



Getting **Started**

Blackboard Learn 9.1
Last updated: December 2011

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1.0 Workshop Overview

In this section, we will look at the key concepts covered in this hands-on workshop. From the student and instructor perspectives, you will be introduced to the teaching and learning features of Blackboard Learn™.

First, you will log in as a student and become familiar with how the course environment appears to your students. You will learn how to access and navigate through tools and content.

Next, from the instructor perspective, you will follow a scenario-based approach representing the tasks you will complete to set up your course. You will begin with examining different strategies for organizing the Course Menu, which is the students' access point to tools and content. Next, you will learn how to customize your course style and course Home Page. Finally, you will become familiar with some common start-up tasks, such as creating announcements, adding calendar entries, setting up discussion forums, and adding textbook information.

Throughout the workshop, pedagogical issues related to teaching and learning online will be introduced.

Roadmap

2.0 Student Experience

- Explore the course environment
- Access course components
- Think of your students first

3.0 Creating Your Course Menu

- Plan the links
- Add the tools
- Create the Content Areas
- Organize the links

4.0 Customizing Your Course

- Customize course style
- Access course structure and themes information.
- Select tools
- Customize the Home Page

5.0 Day 1 Tasks

- Start from the beginning
- Make additions
- Welcome your students

2.0 Student Experience

In this section, you will explore Blackboard Learn as a student. You will see how course content appears to students and try common tools from a student perspective. The information will provide context for the decisions you will make as an instructor.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Log in to Blackboard Learn.
- Explain the information available on the **My Institution** tab.
- Access the **What's New** and **To Do** items from a course's Home Page.
- Access content and tools from the Course Menu and **Tools** link.
- Describe what a Content Area is and navigate content.
- Use breadcrumbs to navigate the course.
- Change the Course Menu from **List View** to **Folder View**.

Logging In

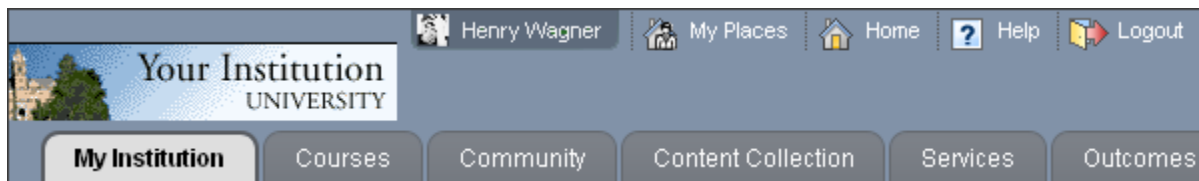
The first step in using Blackboard Learn is to log in. Your school will provide the URL, username, and password.

<h3>Have an account?</h3> <p>Please enter your credentials and click the Login button below.</p> <p>Username: <input type="text" value="tstenson"/></p> <p>Password: <input type="password" value="*****"/></p> <p>Forget Your Password?</p> <p><input type="button" value="Login"/></p>	<h3>Don't have an account?</h3> <p>Please choose from the options below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Create a New Account» View Course Catalog» Preview as Guest
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QUICK STEPS: Logging in

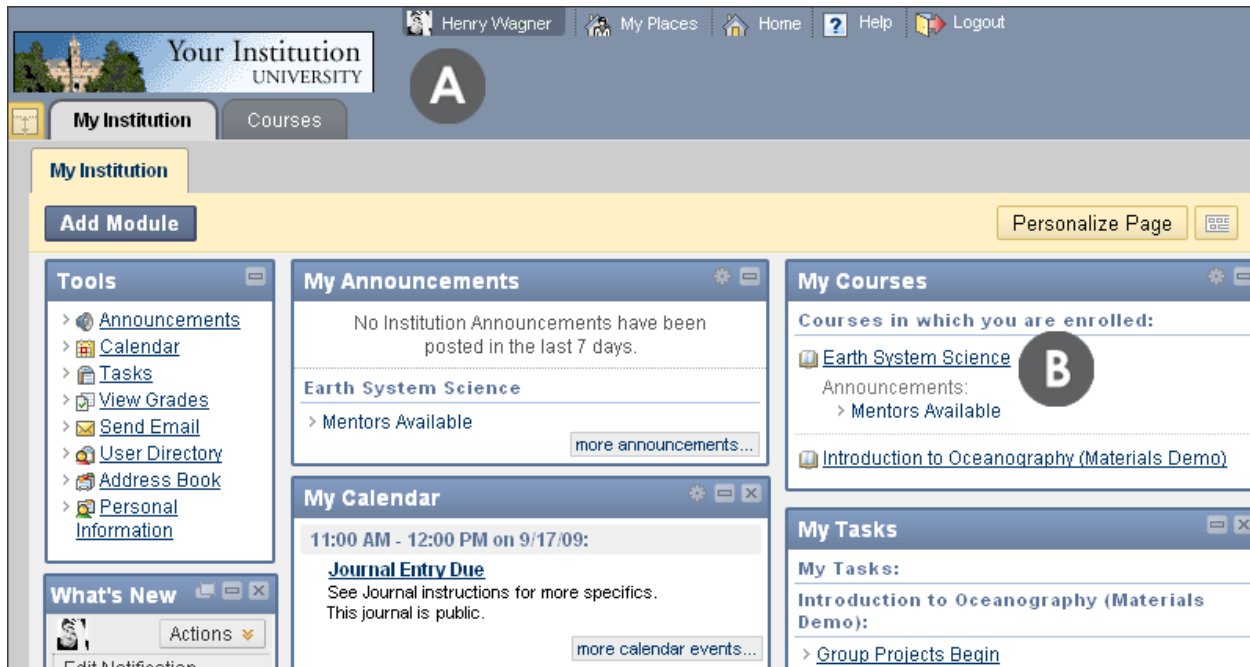
1. In your browser, type or paste the URL.
2. Type your **Username** and **Password**.
3. Click **Login**.

After logging in, the tabs you see in the page header will depend on what capabilities your school has licensed. For example, if your school has licensed the content management capability, you will see a Content Collection tab.



Exploring the My Institution Tab

First, explore the contents of the **My Institution** tab. It contains the **My Courses** module that lists all the courses to which you have access.



- A. From the page header, go to **My Places**, your school's home page, Help, or log out of the system.
- Clicking the **My Places** link allows you to edit your personal information that is seen by other course members and to set privacy options.
 - From **My Places**, you can also add an avatar image to use in the course. In the *Merriam-Webster OnLine* dictionary, an avatar is defined as “an electronic image that represents and is manipulated by a computer user.” An avatar image can be a photo of yourself or can be one you create for your alter ego.
 - Your avatar will appear throughout the course, such as in the page header, in the **What's New** module, and with journal entries. The recommended pixel size for an avatar image is 150 by 150. Adding an avatar is a function that must be enabled by the Blackboard administrator at your school.
- B. To select a course, click its title in the **My Courses** module.

The **My Institution** tab is a Module Page and contains individual boxes called modules. Modules help you organize information and links. A module can contain a tool, such as a calculator, or display dynamic information such as grades, alerts, and announcements. You can use the links in modules to navigate to areas in your courses.

NOTE: The Blackboard administrator at your school can rename modules and determines which are available.

Modules on the **My Institution** tab collect information from all the courses you are enrolled in, giving you a total picture of news and activity for your courses. The following list includes some of the modules you may find on the **My Institution** tab:

- **Tools:** View announcements and grades for all courses you are enrolled in. Send email to members of any of your courses. View course calendar dates and tasks added by instructors and add your personal calendar events and tasks, which will remain private. Use the **Personal Information** link to access and edit the same personal information found in the **My Places** link in the header.
- **My Announcements:** Displays announcements for courses you are enrolled in. It can also contain announcements from your school's Blackboard administrator. Announcements communicate important, time-sensitive information.
- **My Calendar:** Displays calendar dates for courses you are enrolled in and any personal events you have added. You can add personal events when accessing the Calendar from the **My Institution** tab and clicking the **Create Personal Event** link on the Action Bar. You cannot create personal events from the Calendar in the course environment.
- **Optional modules:** Add a module to view the list of available modules, such as **Dictionary**, **Report Card**, and **Notes**. Descriptions are provided in the list to help you choose the most significant.

You are able to add and delete some modules, collapse individual windows, and change the position of modules. To move a module, point to the title bar to access the four arrows, press and drag the module into its new location and release.

Hands-on Activity



Log in to Blackboard Learn.

Page header

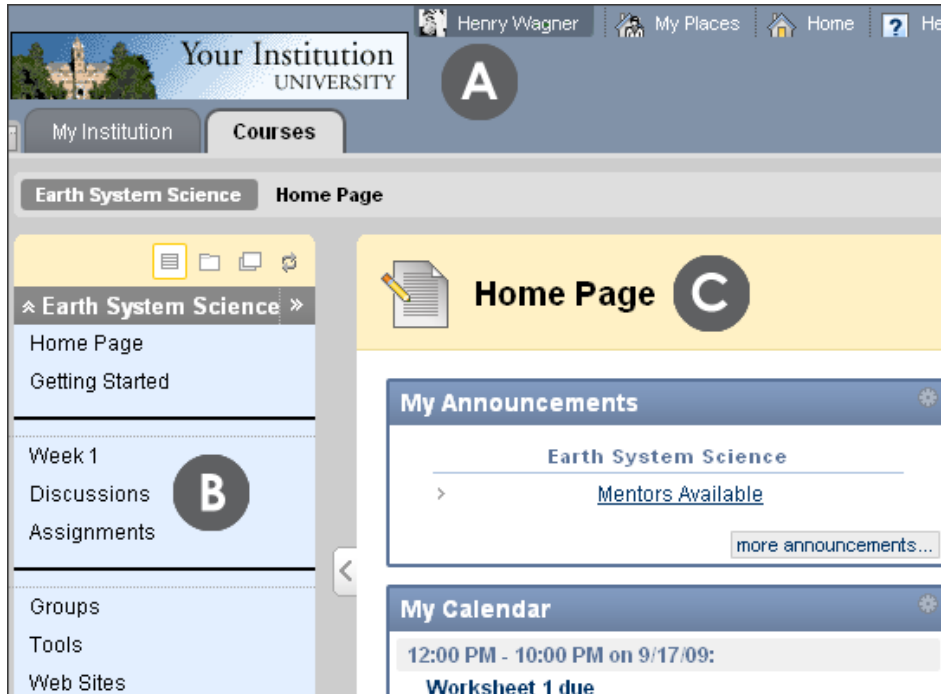
- Go to **My Places** and edit your personal information. Add an avatar, if allowed.
- Depending on what capabilities your school has licensed, you may see more than one row of tabs. In the first or top row of tabs, click **Courses** to view the information.

My Institution tab

- In the first or top row of tabs, click **My Institution**. On the **My Institution** tab, click **Add Module** on the Action Bar to view descriptions of the available modules. Choose two modules to include.
- Click **Personalize Page** on the Action Bar and change the color palette.
- Use the drag-and-drop function to move modules into the order you prefer.

The Course Environment

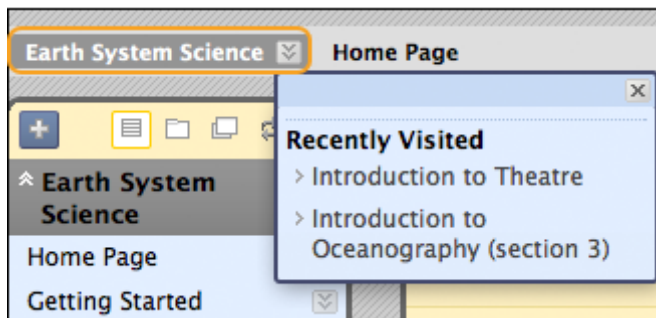
You access a course by clicking its title on the **My Institution** tab. Courses vary in design depending on the instructor and the school, but there are some common features.



- A. **Page header:** Identical to the page header you saw upon logging in, including the **My Institution** and **Courses** tabs. The Blackboard administrator can rename tabs.
- B. **Course Menu:** The access point for all course content. Instructors decide which links are available here.
- C. **Content frame:** Displays the selected tool or Content Area. By default, when you enter a course, the **Home Page** appears. The first page you see is chosen by the instructor and is called the course entry point.

Course-to-Course Navigation

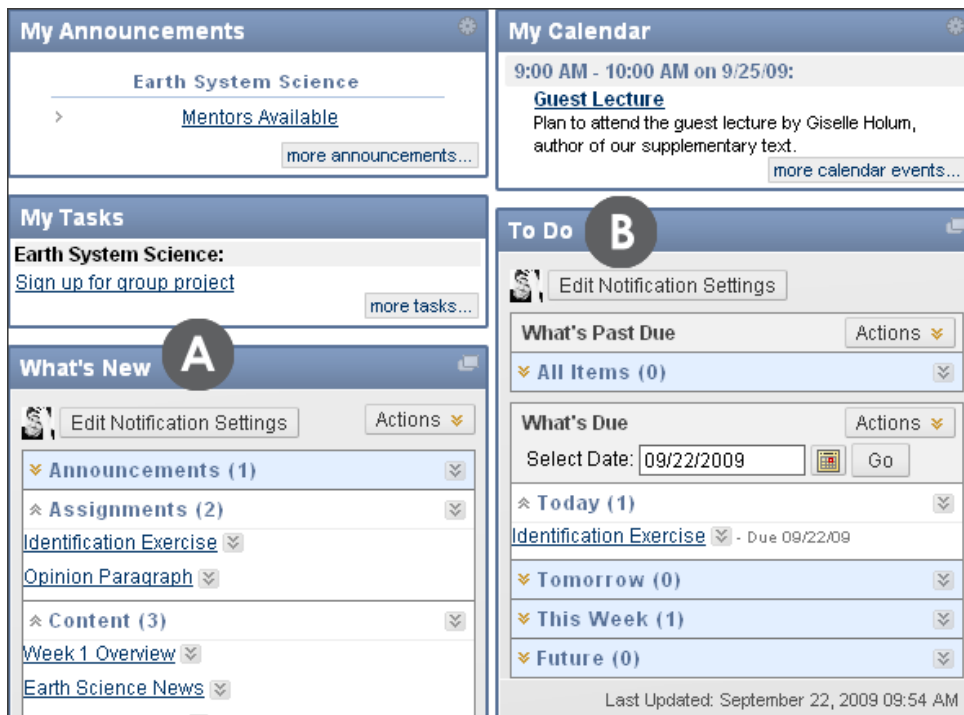
If you are enrolled in or teach more than one course, you can access all your courses using the course-to-course navigation feature. Click the Action Link next to the course title in the breadcrumbs bar and select another course from the contextual menu. For example, if you are viewing the **Announcements** page in one course and select another course from the contextual menu, you are taken to that course's **Announcements** page. Instructors can easily go from one course's Grade Center to another to access gradable items faster.



Note: Depending on the default course theme your school uses, you may see a house icon rather than the course title in the breadcrumbs bar.

Exploring the Home Page

The Home Page contains modules that provide students with an intuitive way to navigate through a Blackboard Learn course. Students can keep abreast of content additions and due dates through notifications. The modules are similar to those found on the **My Institution** tab, but the information appearing pertains only to the course currently being viewed. Your instructor can remove, add, and reorder modules. Two of the most relevant modules for students are **What's New** and **To Do**. Any new content added by the instructor appears when the Home Page is accessed.



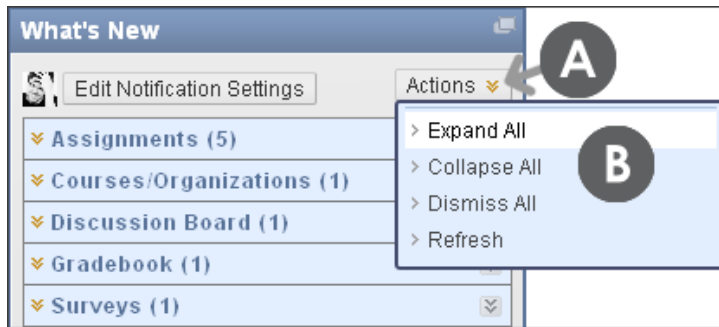
The screenshot displays the Blackboard Home Page interface. It is divided into several modules:

- My Announcements:** Shows a notification for "Earth System Science" with a link to "Mentors Available" and a "more announcements..." button.
- My Calendar:** Displays a calendar event for "9:00 AM - 10:00 AM on 9/25/09" titled "Guest Lecture" by Giselle Holm, with a "more calendar events..." button.
- My Tasks:** Lists a task for "Earth System Science" to "Sign up for group project" with a "more tasks..." button.
- What's New (A):** A module with a search icon and "Edit Notification Settings" button. It lists categories: "Announcements (1)", "Assignments (2)", "Content (3)", and "Earth Science News".
- To Do (B):** A module with a search icon and "Edit Notification Settings" button. It is divided into "What's Past Due" (0 items) and "What's Due". The "What's Due" section includes a date selector (09/22/2009) and a "Go" button. It shows "Today (1)" with "Identification Exercise" due on 09/22/09, "Tomorrow (0)", "This Week (1)", and "Future (0)".

