SoftChalk Cloud™ Quick Start Guide

Updated January 6, 2023

Contents

Introduction

Welcome! We're excited to help you get started using SoftChalk Cloud! This **Quick Start Guide** is designed to give you a quick overview of the basics for using SoftChalk Cloud to create your first online lesson.

Just follow our simple 4 step process to create engaging, interactive, media-rich online lessons. Using this guide, you'll learn how to quickly create a lesson in your SoftChalk Cloud account, add interactive games, quizzes, and videos, and then share your lesson with your students.

Of course, that's just the beginning! After learning the basics in this guide, you can get additional info about all the features in SoftChalk Cloud from the ["Get Started" page](#) on our website, our [Video Tutorials](#), the [SoftChalk Cloud Guide](#), and the **Getting Started** section in our [SoftChalk Create Guide.](#)

Do you have a question that isn't answered here? Or need additional help to get started? Please visit our [SoftChalk Support](#) webpage. For purchase information, please contact [sales@softchalk.com](#).

Let's get started!!

Quick Start Guide Web Link

The web link for this guide is below. As we update this guide, the URL will remain the same. (You may want to bookmark this link in your web browser.)

https://softchalk.atlassian.net/wiki/download/attachments/129237016/quickstartguide.pdf

Step 1 - Create a SoftChalk Cloud Account

If you have not already created a SoftChalk Cloud account, please use the steps below to create an account.

IMPORTANT: If your institution has an *Enterprise SoftChalk Cloud,* you will need *a different SoftChalk Cloud URL* and may need different steps to create a SoftChalk Cloud account - please consult your institution's technical support.

1. Go to https://www.softchalkcloud.com/join

    *   If you are creating a "Free Trial" account, please complete the online request form. You will receive an activation key via email.

    *   If you are creating a licensed account, you will receive an activation key from SoftChalk, or from your school/institution liaison.

2. On the Create My SoftChalk Cloud Account page, paste in the activation key provided to you by SoftChalk or by your institution.

3. Fill in the rest of your profile, select the two checkboxes at the bottom and click **Join**.

    Congratulations, you now have a SoftChalk Cloud account!

Step 2 - Create Your First SoftChalk Lesson

Below are instructions on creating a simple three page lesson with a feedback question, an activity, and an embedded YouTube video.

Start Create Online

1. Login to [SoftChalk Cloud](#) with your username and password

2. From the SoftChalk Cloud menus, choose **My Content** and then **Lessons** to display the Lessons Folder view. From the **Actions** menu, choose **Create Lesson in Create Online**.
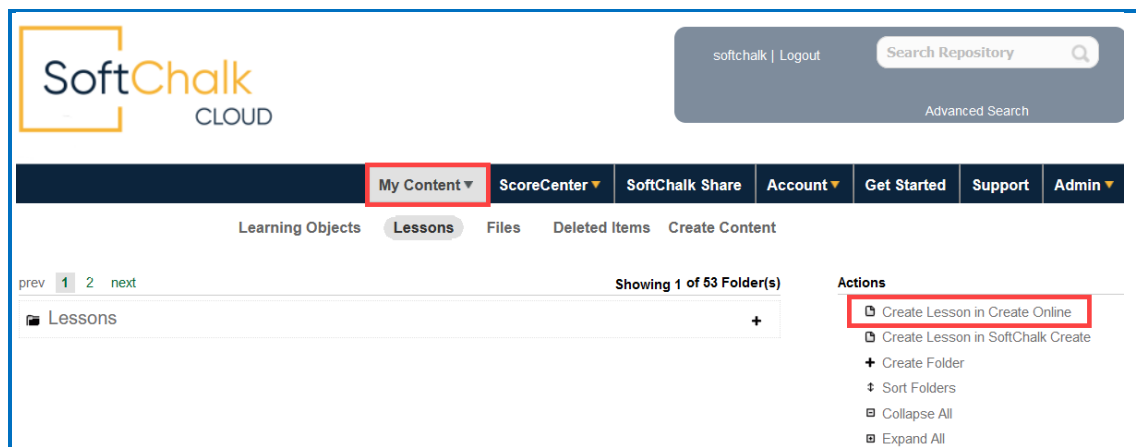
    a. This will open Create Online, and you will be ready to start creating a SoftChalk lesson.

Add Content

1. SoftChalk Create Online works like a word processing program. Simply type your lesson information into the text area of SoftChalk Create Online You may also copy and paste text into the text area from a Microsoft Word document or other source.

2. Use the toolbar to apply formatting (bold, italic, headings) and insert bullets, tables, weblinks, images, etc. Each of these features work in a similar way to standard word processing programs.

