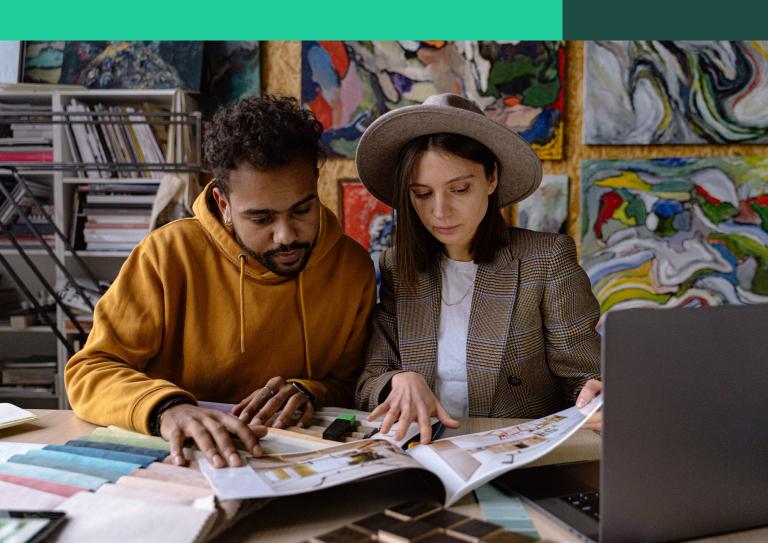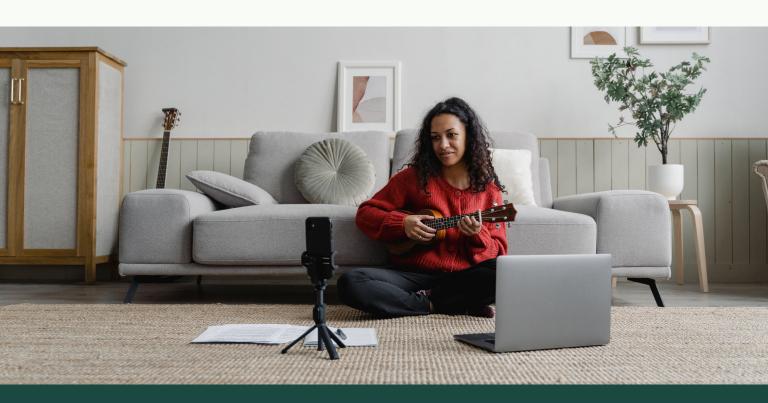# Content types and when to use them

A teachable:u workbook

Introduction

Teachable can support almost any type of content you can imagine, from PDFs to screencasts to video to quizzes—and beyond.

Unfortunately, this abundance of choice can be paralyzing for new course creators. You may feel unsure about choosing which content types make the most sense for each of your lessons, and you may also be confused about how to create your content once you have a plan.

Let's walk through our 5 favorite types of content and when to use them...

teach:able

1. Text and Photos

A text and photo lesson uses a combination of text and photos (or graphics) to walk students through a particular concept.

✓ Great for:

Simple concepts, or lessons that can be demonstrated with a photo or visual.

✕ Not for:

Complex topics that require a lot of words to explain. The kinds of things that are difficult to convey in a text message but easy to share over a phone call.

2. Downloadables

A downloadable—most often a PDF—is a resource or workbook that students can use and reference outside of your course. Downloadables can come in any document type, or even as linked Google Drive files for students to copy and use.

✓ Great for:

Concepts and formulas students will need to visit over and over again. Workbooks, cheat sheets, or resource material that you want students to easily reference. You can imagine students printing this out and sticking it on the fridge or bulletin board.

✕ Not for:

Complex topics that require a lot of words to explain, or concepts that are tough to convey in a few pages.

3. Slide Decks

Slide decks—like PowerPoint, Keynote, or Google Slides—are a great way to visually walk students through your material one step at a time

✓ **Great for:**

Simple concepts, or lessons that can be demonstrated with a photo or visual.

✗ **Not for:**

Complex topics that require a lot of words to explain. The kinds of things that are difficult to convey in a text message but easy to share over a phone call.

Pro-tips:

If you plan to present your slides with a voiceover, you can use a slide deck for a more complex, dense topic—you'll be able to explain it all as students view the slides. If you plan to simply upload the slide deck for students to flip through on their own, it should cover very simple topics that are easy to convey with a few words and visuals.

4. Screencasts

Screencasting, or screen recording, means recording whatever you see on your own computer screen. Often, when screencasting, you'll also include an audio voiceover, which you can record at the same time or after you have the video recorded.

✓ Great for:

Walking students through a lesson, or even showing them how to do something on your computer, step-by-step. Screencasts are great for concepts that are difficult to explain but easy to demonstrate.

✕ Not for:

Demonstrating physical skills, like crafting or building.

Pro-tips:

Screencasts allow you to teach without having to show video of yourself, but they are a little less personal than recorded video, since your students can't see you.

5. Videos

Recorded video lets students watch you explain or demonstrate lessons. Recorded video of your face is also the most engaging type of online course content since many students learn best when they have a person to explain to them.

✓ Great for:

Teaching lessons directly to students, interviewing experts, demonstrating physical tasks (like cooking, crafting, making art, doing sports or athletics, etc.).

✗ Not for:

Computer program demos, like teaching someone how to use InDesign or Photoshop. Simple concepts that could be explained in a few bullet points or with a photo. Reference material that students might want to download. Lengthy topics that students might prefer to skim or cherry-pick.

Other content types:

Comments encourage students to interact with you, the instructor. Comments can also be a great way for students to see what others have done at different points in the course. You can enable comments on your course through Teachable.

Audio can be used in unusual cases where you don't need visuals, such as guided meditation. That said, most topics would benefit from a visual component, whether that means a video, a screencast, or even a bullet point list.

Communities (or forums) allow students to interact with each other, and also with you. They can be a great way to offer support, and for students to help each other (instead of relying only on you, the instructor). Communities are a value add to your course. On Teachable's pro plan and business plan you can create your own in-course community with Circle.

Quizzes are great for keeping students engaged. They allow you to ask questions to check for understanding, and let students know if they're on track. Quizzes are available on all Teachable plans.