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A Crash Guide To MOOCs

Unlocking the World
of Open Education

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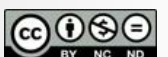


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Introduction

Welcome to the only Crash Guide to MOOCs you will ever need!

Wanna learn more about MOOCs? We provide you with a perfect definition and more in [Part 1](#).

Do you want to know how to apply for one? Don't worry, we got you covered with a step-by-step guide in [Part 2](#).

Don't know how to find MOOCs? That's fine, we will let you experiment with filters and keywords of your choice across various easy-to-use portals and websites, which is also included in [Part 2](#).

So, without further ado, let's get started!



What Are MOOCs?

Here is a quick test to see what you might know already and what you don't. If you notice yourself struggling, this is the perfect guide for you!

If you get everything easily, don't worry, we still have a ton of practical information such as helpful portals and websites, useful keywords and filters, and how to use them.

MOOCs are courses delivered online and accessible to all for free.
MOOC stands for:

M_____ : Refers to the large scale of the courses. MOOCs are designed to support an unlimited number of participants. Unlike traditional classroom settings, which have physical space limitations, MOOCs can accommodate thousands or even hundreds of thousands of students from all over the world simultaneously.

O_____ : Indicates that the courses are generally available to anyone, often free of charge. The "_____" aspect also means that there are typically no stringent prerequisites or admission processes, allowing a wide range of learners to participate. However, some MOOCs might charge for certifications or additional resources.

O_____ : Signifies that the courses are delivered via the Internet. This allows learners to access course materials, participate in discussions, and complete assignments from anywhere in the world, making education more accessible and flexible.

C_____ : Represents a structured sequence of educational content designed to teach a particular subject or skill. Like traditional courses, MOOCs include lectures, readings, assignments, and assessments, but they are adapted for delivery in an online format.

MOOCs are created by a variety of institutions and organizations:

_____ and _____ : Many prestigious _____ and _____, such as Stanford, Harvard, MIT, and the University of London, offer MOOCs. These institutions often provide courses developed by their faculty members, leveraging their academic expertise and resources.

_____ _____ : Some _____ _____ develop MOOCs to fulfill their educational missions. For example, Khan Academy provides free online courses and materials, primarily for K-12 education, aiming to offer a world-class education to anyone, anywhere.

_____ _____ : Companies in various industries, particularly technology, create MOOCs to train employees, customers, and the general public. For example, Google, IBM, and Microsoft offer courses on their platforms to help people develop skills relevant to their products and services.

Independent _____ and _____: Individuals with expertise in specific fields can also create and offer MOOCs. These educators may use platforms like Udemy or Teachable to reach a global audience and share their knowledge.

These diverse creators contribute to the rich variety of MOOCs available, covering a broad spectrum of subjects and skills, from academic disciplines to professional development and personal enrichment.

How did you do on this test? Each paragraph grants you 1 point. If you scored anywhere between 0 - 6 points, this is the perfect guide for you. If you scored more than 6 out of 8 points, that's perfectly fine, we're sure we have information that will pique your interest. Let's move on to some more useful information!

ANSWERS

MOOC stands for:
Massive Open Online Course

MOOCs are created by:

(Universities and Colleges)

(Non-Profit Organizations)

(Private Companies)

(Independent Educators and Experts)

Where can I find MOOCs

Although MOOCs are mainly created by Universities and other institutions, they rarely distribute MOOCs themselves. Instead, you can take MOOCs on a variety of online platforms, each offering a wide range of courses across different subjects. Here are some of the most popular platforms, which we will explain further in [Part 2](#).



- Coursera
- edX
- FutureLearn
- Udacity

These are just a few of the many platforms that provide MOOCs. In different countries, you can find different portals such as JMOOC in Japan, iversity in Germany, or FUN MOOC in France.

Start Times for MOOCs

MOOCs can vary in their start times. Some can be started at any time, offering maximum flexibility to learners. Others begin at regular intervals, such as every few weeks or months, providing more structured schedules. Occasionally, some MOOCs reappear after a long absence, sometimes over a year, while others may stop being offered entirely.



MOOCs have different approaches to deadlines.

Some are self-paced, allowing learners to progress through the material as quickly or slowly as they wish.