Add a Page Break

If you have a lot of content in your lesson, you may want to insert page breaks to "chunk" your content into multiple pages (rather than delivering all of your content in a single lesson page).

1. In the main editing window, place your cursor in the text where you'd like the page to break, then hit your Enter or Return key to create a new paragraph.

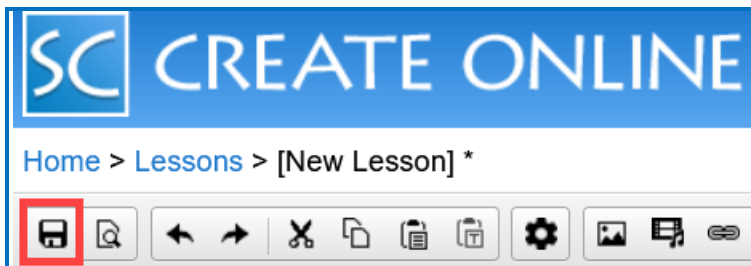2. Go to the Toolbar and click the **Page Break** icon .

Save and Preview Your Lesson
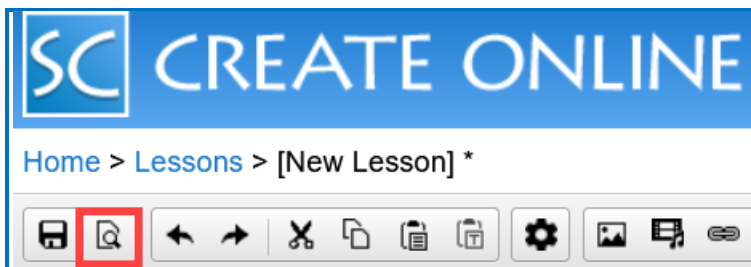
1. To view the lesson the way a student will see it:

   a. **Name your lesson** by typing into the dialog at the top of the editing window:
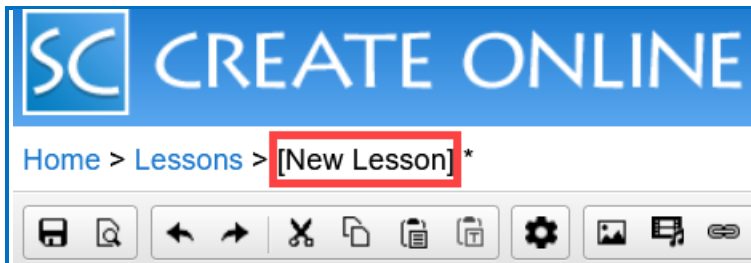
   b. **Save your lesson** by clicking the Save icon on the toolbar

   c. **Preview your lesson** by clicking the Preview icon on the toolbar.

   Your lesson will open in a new tab or a new window in your browser. Note that your lesson editing session will remain open as well. Once you've previewed your lesson, you can close the preview window and continue editing your lesson.

It's good practice to preview your lesson often, as you are adding and editing content, or modifying your lesson properties.

NOTE: SoftChalk lessons are web pages that contain standard HTML, CSS, JavaScript, images, and media. Students will view your lessons using any standard web browser.

Choose a Theme, Layout, & Enter a Title

When you first create a lesson, it has a default Theme and Layout. It's easy to change the look-and-feel of your lesson – simply select a different "Theme" or "Layout".

