

**ENGLISH FOR
TECHNOPEDAGOGY - LESSON 3 :
MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES
(MOOCS)**



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Objectifs



At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to :

- *Explain the role of MOOCs in English*
- *Categorize MOOCs in English*
- *Describe the main parts of a MOOC in English*
- *Comparatives and superlatives*
- *Relative pronouns and clauses*

Introduction



This course focuses on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), their importance, and the benefits of using them. The world is currently undergoing major transformations, including significant changes in the way we learn. Traditionally, learning takes place in schools and universities, where students and teachers gather in person. However, today, people can learn without being physically present in the same location, thanks to MOOC platforms that allow learners to study online and at their own pace.

Students of technopedagogy need to understand the role of these revolutionary learning tools, their different types, and the structure of a MOOC. This knowledge will help them engage more effectively with this form of learning, choose the platform that best suits their needs, and acquire the skills necessary to design a MOOC. By mastering these concepts, they will also be able to guide their own learners—or the general public—in using MOOCs for professional and personal development.

THE ROLE OF MOOCs



Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses designed for very large numbers of learners. Launched in 2008, they aim to support the universalization of education. MOOCs emerged in response to the growing need for flexible learning opportunities that allow individuals to study at their own pace, from any location, and even while maintaining professional or personal commitments.

The use of MOOCs offers several benefits. First, they provide an opportunity for people to learn without needing to attend specific physical locations or go through complex admission procedures. Second, learners can obtain credible certifications from leading universities or educational institutions worldwide, which can play a significant role in supporting career advancement. Third, MOOCs are generally affordable and highly accessible, as many are free or offered at low cost. Additional advantages include the absence of requirements related to educational background and the lack of age restrictions. Moreover, MOOCs help ensure continuity of learning, whether for career development or personal enrichment, and they contribute to promoting lifelong learning.

TYOLOGIES OF MOOCS



MOOCs can be classified into different categories and offered on various platforms.

In terms of categorization, researchers typically distinguish between two major types of MOOCs : cMOOC (Connectivist MOOC) and xMOOC (Extended MOOC). The first category, cMOOC, is based on the notion of connectivity and emphasizes creation, creativity, autonomy and social networking learning. With this category, the focus is on knowledge creation and generation. cMOOCs are inspired by Connectivist philosophy, and refer to the work of Ivan Illich. As a sharp critic of institutionalized education, Illich proposed in 1970 to establish “learning webs” by using new technology.

The other model, xMOOC, emphasizes a more traditional learning approach through video presentations and short quizzes and testing. It focuses on knowledge duplication.

MOOCs are hosted on a range of platforms managed by companies and consortia, several of which have gained considerable popularity globally. Below is a list of well-known MOOC platforms and their main features :

Coursera : this is a for-profit “social entrepreneurship company that partners with the top universities in the world” (Coursera Website). It was established by two Stanford professors and has contracts with 33 universities, eight of them from outside the US. According to the website, more than two million students participate in Coursera Websites.

edX : this is a not for-profit venture established and governed by Harvard and MIT. Currently it offers HarvardX, MITx and BerkeleyX classes. Harvard and MIT announced that they are principally interested in taking additional universities into the “University X Consortium”, but strictly based on quality standards. They also announced that data is collected to allow an assessment of the learning success, and confirmed that courses will remain free of charge.

Udemy : this is a portal that facilitates online courses, mainly in the area of entrepreneurship, IT, software use, design, arts and sports. It invites learners to develop personal and professional skills in a costefficient, flexible and more interesting way than traditional study courses. On the provider’s side, it allows everybody to offer a MOOC, and the website announces that its courses are offered by the “world’s top experts, including New York Times best-selling authors, CEOs, celebrities, and Ivy League professors”. It is not clear whether or not these experts are selected, and whether there is any quality assurance – other than users’ demand. UDEMY is financed by “Insight Venture Partners, Lightbank, MHS Capital, 500 Startups and other investors who previously foresaw the internet giants YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Groupon and Yelp” (company website). But it also charges moderate fees for some of its courses.

Udacity : this is a for-profit company that has been cofounded by a Stanford professor, who started to offer information science courses online in 2012. According to the website, it is a “digital university on a mission to democratize education”, i.e. to offer high education at a lower price to more people. Courses are free, but fees may be charged for certification. UDACITY started off via a partnership with the electronic testing company Pearson VUE offering final examinations, which would be recognized by employers. Apparently, UDACITY does not have a university partner.

