

The Great Google Sites Cook-Off: Module #3

Summary: Google Sites is a tool within the Google Apps for Education suite, which allows users to create their own custom websites without specific coding knowledge.

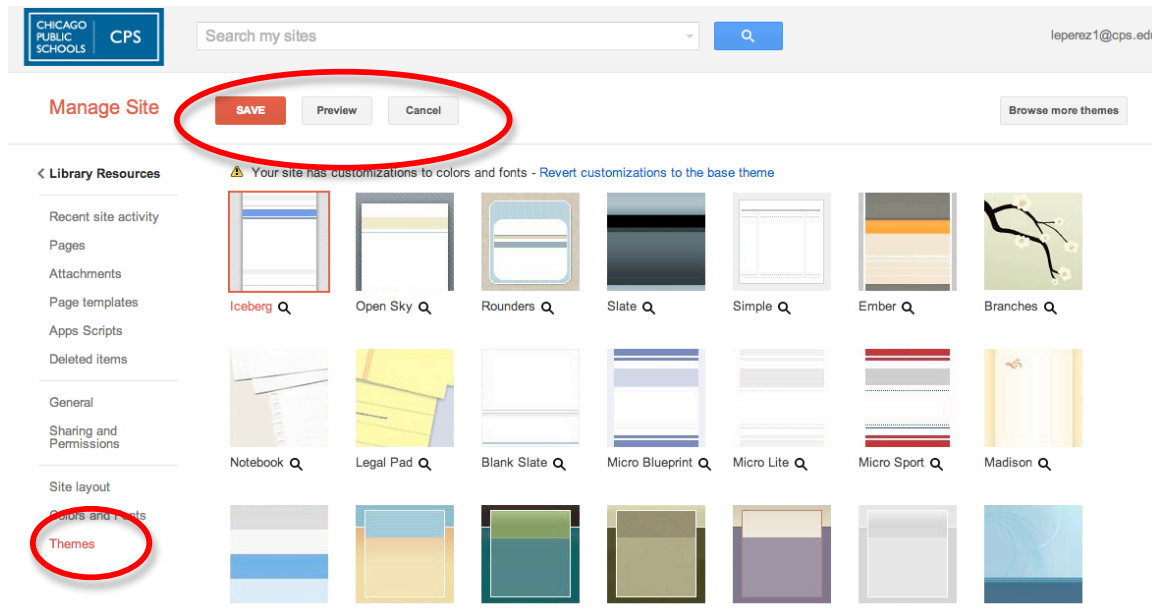
Alignment to CCSS: Google Sites can be used across the curriculum and grade levels to support teaching and learning

Supports for a Personalized Library: Google Sites allows librarians to create custom library websites to provide a menu of options for learning. In addition to sharing basic library program information, these sites can be used to develop digital curriculum-based pathfinders to support research, collaboration, and assessment. Web pages can include links to vetted websites, online databases, Web 2.0 tools, digital resources, and print materials.

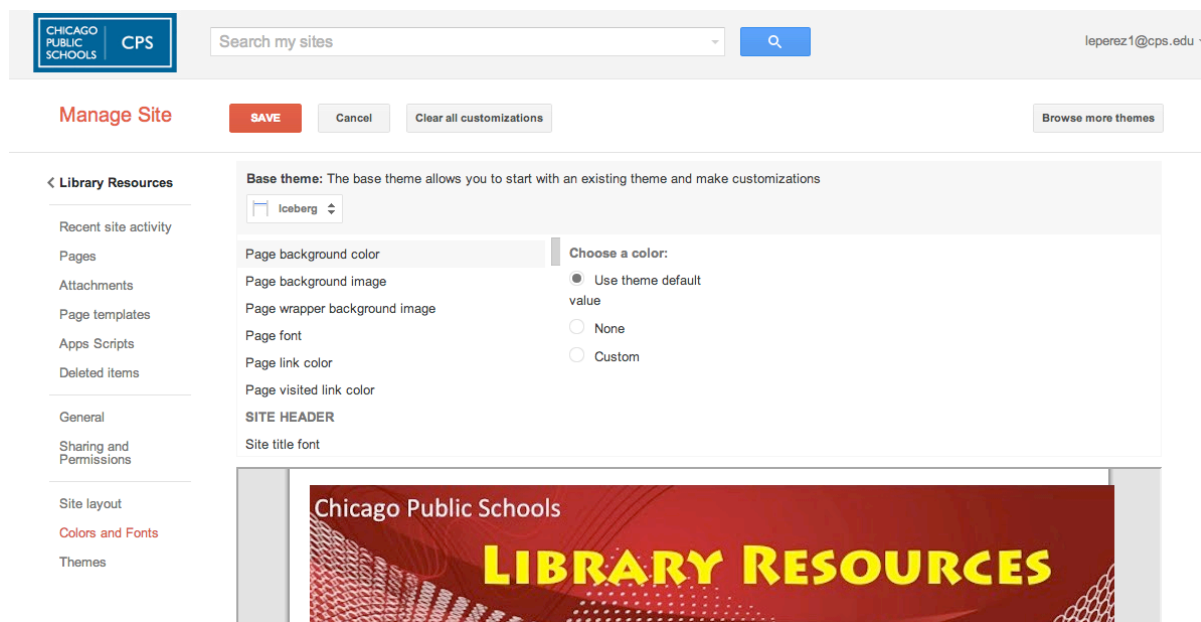
1. Site theme: You can change your site theme. Access the drop-down menu under More > Manage site > Themes.