1. From the Toolbar, click on the **Properties** icon and then select **Theme**.
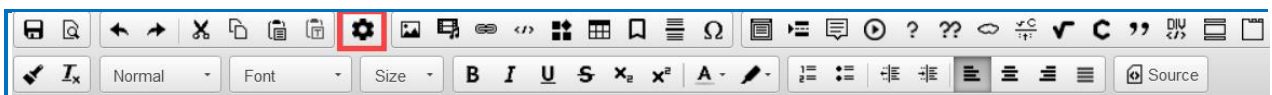
2. With the Theme dialog open, choose a theme from the options available in the drop-down menu at the top of the dialog. Create Online allows you to select from a variety of color-based theme options.
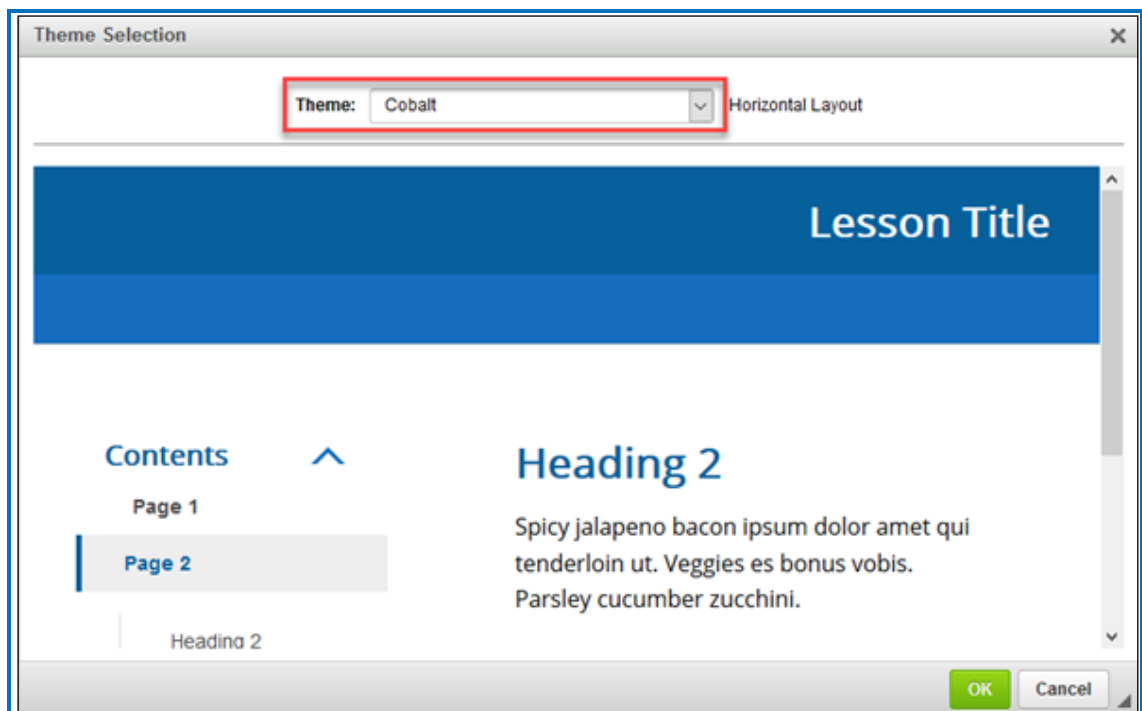
(You can also create your own 'Theme' with custom colors and logo by using the SoftChalk Create App and the ThemeBuilder option. See the SoftChalk Create Guide for more information.)

3. Additionally, you may also enter a Lesson Title and Subtitle, choose a Layout, and make other selections by clicking the **Properties** icon on the toolbar and making selections for **Title & Layout**, **Overview Page**, and **Sidebar**.

4. Once you have made your selections, you will be returned to the main editing window.

5. To view the changes and see your lesson the way a student will see it, save your lesson, and click the **Preview** button on the toolbar.

Add an Activity

Activities are great way to include formative assessment and feedback for your student. Some activities can be scored, like a quiz question. Other activities are "information presentation" style activities.

1. From the Toolbar, click the **Activity** icon ⊙ .

2. There are a variety of activities that you can customize and insert into your lesson.

   Make a selection to open the activity editing dialog. Note the **How To** option ? at the top of the dialog, which is available on all activities. You can view an example of the activity and a short video showing how to create the activity.

3. Let's say you want to have students order the first eight planets based on proximity to the sun. For this, you might use the Ordering Activity. In the Ordering Activity Editor, click the 'plus' icon to create a new card.

4. In the dialog that appears, select an image (optional) and/or type text for a card. When finished, click the **Back** button.
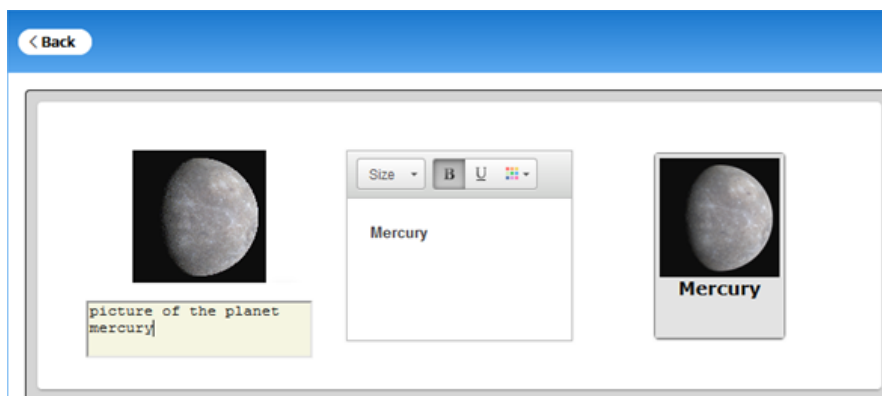
5. Continue creating as many cards as needed for your activity.

