



getting**started**

Blackboard Learn 9.1
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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

Log in to Blackboard Learn™ and explore the My Institution tab.

Access course components

Navigate through the course Home Page, course content, and tools using the Course Menu and breadcrumbs.

Think of your students first

Explore ways to ensure a positive start for your students.

3.0 Creating your Course Menu

Plan the links

Consider your course content and how to represent it through links on the Course Menu.

Add the tools

Add regularly used tools to the Course Menu.

Create the Content Areas

Decide how you will organize information, and then add the Content Areas and materials.

Organize the links

Choose the best order for Course Menu links and add subheaders and dividers.

4.0 Customizing Your Course

Customize course style

Experiment with the appearance of the Course Menu, change the default content view, add a banner to the course entry page, and change the course entry point.

Select tools

Change tool availability.

Customize the Home Page

Add, remove, and reorder modules. Edit notification settings.

5.0 Day 1 Tasks

Start from the beginning

Create a welcome announcement and add calendar entries.

Make additions

Add syllabus lessons, create a discussion forum, and add textbook information to your Getting Started Content Area.

Welcome your students

Understand the importance of first impressions and how to make your students feel comfortable in an online course.

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 institution will provide the URL, username, and password.

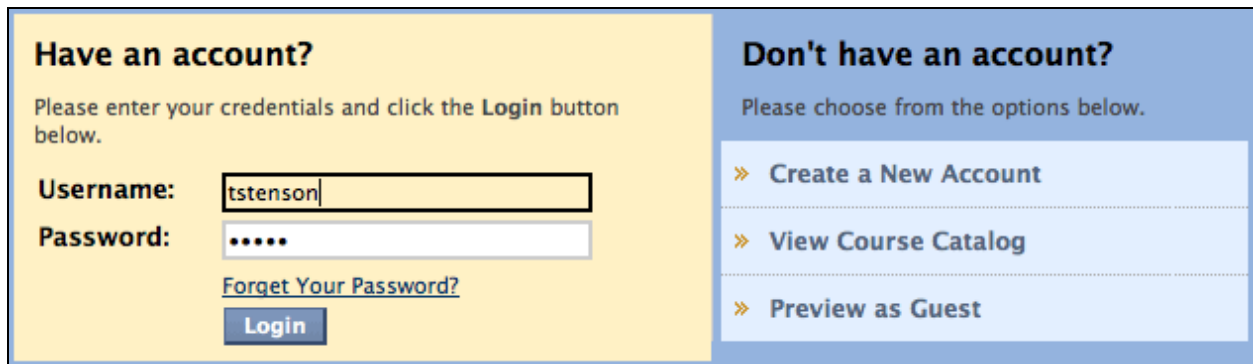
The image shows the Blackboard Learn login interface. It is divided into two main sections: 'Have an account?' on the left (yellow background) and 'Don't have an account?' on the right (blue background). The 'Have an account?' section prompts the user to enter their credentials and click the 'Login' button. It includes fields for 'Username:' (containing 'tstenson') and 'Password:' (containing five dots), a link for 'Forgot Your Password?', and a 'Login' button. The 'Don't have an account?' section prompts the user to choose from three options: 'Create a New Account', 'View Course Catalog', and 'Preview as Guest', each preceded by a right-pointing arrow.

Figure 1.1

► 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.



Figure 1.2

Exploring the My Institution Tab

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

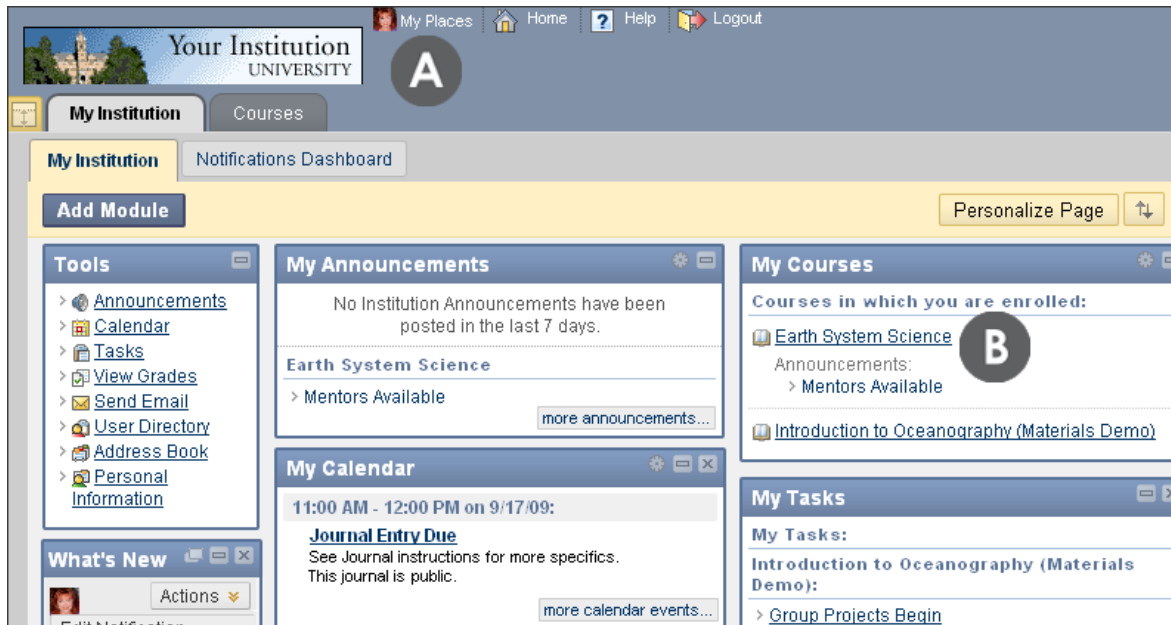


Figure 2

► Take Note

- A. From the page header, go to **My Places**, your institution'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 system administrator.
- B. To select a course, click its title in the **My Courses** module.

Student Experience: Exploring the My Institution Tab

The main My Institution tab contains modules. Modules are windows of content that organize content and links, and help students navigate to areas in their courses. The system administrator can rename modules and determines which will appear when you log in to your course for the first time.

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 modules can be found on the My Institution tab:

- **Tools** – view announcements and grades for all courses in which you are enrolled. 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 in which you are enrolled. It can also contain announcements from your institution's system administrator. Announcements communicate important, time-sensitive information.
- **My Calendar** – displays calendar dates for courses in which you are enrolled 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.

Users 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 add.
- 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 will vary in design depending on the instructor and the institution, but there are some common features.

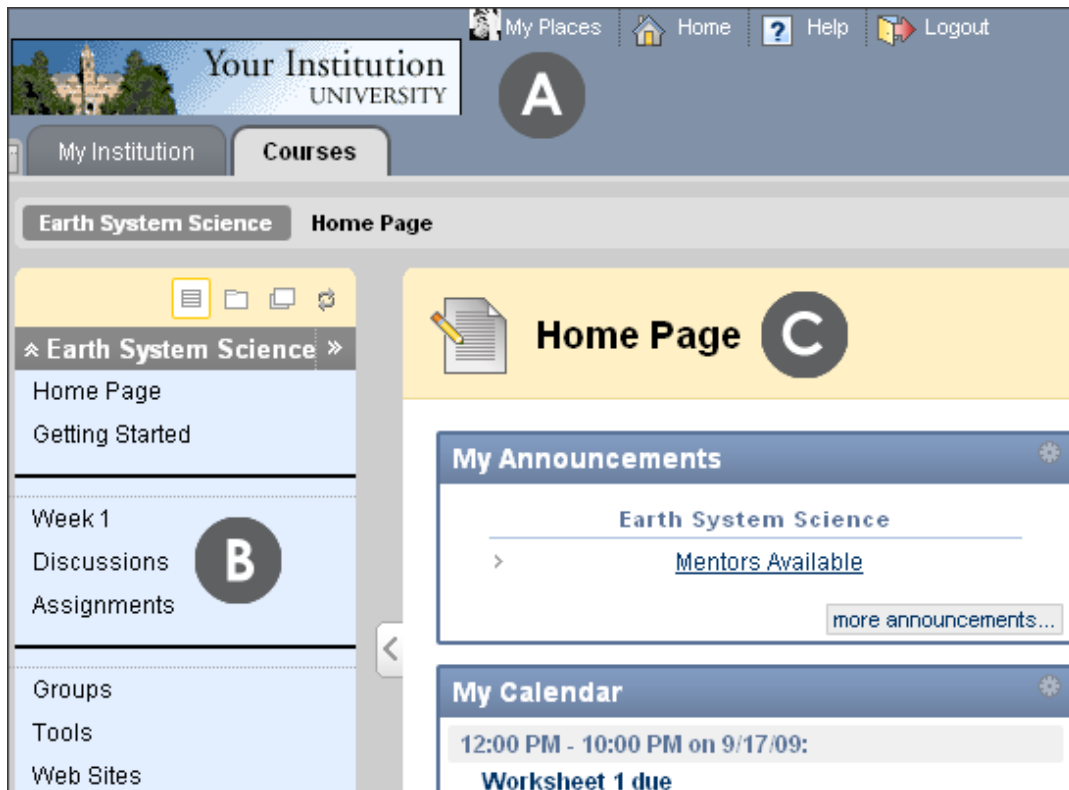


Figure 3

► Take Note

- A. Page header – identical to the page header you saw upon logging in, including the **My Institution** and **Courses** tabs. The system 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.

Exploring the Home Page

The Home Page contains modules that provide students with an intuitive way to navigate through a Blackboard Learn course, and 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. The default modules are selected by the administrator, but the 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.

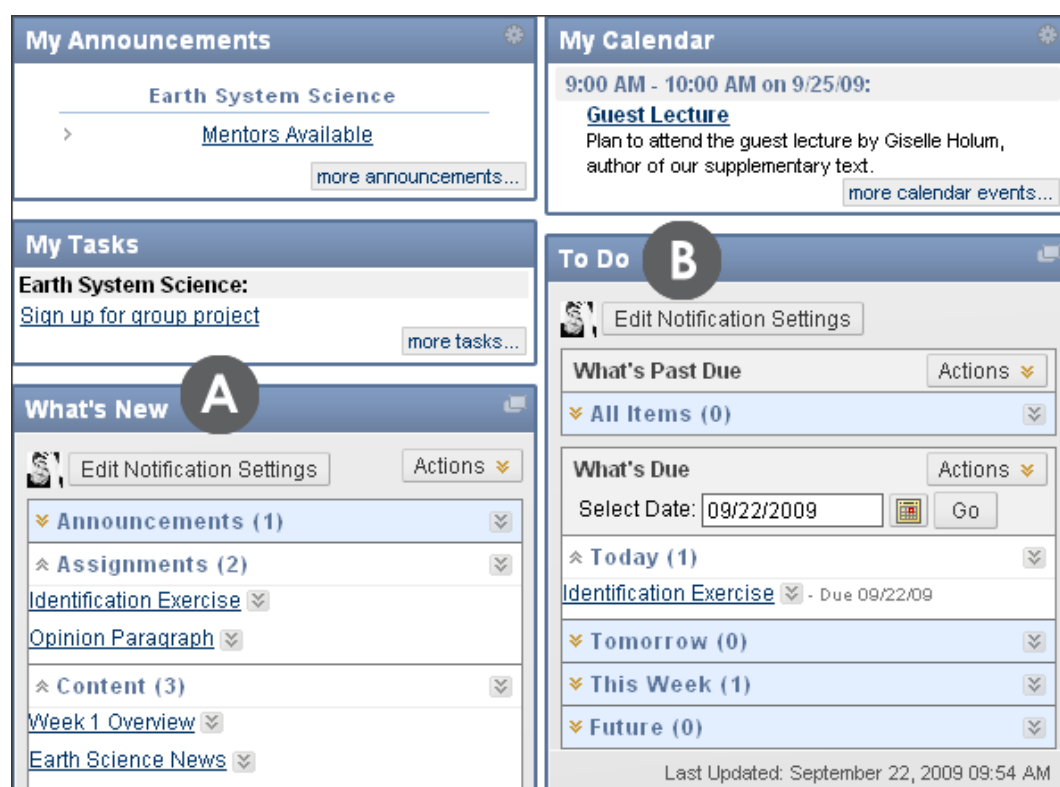


Figure 4.1

► Take Note

- 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**. This information can be used as the launching point for a student's daily course work.

