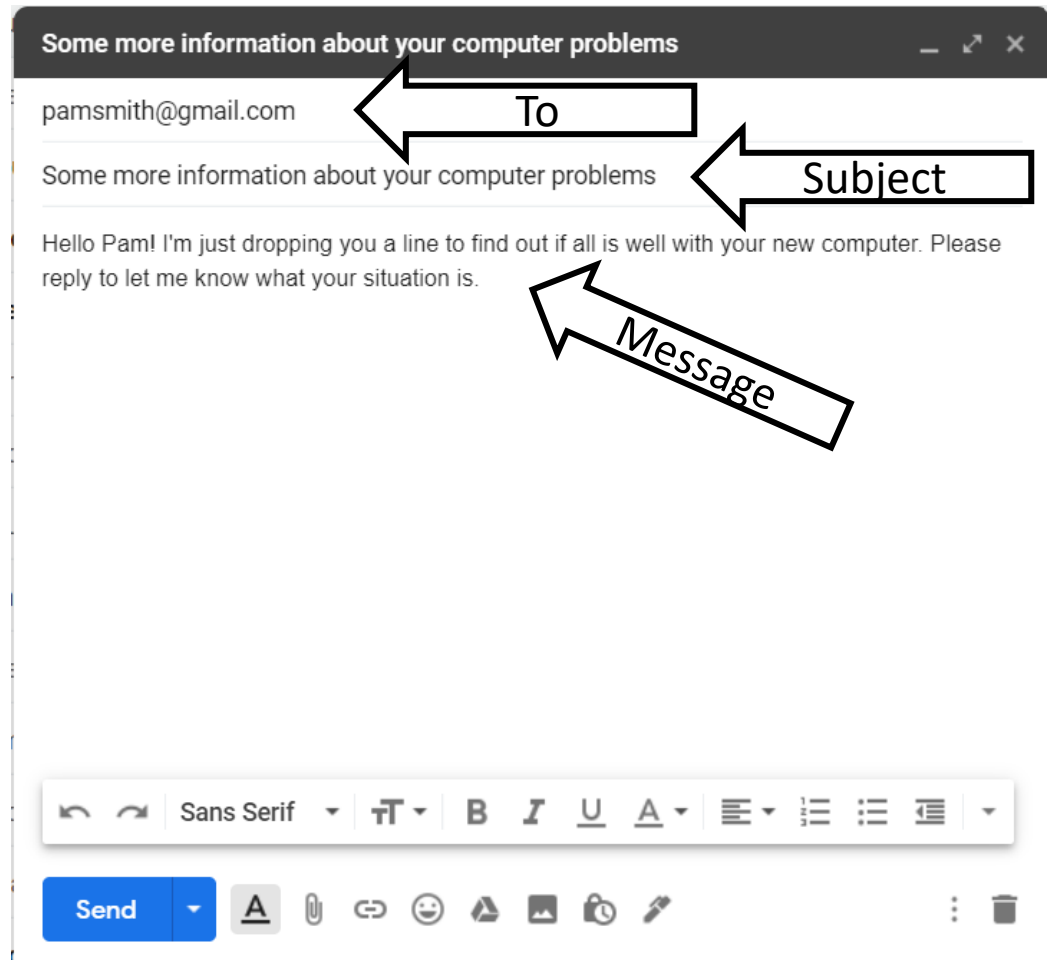
5. The large white space beneath the Subject line is where you click with your mouse and type the full message you intend to send the person. It can be a few words, a few sentences or even full paragraphs. Don't worry, although the space looks small, it can accommodate pages of type written text.

The image shows a 'New Message' window in a dark-themed email client. At the top, the title bar says 'New Message' with standard window controls. Below the title bar, the 'From' field is populated with 'Shawn Gramiak <shawngramiak@gmail.com>' and is marked with a circled '1'. To the right of the 'From' field are 'Cc' and 'Bcc' buttons, marked with a circled '2'. Below the 'From' field is the 'To' field, marked with a circled '3'. Below the 'To' field is the 'Subject' field, marked with a circled '4'. Below the 'Subject' field is a large white area for the message body, marked with a circled '5'. On the right side of the message body, there is a small dropdown arrow and a trash can icon.

