teach:able

Choose your course topic

A teachable:u workbook

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Stop

Welcome! This is the companion workbook to our Teachable Academy course Choose Your Course Topic.

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Here's how it works. In this course, we'll teach you everything we know about building an online course business. But knowledge alone isn't enough—you need to take action! That's why we created this editable workbook for you to download or print and fill in the blanks, so you know exactly what steps to take to create your best possible online course business.

We designed this workbook to follow along with the lessons in our course. If you find yourself getting stuck, go back to the course and see if one of our videos can help you out.

If you still need help, check out teachable:hq. This is a community full of course creators just like you, and we encourage you to ask questions and get involved in the conversation.

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Teachable resources

Not sure what to do next, or need help getting unstuck?

teachable:hq

Head to teachable:hq, our members-only community hosted inside Teachable. Your paid plan gives you free access to the community where you'll get access to other creators in your same business stage. Get encouragement, advice, and insider tips.

Teachable blog

Peruse Teachable's Blog for case studies, tips, and in-depth articles on how to start your online course business, create your content, and market your course.

teachable:u

Consult teachable:u for detailed, step-by-step articles on using Teachable, and answers to common questions.

Support

Submit a Support Ticket to get an answer straight from Teachable's dedicated customer care team.

Teachable exists to help people like you turn their knowledge into a successful online business. We're here to help, and we can't wait to see what you create!

Why online courses?

Not sure what to do next, or need help getting unstuck?

Teachable gives you an online space to host your online courses. We call your Teachable site a school, and you can add any number of courses to your school. You can deliver the content via email, but it lives in your Teachable course at a special domain. And since you can make your content available to any students who have a login, courses on Teachable are usually more flexible and less formal than traditional university courses.

And how can these online courses benefit you? Let's take a look at the common benefits of teaching online:

You can start over. If you're looking to make a career or lifestyle change, an online course like this can help you build up a reputation as an expert, make **passive income,** and earn money from anywhere.

You can stop selling your time. If you are getting burned outoffering your time to clients, an online course can be a lifesaver.

You can translate some of your services to an online course, and offer them to clients who can't afford your hourly rate for 1-on-1 attention, or get stuck on your waiting list.

If you earn money sharing your knowledge at training events, in classrooms, or as a coach, you can **translate part of your program to an online course.** You'll be able to share your knowledge with people who don't come hear you in person,
and earn more without doing more.

You can monetize your following. If you have an online following and already create content, you can expand some of what you know into an online course and offer it to your fanbase at a higher price point than you would a simple product like an ebook. It can get you income that doesn't depend on partnerships, sponsorships, or other external factors.

It's okay if your answer is none of the above, and you just want to do something fun and creative!

Find your "why"

Chances are, you already have some ideas brewing for your online course. In case you're stumped, here's how to get a clear picture of the courses you could teach online.

Your course topic should be a combination of what you know, what you love, and what your audience wants and needs.

But before you get into those details, think about why you want to create an online course. **Why do you want to teach online?**

- Could it be to make more money?
- To make passive income and have more freedom in your life?

- To quit your day job?
- Or maybe you are a freelancer or consultant, and you can't meet the demand from clients?
- Maybe you're sick of doing the same in-person workshop or training over and over again, and you want to automate it.
- Do you want to make money without doing more work?
- Is it a passion project? A way to spend time with your family?

You need to be clear on your goals if you want to pick the course topic that will help you meet those goals.

Why do you want to create an online course?

- Want to do something fun (unrelated to day job)
- Passion project
- Help make an impact; help others

Choose your school topic

Brainstorm your school topic

Now that your why is out of the way, you can think about your school's overall topic. To brainstorm your topic, we'll walk through 3 things: **what you know, what you love, and what people need from you.**

Remember, you have ONE school per Teachable account. Your school is the big repository where any and all courses you create will live. All of your mini courses, standard courses, and flagship courses will fall under this umbrella topic. (Already have a topic in mind? You're welcome to skip ahead.)

What do you know?

• What are you an expert on?
• What jobs have you had?
• What skills do you have?
• What are your success stories?

• Worked in publishing, now paid advertising
• Business school
• Mom
• Buys/leases properties
★ • Cooking & baking (maybe cookie decorating, specifically)
• Excel
★ • Hosting gatherings (birthday parties)

What do you love?

• What do you enjoy doing?
• How do you spend your weekends?
• What do you enjoy learning?
• What do you do without pay?

• Loves dogs
• Traveling
• Getting together with family
★ • Being with the kids (2 girls)
★ • Desserts (baking, decorating cookies)

What do people need?

• How could you help other people?
• How have you helped people?
• What do friends come to you for?

• Help getting organized
★ • Help making things simpler
• Help making $$$$$
• Job advice
• Relieve stress

Pick your school topic

Highlight or star the ideas you feel most excited about. Cross off anything overly challenging or unenjoyable. Now it's time to choose your favorite as the winner!