Module Options

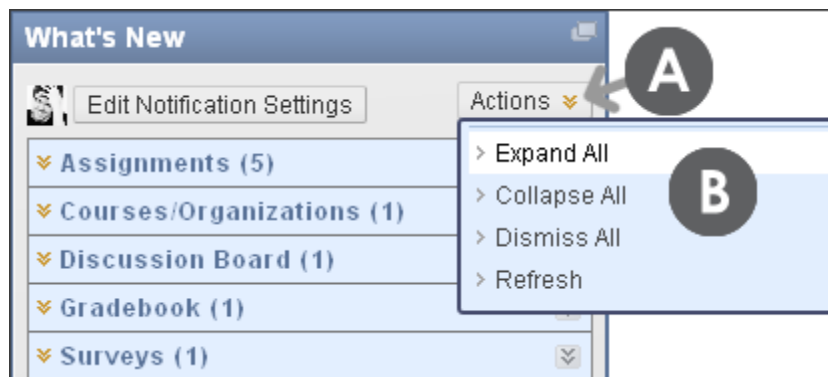


Figure 4.2

► Take Note

- 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.

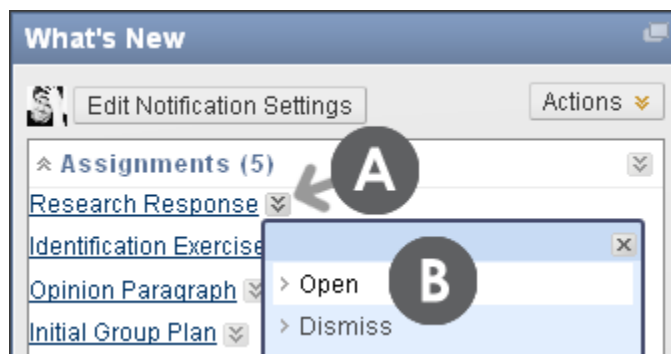


Figure 4.3

► Take Note

- 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.

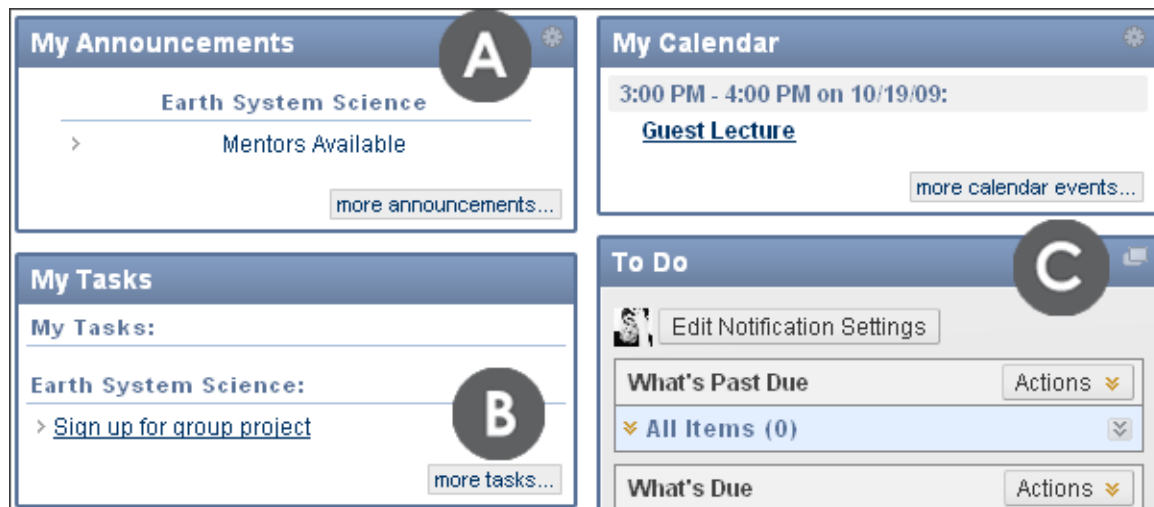


Figure 4.4

► Take Note

- 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 be taken to a tool's main page. For example, click the “more tasks” link to be taken to 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. The window can be moved to a different screen location. For example, keep the **To Do** module window open as you navigate through the course.

The Course Menu

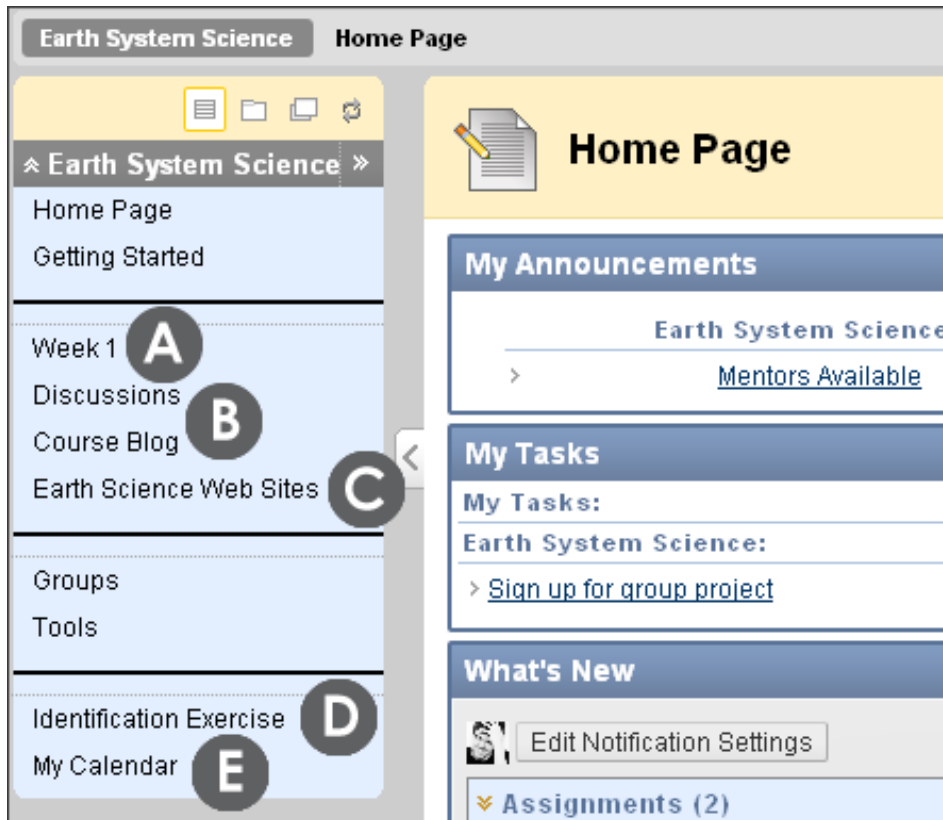


Figure 5.1

► Take Note

Access all course content from the Course Menu. It 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 will be used in a one week period.
- B. Individual tools – links to tools students will need often, such as the **Discussion Board** and **Blogs**.
- C. External links – Web sites 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

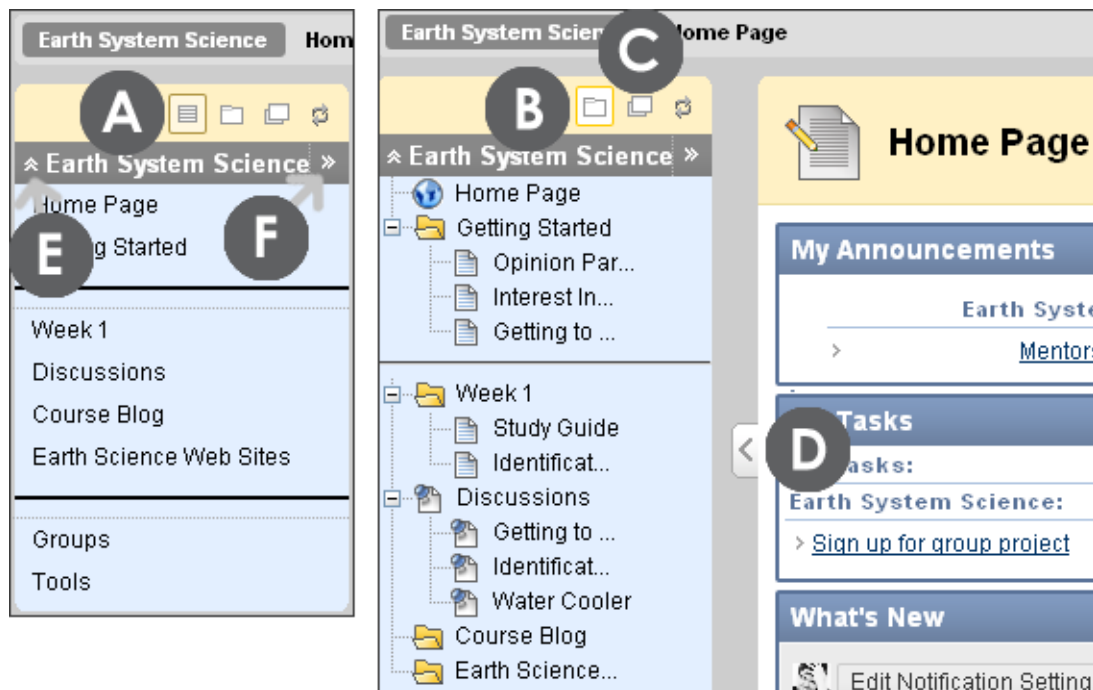


Figure 5.2

► Take Note

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

- A. **List View** – displays 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 can be moved to a different screen location.
- D. **Hide or Show Course Menu** – collapse the Course Menu to focus attention on the content frame.
- E. **Collapse or Expand the Course Menu** in the sidebar – collapse 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, the instructor may create a Content Area containing a week's worth of course material, such as readings, an assignment, a discussion forum, and a URL.

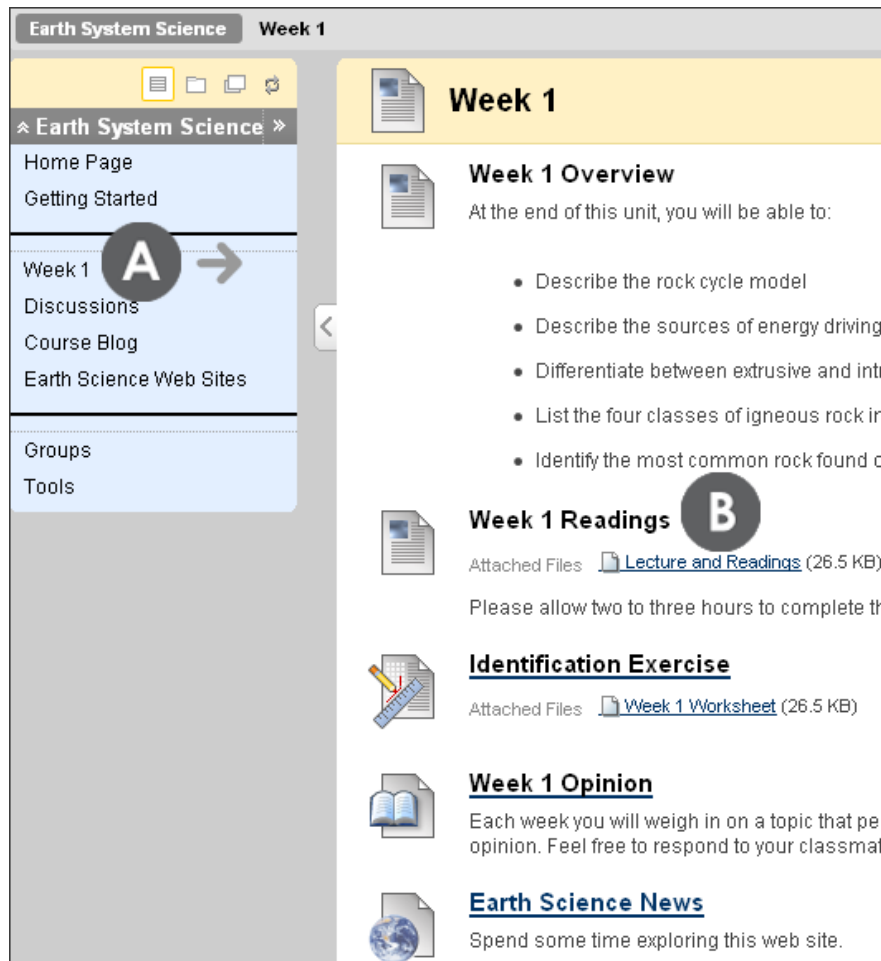


Figure 6.1













► Take Note

To navigate Content Areas:

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

Student Experience: Accessing Content in Content Areas

The following table identifies some of the components commonly added to Content Areas. 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
	Item – text or file
	Assignment – link to an assignment
	Course Link – link to a tool or other area in course
	URL – link to a Web site
	Test – link to a test
	Survey – link to an ungraded survey
	Discussions – link to a Discussions forum, added as an Interactive Tool
	Blog – link to an individual blog entry, added as an Interactive Tool
	Journal – link an individual journal entry, added as an Interactive Tool
	Chat – link to an individual chat session, added as an Interactive Tool

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

Breadcrumbs

As you view the items and links presented in a Content Area, 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.

