COURSES AND CONTENT

ABOUT COURSES

Courses contain content and tools for your learning experience. Your instructor manages the course through the Course Menu and Control Panel. While your instructor has control over the course, the Blackboard administrator at your school can set defaults that can restrict or require specific features and tools.

A course consists of the Course Menu and a content frame. The Course Menu links to content and tools and the content frame will display the feature you select.

A. Course Menu – The Course Menu appears on the left side of a course and contains links to materials and tools within the course.

B. Content Frame – The content frame occupies most of the screen to display the current view. You will interact with content from this screen.

C. Content Area – Content Areas are top-level containers that organize and store course content, such as lecture notes, assignments, and tests. The content appears in the content frame.

ABOUT COURSE CONTENT

A Content Item is any type of file, text, image, or link that appears to users in a Content Area, Learning Module, Lesson Plan, or folder. Your instructors can add a number of different types of content to these course areas.

You can view different types of content in a Content Area. All content shares a few similarities. Each piece of content has a name and description. Many types of content allow your instructor to set options, such as availability and date restrictions.
Your instructors can limit the availability of content items based on date, time, individual users, course groups, and performance on graded items. This means that the content displayed in the Course Menu or Content Areas can change over time. For example, your instructor restricts access to a piece of content until you complete a unit test. The content appears after you complete the test. There are further settings that can be added such as only making the item appear after you complete the test and score at least a 70 percent. If you have questions about content that your instructor mentions should be available, make sure to ask them if it has been made available to everyone or based on specific criteria.

**Review Status** allows your instructor to track interaction with specific content items and may affect the release of additional content. For example, your instructor enables Review Status for an article added to a Content Area and made the release of a quiz contingent upon you reviewing the article. After you mark the article Reviewed, the quiz appears.

A Mark Reviewed option appears on the item when it is opened. After reviewing the item, select the option to mark it as Reviewed.

**Note:** You can switch between Reviewed and Mark Reviewed. Use this option if you want to go back to a content item and review it again. Your instructor only views the current setting. If the item is marked Reviewed, then switched to Mark Review, your instructor does not see that the item was marked Reviewed at any time.

**COURSE CONTENT AREAS**

**Content Areas** are top-level containers that organize and store course content, such as lecture notes, assignments, and tests. Content Areas that are available to users make up the Course Menu that appears as links in the frame on the left side of the course. To access a Content Area, click its name on the Course Menu. The content appears in the content frame. Typical Content Areas that you might see are Instructor Info, Assignments, Tests, My Grades, and the names of units that correspond to the work you will complete throughout your course.
Your instructor or administrator creates the names of the areas in a course, which may differ from the names shown in this section. The **Content Area** names can also change course by course within your institution.

You can access a **Content Area** item by clicking its link in the course menu, such as a Discussion Board or a file. Your instructors can further organize content using folders, subfolders, Learning Modules, or Lesson Plans.

As items and links are viewed in a **Content Area**, use the breadcrumbs to navigate to previous pages.
COURSE CARTRIDGES

Your instructors have the option of using Course Cartridge content in their courses. This content is created by third party publishers and is available for instructors to download. When you access this content within a course, you are prompted for an Access key. Cartridge content often includes:

- Slides
- Documents
- Quiz questions
- Lists of relevant links

To access a Course Cartridge, you must be enrolled in the course and have an Access Key to open the course material. When you attempt to access Course Cartridge content the first time, you will be prompted for a key. The publisher of the Course Cartridge provides the Access Key for a course. The Access Key for a Course Cartridge may be found in the course text book or on the publisher’s website. After you enter the key, you can open any content in the course that comes from that Course Cartridge.

LESSON PLANS

A Lesson Plan is a container for content similar to a Content Area or folder. This allows you to view the lesson profile, objectives, and content items you need to complete a lesson. Your instructor can provide you with information on how your knowledge will be measured, the needed materials, the duration of the instruction, and what you should have learned after the instruction.

Typically, Lesson Plans are added to Content Areas, but they can be added to Learning Modules and folders.
The Lesson Plan appears first in the content list and has its own unique icon. If a description was added to the Lesson Plan when it was created, it appears following the title.

1. Select the Content Area from the Course Menu that holds the Lesson Plan. For example, Week 2.
2. Click the name of the Lesson Plan.

