This QuickStart guide will demonstrate how to weight grades in Moodle using both categories (for multiple items within a category sharing an overall category weight) and single items, based on the following imagined grading scenario:

Assessment	Overall Weight
Essays 1, 2, and 3	40%
Quizzes (throughout semester)	20%
Final Exam	30%
Participation	10%

Getting to the Gradebook

To get to the Gradebook for your course, click on the Gradebook setup link in the Administration block:
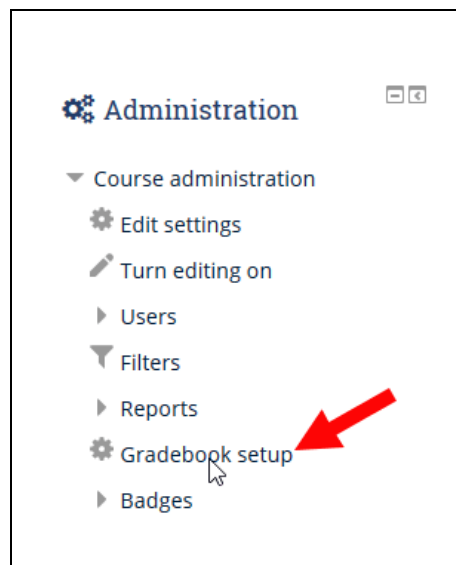
For our imagined grade weighting scenario above, we are assuming that "Essay" and "Quizzes" will be categories, and that the various items within each category will contribute to the collective category weight. "Final Exam" and "Participation" will be items, since there is only of each type. To set up the grading scheme in Moodle, you need to establish the categories first and then add items to the categories. You then need to add the items that don't require categories to the grading scheme. Once those categories and items are all established, you can then assign to each of them the appropriate weight.

Creating Categories

1. You may already have some items in your Gradebook, depending on whether you have added any items to the course (Assignments, Quizzes, etc.) that automatically include a Gradebook item. To add

a new category, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the **Add category** button at the bottom of the page (in the center), just above the "Add grade item" button.

2. To create the first ("Essays") category, type "Essays" in the "Category name" field.

3. For the "**Aggregation**" drop-down, you'll need to choose the weighting method for this category. If you have more than one essay in your course, and if they all contribute to the final grade equally, then you can choose "Mean of grades" as your aggregation method. If the essays are worth different amounts, then you can choose "Weighted mean of grades," which means that at a later point, you'll need to divide the 100% weight for the Essay category among the number of essays in your course. In this example, we'll assume the simpler case of three essays weighted equally:

4. Click on the triangle to the left of "Category total" to expand that section (at least for this first category). In general, we recommend that you retain the default settings of "Value" as the "Grade type" and a "Maximum grade" of 100. When you use a 100-point scale, it's very easy for you to enter clear letter grade values (95 for A, 85 for B, etc.), and it's immediately obvious to students what a particular number value means. Since we are not changing those default settings, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the **Save changes** button to finalize this category.

5. We need to create a second category for our proposed weighting scheme, so you'll need to click on that **Add category** button a second time.

6. This time, type in "Quizzes" for the Category name. We will choose the "Mean of grades" aggregation method (as shown in Step 4 just above), since all of our quizzes will have equal weight. To complicate our weighting scenario a bit, we will be generous to our students and drop the two lowest quiz grades. To do that, click on the "Show more" link on the bottom of this "Grade category" section:
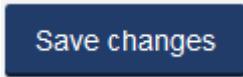
7. You'll now see values for "Keep the highest" and "Drop the lowest." If you know how many quizzes you will give – for example, if you will have 10 quizzes but want to drop two of those – you could enter 8 into the "Keep the highest" box. If you are not sure how many quizzes you will be giving, you can just put 2 in the "Drop the lowest" box:
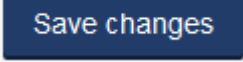

8. Scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the **Save changes** button to save what you've done so far.

9. Repeat Steps 1 through 3 above to add any additional categories that you will need, remembering to click on the **Save changes** button each time to finalize the creation of the category. As we mentioned above, in our sample grading scenario, "Essays" and "Quizzes" are categories because they will have multiple items in them. "Final Exam" and "Participation" will actually be items, since they have only a single grade entry.

Adding Items to Your Gradebook

Now that you've established categories for Essays and Quizzes (or other categories you are using), you'll need to enter the particular assessments that will be assigned to those categories, along with other work that will be included in the final weighted grade. To add items to your Gradebook:

1. Scroll down to the bottom of the "Categories and items" page, and click on the **Add grade item** button to add your first item.

2. Enter a name for the item, and verify that the "Maximum grade" value reflects the point scale that you intend to use for that item. We generally recommend using a 100-point scale, since it is immediately obvious to students what an 85 or 95 means on that scale. You might choose a different Maximum grade value, however, if you are using "Simple weighted mean" or "Natural" as your weighting scheme, since under those scenarios, items with greater point totals will carry more weight within the category or within the course as a whole:


Please note that for these essays in our grading example, we are assuming that students will submit the essays outside of Moodle itself. In other words, you are just entering them as items in the Gradebook, rather than adding them as an Assignment activity within the topic areas of the course itself (which would automatically add the item to the Gradebook).

