

VoiceThread for SPS Instructors

VoiceThread is a web-based program that allows you to upload pictures, videos, or documents, record accompanying audio or video commentary and invite your students to add commentary by means of microphone, webcam, keyboard or telephone. You can link to a VoiceThread directly from your Blackboard course site. The ease with which commentary can be added makes VoiceThread a great addition to either an online or a face-to-face course. In this quick guide, we walk through the steps of linking VoiceThread to your course site and how to make and link to a VoiceThread in your course.

For an idea of the types of things you can do with Voice Thread, browse the VoiceThread library: <http://voicethread.com/about/library/>

Note: Steps 8-21 have been updated for the new version of VoiceThread available in March 2015.

Accessibility: There are a few things you can do to make your VoiceThreads truly accessible to all users – and provide all students with the information in another format. For example, when embedding video from outside VoiceThread, make sure it includes captions. When adding an audio or webcam comment, follow it with a text version of that same comment. When adding an image, post a description of that image in the “Title” field of its slide (see Step 15 below). Also, ask your students to do the same. Please note that for users with visual impairments, VoiceThread offers *VoiceThread Universal* which is compatible with screenreaders. Students using a screenreader will be automatically referred to the VoiceThread Universal version when opening any VoiceThread posted on a Blackboard page (for more information, see here: <https://voicethread.com/support/howto/Universal/>).

See Steps 24-25 for information on **how to re-use a VoiceThread** for another course or semester.

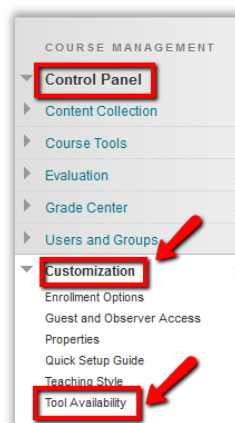
Step 1

Note: you will only have to do this step once for each of your courses.

First, **VoiceThread** needs to be **enabled for your course**. To make sure the tool is available, go to the “Control Panel” in the lower-left hand corner of your course site. Click on “Customization” and then click on “Tool Availability.”

On the “Tool Availability” page, scroll down to find “**SPS VoiceThread LTOne**,” and make sure the box all the way to the right is checked. Don’t forget to scroll back to the top of the page and click “Submit.”

Note: Do NOT check “SPS VoiceThread Course View.”

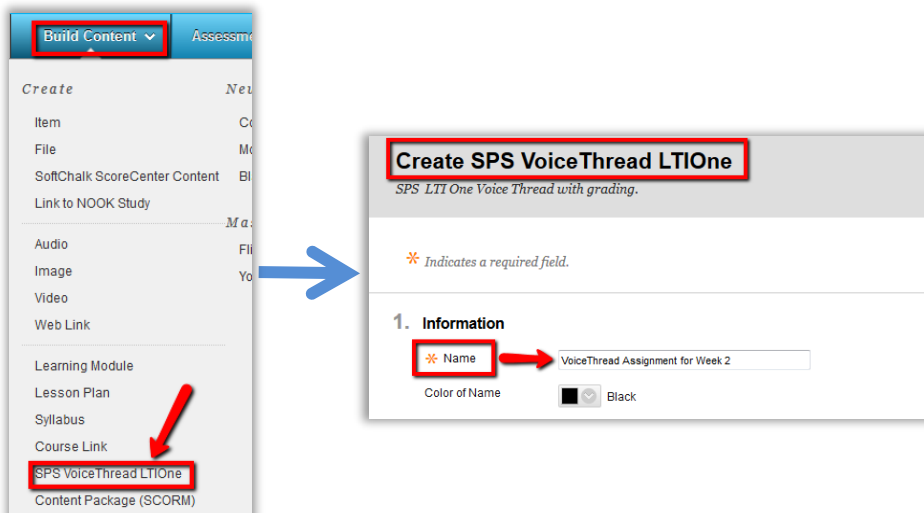


Spell Check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPS VoiceThread Course View	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPS VoiceThread LTOne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Syllabus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Step 2