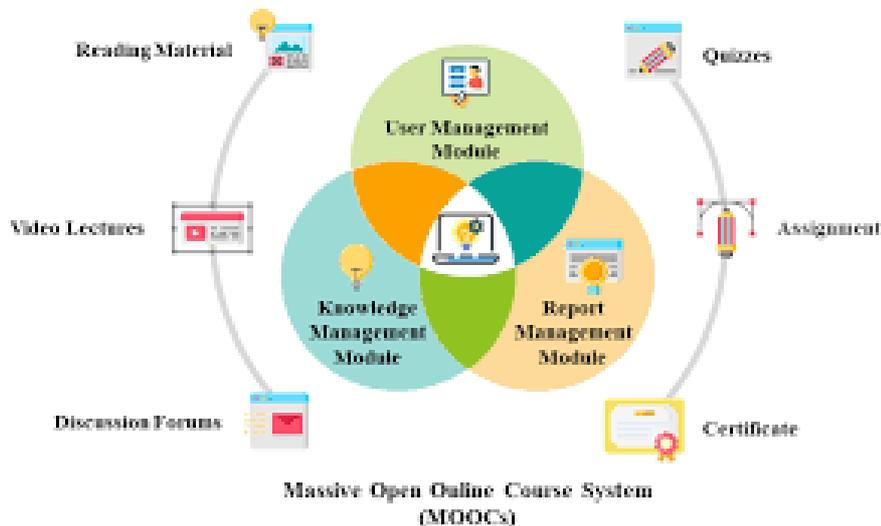
However, the website mentions that it keeps close relations with 20 high-tech companies, among them Microsoft, Google, Facebook and Twitter, and that it is ready to work with companies of any size provided that they have IT departments or a web presence. It also offers students help to find a job (“Our mission is to make direct introductions between employers and students”).

Futurelearn : this platform was established in late 2012, as the first “nationally” defined initiative, and the first one launched outside of North America. According to the website, it “will bring together a range of free, open, online courses from leading UK universities, in the same place and under the same brand.”

Discussion topics :

- Have you taken any MOOC courses previously ?
- If yes, what type of MOOC was it and on which platform ?
- If no, would you be interested in any of the types of MOOC ? On which platform ?
- What other MOOC platforms do you know ?

THE MAIN PARTS OF A MOOC



Despite the diversity of MOOC platforms, researchers have identified common patterns in how MOOC content is structured. This section discusses the most significant similarities across different types of MOOCs.

A typical MOOC lasts between 6 to 12 weeks and is organized into several modules or weekly sections. Each module is composed of several lessons, focuses on a specific topic, and serves a clear learning objective. It generally includes a mix of pre-recorded video lectures, interactive visuals, diagrams, exercises, discussion forums, and a final assessment.

There are **3 main components** that make up a MOOC: learning materials, learning activities, and interaction.

1. Learning materials :

- this is the **asynchronous** part of the training where resources are uploaded by the instructor to the platform, which students can access anytime and at their own pace.
- Usually, **videos** are the central learning materials, but often they are accompanied by slides or reading materials. A one-week module typically includes 1 to 2 hours of video content in total.
- Learning materials such as PowerPoint presentations and videos **must be short**: a maximum of five slides for a PowerPoint presentation and videos should last between 5 – 10 minutes.

2. Learning activities (formative and summative) : learning activities can be

- **formative** : ungraded questions to test learners' understanding at the end of a video lecture or to make them think critically about the topic addressed in the video.
- **summative** : graded questions asked at the end of the course. Final assessment can be graded quizzes, exams and assignments.

3. Interaction : although the majority of of the course is delivered asynchronously, sometimes there can be optional **synchronous** events such as

- 'live' **webinars** (interactive sessions) which require participants to join in at specific dates/times.
- Learners can also interact through **forums**, where students post questions that other students can answer.
- Another type of interaction is students' **meetups** : in this case, learners meet physically in small groups and attend a session together (discussion, workshop, tutoring, networking, etc.). These are important moments in the training program and help make it more enjoyable and user-friendly.

For further reading, please click the following links :

- <https://elearningindustry.com/creating-a-mooc-examples-module-structure-case-study>
- <https://desarrolloweb.dlsi.ua.es/moocs/structure-of-a-mooc>
- <https://www.coursera.org/enterprise/articles/what-is-a-mooc>
- <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/moocs-guide-massive-open-online-courses>
- <https://moocs.unige.ch/offre/presentation/composantes>

COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES IN ENGLISH



1. Definitions

- **Comparatives** are forms of adjectives used to compare two things or people,

Examples : My computer is smaller than my car / the cinema is more exciting than the concert / I feel better today.

- **Superlatives** are used to compare one thing or person with a group of three or more things or people—or with all others in a category.

Examples : My computer is the smallest in the house / This movie is the most exciting of the year.

