

Introduction to Moodle: Lesson 2

Assignments

Assignments can be many things: essays to turn in, online quizzes, answers to questions, anything you ask the students to do. As an example in this lesson, we will suppose you are going to assign an essay for students to write using Microsoft Word. Part of the students' assignment is to upload their completed Word files to Moodle, where you can retrieve them for grading.

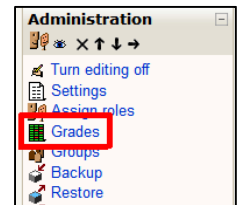
To set up an assignment, you must do two things:

- Define an Assignment category under the Grades category in the Moodle gradebook
 - This only needs to be done once.
- Add the assignment(s) to Moodle
 - You can include as many assignments in the Assignment category as you want

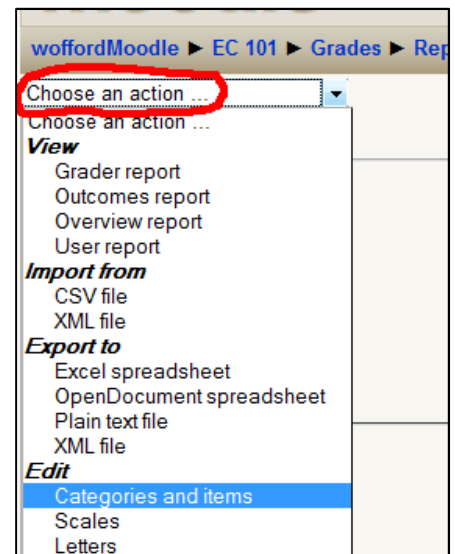
The final step, of course, is grading the assignments and recording the grades in the Moodle gradebook. This step will be covered in *Lesson 7: Student & Professor View*.

Defining an Assignment Category in the Gradebook

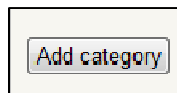
First, we will set up an **Assignment Category** in the Moodle Gradebook. Click on **Grades** in the **Administration** menu. This will send you to the Gradebook.



In the Gradebook, click on **Choose an action** and **Categories and items**.



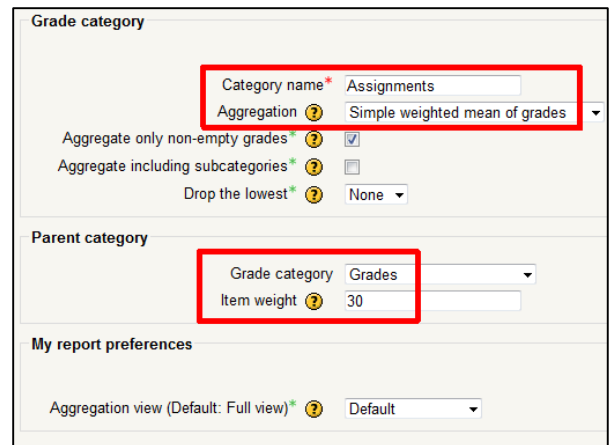
In the next screen, click on the **Add a category** button.



You will be asked to name the category and to specify how the grades within the category will be aggregated. For this example, let's call the category simply "Assignments."

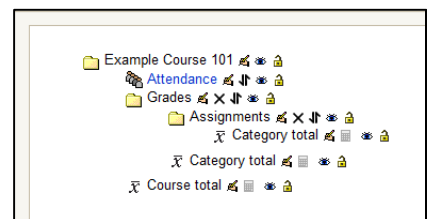
Leave the aggregation method as **Simple weighted mean of grades**.

You also can choose to ignore empty grades and to drop a specified number of lowest grades.



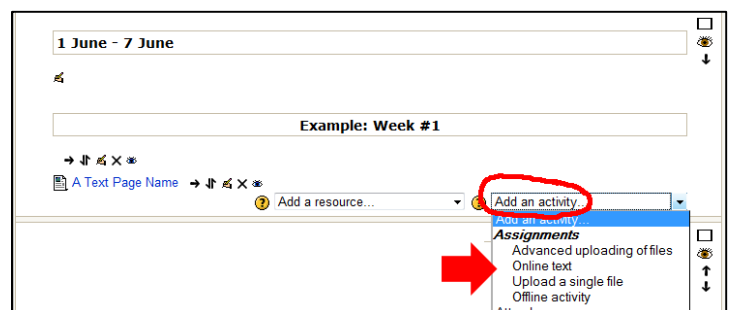
Finally, include the assignments in the **Grades** category and give the Assignments Category an **item weight** that corresponds to how much the assignments count in the course. I chose an item weight of 30, because assignments count 30% of the total course grade¹.