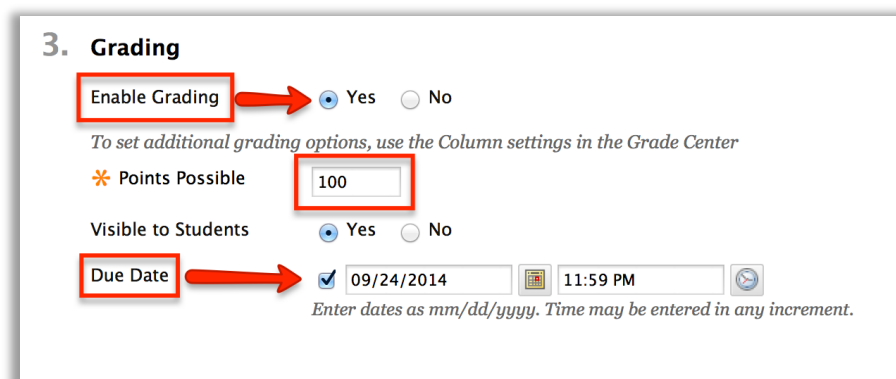
To create your first VoiceThread, or set up a VoiceThread assignment for students, go to a content area of your course, click “Build Content,” and select “SPS VoiceThread LTIOne” from the menu. On the next page, type in a meaningful name.

Note: Your VoiceThread user account will automatically be created the first time you click on a VoiceThread link from within a course. This will also link your course site to SPS’ VoiceThread Pro account.

**Step 3**

Enable grading – if the VoiceThread will be a graded activity in your course – to create a grade center column for the activity. Enter the points possible (required) and a due date (optional). Select viewing options, and click “Submit.”

Important: If you choose to grade this activity, make sure to select “Assignment Builder” in Step 6 below.

**Step 4**

Next, back on the Blackboard content page, click on the link you created in Step 2 (it will be listed at the bottom of the page).

You will be taken to a “Launch LTI Link” confirmation page; **do not click “Launch.”** You will automatically be forwarded to the next page if you wait a few seconds.

Note: If you click on “Launch,” you will receive an error message.

If you are taken to a log-in page instead of the confirmation page, you may need to allow third-party cookies in order to access VoiceThread. More information is available here:

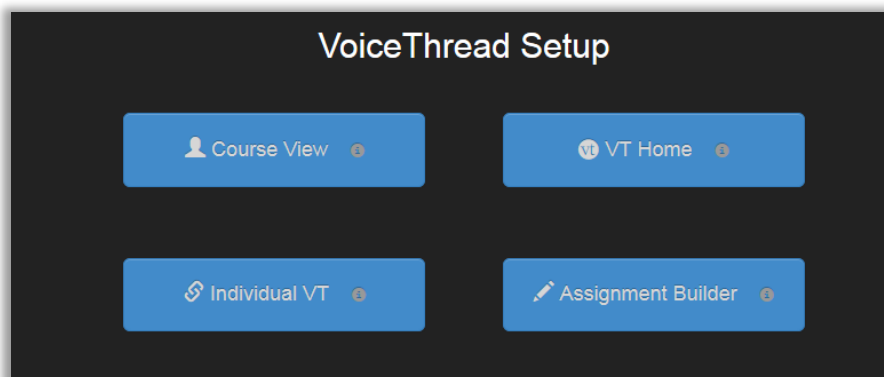
<http://docs.voicethread.com/troubleshooting/enabling-cookies/>



Step 5

This will take you to the **VoiceThread Setup** page. Choose what you would like students to see when they click on the VoiceThread link:

- “Course View” takes students to a page that displays all the VoiceThreads created by all the users of your course.
- “VT Home” takes students to their personal MyVoice page (= a page listing all their VoiceThreads).
- “Individual VT” links to a particular Voicethread.
- “Assignment Builder” allows you to indicate the type of assignment and grading for your VoiceThread; **this option will only appear if you enabled grading in Step 3.**

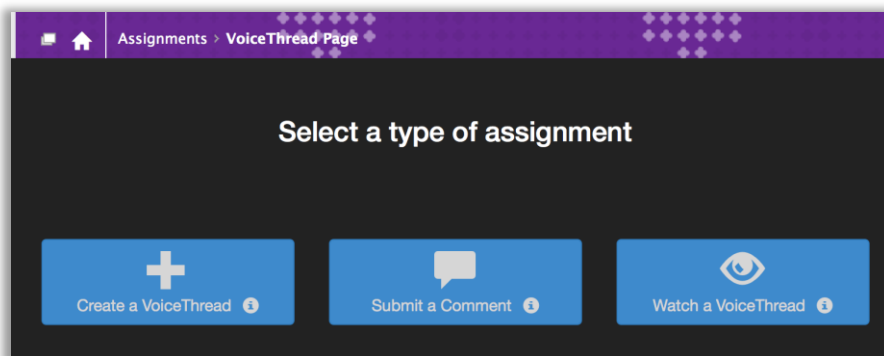


Note: If you are asking students to create their own VoiceThreads, you may want to make a separate “Course View” link in addition to the assignment link. You and your students can then use the “Course View” link to view each other’s VoiceThreads.

