

# Word to Moodle XML

How to convert an existing quiz in Word to a Moodle XML file for import

If you are looking to create a **new** bank of questions for a test/quiz you'll be giving in Moodle, it is easiest to format your questions in Word and then create a Moodle XML file using an online tool.

This tutorial will also help those who have **existing question banks already stored in Word**. For example, if you would like to have students take a test/quiz in Moodle that was previously given on paper all you have to do is change the formatting of the document and use this conversion tool.

In order for us to use the Moodle XML converter site\*, we have to format our questions in a certain way. This allows this conversion tool to translate your questions into XML code that Moodle can read.

You have several options for the way answer choices are lettered or numbered. I will provide examples for commonly used question types, and you can visit this page for more samples.

**\*Note:** *To access vletools.com you will need to create an account or you can authenticate for free using Facebook.*

## **Example #1 – Multiple Choice Question – One correct answer**

[multichoice](#)

What is the capital of New York State?

- A. Kingston
- B. Albany
- C. New York City
- D. Buffalo

Answer: B

## **Example #2 – Multiple Choice Question – More than one correct answer**

[multichoice](#)

What two colors combine to make the color green?

- Blue
- Red
- Yellow
- Purple

Answer: A, C

## **Example #3 – True/False**

[truefalse](#)

The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.

Answer: True

#### Example #4 – Short Answer

[shortanswer](#)

Calculate: 2 + 2

Answer: 4, four

#### Example #5 – Matching

[matching](#)

Match cities and countries

A. Yakutsk

match: Russia

B. Tampere

match: Finland

C. Harbin

match: China

#### Example #6 – Essay

[essay](#)

Explain the causes of World War II.

\*\*\*Notice the [question designator tag](#) above the actual question text. "Multichoice" is the default question type and the tag can be omitted, but if you switch from one question type to another and then back to multiple choice, you must add the tag above the next multiple choice question. Here is an example:

What is the capital of New York State?

A. Kingston

B. Albany

C. New York City

D. Buffalo

Answer: B

[truefalse](#)

The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.

Answer: True

[multichoice](#)

What two colors combine to make the color green?

