

GA4 101

Google Analytics 4, Explained in Plain Language

A friendly introduction for marketers, founders & SEOs

Understand the fundamentals without the jargon —
the mental model, the interface, and the reports that matter.

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About this book

If you have ever opened Google Analytics 4, stared at the menus, and quietly closed the tab again — this book is for you. GA4 is genuinely powerful, but it was designed by engineers for a very flexible data model, and the result is an interface that rarely explains itself. Most courses make it worse by drowning you in features before you understand the shape of the thing.

This little book does the opposite. It builds the mental model first, then walks you through the interface one room at a time, and only then introduces the advanced corners. By the end you will not be a certified analyst, but you will understand what GA4 is doing, where to click, and which numbers to trust.

TIP — How to read it

Read it once, front to back, with GA4 closed. The goal of the first pass is the mental model, not memorising buttons.

Read it a second time with GA4 open in another window, clicking along as each section is described.

Keep the glossary at the back open as a cheat sheet whenever a term stops making sense.

Throughout, you will see two kinds of boxes. A blue Key Idea box marks something worth remembering for good. An amber Tip box is a small practical shortcut. A red Watch Out box flags a place where beginners commonly get tripped up or misread their data.

Contents

1. What GA4 Is, and Why It Exists

Google Analytics 4 — GA4 for short — is a free tool that records what people do on your website or app and turns it into reports. When someone lands on your homepage, reads three articles, watches a video, and fills in a contact form, GA4 quietly notes each of those moments and lets you look back later to understand the pattern. That is the whole job: collect behaviour, then help you make sense of it.

GA4 replaced an older product, Universal Analytics, which most of the web ran on for over a decade. Google switched UA off in mid-2023, so today GA4 is simply what “Google Analytics” means. If you learned the old version years ago, set those habits aside — the differences are not cosmetic. GA4 measures the world in a fundamentally different way, and that difference is the single most important thing to understand before anything else.

What GA4 is good at

- **Seeing the whole journey.** It can follow a person across pages, sessions, and even between your website and your mobile app, treating them as one human rather than a pile of disconnected visits.
- **Measuring actions, not just visits.** Clicks, scrolls, downloads, video plays, form submissions, purchases — GA4 is built around the things people *do*, not only the pages they land on.
- **Predicting and grouping.** It uses machine learning to estimate things like how likely a user is to buy, and to build audiences you can reuse in advertising.
- **Being free and well-connected.** It plugs straight into Google Ads, Search Console, BigQuery and Looker Studio at no cost, which is why it dominates the market.

What GA4 is not

GA4 is not a perfectly accurate ledger. Ad blockers, cookie consent rejections, and privacy settings mean it never sees every single visitor, and it fills some gaps with modelled estimates. It is a powerful, directionally-honest instrument for spotting trends and comparing things — not a bank statement. Holding that expectation from day one will save you a great deal of frustration.

KEY IDEA

GA4 answers “what are people doing, roughly, and is it getting better or worse?” It does not answer “exactly how many humans, to the person, visited yesterday?” Treat it as a compass, not a stopwatch.

2. The Big Mental Shift: Everything Is an Event

Here is the one idea that unlocks all of GA4. In the old world, the basic unit of measurement was the pageview — a person loaded a page, and that counted as one thing. Reports were built on pages. In GA4, the basic unit is the event, and an event is simply “something happened.”

A page loading is an event (it is called `page_view`). But so is scrolling 90% of the way down an article (`scroll`). So is clicking a link that leaves your site (`click`). So is starting a video, finishing a video, downloading a PDF, or submitting a form. In GA4, all of these are the same type of object — an event — and every report is ultimately a way of counting and slicing events.

KEY IDEA — Events are the atoms of GA4

Pages, clicks, scrolls, purchases, sign-ups: in GA4 they are all events. Once you accept that everything is an event, the entire interface stops feeling random and starts feeling consistent.