Step 6

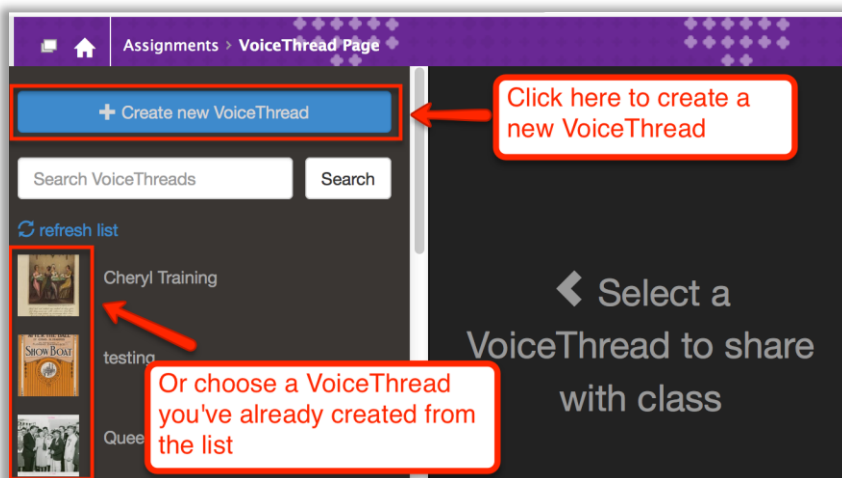
In the **assignment builder**, you have three options for the type of assignment. You can either ask students to create a VoiceThread, submit a comment or watch a VoiceThread.

- If you are asking students to submit a comment or watch a VoiceThread, click on the appropriate button here and go to Step 7.
- If you are asking students to create a VoiceThread, click on “Create a Voice Thread;” you will be taken to a screen in which you can enter directions. Then, go to Step 23.



Step 7

When you are linking to an individual VT, or if you are asking students to submit a comment or watch a VoiceThread, you will be taken to a new page. Click on the blue button that says, “Create a new VoiceThread” on the top of the left side of the screen to create a new VoiceThread (see Step 8), or choose a VoiceThread you’ve already created from the list below.

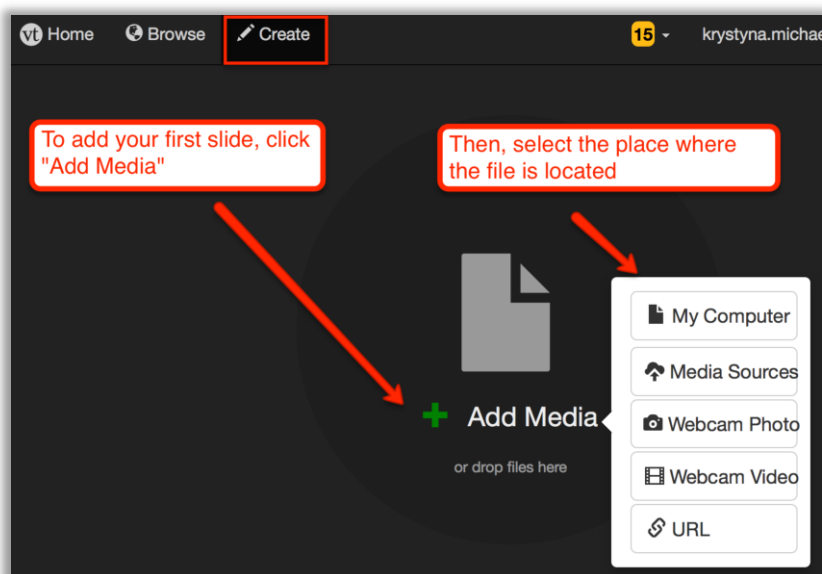


Step 8

When you click on “**Create new VoiceThread**,” you will be taken to the “Create” tab in a new window. The first thing you’ll do is **add slides to your VoiceThread**. To add your first slide, click the “**Add Media**” button. A slide can hold many types of media, from documents and images to videos and audio. (Files that are not supported include: zip, .swf, .html, and .txt.)