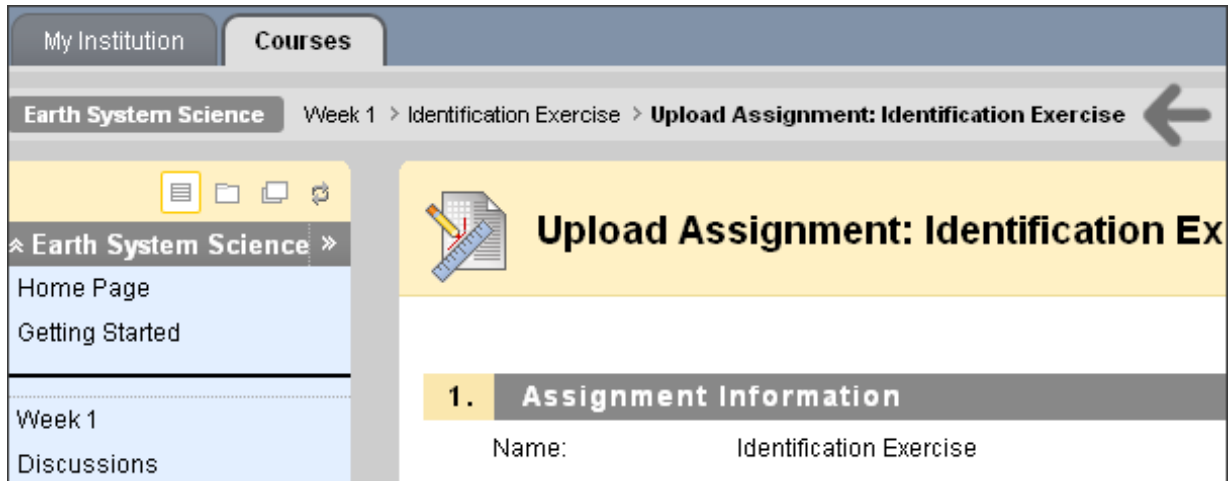


Figure 6.2

Using the Tools Link

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

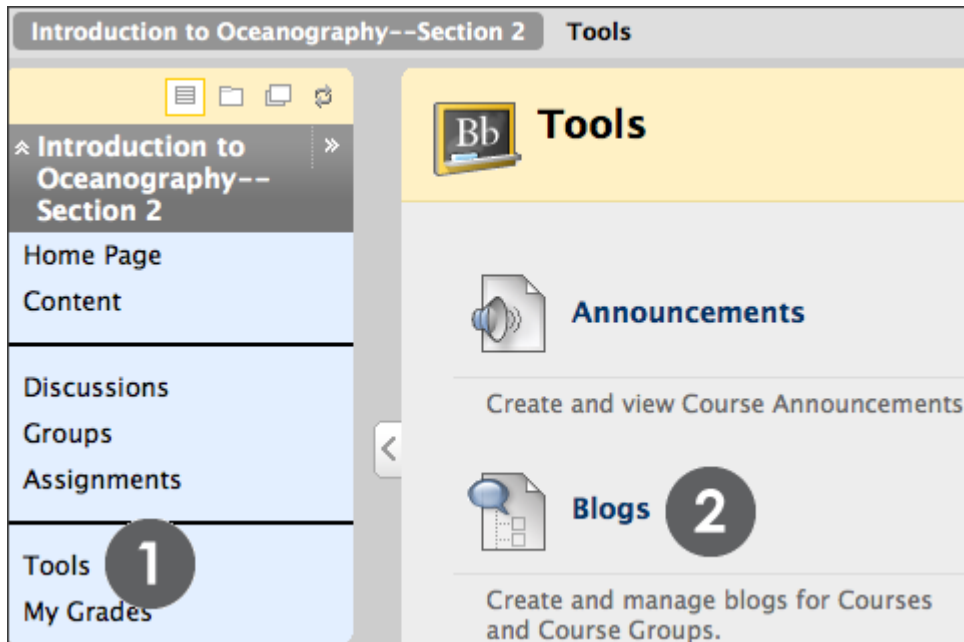


Figure 7

► 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 will be used often. In the preceding example, a link to the Discussion Board is added to the Course Menu so students can access it directly.

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. Use the **Collapse** function at the top of the module to hide its contents.
- 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.

Student Experience: Best Practice: Remember the Student

- 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:

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

Student Experience: Best Practice: Remember the Student

- 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 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 Web site	External 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.

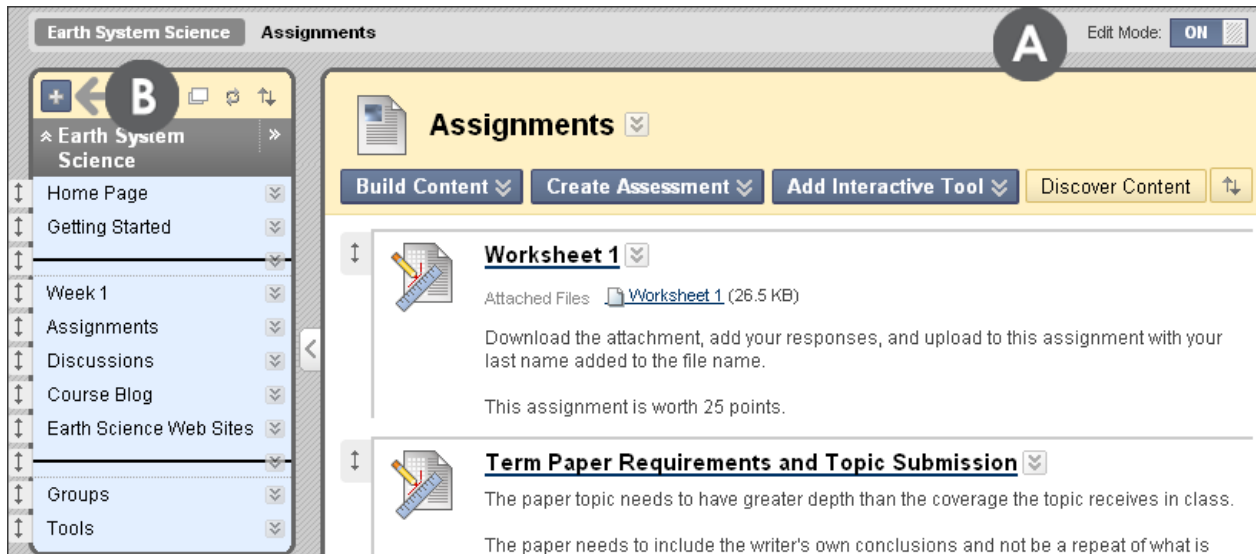


Figure 1 – Instructor view of the Course Menu and a Content Area

► Take Note

- 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 will appear 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

Links to frequently used tools can be added to the Course Menu. Consider the course content and the needs of the students when adding tools.

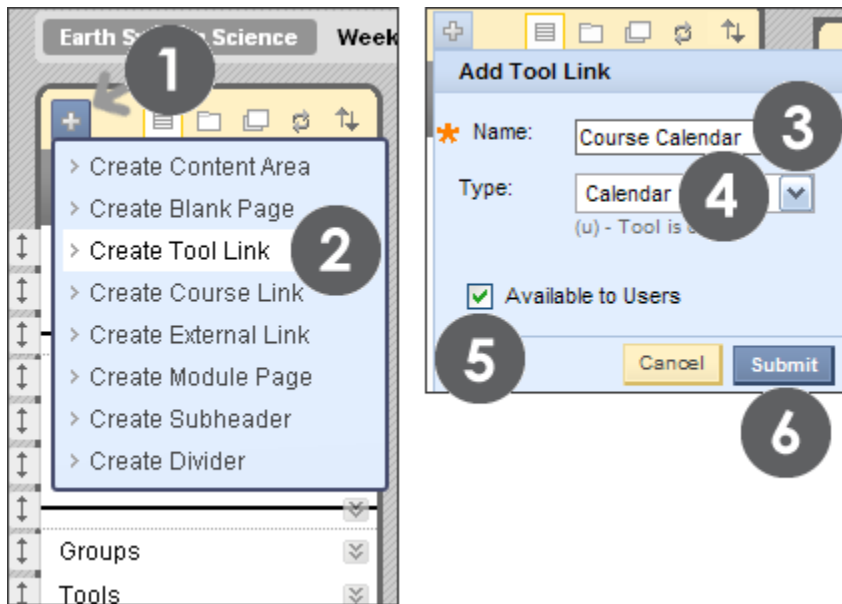


Figure 2

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

NOTE: In the drop-down list, you may not see **Create Blank Page**. This is not a default option, but can be added by the instructor. Tool availability is discussed in the Customizing Your Course section of this manual.

Adding Blank Pages to the Course Menu

STEP 2: Add the Tools and Blank Pages, continued

You can 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 Web sites to visit before a chat session
- Add a study guide for the final test

TIP: Alternatively, 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 also be added to the appropriate Content Area and you can inform students in an announcement. As you can see, you can find 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 **Create Blank Page**.
3. Type a **Name** for the link.
4. Select the **Available to Users** check box.
5. Click **Submit**. The **Edit Blank Page** appears in the content frame and the new Blank Page link appears last on the Course Menu.
6. Information can be added to the Blank Page at this time or click **Cancel** to add information later.

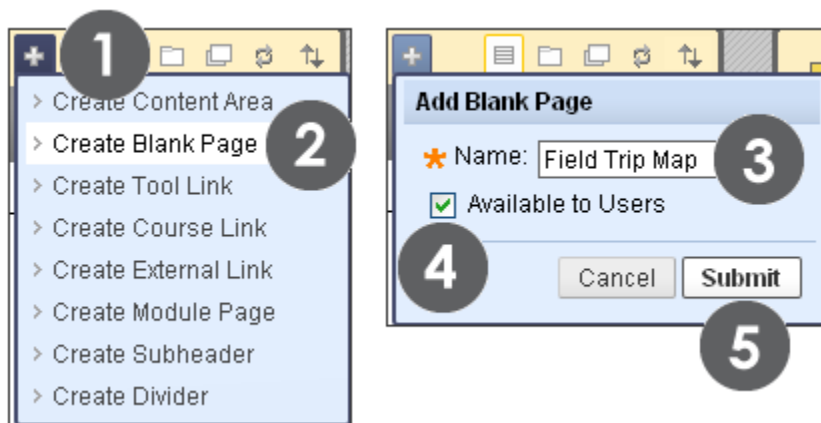


Figure 3

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 **Blogs** and **Calendar** tools to the Course Menu.
- Add other tools appropriate for your course.
- Add a **Blank Page** to the Course Menu, if it has been enabled. 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 Web sites, and other materials.

An instructor 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

Content can be organized in Content Areas 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.