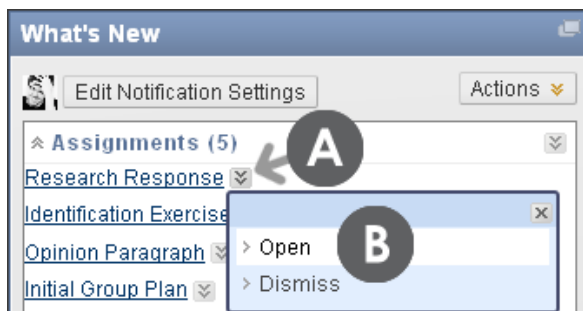
At the bottom right of the To Do module, it says "Last Updated: September 22, 2009 09:54 AM".

- A. **What's New:** Contains links to any new content, such as announcements, assignments, tests, surveys, newly graded items, Mashups, and unread Discussion Board messages.
- B. **To Do:** Divided into **What's Past Due** and **What's Due**. Use this information as the launching point for a student's daily course work.

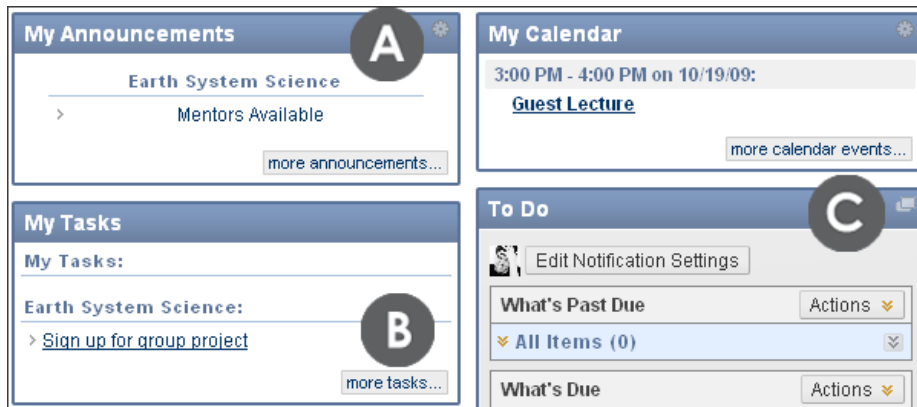
Module Options



- A. Move your mouse pointer over the double arrows to expand any drop-down list.
- B. Use the **Actions** drop-down list to expand, collapse, or dismiss all items in the module. When items are dismissed, they are deleted from the notification module.

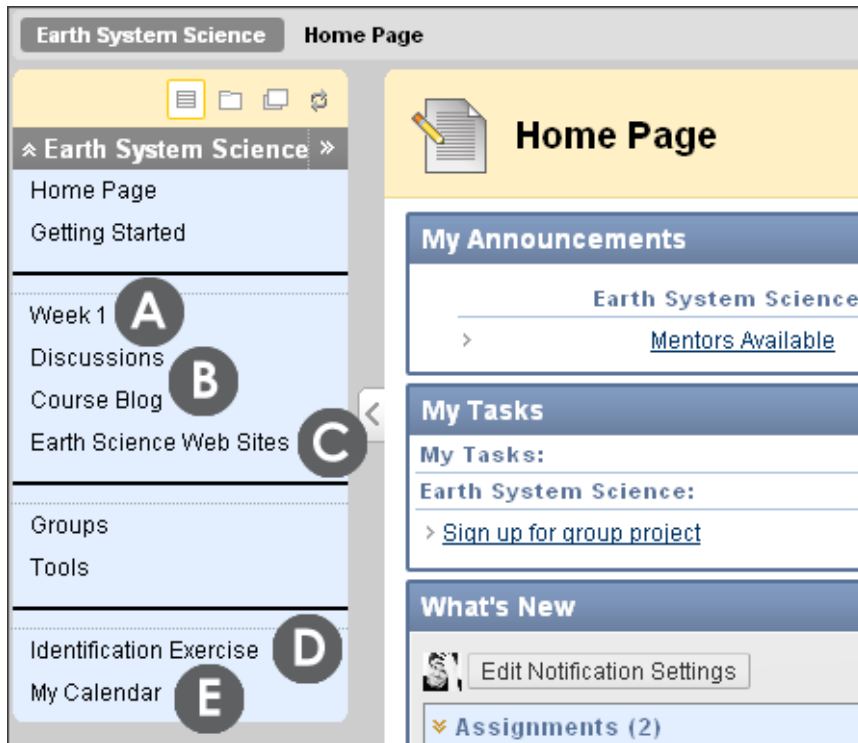


- A. Each item in the **What's New** and **To Do** modules has an Action Link. Click the Action Link to access the item's contextual menu.
- B. You can open or dismiss the item. When an item is opened, you are taken directly to the content. If you choose to view a recently graded item, you are taken to the **My Grades** tool.



- A. Click **Manage** to edit the view of what appears in the module. For example, edit the Announcements module view to include announcements for 7 days, 30 days, or all announcements.
- B. Click the “more” link in a tool module to access a tool's main page. For example, click the “more tasks” link to access the main **Tasks** page to set the status of the task.
- C. Click **Open in a New Window** to view the module in a separate window. Move the window to a different screen location. For example, keep the **To Do** module window open as you navigate through the course.

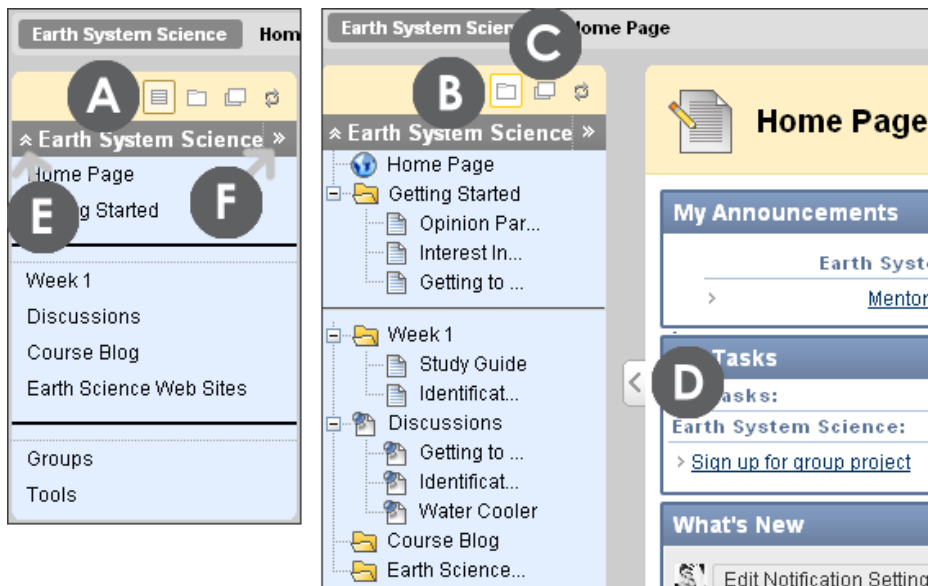
The Course Menu



Access all course content from the Course Menu, which can contain links to the following:

- A. **Content Areas:** Top-level containers that organize and store course content, such as lecture notes, assignments, and tests. In the preceding image, the **Week 1** Content Area contains items that are used in a one-week period.
- B. **Individual tools:** Links to tools students need often, such as the **Discussion Board** and **Blogs**.
- C. **Web links:** Websites used for an assignment.
- D. **Course links:** Direct links to content also available in a Content Area that you do not want students to miss.
- E. **Module pages:** Customized pages that contain modules, such as **What's New**, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and **My Calendar**.

Course Menu Views

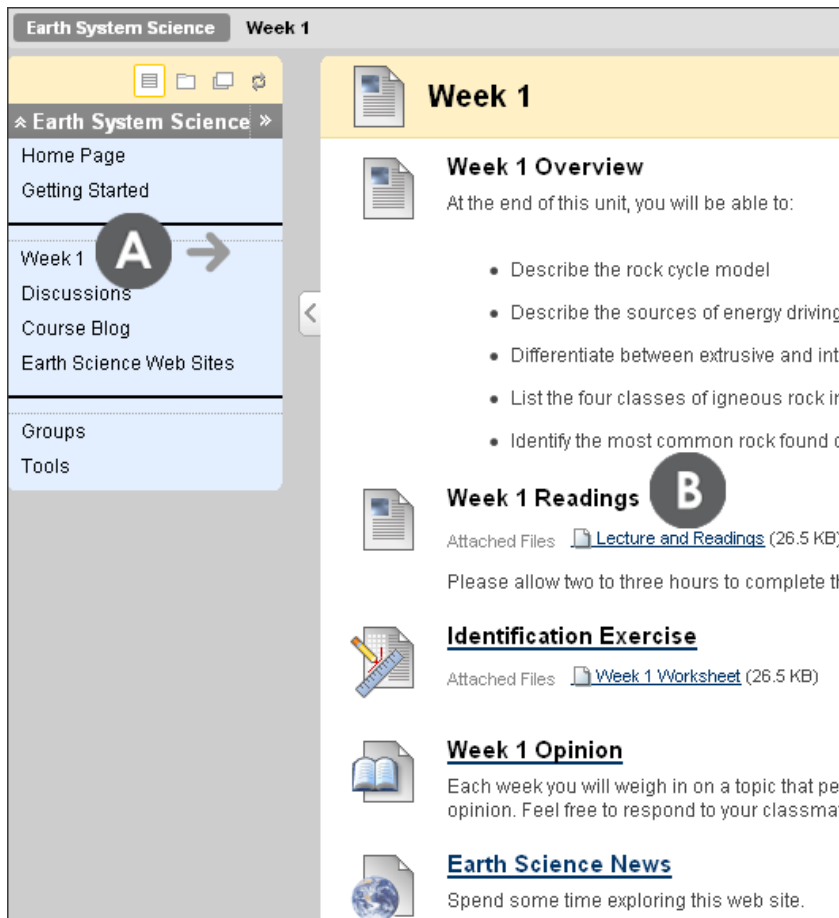


Change what appears on the Course Menu and where the menu itself appears.

- A. **List View:** Display the top level of the Course Menu only.
- B. **Folder View:** Displays the entire hierarchy of material. Expand and collapse folders, and access links within folders.
- C. **Display Course Menu in a Window:** Displays the Course Menu in a separate window. The window moves to a different screen location.
- D. **Hide or Show Course Menu:** Collapse the Course Menu to focus attention on the content frame.
- E. **Show and Hide Course Menu** in the sidebar: Hide the entire Course Menu so that the content frame fills the window.
- F. **Go to Course Entry Page:** In the content frame, display the page chosen by the instructor as the starting point.

Accessing Content in Content Areas















A Content Area can contain multiple components. For example, an instructor may create a Content Area containing a week's worth of course material, such as readings, an assignment, a discussion forum, and a Web Link.



To navigate Content Areas:

- A. On the Course Menu, click the name of the Content Area. The content appears in the content frame.
- B. In the content frame, click a link to access its content, such as a Discussion Board link or a file link.

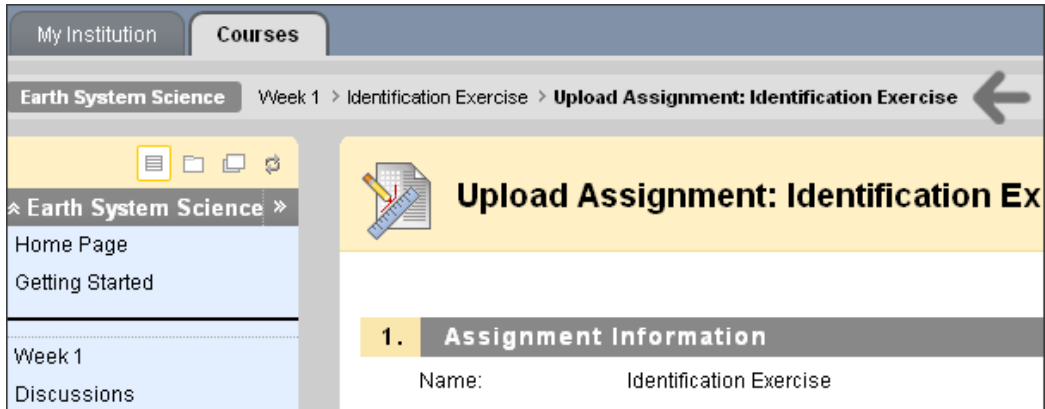
The following table identifies some of the components of a Content Area. In this workshop, the word **item** is also used as a generic term meaning any one of the components added to a Content Area.

Symbol	Description
	Folder – further organizes content
	Learning Module – further organizes content
	Lesson Plan - combines lesson information with curriculum resources
	Item – text or file
	Assignment – link to an assignment
	Course Link – link to a tool or other area in course
	Web Link – link to a website
	Test – link to a test
	Survey – link to an ungraded survey
	Discussions – link to a Discussions forum
	Blog – link to an individual blog entry
	Journal – link an individual journal entry
	Chat – link to an individual chat session
	Wiki – link to a collaborative tool that you can contribute to and modify

NOTE: The Blackboard administrator selects the icon set for your school so you may see different icons than shown in the preceding table.

Breadcrumbs

As you view the items and links presented in the content frame, use the breadcrumbs to navigate to previous pages. In the following example, click the title of the course in the breadcrumbs to return to the course entry point, which is set by the instructor. In this course, it is the Home Page.

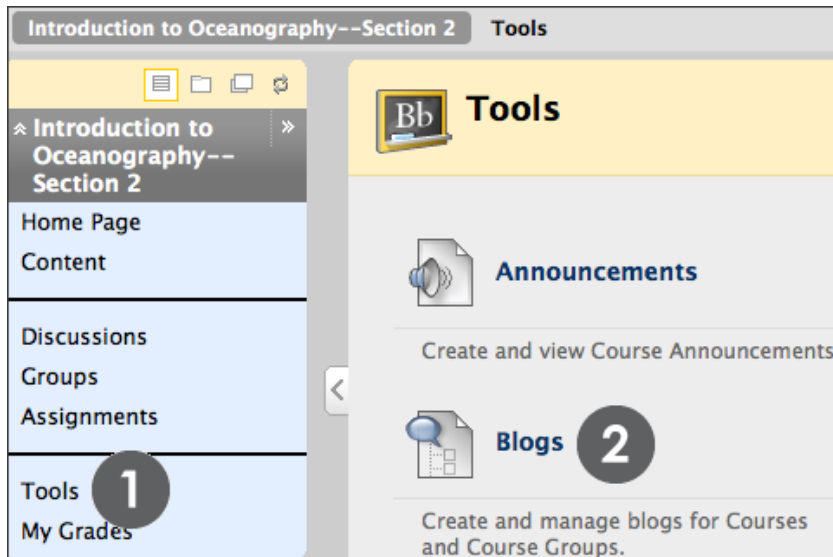


The screenshot shows a Blackboard interface. At the top, there are tabs for "My Institution" and "Courses". Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "Earth System Science > Week 1 > Identification Exercise > Upload Assignment: Identification Exercise". A left-pointing arrow is at the end of the trail. On the left side, there is a navigation menu for "Earth System Science" with sub-items: "Home Page", "Getting Started", "Week 1", and "Discussions". The main content area has a yellow header with a document icon and the text "Upload Assignment: Identification Ex". Below this is a section titled "1. Assignment Information" with a table:

Name:	Identification Exercise
-------	-------------------------

Using the Tools Link

On the Course Menu, the **Tools** link contains links to all of the tools your instructor has made available in the course. Your instructor can rename the link or remove it.



QUICK STEPS: Accessing Tools Using the Tools Link

1. On the Course Menu, click **Tools**.
2. On the **Tools** page, select the name of the tool to access.

Add Course Menu links to tools that are used often. In the preceding example, a Discussion Board link is added to the Course Menu for direct student access.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Student Course.

Home Page

- Use the **Actions** drop-down list to expand all of the items in the **What's New** module.
- Open several of the links. Use the Course Menu to return to the **Home Page**.

Course Menu

- Select a Content Area, such as **Getting Started** or **Units**, and explore its contents. Use the breadcrumbs to return to the **Home Page**.

Tools Link

- Select the **Tools** link in the Course Menu and access several tools.

List View and Folder View of Course Menu

- Click **Folder View** and select **Expand All**. Use the links to navigate through the course. How does **Folder View** compare to **List View**?
- Return to **List View**.

Best Practice: Remember the Student

As you set up your online course, think about how your students will experience your course. If possible, ask someone who is not familiar with the material to critique it through the eyes of a student.

A Clear Beginning

In a face-to-face classroom, after welcoming the students to class, you likely spend the first class session distributing the syllabus, elaborating on its contents, reviewing expectations, and answering questions.