# Sending a message Part 4

Here is an example of a Gmail that is filled out and ready to send. Note that once you start adding text to your Gmail, the words like To and Subject will disappear. You will also notice that the title you put in the Subject line will appear in the black bar at the top of the screen.

Once you fill out your Gmail, just click the blue Send button to send it off!

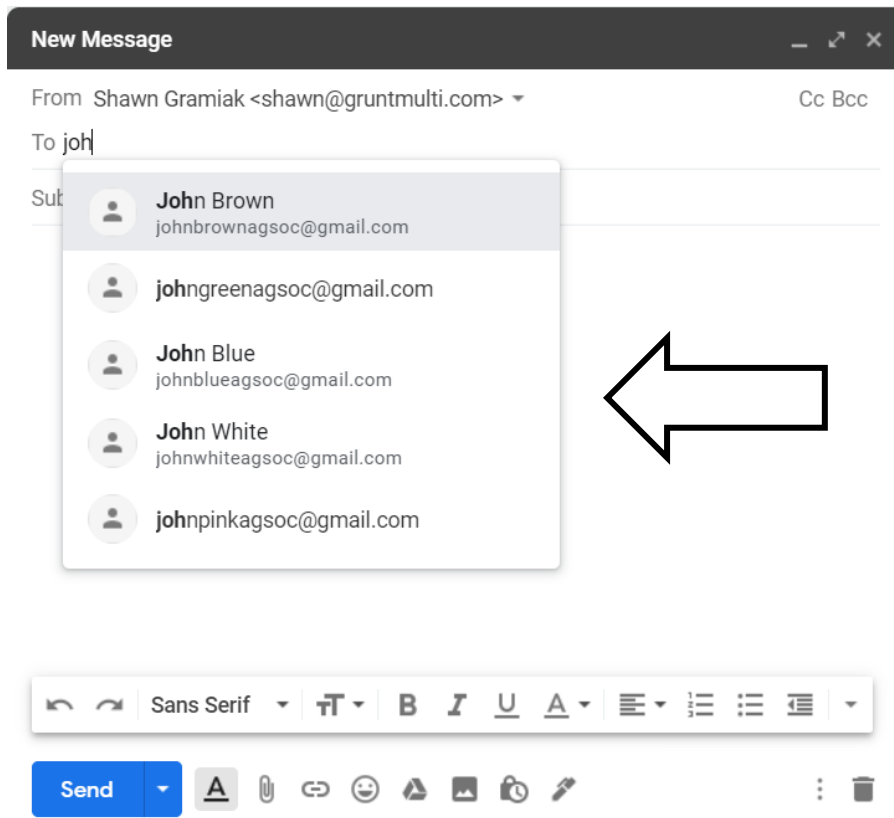


# After you have sent your message

- A copy of it goes into your Sent folder (which is located on the left side of your screen under the Inbox).
- The person you sent your message to will receive it, and will use steps to reply to it as illustrated on previous pages of this handout, and you can reply to their reply if you need to.
- The best way to learn this is to send out a few messages to friends or family, and see if you can get an email conversation going

