



Commenting on a VoiceThread

Commenting is one of the core features of VoiceThread (VT). By recording, sharing and viewing comments, participants can present, discuss and exchange ideas. In a VoiceThread, commenting can be achieved using text, audio, and video. An instructor can use the commenting function to record lectures, organize course discussion, or provide feedback to students.

Before you get started, note:

- VoiceThread is **fully supported** in **Chrome** and **Firefox** web browsers. For the best experience, keep your web browser up-to-date.
- VoiceThread can be viewed, but audio and video cannot currently be recorded with Safari or Edge web browsers.
- VoiceThread offers a [mobile app](#). You'll select **Colorado Mesa University D2L** and use your **MAVzone credentials** to log in once the app is installed. You will be able to access D2L via the VoiceThread app as well.
- Check out [VoiceThread's Troubleshooting documentation](#) for more details.

Accessibility notes:

- VoiceThread offers a [variety of options for interaction](#) and supports [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#).
- Direct students with visual impairments who need accommodations to switch to [VoiceThread Universal](#) from their accounts.
- Creators (instructors or students) can provide [closed captions](#) for students with hearing impairments. Creators can add closed captions for each slide. Creators have the option to upload a caption file (.dfxp, .srt, .sami, .scc, or .sbv) or request

captions from VoiceThread. These machine-generated captions may take up to 4 days to load and will need to be edited for accuracy. Check out our [Adding Captions to VoiceThread](#) guide.

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How to Adjust Thread Settings

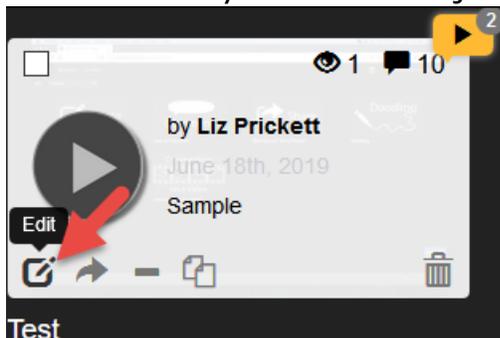
The thread settings affect how you and your students are able to interact with the comments. Default settings are automatically enabled, but depending on how you plan to use a particular VT, you may decide to adjust some settings.

Example options you may adjust as the instructor:

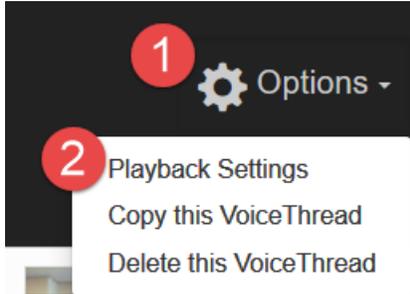
- **Threaded comments:** By default, threaded comments are enabled. This makes the most sense for the conversational nature of VT. However, depending on how you design you VT, you may decide to disable this feature.
- **Comment types:** You have the option to limit the **Allowed Comment Methods**. By default, all 5 options are allowed. This supports the Universal Design for Learning nature of VT. However, depending on the nature of your activity, you may decide to direct students to certain types of comments.
- **Comment length:** You may limit each comment to a set number of minutes/seconds. The maximum time limit from VT is 60 minutes.
- **Auto advance:** While recording comments on multiple slides, make sure to **uncheck Automatically Advance** to the next slide in **Playback Options** in order to leave enough time for narrating on each slide and advance to the next slide manually.
- **Privacy:** Check **Enable Comment Moderation** on the **Playback Options** page when participants' comments are private or might be sensitive. Comments will be hidden from all participants unless the creator decides to reveal them. This feature is also useful when the VoiceThread is used as an assessment tool.
- You may adjust other default settings if the adjustments best meet the needs of your activity.