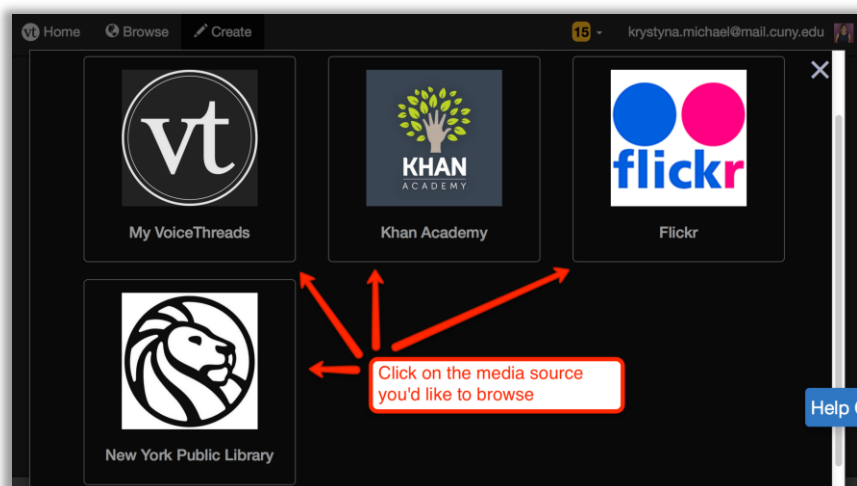
There are four sources you can choose from: “My Computer,” “Webcam Photo,” “Webcam Video,” and “URL” (Step 10).

Click the “**My Computer**” button to open a file manager window that allows you to locate files on your hard drive.



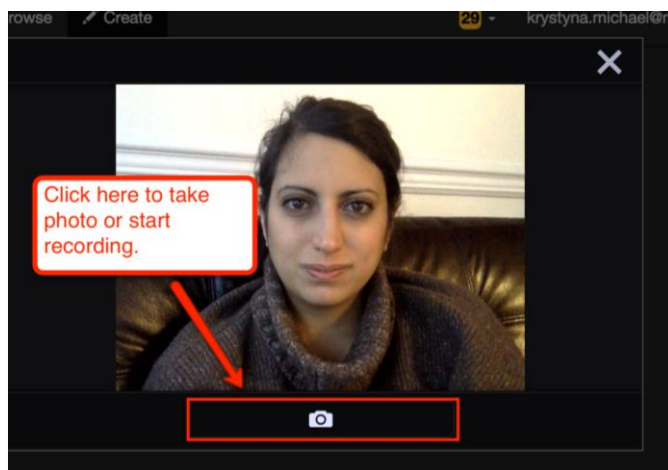
Step 9

The **“Media Sources”** button allows you to browse Kahn Academy, the New York Public Library, Flickr and your own VoiceThreads for images and other files you'd. Click on the tile corresponding to the media source you'd like to browse and then click “Import” when you find the file you want.

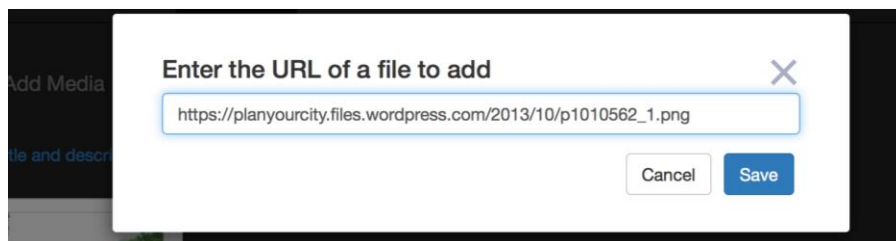
**Step 10**

The **“Webcam Photo”** and **“Webcam Video”** buttons allow you to take a still photograph or a video using your webcam. This photograph or video will be the central media for this slide. When using these options, you may need to click “Allow” on the Flash permissions box.

Then, click the button below your image to take a photo or begin recording a video. If you are making a video, you will see a countdown, after which your video will begin filming. After the recording is complete, the image or video will process and appear as a slide in your VoiceThread.

