

WordPress Meetup Activity

Set Up Your First Online Store with WooCommerce

60 minutes · Beginner to Intermediate · WordPress Playground

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

Identify the core components of a WooCommerce store: products, cart, checkout, orders.

Configure WooCommerce using the setup wizard to set your store's location, currency, and product type.

Create a published product with a title, description, price, and image.

Evaluate what WooCommerce provides free versus what a real launch requires.

Compare WooCommerce against simpler alternatives based on what you're selling.

What You Need

Device + browser Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari

Internet connection Playground runs in the browser — a live connection is required

Playground URL `playground.wordpress.net/?plugin=woocommerce`

A product image Download one free image before we start:

openverse.org unsplash.com pexels.com

Playground first load with WooCommerce: allow 20 to 30 seconds.

Image licensing: these sources are fine for today's activity. For a real store, use your own product photos or images you have commercial rights to. Openverse licenses vary — check for the NC (non-commercial) badge before using an image commercially.

Today's Activity

Part 1 — Open Playground and Run the Setup Wizard

15 min

Part 2 — Add Your First Product

15 min

Part 3 — Preview Your Storefront and Checkout

10 min

Part 4 — What You Have and What a Real Store Needs

10 min

Debrief

5 min

Open Playground and Run the Setup Wizard

1. playground.wordpress.net/?plugin=woocommerce — loads on front-end blog (allow 20-30 sec).
2. Click 'My WordPress Website' in the dark admin bar at the top to reach the wizard.
3. Welcome to Woo! — note the pre-checked data sharing checkbox at the bottom. Click Set up my store.
4. 'Which one of these best describes you?' — leave 'I'm just starting my business' selected. Continue.
5. 'Tell us a bit about your store' — store name, industry, location (auto-detected), email. Continue.
6. 'Get a boost with our free features' — 8 plugins, all pre-checked. Uncheck all or click Skip this step.
7. WooCommerce Home — you land on the task checklist: Add products → Set up payments → Customize → Tax → Launch.

Add Your First Product

1. **Add products:** From WooCommerce Home, click 'Add products' task. Then click Physical product.
2. **Title:** Write a specific product name — e.g. 'Handmade Ceramic Mug', not 'Mug'.
3. **Description:** 2-3 sentences: what it is, who it's for, why someone would want it.
4. **Price:** Product data panel → General tab → enter a Regular price (your local currency).
5. **Inventory:** Product data panel → Inventory tab → check 'Track stock quantity for this product', set quantity.
6. **Short description:** One sentence pitch — appears next to the image on the product page.
7. **Product image:** Upload your image from Openverse, Unsplash, or Pexels. Add alt text.
8. **Publish:** Click Publish. Your product is now live on the store.

Preview Your Storefront and Checkout

1. **Shop page:** Add /shop to your Playground URL. Find your product listed.
2. **Product page:** Click your product. Review: image, title, price, short description, Add to cart.
3. **Add to cart:** Click Add to cart, then navigate to /cart. Review the cart block.
4. **Checkout:** Click Proceed to checkout. Sections: Contact info, Shipping address, Shipping options, Payment options.
5. **Place order:** Cash on delivery appears if enabled in Settings → Payments. Fill in test details, click Place order.
6. **Orders:** Go to WooCommerce > Orders in the dashboard. Your order is there.

What You Have — and What a Real Store Needs

WooCommerce gives you free	Extensions needed for launch
Product management + inventory	Payment gateway (Stripe, PayPal, etc.)
Shopping cart + block checkout	SSL certificate (required for real checkout)
Order management + basic reports	Transactional email plugin
Email notifications to customers	Live carrier shipping rates
Tax settings + shipping zones (basic)	Subscriptions (paid extension)
Cash on delivery / bank transfer	

When a Simpler Tool Might Fit Better

Easy Digital Downloads

Best for digital-only stores — ebooks, software, audio, video. Lighter than WooCommerce with no physical product overhead.

WP Simple Pay

Stripe-powered payment forms without a full store. If you're selling one or two products and don't need a catalog or cart, a payment form may be all you need.

SureCart

Modern eCommerce alternative for physical products, digital downloads, subscriptions, and donations — all in one plugin.

What's Actually in the Box?

You just ran a complete eCommerce workflow:

- ✓ Configured a store with real settings (currency, product type, industry)
- ✓ Created a product with a title, description, price, image, and inventory
- ✓ Completed a checkout as a customer and saw the order appear in the dashboard
- ✓ Identified what extensions a live launch would actually require

Most people who install WooCommerce never get this far on purpose.

Debrief — 5 Minutes

- 1 You just built a store in 45 minutes. What would it actually take to make it live?
- 2 What would make you trust that checkout enough to buy from it?
- 3 Is WooCommerce the right tool for what you're actually trying to sell?

Want to Go Further?

WooCommerce: Start with WooCommerce in 5 Steps	https://woocommerce.com/document/start-with-woocommerce-in-5-steps/
WooCommerce Getting Started documentation	https://woocommerce.com/documentation/woocommerce/getting-started/
eCommerce Best Practices — WordPress.tv	https://wordpress.tv/2022/10/06/ecommerce-best-practices/
Creating an Intuitive WooCommerce Checkout — WordPress.tv	https://wordpress.tv/2023/11/21/creating-an-intuitive-woocommerce-checkout-experience/
Getting Started in eCommerce: From Idea to First Customer — Learn WordPress	https://learn.wordpress.org/tutorial/getting-started-in-ecommerce-from-idea-to-first-customer/

Resources and Image Sources

WooCommerce docs	https://woocommerce.com/documentation/woocommerce/getting-started/
WooCommerce plugin (WordPress.org)	https://wordpress.org/plugins/woocommerce/
Easy Digital Downloads	https://wordpress.org/plugins/easy-digital-downloads/
WP Simple Pay	https://wordpress.org/plugins/stripe/
SureCart	https://wordpress.org/plugins/surecart/
Openverse (free images)	https://openverse.org
Unsplash (free images)	https://unsplash.com
Pexels (free images)	https://pexels.com
WordPress.tv — WooCommerce	https://wordpress.tv/tag/woocommerce/
Learn WordPress — eCommerce	https://learn.wordpress.org/tutorial/getting-started-in-e-commerce-from-idea-to-first-customer/

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