6. When you have completed creating cards, enter the **Max Points** for your activity.

7. Click the **OK** button at the top of the activity editor dialog to save your activity. It will be embedded or linked into your lesson page.

8. Back in the main editing window, you will see a 'placeholder' image that represents the location of the activity in your lesson page. If you need to make changes to the activity, you can **right-click** on the placeholder image, then choose **Modify Activity** to reopen the activity for editing.

9. To view the activity in your lesson the way a student will see it, save your lesson, and click the **Preview** button on the toolbar.

10. In the main editing window, hit your Enter or Return key to create a new paragraph after the activity and continue adding additional content to your lesson.

Add a Self-Check Question – Example: Multiple Choice

Adding self-check quiz questions to your lesson is a great way to include formative assessment and student feedback into your lesson. You can insert individual quiz questions anywhere in your lesson to provide your students a way to self-check their understanding of concepts as they progress thru the lesson.

1. From the Toolbar, click the **QuizPopper** icon [?].

2. There are a variety of activities that you can customize and insert into your lesson. From the options that appear, choose **Multiple Choice** for this example.

3. Type in a question. At the bottom, enter **40** for the points.
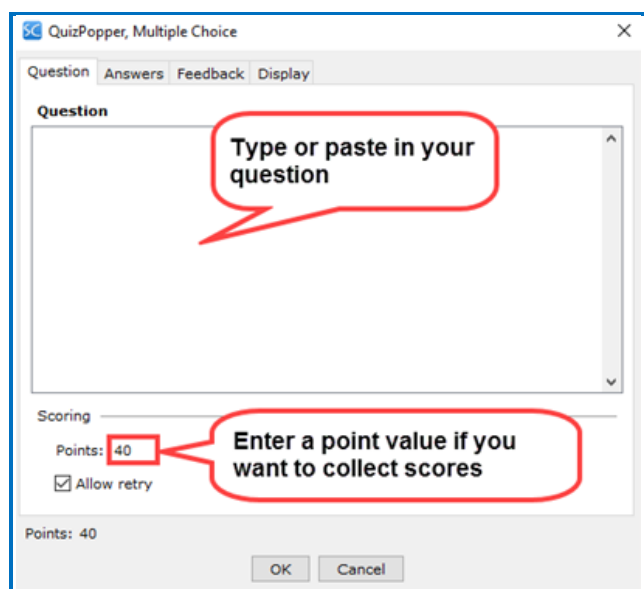
4. Click the **Answers** tab. Enter your answers and individual feedback (optional). To add another answer, click **Add Answer**. In the correct column at the left, select the correct answer.
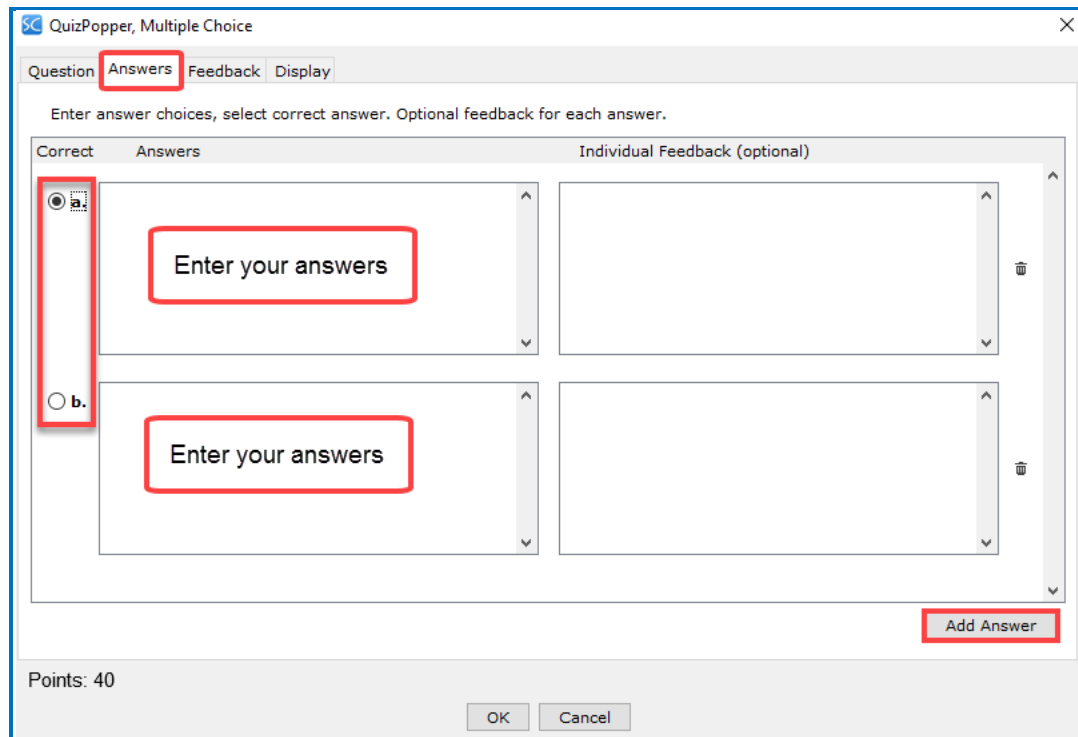
5. Click the **Display** tab at the top. Notice you have three options for how the question will be viewed by the student. The default is **Embed in lesson page**. Click **OK** to save your quiz question into your lesson.