Blue

Red

Yellow

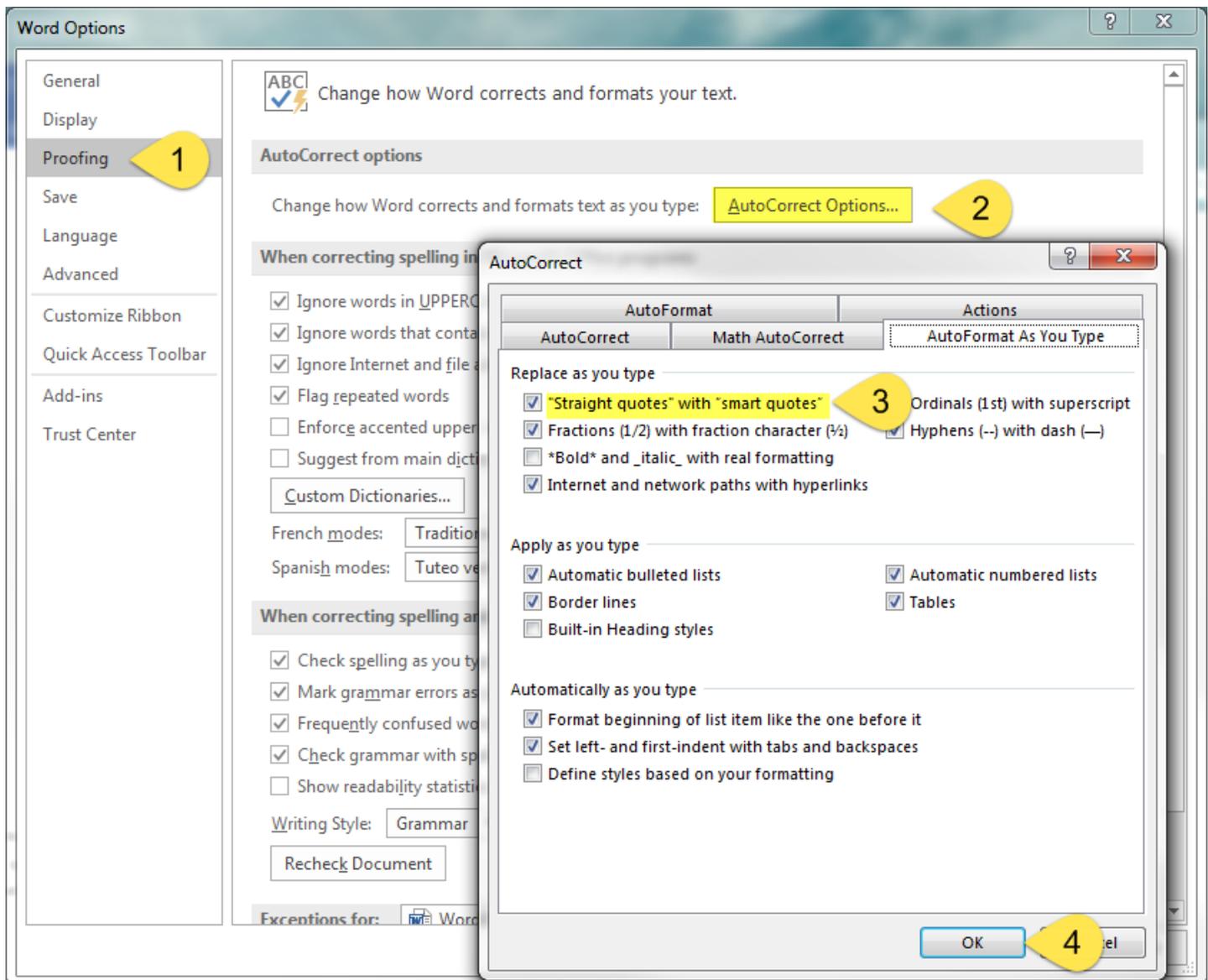
Purple

Answer: A, C

For more examples and information on how to format questions go [here](#).

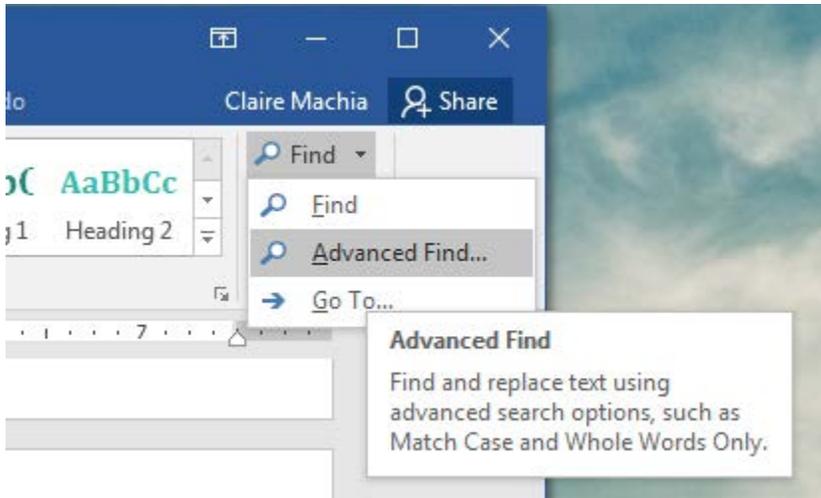
Once you have formatted all of your questions, you have to make sure that there are no smart quotes or apostrophes. The Moodle XML converter only accepts plain text, so you will have to convert smart quotes to straight quotes before pasting your questions into the conversion tool's text box.

From the File menu, go to Options > Proofing. Click the **AutoCorrect Options** button, *uncheck* the box next to "Smart quotation marks" with "straight quotes marks" and *click* **OK**.

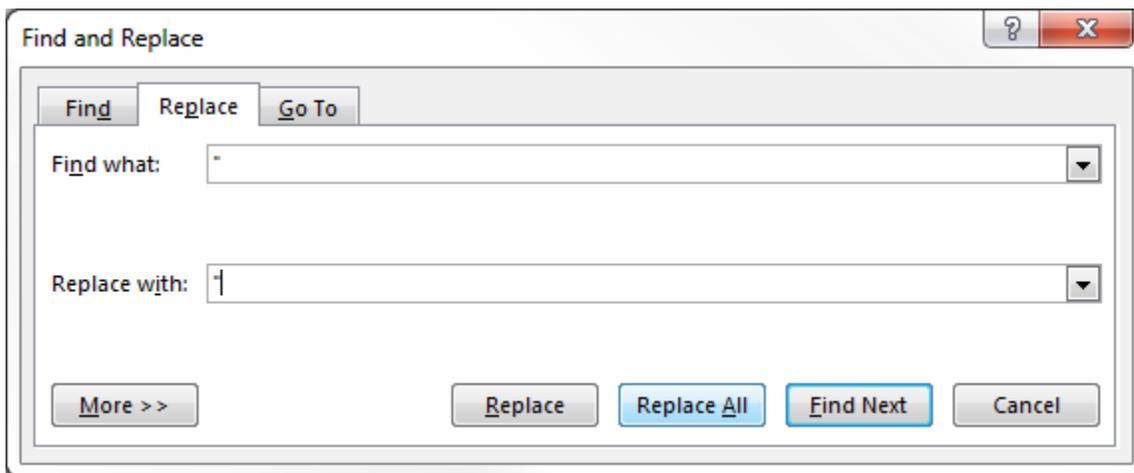


Now we will perform a **Find & Replace** to change any smart quotes we may have in the document to straight ones.

From the **Home** tab of the Word menu, expand **Find >** and click on **Advanced Find**.