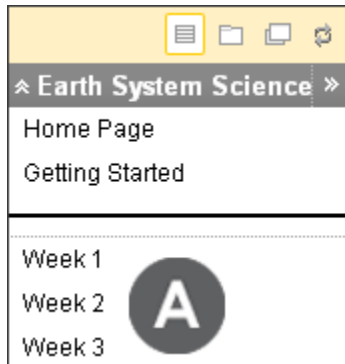


Figure 4.1

► Take Note

- A. Content Areas can be created ahead of time, made unavailable, and then made available at the appropriate time. In the preceding example, Weeks 1 through 3 can be created and made unavailable until each is needed.

Creating Your Course Menu: Determining the Content Organization

The following image represents how Content Areas can be organized chronologically.

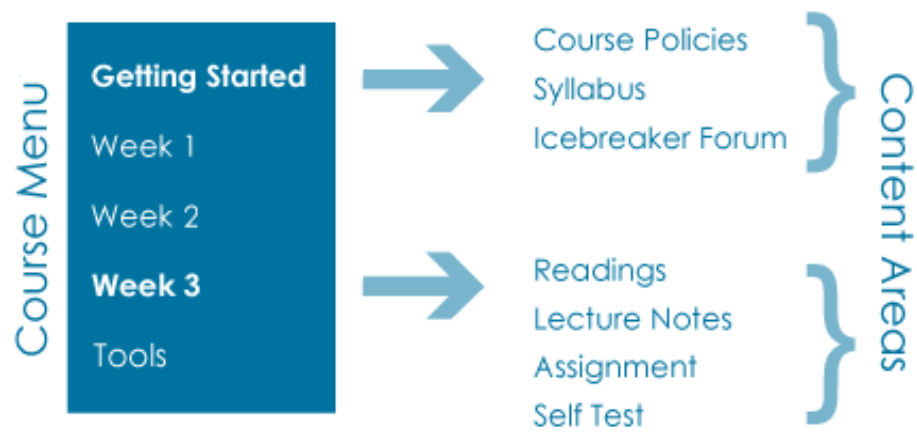


Figure 4.2

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 can contain multiple items and multiple folders.

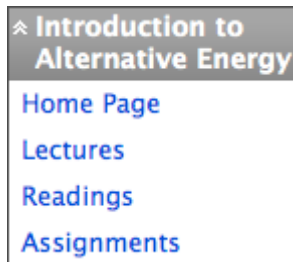


Figure 4.3

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

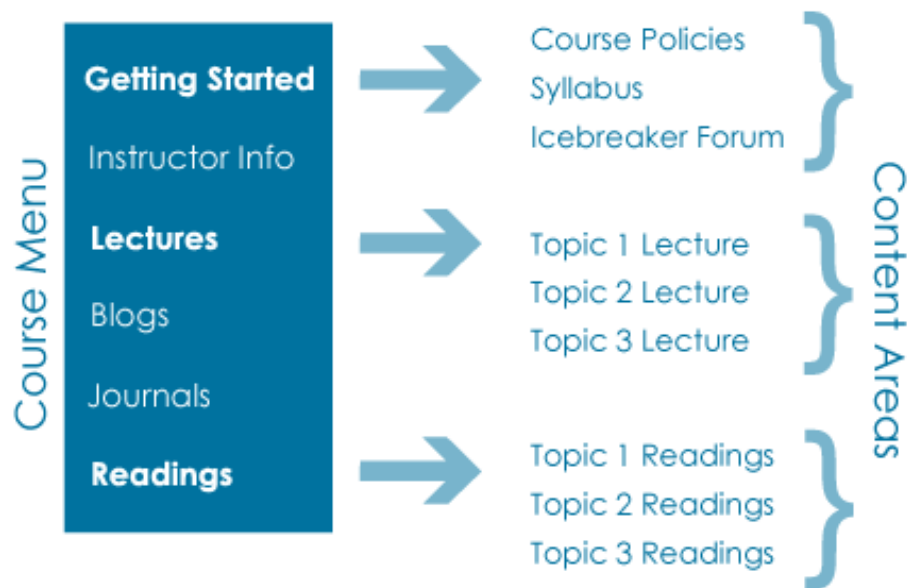


Figure 4.4

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 assessments.

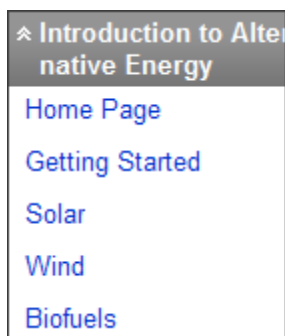


Figure 4.5

The following image represents how Content Areas can be organized by subject area.



Figure 4.6

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 will be added in the next step.

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

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

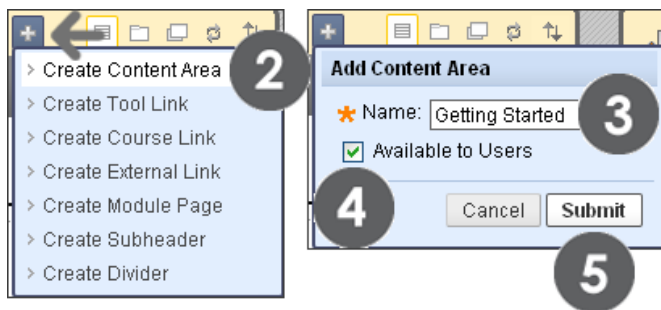


Figure 5

TIP: Content Areas can be created and made 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 you will 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 will 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 that can be added 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 URLs
- Individual audio, image, and video links
- Folders, Learning Modules, and Lesson Plans
- Assignments, tests, and surveys
- Mashups
- Blank Pages
- Textbook information

NOTE: A Mashup can be defined as combining 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.

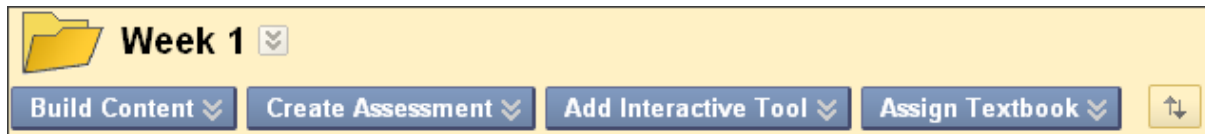


Figure 6.1

On the Action Bar, use the **Build Content**, **Create Assessment**, **Add Interactive Tool**, and **Assign Textbook** options to add materials to Content Areas.

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

Creating Your Course Menu: Adding Items and Tools to a Content Area

The following table summarizes the materials that can be added 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• URL, 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	Create Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion Board• Blogs• Journals• Wikis• Groups• Chat or Virtual Classroom sessions	Add Interactive Tool
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Textbook information for your course	Assign Textbook

The steps for adding items and tools are next. Other types of content can be added in a similar fashion.

Adding Items to Content Areas

An item can contain text, audio, movies, files, images, and Mashups. If text is added, it can be formatted 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 Files** to locate the file. Add a **Link Title** for the attached file; otherwise the file name appears in the Content Area. Alternatively, 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, URL, and Mashups are listed, but can also be added 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.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Item' interface in Blackboard. At the top left, a 'Week 1' folder icon is shown. Below it, a 'Build Content' dropdown menu is open, showing 'Create' as the selected option. Under 'Create', there are links for '> Item' and '> File'. A yellow banner at the top of the main form area says 'Create Item'. Below this banner, a note states '* Indicates a required field.' and there are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons. The form is divided into three sections: 1. Content Information, 2. Attachments, and 3. Options. In the 'Content Information' section, the 'Name' field is filled with 'Chapter 1 Study Guide', and the 'Color of Name' is set to 'Black'. A rich text editor is below, containing the text: '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.' The 'Path' is set to 'body'. In the 'Attachments' section, the 'Attach File' button is highlighted, and a table shows an attached file named 'chapter1_study_guide.doc' with a link title of 'Chapter 1 Study Guide'. In the 'Options' section, 'Permit Users to View this Content' is set to 'Yes', and 'Track Number of Views' is set to 'No'. There are also fields for 'Display After' and 'Display Until' under 'Select Date and Time Restrictions'.

Week 1

Build Content

Create

> Item

> File

Create Item

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit

1. Content Information

* Name Chapter 1 Study Guide

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

Attach File Browse My Computer Browse Course Files

Attached files

File Name	Link Title	File Action
chapter1_study_guide.doc	Chapter 1 Study Guide	Create a link to this file Do not attach

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

Figure 6.2

NOTE: Under **Attachments**, the **Browse Course Files** function takes you to a central storage location on the Blackboard server that is accessed directly from the course. Instructors 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 taught by the instructor. Any file uploaded from your local computer using the **Browse My Computer** function is automatically added 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*.

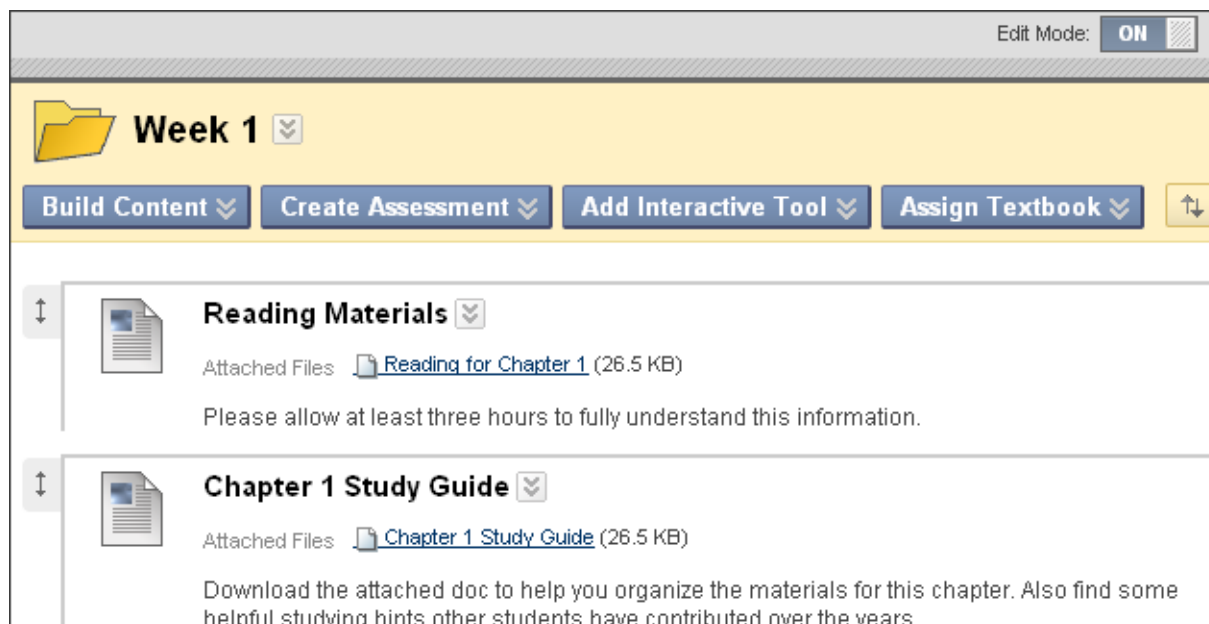


Figure 6.3 – Instructor view of a Content Area containing two items, each with a file attached

Adding Tools to Content Areas

You learned earlier how to add tools directly to the Course Menu. A tool can also be added to a Content Area for students to use in conjunction with the content contained there. For example, if students will be creating 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 **Build Content** to access the drop-down list.
3. Select **Tools Area** from the **New Page** column.
4. On the **Link to Tools Area** page, select the tool and click **Next**.
5. On the **Create Link** page, type a **Link Name** or leave the default name.
6. In the **Text** box, type the text to appear under the link name in the Content Area. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
7. Under **Options**, select **Yes** for **Available** to make the tool available to students. Select other options as needed.
8. Click **Submit**.