To adjust the settings:

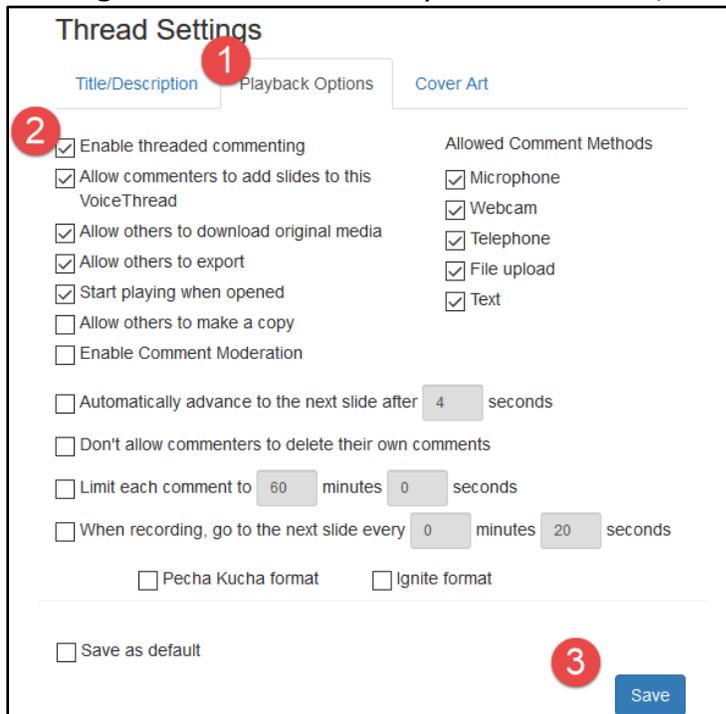
1. Go to VT in your course.
2. Go to the VT you wish to adjust and click the **Edit** (paper/pencil) icon.



3. Go to **Options** and use the dropdown menu to select **Playback Settings**.



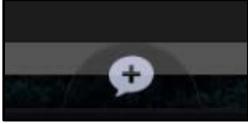
4. In the **Thread Settings** dialog, go to the **Playback Options** tab and adjust settings as needed. Once you're finished, click the **Save** button.



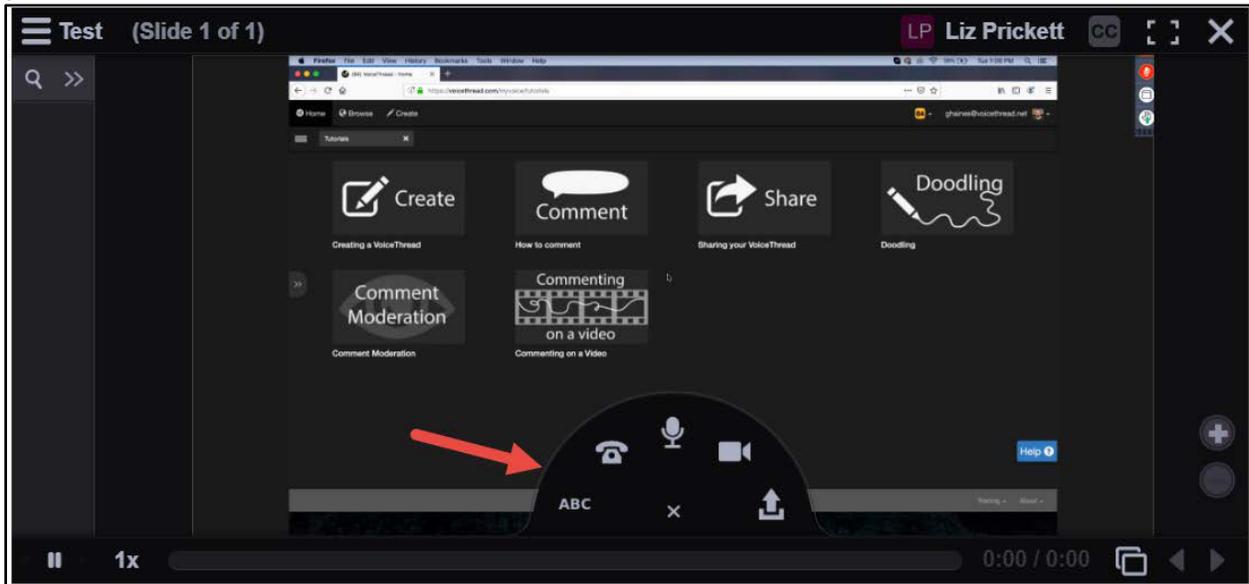
How to Access Commenting



1. Open a **VoiceThread**, go to the **slide** where comments will be added, and click on the **+ icon** at the bottom of the page.