3. This next step is important and also easy to forget when you are trying to add items to a particular category. In the "**Parent category**" section of the page, under **"Grade category,"** click on the downward-facing triangle to drop down the list of categories in your Gradebook, and click on the appropriate category to assign to this item:
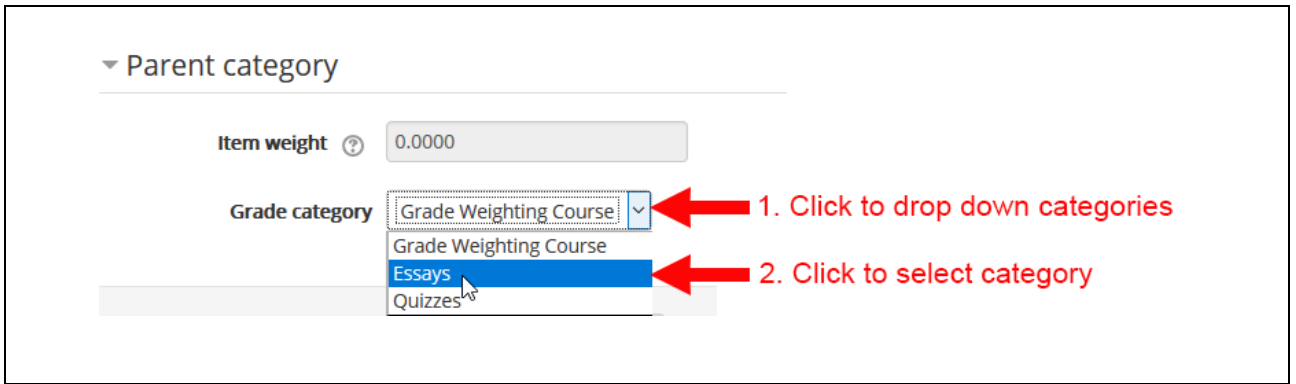
4. Once you've assigned the item to the correct category, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the **Save changes** button to send the information to the server.

5. In our hypothetical scenario, we would repeat Steps 1 through 4 above for Essay 2 and Essay 3 (assigning them to the Essay category) and for each of the "Quizzes" that we plan to enter into the Gradebook (assigning them to the Quizzes category). Once again, we would need to add those items manually to the Gradebook only if they are assignments or quizzes administered outside of Moodle and not created in Moodle itself. Assignments and quizzes that are added as activities within Moodle are automatically added to the Gradebook, and you can choose the appropriate Gradebook category as you are adding that activity to the main Moodle page for your course.

6. In our sample scenario, "Final Exam" and "Participation" are single items that will also have a weight. You can repeat Steps 1 through 4 above to add those items to the Gradebook, although for Step 3, you can keep as the "Grade category" the default one for the course itself, rather than a sub-category.

If you forget to assign a category to a grade item, the item will appear at the bottom of the Categories and Items view. In our figure below, we forgot to assign Essay3 into the Essays category. To assign the "missing" item(s) to the appropriate category, click in the check box at the far right of the item's row to select the item. Then, at the bottom of the page, where it says "Move selected items to," click on the downward-facing triangle, and click on the proper category:
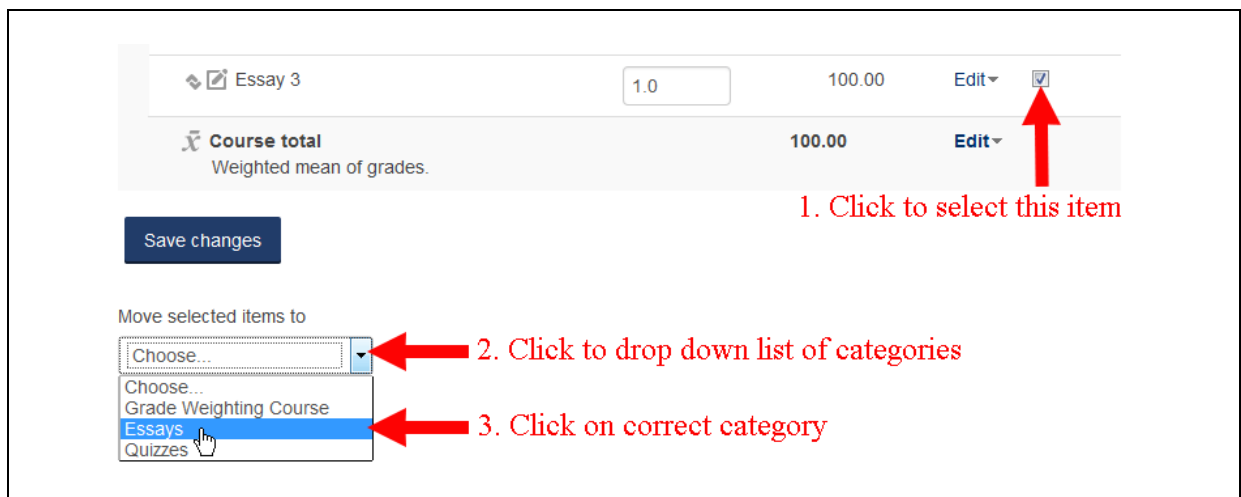
Your Moodle Gradebook page will reload with the item in the category that you selected.