In the **Find what** field type " and in the **Replace with** field type ". Click the **Replace All** button and then *click* OK to confirm replacements.



Repeat this process... only this time, type an apostrophe ' in the **Find what** and **Replace with** fields. Click the **Replace All** button and then *click* OK to confirm replacements.

Now all of the smart (or curly) quotation marks and apostrophes that are in the document should have been replaced with straight quotation marks and apostrophes.

Do a quick scan of the document to make sure this is true. Also note that certain symbols and accents may cause the text not to convert using the Moodle XML Converter tool.

Now we will login to the [Moodle XML Converter site](#), and from the Quiz XML page you can copy and paste the question text from Word to the text box provided within the conversion tool. Once you do, notice how it has changed your text to plain text. Another option is to save your Word document as Plain text and you can upload it here.

Control (or Command) A to select all text in your document

Control (or Command) C to copy

Control (or Command) V to paste

```

multichoice
What is the capital of New York State?
A. Kingston
B. Albany
C. New York City
D. Buffalo
Answer: B

multichoice
What two colors combine to make the color green?
A. Blue
B. Red
C. Yellow
D. Purple
Answer: A, C

truefalse
The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.
Answer: True

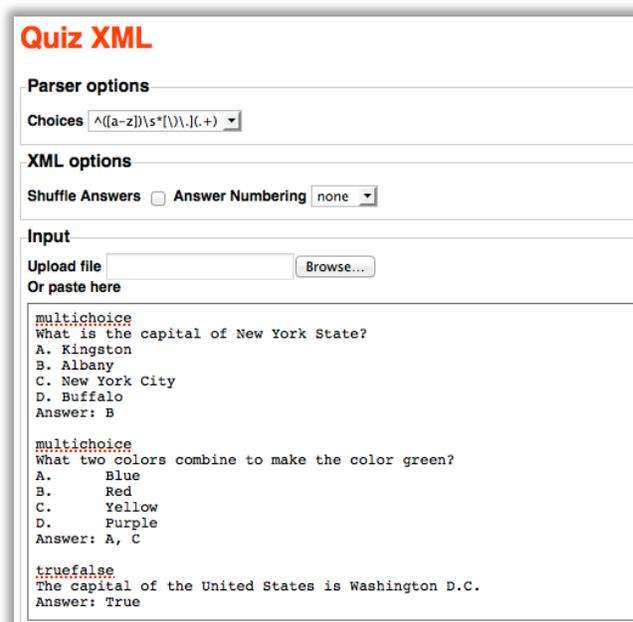
shortanswer
Calculate: 2 + 2
Answer: 4, four

matching
Match cities and countries
1. Yakutsk
match: Russia
2. Tampere
match: Finland
3. Harbin
match: China

essay
Explain the causes for World War II.

```

Take a final look at your text in the Moodle XML Converter to make sure it is formatted correctly. There should be only one space between each question and no spaces between the question and answer choices. (See example below)



Now let's talk a bit about the settings you can change before we create our Moodle XML file.

The **Parser options** tell the conversion tool how you have lettered or numbered the answer choices.

A. B. C. or A) B) C) is the default.

Use the yellow "Parser options selection" box to help you choose the correct option from the drop-down menu.

**Parser options selection:**

1.  $^{\wedge}(\d+)\s*[\]\.](.+) - \text{for } 1. 2. 3. \text{ or } 1) 2) 3)$
2.  $^{\wedge}([a-z])\s*[\]\.](.+) - \text{for } A. B. C. \text{ or } A) B) C)$
3.  $^{\wedge}([a-z])\s*(.+) - \text{for } (A) (B) (C)$
4.  $^{\wedge}(\d+)\s*(.+) - \text{for } (1) (2) (3)$

## Quiz XML

**Parser options**

Choices

---

**XML options**

Shuffle Answers  Answer Numbering

**Input**

Upload file

Or paste here

```

multichoice
What is the capital of New York State?

```

The **Shuffle Answers** setting will allow the answer choices in your question pool to be shuffled for each attempt. Meaning choice A for a given question might not be the same answer if the student takes the quiz a second time.

(Note: Avoid this if you have questions with "all of the above" or "none of the above" answer choices.)

The **Answer Numbering** setting allows you to tell the conversion tool how you want the answer choices to be numbered once they are imported to Moodle. If you choose none, just a radio button will appear next to the answer choice for the students to click.

Ok, now we are ready to convert our pool of questions. *Click* the **Preview** button to test that your questions are all formatted correctly and see how the converter will set up the questions.

## Quiz XML

**Parser options**

Choices

---

**XML options**

Shuffle Answers  Answer Numbering

---

**Input**

Upload file

Or paste here

```
multichoice
What is the capital of New York State?
A. Kingston
B. Albany
C. New York City
D. Buffalo
Answer: B

multichoice
What two colors combine to make the color green?
A. Blue
B. Red
C. Yellow
D. Purple
Answer: A, C

truefalse
The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.
Answer: True
```

If it worked you will see that it "Parsed" however many questions you had. In this example we had 6 questions.