6. Back in the main editing window, you will see a 'placeholder' image that represents the location of the quizpopper in your lesson page If you need to make changes to the activity, you can **right-click** on the placeholder image and choose the edit option. The quizpopper editor will reopen for editing.

7. To view the quiz in your lesson the way a student will see it, save your lesson and click the Preview button on the toolbar.

8. In the main editing window, hit your Enter or Return key to create a new paragraph after the activity and continue adding additional content to your lesson.
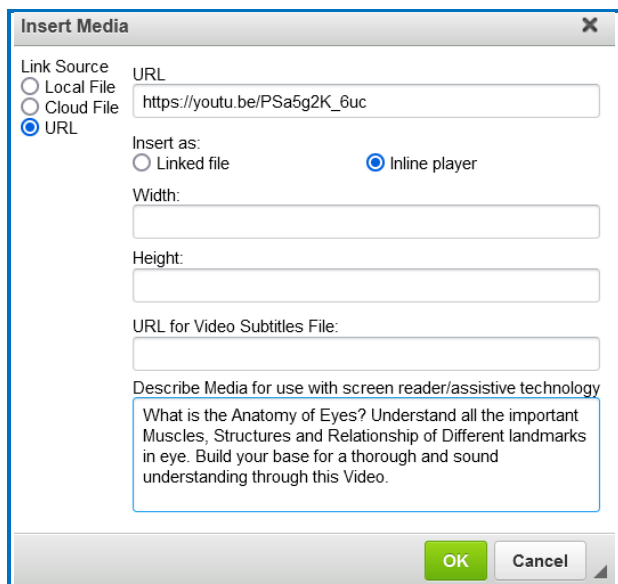
Embed a YouTube Video

You can add videos into your lesson from any source. Videos can be linked or embedded into the lesson page. Below is an example for embedding a YouTube video.

1. On the toolbar, click the **Media** icon .

2. To insert a YouTube video, paste any YouTube video weblink into the 'URL' field. Make sure the **Link Source** is **URL**. You may also add a description of your video as shown below. Click the **OK** button to save the video into your lesson page.

3. In your main editing window, you will see the embedded video appear in the lesson content. To edit the video you just created, double click the selection icon to open the editing window for the video.
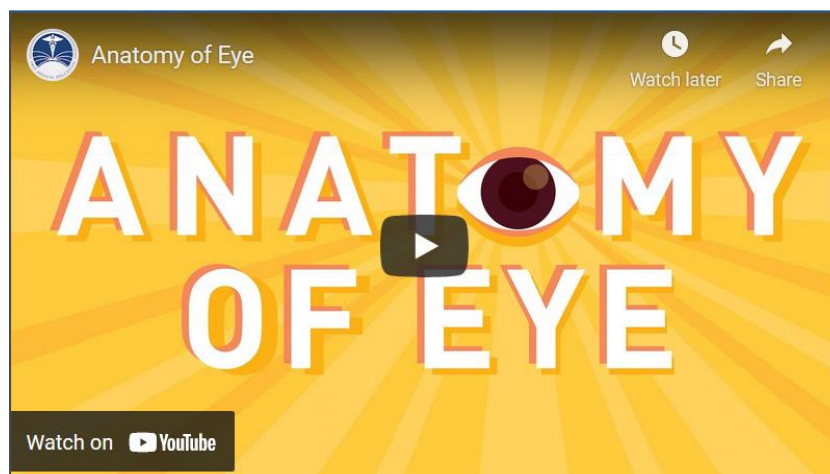
4. To view the video in your lesson the way a student will see it, save your lesson, and click the **Preview** button on the toolbar.

5. In the main editing window, hit your Enter or Return key to create a new paragraph after the video and continue adding additional content to your lesson.

Exit Create Online

When you have finished editing your lesson, you can exit Create Online by clicking on either the **Home** link or the **Folder** link at the top of the Create Online window.

