Video Lesson Activity vs Moodle File Resource

Core Concepts · https://www.mooplugins.com/docs/video-lesson-activity/core-concepts/video-lesson-activity-vs-moodle-file-resource/

This article explains the difference between using a **Video Lesson Activity** and Moodle's built-in **File resource** for video content, and when each option is appropriate.

What is a Moodle File Resource?

The **File resource** is a standard Moodle feature that allows teachers to upload files such as PDFs, documents, images, and videos into a course.

When used for video:

- The video is treated as a downloadable file
- Playback behavior depends on the browser
- Moodle does not track how the video is consumed

It is designed for **content distribution**, not structured video learning.

What is the Video Lesson Activity?

The **Video Lesson Activity** is a dedicated Moodle activity built specifically for **video-based learning**.

Unlike a file resource, it treats video as:

- A learning activity
- A trackable event
- A completion-driven component of the course

It adds video-specific logic that Moodle's core file handling does not provide.

Completion tracking: the biggest difference

Moodle File Resource

- Completion is usually marked when the file is opened
- Moodle cannot detect:
  - How long the video was watched
  - Whether the learner skipped content
- Learners can download the video and mark it complete instantly

Video Lesson Activity

- Completion is based on **actual watch behavior**
- You can:
  - Set a minimum watch percentage (e.g. 90%)
  - Prevent skipping or fast-forwarding
- Completion can be used to:
  - Unlock quizzes
  - Control certificates
  - Enforce course progression

Analytics and learner engagement

File Resource

- No visibility into learner behavior
- No watch time or drop-off data
- No way to improve content based on usage

Video Lesson Activity

- Tracks:
  - Watch duration

    - Completion status
    - User-level engagement
- Helps instructors:
    - Identify disengaged learners
    - Improve video structure
    - Support compliance audits

Performance and scalability

File Resource

- Videos are stored and served by Moodle site
- Large video files can:
    - Slow down the LMS
    - Increase backup sizes
    - Stress server resources

Video Lesson Activity

- Moodle handles logic and tracking only
- Video files are streamed using scalable infrastructure
- Keeps Moodle fast and stable, even with large video libraries

When should you use a File Resource?

- A Moodle File resource may be sufficient when:
    - The video is optional or supplementary
    - Completion tracking is not required
    - Skipping or downloading is acceptable
    - The video is short and used infrequently
- Examples:

    - Optional lecture recordings
    - Reference videos
    - Supplementary materials

When should you use Video Lesson Activity?

- Use the Video Lesson Activity when:
    - Watching the video is mandatory
    - Completion must be enforced
    - Learner engagement matters
    - Videos are central to the course structure
    - Compliance or certification is required
- Examples:
    - Compliance training
    - Certification courses
    - Structured onboarding programs
    - Video-first learning modules

Summary

While Moodle’s File resource can display videos, it is **not designed for video-driven learning**.

The Video Lesson Activity exists to:

- Treat video as a first-class learning activity
- Enforce meaningful completion
- Provide visibility into learner engagement
- Scale video delivery without harming Moodle site's performance

Choosing the right approach depends on how important the video is to your learning outcomes.