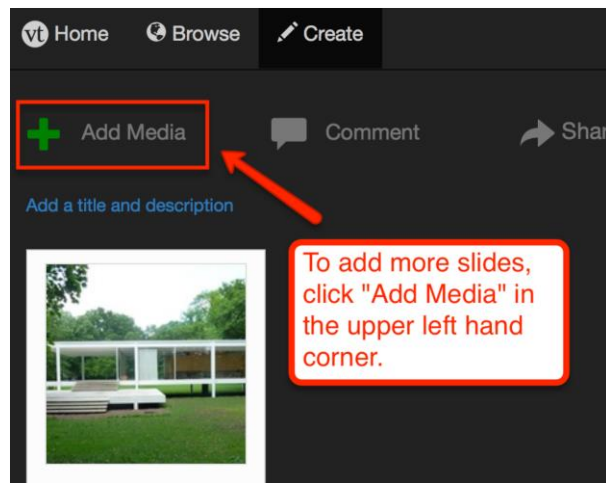
**Step 11**

The **“URL”** button allows you to import media using a URL. This will only work if you have the direct link to the file. Links to media-sharing websites like YouTube will not work.

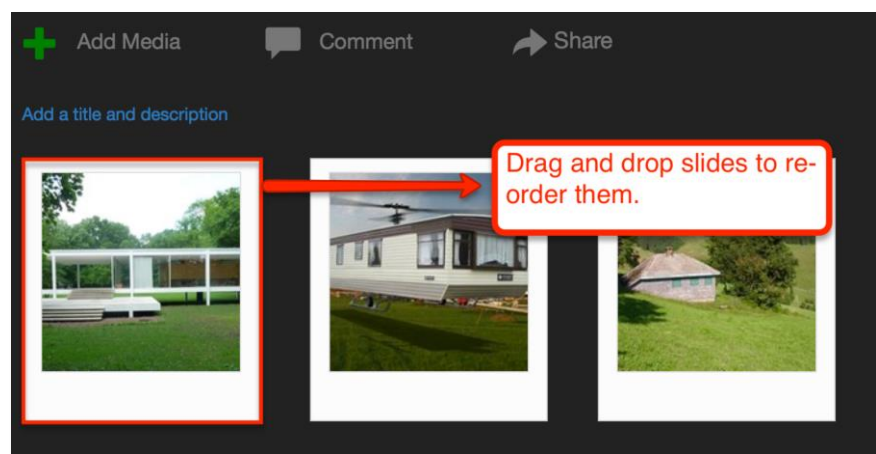


Step 12

After you choose your first slide, it will appear on the “Create” page. To add more slides, click “Add Media” button in the upper left hand corner of the screen and select your file.

**Step 13**

Add as many slides as you need for your VoiceThread. Each slide will appear on the “Create” page in the order in which it was uploaded. You can **change the order of the slides** in your VoiceThread by clicking and dragging a slide to a new position. The new order will be saved automatically.

**Step 14**

To **edit slides**, click on the slide you'd like to edit. This will open the “Edit Page” (see next step).

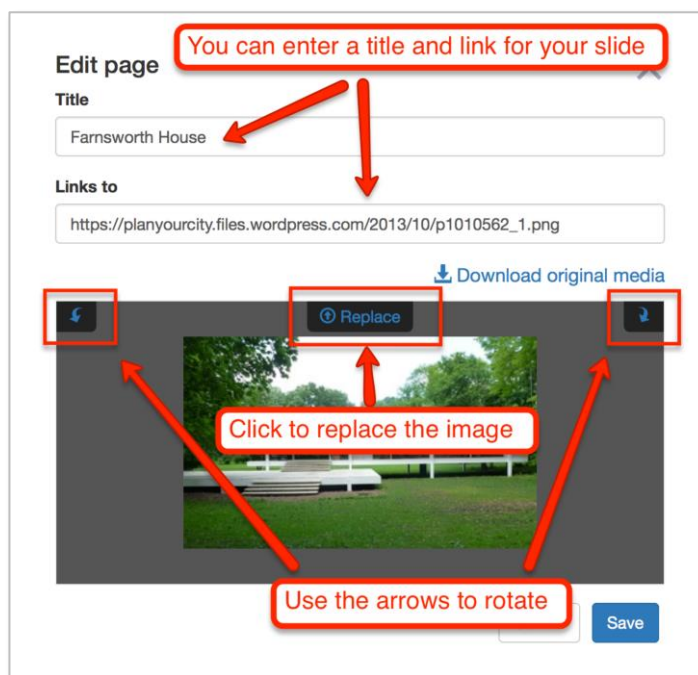


Step 15

On the **Edit Page**, you can enter a title and link. When participants are viewing your VoiceThread, the title will appear at the bottom of the slide. If someone clicks the title, the URL you have entered into the links field will open in a new tab or window.