In an online course, this familiar pattern is missing, and students may feel anxious about what to do next. In fact, the start of an online course can create more student anxiety than a traditional face-to-face course. Here are some tips on how to put your students at ease:

- Be absolutely clear about where and how to begin the course. Put first steps or orientation materials in prominent locations.
- Be prepared to spend the first few days establishing rapport with your students. Be available to answer questions, clarify expectations, and generate excitement about the course.
- Explain tasks clearly. Carefully select clear wording that will not be misinterpreted. Ambiguity in objectives, descriptions, or directions can be magnified in an online course, causing additional work and stress for you and your students.

The Visual Appeal of Your Course

Another way to ensure a positive start for both you and your students is to understand the principles of good web design and to examine your course with a critical eye. A simple yet professional course design is the gold standard. Simple does not mean uninteresting. Clean design styles are inviting, easy to view, and most importantly, easy to navigate.

- Use consistent page design or consider developing page templates to keep your use of headings, fonts, and colors the same throughout the course.
- Make sure images have small file sizes and download quickly. If you have a large image, provide a thumbnail that links to the full-sized image. Avoid using too many images on one page.

- Add visual interest with meaningful icons and attractive banners.
- Keep it clean and simple. Very dramatic or highly animated designs are distracting. Make unneeded elements unavailable and introduce them as necessary.

Design Easy to Read Pages

Students will become frustrated and skip content if pages are difficult to read and scan. Design pages that are concise, organized, and visually appealing.

Studies¹ show nearly 80% of users scan a web page for information, rather than read it word for word. Instead of copying printed course material into your online course, reformat the material so it is easier to read online.

Here are some tips to make your pages user-friendly:

- Use a straightforward, casual writing style. Elaborate language is not only disliked by web users, but reduces comprehension.
- Present text in small chunks by including one idea per paragraph. Use plenty of headings and white space. Use bullets to present lists and summarize important points. This allows users to easily scan the page for important information.
- Use appropriate font size—between 12 and 14 points—so text can be read easily on the screen. Use no more than two or three different fonts. Consider using a sans serif font, such as Arial or Helvetica, for paragraph text.
- Keep pages short. While some vertical scrolling is acceptable, if a page is longer than two or three screens, consider breaking it up into shorter pages. Some instructors find it useful to think of each page as a chunk of information or a brief lesson.

Remember ALL of Your Students

Make sure your content is accessible and can be used by students who rely on adaptive technology to navigate your course. Here are some accessibility tips:

- Use a white background with dark text—the most readable color combination. If you choose to use a colored background, select a light color to maximize contrast between the page and the text. Avoid dark pages or loud colors, such

¹1 Nielsen, Jakob. "How Users Read on the Web." *useit.com*. Nielsen Norman Group. 1 Oct. 1997. Web. 22 Sept. 2009.

as bright red, green, or yellow. These color choices cause eye fatigue, obscure text with glare, and are difficult to read.

- Do not rely on color alone to relay key information because color is not accessible to all students. Instead, use bold or different font sizes for emphasis.
- Use the alt attribute with images. The alt attribute provides alternative information about images and can be read by text-based browsers and screen readers. The alt attribute also allows students on slower modems to see an image's description or label while they wait for it to load.

3.0 Creating Your Course Menu

In this section, you will turn to the instructor perspective and explore the process of planning, adding, and organizing links on the Course Menu. You will gain hands-on experience creating a Course Menu suitable for your course. Finally, you will develop a Getting Started Content Area designed to provide students with the information they need to be successful learners.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the difference between the instructor and student views of the course.
- Explain the steps for creating a Course Menu.
- Create the Course Menu, adding links to tools and Content Areas.
- Describe different strategies for planning Content Areas.
- Create a Content Area and add items and tools to it.
- Edit and order links on the Course Menu.

Overview

As you have seen, students use the Course Menu to access tools and materials. It is the cornerstone for the organization and navigation of a course. Because it reflects the high-level organization of your course, devote ample time to creating your Course Menu.

There are four overall steps in creating the Course Menu. You will use these as a checklist as the process is presented.

Four Steps to Course Menu Creation:

1. Plan the Course Menu links.
2. Add the tools and Blank Pages.
3. Create the Content Areas.
4. Organize the Course Menu links.

Planning the Course Menu Links

STEP 1: Plan the Course Menu Links

Before adding links to the Course Menu, take a step back and look at your course material, learning objectives, and activities.

A good initial strategy is to keep the Course Menu as simple as possible.

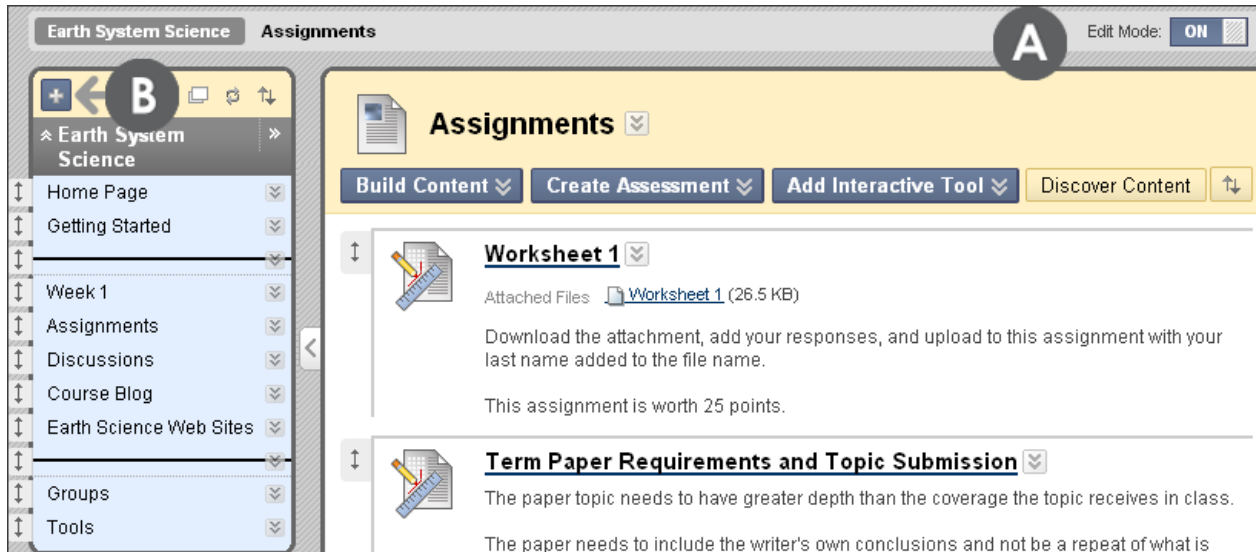
The following table suggests possible starting points for determining what to add to the Course Menu.

If you want to provide	Add
One-click access to regularly used tools, such as the Discussion Board, Blogs, or Calendar	Tool Link to the specific tool
Lecture notes or other reading material	One or more Content Areas to organize the material
A link to a regularly used website	Web Link
An important file, such as a checklist, map, or image to which students need regular and easy access	Blank Page

About Edit Mode

As the Course Menu is created, you will work in **Edit Mode**. Edit Mode allows you to view all the instructor functions.

NOTE: In this workshop, the phrase “in Edit Mode” refers to **Edit Mode** being **ON**, showing all the instructor’s functions.



Instructor view of the Course Menu and a Content Area

- A. Click **Edit Mode** to change from **ON** to **OFF**. When Edit Mode is **ON**, all instructor functions are available. When Edit Mode is **OFF**, you see what students see.
- B. When **Edit Mode** is **ON**, the Course Menu's **Add Menu Item** function is available, which is shown as a plus sign. Use this function to add links to the Course Menu. Whenever you add a new link to the Course Menu, it appears at the bottom of the list. You will learn how to reorder the links later in this manual.

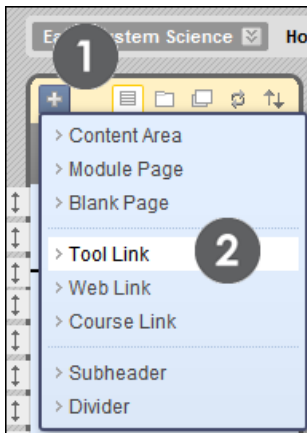
Adding Tools to the Course Menu

STEP 2: Add the Tools and Blank Pages

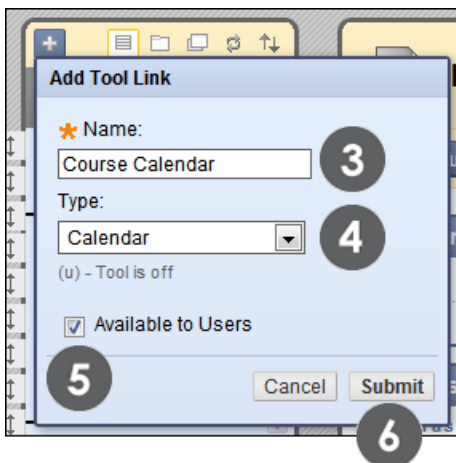
Add links to frequently used tools to the Course Menu. Consider the course content and the needs of the students when adding tools.

QUICK STEPS: Adding Tools to the Course Menu

1. In **Edit Mode**, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The **Add Menu Item** drop-down list appears.
2. Select **Tool Link**.



3. Type a **Name** for the link.
4. In the **Type** drop-down list, select the tool to add.
5. Select the **Available to Users** check box.
6. Click **Submit**.



Adding Blank Pages to the Course Menu

STEP 2: Add the Tools and Blank Pages, continued

Add important information students need easy access to by adding it to the Course Menu using the Blank Page tool. The Blank Page tool allows you to add files, images, and text as a link on the Course Menu.

Add Blank Pages to the Course Menu for critical information, as too many links on the Course Menu can overwhelm students. Remove Blank Pages from the Course Menu as soon as the information is no longer needed.

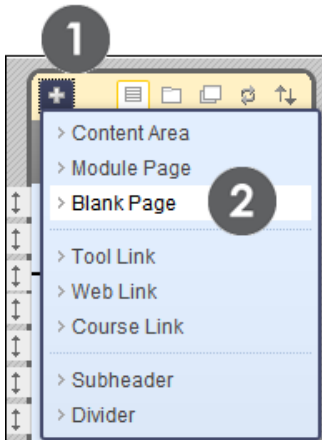
The following list includes uses for adding Blank Pages to the Course Menu:

- Add a map image for an upcoming field trip
- Add information and a photo for a guest speaker
- Add a checklist of reading materials and websites to visit before a chat session
- Add a study guide for the final test

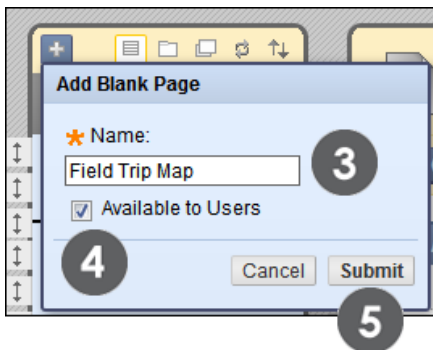
TIP: Alternately, you can also add a Content Area titled **New and Important** and tell your students to check this Content Area first when they log in to your course each time. Any of the information in the preceding list can be added to the appropriate Content Area. Inform your students of new content in an announcement. As you can see, there are multiple ways to present course content to students.

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Blank Page to the Course Menu

1. In **Edit Mode**, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The **Add Menu Item** drop-down list appears.
2. Select **Blank Page**.



3. Type a **Name** for the link.
4. Select the **Available to Users** check box.
5. Click **Submit**. **Edit Blank Page** appears in the content frame and the new Blank Page link appears last on the Course Menu.
6. Add information to the Blank Page at this time or click **Cancel** to add information later.



Adding information to a Blank Page is similar to adding information to an item in a Content Area, which is discussed later in this manual.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Start building the Course Menu.

Add Tools and a Blank Page to the Course Menu

- Add the **Tasks** and **Calendar** tools to the Course Menu.
- Add other tools appropriate for your course.
- Add a **Blank Page** to the Course Menu. You do not need to add the actual information to the page at this time, but feel free to experiment with this tool.

Creating the Content Areas

STEP 3: Create Content Areas

Typically, courses contain multiple Content Areas. Content Areas are containers for several pieces of content, such as lecture notes, assignments, tests, tools, links to websites, and other materials.

You can delete or edit the default Content Areas and create new Content Areas.

The following table lists the four substeps for creating Content Areas.

STEP 3: Create Content Areas
THE FOUR SUBSTEPS
▶ Determine how the Content Areas will be organized
▶ Add the Content Areas
▶ Add items and tools to the Content Areas
▶ Edit the items in the Content Areas

Determining the Content Organization

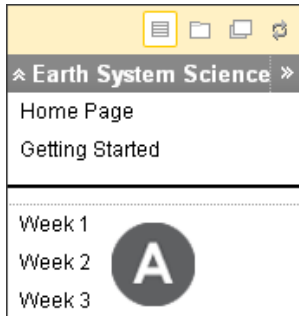
In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

STEP 3: Create Content Areas
THE FOUR SUBSTEPS
▶ Determine how the Content Areas will be organized
Add the Content Areas
Add items and tools to the Content Areas
Edit the items in the Content Areas

Organize your Content Area Content in various ways. Three common approaches include chronologically, by content type, and by subject area.

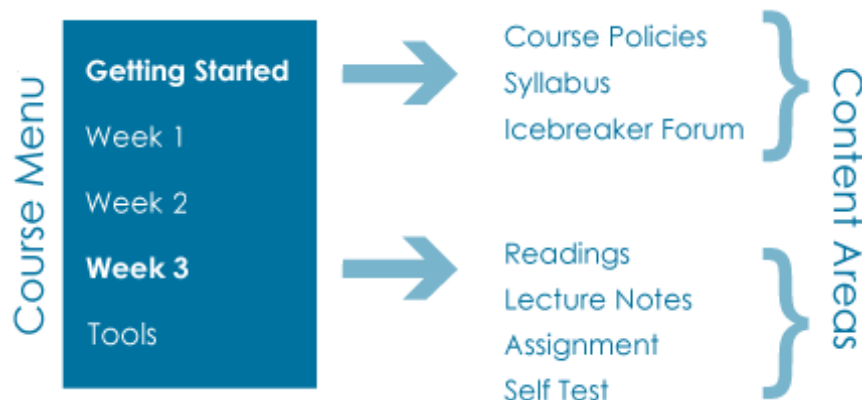
Organizing Content Areas Chronologically

In this approach, each Content Area contains a week's worth of readings, assignments, lecture notes, and discussion forums. A *Getting Started* Content Area contains information about course policies, a syllabus, and other information students need at the beginning of a course.



- A. Create Content Areas ahead of time. Set the availability to **available** or **unavailable** based on when you need the content. In the preceding example, Weeks 1 through 3 can be created and made unavailable until each is needed.

The following image represents Content Areas organized chronologically.

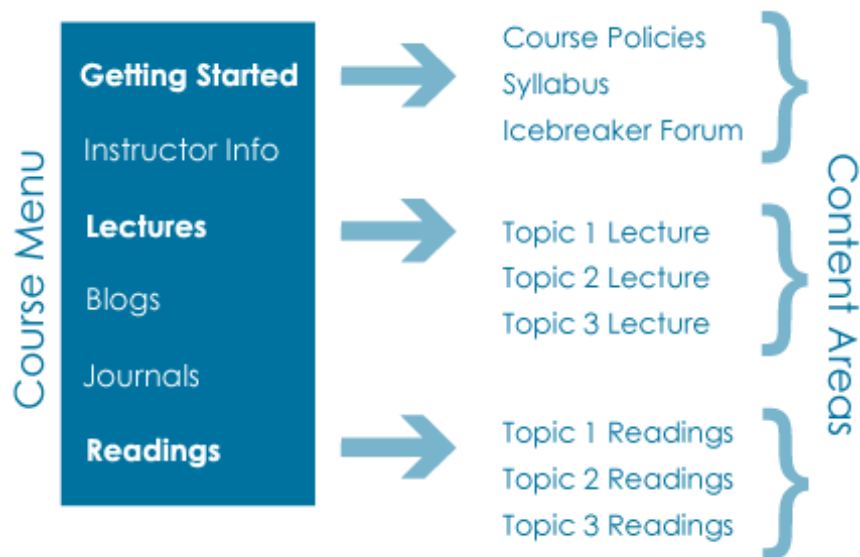


Organizing Content Areas by Type of Content

In this type of organization, related types of content are grouped together in a Content Area, such as all the lectures for the entire course. A Content Area contains multiple items and multiple folders.

⤴ Introduction to Alternative Energy
Home Page
Lectures
Readings
Assignments

The following image represents how Content Areas organized by type of content.



Organizing Content Areas by Subject Areas

When content is organized by subject area, each Content Area contains lecture material and readings on a specific subject, along with assignments, discussion forums, and tests.