Creating Your Course Menu: Adding Items and Tools to a Content Area

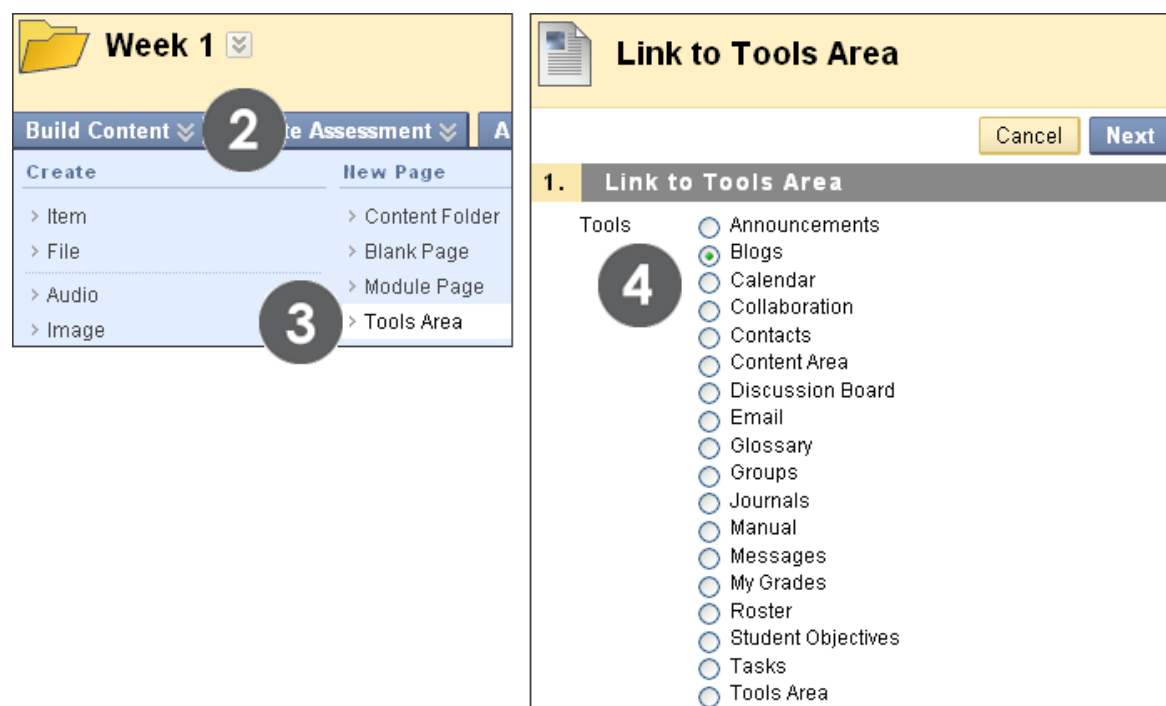


Figure 6.4 – Add a tool to a Content Area using the Build Content function on the Action Bar

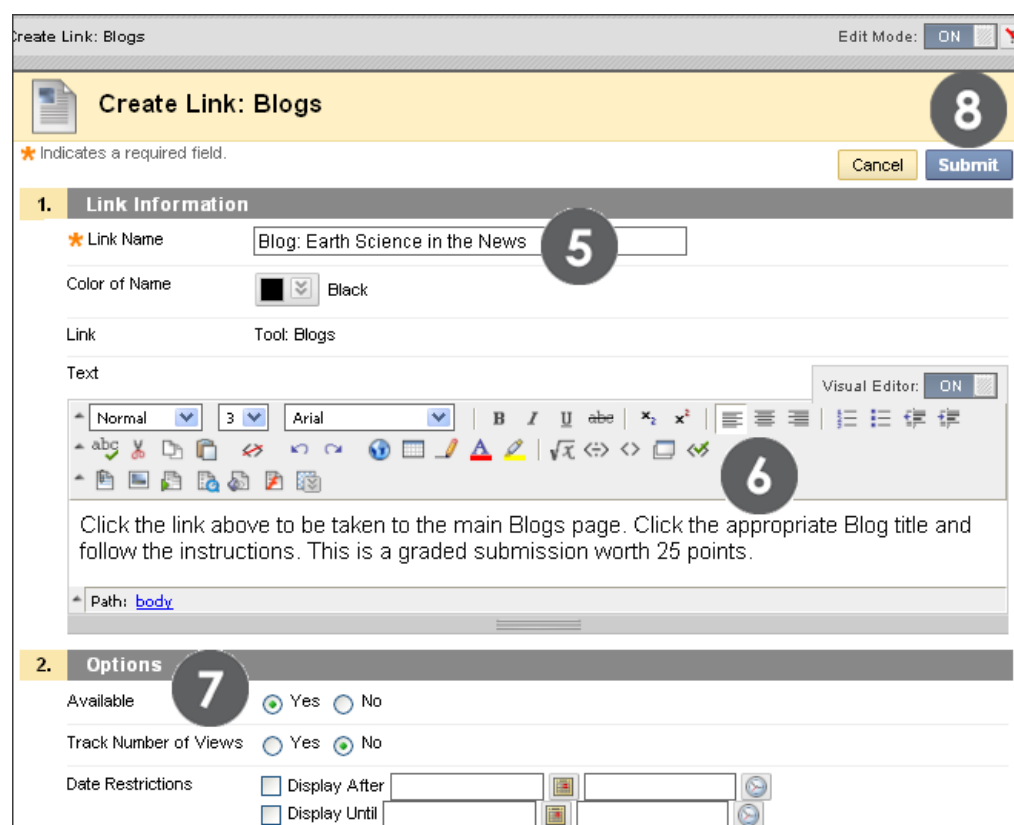


Figure 6.5 – The Create Link page

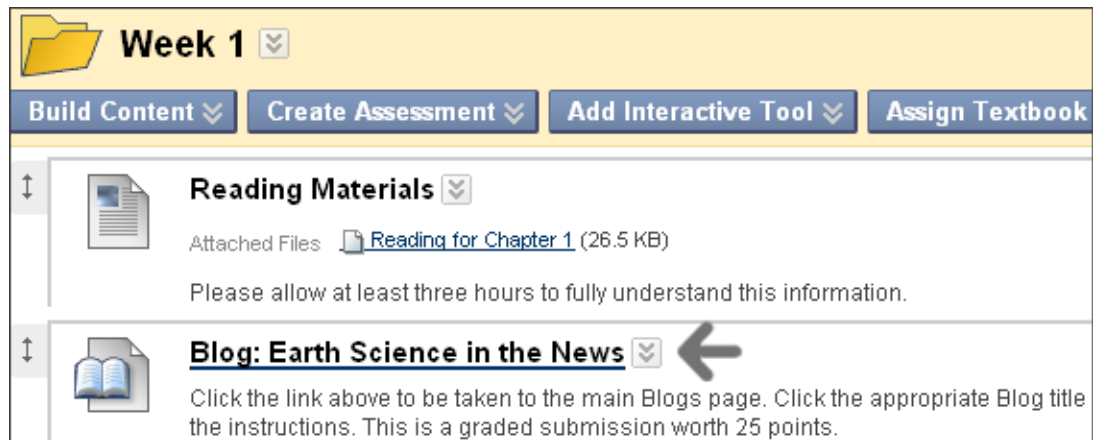


Figure 6.6 – Instructor view of a tool added to a Content Area

Accessing Page Help

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



Figure 7

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 **Add Interactive Tool** drop-down list.
- Add a **URL** for a Web site related to your course.
- Turn **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 edit the following:

- The item's name
- The item's availability
- The order of the items

Edit an Item's Name or Availability

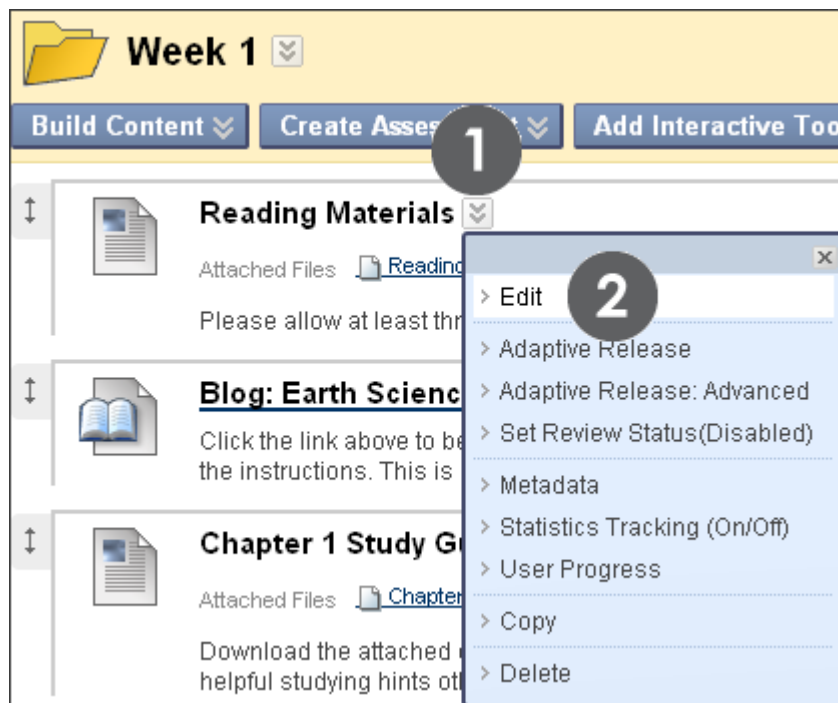


Figure 8.1

► QUICK STEPS: editing an item in a Content Area

1. In **Edit Mode**, in the Content Area, click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Edit**.
3. Edit the item's **Name** or availability. If a content item has been added, edit the actual content, if you want.

Make an item unavailable if content is still being developed, needs updating, or if the item is not yet needed by students.

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.

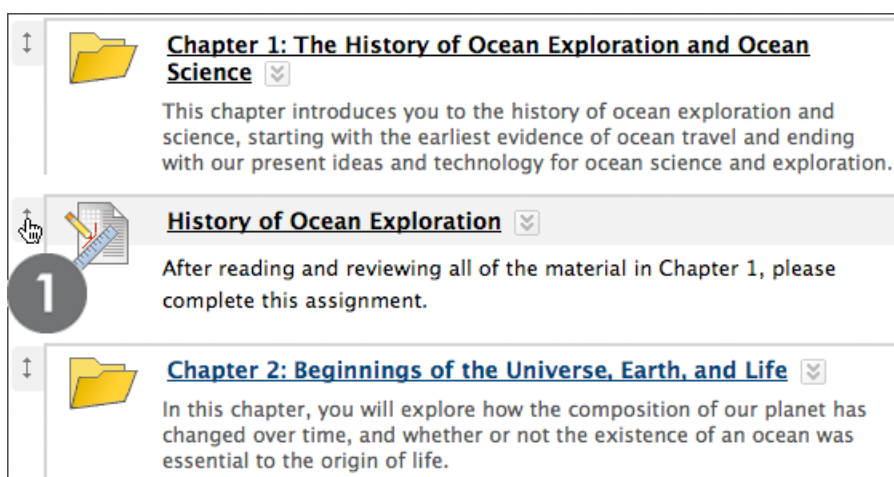


Figure 8.2

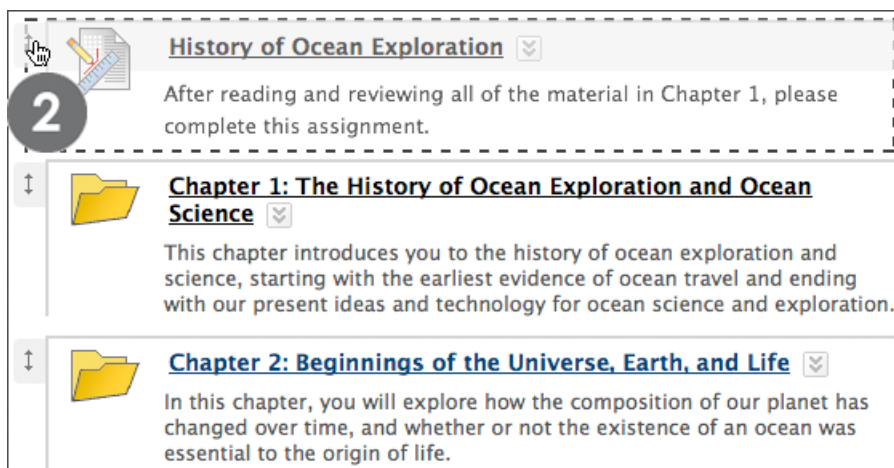


Figure 8.3

Reorder with the Keyboard Accessible Reordering Tool

Items can also be reordered using the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool.