Baking/desserts – cookie decorating!

Find your first course idea

Now that you have a school topic, let's talk about the kinds of courses that might fall under that broad umbrella. (Just like universities have classes, your school may have multiple course.)

Brainstorm course ideas

Try to list 3-5 before we eventually narrow it down to one. These course ideas might include small mini courses, standard courses, or even flagship courses. (Don't filter anything out just yet!)

Pro tip if it's challenging for you to come up with more than one idea, your overall school topic might be too specific.

- How to decorate cookies
- Make and decorate cakes
- How to host a cookie decorating party
- How to decorate cookies with frosting
- How to decorate cookies with royal icing like the pros
- How to decorate cookies with chocolate
- Advanced cookie decorating
- How to use royal icing
- Know how to decorate different kinds of cookies
- Cookie decorating for kids

Choose your course idea

It's time to narrow in on one idea! First, eliminate the mini course and flagship course ideas for now—you want to focus on your standard, regularsized course. If you're still having trouble choosing one standard course idea, these questions should help you decide:

- Which course idea is the easiest, fastest and least expensive for you to create?
- Which course idea will you enjoy the most?
- Which course idea aligns with your long-term goals?

- How to decorate cookies

Validate your idea

"What if I spend all my time creating a course, only to find out that no one wants it, no one will buy it, and I wasted my time and money?"

Do you have this worry? Most new course creators do. Luckily, you can avoid that fate. You don't have to guess if there is a market for your course topic—and you shouldn't! In fact, it's imperative that you know that your course is a good idea before you create it. In other words, you need to validate your course topic.

You can follow a simple framework that online expert Jeff Cobb showed us here at Teachable. It involves four categories of research: searching, listening, asking, and testing.

Choose your validation methods

Searching
☐ Google   ☐ Amazon
☐ Buzzsumo   ☐ Udemy

Asking
☐ Niche forums   ☐ Interviews
☐ Surveys   ☐ Focus groups

Listening
☐ Quora   ☐ Your blog
☐ Feedly   ☐ Analytics

Testing (optional)
☐ Lead magnets

Find your audience

There are several reasons why it's important to know your audience as early as possible in your course creation journey.

1. You need to know exactly what their pain points and goals are.
2. You need to know where to find your audience.
3. You need to know what will attract them.

Broad demographics

Start by describing your audience as broadly as possible. Some helpful (optional) prompts:

- Is your audience mostly located in a specific country?
- What language does your audience speak?
- What's the level of education?
- What age range are most of them?
- Are there any other identifying characteristic or similarities in the group?

- Not country-specific, although ingredients will be measure in volume (US standard)
- English-speaking (because our course is in English)
- Doesn't matter male/female/they/other ID
- Level of education - doesn't matter
- Age-range - any age

Sub-segments

Once you have a very general idea of who you could target, you'll want to get more specific. What groups of people might be interested in your course? List at least 3-4 groups and pick the group you think would be most likely to pay and benefit from your course.

- Aspiring bakers -- most likely teen/young adult, early career.
- Parents with young kids -- fun activity for the family
- Creative hobbyists -- looking for a fun (and delicious) way to spend time and explore creativity
- Party hosts -- people throwing holiday or social events who want to
- DIY treats for their friends or family

Final audience choice

Creative hobbyists

Psychographics

In our last section about finding your audience, let's get into the specifics of how this group of people behaves and why. (That's what psychographics are.)

What are their goals?

Find ways to explore their creativity

What are they interested in?

Crafts and decorating are a fun, stress-free experience. Creatives hobbyists don't necessarily want to go pro, but they do want to impress their friends and learn new creative skills.

What do they fear?

Boredom. Lack of creative outlet outside of work

What are their challenges?

These are total beginners. Even if they are creative or artistic, the world of cookie decorating (and food) might be total foreign. The tools and lingo are new.
The skills are new.

What do they believe in?

Self expression. Creative outlets. Room for open thinking and play. Fun!

From which culture are they?

Any culture. Most likely the audience members live in the USA.

Define your customer

Now that you've deeply analyzed a target audience for your course, it's time to summarize your work. You don't need to write every descriptor you came up with, just try to describe your target audience in one sentence.

Pro tip Remember, if you're ever stumped, model your audience off of yourself, or real people you know.

Our target customer is a busy, career-oriented woman searching for more creative outlets in her life. She wants a fun way to express herself, and, although she's artistic, she's looking for something fun and easy to learn. (She's looking for a way to spend time on a Sunday afternoon.)

Niche down on your course idea

The best way for students to feel a transformation is to make your course outcome specific (niched). We use a technique called going "four deep" to niche down on your topic even more. What this means is you should be really narrowing down your idea to hone in on a very specific pain point, getting one notch more specific each time. You might only make it to all four, but you want to make sure you're adding at least 1–2 levels of specificity to your course topic.