# REMEMBER!

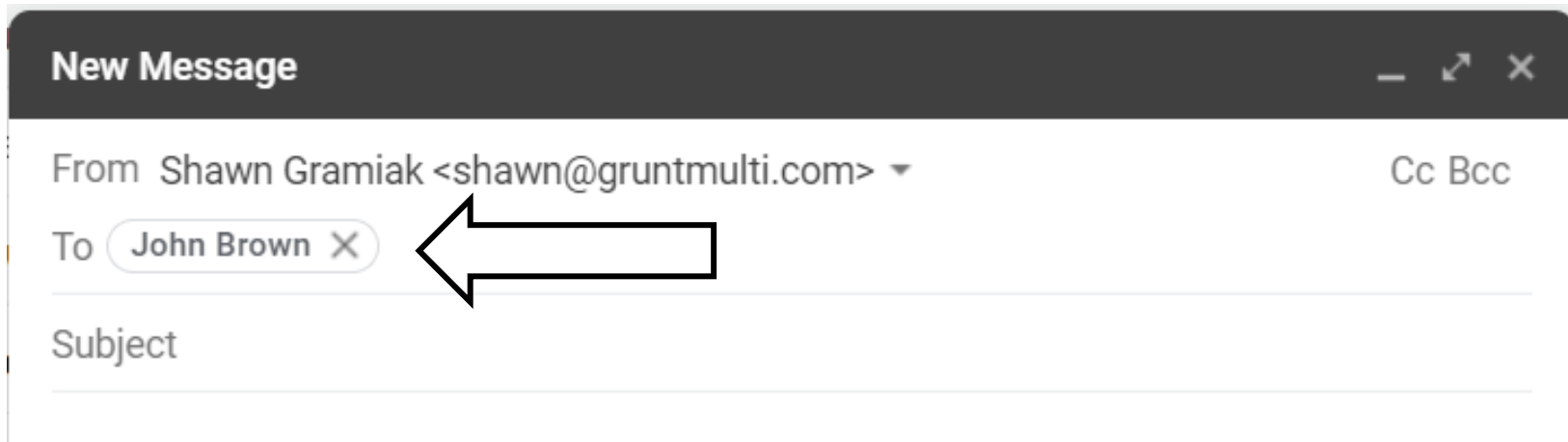
- Email addresses are unforgiving. Double check the email addresses you type before you send anything, because one missing dot or simple misspelling can prevent an email from being sent!



Also note that if you have typed in someone's email address before, or they are in your contacts list, once you start typing in their address, a list may appear. If it does, and the person's address appears in the list, **JUST CLICK THEIR ADDRESS IN THE LIST.** It will put their address into the To line, and save you a bunch of typing!

By the way, we call these lists drop down lists.

