

Educator guide

The power of process: Unlocking multipart assignments

From first draft to final submission—All in one assignment.



Created by educators for educators

Contents

Why multipart assignments?	4
Why process visibility matters in education	5
Use cases to support student growth and learning	6
Grade weighting frameworks *	8
Assignment or syllabus templates *	9
Troubleshooting for educators *	10
Implementation checklist	11

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The power of process: Unlocking multipart assignments

When we evaluate writing as a process rather than a single final product, academic integrity shifts from a monitoring issue into learning integrity, a teaching opportunity. Multipart assignments allow for scaffolding long-form writing into manageable milestones to safeguard authenticity, reduce panic-driven missteps, and make student growth visible every step of the way – available in both Turnitin Feedback Studio and Clarity.

Here are the top five reasons to bring this workflow into the course:



1. Early intervention before misconduct happens

- ✓ Breaking assignments into smaller parts (proposal→outline→draft) allows educators to identify struggling students, weak thesis statements, or unvetted sources early. They can offer support before panic sets in.



2. Flexible, configurable AI controls for each part of the assignment

- ✓ Customize AI assistant permissions to allow for different pedagogical guardrails for each specific phase.
 - **Part 1 - Brainstorm/outline:** Allow broader AI interaction for ideation or structuring.
 - **Part 2 - Drafting:** Restrict AI assistance to ensure core arguments and prose are student-written.
 - **Part 3 - Editing:** Enable targeted AI feedback for grammar and polishing.



3. Meaningful “Where to Next?” feedback

- ✓ Staging assignments in Clarity gives educators a clear view into the student’s actual writing behavior, enabling targeting guidance that students can immediately apply to the next milestone.
- ✓ Feedback reminders for students help them to review valuable feedback when it is most needed: during the writing process. Plus, educators can see whether students viewed the feedback.
- ✓ Draft continuity means that the feedback given does not disappear when the student begins the next section; it carries forward with the draft. Supported in Clarity only.



4. Reduced final grading burden

- ✓ Multipart assignments allow educators to validate the outline, sources, and rough draft along the way.
- ✓ Evaluating the final draft then becomes a quick review of polish and structure, as sources and previous drafts have been previously vetted.
- ✓ Part navigation in the viewer for educators allows toggling back and forth between parts as needed.



5. Proof of process works in tandem with detection

- ✓ Video playback establishes an uninterrupted trail of typing patterns, writing time on task, and improper source usage.
- ✓ Bulk copy-pastes or outsourced text stand out immediately against earlier drafts.

Why process visibility matters in education

While scaffolding writing is vital at every level, secondary and higher education present distinct operational challenges—from high-volume grading and wide variance in student preparation to the shared, urgent task of cultivating authentic student and scholarly voices.

Using multipart assignments in a transparent workspace solves several pain points:

■ Scalability for large enrollment courses:

Managing consistent, authentic student progress can prove incredibly challenging in large lecture sections, multi-section university courses, or secondary school classrooms with heavy student loads. Process visibility standardizes evaluation across teaching teams and grade levels, allowing instructors to seamlessly verify authentic effort and support individual development without facing an overwhelming stack of unverified submissions at the end of the term.

■ Supporting educator autonomy and departmental policies:

Educational institutions vary wildly on generative AI policies—ranging from total bans to mandatory integration across secondary and higher education. Milestone-specific AI configurations respect instructor autonomy and institutional guidelines, allowing educators to customize AI guardrails to match specific departmental or district learning objectives precisely from one part to the next.

■ Transitioning students to scholarly research:

Many students experience a steep learning curve when transitioning to complex, secondary-source synthesis. Staging the research process surfaces common cognitive roadblocks—such as simply stacking sources or engaging in superficial paraphrasing—in real time, allowing educators to offer targeted coaching well before the final submission deadline.