2. Form

a. Comparatives

- **-er / more** : There are two ways to form comparatives : you can add **-er** to the adjective, or you can put **more** in front of the adjective. The choice depends mainly on the length of the adjective.
- **Than** : use **than** after the comparative form to specify what you are comparing with. Using **than** is optional if you do not mention the second element of the comparison.

Examples : The woman is happier **than** her husband / *She is two years older **than** me.* / I'm feeling happier now

- **-er / r** : add **-er** to the adjective to form the comparative if it is an adjective with one syllable. However, if the adjective already ends in -e, just add **-r**.

Examples : old - **older** ; small - **smaller** ; nice - **nicer** ; wide - **wider**

- **Describing the process of change** : to describe how something or someone changes you can use two comparatives with **and**:

Examples :

*The balloon got **bigger and bigger**.*

*Everything is getting **more and more expensive**.*

*Grandfather is looking **older and older**.*

- **Showing correlation** : We often use **the**¹ with comparative adjectives to show that one thing depends on another.

Examples :

***The faster** you drive, **the more dangerous** it is.*

(= When you drive faster, it is more dangerous.)

***The higher** they climbed, **the colder** it got.*

(= When they climbed higher, it got colder.)

- **Double consonant** : if the ending of the adjective is **VOWEL + CONSONANT**, you should double the consonant when adding -er. This rule does not apply if the final consonant is « w ».

Examples : hot - **hotter** ; big - **bigger** ; new - **newer** ; few - **fewer**

- **Change y to i** : If an adjective has two syllables and ends in -y, change the **y** to **i** and add -ier.

Examples : *happy – **happier** ; noisy – **noisier** ; easy – **easier***

- **More** : use more to form the comparative of other adjectives with two or more syllables.

Examples :

The second situation is **more** serious than the first .

The boy is **more** respectful than the girl.

- **(not) as ... as** : for some comparisons, you may want to express similarity in some way. In this case, use **as + adjective + as**. If both things or people are not equal in some way, use **not as + adjective + as**

Examples : Failure is **as painful as** an injury ; men are **not as beautiful as** women.

b- Superlatives

- **-est / most** : There are two ways to make superlatives. You can add **-est** to an adjective or you can put **most** in front of the adjective. Usually, you have to use **the** before the superlative.

Examples :

Birds are **the fastest** creatures on earth.

Parrots are **the most beautiful** birds on earth.

- **-est / -st** : to form the superlative, add **-est** to an adjective that has one syllable ; if the adjective already ends in -e, just add **-st**.

Examples : high - **highest** ; small - **smallest** ; nice - **niciest** ; wide - **widest**

- **Double consonant** : if the adjective ending is **VOWEL + CONSONANT**, you should double the consonant before adding **-est**. This rule does not apply when the final consonant is -w.

Examples : hot - **hottest** ; big - **biggest** ; new - **newest**

- **Change y to i** : If an adjective has two syllables and ends in -y, change the 'y' to 'i' and add **-est**

Examples : *happy – **happiest** ; funny – **funniest***

- **Most** : If an adjective has two or more syllables, put **most** before the adjective to form the superlative.

Example : *It's **the most exciting** news today.*

- **Superlative and present perfect** : Sometimes, the superlative is used with the present perfect.

Examples :

*It's the **most delicious** meal I've ever had.*

*Anna is **the friendliest** girl he's ever met.*

c- Irregular Comparatives and Superlatives

Some adjectives have irregular comparatives and superlatives forms.

- **good** : better (comparative) – the best (superlative)
- **bad** : worse (comparative) – the worst (superlative)
- **far** : farther / further (comparative) - the farthest / furthest (superlative)

1. <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/english-grammar-reference/definite-article>

RELATIVE PRONOUNS AND CLAUSES



- **Relative clauses** are used to give additional information about a noun, such as a person, place or thing.
- **Relative pronouns** are used to introduce a relative clause. The table below summarizes the main relative pronouns in English.

Subject	Object	Possessive
who (for people)	who/whom	whose
which (for thing)	which	whose
that (for thing)	that	-

- **Defining and non-defining relative clauses** : relative clauses fall into two categories, which are defining and non-defining relative clauses.
- **Defining relative clauses** : defining relative clauses provide **essential** information to a sentence. They make clear which person or thing we are talking about. If you remove the clause, the sentence does not make sense.

Examples of defining relative clauses :

*Marie Curie is the woman **who discovered radium.***

*This is the house **which Jack built.***

In this kind of relative clause, you can use **that** instead of **who or which** :

*Marie Curie is the woman **that** discovered radium.*

*This is the house **that** Jack built.*

We can **leave out** the pronoun **if it is the object** of the relative clause:

*This is the house **Jack built.** (here, **that** can be removed because it is the object of *built*)*

- **Non-defining relative clauses** : they add **extra** information to a noun or noun phrase. This extra information is **not essential**. It can be removed and the sentence will still make sense. In written English, where the non-defining clause is more common, we use commas (,) to separate the clause from the rest of the sentence.

