Setup

1. Consider your purpose and goals for using Perusall

   Your goals of why and how you want to use Perusall will simplify much of the decision making for course setup. For instance:

   - Are you looking to replace traditional discussion boards with a more student-friendly interface that alleviates your grading load?
   - Do you want to hold your students accountable for engaging with content outside the classroom?
   - Is encouraging asynchronous interaction between students important to you?
   - Do you want to see a deeper level of cognitive engagement with content?

   Knowing your purpose and what you hope to help students achieve through using the platform will guide your choices in the setup steps that follow.

2. Determine your preferences for analytics

   The first decision is whether or not to use Perusall’s analytics. You can change your mind at any time.

   To access the analytics settings, select the Settings option from the left navigation pane. On the General tab, you will see the different analytics settings Perusall provides:
The default option of **Automatic grading and engagement analytics** automatically scores all assignments for you based on the criteria you select, and makes analytics about student engagement available to you. If you prefer to grade manually but want access to engagement analytics, select **Manual grading and engagement analytics**. If you do not plan to use Perusall for grading at all but still want access to analytics, disable grading entirely by selecting **Disable grading, but provide engagement analytics**. Finally, if you do not want to have any learning analytics available in your course, select **Disable all analytics**.

3. **Establish scoring criteria**

If you choose to leave automatic scoring enabled, your next important setup step is to move to the **Scoring tab** under **Settings**. We will focus on the **Automatic scoring criteria** section. You can read more about **Assignment Score Range and Threshold Score for Credit** in the blog post on [Perusall Scoring Options: Annotation Content Only](#).

To make it easy to establish grading criteria that align with your goals, Perusall provides five preset scoring settings as seen in screenshot below: **Holistic, Annotation Content Only, Focus on Reading/Watching, Focus on Social Engagement**, and **Focus on Quizzes**. Based on your purpose for using Perusall, you can select and adjust a preset that emphasizes what you consider most important, or build your own.

Depending on the preset option you select, Perusall will reassign percentage values to each of its scoring criteria categories. The screenshot below is taken from the **Holistic** preset, so values are more evenly distributed across categories. You can also manually adjust values after choosing a preset to ensure they more accurately reflect your goals.
Selecting your scoring criteria before setting up assignments means that you will not need to address the **Scoring** tab when you go to set up your assignments unless you plan to override any of these preset options.

You can set the weights however you like; they can add up to more than 100% to give students more ways to get to full credit. As most instructors do not want Perusall to be a high-stakes part of the course grade, we suggest keeping the scoring lenient by making the weights add up to well over 100%.

4. **Gather course materials**

Perusall makes it easy to pull materials into your course. In the left navigation menu, select **Course Home** and go to the **Library** tab. Once there, click the **Add Content** button to see your list of options for gathering materials into your Perusall library.

One of the best features of Perusall is that you can easily create a low or no cost course by using journal articles available through your library, self-created materials,
webpages, YouTube videos, podcasts, etc. If you do want to have students use a book, Perusall’s catalog is extensive—students simply purchase the book through Perusall and then you can assign parts of the book at any time. If the catalog doesn’t contain what you’re looking for, scroll down until you see the option to **Request a title not in the catalog.** Perusall will contact the publisher on your behalf to make the book available. If you have materials that are not freely shareable with students (e.g., a book chapter), upload the content and then click **Clear digital rights** to leverage Perusall’s partnership with the Copyright Clearance Center—students simply pay a small copyright clearance fee to access the materials.

5. Create assignments

Your last setup step is to create assignments from the materials in your library. To do this, select the library item you would like to associate with an assignment. A new pane will open on the right side of your screen with the options shown in the screenshot below. Select the **Assign** button.

The screenshot below shows the new window that will pop open with options for assigning the content. You can choose to assign all of the content, sections based on the table of contents, or page ranges. You can also **Add another part** from your library if you want to bundle multiple content items into one assignment. (For example, you might have students read a chapter from the textbook, watch a video, and then respond to a short quiz.)
The **Options** tab provides a number of other optional settings, but for quick and easy set up purposes, you need only enter a submission deadline. Since you’ve already set up your scoring options, you can ignore the scoring tab unless you want to override the presets you established under **Settings**.

That’s it! Your course is all set up and ready to go! Next, we’ll cover a few tips to ensure that you and your students have a successful semester using Perusall.