■ Mitigating the “paper mill” and advanced ghostwriting threat:

Authentic authorship can sometimes be obscured by outsourced text or unedited generative AI outputs. Because video playback tracks localized typing patterns over time, it establishes a transparent “receipt of authorship.” This visibility protects the integrity of the student’s unique voice, validates original effort, and simplifies the verification of authentic writing across all academic levels.

Knowing the value of process visibility is one thing. Designing it effectively is where the real transformation happens. Let’s explore how to deploy this workflow in courses for maximum impact.

Below are five use cases to support student growth and learning:

1. High-stakes research papers and argumentative essays

- **Typical milestones:** Research proposal→Annotated bibliography→Outline and thesis→Rough draft→Final paper.
- **Why it works:** Research tasks can carry the highest risk of students feeling overwhelmed and outsourcing their work to AI or paper mills. Multipart assignments require continuous source evaluation and argument building.

Benefactor	Key benefits
Students	• Eliminates last-minute panic and “blank page” paralysis. • Ensures sources are vetted before writing, leading to higher-quality arguments. • Builds confidence as each small milestone is checked off.
Educators	• Virtually eliminates the need to act like an investigator at the end—originality is verified along the way. • Allows early awareness of weak thesis statements or invalid sources before they turn into ten pages of broken logic.

2. Capstone, thesis, or senior projects

- **Typical milestones:** Project pitch→Literature review→Methodology→Findings and analysis→Final portfolio.
- **Why it works:** Semester-long independent work requires sustained momentum. Multipart assignments establish natural project/time management guardrails over several months.

Benefactor	Key benefits
Students	• Teaches professional project management and long-term planning skills. • Prevents derailment caused by flawed methodology or missing data late in the term.
Educators	• Distributes the grading load across the semester instead of facing a massive stack of 30-page papers during finals week. • Keeps advising meetings, office hours, and defense preparations focused and structured around specific deliverables.

3. Literature reviews and synthesis writing

- **Typical milestones:** Source matrix→Thematic outline→Section drafts→Final synthesis.
- **Why it works:** Synthesizing complex research requires high-level cognitive processing: comparing, contrasting, and evaluating multiple authors rather than just summarizing them one by one.

Benefactor	Key benefits
Students	• Helps organize complex ideas visually before attempting to write cohesive paragraphs. • Moves them away from surface-level summaries toward deep, analytical thinking.
Educators	• Makes the student's cognitive process visible, showing how they linked concepts together. • Drastically reduces generic, fluff-filled submissions that lack actual research integration.

4. Case studies and policy proposals

- **Typical milestones:** Problem identification→Stakeholder analysis→Solution options→Final policy brief.
- **Why it works:** Applied fields (business, law, public health, engineering) require thorough situational analysis before coming to conclusions.

Benefactor	Key benefits
Students	• Mirrors real-world professional workflows where proposals undergo multiple review cycles. • Forces holistic thinking by requiring them to evaluate edge cases and stakeholder impacts early.
Educators	• Yields practical, well-reasoned solutions rather than superficial or impulsive ideas. • Provides clear checkpoints to grade specific analytical skills (e.g., assessing data vs. writing executive summaries).

5. Major revision and portfolio assignments

- **Typical milestones:** First draft→Rubric self/peer-assessment→Revision action plan→Final draft.
- **Why it works:** If the goal is developing editing skills and metacognition, making the revision process itself an explicit, graded step ensures feedback isn't ignored.

Benefactor	Key benefits
Students	• Develops critical self-evaluation skills and “feedback literacy” (knowing how to act on critique). • Directly improves final grades, as students actively fix mistakes before final submission.
Educators	• Ensures the time spent writing feedback on early drafts actually pays off in the final product. • Accelerates final grading by isolating evaluation to verifying that targeted revisions were made.

Suggested grade weighting frameworks

While multipart assignments may seem as if they might cause grade inflation or tripling gradebook entries, grade distribution across milestones or parts of the assignment is highly valuable. It is often noted that by the time the educator reads the final paper, they are only looking for polish and structure, as they have already read and provided feedback on the earlier drafts and elements of the assignment.