Others follow a more structured schedule where:

- Course material is released incrementally, often week by week, encouraging learners to pace themselves.
- Assessments may have specific deadlines, helping prevent learners from lagging behind. Even with these schedules, MOOCs remain flexible, enabling learners to study at times that suit them best, whether day or night.



Duration of MOOCs

The length of MOOCs can vary widely, typically ranging from 1 to 16 weeks. Most courses provide an estimate of the weekly time commitment, although this can vary significantly from one learner to another.

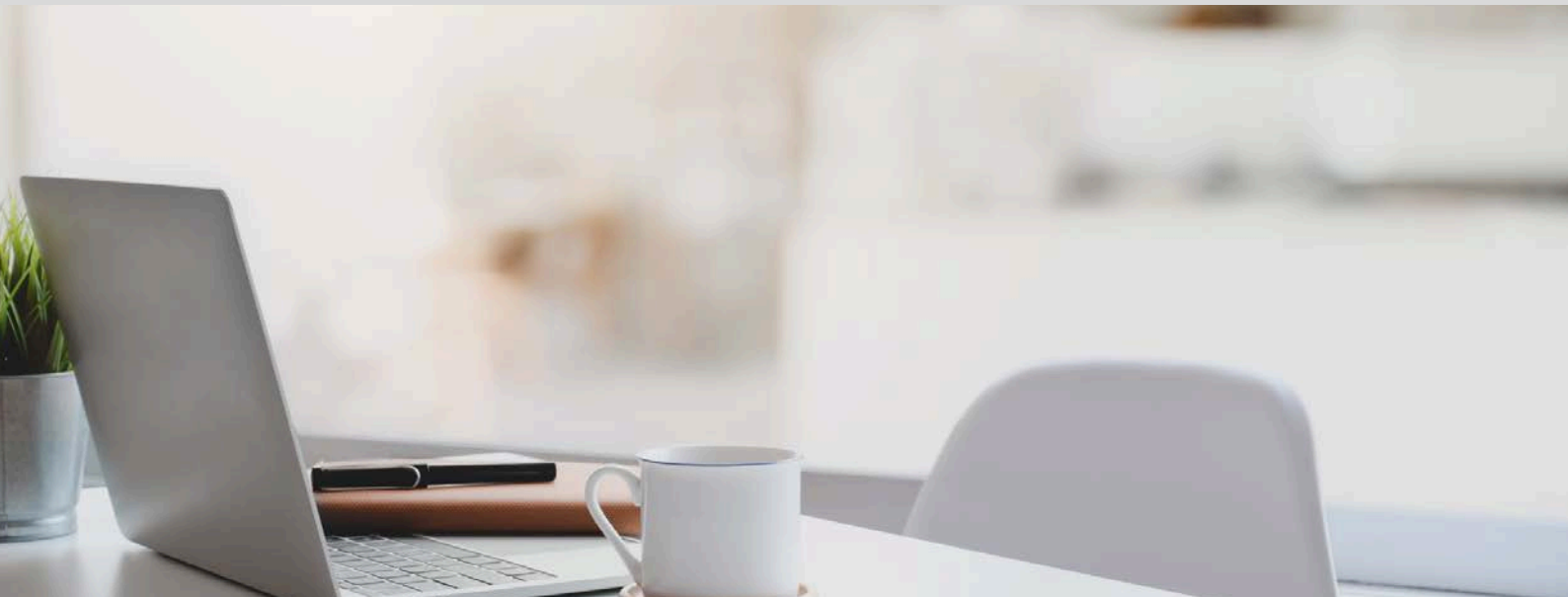


Testing in MOOCs

Assessment methods in MOOCs include:

- Auto-Graded Quizzes: Automatically graded upon submission, such as multiple-choice questions.
- Peer-Feedback Assignments: Graded by fellow learners based on a specific rubric. Instructors typically do not grade learners' work, relying instead on these automated and peer-assessment methods.

Paid Components in MOOCs



MOOCs offer different enrollment options:

- Free Auditing: Provides access to videos, readings, and forums at no cost.
- Paid Enrollment: Grants access to all course content, including graded assignments and a certificate of completion.
- Pay-Only Courses: A small number of courses are entirely pay-to-enroll.
- Financial Aid: Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udacity offer financial aid or scholarships, allowing accepted learners to earn certificates for free or at a reduced cost.