7. If the item appears in the wrong order within the category, you can click on the "move" icon (⬦) in the row for that item. However, you *can't* actually drag the item higher or lower in the category. After you click on the move icon, a new page will load with a series of hashed rectangles. Click on the rectangle where you want the item to appear in the list of items:
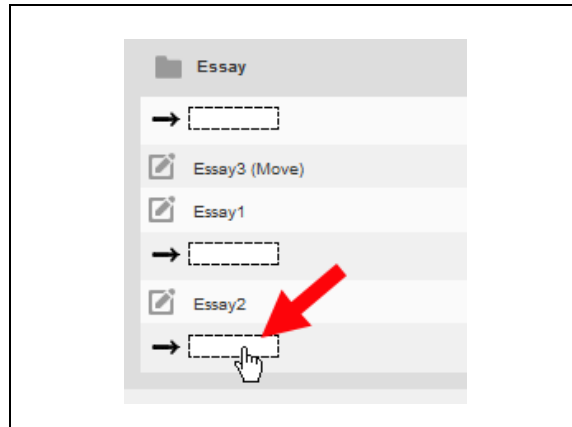
Assigning Weights to Categories and Items

Now that you've entered all the categories and items, you're ready to assign the appropriate weights:

1. The **Weights** column will have a value of 0.0 for all the categories that you entered and 1.0 value for all the items outside of a category. Click within the **Weights** cell for the first category (just to the left of the decimal point), delete the 0, and type in the correct weight for that category as a whole number, equal to its percentage within the course as a whole (or highlight that 0 and type in the new weight):

In our hypothetical scenario, if Essay is our first category, worth 40% of the total grade, you would type 40.0 into the box.
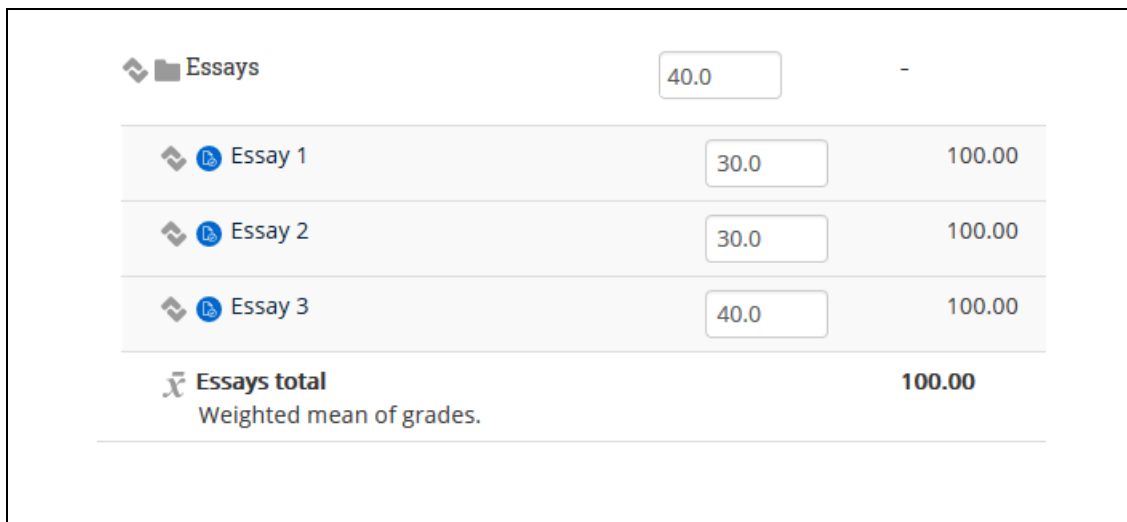
2. Repeat Step 1 just above for each of your additional categories and for each item that contributes to the final weight but falls outside of a category. In other words (for this example), we would enter 20.0 for the Quizzes category weight, 30.0 for the Final Exam weight, and 10.0 for the Participation weight.

3. When you are done entering weights, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the

   Save changes button to send your changes to the server.

4. Since we used "Mean of grades" for both our "Essays" and "Quizzes" categories, we don't need to worry about setting weights for the items within those categories. Moodle will just average the scores of all of those items. If you chose "Weighted mean" as the aggregation for one of the categories, you would need to assign weights to the individual items in the category. Those item weights would need to add up to 100% of the category's weight. For example, if Essay 3 were actually worth more than Essay 1 and Essay 2, you would choose "Weighted mean" as the aggregation method for the category, and you could assign the sub-weights as follows:

As you can see in the above figure, even though Essay 1 is ultimately worth 12% of the overall grade, its weight in the Essays category is 30% out of 100% of the category's sub-weights.