# ALSO NOTE

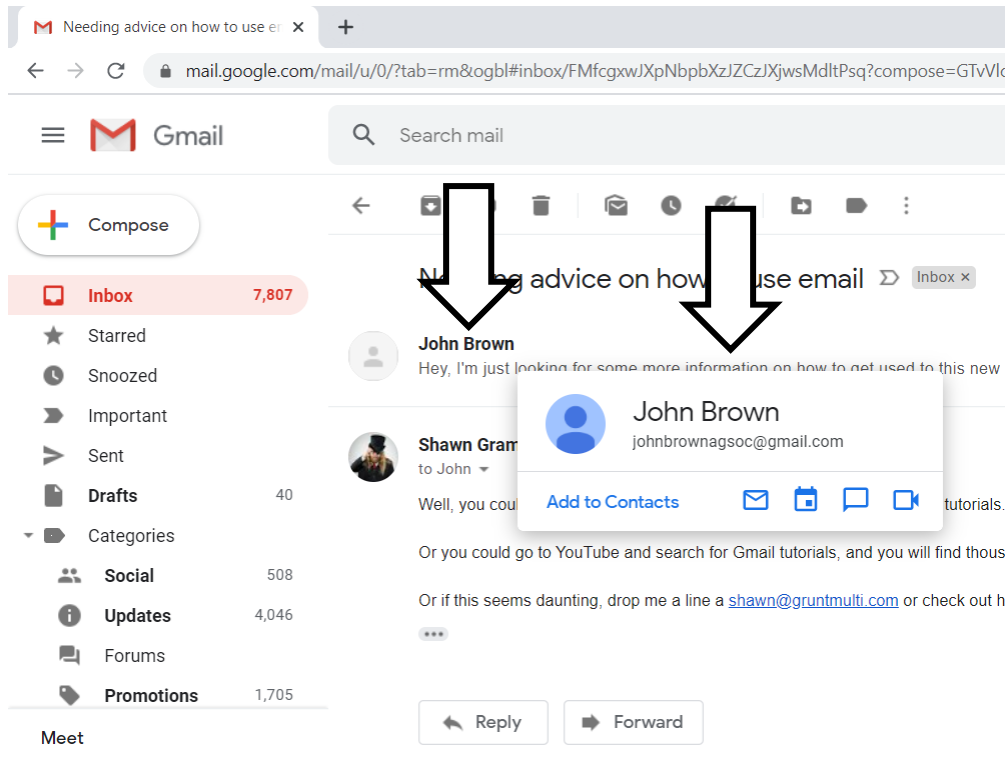


When you type someone's email address into the To line (or click on it if it appears in a drop down list), and they are in your Contacts list, you might find that as soon as you are finished typing and/or you go to add something else, that the email changes to the person's name. Don't worry, you still addressed your email properly, and Gmail will make sure your message goes to the address associated with that name. Gmail is just shortening things, and this makes it easier to put more than one person's address into a line. By the way, the little X by the name is can be clicked on with your mouse to erase the address if you put the wrong one into the line.

# Contacts

- Contacts are simply the names and email addresses of people you send email to. You can add more detail to Contacts (like phone numbers etc.) but name and email is the bare minimum you need. Your Contact list is an electronic address book.
- You can always simply type addresses by hand into the To line, and not worry about Contacts. Gmail will try to remember email addresses you type in regularly, but won't automatically add them to your Contacts. Adding Contacts, however, opens up a bunch of other possibilities for other stuff Google does.
- If you have to copy a whole bunch of contacts (for instance, over 20 of them), you may want to use Export and Import, but that's fairly long winded process.
- You can manually type your Contacts in, but that does take a few steps.
- Following is a little bit of a quicker way, but it relies on someone sending you an email first.

# Adding Contacts Part 1



First, use the steps on previous pages to look at a message that contains someone you want to add to your Contacts.

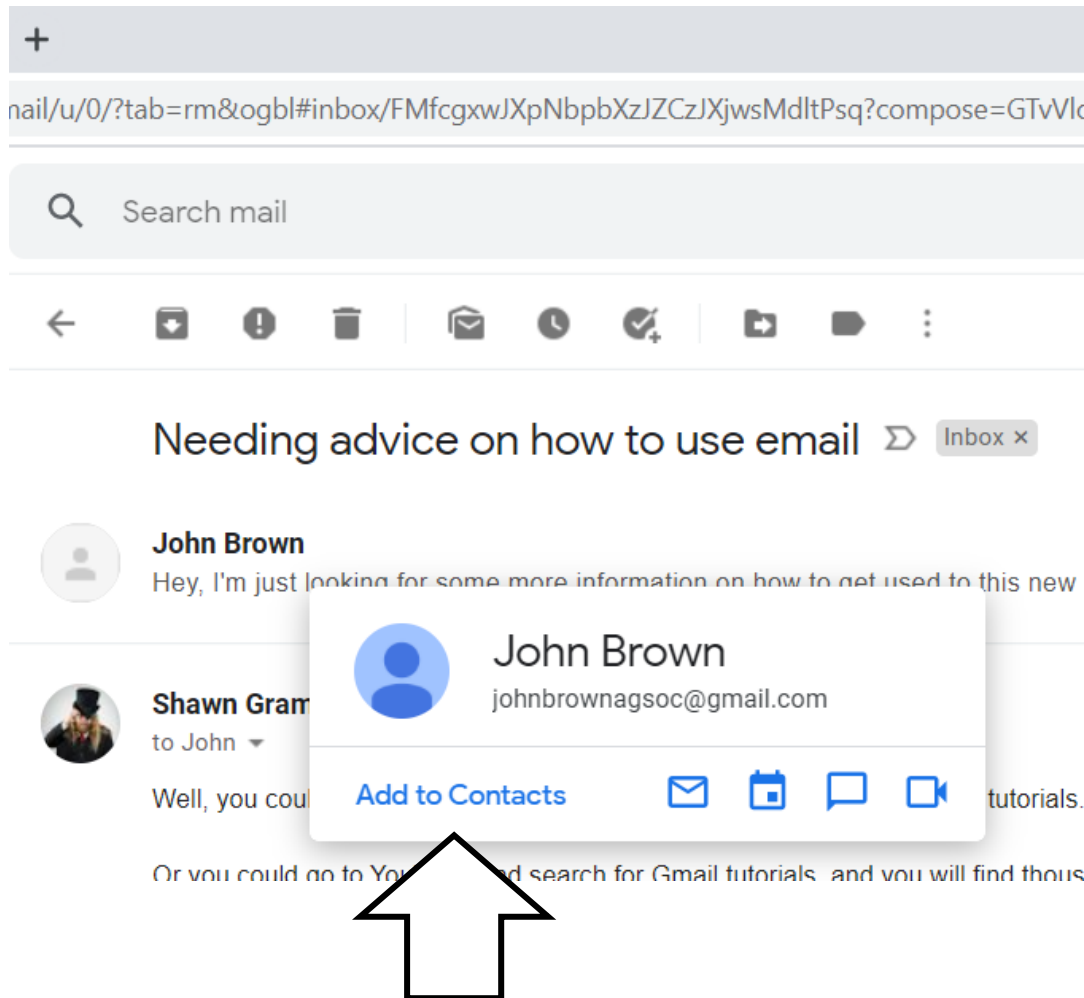
When the message is open, move your mouse pointer over the name of the person you want to add to your Contacts. **THERE IS NO NEED TO CLICK ON THE NAME**, just move your little hand mouse pointer over the name and let it rest there.