Use **the arrows** in the upper right and left hand corners to rotate the image. Note: video, Word and PDF files cannot be rotated.

The **replace button** allows you to change the image on a slide without losing the comments already recorded on it. Clicking the replace button will open a dialogue box in which you can choose a new file from your computer. Note: You can only replace slides with files from your computer, not from the other media sources. Click **“Save”** when done.

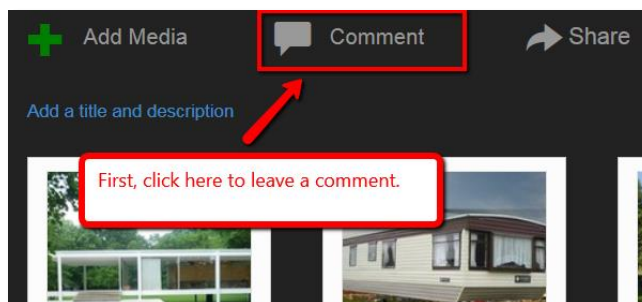
**Step 16**

The **“Comment”** button at the top of the “Create” page allows you to record comments (or your lecture) on the slides before publishing.

Click on “Comment” to bring up the first slide. To leave comments click on the icon at the bottom of the slide corresponding to the type of comment you’d like to leave.

You can add comments by: text, microphone, webcam, phone, and by uploading an audio file from your computer (see Steps 20-21). You may need to click “Allow” on the Flash permission box before leaving a comment.

Note: When leaving an audio or video comment, you can either comment on each slide individually or leave a single comment during which you navigate between slides. To create a lecture that students will listen to before leaving their own comments, leave a single comment and navigate through all the relevant slides without stopping.



Step 17

If you haven't done so already, you will be prompted to add an avatar. Click on the "upload it" button and follow the prompts to browse your computer and add an image.



Note: To change your avatar or to upload an image later, click on your email address in the upper right hand corner of any VoiceThread page and click on "My Identities." Click "edit" next to your name and "Select an image" to browse your computer.

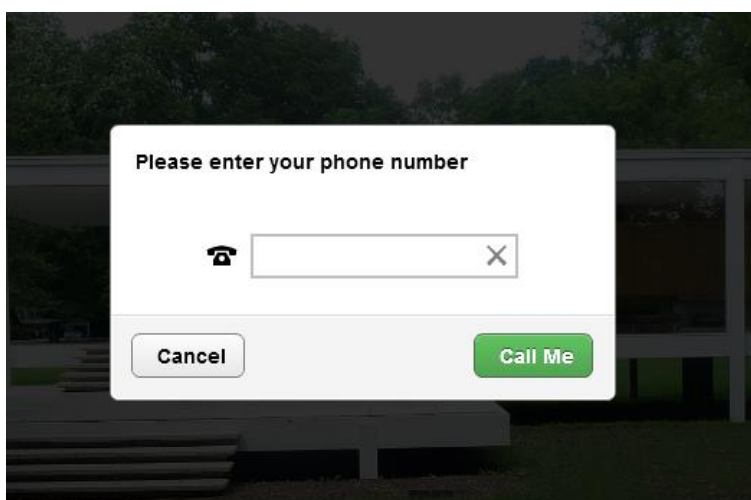
Step 18

To leave a text comment, click on the "ABC" icon and type your comment.
Leaving an audio comment follows similar procedures to leaving a **video comment**. For audio, click the microphone icon; for video, click the camera icon. Begin speaking. When you've finished your comment, click "stop recording." Your comment/video will play back for you so you can decide if you are happy with it.
 When you've finished leaving a typed, audio or video comment, click "save" to save your comment or "cancel" to discard it.

