

# Perusall Quick-Start Guide

January 2021



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# What is Perusall?

Perusall is a browser-based software platform for interactive learning. Students help each other learn by collectively annotating readings in threads, responding to each other's comments, and interacting. Perusall can bring the interactivity of a small seminar to a larger course.



## Why are we using Perusall?

Some of our Data Science Workshops are being taught using a “flipped classroom” model — this is where lecture-based material is delivered online, asynchronously, so that it can be digested at your own pace, which provides more time for Q&A discussion during in-class time.

Prior to our Zoom-based one-hour Q&A session, there will be a **two week self-study period** during which you can work through the workshop materials at your own pace. We are using Persuall as a means to facilitate greater engagement with the workshop materials during this self-study period. With Perusall, you will be able to post questions and comments about parts of the materials you do not understand or problems you encounter. Instructors can answer your questions and comments, but you will also have the opportunity to reply

to questions and comments from other participants. In this way, Perusall facilitates peer-to-peer and peer-to-instructor learning.

**Your successful completion of the workshop will be based on making a contribution, via questions and comments, during this self-study period.**

# How to use Perusall?

You should have received an email asking you to create an account at <https://perusall.com/>. You should also have received a **course code** via email. If you have not, please contact your workshop administrator. Once your Perusall account is created, enter the course code and you will be able to view the course materials.

During the two week self-study period, you can highlight sections of the workshop materials you wish to ask questions about, add comments, as well as respond to questions and comments from other participants. The window for submitting questions will close 24 hours prior to the Zoom Q&A session.

## 0.1 My courses

Once you have logged into Perusall and entered your course code, you should see the name of the workshop you have registered for listed under **My courses** (highlighted in red in the image below).

The screenshot shows the Perusall mobile application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Perusall logo, a Help icon, and a user profile icon labeled 'TS'. Below the navigation bar, there are three main action buttons: 'Enroll in course' (with a magnifying glass icon), 'Create study group' (with a speech bubble icon), and 'My purchases' (with a book icon). The 'My courses' section is titled 'My courses' and contains a list of workshops. One workshop, 'Data Science Workshops', is highlighted with a pink background and shows the start date as January 11, 2021, and the end date as February 1, 2021. To the right of the list, there is a 'Sort by:' dropdown menu set to 'Name, A-Z'. Below the main list, there is a section titled 'My archived courses' with a note stating 'You do not yet have any archived courses. Courses are archived automatically when their end date has passed.'

Click on the name of the workshop to proceed.

## 0.2 Get started

You will now enter the **Course** home page, under the **Get started** tab. This page provides some basic information about Perusall. At the top of the page, there are two other tabs — **Library** and **Assignments**. Click on the latter (highlighted in red in the image below).

The screenshot shows the Perusall interface for a course titled "Data Science W...". The left sidebar includes links for "My Courses", "Course home" (which is highlighted in grey), "My scores", "Notifications", "Notes", "Add to my calendar", and "Unenroll from course". Below these are sections for "Readings", "Assignments", "Chats", "Groups", "One-on-One", and "Hashtags". The main content area is titled "Get started" and contains text explaining how Perusall helps users learn faster through collaboration and annotations. It also describes behaviors that predict higher grades and lists specific actions like contributing thoughtful questions and upvoting answers.

**Perusall® > Data Science Workshops > Get started**

**Data Science W... X**

**Get started** **Library** **Assignments**

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.