If you place your mouse pointer over the person's name and wait a second, a little window should pop out with the person's name and email address.

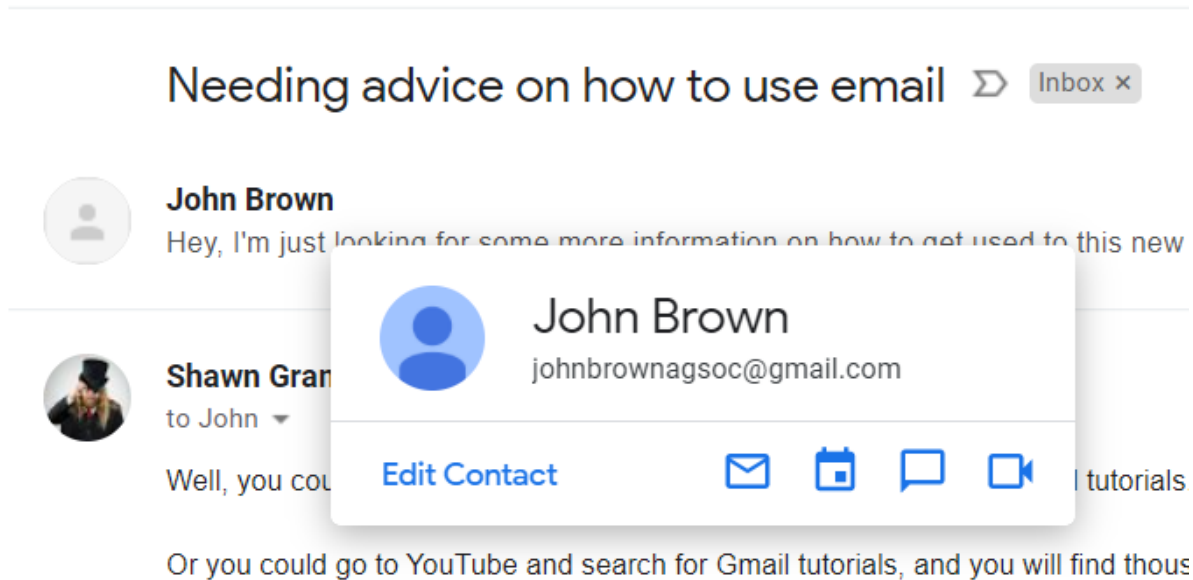


# Adding Contacts Part 2

The little window that pops out will include the phrase “Add to Contacts”. Go ahead and click on that.