Restrictions on MOOC Access



There are some restrictions to be aware of:

Age Restrictions

Some courses restrict enrollment to individuals over 13 years old, although parents can complete courses with their children.

Geographical Restrictions

Certain MOOCs may be unavailable in specific countries due to trade restrictions or government policies.

Instructor Interaction in MOOCs



MOOCs present a flexible and innovative way to learn, catering to a wide range of subjects and learners. While they offer many advantages, such as accessibility and varied pacing, potential learners should consider the structure, support, and potential restrictions when choosing a course.

Interaction with instructors in MOOCs is typically limited:

Minimal or Non-Existent

Direct interaction with instructors is rare.

Course Mentors

Mentors often monitor course forums to assist learners.

Peer Support

Learners are encouraged to help each other by answering questions and recommending resources, though sharing quiz answers is prohibited.

From Mongolia to MIT: Battushig Myanganbayar's MOOC Success Story

Let's dive into an inspiring story that shows the true power of MOOCs! Meet Battushig Myanganbayar, a remarkable student from Mongolia who utilized MOOCs to further his education. Battushig discovered MOOCs while looking for ways to expand his knowledge beyond what was available in his home country.

He enrolled in an online course in circuits and electronics offered by MIT through edX, one of the leading MOOC platforms. Despite being only 15 years old at the time, Battushig completed the course with exceptional results, earning a perfect score of 100%. His outstanding performance garnered attention from the course instructors and the academic community.

As a result of his achievement, Battushig was invited to visit MIT and subsequently received opportunities for further studies and research collaborations. His journey from Mongolia to engaging with top-tier educational resources highlights how MOOCs can provide significant educational opportunities regardless of geographic and economic barriers.

Battushig's story is a testament to the transformative power of MOOCs and how they can enable learners from any part of the world to access high-quality education and achieve remarkable success. So, as you embark on your own MOOC journey, remember that the possibilities are vast and achievable!

Optimize Your Education: Leveraging MOOCs for University Credits

MOOCs are not just for extraordinary success stories like Battushig Myanganbayar; they offer practical benefits for many students worldwide. One such benefit is the ability to earn college credits while still in high school. Many universities now recognize MOOC completion certificates as valid credits towards a degree.

For example, imagine a high school student who takes a MOOC on computer science offered by a prestigious university through platforms like Coursera or edX. By completing the course and earning a certificate, this student not only gains valuable knowledge but also earns credits that can be transferred to their future college. When they eventually enroll in a university, these credits count towards their graduation requirements, saving both time and money.



This practical application of MOOCs showcases their versatility and accessibility. It allows students to get a head start on their higher education, easing the transition from high school to college. Furthermore, it highlights the growing acceptance and integration of online learning in traditional educational systems.

By taking advantage of MOOCs, students can explore their academic interests, gain advanced knowledge, and make significant progress towards their educational goals even before stepping foot on a college campus. This approach democratizes education, making high-quality learning opportunities available to a broader audience, and exemplifies the transformative potential of MOOCs for everyday learners.

Here are some notable universities that accept MOOC completion certificates for college credit:

Arizona State University (ASU): Offers the Global Freshman Academy in partnership with edX. Students can take freshman-level courses through MOOCs and, upon successful completion, earn college credit transferable to ASU and other institutions.

Charter Oak State College: Partners with edX to offer credit for many certificate courses, allowing students to transfer these credits to other colleges as well.

University of Wisconsin System: Includes competency-based degree programs that let students use MOOCs as part of their prior learning assessment to earn credits.

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU): Runs the College for America program, utilizing a competency-based model where students can earn credits through prior learning assessments, which can include MOOCs.

Excelsior College: Accepts credits from multiple proficiency exam companies and provides its own exams for credit, guiding students on using open educational resources, including MOOCs, for exam preparation.

These institutions recognize the value of MOOCs in providing flexible and affordable education options, enabling students to earn credits and advance their academic goals.

