



How to create the perfect course



Table of contents

Methodology	02
-------------	----

Section 1

Use shorter sentences	03
-----------------------	----

Section 2

Split longer content up using headers and sections	04
--	----

Section 3

Use learning objectives	05
-------------------------	----

Section 4

Use visuals to enhance your text	06
----------------------------------	----

Section 5

Leverage the power of videos	07
------------------------------	----

Section 6

Consider how long it takes to answer questions	08
--	----

Methodology

This cheat sheet for creating the perfect e-learning course is based on data from recent Easygenerator research conducted with over 200 participants. The research was also enhanced by market research.

Learners completed an online course consisting of a pre-test, a lesson, and a post-test identical to the pre-test. They then rated how likely they were to recommend the course to others using a Net Promoter Score (NPS).

Two versions of the same course were distributed randomly to the participants to assess whether factors like structure, design or pictures influence learning outcomes and NPS. The study showed that optimizing courses in the following ways led to greater improvement in learner performance between the pre-test and post-test. Additionally, the tweaks appeared to increase learner engagement as the learners were more likely to spend time on the course.

Six tips for creating highly effective courses

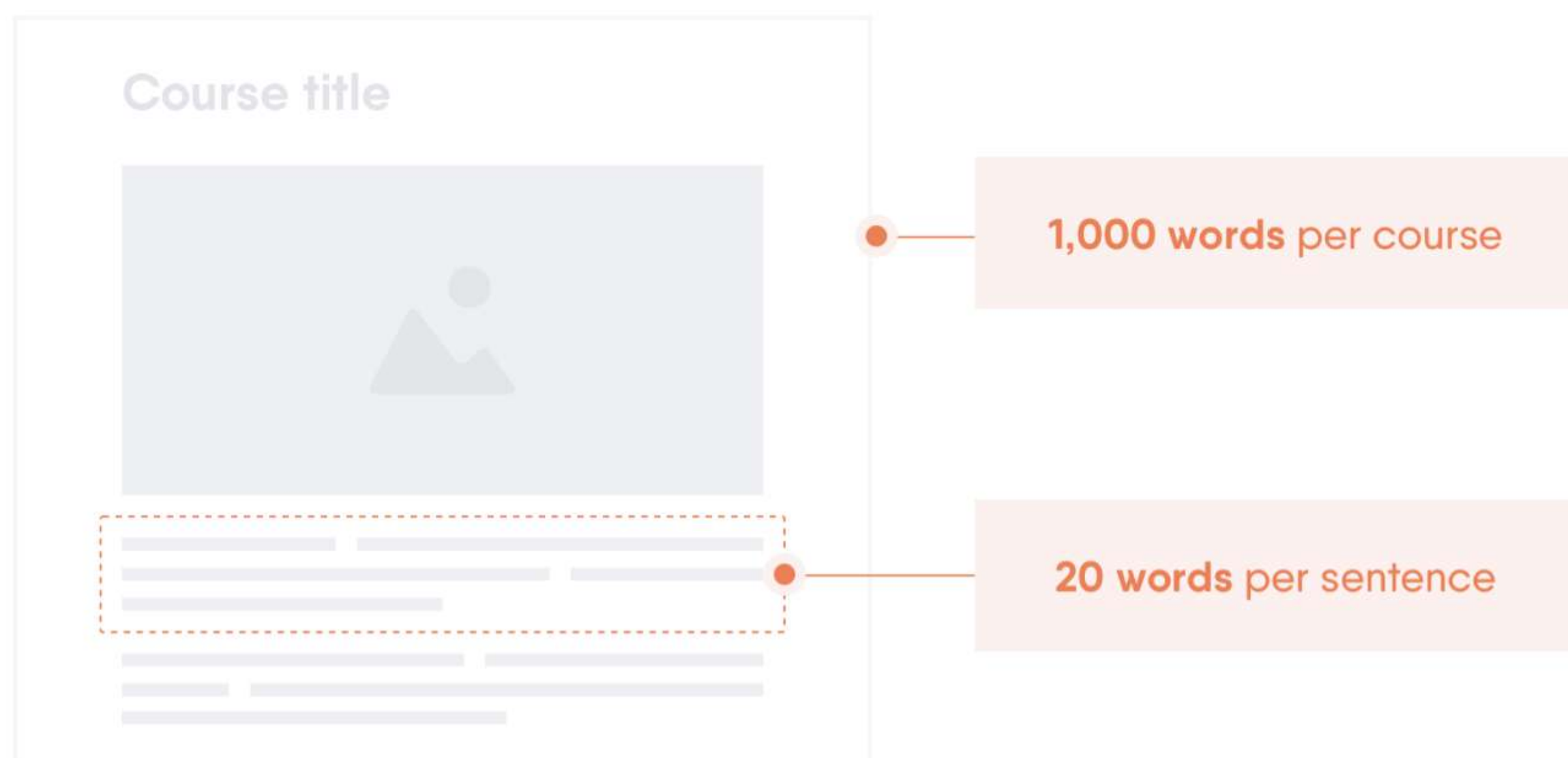
Section 1

Use shorter sentences

When writing a course, be mindful of the length of each module and the overall course. Online audiences are known for shorter attention spans, which it's important to use shorter sentences and paragraphs. Not only do they get a point across quickly, but they're more likely to keep a learner engaged. As much as possible, keep your sentences to a maximum of 20 words each. Ideally, no more than 25% of your sentences should exceed that limit.*

