

Custom Map Overview

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This is a quick-start guide and overview of how to create a custom Space in Gather.

Tip: We recommend checking out our [various Mapmaker tutorials](#) on YouTube in addition to this article.

Terms

- **Space:** A self-contained virtualized world created on Gather. Has an associated URL. Can contain one or more Rooms/Maps.
- **Room:** An individual Map within a Space. (Room and Map can be used interchangeably.) Each Room/Map belongs to a Space, although some Spaces have only have one Room. **Note:** Some Spaces (many of the templates designed for 2-25 users) are designed as an individual Map with multiple "rooms" as indicated by walls and doors. When we refer to a Room, we are referring to a unique Map that has been connected to a Space.
- **Background:** The bottom-most layer of a Map. A Gather Space is like a sandwich: The background is the bottom bread, the characters and objects are the filling, and the foreground is the top bread. Each Room has one background.
- **Foreground:** The top-most layer of the Map. This is an optional layer that allows characters to walk under/behind objects.
- **Tile Effects:** A setting applied to an individual tile or group of tiles to add interaction or a behavior in your Map. There are five types of tile effects: Impassable, Spawn, Portal, Private Area, and Spotlight.
- **Objects:** Objects are the images you can place in your Space, on top of your Space's background image. They can be uploaded as [custom object images](#), or selected from the large variety of pre-generated objects inside of our Object Picker.

Overview

Creating a custom map for Gather is a four-step process:

1. **Create a Space:** Go to <https://app.gather.town/create> to create a new Space. You can start with any of our templates, or start from scratch with a blank Map. You can also add Rooms to existing spaces.
2. **Create a Background (and foreground, optionally):** Create the layout and style for the room you're working on.
3. **Add Tile Effects:** Indicate where Gather should allow characters to walk or not walk (e.g.,

walls) and any other special effects that should happen when avatars enter certain tile locations.

4. **Finally, add Objects:** This includes chairs, tables, and interactive TVs, games, whiteboards, and more.

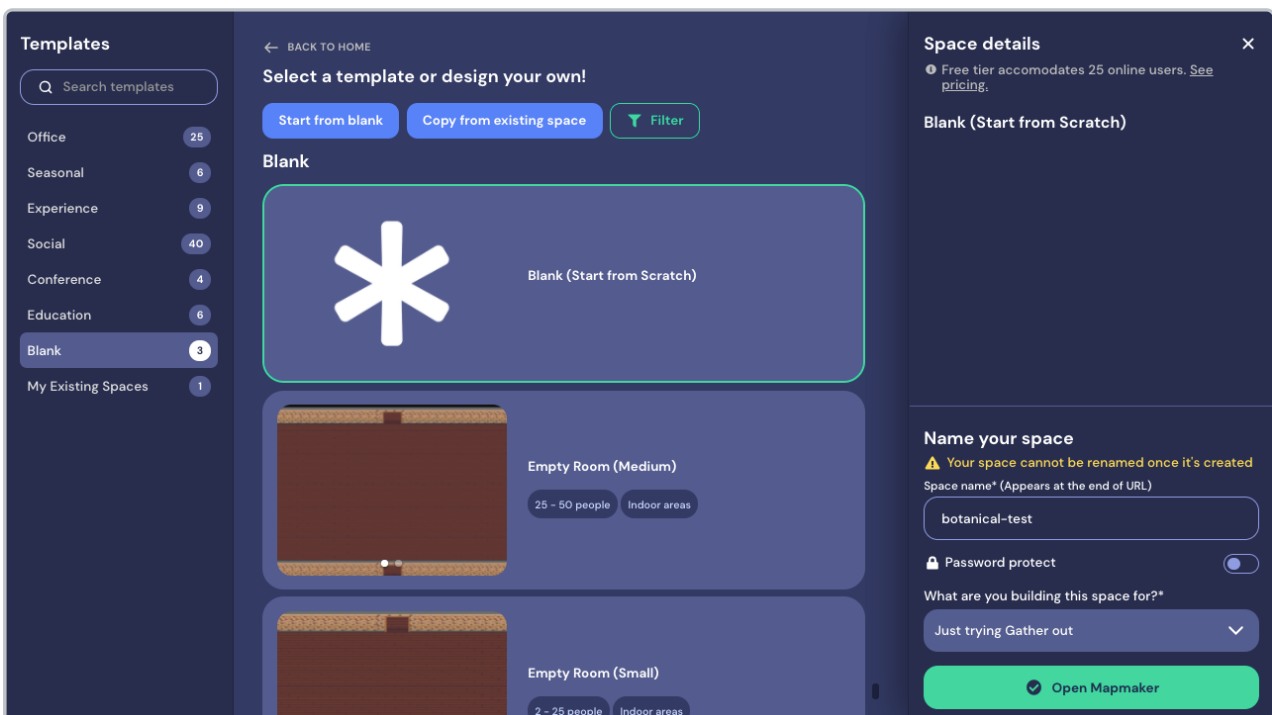
1. Create a Space

When you create a Space, you can choose from any of our templates or start with a blank Space.

Note: For details on how to use our templates, check out our article on [Creating a Space](#).