2. This will expand your commenting options. Select which option (text, audio by microphone or phone, video by webcam, or audio/video file upload) you prefer for your comment.



Recording Comments on a Slide

There are five commenting options: text, microphone, phone, webcam, and file upload. Select one and click its icon to start.

Note: As an instructor, your comment will appear first, before student comments.



Types of Comments

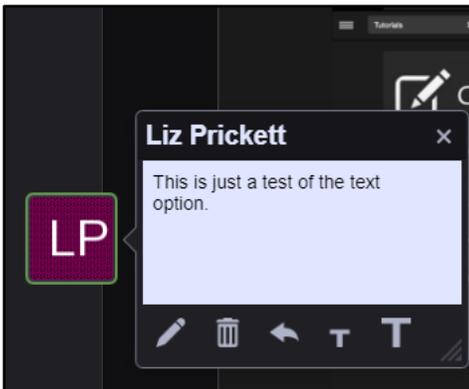
As the instructor, you may place different **time** limitations on your comments. The listed limitations are the maximums allowed by VoiceThread.

Text

Use this option to type your comments.

1. Click on the **text** (ABC)  icon.
2. Type your text comment.
3. Click **Save**.
4. If a URL is included in a text comment, it will be hyperlinked automatically.

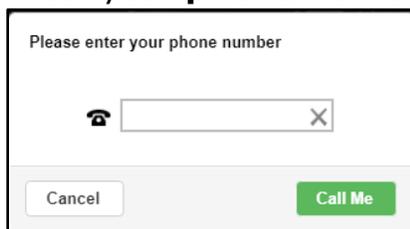
Note: There is no length limit for text comments.



Phone

When a microphone is not accessible, phone commenting is a great way to record audio comments.

1. Click the **phone**  icon.
2. Enter your **phone number**, and click the **Call Me** button.

A screenshot of a dialog box titled 'Please enter your phone number'. It features a text input field with a phone icon on the left and a close button (X) on the right. Below the input field are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Call Me'.

3. When the phone rings, pick it up, and record your comment when prompted.
4. Hang up to save.

Note: Phone comments are limited to 10 minutes per comment. There is no cost associated with phone commenting through VoiceThread.

Audio (Microphone)

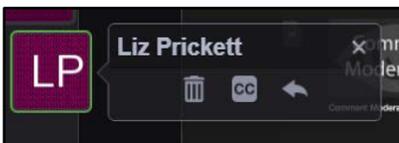
Use this option to record audio through a computer's built-in microphone or a microphone that has been connected to the computer.

1. Click the **audio** (microphone)  icon, wait for the recording countdown, and then begin speaking.



2. Click **Stop Recording** to stop.
3. The recording will be automatically played back.
4. Click **Save** to save the comment or **Cancel** to discard it.

Note: Audio comments are limited to 60 minutes per comment.



Video (Webcam)

Use this option to record videos through a computer's built-in webcam or a webcam connected to the computer.

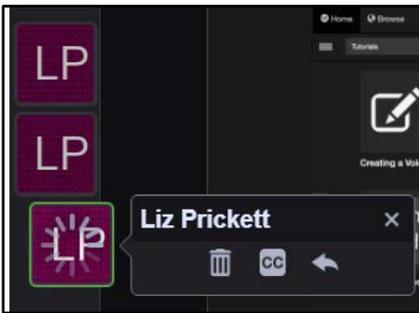
1. Click the **video**  icon, wait for the recording countdown, and then begin speaking.



2. A camera view will be opened on the left side of the recording screen, in which you can see and adjust how you look in the video. (Note: If prompted, click **Allow** on the permission popup page before recording.)
3. Click **Stop Recording** to stop.
4. The recording will be automatically played back.
5. Click **Save** to save the comment, **Cancel** to discard it, or **Record More** to continue recording.