The Lesson Plan’s general information and content items are organized following the title. The top portion contains general information about the lesson, while the bottom contains content items.

In this example, the content items for the lesson are shown with icons and text. Your instructor can select Icons Only, Text Only, or Icons and Text for the content view. By default Lesson Plans have four sections:

- Instructional Level
- Instructor
- Subject Area
- Objectives

Your instructor may customize the sections in the lesson plan, so you may see different sections.
**LEARNING MODULES**

A *Learning Module* is an organized collection of content presented together. *Learning Modules* are shells in which other content items such as files, folders and tools are added. It can support a course goal, a course objective, a subject, a concept, or a theme. *Learning Modules* enable you to follow a structured path for progressing through content.

The sequential path may be enforced or you may be allowed to access any item at any time. For example, your instructor may set up a *Learning Module* on Astronomy. This unit walks you through a series of articles about Astronomy, displays media files, and finally presents an assessment about the information covered. You must move through the contents in this order if the sequential path is enforced. You will know if there is a set path because only the link immediately following the page you are viewing is available. If the sequential path is not enforced, all the links will be available.

To move from page to page within a module, click the right and left arrow buttons on the top right of the content area.

*Example:* The button will appear next to the "Page 1 of 3" text.

![The Solar System](image)

*Note:* The name of a folder or subfolder will count as a page. For example, if the *Learning Module* contains two folders, each containing one file, there will be a total of 4 pages.

It is also possible to navigate by clicking the name of the page in the *Table of Contents* instead of clicking the forward or back arrow buttons.

The *Table of Contents* displays next to the *Course Menu* on the left-hand side of the page. It can also be moved below the *Learning Module* content area.
There are three display options available on the header of the Table of Contents:

- Minimize
- Maximize
- Move to the bottom or the left

Click the button with the arrow pointing down ( сентябрь ) to move the Table of Contents to the bottom of the page. To move the Table of Contents back to the left, click the left-facing arrow ( стрелка ). The move to the left option will reposition the Table of Contents to the left of the content area.

*Note:* Your instructors can organize the Table of Contents however they see fit. The Table of Contents can be displayed using roman numerals, numbers, letters, or any combination of the three.

**MASHUPS**

*Note:* Your instructor controls which tools are available. If this tool is not available, your instructor may have disabled it.

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.

You can use this content in a variety of ways within a course: a standalone piece of content, part of a test question, a topic in a *Discussion Board*, or as part of an assignment. For example, you can include a clip of your favorite movie in a journal entry.

*Mashups* are displayed in the following ways:

- **Embed:** The *Mashup* displays directly on the page.
- **Thumbnail:** A small picture of the *Mashup* displays on the page with controls to launch it.
- **Text Link with Player**: A link to the **Mashup** is displayed on the page. Click the link to launch the **Mashup**.

**Mashups** are added through **Text Editor**.

**DEFAULT MASHUP TYPES**

Blackboard Learn supports any file type available on the following websites:

- **Flickr**: A website for viewing and sharing photos and images.
- **SlideShare**: A website for viewing and sharing slide presentations and documents.
- **YouTube**: A website for viewing and sharing online videos.

The Blackboard administrator at your school may enable other types of **Mashups**.

- **How to Create a Mashup Item Using the Text Editor**
  - Navigate to an assignment, journal, or other piece of content, for example, Lesson 1: Ocean Exploration.
  - On the **Upload Assignment** page, click **Add Mashup** in the third row of **Text Editor** functions.
  - Select Flickr Photo, SlideShare Presentation, or YouTube Video.
On the Search for *Mashup* pop-up window, search for content. Type the content name in the Search box and click *Go*.

On the Search Results page, you can click *Preview* to examine the items, or click *Select* to include the appropriate item.
- On the *Create Mashup Item* page, change the *Name* of the item. This is a required field.
- Set the *Mashup Options*.
- Click *Submit*. 
On the **Upload Assignment** page, click **Submit**.

The **Mashup** appears with your content.

If the **Mashup** does not appear or displays an error after initially appearing, it is possible that the URL has changed or the item was deleted from Flickr, SlideShare, or YouTube.