► 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**.

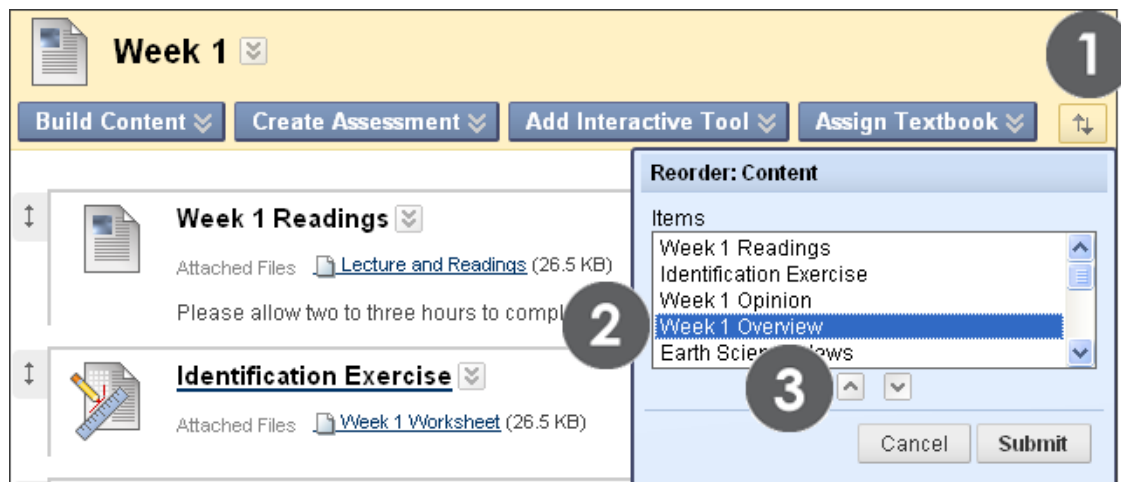


Figure 8.4

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 **URL** unavailable.
- Use the drag-and-drop function or the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to change the order of the materials.

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

We will now cover the final step.

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.

Creating Your Course Menu: Organizing the Course Menu Links

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



Figure 9.1

Reorder and Make Links Unavailable

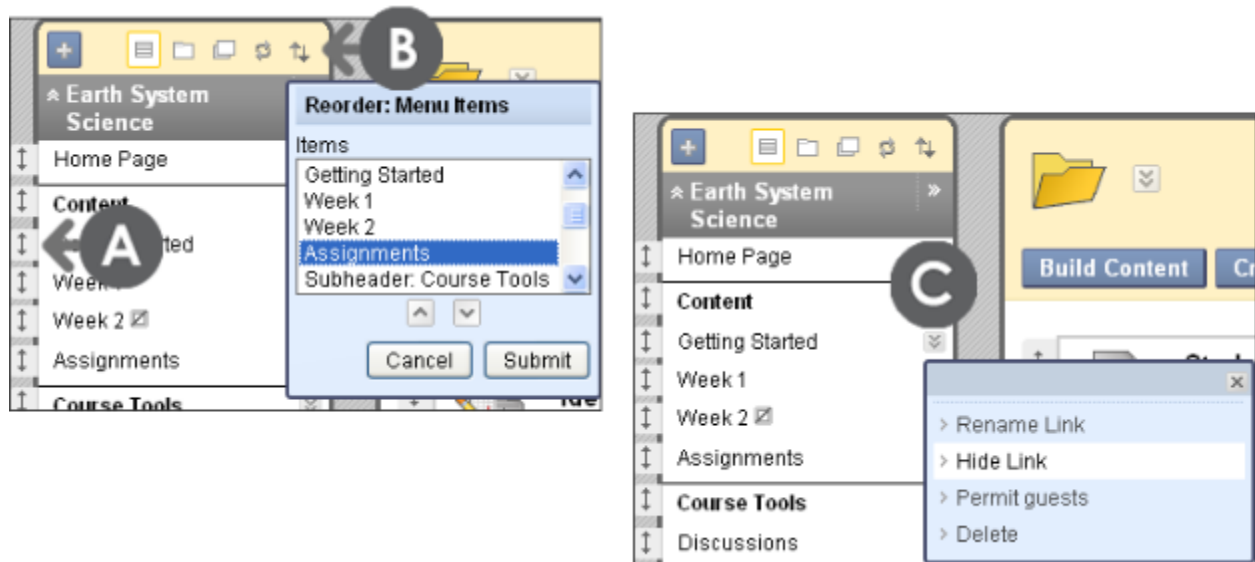


Figure 9.2

► Take Note

- A. Use the drag-and-drop function to reorder links on the Course Menu.
- B. Alternatively, use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to reorder the links.
- C. Click a link's Action Link 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. Each subheader added appears with a divider line to help visually organize the links. You can also add individual divider lines, for example, if you choose not to add subheaders. The divider lines can be used 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 **Create Subheader**.
3. Type a **Name**.
4. Click **Submit**. The **Subheader** is added to the bottom of the Course Menu and can be dragged into place.

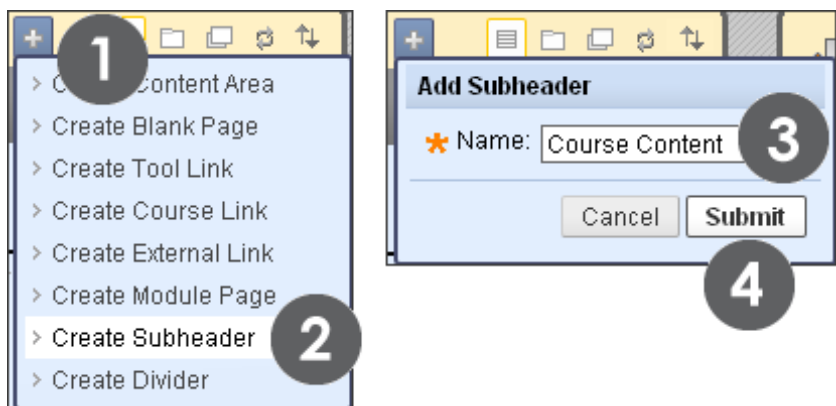


Figure 9.3

A Divider is added from the **Add Menu Item** drop-down list also. The Divider is also added to the bottom of the Course Menu and can be dragged 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.

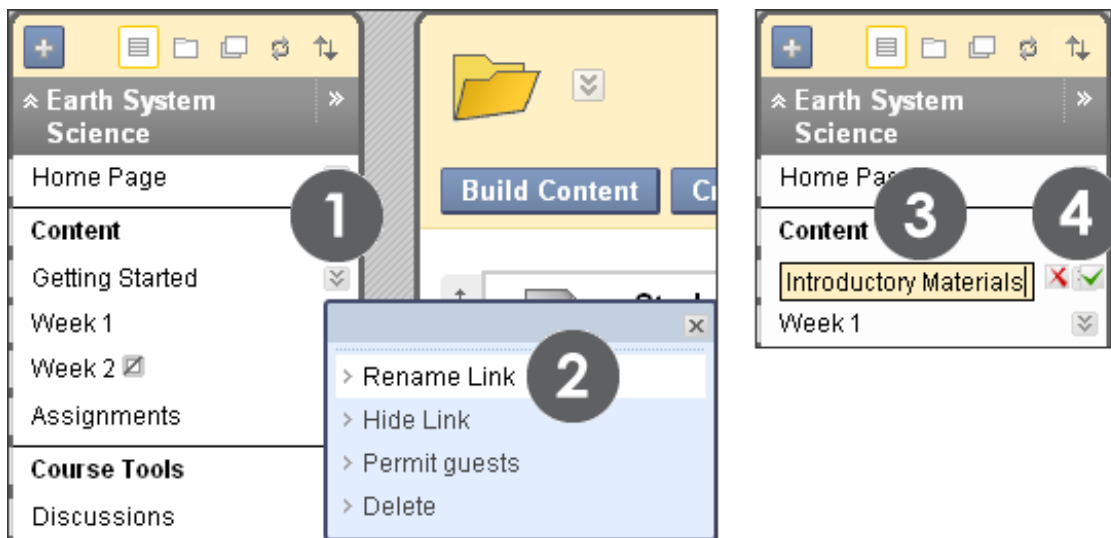


Figure 9.4

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

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

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 are. They are needed in future activities.
- Make one of the links unavailable to students. Notice the unavailable icon appearing next to the link title.
- Turn **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 be using 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>It is a good practice to make unused tools unavailable and only show tools when they are needed.</p> <p>Deciding where to put tools depends on the situation.</p> <p>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>Method 2: Access individual tools from a Content Area. This method can provide tools near related content. For example, if students are 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>Method 3: Access tools from the Tools link on the Course Menu. Consider using this method to quickly set up a 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, you will learn about the choices for the Course Menu and other aspects of your course. You will start by customizing the course style and choosing the default Course Menu and content view. Next, you will select the most appropriate page for the course entry point for your learners and customize it by adding a banner. You will also select which tools will be available to course members. Finally, you will 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
- 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

Customize your course using the customization options on the Control Panel. The Control Panel is the central access point for course management functions and is not visible to students. The Control Panel is located under the Course Menu.

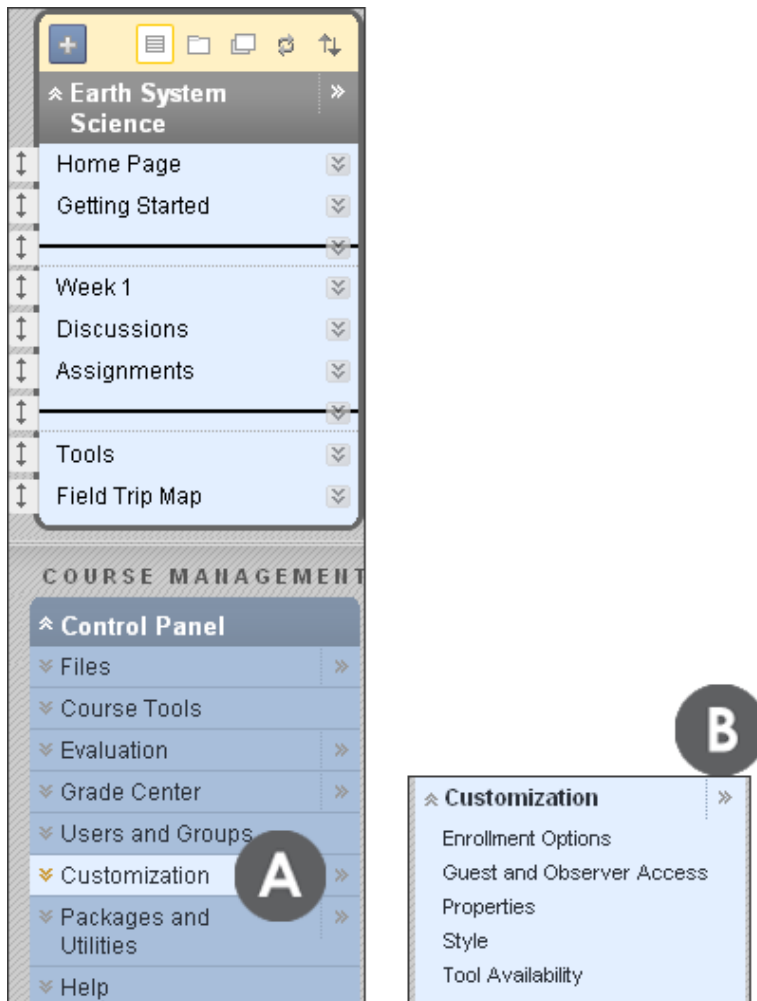


Figure 1

► Take Note

- A. Expand each of the items on the Control Panel by clicking the double arrows pointing downward. The menu appears directly below the subheading. Select the option.
- B. Alternatively, expand an item into the content frame by clicking the double arrows pointing right. Select an option.