Try the exercise a few times to niche down and choose your favorite. To narrow it down, think hard about your target audience and their needs, wants, and dreams.

1	Decorate cookies
2	Decorate sugar cookies
3	Decorate winter-themed sugar cookies
4	Decorate winter-themed sugar cookies for beginners

1	Decorate cookies
2	Decorate cookies with royal icing
3	Decorate cookies with royal icing for beginners
4	Decorate cookies with royal icing for beginners in a day

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1	
2	
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4	

1	
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Craft a transformation

At Teachable, we believe transformations are a great way to communicate the value of an online course. Remember why people take courses in the first place—they want to change something about their lives. By the end of your course, your students will know something they didn't before.

To outline the transformation, we were inspired by Digital Marketer's **Before-and-After Matrix.** We tweaked this formula a little bit to work for course creators. To fill in the matrix, you need to **answer these questions:**

1. What does a prospective student have before taking your course? What will they have after they finish it?
2. How does a prospective student feel before taking your course? How will they feel after they finish it?
3. Who are they before taking your course? Who will they be after finishing it?

	Before	After
Have	A desire for more creative hobbies, but not sure where to start	A fun, delicious hobby that lets them explore their creativity (with low stress, and low cost)
Feel	Stilted, bored. Lacking creativity in their life. Looking for something new	Relaxed and creative. Like they have an outlet for their creative energy.
Is (Identity)	Career-oriented and craving more creative hobbies outside the office	Fulfilled by this new creative hobby

Identify your milestones

The simple way to get started on your curriculum is to revisit your course transformation.

You need to **break the transformation down into all the major milestones** your students need to pass to be fully transformed.

- Get supplies (groceries, baking supplies)
- Bake cookies
- Make icing
- Basic decorating methods
- Sample cookie designs

Next, think about what **steps students would need to take to get through every milestone and achieve their transformation.** Don't worry too much about the order; brainstorm and include anything that comes to mind.

Start writing in the first box and then move to the second once it's full.

Pro tip If you're going more than 2 levels deep on your bullet points -- i.e. you have steps under your steps under your steps -- you probably need to rethink (or split up) that milestone into smaller sections.

• Cookie decorating 101
  • Frosting vs. Icing
• Prep your kitchen
  • Decorating toolkit (know the lingo)
  • Perfect decorating cookies (w/recipe)
• Make your royal icing
  • Recipe
  • Color
  • Outline & flood

• Icing consistencies
• Beginner cookies
  • Solid color
  • Add decorations
  • Use icing markers
• Intermediate cookies
  • Ombre effect
  • Marbling (wet icing technique)
  • Using stencils

Pro tip You don't need to worry about content types yet, like where you'd use demo videos, PDFs, slide decks, etc. We'll cover content types later when you're ready to create your course. For now, you just need to know what content you'll cover to help you start getting organized.

Name your school

Your school name should convey the theme of all your courses, as well as your brand. (Remember, your school is like the university, and the courses are like the classes.)

If you already have a recognizable brand, you may want to use that as well. For example, you could use your own name, or the name of your business.

Here are some quick tips for naming your school:

Keep it short

Less than 5 words is a good rule of thumb. Drone Flight School is better than The Ultimate School for Learning to Fly Drones.

Choose relevant keywords

Are there certain words people use or Google often when searching for information on your topic?

Make it memorable

Reading with Randle is a lot more memorable than Randle's School of Books.

See if the domain is available

This isn't required for a teachable school, but you can always set up a custom domain, and if your brand and business grows, you'll want to own the Internet real estate.

Brainstorm some options for your SCHOOL name:

- Karla's Kookies
- Kooking with Karla
- Karla's Kitchen
- Cookies with Karla
- Cookie Academy
- Cookie Decorating Academy
- Decoratable

Choose a winner!

- Karla's Cookies
cookies.teachable.com

Name your course

Before naming your course, you need to do 2 things:

> 1. Identify your target audience.
> 2. Craft a transformation.

If you're following along with this workbook, you should be done and done! So let's get naming.

When you name your course, you want to be a lot more specific than you were when you named your school. (Your school is like the college where all your individual classes, or courses live. It's the brand umbrella that holds all your courses).

There are 3 rules to writing a good course name:

> 1. It should be benefit-driven.
> 2. It should be specific.
> 3. It should convey emotion.

Brainstorm ideas for your title and subtitle before starring the winner!

Pro tip Teachable course names are structured in two parts, with a title and a subtitle. It's a good idea to keep the title shorter, probably fewer than 40 characters. The subtitle canbe longer, up to around 80 characters.

Title	
Subtitle	

Title	
Subtitle	

Title	
Subtitle	

You did it!

You've made it to the end of the course. But before you move into creating your course content, it's time to develop your first mini course.

Continue learning in our next course, Build Your Audience