Student Experience

Logging In

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

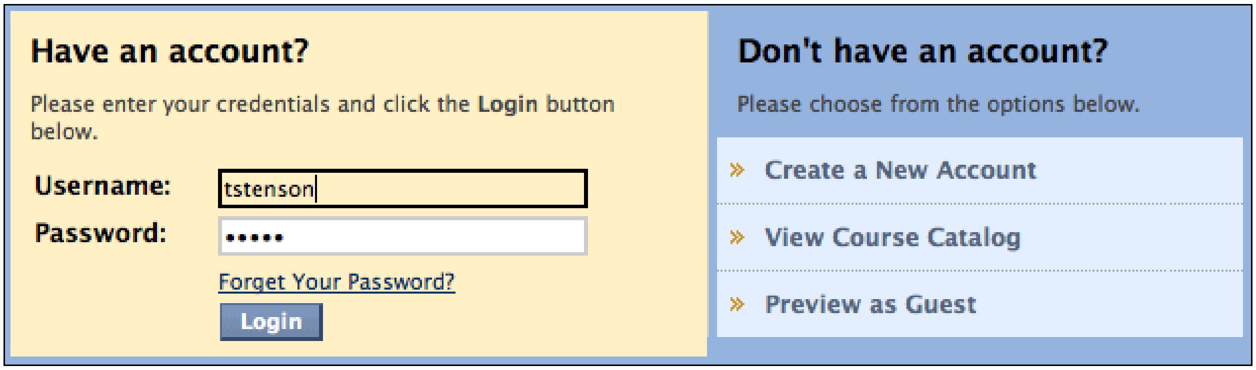


Figure 1

▸ ***QUICK STEPS:*** **logging in**

1. In your browser, enter the URL.
2. Enter your **Username** and **Password**.

Exploring the My Institution Tab

After logging in to Blackboard Learn, the contents of the My Institution tab are displayed. It contains the My Courses module which lists all the courses to which you have access.

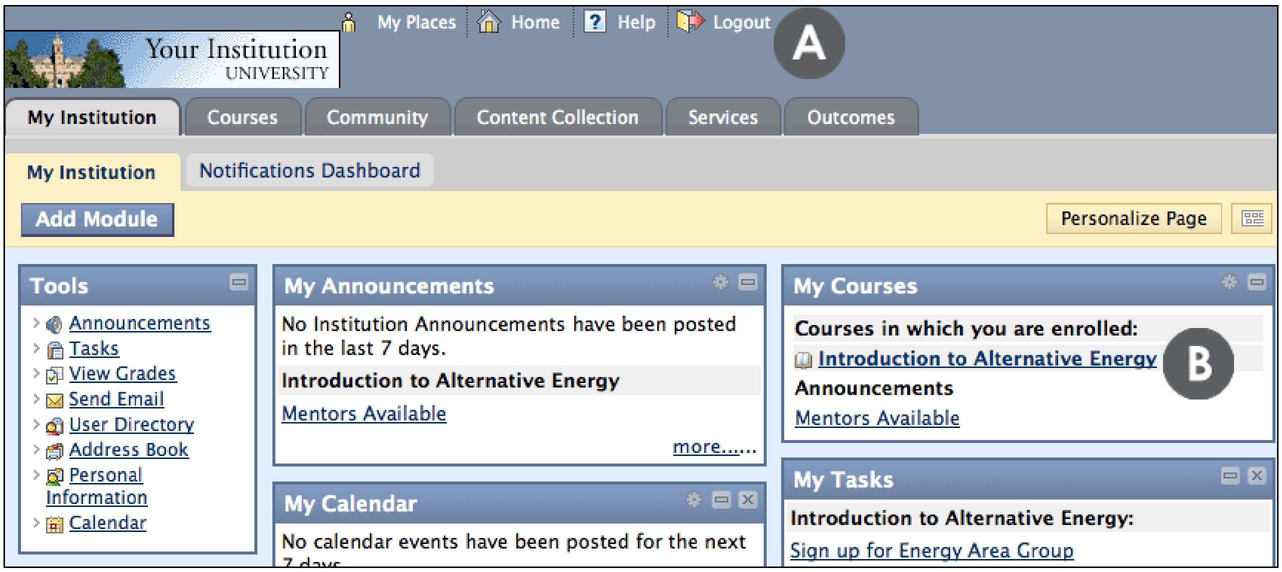


Figure 2

Take Note

A From the page header, go to My Places, your institution's home page, Help, or logout.