Events carry parameters

An event on its own would not be very useful — knowing that “a page was viewed” tells you nothing about which page. So every event arrives with extra details attached, called parameters. Think of the event as a verb and the parameters as the description around it.

Example: a single `page_view` event might carry parameters such as `page_location` (the URL), `page_title` (the headline), and `page_referrer` (where the person came from). A purchase event carries value (how much), currency, and a list of the items bought. The event is the headline; the parameters are the story.

Why Google made this change

The old pageview model assumed the web was made of pages you visit one after another. But modern experiences — single-page web apps, mobile apps, infinite-scroll feeds, video players — do not work like that. A user can do twenty meaningful things without ever “loading a new page.” The event model can describe all of those things in one consistent language, and it works identically whether the action happens on a website or inside an app. That flexibility is the reason GA4 exists, and also the reason it feels less tidy than the old version: flexibility and simplicity always pull in opposite directions.

The old way (Universal Analytics)	The GA4 way
Built around pageviews and sessions	Built around events and users
“Goals” you configured to mark success	“Key events” you flag from existing events
Bounce rate was a headline metric	Engagement rate is the headline metric

The old way (Universal Analytics)	The GA4 way
Web and apps measured separately	Web and apps measured together in one property
Mostly described which pages were seen	Describes what people actually did

3. The Vocabulary You Actually Need

GA4 has dozens of terms, but you only need a handful to be dangerous. Learn these eight and most reports will start reading like plain English.

User

One person (more precisely, one browser or device that GA4 can recognise). If the same person visits on Monday and Friday, GA4 tries to count them as one user across both days.

Session

One sitting. A session begins when a user arrives and ends after 30 minutes of inactivity (or at midnight, or when the traffic source changes). One user can have many sessions over time.

Event

Something that happened, as described in Chapter 2. The fundamental unit of everything.

Engaged session

A session that lasted longer than 10 seconds, OR had a key event, OR included at least two page or screen views. This is GA4's way of separating “someone who actually paid attention” from “someone who bounced instantly.”

Engagement rate

The share of sessions that were engaged. If 100 sessions happen and 62 were engaged, your engagement rate is 62%. (The old “bounce rate” is simply the opposite: 100% minus engagement rate.)

Key event

An ordinary event that you have flagged as important — a purchase, a lead form, a newsletter sign-up. Marking an event as “key” tells GA4 “this is a goal; count it specially.” This is the single most renamed concept in GA4, so it gets its own chapter later.

WATCH OUT — “Key events” used to be called “conversions”

Google renamed conversions to key events at the end of 2024. If a course, blog post, or screenshot still says “conversions,” it means key events. Confusingly, when those same actions are imported into Google Ads, Google Ads still calls them conversions. Same thing, two names, depending on which tool you are standing in.

Dimension vs metric

A dimension is a quality — a label you can group by, such as Country, Device, Landing page, or Source. A metric is a number you can measure — such as Users, Sessions, or Key events. The easiest test: if you can put the word in front of “by” it is usually a dimension (“users by country”); if it is a count or a sum, it is a metric.

Almost every report is just a table of one or two dimensions crossed with one or more metrics.

KEY IDEA — The grammar of every report

Dimensions are the rows (the things you slice by). Metrics are the numbers in the columns. “Key events by landing page” = a dimension (landing page) crossed with a metric (key events). Once you see this pattern, you can read any GA4 table.

4. How GA4 Is Organised

Before you can read your data, it helps to understand the containers it lives in. GA4 has a simple three-level hierarchy, and getting these straight prevents a lot of confusion later — especially the difference between an account and a property, which trips up nearly everyone.

Account → Property → Data stream

1. **Account.** The top-level container, usually one per company or organisation. It mostly handles ownership and who has access. You rarely look at data at this level.
2. **Property.** This is the one that matters day to day. A property is a single dataset for a single business or product — all the reports, events, and key events live here. When someone says “open GA4,” they almost always mean “open this property.” A property can collect from your website and your app at the same time, blending them into one view.
3. **Data stream.** A source of data feeding into the property. A website is one stream; an iOS app is another; an Android app is a third. Most small businesses have exactly one stream — their website — and never think about this level again.