**ABOUT COURSE GROUPS**

Your instructor can create groups of students within a course. **Groups** usually consist of a smaller group of users in a course, such as study groups or project groups. These course groups have their own area in the course to collaborate. These spaces are equipped with tools that can assist each group member. Within **Group** page, you may:

- Send email
- Exchange files
- Enter discussion forums
- Enter collaboration sessions
- Change the position of individual modules by dragging and dropping

Your instructor can provide **Communication and Collaboration** tools that only group members can access, such as a private **File Exchange** area, a **Group Discussion Board**, and a **Group Journal**.
Your instructor will either place you into a group by selecting your group for you, assigning students in random groups or allowing you to select the group you want to join.

You can only access a group within a course, and there are several ways to access a group.

A **Groups page link**: The Groups page link appears on the Course Menu or in a Content Area. The Groups page lists all available groups and sign-up sheets for self-enroll groups.

B **My Groups panel**: The My Groups panel appears following the Course Menu. The My Groups panel provides direct links to the group space for each group you belong to. You can expand the panel to reveal all the tools that are available for the group to use. If you are enrolled in a group, the panel appears automatically.

C **Group Link**: A Group Link is a link to a single group, sign-up sheet, or the Groups page made available in a course area.

The Group homepage is the center for group activity and can contain a description of the group, a list of members, and tools. If your instructor permits, this page can be customized by adding a banner, selecting a color scheme, and adding Personal Modules, such as My Calendar or Report Card, which are visible only to the member who added the modules. Access Group Tools and Group Members here.
Each group has its own space in the course to work together. When inside your group, you will find the tools your instructor has made available to you. Your instructor may not turn on all the available tools. Be sure to ask about any tools you want to use but do not find on your groups page. Review any instructions provided by your instructor on how to use these tools to complete group work. Tools that can be made available to a group include:

- **Collaboration**: Users within the group can create and attend chat sessions and virtual classroom sessions.
- **File Exchange**: Group members and your instructor can share files in this area. All members, as well as your instructor, can add files. They can also delete files, regardless of who added them.
- **Group Blog**: In the group area, all members of a group can create entries for the same blog, building on one another. Any course member can read and comment on a group blog, but cannot make entries if they are not a member of the group. Your instructor can select the grade option for group blogs.
- **Group Discussion Board**: Users within the group can create and manage their own forums and discuss topics with only the group members.
- **Group Journal**: When used in the group area, all members of a group can view each other's entries, but the group journal can only be viewed by the group and your instructor. Your instructor can select the grade option for journals.
- **Group Task**: Users within the group can create tasks that are distributed to all group members.
- **Group Wiki**: Users within the group can edit, and view their group wiki. Your instructor can view and edit a group wiki and can select the grade option for group wikis.
- **Send Email**: Users within the group can email individual members or the entire group.

**SUBMITTING GROUP ASSIGNMENTS**

You can submit your work to complete group assignments in the following ways:

- Text typed on the *Upload Assignment* page.
- Files attached from your computer or from the *Content Collection*
- A combination of both text and attached files.

Assignments list the name, description, and attachments for course work. You can also choose to include comments for your instructor.

The grade provided by your instructor for the final assignment is given to every member of the group.

- On the *Course Menu*, select the *Content Area* that holds the group assignment, for example, the *Group Assignments Content Area*. Click the name of the assignment.

--OR--

- In the *My Groups* panel, select your group name. On the group homepage, click the name of the assignment in the *Group Assignments* section.
On the **Upload Assignment** page, review the instructions and download any files provided by your instructor and complete the assignment using one or both of the following:

- In the **Submission** box, type your response. You can use the *Text Editor* functions to format the text and include files, images, web links, multimedia, and Mashups.
- If your response to the assignment is in a separate file, click **Browse My Computer** and select a file to attach. If you attach a file, type a **Link Title**. If the box is left blank, the file name becomes the link. Follow any instructions that your instructor provided for naming your file.

**Note:** The **Do not attach** option appears next to an uploaded file. If you have selected an incorrect file, you can remove it with this option. If the same file is attached to your assignment more than once, the new file is saved with a number appended to the name. For example, `history_assignment(1).doc`.

**Note:** If your instructor is using a rubric and has made it available to students, click the **View Rubric** button to view grading criteria.

- Optionally, in the **Comments** box, type your comments.

**WARNING!** If your instructor has not allowed multiple attempts, assignments can be submitted only once. Ensure that you have attached any required files to your assignment before you click **Submit**.
**WARNING!** When you finish your assignment, you must click *Submit*. If you do not, your instructor will not receive your completed assignment.