Boost Your Career with MOOCs: Practical Use Cases

MOOCs are not just for students; they offer significant benefits for professionals looking to advance their careers, change industries, or gain new skills. Here are some real-world examples of how working professionals have successfully leveraged MOOCs to achieve their career goals.

Career Advancement

Many professionals have taken advantage of MOOCs to gain additional qualifications and skills. For example, completing courses in digital marketing or data analysis through platforms like Coursera or edX can enhance a resume and lead to promotions or new job opportunities within their current field.

Industry Change

Professionals looking to switch industries can benefit greatly from MOOCs. For instance, a teacher wanting to move into the tech industry might complete a series of coding courses and earn a Professional Certificate in Computer Science. This new credential can help them secure a job in a completely new field.

Skill Enhancement

MOOCs provide a flexible way for professionals to enhance specific skills relevant to their jobs. Project managers, for example, might take courses in advanced project management techniques, which can help them handle larger and more complex projects, potentially leading to career growth and higher salaries.

Professional Development

Leadership and management courses available through MOOCs can help professionals develop better team management strategies and improve their ability to handle workplace conflicts. This can make them more effective leaders and increase their chances of receiving leadership roles and recognition within their organizations.

Industry Change

For those dreaming of starting their own business, MOOCs offer courses in entrepreneurship, business planning, and market analysis. These courses provide essential knowledge and skills needed to launch and run a successful startup.



These examples illustrate how MOOCs can be a valuable resource for professionals seeking to advance their careers, switch industries, or enhance their skill sets. By taking advantage of the flexible and accessible learning opportunities provided by MOOCs, working individuals can achieve significant professional growth and success.

Part 2 | Setting Goals

What to consider before taking a MOOC

Now that you have learned a lot about MOOCs, we want you to think about why you want to enroll in a MOOC.

Interest

Check the Fields you are interested in.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer programming | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Physics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ | |

Purpose

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions and write down your answers. Examples are provided for each question to help guide you.

What do you want to achieve?
(I want to learn Python programming.)

Why do you want to learn this?
(I am interested in transitioning to a data science career.)

How will this learning benefit you?
(Gaining Python skills will make me more competitive in the job market and allow me to work on data analysis projects.)

Take your time to think through your answers and write them down. Having a clear vision of your goals will help you navigate your learning journey with MOOCs more effectively.

Platforms

In this part, it's going to get a bit more practical. As we said in the introduction, you will later be able to experiment with various keywords and filters on a website of your choice. but first, here are some of the most popular platforms.



Coursera

Partners with universities and companies worldwide to offer courses, specializations, and degrees. Institutions like Stanford, Yale, and Google provide content on Coursera. Coursera is ideal for those seeking high-quality courses from prestigious institutions and looking to earn recognized certificates and degrees.

edX

Founded by Harvard and MIT, edX offers courses from universities and institutions around the globe. It also provides professional certificates and degrees. edX is great for learners who want to access rigorous academic content and obtain credentials from top universities.

U d a c i t y

Focuses on technology and career advancement courses, particularly in programming, data science, and artificial intelligence. They offer "Nanodegrees" in various fields. Udacity is perfect for those aiming to gain practical, industry-relevant skills quickly, especially in tech fields.