Examples :

Lord Thompson, **who is 76**, has just retired.

We had fish and chips, **which I always enjoy**.

I met Rebecca in town yesterday, **which was a nice surprise**.

My friend's birthday, **which was last weekend**, was great fun.

My current girlfriend, **who I love very much**, calls me every night.

Be careful !

In non-defining relative clauses, we cannot use **that** and we cannot leave out the pronoun :

For instance, it is NOT CORRECT to say « Lord Thompson, that is 76, has just retired » / « We had fish and chips, I always enjoy »

- **Whom** : in formal English, we use **whom** instead of **who**, when the pronoun refers to the object of the clause .

Examples :

My German teacher, **whom** I really admired, retired last year. (here **whom** is the object of admired)

The woman **whom** I called this morning was my secretary. (here **whom** is the object of called).

This is George's brother, **with whom I went to school**.

(here **whom** is the object of *with*)

- **Whose** : we use **whose** as the **possessive** form of *who*.

Example : *his is George*, **whose brother went to school with me**.

- **When and where** :

We can use **when** (time) and **where** (places) to **make it clear which time or place** we are talking about.

Examples :

- England won the World Cup in 1966. It was the year **when we got married**.

- I remember my twentieth birthday. It was the day **when the tsunami happened**.

- Do you remember the place **where we caught the train**?

Stratford-upon-Avon is the town **where Shakespeare was born**.

We can **leave out when**:

- England won the World Cup in 1966. It was the year **we got married**.

- I remember my twentieth birthday. It was the day **the tsunami happened**.

- **Quantifiers** : We often use quantifiers and numbers with relative pronouns:

<i>all of which/whom</i>	<i>most of which/whom</i>	<i>many of which/whom</i>
<i>lots of which/whom</i>	<i>a few of which/whom</i>	<i>none of which/whom</i>
<i>one of which/whom</i>	<i>two of which/whom</i>	<i>etc.</i>

Examples :

*She has three brothers, **two of whom are in the army.***

*I read three books last week, **one of which I really enjoyed.***

*There were some good programmes on the radio, **none of which I listened to.***

Exercice



QUESTION 1

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

The word MOOC stands for

- Massive Open Only Courses
- Massive Open Online Courses

QUESTION 2

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

Universalization of education means

- Education for All
- Education universal

QUESTION 3

Which of the following better summarizes the flexibility of MOOC ?

- self-paced learning
- distance learning

QUESTION 4

Fill in the blank with the right proposal :

MOOCs can support career advancement through

- credible certifications from leading universities or educational institutions.
- Massive courses from leading universities or educational institutions

QUESTION 5

Fill in the blank with the right answer:

The affordability of MOOCs means that

- They are totally free
- They are partially free
- They are free or low-cost

QUESTION 6

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

The main types of MOOC are

- cBOOC and xCOOC
- cMOOC and xMOOC

QUESTION 7

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

..... is a MOOC platform launched and governed by Havard and MIT.

- Coursera
- edX

QUESTION 8

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

..... is the MOOC Platform that partners with many universities.

- Udemy
- Coursera

QUESTION 9

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

The main parts of a MOOC are

- Synchronous, formative learning activities, and interactions
- Interaction, learning activities, and learning materials

QUESTION 10

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

Most MOOCs are

- Synchronous and asynchronous
- Synchronous or asynchronous

QUESTION 11

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

If you practice more,

- Your English will get more good.
- Your English will get better

QUESTION 12

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

We have invited six friends for dinner, so

- we need a larger table
- we need a more large table

QUESTION 13

Fill in the gap with the right answer.

They are now married and

- feel happier
- feel happyer

QUESTION 14

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

Without treatment, his condition

- will get the most bad
- will get worst

QUESTION 15

Fill in the blank with the right answer :

Mathematics are one of

- the challengingest subjects at school.
- the most challenging subjects at school.

QUESTION 16

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

Economics is a subject I've never understood.

- who/that
- which/that

QUESTION 17

Fill in the blank with the right answer.

You're the most beautiful person I've ever seen.

- who/that/0
- which/that/0

QUESTION 18

Which of the following sentences is correct ?

- Paul who has never played tennis before somehow managed to win her first match !
- Paul, who has never played tennis before, somehow managed to win her first match !

QUESTION 19

Which of the following sentences is correct ?

- This is Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, who children I teach.
- This is Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, whose children I teach.

QUESTION 20

Which of the following sentences is correct ?

- The man whom I marry will have to be someone really special.
- The man which I marry will have to be someone really special.