WATCH OUT — The part that confuses everyone

An account is not a property. One account can hold several properties (for example, one per client or per brand), and one property can hold several data streams (web + iOS + Android). When you cannot find your data, the usual cause is that you are looking at the wrong property in the property selector at the top of the screen.

There is also a special demo account Google provides — based on the Google Merchandise Store and a sample mobile game — that anyone can add for free. It is the safest possible playground: real data, real reports, and absolutely no way for you to break anything. Practising there while reading this book is highly recommended.

5. Getting Set Up (The Short Version)

You may already have GA4 installed, in which case skim this chapter. If you are starting fresh, here is the whole process in plain steps. The details of buttons shift slightly over time, but the shape never changes.

The five steps

4. **Create the property.** In Admin, create a new GA4 property and give it your business name and time zone. Set the time zone and currency correctly now — changing them later does not fix historical data.
5. **Create a web data stream.** Add a stream for your website URL. GA4 hands you a Measurement ID (it looks like G-XXXXXXX) and a small snippet of tracking code.
6. **Install the tag.** Put that code on every page of your site, ideally through Google Tag Manager or your platform's built-in Analytics field. “Every page” is the important part — a tag missing from some pages means missing data with no error message to warn you.
7. **Confirm it works.** Open the Realtime report, then visit your own site in another tab. If you see yourself appear within a few seconds, data is flowing.
8. **Leave Enhanced Measurement on.** This is a set of automatic events GA4 turns on by default, and for beginners it is a gift.

Enhanced Measurement: free events you get for nothing

Without writing a single line of code, GA4 will automatically record scrolls, outbound link clicks, site searches, video engagement (for embedded YouTube), and file downloads, in addition to the standard page views. This is called Enhanced Measurement, and it means a brand-new GA4 property is already capturing far more than the old version ever did out of the box.

TIP — Set it up once, correctly

Time zone and currency cannot be applied retroactively. Set them before you collect a month of data you will later misread. And verify the tag is on 100% of pages — partial installation is the most common silent failure in analytics.

6. Finding Your Way Around the Interface

Open GA4 and almost everything you need lives in a slim navigation strip down the left-hand side. There are five destinations. Learn what each one is for and the interface stops feeling like a maze.

Home

A personalised dashboard that tries to surface what is relevant based on what you usually look at. It is a fine landing spot but not where the real work happens — think of it as the lobby, not the rooms.

Reports

The pre-built, ready-made reports. This is where you will spend most of your early days: traffic sources, top pages, engagement, sales. If you only ever learn one section, learn this one. The whole of Chapter 7 is devoted to it.

Explore

The build-your-own-report workshop (it used to be called “Analysis”). Here you drag and drop dimensions and metrics onto a canvas to answer questions the standard reports cannot. Powerful, a little intimidating, and covered in Chapter 9.

Advertising

Focused on the return from your marketing spend and on attribution — which channels deserve credit for your key events. It becomes useful mainly once you have connected Google Ads. Chapter 12 demystifies it.

Admin

The settings room, marked with a gear icon. Creating properties, defining key events, linking Google Ads and Search Console, managing who has access — all the plumbing lives here. You visit occasionally to change something, not to read data.

KEY IDEA — A one-line map

Home = lobby. Reports = ready meals. Explore = the kitchen where you cook your own. Advertising = the spending dashboard. Admin = the settings room. That is the entire app.

Two more things to know about the chrome around every report. Top-right, there is a date range picker — by default it shows the last 28 days, and you can change it or compare two periods. And there is a Comparisons feature that lets you split any report by a condition (say, mobile users versus desktop users) side by side. Both are small controls that dramatically change what a report tells you, so it is worth noticing them early.