**Step 19**

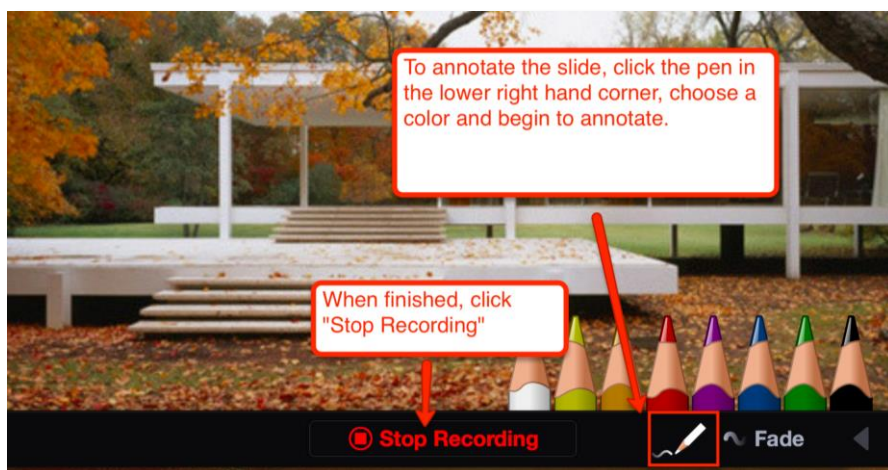
If you (or your students) don't have access to a microphone, **phone commenting** is an alternative way to record audio comments. Click the phone icon, enter your 10-digit phone number, and click "call me." Your phone will ring within a few seconds. When you answer, you will be prompted to record your comment.

Note: phone commenting is currently not available from outside the United States and Canada.



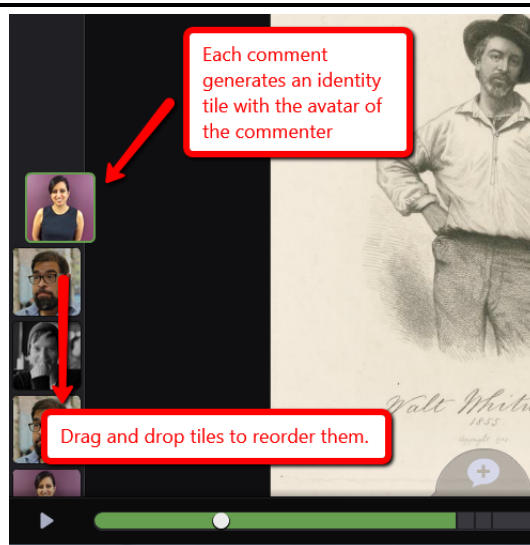
Step 20

While leaving an audio or video comment, you can **mark up** a slide with the “doodle” function to bring attention to a particular part of the image or video. Click on the colored pencil that appears to the right of the “start speaking” button, choose a color, and mark up the slide while you’re talking in a voice or video comment.

**Step 21**

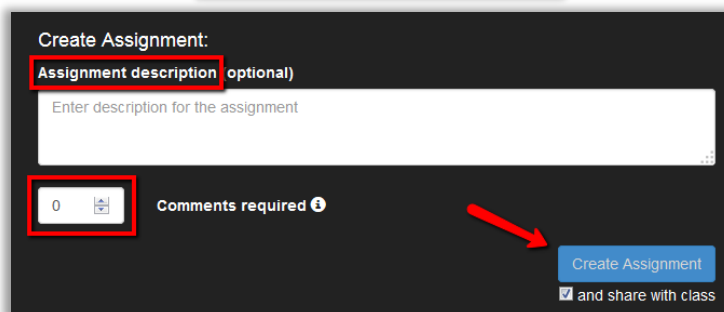
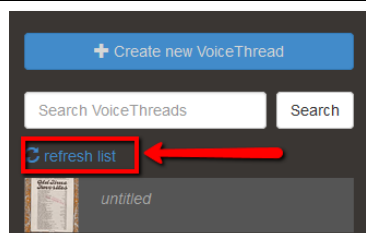
Each comment will generate a tile displaying the avatar of the commenter along the left side of the VoiceThread screen. New tiles will appear at the bottom of the screen by default, but you can rearrange tiles by dragging and dropping them.

Note: Only the creator of a VoiceThread has this ability. Students will not be able to rearrange comments, and you will not be able to rearrange comments on any VoiceThreads your students create.

**Step 22**

When you are done adding comments and annotations, **do not** use the “Share” button on the “Create” page to share your VoiceThread with the class.

Instead, return to the previous VoiceThread tab in your browser and refresh the list. The VoiceThread you just created will now appear at the top of the list. Select it, and add instructions and the number of comments required by students. Then, click “Create Assignment” to add it to your Blackboard course site.