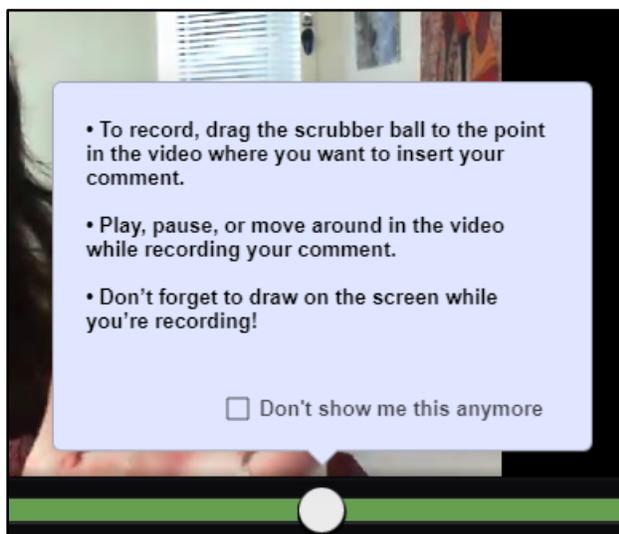


Note: Webcam comments are limited to 60 minutes per comment.

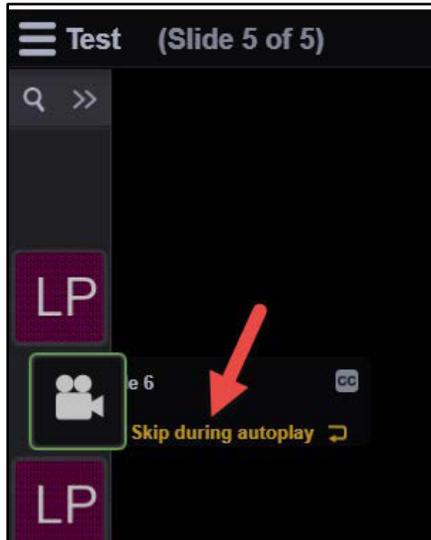


Note: If you video comment on a video-based slide, follow these steps:

1. To record, drag the scrubber ball to the point in the video where you want to insert your comment.
2. Play, pause, or move around in the video while recording your comment.
3. Optional: You may draw on the screen while you're recording by using the **Doodle** feature.



4. If you don't need the students to see the raw video: **Skip during autoplay.**



File Upload

Use this option to upload a pre-recorded audio or video file. MP3 and Wav files are supported.

According to VoiceThread, most QuickTime, WMV, and AVI video formats are also supported. For best video file results, VoiceThread recommends the use of H.264 codec to encode or compress the video, and upload videos that roughly match the native size of a VoiceThread (600 x 450 pixels).

1. Click on the **file upload**  icon to open a file manage window.
2. Select a file from your computer.
3. Upload the file.

Note: Audio and video file uploads in comments are limited to 3 GB per file for upgraded accounts and 25 MB for free accounts.

Group, Direct, and Private Comments

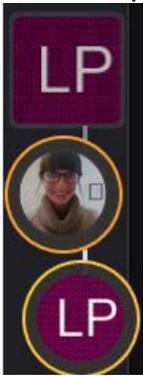
As an instructor, VoiceThread gives you 3 options when it comes to comments: comment to the thread, directly reply to a comment, or reply privately to another participant's comment. For comments to the thread, you'll use the method described previously in the **How to Access Commenting** section. This comment will appear at the end of the current comments.

Direct Comments

Like comments to the thread, everyone in the VT has access to direct replies. However, they are shown as direct replies to a comment. This makes it easier to understand to whom you are replying – an individual comment or the thread in general. Your direct comment will appear directly after the one to which you replied.

Notes on **threaded** comments:

- **Threaded** comments are enabled by default. This allows direct replies to have a visual connection. The original comment will appear as a square icon, with the direct replies as circle icons beneath it. Connecting lines appear between each.



- If you have **disabled** threaded comments in the **Thread Settings**, only the owner/editor of a VoiceThread has the ability to comment directly after someone else's comment. This means that your students will only have the comment or private reply option. Even if you give students editing permissions, direct comments will be allowed but will not appear as threaded comments.