Sample grading distributions

Assignment type	Part 1: Ideation	Part 2: Scaffolding	Part 3: Drafting	Part 4: Final
Standard research paper	5% (Proposal)	15% (Annotated bibliography)	20% (Peer review)	60% (Final paper)
Quick 2-week essay	10% (Outline)	-	30% (Rough draft)	60% (Final polish)
Highly iterative task	10% (First draft)	30% (Revision plan)	-	60% (Final portfolio)

Copy-paste assignment or syllabus templates

Students can sometimes feel anxious about writing in a space that has total transparency like the video playback in Turnitin Clarity. Educators should be prepared for that before the assignment is made by using friendly language they can drop into a syllabus or the assignment space to frame Turnitin Clarity as a safety net, not a surveillance tool. The idea is to use this information proactively to coach students, not to “catch” them.

The examples below are based on the experiences of our users and educators in our online community [TEN](#). If you are designing multipart assignments within Feedback Studio and/or Clarity, feel free to adapt this language. We believe clear guidelines benefit everyone in the writing and learning process.*

Examples:



■ Syllabus language:

*In this course, we treat writing as a process, not just a final product. We will be using **Turnitin Clarity** for our writing assignments. This tool is designed to support you—it saves progress automatically, allows for safe experimentation with AI brainstorming tools, and acts as a “receipt of authorship.” By showing step-by-step writing progress, you protect your own original work and get targeted feedback when it actually helps the most.**

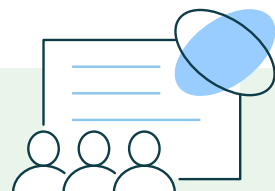
■ LMS announcement: Subject: Getting Started with Our First Scaffolded Writing Project!

Hi everyone,

This week, we are kicking off our first major writing project. To make this as stress-free as possible, we aren't writing this paper all at once. Instead, we've broken it down into a few manageable, lower-stakes milestones in **Turnitin Clarity**.

Working this way means you never have to face a blank page or pull an all-nighter to finish a 10-page paper. Write directly inside the Clarity composition space so progress is saved automatically. If you have any questions about using the interface, let me know!

- **Part 1 (The outline):** This is where we organize our ideas. I've configured Clarity's built-in AI assistant to be fully active here to help brainstorm and structure your thoughts.
- **Part 2 (The rough draft):** Here, we focus on drafting. To ensure your unique voice shines through, the AI assistant will be disabled for this part so you can focus on putting ideas into your own words.
- **Part 3 (The final polish):** The final stretch! We'll use this stage to refine your draft, integrate peer feedback, and polish grammar.*



“What if?” troubleshooting for educators

Be prepared for the edge cases that inevitably happen in a digital workspace.

■ Q: What if a student writes their draft offline and then pastes it into Turnitin Clarity?

- **Proactive:** Emphasize on day one that writing must occur inside the Clarity composition space.
- **Reactive:** If a large amount of text is pasted into Clarity, it will be flagged. This presents an opportunity to have a low-stakes conversation about their process before the final submission:

*“I noticed your draft was pasted in all at once. Because we grade the process in this class, I need you to do your drafting and revising inside the editor for the next milestones so I can see your progress and provide accurate feedback.” **

■ Q: What if a student gets stuck or hits writer’s block?

- Look at the process playback. If it shows they’ve spent 45 minutes on a single paragraph with lots of deletions, try to intervene with targeted suggestions before they become frustrated and turn to generative AI to write it for them.
- This suggestion works with many different scenarios. Use Turnitin Clarity’s features to best advantage so the norm is being proactive with feedback, not reactive. Try using Turnitin’s resource [Interpreting the insights offered by Turnitin Clarity’s writing report](#) for other ideas.

■ Q: Won’t grading three or four parts instead of one assignment triple my grading time?