- Click the **Home** link to exit and return to the SoftChalk Cloud Home page.

- Click the **Folder Name** (e.g., Nursing) to exit and return to the lesson list page

Step 3 – Edit and Share a SoftChalk Lesson

Once you've saved and exited your lesson editing session, you can perform several actions on your lesson – preview the lesson, edit the lesson, and access the lesson link information to put into your learning management system. These actions are described below.

Edit Your Lesson in Create Online

1. Select **My Content / Lessons**. This will display the lesson list page. This view shows your Lessons folder and the lesson(s) you have created in that folder.

   Note: If you have multiple folders of lessons, navigate the folders to find the lesson you wish to access.

2. Click on the pencil icon to the right of the lesson title to open the lesson for editing in Create Online.
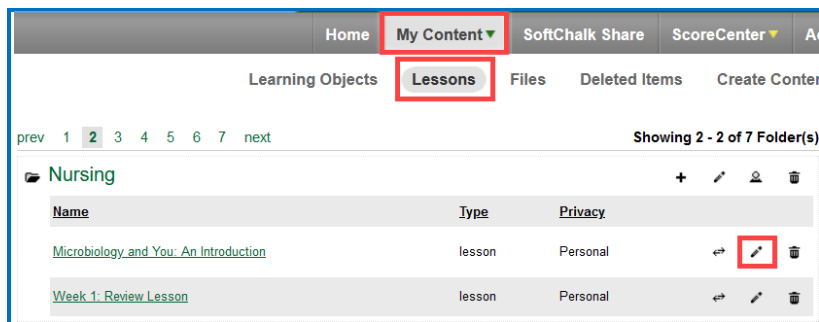
Share Your Lesson Link

Each lesson you create in SoftChalk Cloud has its own unique web link (URL). You can provide this web link if you wish students or colleagues to view your lesson.

1. Select **My Content / Lessons**. This will display the lesson list page. This view shows your Lessons folder and the lesson(s) you have created in that folder.

   Note: If you have multiple folders of lessons, navigate the folders to find the lesson you wish to access.
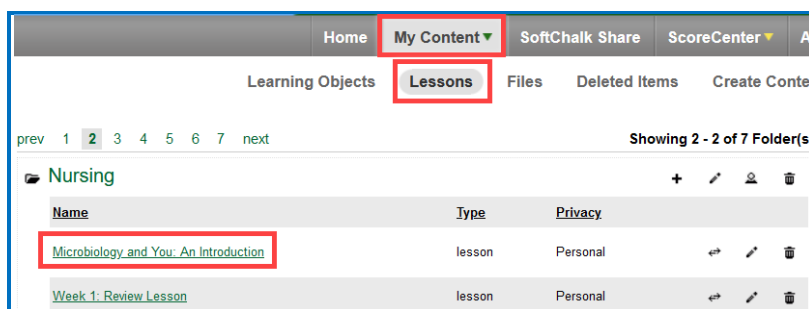
2. Click on the name of your lesson to display the lesson "detail" page.

3. From the lesson details page, scroll down to the **Lesson Actions** area. At the bottom right, right-click within the **Hyperlink** field and choose **Copy** to grab a copy of the lesson link.

4. Lesson links can be put into other web pages, into an email, into a Google Doc or PDF file.

5. A major advantage of using SoftChalk Cloud is that you can put your lesson links into multiple places (multiple web pages, emails, etc.) and when you need to update the lesson information, you can update it one time in SoftChalk Cloud, and every place you have linked to the lesson will be simultaneously updated.

6. From the lesson detail page, you can perform several actions

    a. **preview the lesson** The lesson is embedded in this page for quick previewing. You can also preview the lesson full screen (the link is near the top of the page)

    b. **edit the lesson** In the **Lesson Actions** area on the right, there are two options for editing your lesson: **Edit in Create** and **Edit in Create Online.**

        To edit using the editor described in this guide, choose the option for **Edit in Create Online**. This will launch the editor and open your lesson for editing.

        There are some differences between the two editing options; here are some considerations:

    •   You may edit the lessons you create with either editor. Lessons created with one editor can be edited with either editor.

    •   The option **Edit in Create** will launch the SoftChalk Create app for you to edit your lesson. **NOTE**: **Before using the Create app to edit content, you must install the app**. The instructions for installing the Create app are provided at the end of this Guide. For more information about using the Create app, please see the SoftChalk Create Guide.

    •   The Create Online Editor does not require the installation of an app. You can use the Create Online Editor with any major web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge), which means you can create and edit content from any device (computer, laptop, tablet, mobile) that supports these browsers.

    •   The Create app has more features than Create Online – including the ThemeBuilder and Media Search too.