To add a **direct** reply:

1. Click on the **comment** on which you want to reply directly.



2. When it opens, click on the **Insert a direct reply** (backwards arrow) icon.



3. Select your method of commenting.



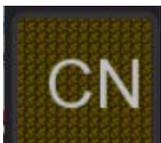
4. Compose and post your comment.

Private Comments

Unlike comments and direct replies, private replies are only accessible by the individual to whom you made the reply, like the difference between “reply all” and “reply” when composing and sending an email.

To add a **private** reply:

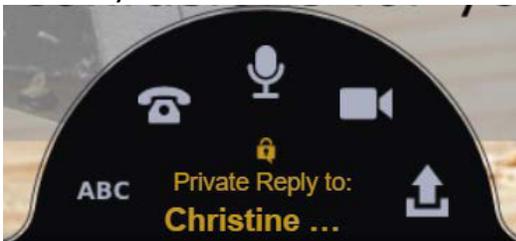
1. Click on the **comment** on which you want to reply directly.



2. When it opens, click on the **Insert a private reply** (padlock) icon.



3. Select your method of commenting.



4. Compose and post your comment.
5. You'll see your private comments as circles (vs the usual squares) marked with the padlock icon connected by a white line. These comments be hidden from the other participants.

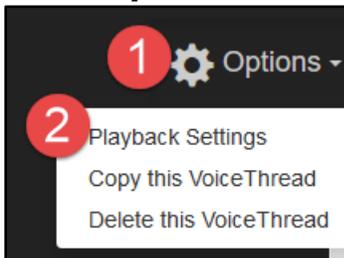


Moderated Comments

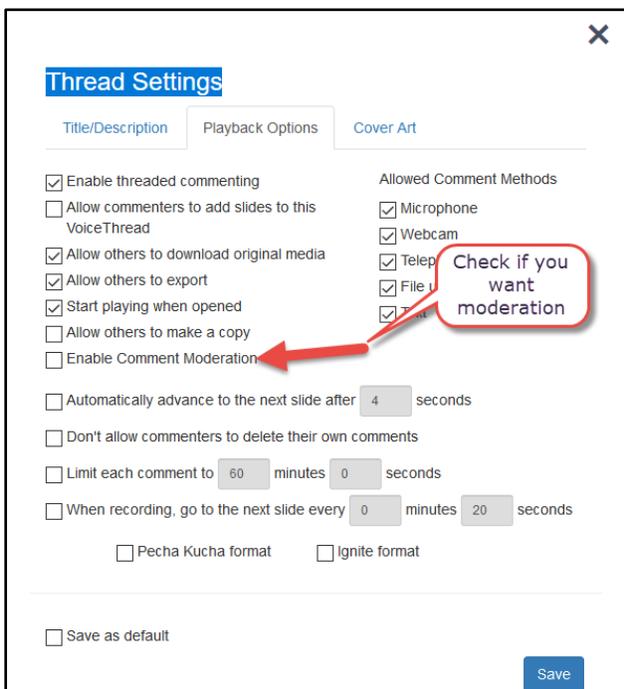
You have the option to turn on **Comment Moderation** in individual VoiceThreads. Comment Moderation allows instructors to review all comments before allowing other students to see them. Then you have the option to reveal individual comments or keep them hidden. This is helpful if you wish to preview the quantity or quality of student comments. It's also useful as an assessment tool.

To enable **Comment Moderation**:

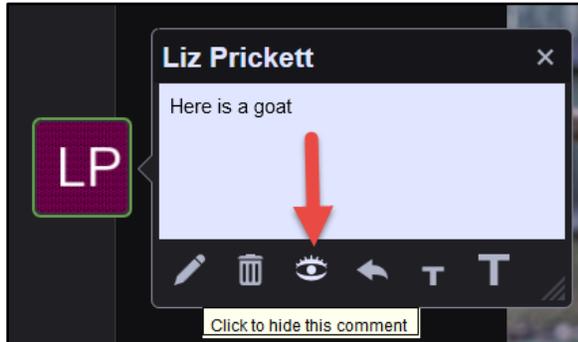
1. Navigate to the applicable VT.
2. Go to **Options** and select **Playback Settings** from the dropdown menu.