To create a completely custom Space, from our Template Picker (<https://app.gather.town/create>), select the **Start from blank** button at the top of the page, or choose one of the three options in the **Blank** category in the left panel.

- If you select the **Blank (Start from Scratch)** template, you will need to upload your own background image or create one using our Background Painter (in beta). Starting from scratch will take you straight into the Mapmaker.
- If you choose either of the Empty Room templates, we provide walls and a floor in a Map designed to initially accommodate 25-50 (Medium) or 2-25 (Small). Starting from one of these templates takes you into your Space, where you then need to select **Build** in the **Left Nav Menu** to open the Mapmaker.



From the Template Picker, select the **Start from blank** button or choose one of the options in the **Blank** category.

2. Create a Background

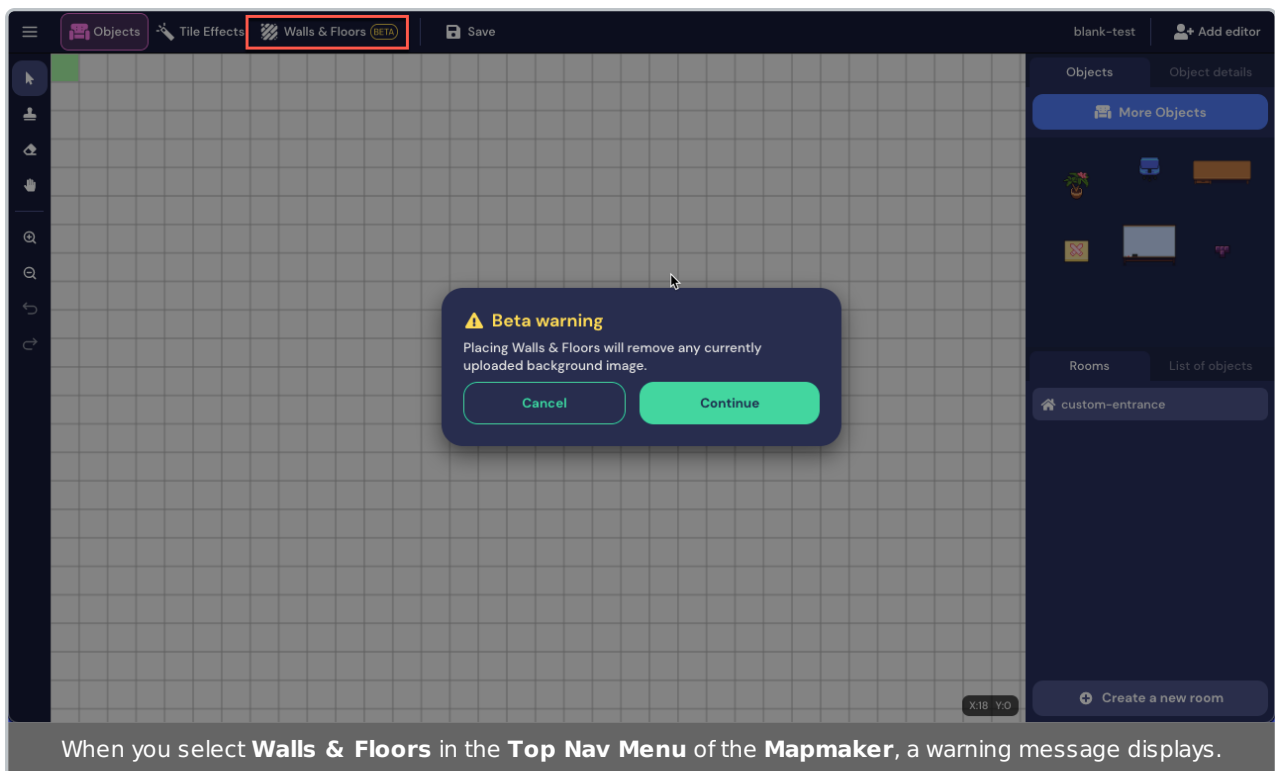
Backgrounds are managed from the Mapmaker. There are two ways to create a background at this time: use the Background Painter or upload your own image.

Background Painter [Beta]

The Background Painter is a powerful tool that allows you to draw your own walls and floors in your Map.

Warning: If you place walls or floors, you will remove the existing background. A warning message displays when you select **Walls & Floors** in the Mapmaker.

To use the Background Painter, select **Walls & Floors** in the **Top Nav Menu**. A warning message displays.



Select **Continue** to open the Background Painter.



Select **Walls** or **Floors**. We recommend that you start with drawing the walls first and then fill in the floors after the walls are built.

To use the wall tool, simply drag your mouse in a straight line (note that it should only be one tile tall for the walls and the tool auto-creates the depth). You can create corners, intersections, etc. as well!

Using the floor tool is even easier! Simply drag your mouse across the Map and the floors will fill in.

