UNDERSTANDING NODES IN N8N

🎯 What this lesson is about:

In this lesson, you learned what nodes are, how they function, and how they fit into workflows. You explored node categories, how to use them, and how to keep your automations organized and efficient.

🔧 What is a node?

Nodes are the basic building blocks of every automation in n8n. Each node performs one specific task. When you connect them, you build a **workflow** (like a recipe).

- Nodes = steps/ingredients
- Workflow = full recipe
- Execution = each time the automation runs

📂 5 Main Categories of Nodes in n8n:

1. **Trigger nodes** – Start workflows when something happens (e.g. a form is submitted, a file is uploaded, or an email arrives)
2. **Action nodes** – Perform tasks like sending emails, updating spreadsheets, or making API requests
3. **Data transformation nodes** – Modify, filter, or restructure data (e.g. Set, Merge, Code nodes)
4. **Logic nodes** – Add decision-making (e.g. IF node, Switch, Wait)
5. **Output nodes** – Send results to external apps or store them (e.g. send reply via WhatsApp, email, or Telegram)

🧱 Node Structure – Each node has 3 parts:

- **Parameters** – Settings that define the node's behavior (like filters, fields, or API details)
- **Input/Output** – Data it receives and passes to the next node
- **Credentials** – Optional authentication for services like Gmail, Slack, Google Sheets

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📂 Node Categories in the Interface:

When you click "Add Node", you'll find categories like:

- **App actions** – Perform tasks in other tools (e.g. send an email)
- **Data transformation** – Modify or filter data
- **Flow control** – Manage how the automation runs (e.g. loops, branches)
- **Core** – Handle technical tasks (e.g. HTTP requests, webhooks)
- **Advanced AI** – Use AI tools to summarize, search, or build agents
- **Triggers** – Start the automation from specific events (you can add more than one per workflow)

Use the search bar to quickly find a node (e.g. type "Gmail").

🛠️ Best Practices for Working with Nodes:

- **Name your nodes clearly** – Use names like "Filter High-Value Customers" instead of "Node 1"
- **Add comments** – Explain complex steps for future reference
- **Test nodes step-by-step** – Catch problems early
- **Keep your canvas organized** – Make it easy to read and debug
- **Watch your data flow** – Always know what’s going in and out of each node