## Quiz XML

Parsed 6 quiz entries.

This tool should notify you of an error and identify where the error is. If it does not provide an error message, you might have to carefully look back at the text for any smart quotes/apostrophes or any other symbols that could cause the converter not to work.

When troubleshooting an error with large pools of questions, we recommend that you paste in 10 questions at a time and hit preview to make sure they are good to go, then do the next 10. This makes finding an error easier when there is one.

In this example, it told me that all 6 questions parsed. BUT it is telling me there is a problem with one question below the preview.

Preview Download

Preview

**multichoice**  
 What is the capital of New York State?  
 What is the capital of New York State?

- Kingston
- Albany
- New York City
- Buffalo

Answer: B

**multichoice**  
 What two colors combine to make the color green?  
 What two colors combine to make the color green?

- Blue
- Red
- Yellow
- Purple

Answer: A, C

**truefalse**  
 The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.  
 The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.

Answer: True

**shortanswer**  
 Calculate: 2 + 2  
 Calculate: 2 + 2

Answer: 4, four

**matching**  
 Match cities and countries  
 Match cities and countries 1. Yakutsk

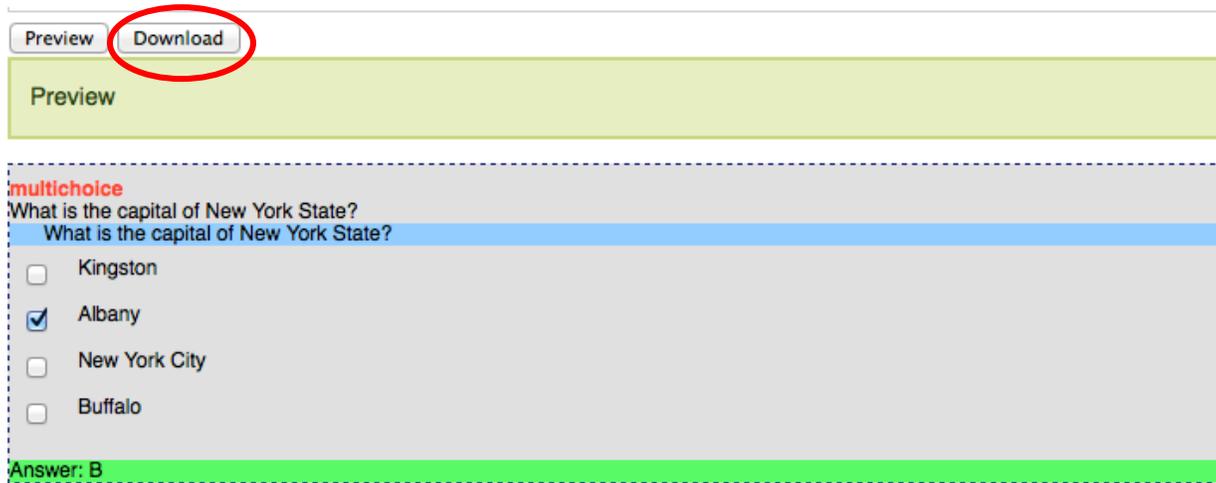
**essay**  
 Explain the causes of World War II.  
 Explain the causes of World War II.

Errors

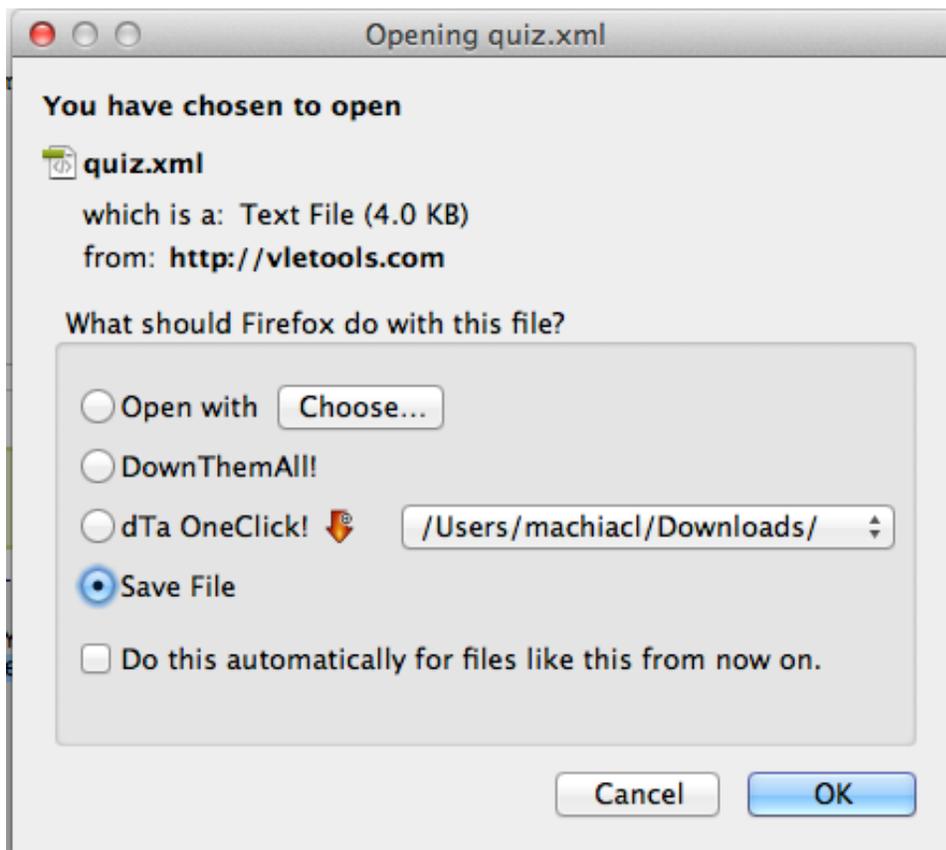
Parsing error at line 29: 2. Tampere  
 Parsing error at line 31: 3. Harbin

