

teachable

THE COURSE CREATOR'S TOOLKIT

Building a course from scratch can feel overwhelming, especially if you've never created your own video or PDFs before. In this Course Creator's Toolkit, you'll find our recommended tools for all of our favorite content types.

These tools are free (or cheap), easy to use, and beginner-friendly.



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Use this as a reference guide for whichever content type you're creating. If you need additional support, find help from Teachable or fellow instructors in the [Teachable Tribe](#) on Facebook.

Stock photos

Many of the large stock photo websites are filled with standard (and cheesy) imagery. Here are a few stock photo sites that offer more unique stock photos.

The photos all are high-resolution and are commercial free to use (that means you don't have to credit the photographer).

Free stock photos

- [Unsplash](#)
- [Pexels](#)
- [Death to Stock](#)
Monthly newsletter with a downloadable photo pack of 10 images.

If you want to **buy** stock photos

- [Stocksy](#)
- [Stock that Rocks](#)
More female-focused, but are always expanding their range.

Downloadables

The most commonly used downloadables in online courses are course workbooks, cheat sheets, checklists, handouts, and reference guides.

While InDesign is the tool of choice for most graphic designers, course creators don't need to learn to use fancy software or invest in expensive programs to create a beautiful course.

Here are a few resources that will help you create downloadables for free, even if you don't have any formal design experience.

Microsoft Word or [Apple Pages](#)

You can use these documents in their native form, but it's best to export documents created here as a PDF.

[Adobe Acrobat](#)

You can use Acrobat to add fillable fields to a PDF, if needed.

[Google Drive](#)

If you want a more interactive option, you can share Google Docs (or Google Sheets) with students. The best way to use this option is to create a view-only Google Doc and then invite students to make their own copy.

[Canva](#)

Canva is a free online tool that lets you create beautiful graphics, downloadables, mailers, and even slide decks for free. They offer templates to make designing easy.

Slide decks

Here are the top three tools course creators prefer for creating slide decks.

PowerPoint (PC/Mac)

[Keynote](#) (Mac)

[Google Slides](#) (PC/Mac)

Free design resources

Websites and newsletters that offer free graphics, slide decks, photos, and more:

- [Creative Market](#)
Emails 6 freebies each Monday, including keynote templates & social media branding packs, images, fonts and mockup creators.
- [Creative Booster](#)
Weekly round-up newsletter with new freebies on their website.
- [Pixel Surplus](#)
Weekly roundup email of the best freebies aggregated on their site.

Free websites to **create graphics** and slide decks

- [Canva](#)
Create beautiful slide decks (and downloadables) for free from starting templates.
- [Slides gallery](#)
Google Slides offer a few standard templates.

Buy editable templates, mockups and more

- [Creative Market](#)
On top of sending weekly freebies (as mentioned above), they sell templates, fonts, images and more that you can edit to fit your brand and content.

Screencasting

Recording screencast videos is almost too easy! Remember, **screencasting lets you record exactly what you see on your screen**, and is usually accompanied by audio, like you explaining what's happening on screen.

Here are two free options.

PC

[Bandicam](#) is a free, easy-to-use screen recorder for windows that lets you capture any area of your screen as either a screenshot photo or a screencast video file.

Mac

Your computer comes preloaded with Quicktime. You can use Quicktime to record audio only, screencast video, or even recorded video! (More on that below.)

If you're looking for a **few added features**, try [Snagit](#). In addition to recording your screen, Snagit lets you take screenshot photos and add visuals like arrows, shapes, and callouts.

Video

Video is our favorite course content type here at Teachable for a couple of reasons.

It's engaging for your students to watch. Unlike just reading pages of text, watching a video allows them to better connect with you as an instructor.

Since video delivers information in several ways—you can see the information and hear it—it's more accessible and memorable to students.

Record on your computer (PC/Mac) - Recommended

This is the best option for most course creators. And recording from your computer is easy when you have the right gear.

Camera

On both a PC or a Mac, your laptop comes with a built-in webcam. This is perfect for beginning course creators! If you use a desktop or don't have a built-in webcam, you should be able to purchase a webcam for under \$50. Check out this option from Amazon: [Logitech HD Webcam C525, Portable HD 720p Video Calling with Autofocus](#).

Recording software

You'll also need a program to actually hit "record" and capture your videos. On a PC, you can use [Windows Movie Maker](#) (free to download). On a Mac, you can use **QuickTime** (free, pre-installed).

Microphone

For a good computer microphone, get the [Samson USB Go Mic](#). (If your computer doesn't have a USB port, you might also need an adapter.)

Light

For lighting, try the [Bescor LED144 Light](#) with stand.

Record on your smartphone

Recording on a phone might make sense if you want to demo something with your hands, like crafting or baking. It might also make sense if you are filming outside or in a non-office environment. The rest is just personal preference!

There isn't a major quality difference between webcam and phone recording, so when in doubt, choose the option that feels most comfortable for you. On some computers, processing speed may slow down your videos. In that case, try a smartphone.

Camera

This approach only works if your smartphone comes with a built in video camera, of course.

Recording software

The phone is both the camera and the recording software. You'll record using a video app, either the one that comes on your phone preloaded, or another app you prefer.

Microphone

For a smartphone mic, try the [Rode VideoMic](#).

Light

For lighting, try the [Bescor LED144 Light](#) with stand.

Minor video edits

If you end up wanting to make minor edits to your videos (i.e. cut out mistakes, trim some of your clips, add a title) there are some great (and relatively simple to use) tools available.

However, it's important to note that your video does not need to be perfect. Having 'ums' and 'ahs' or slight pauses between your sentences is completely ok!

That being said, there may be times when you'd like to take things a bit further.

For Mac users

[iMovie](#)

Free and included on most Mac devices, including a version for iPhones and iPads.

[Screenflow](#)

This screen recording tool can also be used to make minor edits to any video file.

For PC users

[Windows Movie Maker](#)

Free to download.

[Camtasia](#)

Another screen recording tool that will allow you to trim clips and make simple cuts.

BONUS: Branding

Branding is more than just defining a logo or a set of colors. Generally speaking, branding is the perception you want customers to have—what they feel and what they think—when they hear your company name or product. It's the emotional response triggered when a customer interacts with your company. Branding comes through in the way you respond to your audience when they ask for help, in the way people react to your ads, in the way you express yourself on your website, and yes of course, in the visual identity of your product.

Very simply put, branding is the reason why a customer chooses you over a competitor that offers the same services, and why they keep coming back to you.

To help build or expand upon the visual identity of your brand, here are some tools that will help.

Colors & palettes

[Colour Lovers](#)

When you have no idea what you want

[Coolors](#)

When you have a brand color, and want other colors to go with it.

[Adobe Color](#)

When you have a brand color, and want other shades, hues and complementary colors to go with it.

Custom fonts

[FontSquirrel](#)

Download free fonts.

[Font pairing tool](#)

Find fonts that pair well together.

Design inspiration

[Elle & Co.](#)

Lauren has made a business off of design & her resources are beautiful.

[Pinterest](#)

We use it all the time to search for design inspo.

[Behance](#) and [Dribbble](#)

Browse portfolios by designers who specialize in everything from illustration to web design.

[Love Plus Color](#)

As the name describes, everything Jessica does is colorful & gorgeous. Her blog is filled with helpful design tips.