- **Why it feels that way:** Looking at more submissions sounds like more work on paper.
- **Why it actually saves time:**
 - **Low-stakes checkpoints.** Early milestones like outlines or proposals are graded for completion or basic alignment, not line-by-line polish.
 - **Streamlined TA oversight:** If you manage Teaching Assistants, multipart assignments allow for auditing TA feedback at

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intermediate milestones, ensuring consistent grading standards across large cohorts before final grades are posted.

- **Faster final grading:** Because you have already read and approved the outline, sources, and rough draft, the premise of the student’s paper has already been established when it is submitted. Simply check the final “polish,” which cuts final grading time significantly.
- **Fewer formal reviews:** The video playback does the validation work without wasting hours of time.

■ Q: How do I support a student whose process playback shows they are struggling?

- **What the video might show:** A student spends two hours writing, deleting, and rewriting the same paragraph, resulting in very little text.
- **How to intervene:** Use this insight to offer targeted, positive support before they turn to generative AI:

*“I was looking over your writing time-lapse and noticed you spent a lot of time perfecting that first section. Don’t worry about making the draft perfect right now—just focus on getting ideas on the page, and we can clean up the phrasing together in Part 3.” **

■ Q: What if a student’s process playback shows high AI usage in a part where AI was restricted?

- Frame this as a teachable moment regarding responsible AI use. Because feedback and drafts carry over, if AI use is restricted, it’s likely that the student used generative AI from outside Turnitin Clarity.

Try showing the student their process playback and contrast it with a workflow that doesn’t outsource their thinking: *“See how this entire argument was pasted in without any editing or revision? In our rubric, that falls under ‘developing’ because your own voice isn’t driving the essay. For the next draft, I want to see you take those AI suggestions and rewrite them to reflect your own style and perspective.” **

Step-by-step implementation checklist

How to build a meaningful assignment for students:	
☐	Step 1: Select a high-stakes writing assignment from a current unit or syllabus.
☐	Step 2: Break it into three clear, sequential milestones (e.g. Outline, peer-reviewed draft, final). Pro tip: Save four or more milestones for when both you and the students are more familiar with the process.
☐	Step 3: Configure AI settings to support each step of the process (e.g. Part 1: Full AI chat enabled; Part 2: AI disabled; Part 3: Revisions only).
☐	Step 4: Share the rubric and allowable AI guidance with students before they open the first assignment. Upload the rubric and AI guidance along with assignment instructions within Clarity. Try using Turnitin's resource AI use in assignments: Guidance and sample language to help with the language.

The universal win-win:

Multipart assignments trade **high-stakes post-submission auditing** for **low-stakes formative guidance**. Students get a safety net that protects them from panic, and educators get higher-quality, authentic submissions that are vastly easier to evaluate.

Turnitin

Turnitin stands with educators and institutions as champions of learning integrity who understand the enduring value of education in a rapidly changing world. As a global company with more than 16,000 customers in 185 countries and more than 25 years of experience working closely with educators, Turnitin designs every product it builds to address timely needs in today's learning settings. From integrity solutions offering transparency in the writing process to delivering secure high-stakes and course assessments, Turnitin provides educators and researchers with the tools they need to navigate responsible use of AI in education and the learning experience. Learn more at turnitin.com.

Teaching & Learning Innovation (TLI)

Consisting entirely of veteran educators, the Teaching and Learning Innovations (TLI) team at Turnitin ensures that best pedagogical strategies are integrated into all tools, services, and resources. The Teaching and Learning Innovations team creates content, curricular resources, and professional learning materials that support the best practices for using our products and services. Our primary goal is to act as the voice of educators and students while producing high quality, research-based content to help educators provide effective instruction and help students grow as writers.

Collections of resources:

- Disrupting Plagiarism
- Source Credibility
- Paraphrasing
- Social Studies
- Remote Learning
- STEM
- Teaching argumentation with integrity
- Learning Integrity in the Age of AI
- Peer Review & Feedback



To explore more ideas about learning integrity in the age of AI, visit www.turnitin.com/instructional-resources/packs/learning-integrity-in-the-age-of-ai

www.turnitin.com