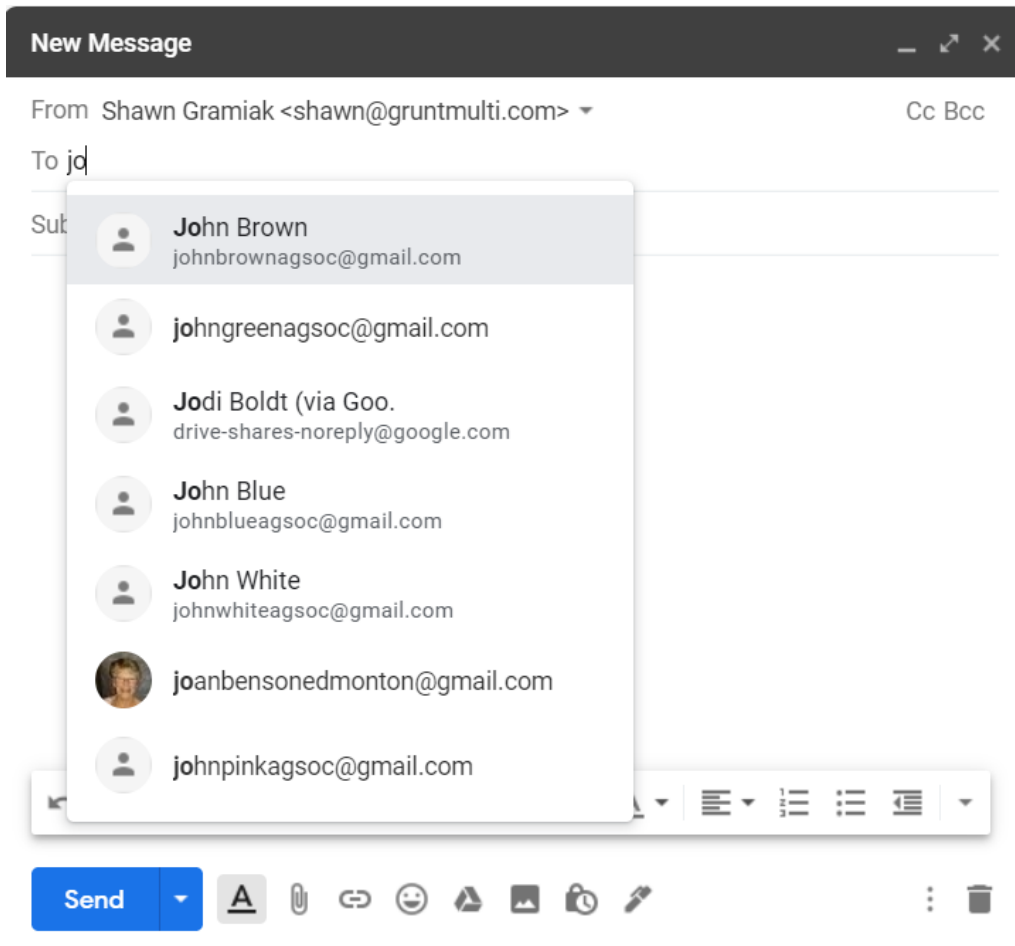


# Adding Contacts Part 3



Once you have clicked on “Add to Contacts”, the phrase will change to “Edit Contact” and that is a guarantee that it has been added to your Contacts list. If you move your mouse pointer to a blank part of the screen, this little window will just disappear.