B To select a course, click its title.

The My Institution tab also contains the following modules:

- Tools – view announcements, calendar dates, task reminders from instructors, and grades for courses in which you are enrolled. Also, send email to all members of courses in which you are enrolled.
- My Announcements – displays announcements for courses in which you are enrolled. It may also contain announcements from your institution's system administrator.

- Optional modules – view other modules, such as My Calendar, My Tasks, and What's New.

Student Experience

The Course Environment

Each course will vary depending on the instructor and the institution. However, there are some common features.

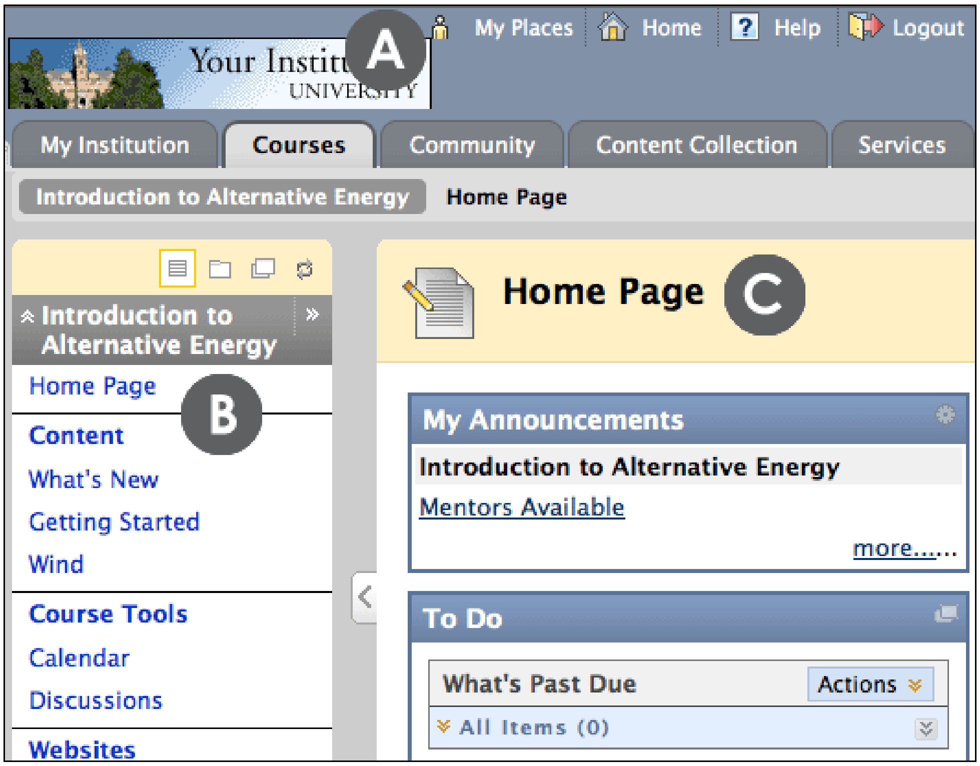


Figure 3

▸ Take Note

C Page header – identical to the page header you saw upon logging in, including My Institution and Courses tabs.

D Course Menu – the access point for all course content. Instructors decide which links are available here.

E Content frame – displays the selected tool or Content Area. By default, when you enter a course, the Home Page appears. The instructor may change the default.