### Encouraging Student Use

1. **Share course joining information with students**

   If you already have a Perusall integration for your campus LMS, getting students into Perusall is easy: students simply click a link in your LMS to launch into your Perusall course (or into a specific assignment). Consult the Perusall support guide relevant to your LMS, contact your campus LMS support, or contact support@perusall.com for more guidance.

   **LTI 1.3**
   - Blackboard Integration
   - Canvas Integration
   - Desire2Learn/Brightspace (D2L) Integration
   - Moodle Integration

   **LTI 1.1**
   - Blackboard Learn Integration
   - Blackboard Ultra Integration
   - Canvas Integration
   - Desire2Learn/Brightspace (D2L) Integration
   - Moodle Integration
   - Sakai Integration
If you are using Perusall as a standalone platform, provide students the course code to self-enroll: go to **Settings** and select the **Access** tab; the first option will be the **Student course code**. Students will create a Perusall account (at [https://perusall.com](https://perusall.com)) and as part of the registration process they will be prompted to enter the code to join your course.

2. **Be clear to your students about why they are using Perusall**

   Just as course setup is easier if you know your purpose for using Perusall, getting buy-in from students is easier when they know why you’ve asked them to use this additional technology. Communicate to your students the course learning outcomes that Perusall supports (developing critical thinking skills, engaging with peers, building metacognition, etc). It’s best to do this in several places: in a synchronous first meeting, the syllabus, the course welcome module, or the Perusall course home welcome message.

3. **Demonstrate features you want students to use**

   Knowing your goals for using Perusall will also help you determine what features you would like students to use the most. Perusall has many exciting bells and whistles when it comes to engaging with content and other students in the assignments. Student resources like the [Perusall student support pages](https://perusall.com/support) or the [Perusall student page](https://perusall.com/student) make it easy for students to learn features. Consider asking students to practice using these features in the first assignment, to focus your students on what’s most important to you based on your goals.

   **Tagging each other with @mentions**

   Do you want to promote student-student interaction? Teach students to use the @name, @conversation, and @everyone features to ensure they’re talking to each other. Students (and instructors!) will be notified by email and in the app whenever they @mention each other.
Identifying themes with #hashtags
Interested in fostering intertextual connections or identifying consistent themes or terms across the semester? Consider establishing and encouraging students to establish #hashtags. Students (and instructors!) can see in one place all comments that have a particular #hashtag.

Upvoting and question flags
Students can upvote each others’ comments and questions to indicate that they found a particular comment helpful, or that they have the same question. If students will be graded on their use of upvoting, be sure to have them practice using that feature. Students can also flag a comment of theirs as a question if Perusall doesn’t automatically detect it as such. If you want to use the Confusion Report, have students make sure that their questions are marked as such since the Confusion Report will only consider questions as part of its analysis.

4. Provide a practice assignment
Once you’ve shown students what you want them to do, give them the opportunity to practice doing it. The first assignment should focus as much on using Perusall as it should on getting acquainted with content. Consider using your syllabus as the first assignment. Not only will students have an opportunity to practice using the platform in a low-stakes manner, they may also surprise you with the questions they ask and the comments they leave—and they’ll read the syllabus!
Be sure to follow up with students on their initial experience in Perusall. Allow them to ask questions or clarify concerns during a synchronous discussion or in an open discussion board. Ensuring that their questions and concerns are addressed helps students feel more comfortable using the technology and promotes a more positive user experience.

5. Be present

Depending on your course goals, you may want to help students get excited about participating in discussion by demonstrating your presence in the course.

Here are a few ways you can spark discussion within Perusall:

- Upvote helpful or insightful student comments
- Use the @name, @conversation, and @everyone tags to draw student attention to your response
- Star comments to easily return to them in class or in a weekly video
- Create your own highlights with instructor-driven prompts to get students to focus on specific pieces of the content

However, you may opt to not be present at all. By allowing Perusall to be a student-led resource, students can feel confident answering each other’s questions without worrying they will give the “wrong” answers. Students often find they enjoy interacting with each other on the platform. The more comfortable students feel expressing their thoughts and opinions, the better—so as to spark discussion and drive students towards deeper thinking and understanding.

Read more about these tips in the [Getting Started with Perusall blog](#).

We hope these tips will help you set up your course quickly and ensure that you and your students have an optimal experience using Perusall!
Need help?
Instructor Support Pages

Have more questions?
Contact support@perusall.com