The error description helped me realize that my matching question had answer choices of 1. 2. 3., instead of A. B. C., which is what I told the converter I was using under Parser options. Once I fixed that, the preview was correct.

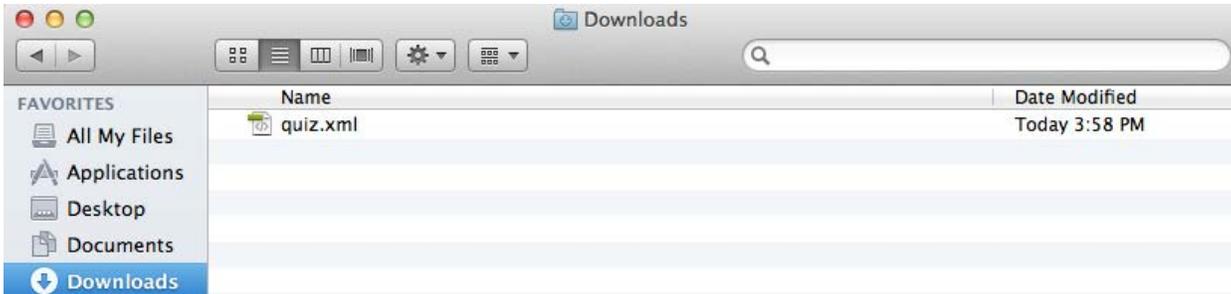
Now we will *click* the **Download** button to get the XML file this converter generates.



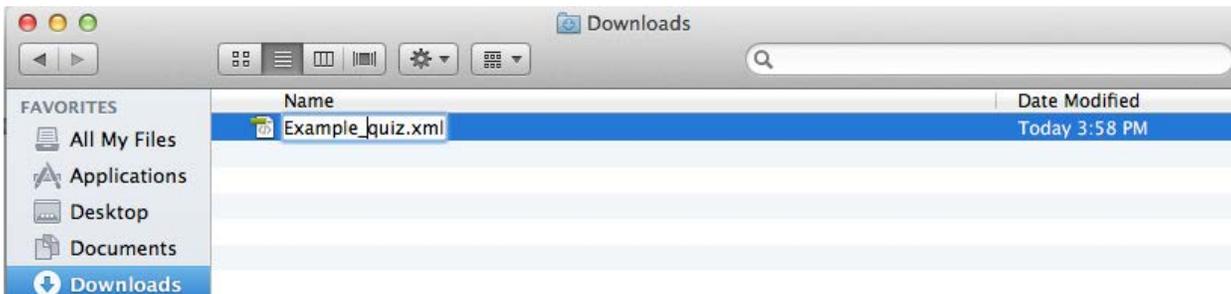
It will prompt you to open or **Save File**. I want to save the file so will click **OK** to continue.



Unless you have changed your preferences, this will probably be saved to your **Downloads** folder.