Customizing the Course Style

Select **Style** from the **Customization** section of the Control Panel to customize the menu style and display, the default content view, the course entry point, and add a banner.

Customization

- Enrollment Options
- Guest and Observer Access
- Properties
- Style**
- Tool Availability

Style

Cancel Submit

1. Select Menu Style

Preview

Earth System Science (earth_sys_sci_104)

- Menu Item 1
- Menu Item 2
- Menu Item 3

Style **A**

☒ Text ☐ Buttons

Background Color

Text Color Black

B 2. Course Menu Display

Default Menu View ☐ Folder View ☒ List View

☒ Permit Both Views

C 3. Default Content View

Content View ☐ Icon Only ☐ Text Only ☒ Icon and Text

4. Select Course Entry Point

Entry Point **D**

Home Page

Home Page

Announcements

Getting Started

Week 1

Discussions

Tools

Course Checklist

5. Select Banner

Current Banner Image

New Banner Image

Attach File

Browse My Computer **E**

Figure 2

► Take Note

Customize the course style in the following ways:

- A. Display the links on the Course Menu as text or buttons.
- B. Select a default view for the Course Menu – either Folder View or List View.
- C. Select a default content view – Icon Only, Text Only, or Icon and Text.
- D. Change the course entry point. The course entry point is the first page students see when entering the course. The default course entry point is the Home Page. Select the new entry point from the drop-down list. Any link that appears on the Course Menu can be the course entry point.
- E. Add a banner to the top of the course entry page. The banner can be a text phrase or an image. The image needs to be in .png or .jpg format and approximately 480 x 80 pixels.

NOTE: Banner images must be uploaded from your local computer; however, a copy is stored in Course Files with each new upload. If you delete the image from the course entry page, the image file remains in Course Files.

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>Two good graphic formats for use on the Web are .png and .jpg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A .png is good for full color images, logos, and illustrations.• A .png retains image detail.• A .png can be transparent, which means non-rectangular shapes can appear over a background pattern.• Be aware that some older browsers do not support the .png format.• A .jpg is usually a better file format to use for photographs or images in which there are subtle gradations.• For photos, .jpgs will compress to a smaller file size. However, if the file compression is too high, you can lose quality.• A .jpg can never be transparent.

Changing Tool Availability

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

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

Tool State	Description of State
Available	The tool is available throughout the 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 the course.
Visible to Observers	The tool is visible (read-only), but not usable to Observers, when Observers are permitted into the course.
Available in Content Areas	The instructor can place a link to the tool in one or more Content Areas in the course.

If a tool is made 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**.

					Cancel	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"/>	-		
Announcements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-		
Assignment	-	-	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Audio	-	-	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Blackboard Scholar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
Blank Page	-	-	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Blog	-	-	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Figure 3

LEGEND:

Filled check box: system administrator made the tool unavailable.

Hyphen: availability settings in the system cannot be changed.

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?	<p>In addition to your students, Guests and Observers may be enrolled in your course.</p> <p>Guests can be prospective students, guest lecturers, or others with limited access.</p> <p>Observers are connected to an individual student account, such as an advisor who works with one of your students.</p>

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 the **Files** area in the **Control Panel** to see that the image was added to Course Files.

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.
- Turn **Edit Mode** to **OFF**. On the Course Menu, select **Tools** and preview how this page appears to students.
- Turn **Edit Mode** to **ON** and make the tools available again.

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

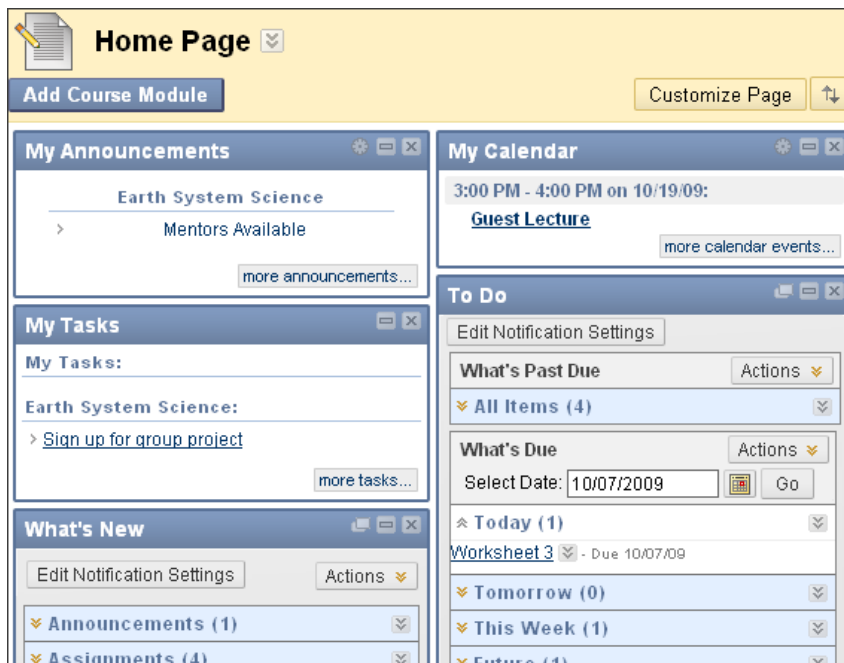


Figure 4

The instructor chooses the page layout and modules available from a pool of modules managed by the system administrator. Other types of content cannot be added to the Home Page or other Module Pages. For example, you cannot add a tool link on a Module Page.

Adding and Removing Modules

A variety of modules can be added 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
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
Textpad	Type plain text or HTML for display on the page

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 a module with content is removed, when the module is added 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, select the check box for each module you want to add.
4. Click **Submit**.

Home Page

Add Course Module 2

Add Module 4

1 Select Modules

Select modules to appear on the page: Home Page

☒ **Alerts**
Displays notifications of past due and early warning items for all the courses relevant to the user.

☐ **Calculator**
Displays a calculator tool.

☐ **Content Collection: Course Content**
Content Collection module for a user's Course content.

☒ **Dictionary**

Figure 5.1

Customizing Your Course: Adding and Removing Modules

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

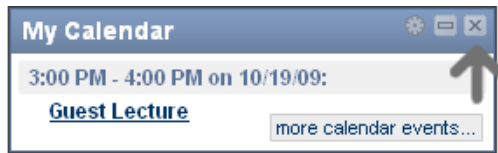


Figure 5.2

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.

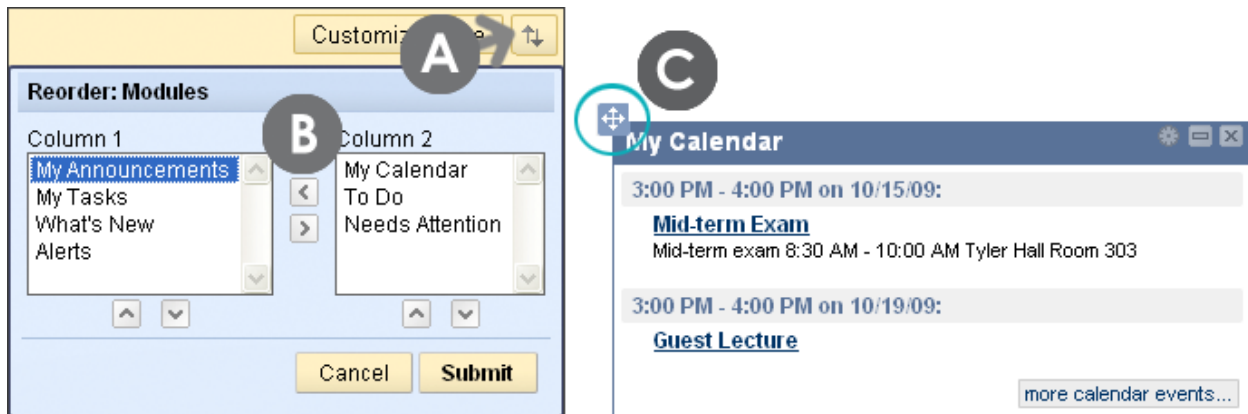


Figure 6

► Take Note

- A. The Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool is accessed 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 will appear in the following notification modules: What's New, To Do, Alerts, and Needs Attention. Customizing these notifications will 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 or Graded
- Survey Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Test Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Unread Blog Posts
- Unread Discussion Board Messages
- Unread Journal Entries

► **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 to which you want to receive an email notification; clear the check boxes if an email notification is no longer needed.
6. Click **Submit**.

What's New

Edit Notification Settings (2) Actions

- Announcements (1)
- Assignments (3)
- Content (3)
- Courses/Organizations (1)
- Discussion Board (1)

Edit Notification Settings

⚠ Indicates settings have been changed from default.

» **Edit General Settings**

Define general notification settings such as deletion schedule, and reminder schedule for organizations.

» **Edit Individual Course Settings**

View the current notification settings for courses you are enrolled. Make changes to the notification settings for a specific course.

Astronomy 101

Earth System Science (3)

Current Notification Setting: Earth System Science

Cancel Submit

1. **Notification Destinations**

Email cchu@myschool.edu (6)

2. **Settings**

Notification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dashboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Email
Announcement Available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment Available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment Due (4)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment Past Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment Submitted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (5)
Content Item Available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 7 – The system 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 the course.

5.0 Day 1 Tasks

In this section, you will complete some common activities to prepare your online course for students. First, you will create a welcome announcement and add calendar entries for upcoming events. Then, you will 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 will not appear in the modules.

Announcements appear in the order posted with the most recent announcement appearing first. You can create permanent announcements, which will appear at the top of the list, before all dated announcements.

NOTE: When performing the instructor functions, ensure Edit Mode is ON.

► QUICK STEPS: creating an announcement

1. On the **Control Panel**, under Course Tools, 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**. Format the **Message** text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
4. Under **Web Announcement Options**, select **Permanent** or **Date Restricted**.
5. If applicable, select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes and type the dates and times.
6. Optionally, under **Course Link**, 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**.

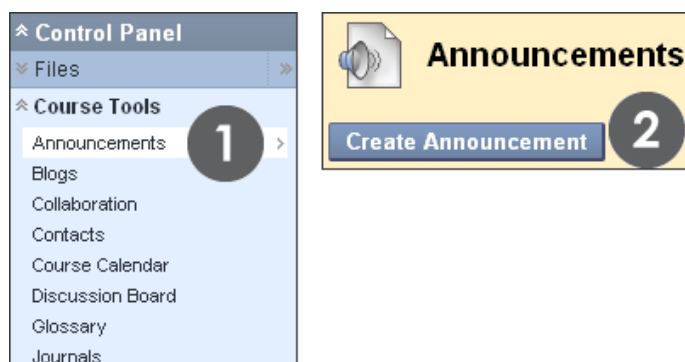


Figure 1.1

Create Announcement 7

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Announcement Information

* Subject Presentation Plans ■ Black

Message Visual Editor: **ON**

Normal 3 Times New Roman
B I U abc
x₂ x²
[] [] []
[] [] []
[] [] []

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.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2. Web Announcement Options

Duration 4 ☐ Permanent 5 ☒ Date Restricted

Select Date Restrictions

☐ Display After 07/29/2009 06:39 PM

☐ Display Until 07/30/2009 06:39 PM

Override User Notification Settings ☐

3. Course Link 6

Click **Browse** to choose an item.

Location /Assignments/Presents Browse...

Figure 1.2

The Subject becomes the title of the announcement on the Announcements page. In the Message text box, you can add text, images, multimedia, and links using the Text Editor functions.

Select the **Override User Notification Settings** check box if you want to send students an email containing the announcement. The email will be sent to all students, even those that 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, due date notifications can be turned off by students, 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**, under **Course Tools**, 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**. Format the **Event Description** text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
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, click the pop-up **Time Selection Menu** to select the times.
7. Click **Submit**.