# Adding Contacts Part 4

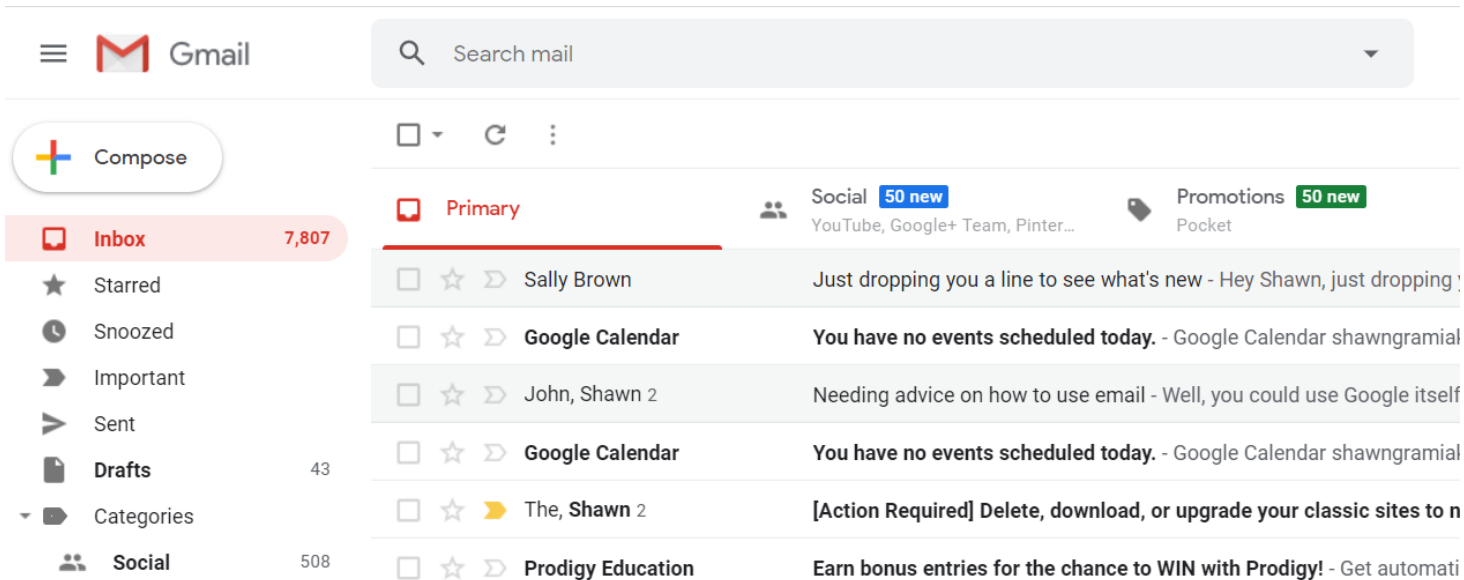


From now on, if you click the Compose button to open a new blank Gmail message, and you click in the To line and start typing the name of the Contact you just added, it should pop up automatically in a list.

Just click on that name to put the name and address into the To line. Again, don't be surprised if Google just shortens it to the person's name.

Also note that it will bring up other addresses with the same letters you are typing. You can ignore those.