Ideally, a course shouldn't be longer than 1,000 words. If it's difficult to stay within this limit, you can also break your course up to form a learning path. For example, you might break up the learning objectives into multiple courses.

*More on this topic: [Content analysis: methodological choices explained](#)



Section 2

Split longer content up using headers and sections

To ensure your learners make sense of your content, you'll need to structure it in a way that's easy to understand. This is especially important if you have a lot of content to share.

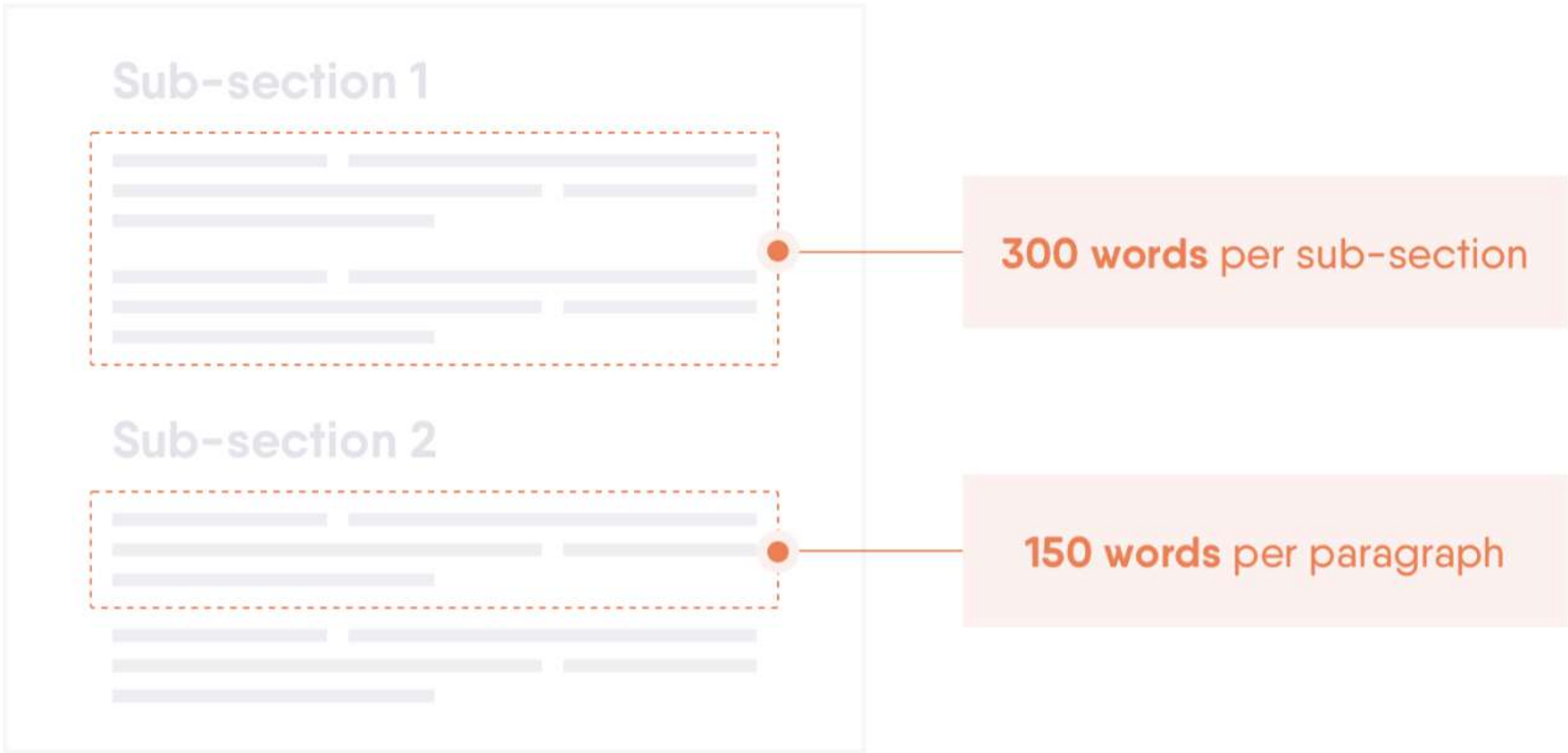
Use headers to break your content up into smaller sections. You can then break each section down further using sub-headers. This way, you ensure that complex ideas are broken down into easily digestible portions. You also make it easier for learners to skim through the content and identify key takeaways. In fact, research shows that readers tend to focus mainly on the first and last three words.*