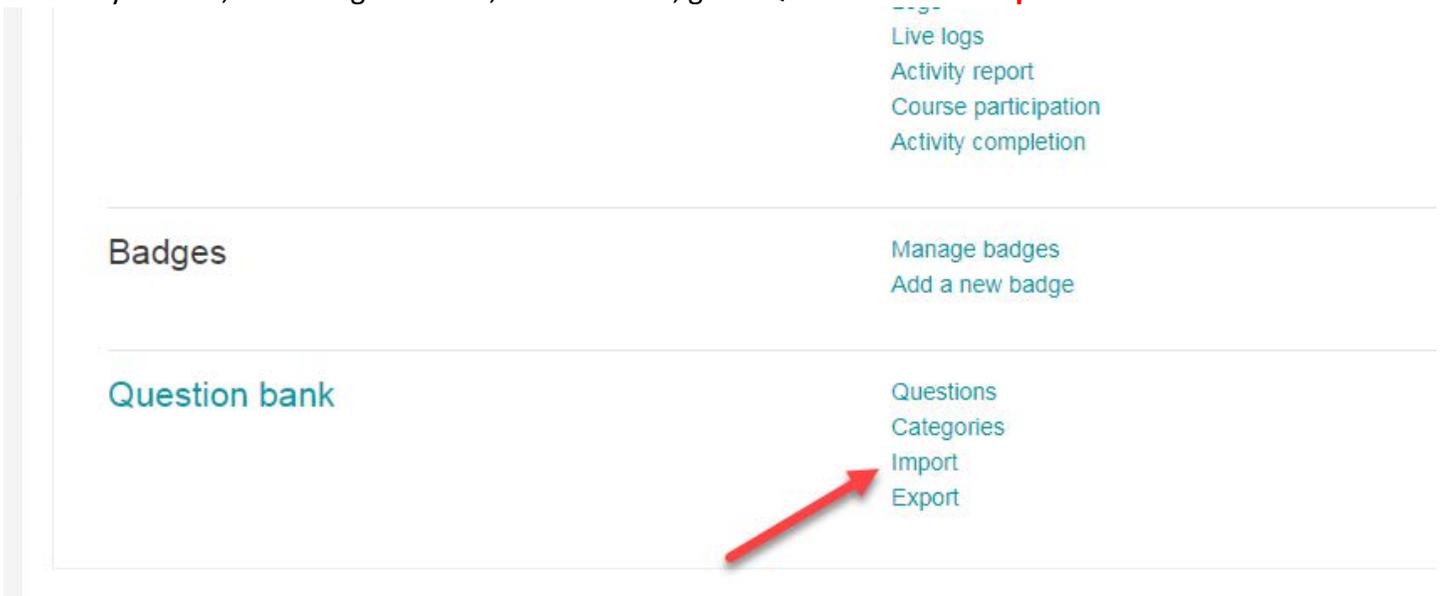


Once you locate the file in the Downloads folder, rename it and move it to the desktop for easy access when you upload it to Moodle.

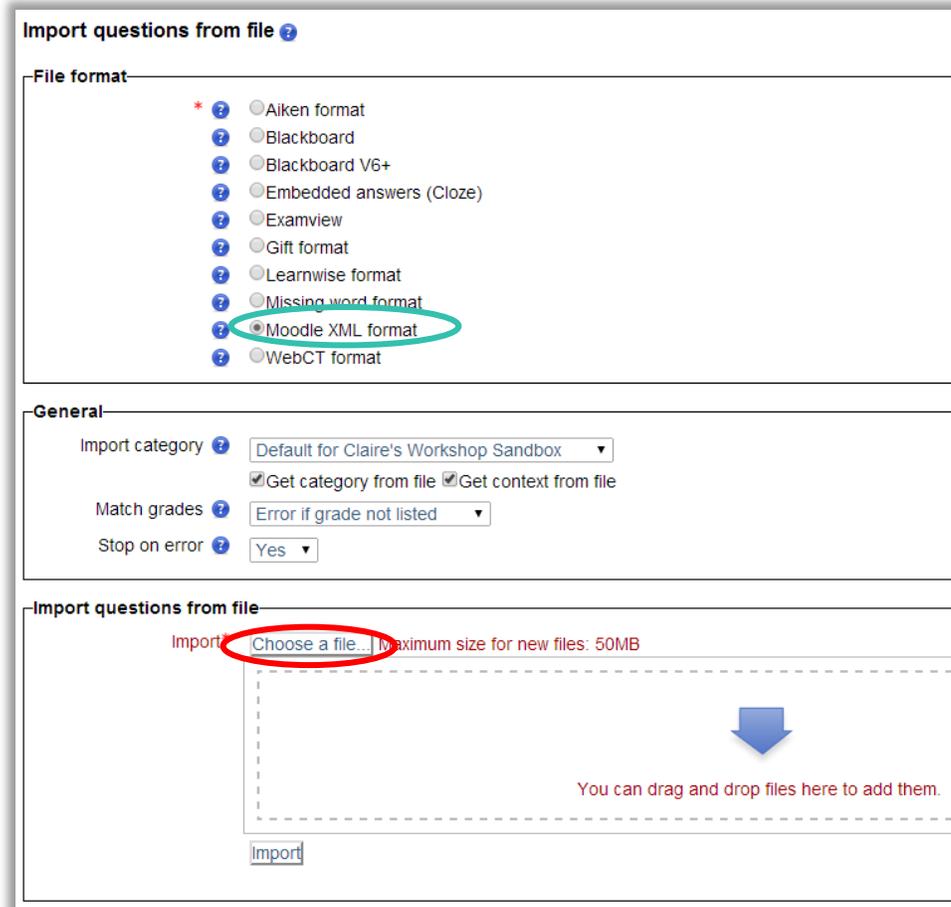


Now we are ready to go into our Moodle site and upload this bank of questions.