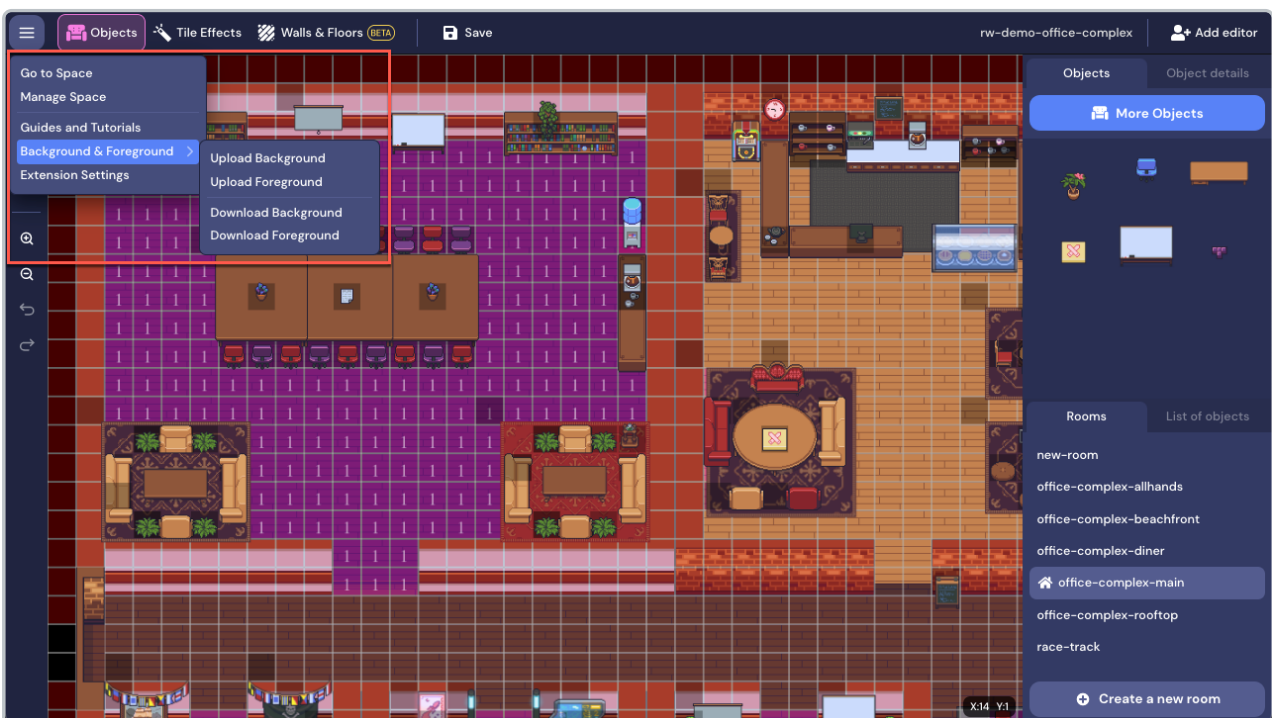


When you're satisfied, select **Done** in the **Top Nav Menu**. The Mapmaker will display with the Background Painter closed. If you're satisfied with your changes, select **Save**.

Note: Click **Done** in the Background Painter to check how your new walls and floors look with your existing Space. If you want to revert changes, simply close the tab and your changes will not be saved. If you are happy with how it looks, remember to click **Save** in the Top Nav Menu of the Mapmaker.

Upload a Custom Background

You can also create your custom background (and foreground) outside of Gather and then upload it in the Mapmaker. From the Mapmaker, select the hamburger menu, then select **Background and Foreground**. Select **Upload Background** or **Upload Foreground**, as appropriate.



Select the hamburger menu, then select **Background & Foreground**. Choose whether to upload your foreground or background.

Custom Background Specifications

You can use any photo editing program to create your background and foreground images. Images should be:

- A .png or .jpg file (Foregrounds must be use PNG for transparency)
- Scaled to fit a 32x32 pixel tile system (so height and width should both be multiples of 32)
- Files should be under 3MB
- Dimensions should be under 3200x3200 pixels
- Foregrounds and Backgrounds **MUST** have the same dimensions

Further Resources

- You can find and use our public tile set here: <https://github.com/gathertown/mapmaking>
- The third-party program [Tiled](#) is extremely helpful for creating backgrounds and objects for use in Gather.
- You can find non-Gather created Tiled assets that are available from other websites such as: <https://itch.io/game-assets/tag-pixel-art>
- We also have a tutorial on how to use Tiled, led by one of our in-house mapmakers that can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YhaaZIUe0p0gsaDzOgiXZHZ5T8JpWWc/view?usp=sharing>

Tip: As long as it's scaled to match our 32x32 pixel grid and in .png or .jpg format, you'll be able to upload it as a background or foreground.

3. Add Tile Effects

Add tile effects to govern how characters can interact with your Space. For example:

- Add Impassable effects to prevent people from walking through walls or decorative objects like statues or fountains.
- Add a [Spotlight effect](#) so someone can provide announcements to everyone in the Room.
- Add [Portal effects](#) to connect any added on rooms or Spaces.

Note: Read all about [Tile Effects](#) within Space Design.

4. Adding Objects

You can add a variety of objects to your Space to perfectly match your aesthetic! We offer a large variety of objects found through our Object Picker, or you can upload your own image assets.

Note: Read all about [Objects](#) within Space Design.