When you **Save Changes** you will see the Assignments category listed under the Grade items.



Adding an Assignment

To give the students an assignment for the week, click on **Add an activity** on the course Homepage. At the top of the activity menu, you will see *Assignments*.



There are four types of assignment:

1. Advanced uploading of files

The students may prepare one or more files (Word document, Excel spreadsheet, image, etc.) and upload them to the Moodle server, where you will be able to view them. *You should choose this option if you wish to be able to upload files when you post grades, for instance if you wish to upload a Word document with comments in the margins.*

2. Online text

The students will be able to submit text, for example answers to questions or reflective writing, using the normal Moodle editing tools.

3. Upload a single file

Similar to advanced uploading of files, except that you have fewer options

4. Offline activity

The assignment is performed outside of Moodle. The students will see a description of the assignment, but won't need to upload files or enter text into Moodle.

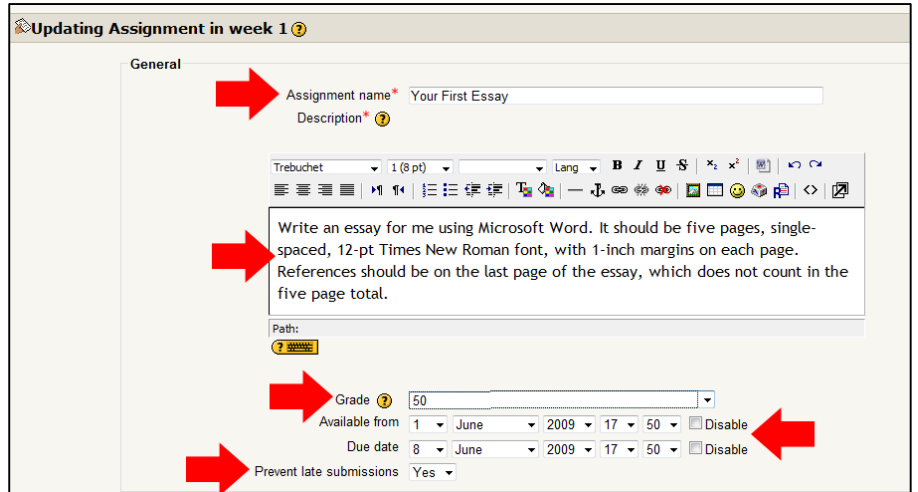
¹ Remember that in this example, we are grading four types of activities: exams (40%), written assignments (30%), online discussions (20%), and online quizzes (10%).

As mentioned above, in our example for this lesson you want students to write an essay and submit it as a Word file. Choose an **Advanced uploading of files** assignment from the **Add an activity** menu. You then will see a page on which you can describe the assignment and make several choices about how it will be made available to students:

For example, you can **name** the assignment and **describe** it

Select the maximum grade for the assignment in the **Grade** menu

You can choose the **time period** during which the assignment will be available. If you do not wish to restrict these options, you can simply choose “**disable**” and disregard the dates.

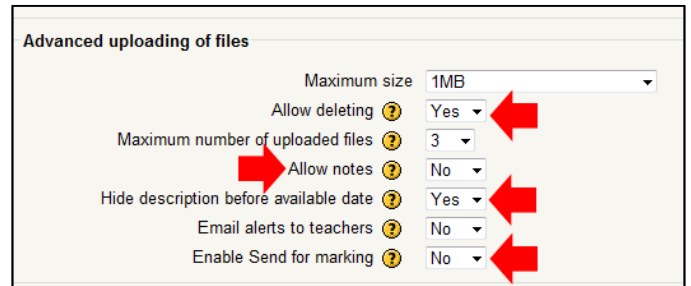


You also can prevent students from submitting an assignment late.

