Student Guide

Getting Started with Perusall

What is it? (Pedagogical Overview)

Perusall is a collective annotation tool that allows you to collaborate and communicate with peers directly within a course reading. Pay special attention to areas highlighted by your instructor, answer prompts within the reading, ask questions, and use threaded discussions to have a more meaningful learning experience. Feel more prepared to engage in class discussions based on course readings by more fully engaging with the text and enjoying the process along the way.

Why is your professor using it? (Reasons to benefit learning)

Perusall supports the reading process by calling out important areas of the text and prompting you to think critically about the reading. It also allows you and your peers to support each other by asking and answering each others’ questions.

- Get your questions answered before you come to class.
  If you have ever felt confused and alone while reading assigned texts, using Perusall can help minimize that gap. Ask questions as they arise, and see what your classmates have to say in return!

- Stay engaged with the reading anytime.
  Perusall will send you friendly notifications to remind you to check in on the discussion. Maybe you need a little more engagement to complete the assignment or someone has replied to your post - Perusall will let you know what you need to do to stay in control of your learning.

- Your participation helps your instructor know what to teach.
  Without Perusall, your instructor would have to wait until class discussions to find out where students got stuck on the reading. Now, discussions can be prepared ahead of time based on your comments.

- Benefit from small group discussions.
  It can be easy to feel disconnected when learning remotely or in a large class. Perusall will break your class into optimal groups to more easily manage and stay on top of discussions. This allows feedback to become more personalized as you communicate continually with your assigned group.
How to get started (steps to access the tool or associated assignment)

Starting conversations with classmates

- When you open a document, you'll see highlights superimposed on the document that represent comments that you and other students have entered.
- **Yellow** highlights indicate comments or questions by you or other students; **blue** highlights indicate comments from your instructor.
- To start a conversation, highlight some text; once you finish highlighting, you will see a panel open on the right where you can type your comment. Press **Enter** or **Return** to submit the comment; your classmates will see it appear in real time. (If you are having trouble highlighting text, see this page.)
- When someone responds to your question or comment, you will receive a notification by email and you can post a reply by either signing on or merely replying to the email.
- To add to a conversation started by one of your classmates, simply click on the highlight in the text to open up the conversation panel, type your comment, and then press Enter.
- You can also highlight part of a figure rather than text by using the toolbar buttons at the top. When you have elected to highlight a figure, click and drag to draw a box around the area of interest, or simply click to drop a map pin.
- While reading the document, change which comments you see by clicking the filter dropdown at the top of the page (which says All comments by default).

Keeping track of your scores

- View your scores by clicking the **My scores** button on your course home page.
- The scoring is based on the quality and timeliness of your comments, questions, and responses, and may include other measurements of engagement as determined by your instructor. See some examples of how quality is measured
- In order to see some details of a particular score, click **My scores**, then click on that particular assignment's score in the score column.
- If you don't see a score for an assignment, it's because your instructor hasn't released the scores for that assignment yet.
- You may continue to ask questions, answer questions, and make comments outside of the context of a particular reading assignment. However, note that if you edit a comment that was counted towards an assignment whose deadline has passed, that comment may no longer count towards your score for that assignment.
Tips for Using the Tool Efficiently

*Perusall* helps you **learn faster** by collaboratively annotating the readings and communicating with your classmates. Collaboration gets you help whenever you need it, makes learning more fun, enables you to help others (which research shows is also a great way for you to learn), and helps the instructor make class better by emphasizing information that you need.

If you have a question or information to share about a passage in the readings, highlight the text and type in a comment as an annotation. You can also respond to a classmate’s annotation in threads (Facebook style) in real time or upvote questions you find helpful. Good annotations contribute to the class by stimulating discussion, explaining your thought processes, helping others, and drawing attention to good points. If a particular classmate’s point is relevant, you can explicitly "mention" them and they will be immediately notified, even if not presently signed on.

Research shows that the following behaviors on *Perusall* predict higher end-of-semester grades and long term mastery of the subject. Your instructor may use some or all to determine your formal score.

- Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the class discussion, spread throughout the entire reading ([see some examples](#))
- Starting the reading early
- Breaking the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
- Reading all the way to the end of the assigned reading
- Posing thoughtful questions and comments that elicit responses from classmates
- Answering questions from others
- Upvoting thoughtful questions and helpful answers

Resources

**Tutorial/Resources:**

- [Students – Perusall](#)
- [Example Scoring Student Comments](#)

**Webinar Recordings:**

- [Tutorial Video: LMS Accounts](#)

**Technical Support and Consultation:**

- [Students – Perusall](#)
- [OIT@uci.edu](#)