Each sub-section should contain no more than 300 words,* and the individual paragraphs should be 150 words max.** For headers, we recommend keeping them under six words.

Keep the sections focused on the main learning goals or topics. Always clearly state the expected learning outcomes at the start of each section. You can also emphasize the most important terms or figures by strategically using colors and different font sizes.

*More on this topic: [The Ideal Length of Everything Online, Backed by Research](#)

**Content analysis: methodological choices explained



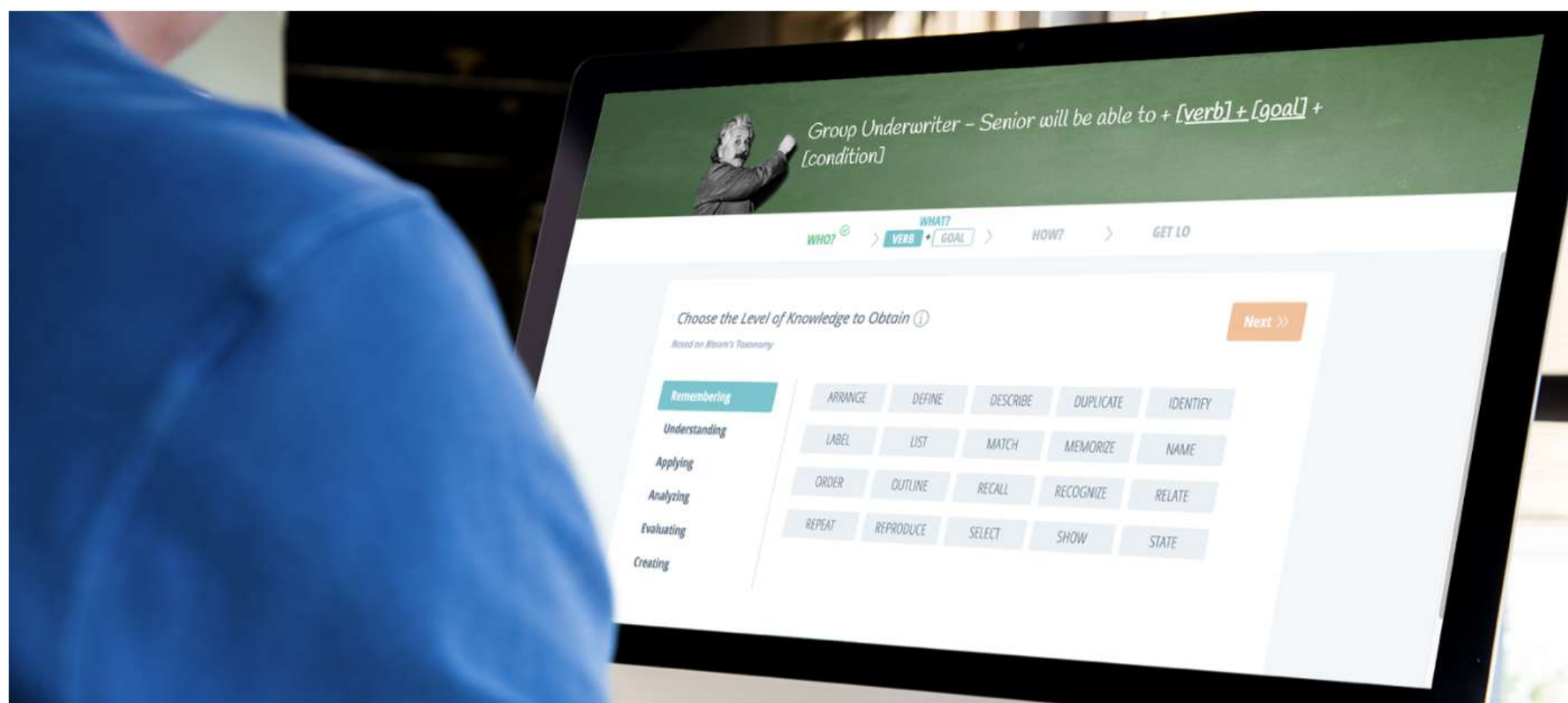
Section 3

Use learning objectives

When creating a new section using Easygenerator, always start with a learning objective. Learning objectives let your learners know what knowledge and skills they can expect to gain after having taken the course.

For one, they help your learners understand why they should be taking the course before signing up. It also encourages a goal-oriented mindset throughout their experience. Beyond that, however, setting learning objectives before anything else helps you identify the reason for creating content, which can help streamline your creation process.

With a clear goal in mind, you'll have an easier time differentiating between relevant and irrelevant content. To learn more, explore our in-depth article about how to create effective learning objectives.



Section 4

Use visuals to enhance your text

People tend to scan bodies of text, reading around 25% of the words on a page.* This makes it even more important to get information across quickly. Visuals make it easier to quickly grasp important concepts and increase the learner's attention. In fact, according to the Visual Teaching Alliance, people mentally process visuals 60,000 times faster than they process text.