You can choose to allow students to delete a file they have submitted and whether they can leave you a text note with their submitted assignment.

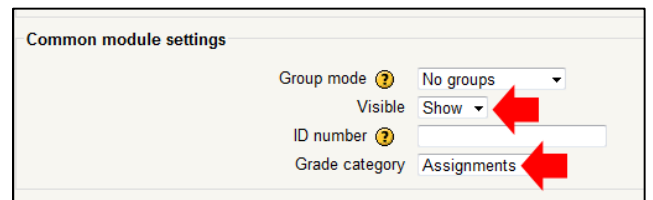
“Hide description before available date” hides the description of the assignment before its first available date.

*You probably want to select **No** for **Enable Send for marking**. If this is enabled, you will get an email message every time a student submits a paper in final form. Enough email is enough.*



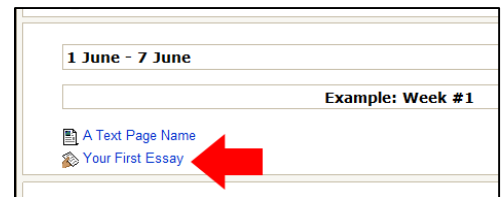
If you choose “Show” for the “Visible” setting, the link to the assignment will be visible on the course Homepage.

Select **Assignments** as the **Grade category**.



If you do not understand any of the options, click on the question mark  to see a description of the option. Click on **Save and return to course** when you are ready.

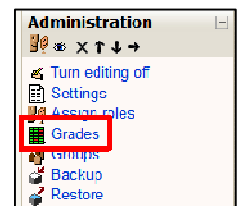
You should see the assignment posted on the course Homepage. If the Visible setting in the assignment set-up was chosen as “Show,” the students should see something like the picture at the right.



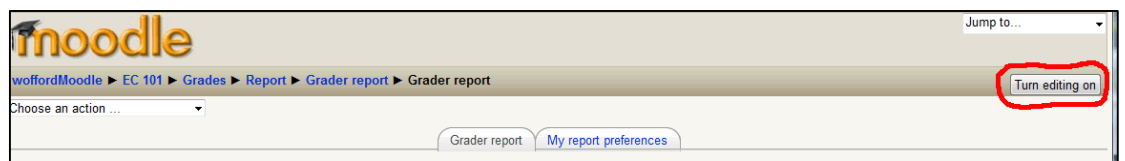
For practice, you might add two more assignments called “Essay 2” and “Essay 3.” Put them in other weeks of the course.

Hiding an Item in the Moodle Gradebook

You may not want a student to see an assignment in the Moodle gradebook until after you have finished with grading. To hide an assignment in the gradebook, click on **Grades** in the **Administration** menu.

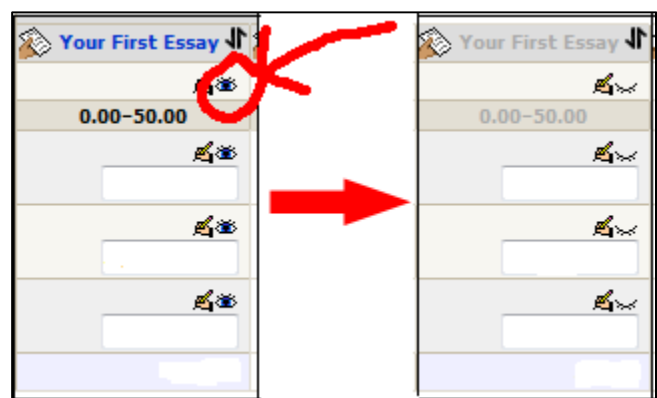


Click on **Turn editing on**.



Find the column for this assignment and click on the **Eye icon** at the top of the column. This will change the open eye to a closed eye, indicating that students will not see this assignment.

To make the assignment visible to students, click on the closed eye icon, which will open the eye again.



This will work for any item in the Moodle gradebook.

Note: The ways that students can submit assignments and you can retrieve the assignments and record the grades are described in *Lesson 7: A Student's and a Professor's View*.