The screenshot displays a Google Sites page titled "Home" with a last update of "Mar 12, 2013, 1:30 PM". The main content area features a red banner for "Chicago Public Schools LIBRARY RESC Department". A navigation menu on the left includes "Home" and "Sitemap". A "More" dropdown menu is open, showing options under "Page actions", "Page templates", and "Site actions". The "Manage site" option is circled in red. At the bottom, there are links for "Recent Site Activity", "Report Abuse", "Print Page", and "Remove Access".

You can preview and change the site's theme. It is recommended to usually stick with more plain choices, such as Iceberg, to avoid detracting from your content. Also, it is usually not advisable to change the theme in a more complex, developed site, as it can throw off the placement of existing text and other content.



2. **Colors and fonts:** Go to More > Manage site > Colors & Fonts to access a number of choices for continuing to change the look of your website. Note that you can also change your theme here. First, scan the choices for change to identify the major categories of change. They are Entire page, Site header, Content area, Content area gadgets, Sidebar gadgets, Navigation gadgets, Horizontal navigation, and Horizontal navigation drop-down menu. You will come back to this area to continue to tweak until you are happy with your choices. In this module, we'll look at some important initial areas for choice. Other areas, such as gadgets, will be covered in a later module.



3. **Page options:** Scan your options for adjusting the colors, images, and fonts of entire webpages within your website. For example, you can choose a different page background color or image. Be judicious in these choices because odd colors or images can detract from the content that you will add to your site later. Usually, it is recommended to stay with white backgrounds and the default fonts. You can always revert back to the theme default without affecting your site.



Base theme: The base theme allows you to start with an existing theme and make customizations

Iceberg

ENTIRE PAGE

- Page background color
- Page background image
- Page wrapper background image
- Page font
- Page link color
- Page visited link color

Choose a color:

- Use theme default value
- None
- Custom

A color selection palette with a grid of 20 color swatches in various shades including black, grey, white, red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple, pink, and magenta.

4. **Page wrapper background image:** This is an option that can make your site unique without detracting from the main content area, as the design goes to the side of the webpage rather than in the main content area. Select Entire page > Page wrapper background image > Custom. Navigate to a file on your computer that can tile seamlessly. See the preview of how the image will look below. You can find background files online that have free permissions, at a stock photo site, or even a photo you took yourself. You may have to resize the file before uploading it. If you upload a second version of the file, while tweaking it, be sure to give it a different name, as Sites doesn't recognize different versions of the same file name. Keep in mind that you can always revert back to the default value.



Base theme: The base theme allows you to start with an existing theme and make customizations

Iceberg

ENTIRE PAGE

- Page background color
- Page background image
- Page wrapper background image
- Page font
- Page link color
- Page visited link color

Choose a background image:

- Use theme default value
- None
- Custom

SITE HEADER

5. **Header options:** Note that you also have choices in changing your header. If you have already added a banner, it may be necessary to change the header background color, for example. If you added a page wrapper image, you may want to add the same image to the Site header background image.

SITE HEADER

Site title font

Site title font size

Site title color

Site header background color

Site header background image

Choose a font:

Use theme default value

Custom

Normal ▾

6. **Horizontal navigation options:** If you are using a horizontal navigation bar in your site, you will likely want to tweak the color options to match the rest of your site. Play around with options for the text color on the tabs, how they will change when the mouse hovers over the tab, and how it changes again when selected. You may want to come back to this again after you have more tabs, as we begin to add pages in the next module. A hint for color selections is to stay in the same color family and use a shade up or down for hover/selected options. Look at the preview to see if you like an option before clicking the Save button.

SAVE Cancel Clear all customizations

Base theme: The base theme allows you to start with an existing theme and make customizations

Iceberg ▾

HORIZONTAL NAVIGATION

Horizontal navigation title font

Horizontal navigation text color

Horizontal navigation hover text color

Horizontal navigation background color

Horizontal navigation hover background color

Horizontal navigation selected text color

Horizontal navigation selected background color

Choose a font:

Use theme default value

Custom

Normal ▾