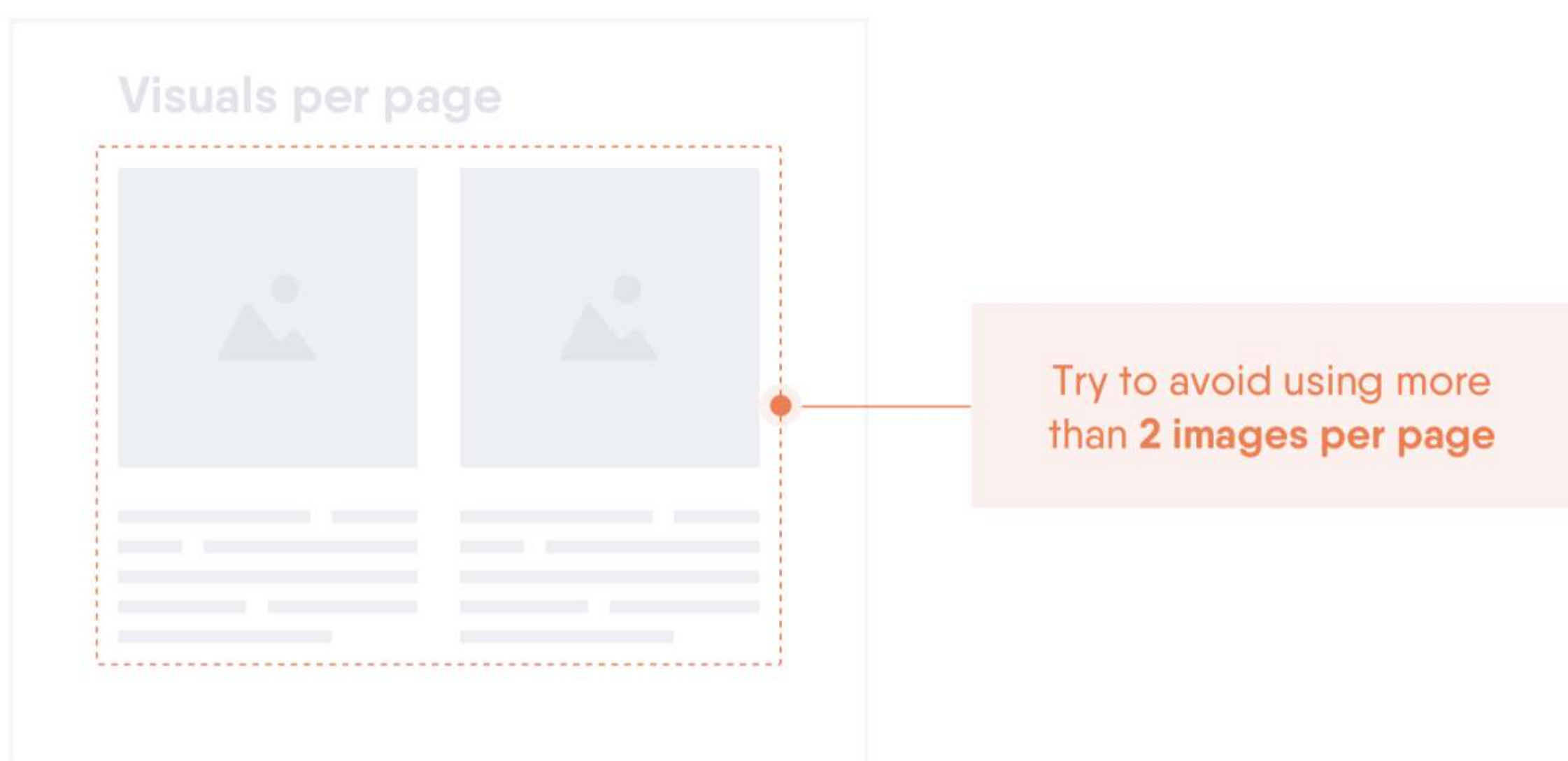
That said, there is a strategy to including visuals in your course. While it varies depending on the course, there are some general rules to keep in mind.

For example, your content should harmoniously alternate between text and visuals. So, to avoid distraction and confusion, we recommend adding no more than two visuals per page.

More importantly, any visual you decide to include should add value to your course. That means they should visually elaborate on your text – they shouldn't be introducing new points on their own.

Not only will these practices ensure your content stays relevant to the learning objectives, but also that your learners can easily store the information in their long-term memory.