⤴ Introduction to Alternative Energy
Home Page
Getting Started
Solar
Wind
Biofuels

The following image represents Content Areas organized by subject area.



Adding a Content Area

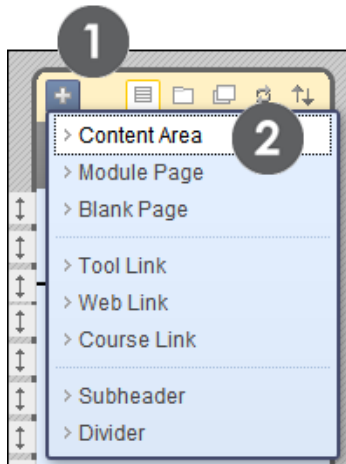
Once the method of organization is decided, you are ready to add the Content Areas. A Content Area starts as an empty container. Course materials and tools are added in the next step.

In the following table, the arrow image indicates the substep being described.

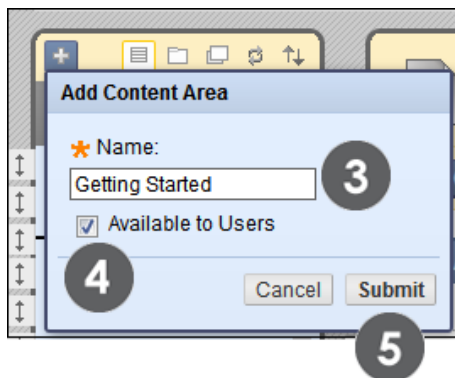
STEP 3: Create Content Areas
THE FOUR SUBSTEPS
Determine how the Content Areas will be organized
▶ Add the Content Areas
Add items and tools to the Content Areas
Edit the items in the Content Areas

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Content Area

1. In **Edit Mode**, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The **Add Menu Item** drop-down list appears.
2. Select **Content Area**.



3. Type a **Name** for the new Content Area.
4. Select the **Available to Users** check box.
5. Click **Submit**.



TIP: Create and make a Content Area unavailable to users until needed.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Planning Content Areas

- Take a few minutes to consider how to organize your online course. List the Content Areas to include in the Course Menu.

Adding Content Areas

- Create two or three Content Areas suitable for your course and subject matter. Title one of them **Getting Started**.

Viewing Content Areas

- On the Course Menu, note the Content Areas you created. Since the new Content Areas are empty, a dotted square appears next to the name. Empty Content Areas do not appear in the Course Menu in student view.
- Access the **Getting Started** Content Area. Note that it is empty. You will add materials to it in the next section.
- Use the breadcrumbs to return to the course entry point, which is **Announcements** for this course. Changing the course entry point is covered later in this manual.

Adding Items and Tools to a Content Area

In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

STEP 3: Create Content Areas
THE FOUR SUBSTEPS
Determine how the Content Areas will be organized
Add the Content Areas
▶ Add items and tools to the Content Areas
Edit the items in the Content Areas

You have added Content Areas to the Course Menu. The next step is to add course materials and tools. The following list includes some of the items you can add to Content Areas, if they have been made available to your course:

- Items, which can contain text, audio, movies, files, and images
- Individual tool links, Course Links, and Web Links
- Individual audio, image, and video links
- Folders, Learning Modules, and Lesson Plans
- Assignments, tests, and surveys
- Mashups
- Blank Pages
- Textbook information

NOTE: A Mashup combines elements from two or more sources. When you view a YouTube™ video in a Blackboard Learn course as part of the course content, you are experiencing a Mashup. Mashups can also include Flickr® photos and SlideShare presentations.



On the Action Bar, use the **Build Content**, **Assessments**, **Tools**, and **Publisher Content** options to add materials to Content Areas.

The Blackboard administrator determines if other functions and tools are available to your course. Instructors also have the capability to determine tool availability in their courses. Tool availability is discussed later in this manual in the **Customizing Your Course** section.

The following table summarizes the materials you can add using each option on the Action Bar in a Content Area, if they are available in your course.

Content Area additions	Click
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item, File, or Folder • Web Link, Audio, Image, Video • Learning Module • Lesson Plan • Syllabus • Course Link • Module Page or Blank Page • Mashups 	Build Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test • Survey • Assignment • Self and Peer Assessment • SafeAssignment • McGraw-Hill Assignment 	Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board • Blogs • Journals • Wikis • Groups • Chat or Virtual Classroom sessions • Tools Area and a More Tools link 	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook information for your course 	Publisher Content

The steps for adding items and tools are next. You can add other types of content in a similar fashion.

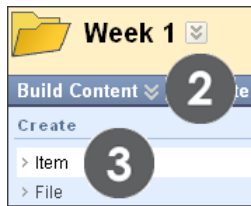
Adding Items to Content Areas

An item can contain text, audio, movies, files, images, and Mashups. If text is added, you can format it using the Text Editor functions.

QUICK STEPS: Adding Items to Content Areas

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the Content Area from the Course Menu.
2. On the Action Bar, point to **Build Content** to access the drop-down list.
3. Select **Item** from the **Create** column.
4. On the **Create Item** page, type the item's **Name** and select a color for the name, if you want. Add optional instructions or a description in the **Text** box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
5. To add a file, click **Browse My Computer** or **Browse Course** to locate the file. Add a **Link Title** for the attached file; otherwise the file name appears in the Content Area. Alternately, you can use the **Attach File** function in the Text Editor.
6. Under **Options**, select **Yes** for **Permit Users to View this Content** to make the item available to students. Select other options as needed.
7. Click **Submit**.

NOTE: In the **Build Content** drop-down list, additional content types are listed. Notice that Files, Audio, Image, Video, Web Links, and Mashups are listed, but you can also add them using the Text Editor functions when adding a content item. The student view may be different depending on the method used, so experiment to determine which method meets your needs.



7
Create Item

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Content Information

* Name 4

Color of Name Black

Text Visual Editor: ON

Normal 3 Arial B I U abc x₂ x² ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡ ≡

Download the attached doc to help you organize the materials for this chapter. Also find some helpful studying hints other students have contributed over the years.

Path: [body](#)

2. Attachments 5

Attach File Browse My Computer Browse Course Files

Attached files

File Name	Link Title	File Action
chapter1_study_guide.doc	<input type="text" value="Chapter 1 Study Guide"/>	Create a link to this file Do not attach

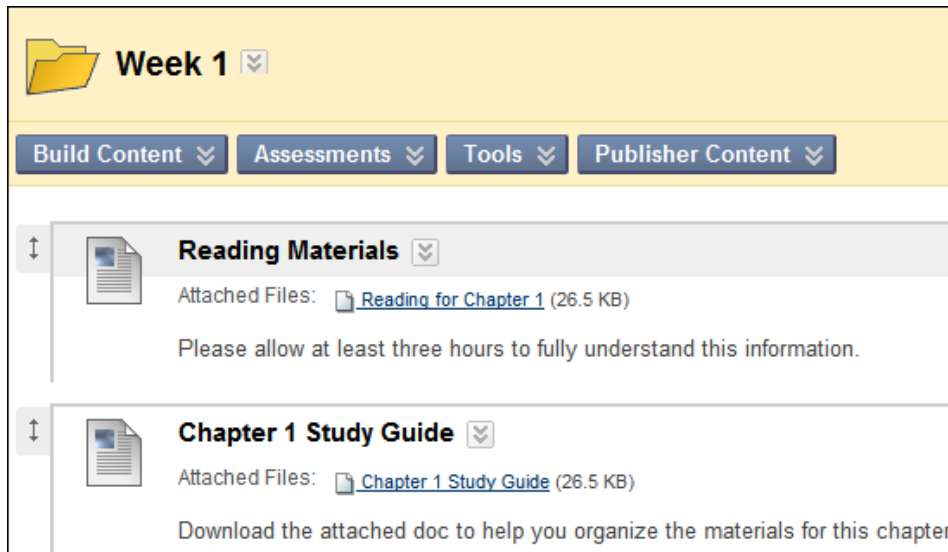
3. Options 6

Permit Users to View this Content Yes No

Track Number of Views Yes No

Select Date and Time Restrictions Display After Display Until

NOTE: Under **Attachments**, the **Browse Course** function takes you to a central storage location on the Blackboard server that is accessed directly from your course. You can upload files to Course Files and link to them when creating course content. Within each course, Course Files displays content for that specific course, not for other courses you teach. Any file uploaded from your local computer using the **Browse My Computer** function is added automatically to Course Files. This repository is not seen by students, but is available to instructors when adding content or by accessing **Files** in the **Control Panel**. Course Files is discussed in-depth in the manual, *Using Course Files*.

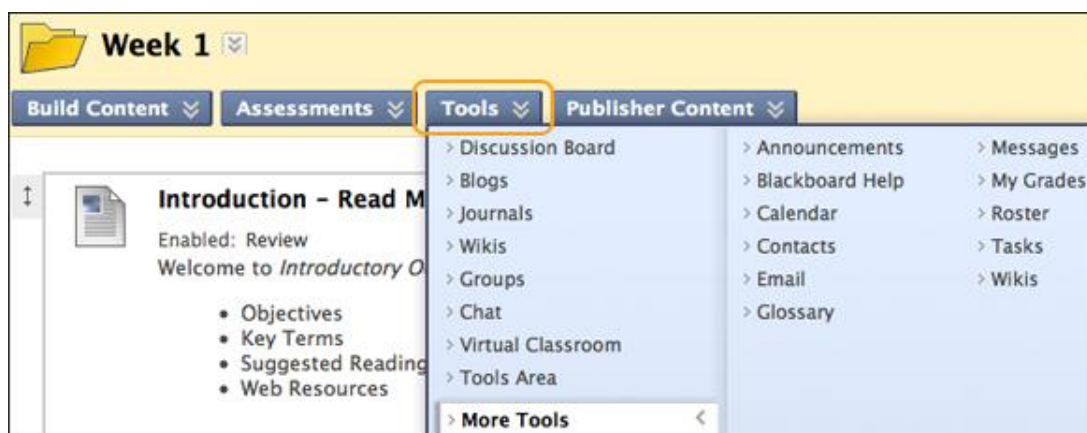


Adding Tools to Content Areas

You learned earlier how to add tools directly to the Course Menu. You can add tools to a Content Area for students to use in conjunction with the content contained there. For example, if students will create blog entries related to the content, add the Blogs tool.


QUICK STEPS: Adding Tools to Content Areas

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the Content Area.
2. On the Action Bar, point to **Tools** to access the drop-down list.
3. Select the tool you want to create a link to or click **More Tools** to see additional choices.




4. On the **Create Link** page, select an option and click **Next**.

- On the next **Create Link** page, type the text to appear under the link name in the Content Area. You can use the Text Editor functions to format the text and include files, images, external links, multimedia, and Mashups.
- Under **Options**, select **Yes** for **Available** to make the link available to students. Select other options as needed.
- Click **Submit**.



 **Week 1** ▾

Build Content ▾ **Assessments** ▾ **Tools** ▾ **Publisher Content** ▾

↑ ↓  **Introduction - Read Me First** ▾

Enabled: Review
Welcome to *Introductory Oceanography*. This section of the course resources:

- Objectives
- Key Terms
- Suggested Reading
- Web Resources

↑ ↓  **Unit 1 Opinion** ▾ 

Create the link to access the blog and follow the instructions. This is a three of your classmates' entries.

Accessing Page Help

In many areas, you can access Page Help, unless your school's Blackboard administrator has disabled it. Turn Page Help on and off next to the **Edit Mode** function by clicking the question mark.



Information about the specific content you are working with is available at the top of the screen. You may also find additional information on the screen where you may need instructions for a field, such as how to type dates or remove an attachment. If no question mark appears, Page Help is not available.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

One of the most anxiety-provoking points in an online student's experience is wondering where to begin. Help ease your students' concerns by giving them a clear starting point. To provide students with the information they need to get started on the right foot, flesh out the **Getting Started** Content Area you created earlier.

Add material to the **Getting Started** Content Area

- Add an item titled Course Policies.
- Use the **Build Content** drop-down list to create a **Syllabus**. On the **Add Syllabus** page, turn **Page Help** on and click the **More Help** link to access more information about creating a syllabus. **Page Help** will open in a new window and can be moved to a new screen location.
- Return to the **Add Syllabus** page and select the option to **Create New Syllabus**. Do not create the lesson shells, as they will be created in a later activity.
- Add a link to the **Discussion Board**. A Getting Started forum will be created later.
Hint: Use the **Tools** drop-down list.
- Add a **Web Link** for a website related to your course.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **OFF**. On the Course Menu, click the **Getting Started** link to preview how the Content Area will appear to your students.

Editing the Items in a Content Area

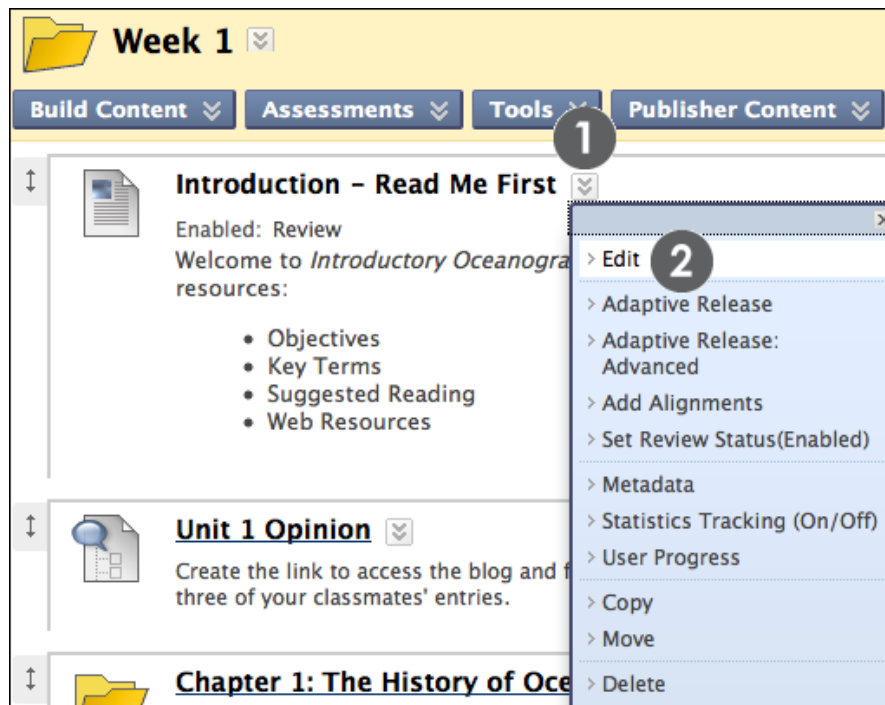
In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

STEP 3: Create Content Areas
THE FOUR SUBSTEPS
Determine how the Content Areas will be organized
Add the Content Areas
Add items and tools to the Content Areas
▶ Edit the items in the Content Areas

After items are added to a Content Area, you can do the following:

- Edit an item's name
- Edit an item's availability
- Change the order of items
- Copy or move items

Edit an Item's Name or Availability



QUICK STEPS: Editing an Item in a Content Area

1. In **Edit Mode**, in the Content Area, click the Action Link next to the item's name to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Edit**.
3. Edit the item's **Name** or availability. Edit attached content items if necessary.

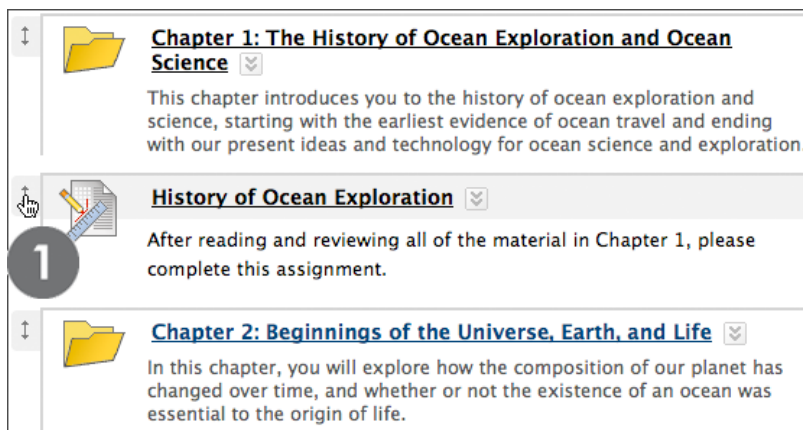
Tip: Make an item unavailable if content is being developed, needs updating, or if students do not need the item yet.


Change the Order of Items



Add content items to a Content Area in any order and reorder using the drag-and-drop function. Each item has a move icon—a double-tipped arrow or handle.