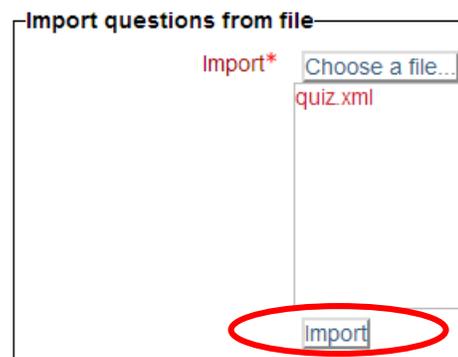
Once in your site, click the gear menu, choose more, go to Question Bank > **Import**.



Under **File format**, select the **Moodle XML** radio button. Leave the **General** settings at the default, and then either drag-and-drop the text file into the upload basket, or *click* the **Choose a file...** button to open Moodle's File Picker and browse your computer for the file.



The screenshot shows the 'Import questions from file' form in Moodle. It is divided into three sections: 'File format', 'General', and a file upload area. In the 'File format' section, the 'Moodle XML format' radio button is selected and circled in green. The 'General' section has 'Import category' set to 'Default for Claire's Workshop Sandbox', 'Match grades' set to 'Error if grade not listed', and 'Stop on error' set to 'Yes'. The file upload area has a 'Choose a file...' button circled in red, a dashed box for drag-and-drop with a blue arrow pointing down and the text 'You can drag and drop files here to add them.', and an 'Import' button at the bottom.



This is a close-up of the 'Import' button from the previous screenshot. The 'Import' button is circled in red. Above it, the text 'Import\*' is visible, along with a 'Choose a file...' button and the filename 'quiz.xml'.

If the Import was successful, you will see that it imported all questions from the file. If there was an error, it should tell you the location of it.

Parsing questions from import file.

Importing 6 questions from file

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1. What is the capital of New York State?

---

2. What two colors combine to make the color green?

---

3. The capital of the United States is Washington D.C.

---

4. Calculate:  $2 + 2$

---

5. Match cities and countries

---

6. Explain the causes of World War II.

Continue

Click the **Continue** button to finish. You will arrive at the **Questions** area of your **Question Bank** menu.

### Question bank

Select a category:

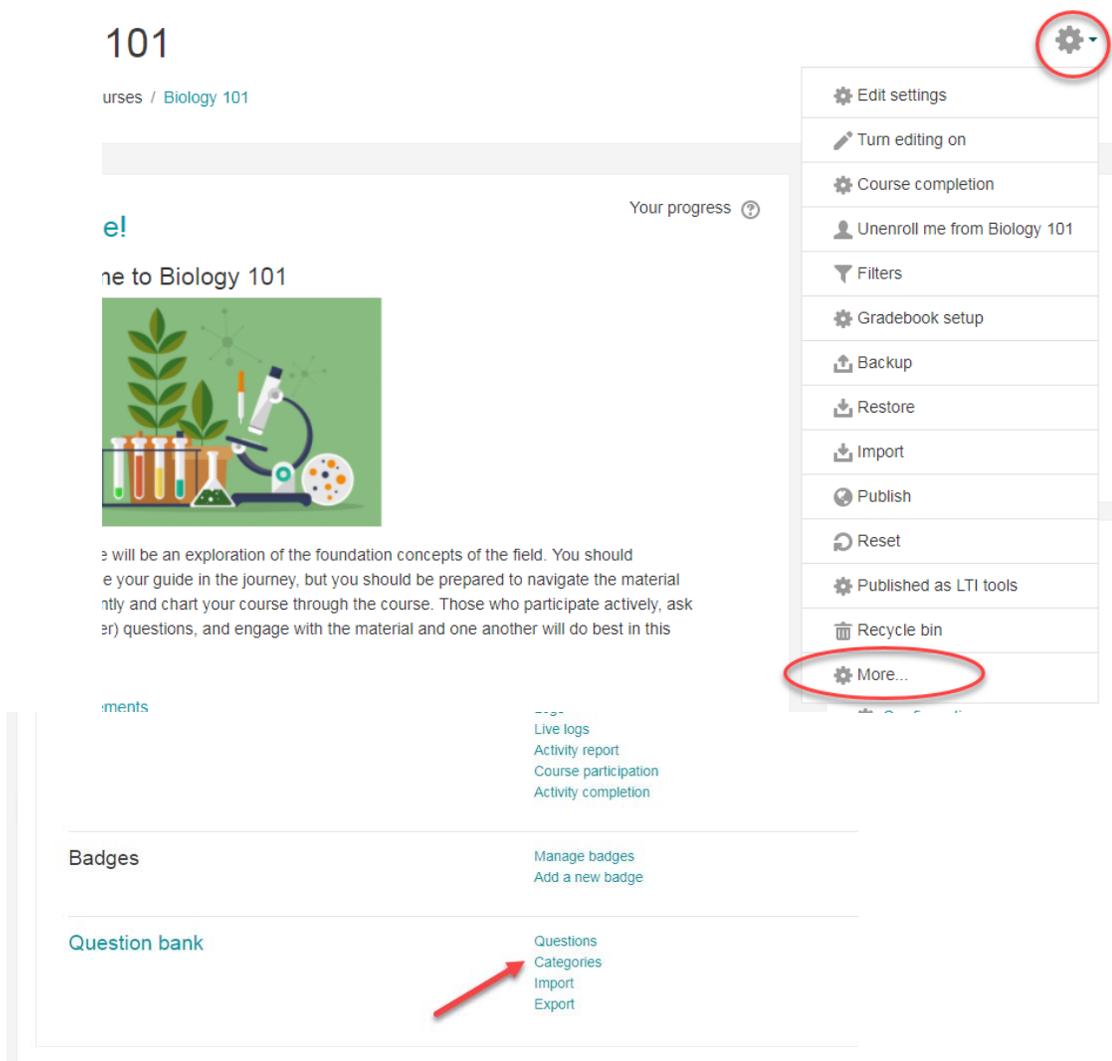
Also show questions from sub-categories  
 Also show old questions  
 Show question text in the question list