7. The Reports Section, Room by Room

The Reports section is the heart of everyday GA4. It is organised into a few groups; the most important is the life-cycle set, which mirrors the journey of a customer from first arriving to (hopefully) coming back. Walk it in order and it tells a story.

Realtime

Shows what is happening on your site in roughly the last 30 minutes: how many people are on right now, which pages they are on, and where they came from. It is mesmerising and almost useless for decisions — its real job is confirming that tracking works and watching the immediate effect of a launch or a social post.

Acquisition — where people come from

Acquisition answers “how did people find me?” It splits your traffic into channels: Organic Search (they found you on Google), Direct (they typed your address or the source is unknown), Organic Social, Referral (a link on another site), Email, Paid Search, and so on. For anyone working in SEO this is the most important report in the building, because it shows whether your organic channel is growing.

WATCH OUT — User acquisition vs Traffic acquisition

These two reports look almost identical and confuse everyone. User acquisition asks where a person came from the very first time they ever found you. Traffic acquisition asks where each session came from, including return visits. For “are my marketing efforts bringing new people?” use User acquisition; for “which channels drive activity overall?” use Traffic acquisition.

Engagement — what people do

Engagement is where the event model pays off. Here you find your most-viewed pages and screens, your list of events and how often each fired, your key events, and engagement metrics like average engagement time. If Acquisition is “how they arrived,” Engagement is “what they did once they were here.” The Pages and screens report is the spiritual successor to the old “top pages” report and is where you will check which content actually performs.

Monetisation — what they buy

Only relevant if you sell something and have e-commerce tracking set up, but if you do, this is gold: revenue, products purchased, average order value, promotions, and the checkout journey. For a content site or a lead-gen business with no online sales, this section will simply be empty, and that is fine.

Retention — whether they come back

Retention shows new versus returning users over time, and how long people keep coming back after their first visit. For subscription products and any business

built on repeat custom, this quietly answers the most important question of all: are the people you acquire actually sticking around, or are you filling a leaky bucket?

User reports — who they are

Two reports describe the people themselves. Demographics covers country, city, age, gender and interests (where available and consented). Tech covers browser, device category, operating system and screen size — invaluable for spotting, say, that your mobile experience converts half as well as desktop and deserves attention.

KEY IDEA — Read Reports as a funnel

Acquisition (they arrive) → Engagement (they do things) → Monetisation (they buy) → Retention (they return). Reading the section in that order turns a pile of menus into a single, sensible story about your customers.

8. Events and Key Events: The Heart of GA4

Because everything in GA4 is an event, understanding the few types of events — and how to promote one to “key” status — is the most valuable practical skill in this whole book. There are four flavours, arranged from “you get them for free” to “you build them yourself.”

1. Automatically collected events

GA4 fires these on its own the moment tracking is installed: `page_view`, `first_visit`, `session_start`, `user_engagement`. You do nothing; they simply appear.

2. Enhanced Measurement events

The bonus events from Chapter 5 — `scroll`, `click` (on outbound links), `view_search_results`, `video_start` and `video_complete`, `file_download`. Switched on by default, no code required. For most beginners these two free tiers already cover the majority of what you want to know.

3. Recommended events

A list of standard events Google suggests for common business types — `login`, `sign_up`, `search`, `purchase`, `generate_lead`, and many more. They are not automatic; someone has to implement them, usually via Google Tag Manager. The benefit of using Google's recommended names rather than inventing your own is that GA4 understands them and unlocks extra reporting features.

4. Custom events

Events you define yourself for things unique to your business — “downloaded the price list,” “used the mortgage calculator.” Maximum flexibility, but also maximum responsibility: you name them, you implement them, and you keep them tidy.