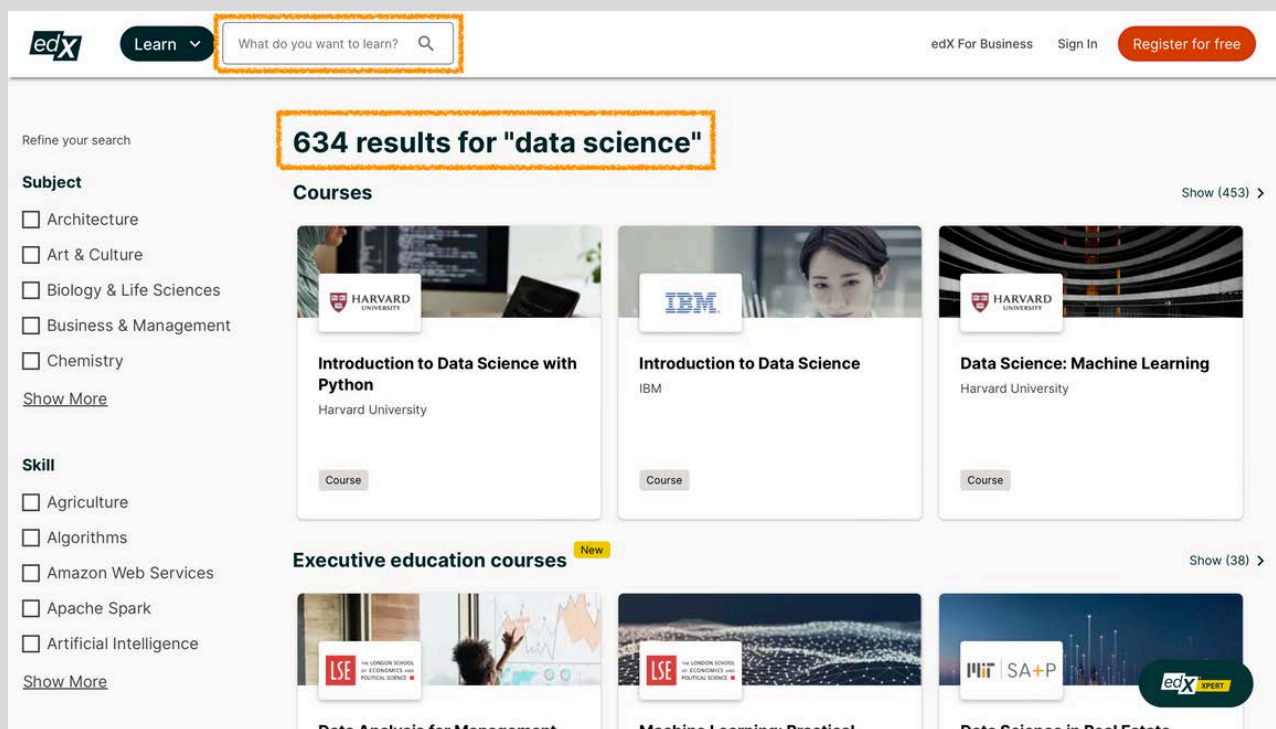
F u t u r e L e a r n

Offers a wide range of courses from universities and cultural institutions, with an emphasis on social learning through discussion and collaboration. FutureLearn is excellent for those who value interactive and collaborative learning experiences.



Keyword Search

Each platform asks you to sign up, however, you can still browse for MOOCs without doing so. If you access any of the platforms listed above, you can see a bar on the left side with various filters you can check. We will let you play around a little bit with the filters and keywords, so you can get a hang of it. Here is a quick walk-through on how you should use filters. We will be using edX, but feel free to use any platform of your choice.



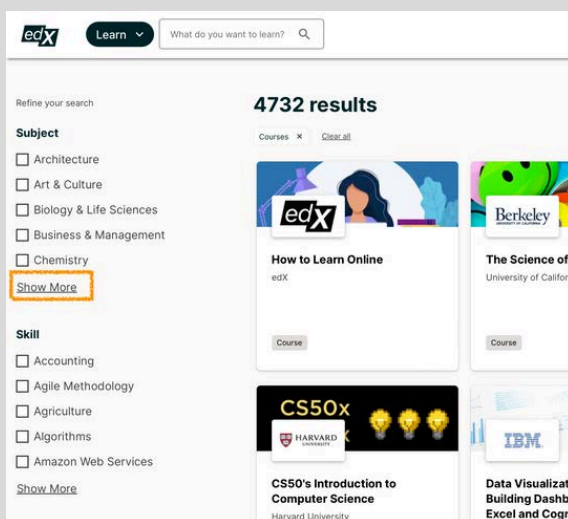
Source: edX (<https://www.edx.org/search?q=data+science>, Accessed: 2024-7-05)

It's always good to start by entering a keyword in the search bar. It narrows the field down by a lot and helps you cut out courses you are not interested in. Keywords can contain multiple words, however, complicated keywords don't always give you the best results.

Once you enter a keyword, various courses should show up in your feed. You can scroll through them, or you can also just check the filters at the left.