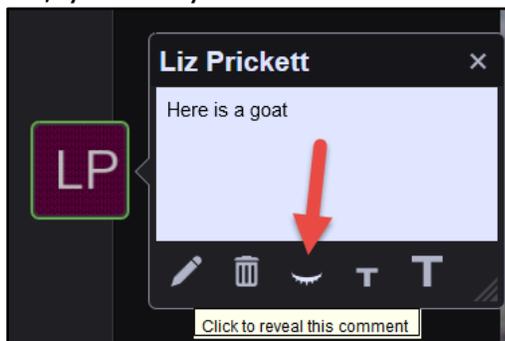
3. In **Thread Settings**, go to the **Playback Options** tab and make sure **Enable Comment Moderation** is checked.



4. Now, when you make a comment, you have the option to **hide** the comment by clicking on the open eye icon.



Or, you may **reveal** the comment by clicking on the closed eye icon.



Note: You can tell which comments are hidden because they appear darker and shifted to the left within the conversation channel.

Recording Comments on Multiple Slides

A **microphone** or **webcam** needs to be used to make multi-slide comments.

1. Select a **slide** as the start, and click the **audio** (microphone) or **video** (webcam) icon to start recording.
2. Use the arrows in the bottom-right corner to navigate to the previous and/or next slide during recording. (Warning: Make sure you use the dark-colored arrows in the VoiceThread user interface , rather than the light-colored back and forth arrows  in the D2L user interface.)
3. Click **Stop Recording** when it is finished.
4. The recording will be automatically played back from the first slide to the final slide.
5. Click **Save** to save the comment or **Cancel** to discard.

Notes:

- There is a limit for the length of audio or webcam recording (up to 60 minutes per comment). The audio or video comments cannot be edited after being made. To change a comment, it would need to be deleted and recorded again.
- VoiceThread recommends not using one long recording/comment during a VoiceThread. Record a comment on **each** slide, and then students can make comments by slide. Break up the comments to about 1 minute or so per slide.

Doodling

A Doodle is an animated annotation that is recorded as part of a VoiceThread comment. Use your finger if you are working on a touchscreen or a cursor if you are working on the traditional laptop/desktop to draw or write on the slide as you speak. Only audio or video comments can include Doodles.

During the recording of an audio or video comment:

1. Tap on the **pencil** icon at the bottom of the slide beside **Stop Recording**. This will open the color selections.
2. Select a **color** for the Doodle.
3. Draw on the slide with your finger or cursor.



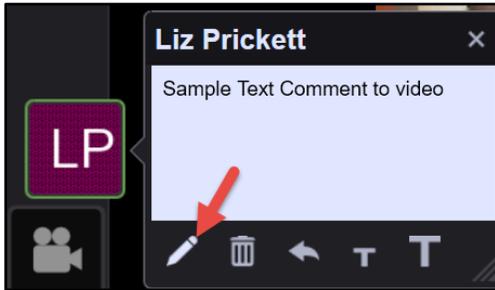
4. To prevent the Doodles from fading over time, tap on the **Fade** button beside the pencil icon.
5. Be sure to **save** the comment when it's done.

Editing Text Comments

Once made, comments will automatically be shown on the left side of the main media. Audio and video comments cannot be edited once they are recorded, but text comments can be edited at any time.

1. Open a **VoiceThread** and navigate to the **slide** on which a textual comment was made.
2. Tap on the **identity image** (photo or initials) to open the text comment.

3. Select the **edit** (pencil) icon inside the comment bubble.



4. Make the edits.
5. **Save** it or **Cancel** to discard the change.
6. Click the delete (trash) icon to delete this comment if needed.

Reordering Comments

The order of the comments can be changed on a slide in any VoiceThread that you own or can edit. Find the identity image for that comment on the left side of the VoiceThread, and drag it to its new location among the others. The new position will be saved automatically.