Turning an event into a key event

This is the part that matters most and is gloriously simple. In Admin, under Events, you will see a list of every event GA4 is collecting, each with a toggle or a star labelled “Mark as key event.” Flip it on, and from that moment GA4 treats that event as a goal: it appears in special columns across your reports, it powers key-event rates, and it can be sent to Google Ads to optimise campaigns.

TIP — Mark only what truly matters

If everything is a key event, nothing is. Reserve key-event status for the handful of actions that represent real business value — a purchase, a qualified lead, a demo booking. A scroll is interesting; it is not a goal. Three to five key events is plenty for most businesses.

WATCH OUT — The rename, one more time

Anything you previously set up as a “conversion” was automatically converted to a “key event” — you did not need to do anything. In GA4 they are key events. In Google Ads, the same actions imported across are still labelled conversions. The

action is identical; only the label changes with the room you are standing in.

9. Explorations: Building Your Own Reports

The standard Reports answer common questions. Sooner or later you will have an uncommon one — “where exactly do people abandon my checkout?” or “what path do users take before they sign up?” That is what the Explore section is for. It is a blank canvas where you drag dimensions and metrics into a table or chart to build precisely the view you need.

Explore can feel intimidating because it starts empty, but the workflow is always the same three moves: pick a technique (the shape of the analysis), drag in the dimensions and metrics you want, then refine with segments and filters. Here are the techniques worth knowing as a beginner.

Free-form

The default. A flexible pivot table where you decide the rows, columns, and values. If you have ever built a pivot table in a spreadsheet, you already understand this. Start here for almost everything.

Funnel exploration

Define a series of steps — viewed product, added to cart, began checkout, purchased — and GA4 shows you how many people made it through each one and, crucially, where they dropped off. This is the single most useful exploration for improving a website, because it points straight at your weakest step.

Path exploration

Shows the routes people actually take through your site, branching like a tree from any starting point. Useful for discovering the unexpected — the page everyone visits right before they leave, or the surprising journey that leads to sign-ups.

Segment overlap

Compares up to three groups of users (say, mobile users, buyers, and people from social media) as overlapping circles, revealing how much they intersect. Good for spotting that, for instance, almost none of your social traffic ever buys.

KEY IDEA — Explore is optional at first

You can run a perfectly healthy analytics practice for months on the standard Reports alone. Treat Explore as the place you graduate to once a specific question outgrows the ready-made reports — not a hurdle you must clear on day one.

10. Audiences, Segments and Comparisons

Three closely related features let you stop looking at “everyone, lumped together” and start looking at meaningful groups. Averages hide the truth; segmentation reveals it.

Comparisons

The lightest tool. In almost any standard report you can add a comparison — for example, “Device category = mobile” versus “Device category = desktop” — and see both lines side by side without leaving the report. It is the fastest way to answer “is this different for that group?” and the best habit a beginner can build.

Segments

Segments live in the Explore section and are more powerful, defined groups of users, sessions, or events — “users who bought,” “sessions from organic search,” “users who watched a video but never returned.” You build a segment once and reuse it across explorations.

Audiences

An audience is a segment with a future job. You define a group — “people who added to cart but did not buy” — and GA4 keeps that list fresh and, once linked, hands it to Google Ads so you can advertise to exactly those people (this is remarketing). Audiences are where analytics stops being a rear-view mirror and starts feeding your marketing.

KEY IDEA — Comparison vs segment vs audience

Comparison = a quick split inside a standard report, here and gone. Segment = a saved, reusable group for deep analysis in Explore. Audience = a living group built for action, especially advertising. Same idea, three levels of commitment.

11. Connecting GA4 to the Rest of Google

GA4 becomes far more useful once it talks to its siblings. Three links matter most, and the first two take about five minutes each in Admin.

Search Console (for SEO)

Linking Google Search Console pulls the actual search queries people typed to find you, plus your impressions and average position, directly into GA4. For anyone doing SEO this closes the loop: you can finally see not just that organic traffic arrived, but which queries drove it and what those visitors then did on the site.