<input type="checkbox"/>	T	Question	Created by First name / Last name
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 1	Claire Machia
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 2	Claire Machia
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 3	Claire Machia
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 4	Claire Machia
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 5	Claire Machia
<input type="checkbox"/>		__Question 6	Claire Machia

**With selected:**

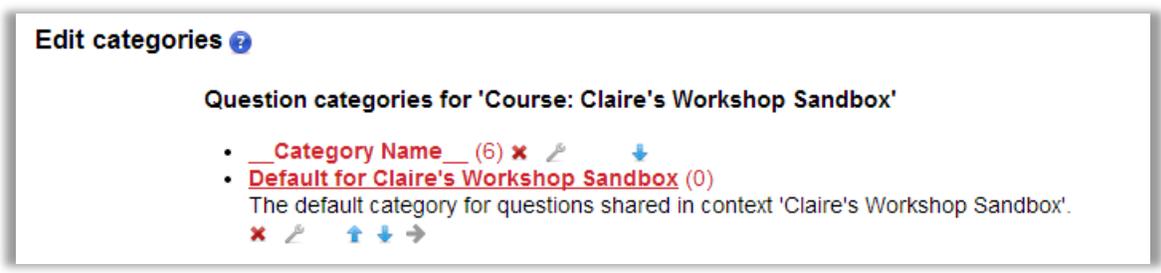
Notice how our pool of questions was created with the default name of "\_\_ Category Name\_\_"  
 We will want to change our category name to something more descriptive so we can tell different categories of questions apart once we have several of them.

To do that, go to your gear menu, choose more and then **Question Bank > Categories**.



The screenshot shows the Moodle course interface for 'Biology 101'. On the right side, a gear menu is open, with the 'More...' option at the bottom circled in red. Below the main content area, there is a 'Question bank' section with a red arrow pointing to the 'Categories' link.

Once there you will see a list of the categories already set up within this course site.



**Edit categories** ?

**Question categories for 'Course: Claire's Workshop Sandbox'**

- \_\_ Category Name\_\_ (6) ✕ ⚙️ ⬇️
- **Default for Claire's Workshop Sandbox** (0)  
 The default category for questions shared in context 'Claire's Workshop Sandbox'.  
 ✕ ⚙️ ⬆️ ⬇️ ⬇️ ⬆️

Click on the edit icon to rename our new category.

Give the category a descriptive name and change the **Parent category** if you wish. This is useful if you have multiple question pools on a related topic and you want them to be grouped together. I'm going to leave it at the default, which is "Top" meaning it stands alone and is not nested under another category.

I have also added something to the **category info** just to demonstrate the feature. I usually leave this blank, but it might help to provide a quick reminder about what the category contains.

Click the **Save changes** button to finish and return to your list of categories.

▼ **Edit this category**

Parent category  Default for BIO101 (1) ▼

Name  DNA

Category info

I used the [Moodle XML Converter](#) online utility to create this category of questions. |

**Save changes**

Now the category name is updated and the description is shown in our list of question categories.

### Edit categories

#### Question categories for 'Course: Claire's Workshop Sandbox'

- **Default for Claire's Workshop Sandbox (0)**  
The default category for questions shared in context 'Claire's Workshop Sandbox'.  
  
- **Example Category (6)**  
I used the Moodle XML Converter online utility to create this category of questions.  
    

The questions in this category can now be added to a quiz activity.

It is much more efficient to create **question categories** instead of adding questions directly to a quiz activity. This is because **categories** act as question pools, allowing for randomization and reuse by multiple assessments.

For more information about quiz settings and adding questions to a quiz, see the relevant sections in our Moodle 201 training course.