QUICK STEPS: Changing the Order of Items in a Content Area

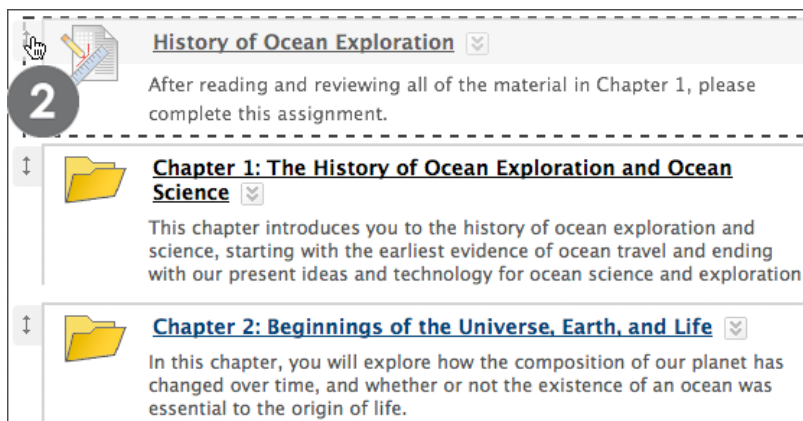
1. In **Edit Mode**, press the arrows next to the item. The item is highlighted.
2. Drag the item into the new location in the Content Area. The item is surrounded by dashes as it is being moved into its new spot.
3. Release the item to place it in its new location.






↑  **Chapter 1: The History of Ocean Exploration and Ocean Science** ▾
This chapter introduces you to the history of ocean exploration and science, starting with the earliest evidence of ocean travel and ending with our present ideas and technology for ocean science and exploration.


↑   **History of Ocean Exploration** ▾
After reading and reviewing all of the material in Chapter 1, please complete this assignment.

↑  **Chapter 2: Beginnings of the Universe, Earth, and Life** ▾
In this chapter, you will explore how the composition of our planet has changed over time, and whether or not the existence of an ocean was essential to the origin of life.



↑   **History of Ocean Exploration** ▾
After reading and reviewing all of the material in Chapter 1, please complete this assignment.

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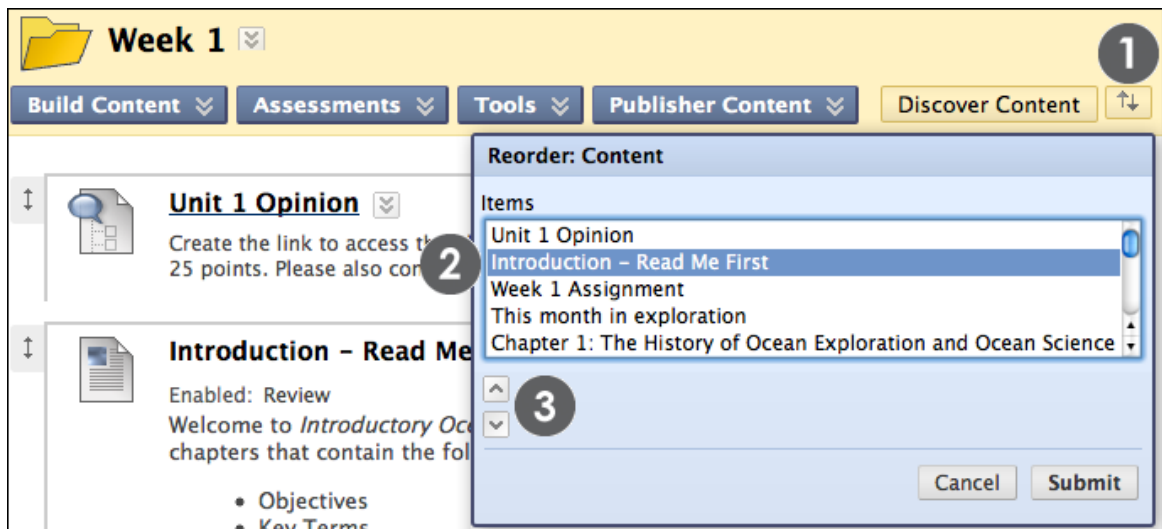
↑  **Chapter 2: Beginnings of the Universe, Earth, and Life** ▾
In this chapter, you will explore how the composition of our planet has changed over time, and whether or not the existence of an ocean was essential to the origin of life.

Reorder With the Keyboard Accessible Reordering Tool

Alternatively, you can use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to reorder items.

QUICK STEPS: Using the Keyboard Accessible Reordering Tool

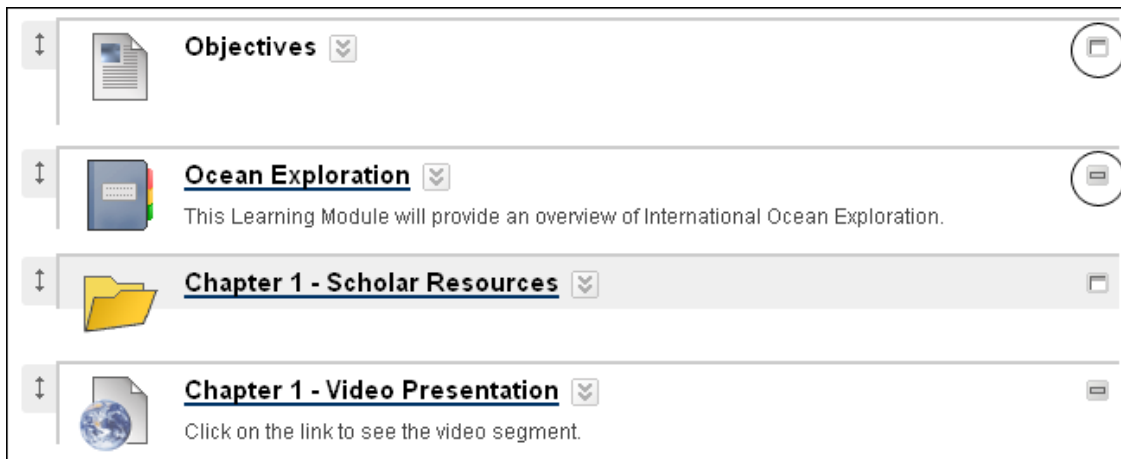
1. In **Edit Mode**, in the Content Area, click the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar.
2. Click the item in the list to select it.
3. Use the up and down arrows below the title box to adjust the order.
4. Click **Submit**. A pop-up box states: **Items have been reordered**.
5. Click **OK**.



Use the Hide/Show Details Button

If an item in a Content Area, such as an assignment, test, folder, or content item has a description, you can use the **Hide Details** function to collapse the description to save screen space and allow for less scrolling to view the list of items. When a description is collapsed, it remains collapsed, even after logging out and logging in again. To expand the description, click **Show Details**.

The students' view of the Content Area is not affected. The descriptions do not collapse and students do not have the ability to collapse descriptions for a folder or in a folder.



Copy or Move Items


You can copy or move any content item, including Web Links, folders, Learning Modules, Lesson Plans, Blank Pages, and Mashups from one area to another area of your course. If you copy or move the item to another course, both courses must belong to you.

- Copying does not delete the content from the original location in your course.
- Moving removes it from its original location in your course.

The availability of the copy and move function varies depending on the content item type. For example, you can only copy or move Course Links to another area within the same course. You cannot copy assignments, tests, and surveys, but you can move them within the same course.

QUICK STEPS: Copying Items

1. In **Edit Mode**, in the Content Area, click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Copy**. If **Copy** does not appear, this option is not available.
3. On the **Copy** page, select the **Destination Course** from the drop-down list. The default setting is the current course. Only courses where the instructor has a role permitting copying content appear in the list.
4. Click **Browse** to select the **Destination Folder**.
5. For some items, select an option for **Create links for items which cannot be copied**. If the options are grayed out, you cannot create links.
6. Select the **Copy Alignments** option.
7. Click **Submit**.

 **Copy**

1. Content Information

Name Chapter 1: The History of Ocean Exploration and Ocean Science

2. Destination

Destination Course Introduction to Oceanography (Materials Demo) 3

Destination Folder /Chapter 1/Chapter 2: Beginning; 4

Create links for items which cannot be copied Yes No 5

Copy Alignments Yes No 6

3. Submit

Cancel
Submit

If an item, such as a Learning Module contains items that cannot be copied within your course, such as a test, a link is created to the test. After the Copy action is complete, a message appears: "Some items copied. The following items were created as links:" and the specific items are listed.

QUICK STEPS: Moving Items

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the Content Area.
2. Click the Action Link next to the item's name to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Move**. If **Move** does not appear, this option is not available.
4. On the **Move** page, select the **Destination Course** from the drop-down list. The default setting is the current course. Only courses where an instructor has a role permitting copying content appear in the list.
5. Click **Browse** to select the **Destination Folder**.
6. Click **Submit**.

Move

1. Content Information
Name Chapter 1: The History of Ocean Exploration and Ocean Science

2. Destination
Destination Course Introduction to Oceanography (Materials Demo) **4**
Destination Folder /Chapter 1/Chapter 2: Beginning; Browse... **5**

3. Submit

Cancel Submit

If an item, such as a Learning Module contains items that cannot be moved to another course, such as a test, a message appears: "The move operation has completed but the following items could not be successfully moved." The specific items are listed.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Materials and tools have been added to the **Getting Started** Content Area. Now choose the order for the contents.

Organize the Content Area Items

- On the Course Menu, access the **Getting Started** Content Area. Be sure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
- Change the name of the **Syllabus**.
- Make the **Web Link** unavailable.
- Use the drag-and-drop function or the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to change the order of the materials.
- Select an item to move or copy. If you move an item and want to revert, go to its new location and move it back to its original place.

Organizing the Course Menu Links

To review, there are four steps to Course Menu creation:

1. Plan the Course Menu links.
2. Add the tools and Blank Pages.
3. Create the Content Areas.
4. Organize the Course Menu links.

STEP 4: Organize the Course Menu Links

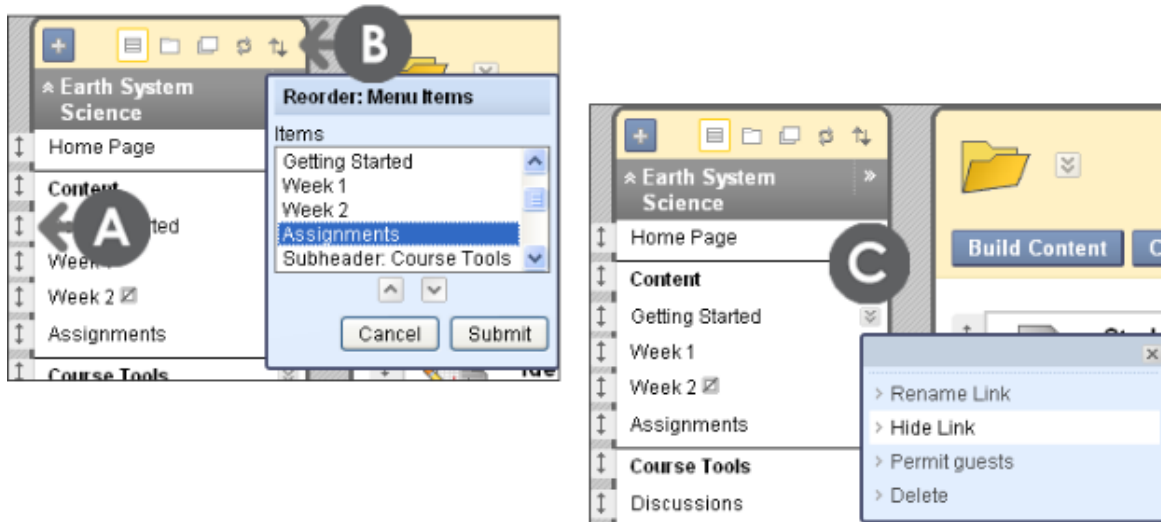
You can organize the Course Menu links to make them easier for students to use.

- Order the links using the drag-and-drop function or the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool.
- Rename a link and change its availability.
- Add subheaders and dividers.

In the following Course Menu, an instructor organized the content into sections and added the following subheaders: Content, Course Tools, and Contacts. The **Week 2** Content Area is unavailable to students and the Contacts tool was renamed **Instructor Bio**.



Reorder and Make Links Unavailable



- A. Use the drag-and-drop function to reorder links on the Course Menu.
- B. Alternately, use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to reorder the links.
- C. Click a link's Action Link to access the contextual menu and select **Hide Link** to make a link unavailable to students.

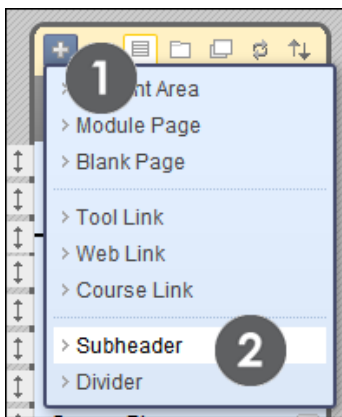
NOTE: In **Edit Mode**, an unavailable link title appears with a square with a diagonal line through it. Students will not see the link on the Course Menu.

Add Subheaders and Dividers

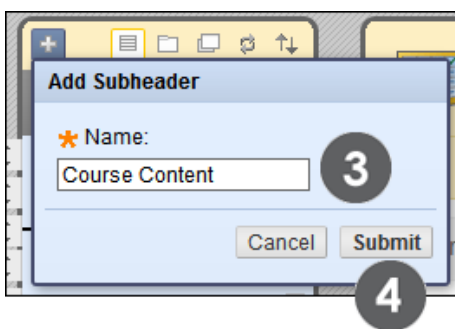
You can group your Course Menu links and add subheaders to each group of content to help students navigate in your course. You can also add individual divider lines to separate the links into areas.

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Subheader to the Course Menu

1. In **Edit Mode**, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The **Add Menu Item** drop-down list appears.
2. Select **Subheader**.



3. Type a **Name**.
4. Click **Submit**. The **Subheader** is added to the bottom of the Course Menu and you can drag it into place.

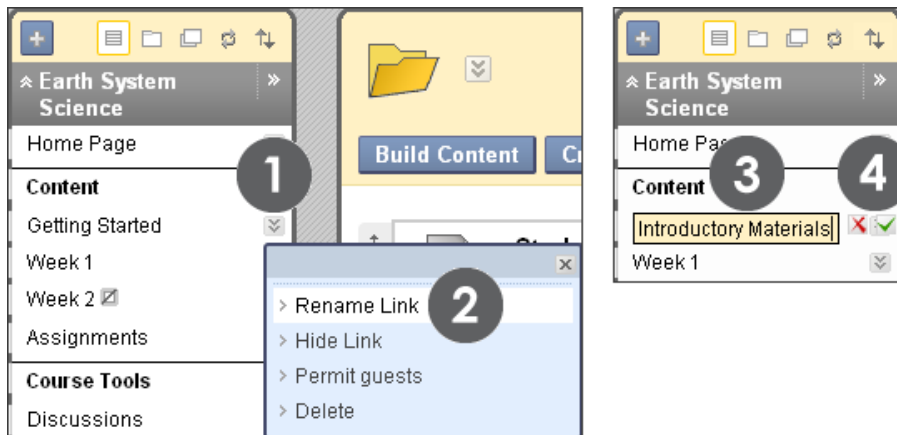


You can add a **Divider** from the **Add Menu Item** drop-down list also. It is also added to the bottom of the Course Menu and you can drag it into place.

Rename Links

QUICK STEPS: Renaming a Link

1. In **Edit Mode**, click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Rename Link**.
3. Type a new name.
4. Click the check mark to **Save** or the **X** to **Cancel**. The new name appears on the Course Menu.



Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Finalize the Course Menu by making changes to the link order, link names, or availability of links as needed.

Edit the Course Menu Links

- Change the order of the links on the Course Menu by using the drag-and-drop function or the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool.
- Change the name of the **Information** Content Area.
NOTE: Leave the other links as they appear. They are needed in future activities.
- Make one of the links unavailable to students. Notice the unavailable icon appearing next to the link title.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **OFF** and view the Course Menu, as students will see it.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses Course Menu organization. Dr. C is our Blackboard Learn expert.

Your question	Dr. C's reply
I have a lot of course content to deliver to my students. What is an effective way to organize the Course Menu?	<p>A streamlined and uncluttered Course Menu is ideal. Including too many links on the Course Menu can overwhelm students.</p> <p>To streamline the Course Menu:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include no more than six to eight primary links on the Course Menu.• Use subheaders or dividers to organize content.• Hide any content students will not use immediately. As the term progresses, introduce these additional links.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses student access to course tools.