        Stay tuned, the plan is to have all features available in both editors – we're working on it!

Step 4 - Learning Management System Integration

Using SoftChalk Lessons in Your LMS

SoftChalk lessons work with most any learning management system, i.e., Canvas, Blackboard, Moodle, BrightSpace, Schoology, etc. Every LMS is different, so the specific steps for integrating SoftChalk lessons will depend on which LMS you are using. See the table below in this section for details.

Each lesson you create in SoftChalk Cloud can be added to your learning management system (LMS) course. There are several options including:

- Adding your lesson as a web link to your LMS course

- Embedding your lesson in an iframe within your LMS course

- Integrating your lesson via LTI (learning tools interoperability) within your LMS course. This option allows you to track student access to your lesson and pass student grades into your LMS gradebook.

A key advantage to using SoftChalk Cloud with your LMS is that you can link each lesson into multiple courses in your LMS. Should you need to update your lesson, you update it one time in SoftChalk Cloud – and every course that links to that lesson will be immediately and simultaneously updated. It's a very efficient way to manage your LMS course content.

If needed, you can also link your SoftChalk lesson(s) into multiple courses in different LMS platforms simultaneously. This is particularly helpful if you are transitioning from one LMS to another.

LMS Video and Guide Links

The table below provides links to videos and guides that provide more detailed information about SoftChalk Cloud content integration with various learning management systems. If you don't see information for your LMS, please email help@softchalk.com to inquire for information. SoftChalk works with most any LMS and we will do our best to help you deliver your SoftChalk content where you need it!

LMS	Guide
Blackboard	Blackboard and SoftChalk Cloud Integration Guide
Buzz	Buzz Integration Guide
BrightSpace by D2L	Brightspace by D2L Integration Guide
Canvas	Canvas Integration Guide
Moodle	Moodle Integration Guide
Schoology	Schoology Integration Guide

Install the SoftChalk Create App

As discussed in a previous section of this guide, SoftChalk Cloud offers two different methods for creating and editing lessons – Create Online (the method discussed in this guide), and the Create App.

Create Online does not require you to install any software on your computer – it runs in your web browser. The SoftChalk Create App requires a software installation. Follow the instructions below to install the Create App on your Windows or Macintosh computer.

Even if you are not an administrator on your computer, you should be able to install the SoftChalk Create App. If you have any questions about computer requirements, please see our System Specifications page. If you run into any issues with your installation, please see our FAQs.

If you have a Macintosh, please see the section Macintosh on the next page.

Windows

1. Download and install the SoftChalk Create App (windows version).

    a. Please be patient while the installer downloads - it typically takes one to five minutes.

2. Open the folder where you saved your installer file. Typically, this folder is called **Downloads** on a Windows computer. The installer file is called ***SoftChalk-Create-Cloud-11.exe*** when downloading 32-bit or ***SoftChalk-Create-Cloud-11-64bit.exe*** when downloading 64-bit Windows installer. **Double-click** on this file to run the installation.

3. Congratulations! You have installed the Create App successfully on your computer.

Macintosh

1. Download and install the SoftChalk Create App (Macintosh version).

    a. Please be patient while the installer downloads - it typically takes one to five minutes.

2. Once the installer has downloaded, Click **Open**.
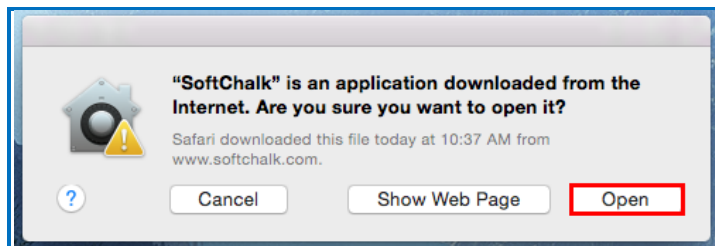
3. On your desktop, double-click on the **SoftChalk-Create.dmg** file (see below).


4. Double-click on the SoftChalk Installer icon (see below) and proceed to the next step on the following page.

If you do NOT see the SoftChalk Installer icon above on your desktop, then see the following solutions:

   a. Please open your computer icon, typically **Macintosh HD**. Then look at the left hand column under **Devices**, and click on **SoftChalk Installer** and continue with Step 6 below.

   b. If you do NOT see the SoftChalk Installer icon under the **Devices** area, then you may be using a non-standard program to open .dmg files. Control-click on the SoftChalk-Create.dmg file. Choose **Open with** and make sure that **DiskImageMounter.app** is the selected application.