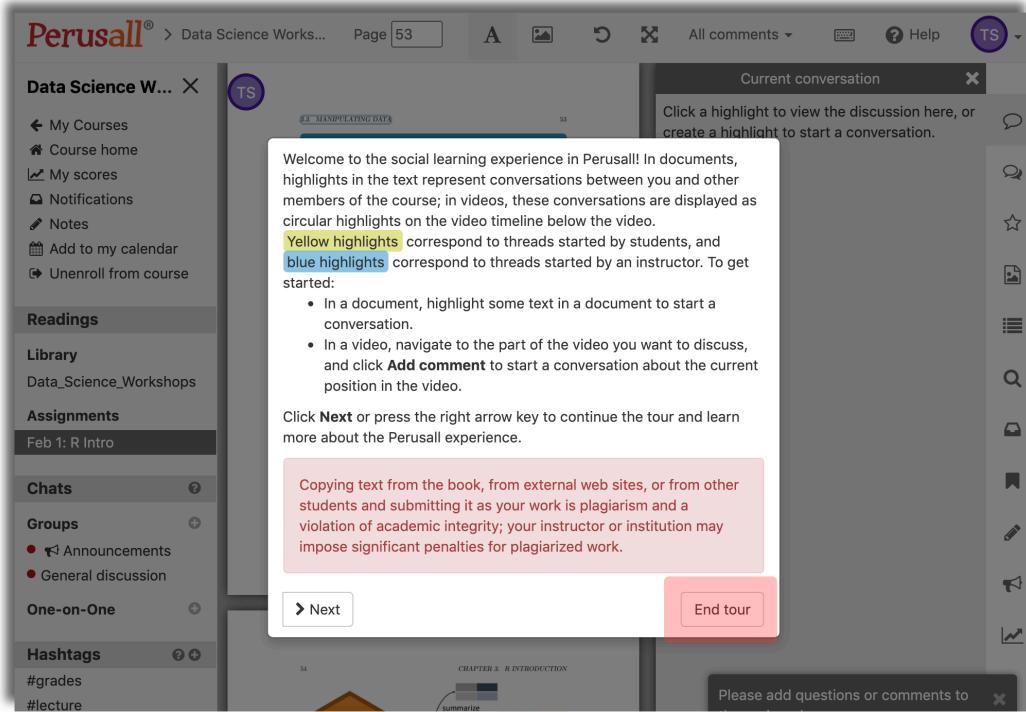
- Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the class discussion, spread throughout the entire reading ([see some examples](#))
- Starting the reading early
- Breaking the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
- Reading all the way to the end of the assigned reading
- Posing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

## 0.3 Assignments

You will now enter the **Assignments** page. For your workshop, there will be only one assignment. To start working on the assignment, click on the **Work on assignment** button (highlighted in red in the image below).

The screenshot shows the Perusall course interface for 'Data Science Workshops'. The left sidebar includes links for 'My Courses', 'Course home' (selected), 'My scores', 'Notifications', 'Notes', 'Add to my calendar', 'Unenroll from course', 'Readings', 'Library' (selected), 'Data\_Science\_Workshops', 'Assignments' (selected), 'F1: R Intro', 'Chats', 'Groups' (with 'Announcements' and 'General discussion' listed), 'One-on-One', and 'Hashtags' (#grades, #lecture). The main content area shows an assignment titled 'Data\_Science\_Workshops R Intro' due on Feb 1, 2021, at 12:00 pm EST. It includes a preview of the assignment document and a note: 'Please add questions or comments to the assigned page ranges'. A message says 'Assignment not yet opened.' Below is a green button with a white arrow pointing right and the text 'Work on assignment'.

You will enter a new page and be presented with a popup window of instructions. Once you've read the instructions, click **End tour** in the bottom right of the popup (highlighted in red in the image below).



## 0.4 Layout

You will now enter a new page where the main screen is divided into a left and right panel. On the left, you can view the workshop materials as a pdf file. You can scroll through the materials as you work on them. On the right, you will see a panel called **Current conversation**, which should be blank.

The screenshot shows the Perusall platform interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with navigation links like 'My Courses', 'Course home', 'My scores', 'Notifications', 'Notes', 'Add to my calendar', and 'Unenroll from course'. Below that is a 'Readings' section with 'Library' and 'Data\_Science\_Workshops'. Under 'Assignments', there's a 'Feb 1: R Intro' section. On the right, the main area displays a slide titled 'CHAPTER 3. R INTRODUCTION' with a diagram of the dplyr package. The diagram shows an orange hexagon labeled 'dplyr' with arrows pointing to 'filter', 'select', 'mutate', and 'summarize'. Below the diagram is a code chunk titled '3.3.1 Filter, select, & arrange'. The code filters baby names data for the years 1992 and 1993, specifically for the names 'Alex' and 'Mark'. The resulting data frame 'baby\_names\_alexmark' has 4 rows and 4 columns, containing data for Alex Girls, Mark Girls, Alex Boys, and Mark Boys. To the right of the main content is a 'Current conversation' panel with a red border. It contains a message: 'Click a highlight to view the discussion here, or create a highlight to start a conversation.' At the bottom of this panel is a message box: 'Please add questions or comments to the assigned page ranges.' The top right of the screen shows a 'Help' button and a 'TS' icon.

You're now ready to start! You can work through the materials at your own pace.