Your question	Dr. C's reply
Should students access tools individually on the Course Menu, in a Content Area, or from the Tools link?	<p data-bbox="573 506 1365 583">It is a good practice to make unused tools unavailable and only show tools when they are needed.</p> <p data-bbox="573 625 1365 661">Deciding where to put tools depends on the situation.</p> <p data-bbox="573 695 1365 894">Method 1: Access individual tools from the Course Menu. This method provides quick access to frequently used tools. Make the Tools link on the Course Menu unavailable so students cannot access other unneeded tools.</p> <p data-bbox="573 930 1365 1173">Method 2: Access individual tools from a Content Area. This method can provide tools near related content. For example, if students are required to read an item in the Content Area and then respond on the Discussion Board, add a Tool Link in the Content Area for easy Discussion Board participation.</p> <p data-bbox="573 1209 1365 1413">Method 3: Access tools from the Tools link on the Course Menu. Consider using this method to quickly set up your course. It may be appropriate for a course that supplements a face-to-face class and provides tools for online communication outside of the regular classroom.</p>

4.0 Customizing Your Course

In this section, learn about the choices for the Course Menu and other aspects of your course. Start by customizing the course style and choosing the default Course Menu and content view. Next, select the most appropriate page for the course entry point for your learners and customize it by adding a banner. Also, select which tools to make available to course members. Finally, customize the Home Page by adding, removing, and reordering modules.

Learning Outcomes

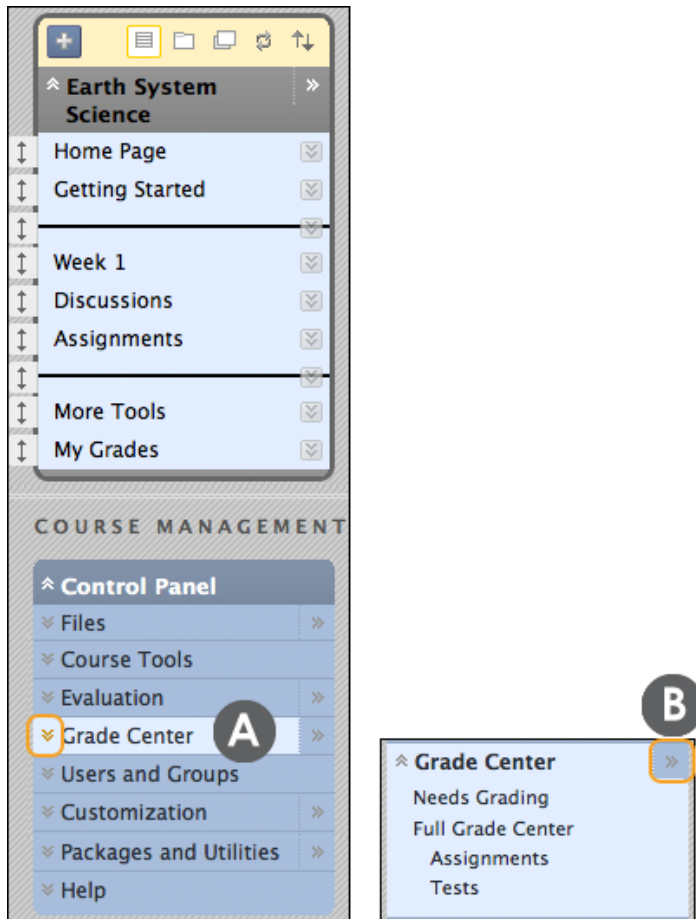
After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the features and functions of the **Control Panel**.
- Customize the course style.
- Access course structure and themes information.
- Select a content view.
- Select the page for the course entry point.
- Add a banner to the course entry page.
- Change tool availability.
- Customize the Home Page by adding, removing, and reordering modules.
- Edit the notification settings.

The Control Panel

The **Control Panel** is located under the Course Menu and is the central access point for course management functions. It is not visible to students.

You can use the options available in the Control Panel to customize aspects of your course.



- A. Expand each of the items on the Control Panel by clicking the double arrows pointing downward. A menu appears directly below each section subheading. Select an option.
- B. Alternately, expand a section into the content frame by clicking the double arrows pointing right. The section page opens in the content frame and you can select an option.

Customizing the Course Style

On the **Teaching Style** page, you can decide how your course appears to students. You can select which page your students see when they enter your course and add a banner image to welcome them. You can control how the Course Menu appears, determine the theme and course structure, and decide how icons are used.

NOTE: The Blackboard administrator at your school controls the availability of features, such as course structures and themes.

On the **Control Panel**, expand the **Customization** section and select **Teaching Style**.

1. Select Course Structure

You can select a course structure for your new or existing course. Course structures contain predefined course materials such as menu links, instructions, and content examples that can jump-start your course organization.

As shown in the following image, the course structure selection tool's left column displays all course structures in a scrollable list. The **Learn More** link in a course structure's description helps you choose the appropriate course structure for your teaching method and print a set of step-by-step instructions for preparing your course.

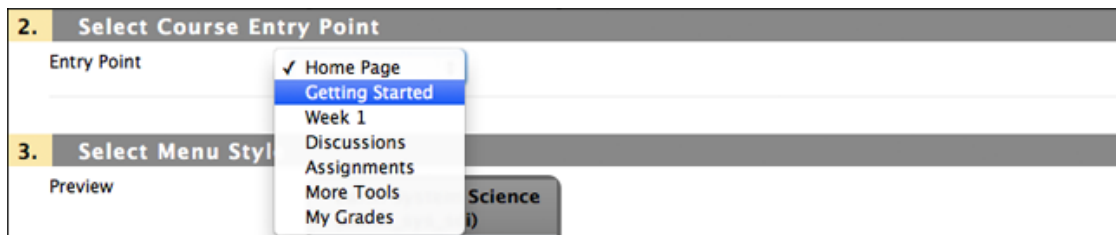
If you decide to include the content examples and instructions, the content in the selected course structure is **added** and **does not replace your course's existing** menu items and content.

The screenshot displays the Blackboard interface for customizing a course. On the left, the 'COURSE MANAGEMENT' sidebar is visible, with the 'Customization' section expanded to show 'Teaching Style' selected. The main content area is titled 'Teaching Style' and features a section '1. Select Course Structure'. This section is divided into two columns: a scrollable list of course structures on the left and a detailed description of the selected 'Activity' structure on the right. The 'Activity' structure description includes a 'Learn more about course structures.' link, which is highlighted with a yellow box. Below the description is a 'Use This Structure' button. On the far right, a vertical sidebar contains various navigation links such as 'Activities', 'Conversations', 'Live Chat', 'Stay on Track', 'Tips & Resources', 'Tools', 'Game Plan', 'Instructor Info', 'My Grades', and 'Help'.

2. Select Course Entry Point

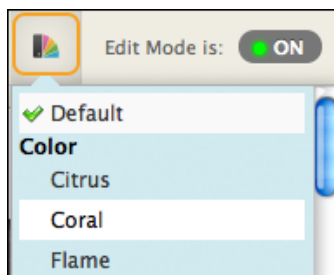
The course entry point is the first page students see when entering your course. The default course entry point is the Home Page and contains modules that alert students to activity in the course. Select the new entry point from the drop-down list that includes all the available links that appear on the Course Menu.

Changing the course entry point takes effect immediately for users who log in to the system after the change. Users who are in the system when the change takes place will see the new course entry point the next time they log in again.



OPTIONALLY: Select Course Theme

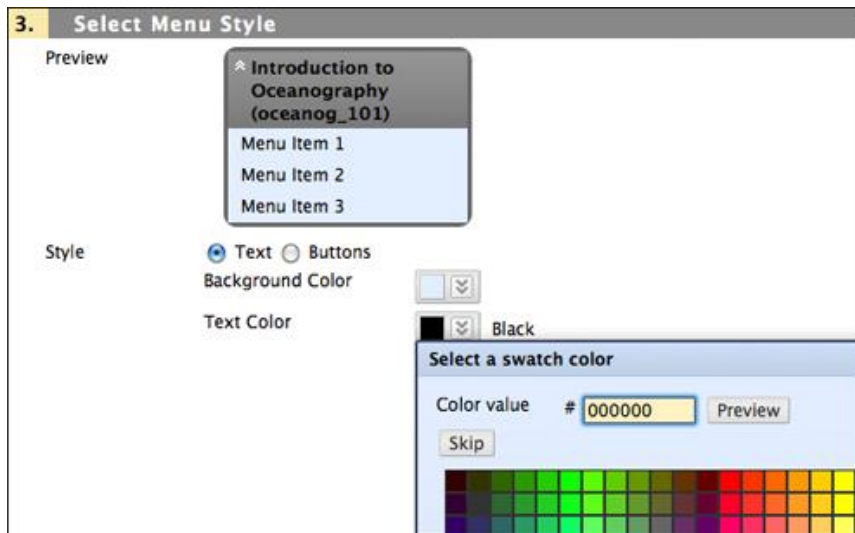
If your school uses the Bb Learn 2012 system theme, you can select a **course theme** from the **Teaching Style** page. Course themes add a background image to the course display and change the color of the user interface, including the Course Menu, buttons, and controls. Use the scrollable list to select the appropriate course theme from the thumbnail sample images. It is possible to change the theme again at any time. Themes do not affect course content or a chosen course structure.



You can change course theme from anywhere in your course by pointing to the **Change Course Theme** icon above the content frame. A drop-down list displays all the available themes. Click a theme to select it. The new course theme appears immediately.

3. Select Menu Style

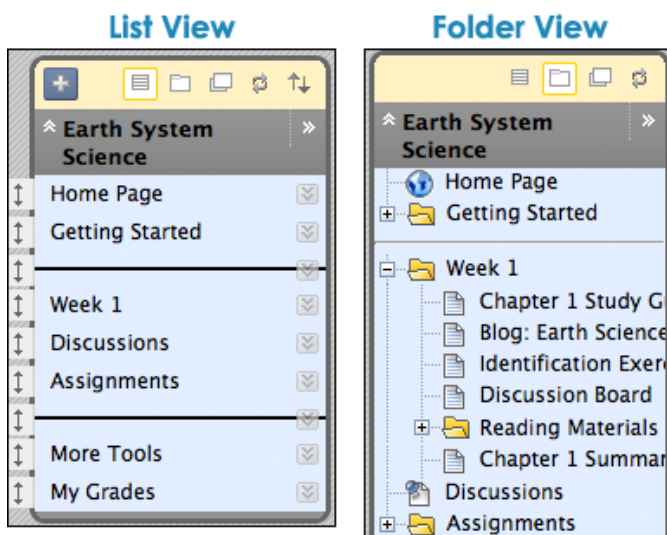
Display the links on the Course Menu as text or buttons and select colors.



4. Course Menu Display

Select a default view for the Course Menu—either **List View** or **Folder View**.

- **List View** displays the top level of course materials.
- **Folder View** displays course materials as a directory tree. You can expand the view to show the hierarchy of course navigation.

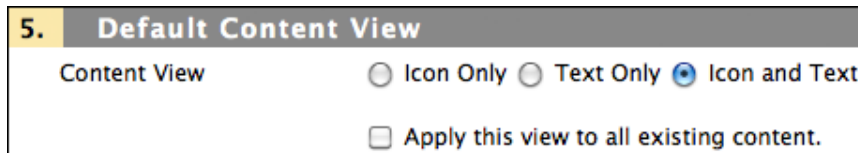


5. Default Content View

Determine the default content view in your Content Areas.

- **Icon Only** displays content items as titled icons with no descriptions.
- **Text Only** displays content items as titles with short text descriptions only.
- **Icon and Text**, the default option, displays titled icons with descriptions. This is the option chosen for the course you are in now.

By default, changing the **Default Content View** affects only new content pages. To change all existing pages as well, select the check box to **Apply this view to all existing content**.

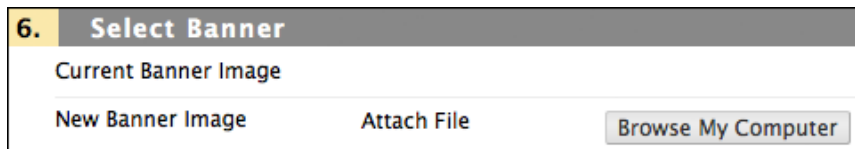


The screenshot shows a settings panel titled "5. Default Content View". It contains a "Content View" section with three radio button options: "Icon Only", "Text Only", and "Icon and Text". The "Icon and Text" option is selected. Below this is a checkbox labeled "Apply this view to all existing content." which is currently unchecked.

6. Select Banner

You can add a banner image to the top of the course entry page. The image needs to be in PNG or JPG format, approximately 480 x 80 pixels, and uploaded from your computer. You cannot use images stored in Course Files or the Content Collection; however, a copy is stored there with each new upload. If you delete the image from the course entry page, the image file remains in the course storage repository.

Keep in mind that users can resize their browser windows, expand and collapse the Course Menu, and use monitors of varying sizes and screen resolutions. After uploading a banner, view it under those varying conditions to ensure that it looks as intended. It will appear centered on the page.



The screenshot shows a settings panel titled "6. Select Banner". It features a "Current Banner Image" section with a placeholder image. Below this is a "New Banner Image" section with an "Attach File" label and a "Browse My Computer" button.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses image formats.

Your question	Dr. C's reply
What type of image format is best to use for my banner?	<p data-bbox="618 506 1321 583">Two good graphic formats for use on the web are PNG and JPG.</p> <ul data-bbox="618 617 1382 1325" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="618 617 1321 695">• A PNG is good for full color images, logos, and illustrations.<li data-bbox="618 716 1057 751">• A PNG retains image detail.<li data-bbox="618 772 1321 892">• A PNG can be transparent, which means non-rectangular shapes can appear over a background pattern.<li data-bbox="618 913 1382 991">• Be aware that some older browsers do not support the PNG format.<li data-bbox="618 1012 1321 1131">• A JPG is usually a better file format to use for photographs or images where there are subtle gradations.<li data-bbox="618 1152 1382 1272">• For photos, JPGs will compress to a smaller file size. However, if the file compression is too high, you can lose quality.<li data-bbox="618 1293 1133 1329">• A JPG can never be transparent.

Changing Tool Availability

Select which tools are available in your course and which users have access to them. For example, if the Messages tool is not used, make it unavailable. No one can see it or access it, including you, until it is available again. Available tools are listed alphabetically on the **Tool Availability** page.

NOTE: The Blackboard administrator can turn off select tools, making those tools unavailable for use in your courses. The administrator can also remove your ability to choose who has access to select tools.

Tool State	Description of State
Available	The tool is available throughout your course and open to all users having a role permitting use of the tool.
Visible to Guests	The tool is visible (read-only), but not usable to Guests, when Guests are permitted into your course.
Visible to Observers	The tool is visible (read-only), but not usable to Observers, when Observers are permitted into your course.
Available in Content Areas	An instructor can place a link to the tool in one or more Content Areas in a course.

If a tool is unavailable, the tool's content is not deleted. Once the tool is available again, the content becomes available.

QUICK STEPS: Changing Tool Availability

1. On the **Control Panel**, select **Customization**.
2. Select **Tool Availability**.
3. On the **Tool Availability** page, make the availability adjustments required.
 - To make a tool **Available**, select the tool's check box.
 - To make a tool unavailable, clear the tool's check box.
4. Click **Submit**.

Tool ▲	Available	Visible to Guests	Visible to Observers	Available in Content Area
Adaptive Release	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Announcements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Audio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Blackboard Help	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blank Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Blogs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LEGEND:

Circle with diagonal line: The Blackboard administrator at your school made the tool unavailable.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses two course roles: Observers and Guests.

Your question	Dr C's reply
Who might be an Observer or Guest in my online course?	In addition to your students, Guests and Observers may be enrolled in your course. Guests can be prospective students, guest lecturers, or others with limited access. Observers are connected to an individual student account, such as an advisor who works with one of your students.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course. Make the following customizations:

Course Menu and Content View

- Change the menu style to button links and select a new color and shape.
- Change how links are viewed on the Course Menu to **Folder View**, but permit users to select either view.

Course Entry Point

- Change the course entry point to the **Getting Started** Content Area.

Course Entry Page Banner

- Add a banner for your course. You may add one you have made or found. Alternatively, access the **Workshop Resources** Content Area and download the **banner.zip** file to experiment with one of the provided banner images.
- Access Course Files or the Content Collection to see that the image was added to your course's storage repository.

Tool Availability

- Make the **Glossary** tool unavailable. Note how the **Glossary** link on the Course Menu now has the hidden icon next to it. Change the availability of one other tool not needed. Expand the **Course Tools** section of the **Control Panel** and note that **Glossary** and the other tool are not in the list.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **OFF**. On the Course Menu, select **Tools** and preview how this page appears to students.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **ON** and make the tools available again.