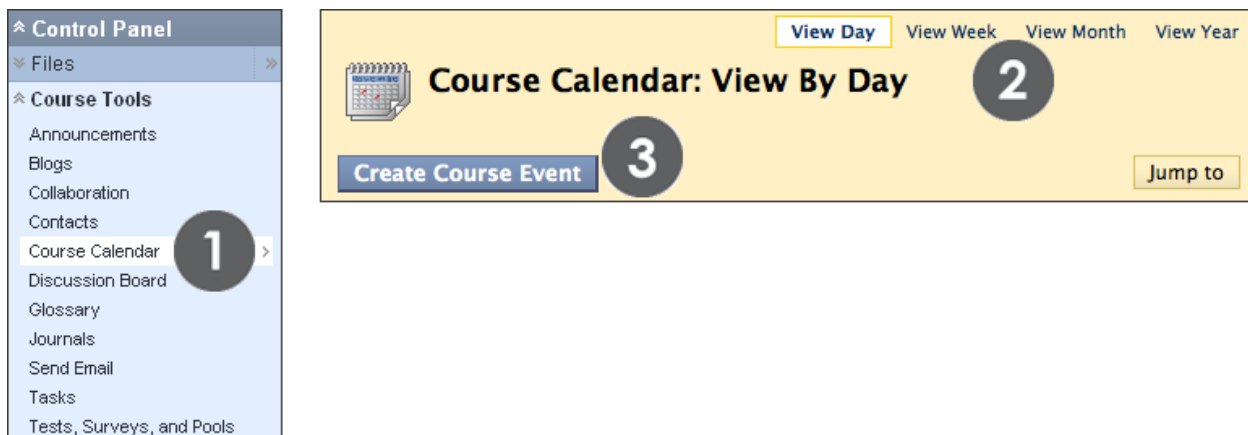


Figure 2.1

Create Course Event

7

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel

Submit

1 Event Information

* Event Name

Event Description

4

Normal

3 Times New Roman

B I U abc x₂ x²

If you would like help selecting your Research Paper topic, or need help narrowing down the topic, please attend the special Chat session.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2 Event Time

5

6

Event Date

Event Time

Event Start Time

Event End Time

12:30 AM

01:00 AM

01:30 AM

02:00 AM

02:30 AM

03:00 AM

03:30 AM

04:00 AM

04:30 AM

Figure 2.2

The Event Name will appear as the link on the Course Calendar. Click the link to display the Event Description. There is a 4,000 character limit for Event Descriptions.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Announcements

- Create an announcement welcoming your students to your online course.

Calendar

- Create one or two calendar entries for upcoming events.
- Turn **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, you will 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. Format text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
8. Click **Submit**.
9. To add more lessons, repeat steps 4–8.
10. Click **OK**.

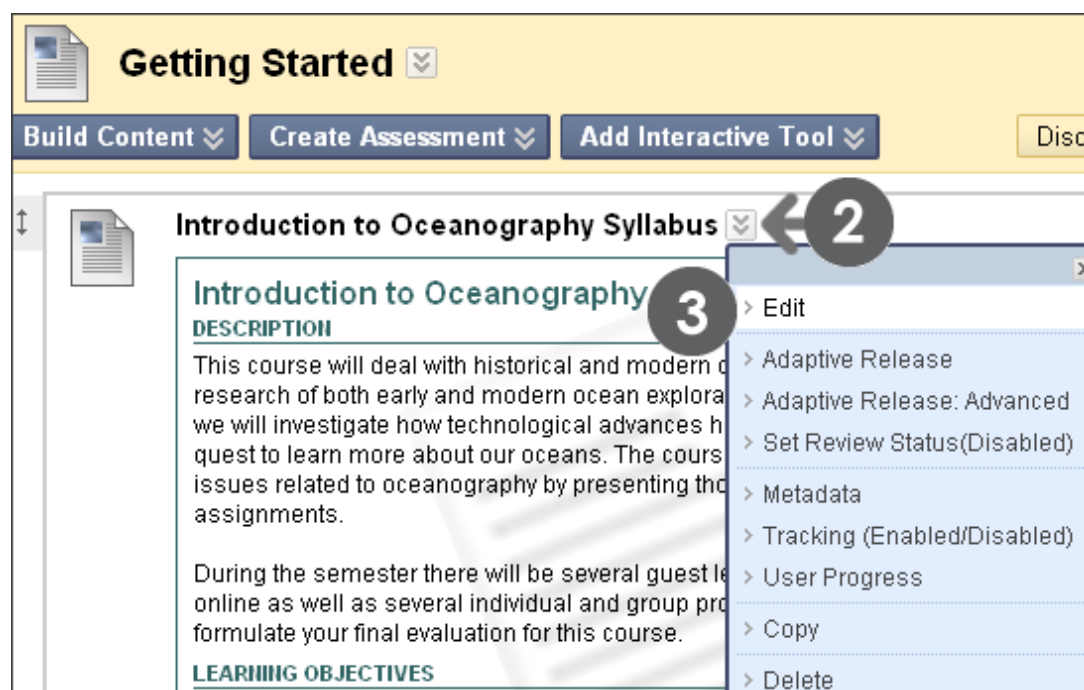


Figure 3.1

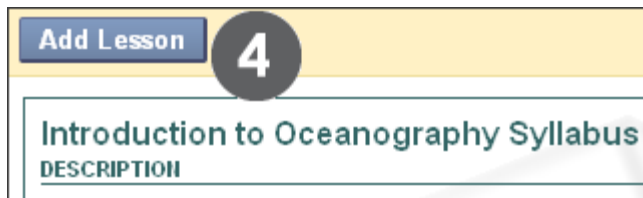


Figure 3.2 – Click Add Lesson on the Action Bar

A screenshot of the 'Edit Lesson: Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus' page. The page has a yellow header with a pencil icon, the title 'Edit Lesson: Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus', and a large black circle with the number '8' in the top right corner. Below the header, there is a legend: '* Indicates a required field.' and two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Submit'. The main content area is titled '1. Lessons'. It contains several form fields: 'Lesson Title' (with a red asterisk and a value of 'Lesson 1: Origin and Morphology of Ocea'), 'Color of Name' (a black color picker and the text 'Black'), 'Lesson Date and Time' (with a checked box for 'No Lesson Date' and a calendar icon), and 'Lesson Times' (with a checked box for 'No Lesson Times', 'Start Time' set to '06:50 PM', and 'End Time' set to '07:50 PM'). A large black circle with the number '5' is next to the 'Lesson Title' field. Below these fields is a 'Lesson Description' section with a rich text editor. The editor has a toolbar with various icons (bold, italic, underline, etc.) and a 'Visual Editor: ON' toggle. A large black circle with the number '6' is next to the 'Lesson Date and Time' field, and a large black circle with the number '7' is next to the 'Lesson Description' toolbar. The description text includes two bullet points: 'Describe variations in deep ocean relief using proper terminology' and 'Recognize processes responsible for creating ocean basin features'.

Figure 3.3 – The Edit Lesson page

Creating a Discussion Forum

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


► 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 will 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** will appear below the forum name.
6. Under **Forum Availability**, select the **Yes** option.
7. Select **Forum Settings**.
8. Click **Submit**.



Figure 4.1

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.



Create Forum

8

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel

Submit

1. Forum Information

*

Name

Icebreaker Forum

4

Description

Normal

3

Arial

B *I* U abe x_2 x^2

abc

Let's start out by getting to know each other. Please use your name in your post. Include some information about yourself, such as why you chose this course, 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 Restrictions

☐ Display After

Date

☐ Display Until

Date

3. Forum Settings

☐ Allow Anonymous Posts

☐ Allow Author to Delete Own Posts

☐ All posts

7

☒ Only posts with no replies

Figure 4.2

TIP: All forums needed for the term can be created in advance and the **Forum Availability** can be set 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 textbook information is added to a course, it is also added to the Course Catalog where perspective students can access this information prior to enrollment.

NOTE: The system administrator determines if the **Search for Textbook** tool is available. If available, you can turn this tool on and off from the Control Panel > Customization > Tool Availability. When this tool is disabled, you will not see **Assign Textbook** on the Action Bar in a Content Area.

► QUICK STEPS: adding textbook information

1. Access the Content Area where the textbook information will appear.
2. Point to **Assign Textbook** on the Action Bar to access the drop-down list.
3. Click **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**.

Getting Started

Build Content ▾ Create Assessment ▾ Add Interactive T ▾ **2** Assign Textbook ▾

> Search for Textbook **3**
> Manual Entry Textbook

Search for Textbook **4** **5**

Search	Keywords	Type	Currency	
ISBN ▾	Earth Sciences	All ▾	US Dollars USD\$ ▾	Go
ISBN		All	US Dollars USD\$	
Title		Digital	Argentinean Peso ARS\$	
Author		Print	Australian Dollars AUD\$	
Subject			Brazilian Real BRLR\$	
			British Pound GBP£	
			Canadian Dollars CND\$	
			Colombian Peso COP\$	
			Danish Krone DKKkr	
			Euro EUR€	
			Hong Kong Dollar HKD\$	
			Indian Rupee INRRp	
			Japanese Yen JPY¥	
			Mexican New Peso MXP\$	
			New Zealand Dollars NZD\$	
			Norwegian Kroner NOKkr	
			Russian Ruble RURpyб	
			Saudi Arabian Riyal SARر.ي.س	
			South African Rand ZARR	
			South Korean Won KRW₩	
			Swedish Krona SEKkr	

Figure 5.1 – Use the drop-down lists and type Keywords to search for textbooks

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

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Search for Textbook" with a yellow header. Below the header, there are four main sections: 1. Search filters: "Search" (Title dropdown), "Keywords" (Earth Sciences text input), "Type" (Print dropdown), and "Currency" (US Dollars USD\$ dropdown), each with a "Go" button. 2. Sort By: "Sort By" (ISBN dropdown) and a "Go" button. 3. Navigation: "Page 1 of 2" with left and right arrow buttons. 4. Results: "Displaying 1 to 25 of 46 items" followed by a list item. The list item shows a "No image available" placeholder, the title "Foundations of Earth Science (Application in Earth Science)", and the author "Lutgens". Callouts are placed as follows: 'A' points to the "Sort By" dropdown; 'B' points to the "Displaying 1 to 25 of 46 items" text; 'C' points to the "Page 1 of 2" navigation; and 'D' points to the "Select" button next to the first result.

Search for Textbook

Search: Title Keywords: Earth Sciences Type: Print Currency: US Dollars USD\$

Sort By: ISBN

Page 1 of 2

Displaying 1 to 25 of 46 items


 **Foundations of Earth Science (Application in Earth Science)**
Author: Lutgens
ISBN: 978-0-536-40426-8
Publisher: Pearson Higher Education&Professional Group

Figure 5.2

► **Take Note**

- A. You can 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 appear.
- C. Navigate to other results pages using the arrows.
- D. Click **Select** next to the appropriate textbook information. You will be taken to the **Create Textbook** page before the item is added.

Create Textbook

* Indicates a required field.

Back Submit and Add Another Submit

1. Textbook Information

TEXTBOOK

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE

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

Description

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

2. Options

Permit Users to View this Content ☒ Yes ☐ No

Track Number of Views ☐ Yes ☒ No

Select Date and Time Restrictions

Display After

Display Until

Figure 5.3

► Take Note

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

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

Day 1 Tasks: Adding Textbook Information

If a search does not provide your textbook, you can type information in the provided fields on the **Manual Entry Textbook** page. This information is editable at any time. Any text boxes without information will 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 Files** to locate the file. If an image is not uploaded, a default is used.

Getting Started [v]

Build Content [v] **Create Assessment** [v] **Add Interactive Tool** [v] **Assign Textbook** [v]

> Search for Textbook
> Manual Entry Textbook

Manual Entry Textbook

* Indicates a required field. **Cancel** **Submit and Add Another** **Submit**

1. Textbook Information

Type Print [v]

ISBN

* Title

Subtitle

Author

Publisher

Published Date [v]

Page Count

Binding

Description

Price

Currency US Dollars USD\$ [v]

* 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 [v] ☐ Display Until [v]

Figure 5.4

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.
- Turn **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, if **Assign Textbook** appears on the Action Bar, 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 has been 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 and reorder items in a Content Area
- 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
- 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?	
<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?	