## 0.5 Ask a question

As you work through the materials, you may have questions or comments about the content. You can ask a question or make a comment by simply highlighting the part of the text that you'd like to refer to (see highlighted code chunk in left side panel below). Once the text is highlighted, a text window opens in the right side **Current conversation** panel (highlighted in red in the image below). You can type your question here. Your question could be in plain English, or include code.

The screenshot shows the Perusall interface for a Data Science workshop. The left sidebar includes links for My Courses, Course home, My scores, Notifications, Notes, Add to my calendar, and Unenroll from course. Under Readings, there's a section for Library and Data\_Science\_Workshops. Assignments show 'Feb 1: R Intro'. The Chats section has Groups (Announcements, General discussion) and One-on-One. Hashtags include #grades and #lecture.

The main content area shows Chapter 3: R INTRODUCTION. It features a diagram of the dplyr package with arrows pointing to filter, select, and arrange functions. Below the diagram is a code snippet:

```
# Read in the baby names data (if you haven't already)
baby_names <- read_csv("babynames.csv")

# Filter data, keeping "Alex" and "Mark" in year 1992, record >= baby_names %>
# Use logical operators to specify the filtering condition
#> baby_names %>%
#>   filter((Name == "Alex" | Name == "Mark") & Year == 1992) %>%
#>   select(-Year)

print(baby_names %>% almanac() # explicit printing)
```

A red arrow points to the question in the 'Current conversation' window:

Why do we use two equals signs in this code chunk?

Not yet submitted: press Enter to submit.

Please add questions or comments to ...

Once you have finished typing your question press enter/return. Your question will now be visible to the instructor and other workshop participants. Don't be shy — **there are no stupid questions!!!**

## 0.6 Answer a question

If you see a comment or question that you can help with, please try to answer it yourself! There will be a text window under the most recent part of the conversation thread, which you can write your reply in (highlighted in red in the image below). This is a great way to learn, since we often learn best by teaching others. Feel free to ask as many additional questions as you want within the same conversation thread.

The screenshot shows the Perusall platform interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with navigation links like 'My Courses', 'Course home', 'My scores', 'Notifications', 'Notes', 'Add to my calendar', 'Unenroll from course', 'Readings' (with 'Library' and 'Data\_Science\_Workshops'), 'Assignments' (with 'Feb 1: R Intro' selected), 'Chats' (with 'Groups' and 'One-on-One' sections), and 'Hashtags' (#grades, #lecture). The main area displays a slide titled 'CHAPTER 3: R INTRODUCTION' with a dplyr logo and a flowchart illustrating its functions: filter, select, summarize, and mutate. Below the slide is a code chunk titled '3.3.1 Filter, select, & arrange'. The code filters a dataset for names 'Alex' and 'Mark' in 1992:

```
# Load in the baby names data if you haven't already
library(babynames)

# Filter data, keeping 'Alex' and 'Mark' in year 1992, record in baby_names_element
# Use the logical operator to specify the filtering condition
baby_names_element %>% filter(Name == "Alex" | Name == "Mark") %>% select(-Year) %>% print()

print(baby_names_element) # explicit printing
```

The output shows four rows of data:

```
## # A tibble: 4 x 4
##   Name Sex Count Year
##   <chr> <chr> <dbl>
## 1 Alex   Girl  366  1992
## 2 Mark   Boy   4743 1992
## 3 Mark   Boy   4743 1992
## 4 Alex   Boy   7486 1992
```

Below the code, a note says: 'Note that we can combine conditions using & (AND) and | (OR).'

In the top right, there's a 'Current conversation' window with a question from a user: 'Why do we use two equals signs in this code chunk?'. A response box says: 'Enter your comment or question and press Enter. Mention a friend by typing @. Add hashtags by typing #.' At the bottom of the conversation window, it says: 'Please add questions or comments to this section'.

The above process repeats itself whenever you reach part of the materials you have a question about: **highlight text -> type question**.



# Zoom-based Q&A session

After the two-week self-study period, we will host a one-hour live Q&A session via Zoom. No new material will be presented during this session – rather, this will be an additional opportunity to ask questions and get feedback about the materials. The instructor will use the questions submitted on Perusall as a starting point for discussion and possibly for short code demonstrations illustrating conceptual or syntactical stumbling blocks.

**Zoom etiquette:** Please be punctual. All participants will initially be entered into a Zoom waiting room and the presenter will admit them to the session at the designated start time. Any participants arriving in the wait room more than 5 mins past the listed start time of the session will not be admitted.