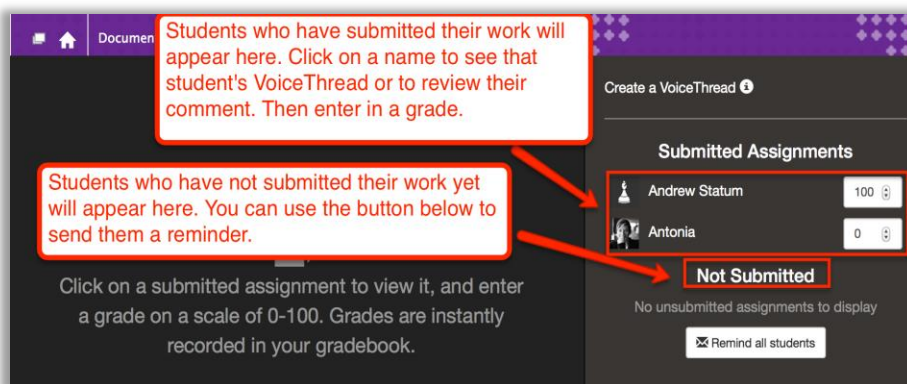


Note: You will not be able to change the setting for number of comments or the description once you submit. Also, keep the description down to one paragraph; any more than that will not display correctly.

Step 23

Grading: If grading is enabled and the assignment requires that students watch a VoiceThread, they will automatically get **full credit** in the Grade Center after viewing the entire VoiceThread. If the assignment requires students to create a VoiceThread or submit a comment, **access the VoiceThread through your course link to review student work.** You will be taken to a grading page that displays the names of all the students in the course along the right side organized into two groups: those that have submitted will appear in the top section, and those who have not submitted will appear in the bottom section. Click on a student's name to review their work and enter a grade. The grade will automatically show up in the Grade Center column for the VoiceThread. You can also send students reminders if they have not yet submitted by using the button next to their name or clicking "Remind all students." Be sure to indicate the course and assignment in your message.

Note: Students *must* click "Submit" in the upper left-hand corner of the VoiceThread screen after they have posted the required number of comments. If they don't click "Submit," their names will not appear in the "Submitted Assignments" area and you will not be able to grade their work. You might want to include this step in your instructions for students.



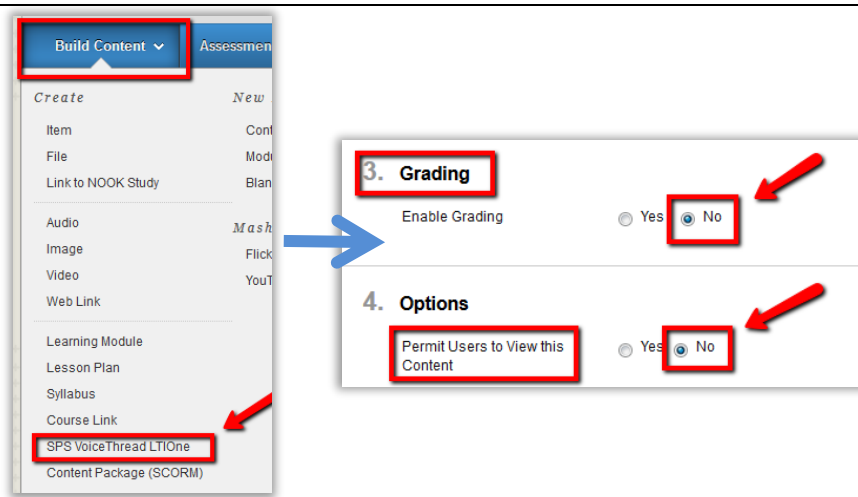
(See next page for Steps 24-25: Re-Using a VoiceThread)

Re-Using a VoiceThread for another course or in a new semester

Step 24

If you would like to use one of your VoiceThreads in multiple courses, or re-use one you had already used in another semester, you should make a copy of that VoiceThread to avoid having all previous comments still visible. To do so, first create a non-graded VT link anywhere on your course site, and hide it from students.

Click on the link and select "VT Home," which will take you to your VoiceThread homepage.



Step 25

Hover over the thumbnail of the VoiceThread you'd like to copy. Click on the "copy" button in the pop up window that appears. Give the copy a unique title and decide what comments you would like to include in the copy. This concludes creating a copy of your VoiceThread.

You can make any edits to the copy on the "Create" page (which you will land on after creating the copy), or just go back to your Blackboard course site and create a new link or assignment using the copied VoiceThread (start with Step 2 above).

