Getting Started Guide for Teachers

Welcome to CodeCombat's Courses for teachers. We're so excited that your students will be learning how to code -- all while playing a game! Here's how you can get started with your class to track their progress and let students compete on a leaderboard together:

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1. Sign up for a teacher account

Go to codecombat.com/teachers and click the red "Create Account" button at the top of the page to create your teacher account. If you already have a CodeCombat account as an individual player, you can simply Log In to your existing account.

2. Create your first class

Once you're logged into your account, go to your **Class Management Page** and click the green "Create New Class" button. This will allow you to enter a class name, such as *Mrs. Portman's Third Grade Class*, that will be easily identifiable by your students as well as yourself.

Should I select Python or JavaScript?
We recommend choosing Python if your students have not already had prior experience with any coding languages. It's a simple yet powerful language that can be used by both beginners and experts.

3. Add students to this class

Once you've created a class, click the blue "Add Students" button to invite students to join this class.

There are several ways to add students to your class - we recommend going with **Option 1** as it doesn't require students to enter URLs or codes by hand (important for younger students who are just learning to type!).

Option 1: Invite students via email
Students will receive an email with a URL that they can click to automatically join this class. If there is a group email address that automatically sends a message to all of your students, you can enter that email address here as well.

Option 2: Send a URL to your students
Copy and paste this URL to an online class announcement board and tell students where to find it when they arrive in class. We do not recommend this option if you are writing a URL on a board for students to type in - see Option 3 for a better solution.

Option 3: Direct students to codecombat.com/courses
If you will be writing a URL on a whiteboard for students to navigate to, use this method. Direct them to codecombat.com/courses (make sure they go to /courses) and have them enter your unique class code in order to join the class.

4. Help students choose appropriate username and passwords
No matter which option you chose to invite students, they will need to create an account by entering an email address as well as choosing a username and a password they can remember. This username will be your primary means of identifying each student in your class dashboard, and also needs to be unique in our system (no duplicate names allowed).

Here are some tips to get your students set up quickly:

When choosing a username:
- Use your first name, then your favorite animal
- If your first name is already being used by someone else as a username, we will automatically add numbers to the end to make it unique.

When choosing a password:
- Use the name of a favorite pet
- Use the teacher's name

What if my students don't have an email address?
No worries, students can make up a fake email address instead of entering a real one, such as student123@code.org (we'll have options in the future to skip this step) -- they won't lose out on their progress or experience as long as they remember the fake email address they used and password.

5. View student progress on your class dashboard
When your students successfully join your class, you'll start to see their overall progress tracked on the **Class Management Page**. From here, you can edit class details as well as see at a glance how much progress students have made in each course.

To view more detailed progress for each student, click the blue "View/Edit" button underneath the number of students count. This will lead you to the class page for this individual class, where you'll be able to track how each individual student is doing, as well as add/remove students, and enroll students in paid courses for additional content.

6. Tips for the first hour of content
The first course will take an average student about an hour to complete. If you are new to Python (or programming languages in general!), we recommend downloading the [Teacher's Guide for Course 1: Introduction to Computer Science](#), which explains the concepts they'll be learning in each of the levels, as well as provides solutions so that you can help guide students towards writing the correct lines of code.

When students are finished with the last level in "Introduction to Computer Science", they'll have an Arena level awaiting them. This level is unlike the other ones in that each students' solution will be different, and their solutions can be ranked against each other so they can try to find the best solution over time (this is called "iteration" in software engineering!).

7. Technical Specifications & Age Recommendation
We've found that CodeCombat runs best on computers or laptops with at least 2GB RAM, and a recent version of Firefox/Chrome, Safari 6+, IE9+/Edge. CodeCombat is not supported on Windows XP and Mac OS 10.6 or older and you may experience problems on these platforms. Internet connection is also required while playing. We do not currently offer a mobile or iPad version.

We've successfully tested CodeCombat with students as young as 8 years old, and we've found that even high schoolers grades 11-12 enjoy playing. The game also plays very well collaboratively - we've seen students help each other find solutions by brainstorming together and fixing each other's' code (just like engineers do in their actual jobs!).

Since the game has sound turned on by default, we also recommend teachers with larger classes ask their students to put on headphones or hit the 'mute' button before loading.

8. Troubleshooting & FAQs

A student isn't showing up in my class list
To check if a student should be showing up in your class list, ask the student to log into their account and navigate to [codecombat.com/courses/](#). If your class isn't listed in their "Saved Games", they will need to enter the class code under "Join A Class" and click "Join."

How can I tell if a student is accidentally playing the Campaign mode?

Sometimes eager students may accidentally navigate to the main Code Combat individual campaign game, which is not part of the Courses system (this usually happens if a student goes straight to codecombat.com and clicks "Play").

If you see one of the following occur, this student is playing campaign mode:
- The student is navigating through a world map to progress through the levels instead of automatically progressing to the next level.
- Before a level, the student is asked to choose a character and equip items.
- During a level, the level name is NOT preceded by a number.
- After a level, the student is rewarded with XP (experience points) or gems.

If this is happening, the student can continue to play the campaign on their own, but not all their levels will be tracked in your class, since they will be playing some different levels. To keep the same student account but make sure they are in your class, have them navigate to codecombat.com/courses/. If your class isn't listed in their "Saved Games", they will need to enter the class code under "Join A Class" and click "Join."

One of my students is stuck on a level and I'm not sure how to help them
For the content in "Introduction to Computer Science", we've created a Teacher's Guide with overviews and solutions to all of the levels, as well as summaries of the concepts covered and common issues we've seen students run into.

Still need additional help?
Visit our Teacher Forums to connect with fellow educators who are using CodeCombat, or contact our team at team@codecombat.com.

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