# Deleting emails Part 1

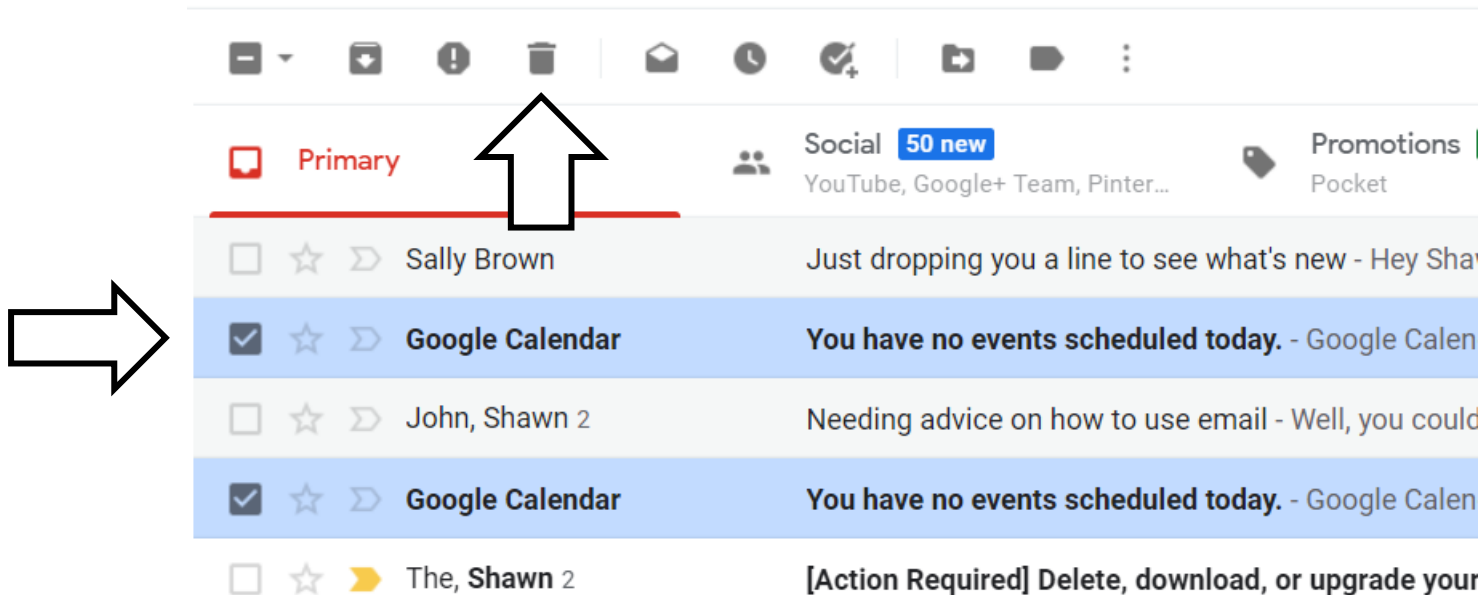


Your Google account (which includes Gmail) has 15 GB of storage. You can easily keep THOUSANDS of emails in your Inbox with no trouble.

But it never hurts to get rid of messages that are clearly junk, or have become so dated that you don't need them.

In your Inbox, note that all of the messages have a little box on the left hand side, you can click on this box to select the message. When you do, it puts a little check mark in the box.

# Deleting emails Part 2



When you put check marks beside the items you want to get rid of, a little garbage can will appear at the top of your list of messages. This is a Trash Bin.

Click that garbage can to put the messages you marked into the Trash Bin.

The messages you delete this way will stay in the Trash Bin for 30 days if you need for some reason to rescue them, otherwise, they are automatically deleted after 30 days.

# IMPORTANT NOTE about deleting

If you have sent an email back and forth with someone and created a conversation thread, deleting the message deletes ALL the messages in that conversation thread. If you are worried about deleting something, leave the message alone, you've got plenty of room.

# A couple side notes

- Gmail, and everything in Google, is constantly changing.
- The easiest way to deal with changes is to use Gmail regularly, then changes don't seem so abrupt.
- Gmail will often pop up little messages describing new features they have added. Feel free to look at these things, but if they are getting your way, look for phrases like "Got it" or "Dismiss" and click on them. Then you can go about writing your Gmail.

# There is plenty more to know...

- But at this point, get comfortable with composing, sending, receiving and replying to emails. As well as adding Contacts and cleaning up your Inbox by deleting what you don't need.
- Once you have these skills down, stuff sending one message to multiple people, or attaching a picture or document to an email is much easier to learn.
- The way Gmail behaves on a computer, a phone and a tablet is different, and I will be composing handouts for those topics too.
- If you have further computer issues, please feel free to contact Shawn at [shawn@gruntmulti.com](mailto:shawn@gruntmulti.com) or leave a voice mail at 780-940-5274.