*More on this topic: Sentence length: why 25 words is our limit



Section 5

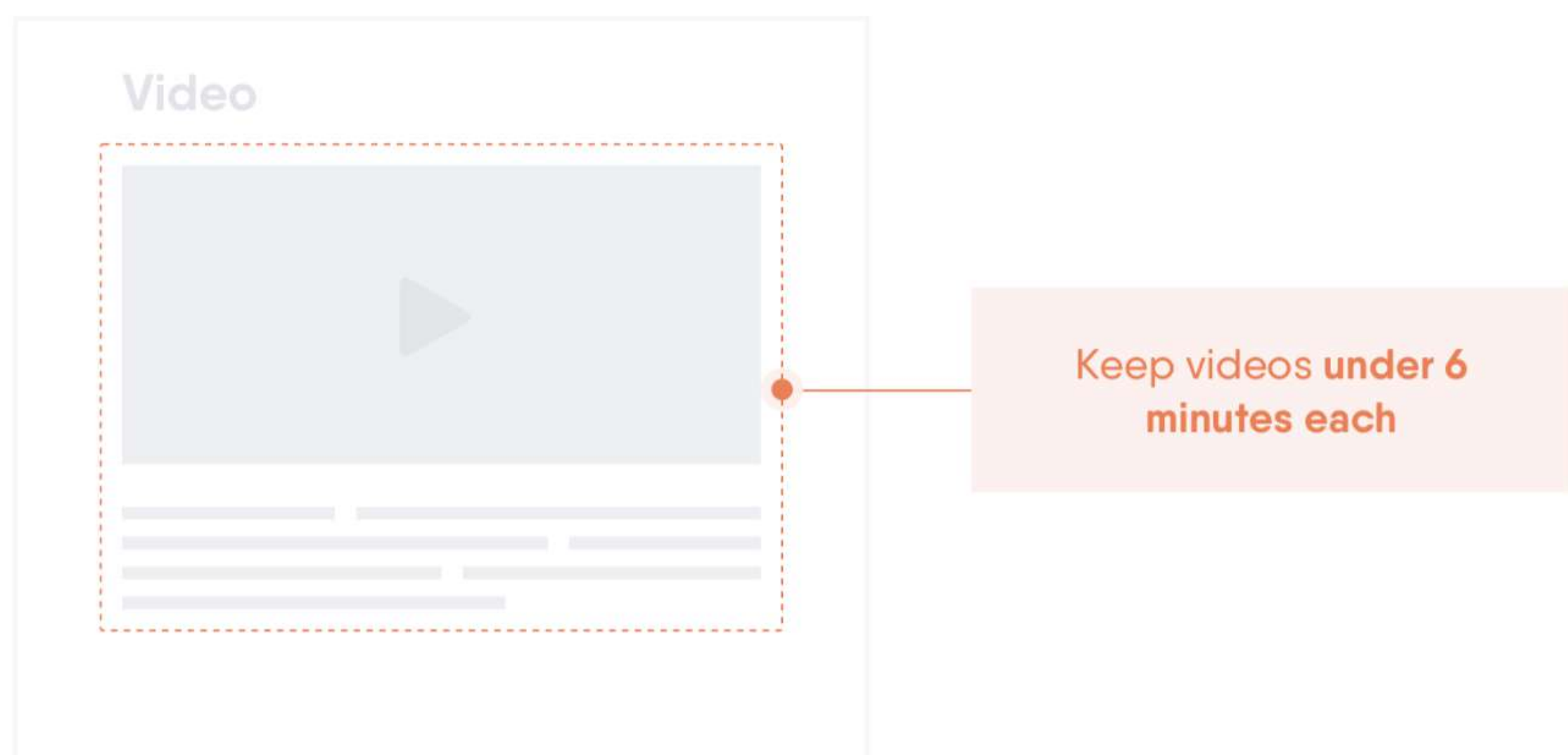
Leverage the power of videos

Videos make your course more dynamic and interactive. Unlike images that appeal solely to our visual senses, videos provide a multisensory experience by combining audio and visual elements. This makes it easier to capture a learner's attention and keep them engaged.

Besides choosing a video that's relevant to your course, you should also ensure it gets the point across clearly and doesn't last longer than 6 minutes. Beyond 6 minutes, learners are less likely to keep watching and stay focused,* which also means they're less likely to retain the information.

Videos are particularly effective when they take an explanatory, "how-to" approach,* where they explain how to perform a task or procedure step by step. If possible, incorporate immersive, real-life scenarios to make educational videos more applicable for viewers.**

*More on this topic: Optimal Video Length for Student Engagement,
10 tips to effectively use videos in elearning