Google Ads (for paid marketing)

Linking Google Ads lets cost data flow into GA4 and lets your key events flow back to Ads as conversions, so campaigns can optimise toward real outcomes. It also unlocks the Advertising section and lets you push audiences to Ads for remarketing. If you spend money on Google Ads, this link is not optional.

BigQuery (for the raw data)

This one is more advanced and entirely free for most volumes. GA4 can export every single raw event into BigQuery, Google's data warehouse, where analysts can query it with SQL far beyond what the GA4 interface allows. You do not need it as a beginner, but it is worth knowing it exists, because it is GA4's answer to "but I want the un-aggregated data."

TIP — Connect Search Console early

Even if you do nothing else, link Search Console on day one. It is free, takes minutes, and gives SEO-focused users the query-level insight the old version made you jump through hoops for.

12. Attribution Without the Headache

Attribution is the question of credit. A person sees your Instagram ad on Monday, googles you on Wednesday, clicks a newsletter link on Friday, and buys. Which channel gets credit for that sale? Attribution models are the different ways of answering that, and they live mostly in the Advertising section and in Admin's attribution settings.

You do not need to master this as a beginner. You need to understand two things: that the choice of model changes the numbers, and which model GA4 uses by default.

Last-click

Gives 100% of the credit to the final channel before the purchase. Simple, but it flatters whatever sits at the end (often Direct or branded search) and ignores everything that built awareness earlier.

Data-driven (the GA4 default)

Uses machine learning to share credit across all the touchpoints based on how much each actually seemed to influence the outcome. This is the default for new properties and generally the fairest picture, which is why Google now pushes everyone toward it. Note that first-click attribution was retired from GA4 reporting in 2026, so do not go looking for it.

WATCH OUT — Why your numbers might not add up

Data-driven attribution only switches on once a property has enough data (roughly hundreds of key events per goal within the lookback window). Below that threshold GA4 quietly falls back to last-click — so a small site may believe it is running advanced attribution while actually running the simplest model. If the picture looks suspiciously last-click-ish, this is usually why.

The practical takeaway: pick one attribution model, understand that it is a lens rather than a fact, and compare like with like over time. Switching models month to month and then panicking at the different numbers is a classic beginner trap.

13. The Metrics That Confuse Everyone

A few GA4 metrics look familiar but behave differently from their old-version namesakes, and a few are simply new. Here are the ones worth pinning to memory.

Metric	What it actually means
Users	Roughly the number of distinct people. “Total users” is everyone; “Active users” (the GA4 headline) is those who had an engaged session.
Sessions	Number of sittings. One user can produce many.
Engaged sessions	Sessions over 10 seconds, or with a key event, or 2+ pageviews.
Engagement rate	Share of sessions that were engaged. Replaces bounce rate.
Bounce rate	Still exists, but now simply means 100% minus engagement rate — the opposite of the headline number.
Average engagement time	Time the page was actually in focus, not just open in a tab. Stricter and more honest than old “time on page.”
Key events	Counts of the actions you flagged as goals (formerly “conversions”).
Event count	Total number of times any event fired — a raw volume number, easy to misread as “people.”
Views	Page or screen views. The closest thing to the old “pageviews.”

KEY IDEA — Engagement rate, not bounce rate

The biggest mindset change in the metrics: GA4 leads with engagement rate (good is high) where the old version led with bounce rate (good is low). They are mirror images. If a report feels backwards, check which of the two you are reading.

14. Common Beginner Mistakes

Almost everyone new to GA4 stumbles on the same handful of things. Knowing them in advance is half the cure.