5. You'll see the SoftChalk License Agreement:
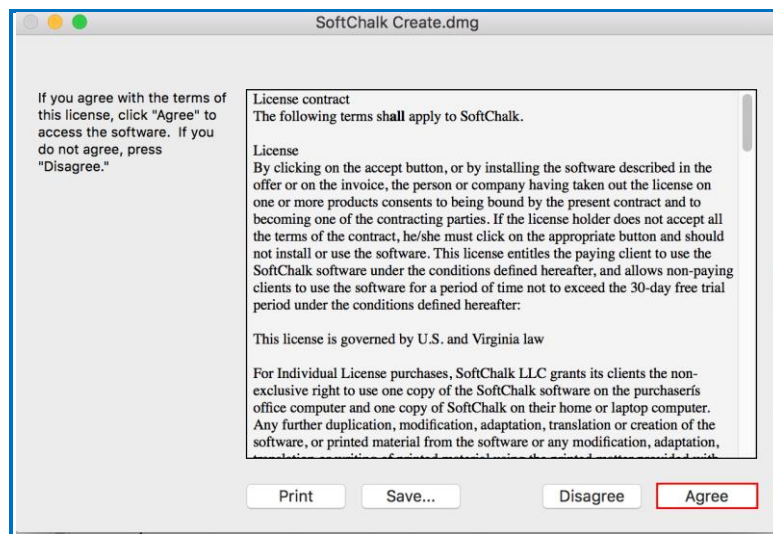
6. When you click on "Agree" to agree to the license, you'll see the contents of the disk image for the installer.

   IMPORTANT: To complete the installation, either drag the SoftChalk.app onto your desktop or drag it into your Applications folder. ***Be sure to close your SoftChalk Installer window.***
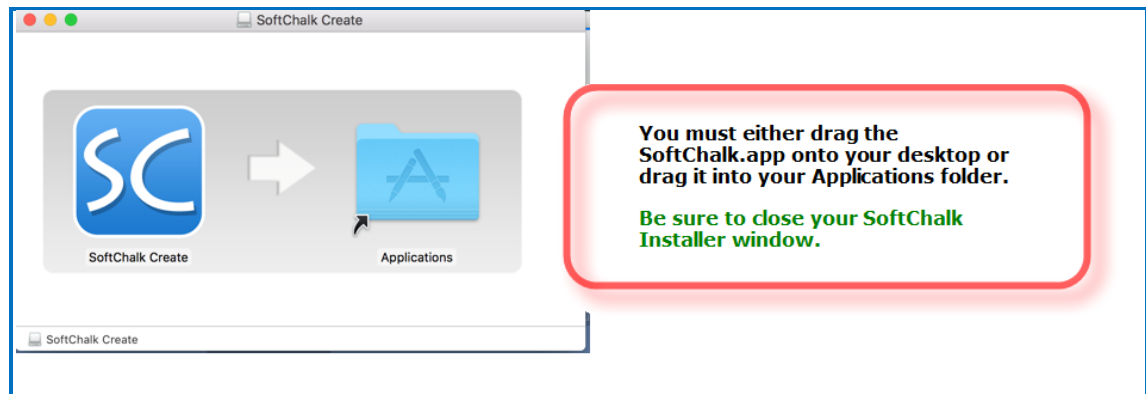
7. Congratulations! You have installed the Create App successfully on your computer.

For information about using the Create app, or for additional resources and guides, please see the next section Other Resources and Guides.

Other Resources and Guides

Resource	Description
Sample Lessons	View sample lessons created by SoftChalk customers.
Video Tutorials	The videos are typically 2-5 minutes long and cover Getting Started with SoftChalk Cloud as well as saving a lesson to SoftChalk Cloud, using images in SoftChalk, and creating quizzes and activities.
SoftChalk Webinars	Sign up for free SoftChalk webinars including Introductory Webinars for getting started with SoftChalk Cloud.
SoftChalk Cloud Guide	Contains info on how to create a Cloud account, collaborate on lessons with other instructors, share content and find content to use in our SoftChalk Share repository.
SoftChalk Create Guide	Gives details on using the SoftChalk Create app, our award-winning content authoring software. SoftChalk Create is a feature within your SoftChalk Cloud account.
Student Guide to SoftChalk Lessons	Contains info for students taking SoftChalk lessons. Includes a **Troubleshooting** section.
Migration to SoftChalk Cloud	If you are already familiar with the desktop version of SoftChalk Create and want to start using SoftChalk Cloud, this is the guide for you.
System Specifications	Gives the system specifications for both instructors who are creating content (e.g. SoftChalk lessons) and students who are viewing SoftChalk lessons in web browsers.
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions

Help

Please visit our SoftChalk Support webpage. For purchase information, please contact sales@softchalk.com.

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