



Hands-On Exercises: Learning with NotebookLM

This section is designed to help you **actively learn NotebookLM by using it**, not just reading about it. Each exercise builds on the previous one and reinforces *thinking with sources*.

Exercise 1: Create Your First Knowledge Notebook

Goal

Learn how to structure a notebook and understand how sources shape NotebookLM's responses.

Instructions

Get more Resources from Laurence Svekis <https://basescripts.com/>

1. Open NotebookLM.
2. Create a new notebook.
3. Name it based on a real topic you want to learn (example: “*Async JavaScript Basics*”).
4. Add **at least two sources**, such as:
 - A PDF
 - A Google Doc
 - A reputable article link
5. Ask NotebookLM:

“Summarize the key ideas across all sources.”

Reflection Questions

- Did the summary reference all sources?
- What ideas appeared repeatedly?
- What surprised you?

Answer Key (What You Should Observe)

- The response should be **grounded only in your uploaded sources**.
- You should see **citations or references** pointing back to those sources.
- If sources overlap, NotebookLM will highlight shared concepts.
- If sources differ, you may see contrasting viewpoints.

Exercise 2: Ask Better Questions

Goal

Practice asking *specific, high-quality questions*.

Instructions

Using the same notebook, ask:

1. A vague question:

“Explain this topic.”

2. A focused question:

“Explain how `async/await` simplifies promise handling, based on the sources.”

Reflection Questions

- Which answer was more useful?
- Which one helped you *understand* rather than skim?

Answer Key

- The vague question produces a **general, surface-level explanation**.
- The focused question produces:
 - More precise language
 - Stronger alignment with source material
 - Clearer explanations tied to examples

✓ Lesson: *NotebookLM rewards precision.*

Exercise 3: Concept Clarification Drill

Goal

Use NotebookLM to resolve confusion instead of memorizing definitions.

Instructions

1. Identify a concept you find confusing.
2. Ask:

“Explain this concept in simple terms, as if teaching a beginner.”

3. Follow up with:

“What common misunderstandings do learners have about this?”

Reflection Questions

- Did this clarify your confusion?
- Were misconceptions addressed?

Answer Key

- NotebookLM should:
 - Simplify language
 - Avoid adding external assumptions
 - Highlight misunderstandings *found in or implied by the sources*

This shows NotebookLM’s strength as a **learning clarifier**, not just a summarizer.

Exercise 4: Compare Sources

Goal

Learn how NotebookLM helps with critical thinking and comparison.

Instructions

1. Ensure you have **two different sources** that approach the same topic.
2. Ask:

“How do these sources differ in explaining this concept?”

3. Ask:

“Where do they agree?”

Reflection Questions

- Do the authors emphasize different priorities?
- Is one more theoretical or practical?

Answer Key

- NotebookLM should:
 - Identify differences in framing or emphasis
 - Point out overlapping ideas
 - Cite which source supports which claim

This exercise strengthens **analytical reading skills**.

Exercise 5: Turn Notes into a Study Guide

Goal

Use NotebookLM to restructure information for learning.

Instructions

Ask:

“Create a structured study guide based on these sources, with headings and bullet points.”

Optional follow-up:

“Add a short explanation under each heading.”

Reflection Questions

- Is the structure logical?
- Does it match how *you* would study?

Answer Key

- The output should:
 - Be organized
 - Follow the logical flow of the sources
 - Avoid adding external topics

NotebookLM excels at **restructuring knowledge** without distorting it.

Exercise 6: Self-Testing with AI

Goal

Use NotebookLM to test your understanding.

Instructions

Ask:

“Create 5 quiz questions based on the sources.”

Then answer them **without looking**.

Follow up with:

“Provide the correct answers with explanations.”

Reflection Questions

- Which questions were hardest?
- What gaps did this reveal?

Answer Key

- Questions should:
 - Be directly tied to the content
 - Avoid trivia not found in sources
- Explanations should reference where the answers come from

This turns NotebookLM into a **feedback loop**, not a shortcut.

Exercise 7: Teach It Back

Goal

Reinforce learning by explaining.

Instructions

Ask:

“Help me explain this topic to someone new, using examples from the sources.”

Then:

- Rewrite the explanation in your own words.

Reflection Questions

- What was hard to explain?
- Where did you rely on NotebookLM too much?

Answer Key

- NotebookLM provides structure and examples
- Your rewritten version reveals **true understanding**
- Any hesitation highlights areas to revisit

Exercise 8: Meta-Learning Reflection

Goal

Develop awareness of *how* you learn.

Instructions

Ask:

“Based on my questions so far, what areas might I need to explore further?”

Reflection Questions

- Does this align with your own sense of confusion?
- What would you explore next?

Answer Key

- NotebookLM may infer:
 - Repeated topics
 - Shallow exploration areas
- This works best if you've asked **multiple meaningful questions**

Final Workbook Reflection

Write a short response:

- What did NotebookLM help you understand better?
- Where did you still need human judgment?
- How did working with sources change your confidence?

 Correct outcome:

You should feel **more grounded**, not overwhelmed—and more capable of independent learning.