Section 6

Consider how long it takes to answer questions

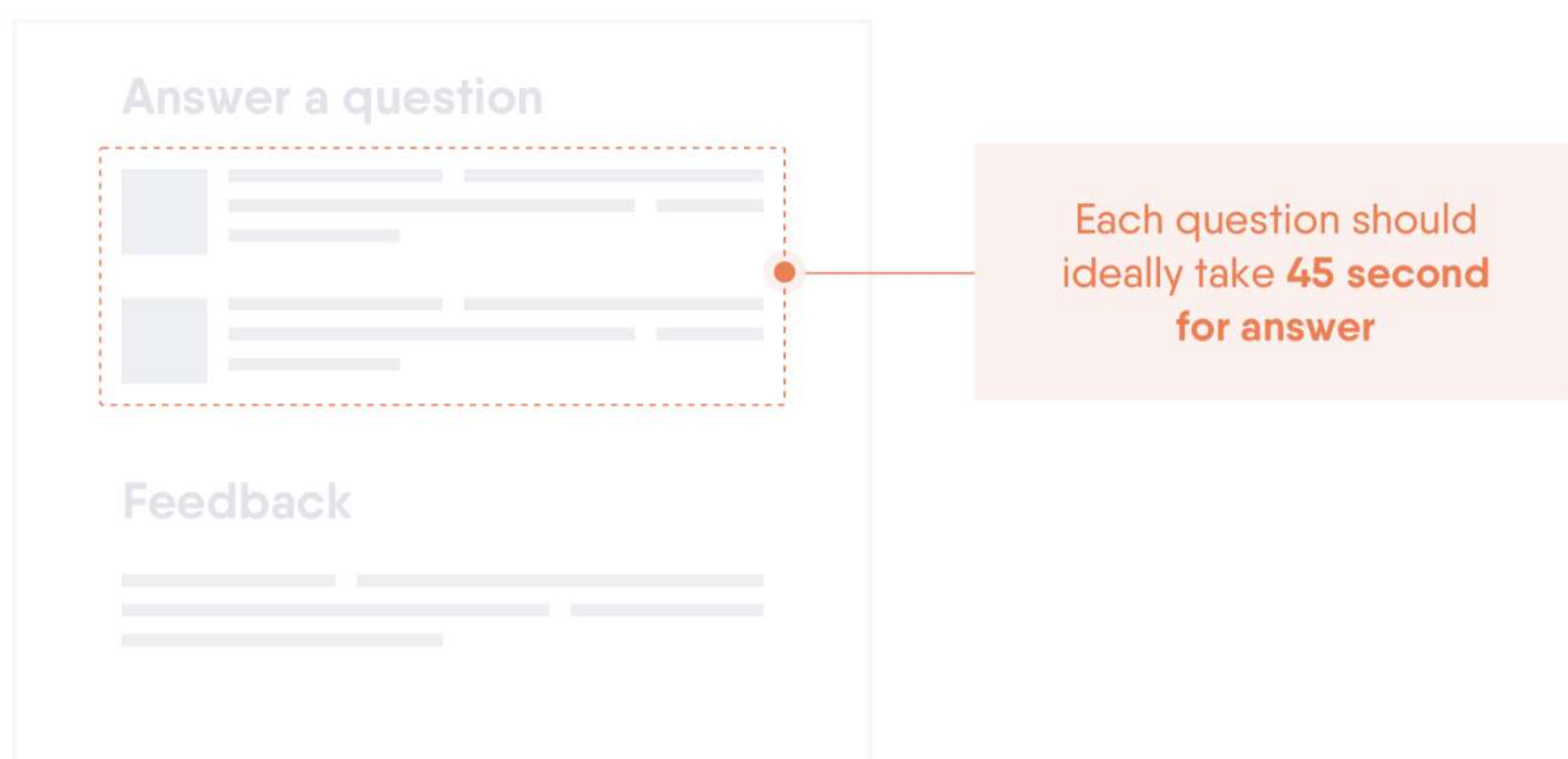
Quiz questions are a helpful way to assess your learners' progress and help them internalize knowledge. Ideally, each question should ideally take around 30 to 45 seconds for the learner to answer – long enough for the learner to process the question, filter out distractions, reflect on their answer, and digest feedback.

That said, response times can vary depending on the complexity of the question and feedback. A question that involves a scenario, for example, may take up to 90 seconds to respond to. In any case, it's important to write and present the question as clearly as possible to avoid confusing the learner in the process.

Not only should questions test the learner's ability to recall what they've learned, but also to allow them to focus on their comprehension and practice critical thinking.

To help them achieve this, be sure to always include feedback after a learner has responded to a question, especially when they answer incorrectly. This enables the learner to make sense of their mistake and retain the correct information.

For multiple-choice questions, where learners have several options to choose a response from, each choice should be similar in length. This prevents any single option from sticking out and distracting the learner. As a best practice, offer 3 to 5 choices for the learner to choose from.



Now you're ready to create courses

Applying these six tips is a simple way to improve the quality and effectiveness of your e-learning content. Not only will these tips increase the learning impact but also improve learner engagement significantly. They'll also help you in the content creation process, shedding light on the impact your course will have.