- **Expecting perfect accuracy.** Consent banners, ad blockers and privacy settings mean GA4 never sees everyone. Use it for trends and comparisons, not for an exact head-count.
- **Looking at the wrong property.** If the numbers look wildly off, check the property selector at the top before assuming anything is broken. It is almost always this.
- **Confusing event count with people.** A high event count can come from a few very active users. When you mean “how many people,” use Users, not Event count.
- **Marking everything as a key event.** Dilutes the very signal key events exist to provide. Keep the list short and meaningful.
- **Comparing GA4 to other tools and panicking.** GA4, your ad platform, and your shopping cart all count differently. They will never match exactly. Compare each tool to its own past, not to the others.
- **Forgetting the date range.** Reports default to the last 28 days. A “sudden drop” is often just an incomplete current period or a leftover custom range from last week.
- **Ignoring the data-retention setting.** GA4's default retention for some exploration data can be as short as two months. Check it in Admin early and extend it if your plan allows, so historical analysis is possible later.

TIP — When a number looks wrong, check these first

1) Which property? 2) Which date range? 3) Users or events? 4) Engagement rate or bounce rate? Four questions resolve the large majority of “my data is broken” moments.

15. Your First 30 Days

Reading builds understanding; clicking builds skill. Here is a gentle, realistic plan to turn this book into competence over a month. None of it takes more than half an hour a day.

Week 1 — Look

- Add the free GA4 demo account and just browse the Reports section. Get lost on purpose.
- Find your own property and open the Realtime report while visiting your site in another tab.
- Read the Traffic acquisition report and write down your top three channels.

Week 2 — Understand

- Spend time in Engagement → Pages and screens. Identify your best and worst performing pages.
- Open the Events list in Admin and read what is being collected automatically.
- Add a Comparison (mobile vs desktop) to a report and notice what changes.

Week 3 — Configure

- Decide on three to five key events that represent real value for your business.
- Mark them as key events in Admin (or set them up via Google Tag Manager if they need implementing).
- Link Google Search Console, and Google Ads if you run it.

Week 4 — Explore

- Build one Free-form exploration: key events by landing page.
- Build one Funnel exploration for your most important journey and find the biggest drop-off.
- Write a short, plain-English summary of what you learned. Teaching it back is how it sticks.

KEY IDEA — The only habit that matters

Open GA4 for ten minutes a week with one specific question in mind — not to “check the numbers,” but to answer something real. Curiosity with a question beats hours of aimless dashboard-staring every time.

Quick Glossary

Keep this open as a cheat sheet. Definitions are deliberately plain rather than technical.

Term	Plain-English meaning
Account	Top-level container for ownership and access. Holds one or more properties.
Property	The actual dataset for one business or product. Where reports live.
Data stream	A source feeding a property: a website, an iOS app, an Android app.
Event	Something that happened. The basic unit of all GA4 measurement.
Parameter	Extra detail attached to an event (which page, how much, which item).
User	One recognised person/device. "Active users" is the headline count.
Session	One sitting; ends after 30 minutes of inactivity.
Engaged session	A session over 10s, or with a key event, or with 2+ views.
Engagement rate	Share of sessions that were engaged. The opposite of bounce rate.
Key event	An event flagged as a goal. Formerly called a "conversion."
Dimension	A label you group by (Country, Device, Landing page).
Metric	A number you measure (Users, Sessions, Key events).
Enhanced Measurement	Automatic events (scroll, search, video, downloads) on by default.
Exploration	A custom report you build in the Explore section.
Audience	A reusable group of users, often used for advertising.
Attribution	How credit for a key event is shared across channels.
Data-driven attribution	GA4's default model; ML shares credit across touchpoints.

A Closing Word

If you have read this far, you already know more about GA4 than most people who use it daily. You understand the one idea everything rests on — that everything is an event — and you have a map of the five rooms, the vocabulary to read any report, and a plan to build real skill over a month.

GA4 will keep changing; Google moves things, renames features, and adds machine learning wherever it can. But the foundations in this book change slowly, and they are the part worth owning. The menus will rearrange themselves; your mental model will not.

The rest is practice. Open it with a question, find the answer, and let curiosity do the teaching. That is the whole secret, and it is a surprisingly enjoyable one.

— mimozabilisim.com