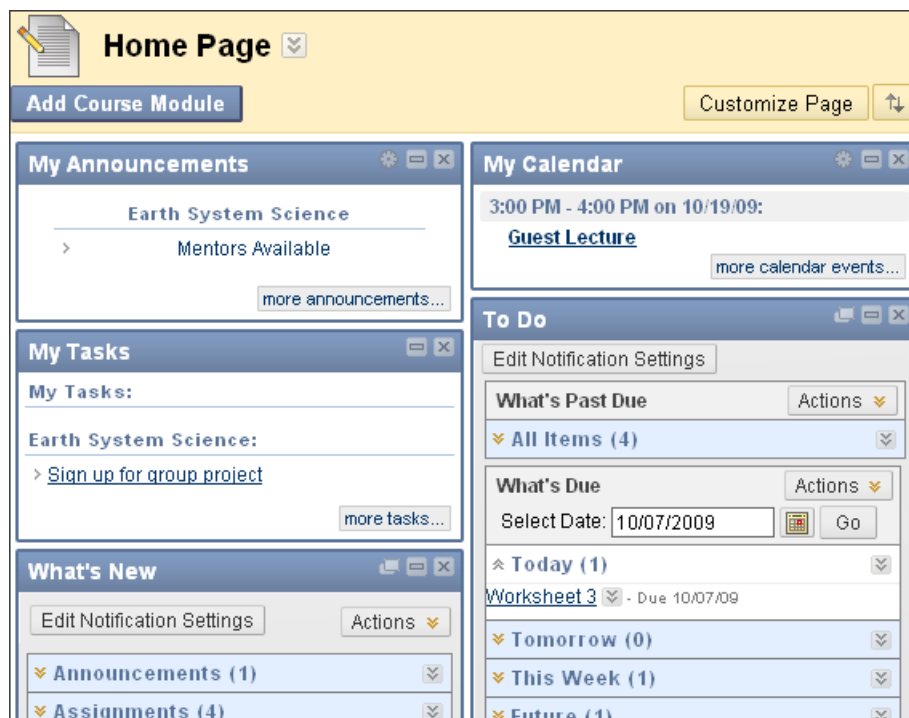
OPTIONAL: Course Structures

- In the **Select Course Structure** section, choose a course structure from the list that best fits your teaching method.
- Click the **Learn More** link in the description to access the Blackboard Learn topics that guide you through adding a course structure to your course. Optionally, add a course structure to your course and explore the content examples.

Customizing the Home Page

Earlier, you explored the student view of the Home Page. The Home Page is a Module Page, which is a specialized content page that presents information in discrete boxes. By default, a new course's Home Page contains the following modules:

- My Announcements
- My Tasks
- What's New
- Needs Attention
- My Calendar
- To Do
- Alerts



The screenshot displays a Blackboard Home Page interface. At the top, there is a yellow header bar with a pencil icon, the text "Home Page" with a dropdown arrow, and a "Customize Page" button with a double-headed arrow. Below the header is a blue bar with "Add Course Module" and "Customize Page" buttons. The main content area is divided into several modules:

- My Announcements:** Shows "Earth System Science" with a sub-item "Mentors Available" and a "more announcements..." link.
- My Calendar:** Shows a calendar event for "3:00 PM - 4:00 PM on 10/19/09" titled "Guest Lecture" with a "more calendar events..." link.
- My Tasks:** Shows "My Tasks:" and "Earth System Science:" with a sub-item "Sign up for group project" and a "more tasks..." link.
- What's New:** Shows "Edit Notification Settings" and "Actions" buttons, followed by a list of "Announcements (1)" and "Assignments (4)".
- To Do:** Shows "Edit Notification Settings" and "Actions" buttons, followed by "What's Past Due" (All Items (4)), "What's Due" (Select Date: 10/07/2009, Go), and a list of tasks categorized by date: "Today (1)" (Worksheet 3 - Due 10/07/09), "Tomorrow (0)", "This Week (1)", and "Future (1)".

You choose the page layout and modules available from a pool of modules managed by the Blackboard administrator at your school. You cannot add other types of content to the Home Page or other Module Pages. For example, you cannot add a tool link on a Module Page.

Adding and Removing Modules

You can add a variety of modules to the Home Page. Use the following table to decide which modules are appropriate for your course.

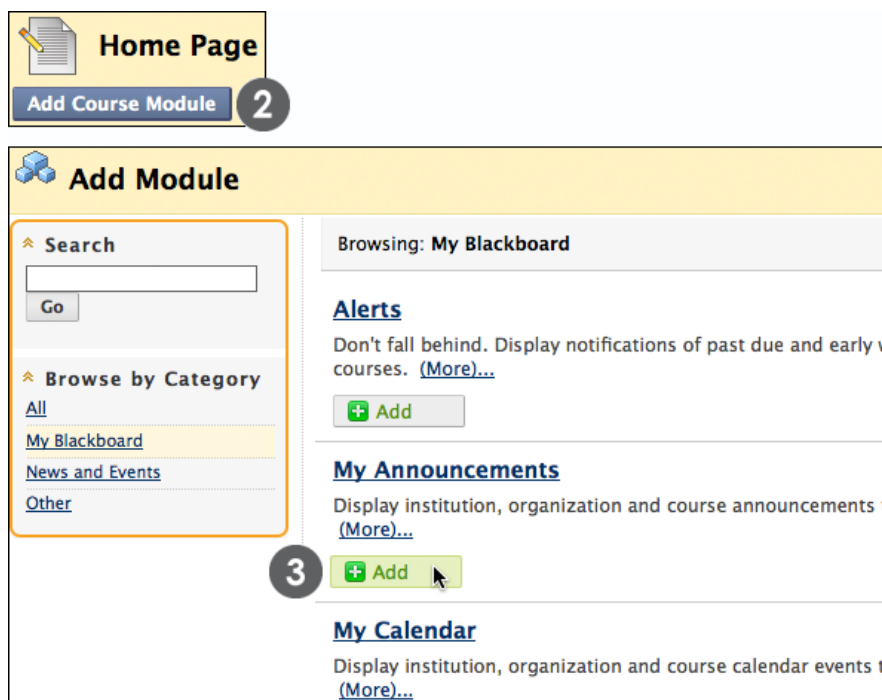
Add	If you want to
Alerts	Receive notifications of past due and early warning items
Calculator	Provide a calculator
Dictionary	Allow users to search for terms in the <i>American Heritage Dictionary</i>
My Announcements	Display current announcements with links to the Announcements tool
My Calendar	Display current calendar events with links to the Calendar tool
My Tasks	Display current tasks with links to the My Tasks tool
Needs Attention	Receive notifications of items needing attention, such as items to be graded
Report Card	Display the student's grades
Textpad	Type plain text or HTML for display on the page
Thesaurus	Allow users to search for synonyms using <i>Roget's II: The New Thesaurus</i>
To Do	Display items due and past due with links to the items
What's New	Display items recently added with links to the items

TIP: The **Alerts** and **Needs Attention** modules contain instructor-oriented information. If the modules are included, students will see them on the Home Page, but they will contain no information. To minimize confusion, you can create a separate Module Page on the Course Menu containing these modules. Since this Module Page is only for your use, make it unavailable to students.

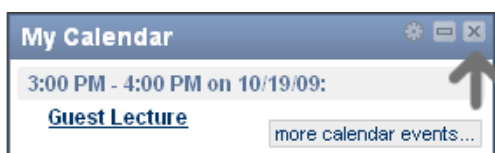
If you remove a module with content, and then add it again, the content is regenerated.

QUICK STEPS: Adding Modules

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the **Home Page**.
2. Click **Add Course Module** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Add Module** page, click **Add** for each Module.
4. Click **Submit**.

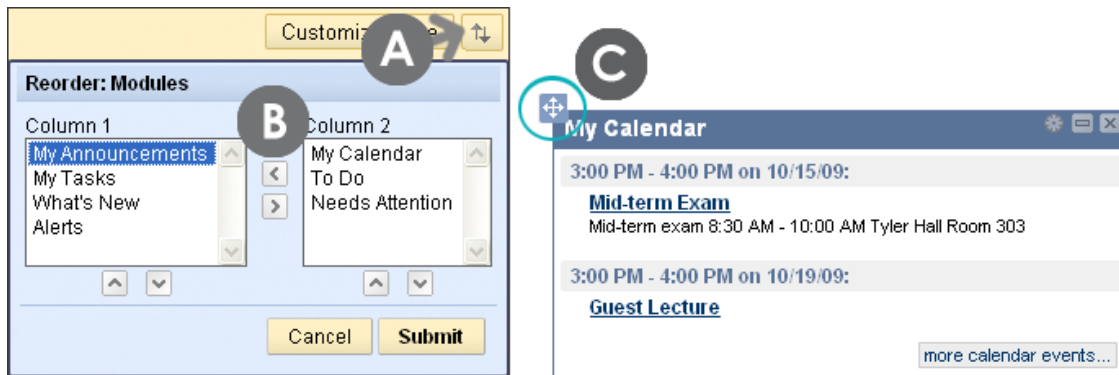


While viewing the Home Page in Edit Mode, remove a module by clicking **Close**, represented by the **X**.



Reordering Modules

You can change the module order so the most important modules appear near the top of the Home Page. Use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool or the drag-and-drop function to reorder the modules.



- A. Access the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar.
- B. In addition to the up and down move arrows, the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool also has arrows to move modules right or left between the two columns on the Home Page.
- C. Point to the top of a module to access the move icon, which consists of four arrows. Press and move the module to a new position on the page.

Editing Notification Settings

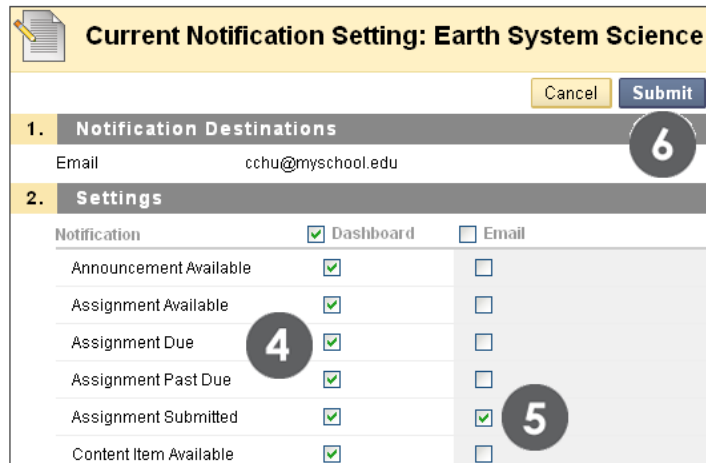
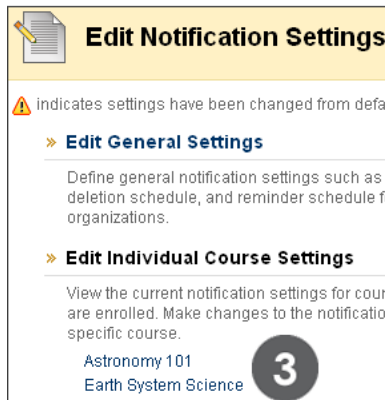
You can select which items appear in the following notification modules: **What's New**, **To Do**, **Alerts**, and **Needs Attention**. Customizing these notifications does not affect the students' notification settings.

Depending on administrator settings, the following items may be included:

- Announcement Available
- Assignment Available, Due, Past Due, or Submitted
- Content Item Available
- Early Warning System Rule Details
- Item Due
- Survey Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Test Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Unread Blog Posts
- Unread Discussion Board Messages
- Unread Journal Entries
- Items in Needs Grading status

QUICK STEPS: Editing Notification Settings

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the **Home Page**.
2. In one of the notification modules, click **Edit Notification Settings**.
3. On the **Edit Notification Settings** page, select the link to the course.
4. On the **Current Notification Setting** page, in the **Dashboard** column, select the check boxes of the items to appear or clear the check box of an item not needed.
5. In the **Email** column, select the check boxes for the items you want to receive an email notification for; clear the check boxes if you do not need an email notification.
6. Click **Submit**.



The Blackboard administrator determines if the Email option is available.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Create your Home Page and make the following customizations:

Create Home Page and Add Modules

- Create a Module Page on the Course Menu. Name it Home Page.
- Access your new Home Page and add several course modules.

Organize Modules

- Remove one of the modules.
- Reorder the modules.

Edit Notification Settings

- Clear the check boxes for selected notifications.
- In the page header, use the **Courses** tab and select the course name to return to your course.

5.0 Day 1 Tasks

In this section, complete some common activities to prepare your online course for students. First, create a welcome announcement and add calendar entries for upcoming events. Then, finish the *Getting Started* Content Area created earlier by adding syllabus lessons, creating a discussion forum where students can pose questions, and adding textbook information.

Learning Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Create an announcement.
- Add calendar entries.
- Add syllabus lessons.
- Create a discussion forum.
- Add textbook information.

Creating Announcements

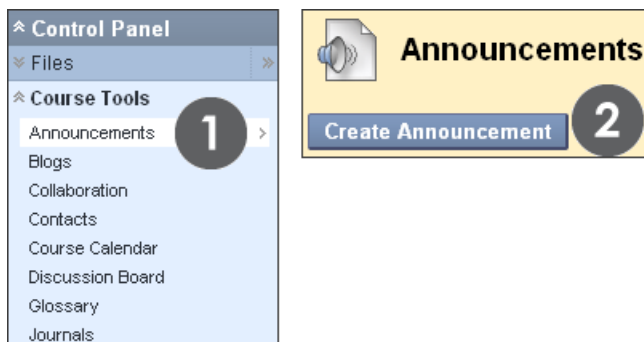
Use the Announcements tool to provide students with course reminders and updates. Announcements can contain text, images, and multimedia, as well as links to course content. If the Home Page includes the **What's New** and **To Do** modules, students will already be alerted to new content, assignments, and discussion posts. Therefore, consider creating announcements only for items that do not appear in the modules.

New announcements appear directly below the repositionable bar titled **New announcements appear below this line**. To pin an announcement to the top of the list, drag it above the repositionable bar. This keeps the announcement at the top of the list and prevents new announcements from superseding it.

NOTE: When performing the instructor functions, be sure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.

QUICK STEPS: Creating an Announcement

1. On the **Control Panel**, expand the **Course Tools** section and select **Announcements**.
2. On the **Announcements** page, click **Create Announcement** on the Action Bar.



3. On the **Create Announcement** page, type the **Subject** and an optional **Message**. Optionally, format the **Message** text using the Text Editor functions.
4. Under **Web Announcement Options**, select **Not Date Restricted**—visible until manually removed, or **Date Restricted**—visible only within selected dates and times.

5. If **Date Restricted**, select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes and type the dates and times.
6. Optionally, in the **Course Link** section, click **Browse** to create a link from the announcement to a course item. Select the course item from the pop-up Course Map.
7. Click **Submit**.

Create Announcement

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit

1. Announcement Information

* Subject: Presentation Plans

Message: Your Presentation Plans assignment is due two weeks from today and is worth 50 points. Find more instructions in the link to the Assignments Content Area.

2. Web Announcement Options

Duration: Not Date Restricted Date Restricted

Select Date Restrictions: Display After: 07/29/2011 04:26 PM Display Until: 07/30/2011 04:26 PM

Email Announcement: Send a copy of this announcement immediately

3. Course Link

Click **Browse** to choose an item.

Location: /Assignments/Presenta Browse...

The **Subject** becomes the title of the announcement on the **Announcements** page.

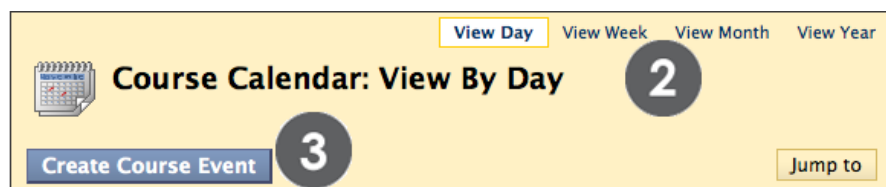
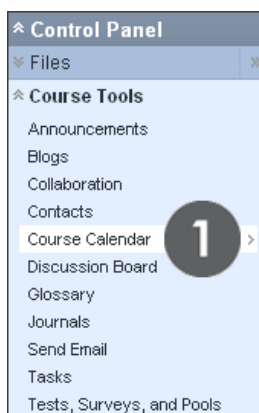
If enabled in your system, select the **Send a copy of this announcement immediately** check box if you want to send students an email containing the announcement. The email is sent to all students even if they chose not to receive announcement notifications through email.

Adding Calendar Entries

Use the Course Calendar to provide students with dates for important events. Course Calendar Events appear to all members of the course. Common entries include upcoming tests, due dates for assignments, or special lectures. Due date notifications also show in the **What's New** and **To Do** modules. However, students can turn off due date notifications so be sure to let them know if you are relying on those modules to remind them of due dates.

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Calendar Entry

1. On the **Control Panel**, expand the **Course Tools** section and select **Course Calendar**.
2. On the **Course Calendar** page, select a calendar view: Day, Week, Month, or Year.
3. Click **Create Course Event** on the Action Bar.