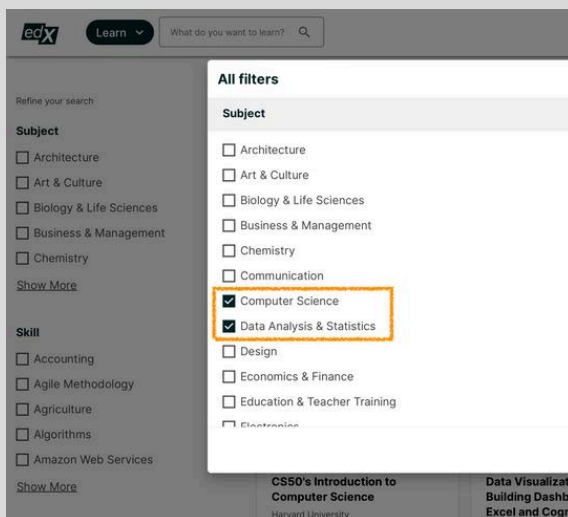
As you can see in the picture above, we used data science as a keyword.

Filter Search



Source: edX (<https://www.edx.org/search?tab=course>, Accessed: 2024-7-05)

There are many categories of filters you can use. In edX, you can choose a subject, skill, school and partner, language of your choice, and much more. We want you to experiment by clicking on some of them, and look at your feed again to find more accurate results.



Source: edX (<https://www.edx.org/search?tab=course>, Accessed: 2024-7-05)

You can also check multiple filters at the same time to find a course of your preference, just like we did in the picture. The more filters you use, the more personalized your feed will be.

Now, we want you to try it out yourself. Play around with keywords and filters of your choice, and look into some of the courses that get recommended. If you find an interesting one, you could consider enrolling. How? Well, we'll explain it to you in the next section.

Step by Step Guide

As we said above, most platforms ask you to sign up and complete your profile to provide you with MOOCs that best fit your interests and goals. They ask you things such as your highest education, your fields of study / career, and your goals and interests. We now want you to actually sign up for a platform of your choice! Again, here is a step-by-step guide. In this guide, we are going to sign up for edX and show you how to enroll in a course, however, you can choose any platform.

Step 1. Find the “sign up” button! Usually, it’s located on the top right corner of the page and could also be named something else. In this case, it’s called “register for free”.

Step 2. Most platforms require you to give your name, Email address, and password. Alternatively, you can sign up with your Google or Facebook account. In edX, they also offer the possibility to register with an Apple or a Microsoft account.

Step 3. Now it’s time to complete your profile. Some platforms ask you for not only your final educational status, but also your fields of interest, and what you are currently studying/do as a profession. You can usually change it later in your profile.

Step 4. We are almost done! Now we just need to enroll in one of the courses of your choice. Enter your keywords, use filters, and pick one MOOC you are interested in. Check all the details, and click on “enroll”. Congratulations, you’ve done it!

By following these simple steps, you're opening the door to a world of knowledge and opportunities. Whether you're looking to enhance your skills, explore new interests, or advance your career, MOOCs provide a flexible and accessible way to learn. You've taken the first steps towards a rewarding educational journey—keep going, and enjoy the learning process!

Final Quiz

Now that you finished our guide, let's see what you've learned. This quiz also acts like a review test, if you actually learned something from our guide.

What does MOOC stand for?

MOOC stands for _____.

What institutions and organizations make MOOCs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



How did you do? If you still struggle with it, you can always go back to **Part 1**, where we have it explained to you in detail.

Finally, we want you to check out this **worksheet** we've created. You can take notes here on what MOOCs you have taken, why, and what you've learned. Well, it should be pretty self-explanatory if you look at it. Now, without further disturbing you, you are free to go!

Work Sheet

This Worksheet serves to enhance your experience with MOOCs. You can use this to track your progress or to come back to when you lose track. Remember, you are not alone, may this guide be forever with you.

Course	My Goals

Congratulations on taking the first step towards expanding your knowledge and skills! Enrolling in MOOCs is a powerful decision that can transform your future. Remember, learning is a journey, not a destination. Stay curious, embrace challenges, and celebrate every milestone. You have the potential to achieve great things, and with dedication and perseverance, you will succeed. Keep pushing forward, and enjoy the incredible adventure of learning!

Congrats!



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