4. On the **Create Course Event** page, type the **Event Name** and **Event Description**. Optionally, format the **Event Description** text using the Text Editor functions.
5. Type the **Event Date**. Optionally, click the pop-up **Date Selection Calendar** to select the date.
6. Type the **Event Start Time** and **Event End Time**. Optionally, use the pop-up **Date Selection Calendar** and **Time Selection Menu** to select dates and times.
7. Click **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Course Event' form. At the top, there is a yellow header with a calendar icon, the title 'Create Course Event', and a '7' in a circle. Below the header, there is a legend: '* Indicates a required field.' and two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Submit'. The form is divided into two sections: '1 Event Information' and '2 Event Time'. In the 'Event Information' section, the 'Event Name' field contains 'Research Paper Topic Discussion in Chat'. The 'Event Description' field contains a rich text editor with a '4' in a circle over the text 'If you would like help selecting your Research Paper topic, or need help narrowing down the topic, please attend the special Chat session.' Below the description is a 'Path: body' field and a 'Save as Reusable Object' checkbox. In the 'Event Time' section, the 'Event Date' field contains '10/26/2008' with a calendar icon and a '5' in a circle. The 'Event Start Time' field contains '10:00 AM' and the 'Event End Time' field contains '11:00 AM', both with time selection icons and a '6' in a circle. A time selection menu is open over the 'Event End Time' field, showing a list of times from '12:30 AM' to '04:30 AM' in 30-minute increments. A '7' in a circle is also present in the top right corner of the form area.

The **Event Name** appears as the link on the Course Calendar. Click the link to display the **Event Description**. There is a 4,000-character limit for the description.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Announcements

- Create an announcement welcoming your students to your online course.
- Create a second announcement and drag it above the repositionable bar.
- Create a third announcement and note where it appears.

Calendar

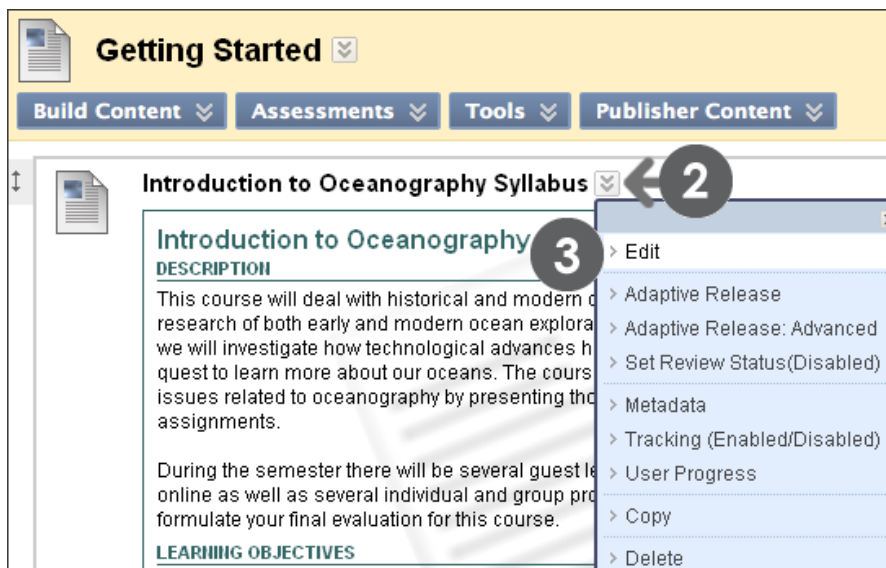
- Create one or two calendar entries for upcoming events.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **OFF**. On the Course Menu, click **Tools** and view a calendar entry as your students will see it. Select different calendar views.

Building Your Syllabus

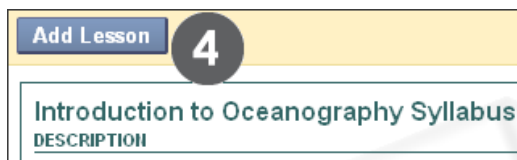
Earlier you added a syllabus to the **Getting Started** Content Area. Now, return to the syllabus to add information about each week's lessons.

QUICK STEPS: Building the Syllabus

1. On the **Course Menu**, click **Getting Started**.
2. Click the syllabus's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Edit**.



4. Click **Add Lesson** on the Action Bar.



5. On the **Edit Lesson** page, type the **Lesson Title**.
6. If applicable, select a specific **Lesson Date and Time**.
7. In the **Lesson Description** text box, type information. Optionally, format text using the Text Editor functions.
8. Click **Submit**.
9. To add more lessons, repeat steps 4–8.
10. Click **OK**.

NOTE: Click **Edit** from the contextual menu of a syllabus to access all your syllabus lessons. Each lesson also has a contextual menu with the option to edit.

Edit Lesson: Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus 8

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Lessons

* Lesson Title Lesson 1: Origin and Morphology of Ocea 5

Color of Name [Black]

Lesson Date and Time No Lesson Date 6

No Lesson Times

Start Time 06:50 PM

End Time 07:50 PM

Lesson Description Visual Editor: ON

Normal 3 Arial B I U abc x₂ x²

- Describe variations in deep ocean relief using proper terminology
- Recognize processes responsible for creating ocean basin features

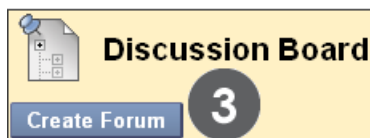
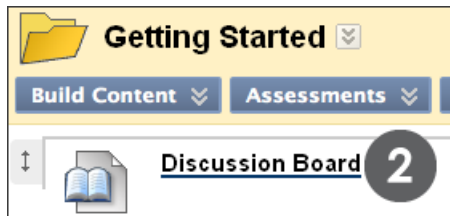
Creating a Discussion Forum

Earlier you added a link to the Discussion Board in the **Getting Started** Content Area. Now, create a discussion forum.

NOTE: The Discussion Board can also be accessed from Course Tools on the Control Panel or from a Discussion Board link you add to the Course Menu. The process for creating forums is the same regardless of how the Discussion Board is accessed.

QUICK STEPS: Creating a Discussion Forum

1. On the Course Menu, click **Getting Started**.
2. Click the **Discussion Board** link in the Content Area.
3. On the **Discussion Board** page, click **Create Forum** on the Action Bar.



4. Type a **Name**. Users click the forum name to access the forum.
5. Optionally, type instructions or a description in the **Description** text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want. The **Description** appears below the forum name.
6. In the **Forum Availability** section, select the **Yes** option.
7. Select **Forum Settings**.
8. Click **Submit**.

Create Forum 8

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Forum Information

* Name 4

Description

Normal 3 Arial B I U abc x₂ x²

abc [Clipboard] [Paste] [Undo] [Redo] [Link] [Unlink] [Image] [Table] [Code] [Source] [Preview] [Fullscreen] [Print]

Let's start out by getting to know each other. Please use your name and post. Include some information about yourself, such as why you chose your life, favorite movie, and anything else you see fit to share.

Path: [body](#)

Save as Reusable Object

2. Forum Availability

Available 6 Yes No

Enter Date and Time Display After [Calendar] [Time]

Restrictions Display Until [Calendar] [Time]

3. Forum Settings

Allow Anonymous Posts

Allow Author to Delete Own Posts 7

All posts

Only posts with no replies

TIP: You can create all forums needed for the semester in advance and set the **Forum Availability** to **No** until they are needed.

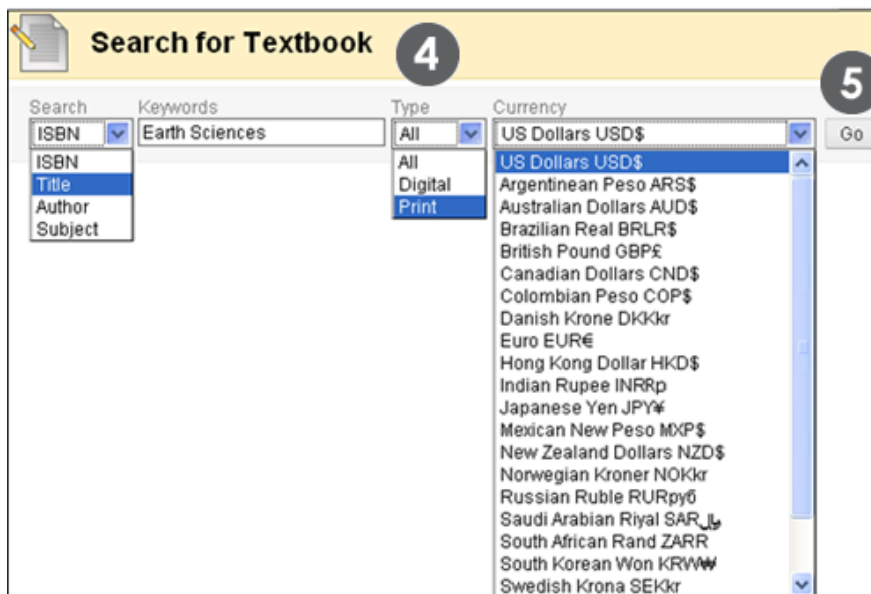
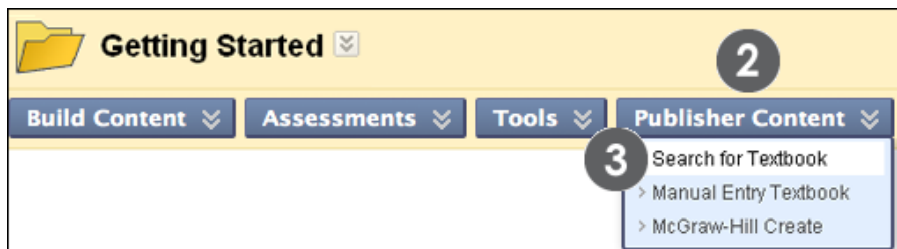
Adding Textbook Information

You can create items in a Content Area for each textbook used in your course. The **Search for Textbook** tool enables you to search an external source for textbooks by ISBN, title, author, or subject. You can also add textbook information manually.

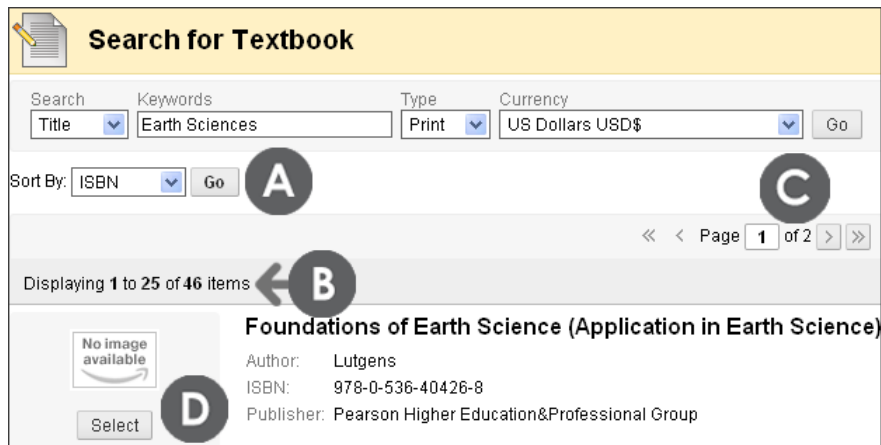
When you add textbook information to your course, it is also added to the Course Catalog where prospective students can access this information prior to enrollment.

QUICK STEPS: Adding Textbook Information

1. Access the Content Area where the textbook information will appear.
2. Point to **Publisher Content** on the Action Bar to access the drop-down list.
3. Select **Search for Textbook**.
4. On the **Search for Textbook** page, use the drop-down lists and type **Keywords** to search for a textbook.
5. Click **Go**.



After clicking **Go**, your search results appear.




- A. Sort your results using the **Sort By** drop-down list, which includes sorting by ISBN, Title, Author, Publisher, or Price.
- B. The number of items found appears.
- C. Navigate to other results pages using the arrows.
- D. Click **Select** next to the appropriate textbook information.

Create Textbook

* Indicates a required field.

Back Submit and Add Another Submit

1. Textbook Information D

	Title	Earth Science
	Subtitle	Earth Science PE
	ISBN	978-0-618-30368-7
	Publisher	McDougal Littell Incorporated
	Published Date	January 1, 2005
	Binding	Trade Cloth
	Price	\$79.08
	Type	Print

* Textbook in Course Required Recommended A

Description B

Earth Science offers a user-friendly overview of our physical environment with balanced, up-to-date coverage of geology, oceanography, astronomy, and meteorology the undergraduate student with little background in

abc ✓

2. Options C

Permit Users to View this Content Yes No

Track Number of Views Yes No

Select Date and Time Restrictions

Display After

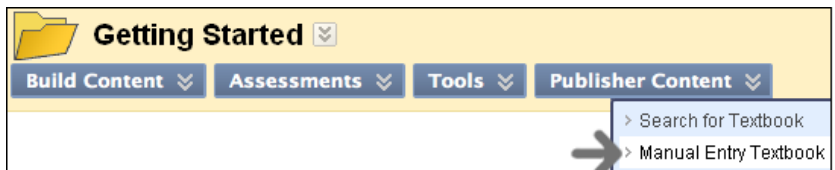
Display Until

- A. On the **Create Textbook** page, select whether a textbook is required or recommended.
- B. Type an optional **Description**, which appears below the textbook title in the Content Area. Descriptions have a 255-character limit.
- C. In the **Options** section, select **Yes** to **Permit Users to View this Content**.
- D. Click **Submit** to add the textbook information to the Content Area or **Submit and Add Another** to add more textbooks.

NOTE: You cannot edit the pre-filled information on the **Create Textbook** page because it comes from external data. You can edit the **Description** at any time.

If a search does not provide your textbook, you can type information in the provided fields on the **Manual Entry Textbook** page. You can edit this information at any time. Any text boxes without information do not appear in the Content Area; however, the **Title** is required.

Optionally, include an image of the book by clicking **Browse My Computer** or **Browse Course** to locate the file. If an image is not uploaded, a default is used.



Manual Entry Textbook

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit and Add Another Submit

1. Textbook Information

Type

ISBN

* Title

Subtitle

Author

Publisher

Published Date

Page Count

Binding

Description

Price

Currency

* Textbook in Course Required Recommended

2. Textbook Image

Attach File

3. Options

Permit Users to View this Content Yes No

Track Number of Views Yes No

Select Date and Time Restrictions Display After

Display Until

Best Practice: Welcome Your Students

Your students' first impressions will influence their opinions and attitudes about your course.

- Let students know you are glad they are here. An inviting tone—somewhat informal, but still professional—is equivalent to a smile and a greeting to a student who walks through the door in a traditional class.
- Think about how your students might feel when they enter your course for the first time. To put students at ease, include the following:
 - A welcoming message and brief self-introduction
 - Specific instructions on how to begin the course
 - Icebreakers to build a sense of camaraderie and community

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Syllabus

- Access the syllabus in the **Getting Started** Content Area. Add at least one lesson to your syllabus.

Discussion Board

- Create a Getting Started discussion forum.
- Change **Edit Mode** to **OFF**. From the Course Menu, preview the **Getting Started** Content Area and access the **Discussion Board** forum.

Textbook Information

- From the **Getting Started** Content Area, search for a textbook and add it to your course. Select whether the textbook is **Required** or **Recommended**. Type a **Description** and make the textbook information available to your students.

7.0 Workshop Wrap Up

The Workshop Wrap Up provides the opportunity to reflect on what you learned by focusing your attention on the key concepts presented in the workshop. Also, the next page includes a worksheet for brainstorming some ideas about how to get started in your online course.

In this workshop, you learned how to do the following:

- Log in to Blackboard Learn and explain the information available on the **My Institution** tab.
- Add, remove, and reorder modules on the Home Page.
- Add and access content and tools from the Course Menu and **Tools** link.
- Explain the steps for planning, creating, customizing, and editing the Course Menu.
- Describe strategies for planning Content Areas and organizing the content.
- Create Content Areas and add course materials and tools.
- Edit, reorder, copy, and move Content Area items.
- Explain the main functions of the **Control Panel** used to customize the course style.
- Select the default Course Menu view: **List View** or **Folder View**.
- Select the course entry point and add a banner to it.
- Access course structure and themes information.
- Change tool availability.
- Edit the notification settings.
- Create announcements, calendar entries, syllabus lessons, and discussion forums.
- Add textbook information to your course.

Spotlight on Your Course

Do you have some ideas about getting started? Use the following worksheet to record your plans.

Ideas to consider	Notes
<p>How will you organize your Content Areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will you organize by subject, chronology, or type of content?• Will you link to tools from Content Areas or have students access tools from the Course Menu or Tools link?• Will you add an existing syllabus or use the Syllabus Builder option?	
<p>Will you customize your course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will you change the Course Menu style or colors?• Will you change the course entry point?• Will you use a course structure to jump-start your course organization?	
<p>What Day 1 tasks are important for your course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will you create a welcome announcement for students?• What initial events do you want to add to the Course Calendar?• Will you create a discussion forum to allow students to pose questions or issues related to the course and online learning?• Will you search for textbook information to add to your course?	