Student Experience

Accessing Course Content and Tools

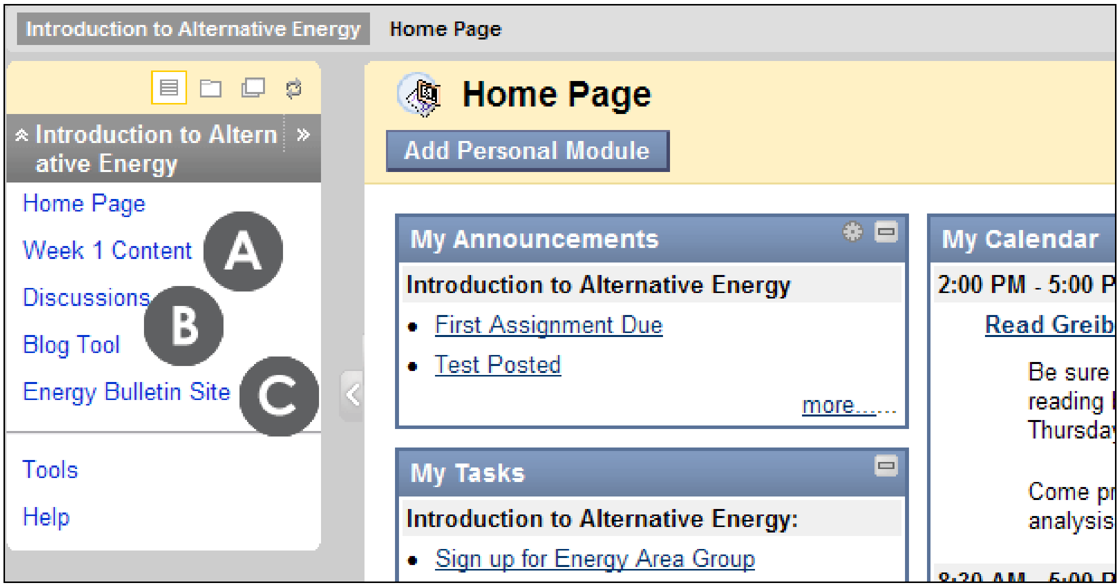


Figure 5.1

▸ 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

B Individual tools – such as the Discussion Board, Calendar, and Blogs tool

C External links – such as Web sites used for an assignment

D Course links – direct links to content also available in a Content Area

E Module pages – pages that contain modules such as What's New and My Calendar

Student Experience

Accessing Course Content and Tools

Course Menu Views

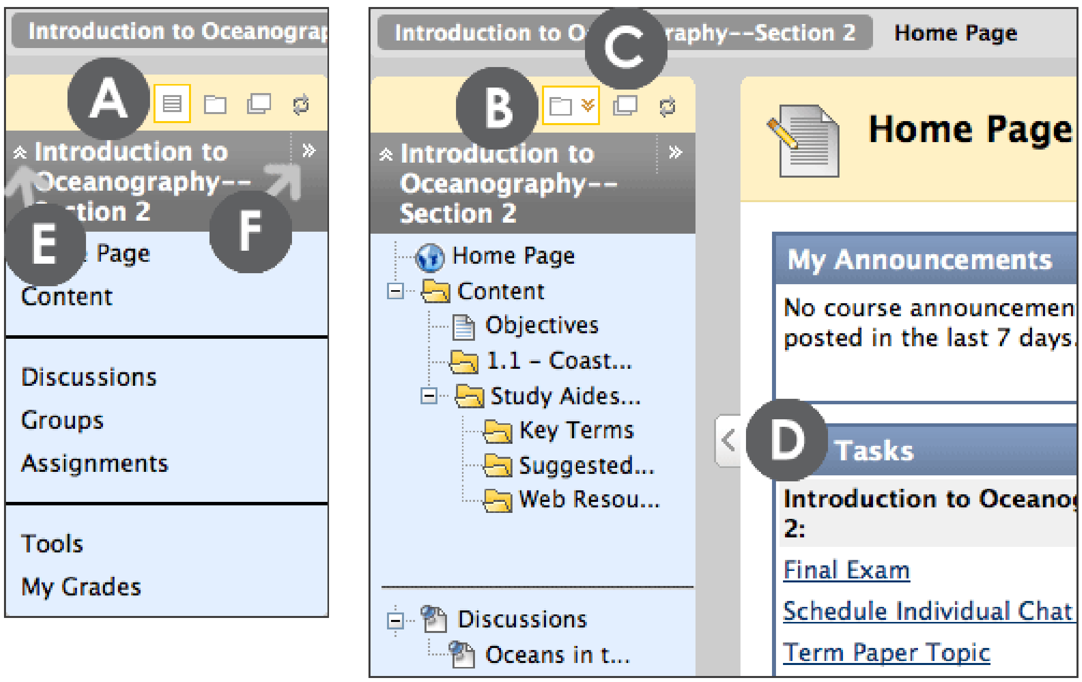


Figure 5.2

▸ Take Note

You can change what is displayed in the Course Menu, and where the menu itself is displayed.

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 Expand or Collapse Menu – collapse the Course Menu for more viewing space in the content frame. Use in conjunction with Display Course Menu in a Window to customize the viewing area.

E Collapse or Expand the Course Menu in the sidebar – collapse the links in the Course Menu.

- Go to Course Entry Page – return to the page chosen by the instructor as the starting point.

Student Experience

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 an external link.

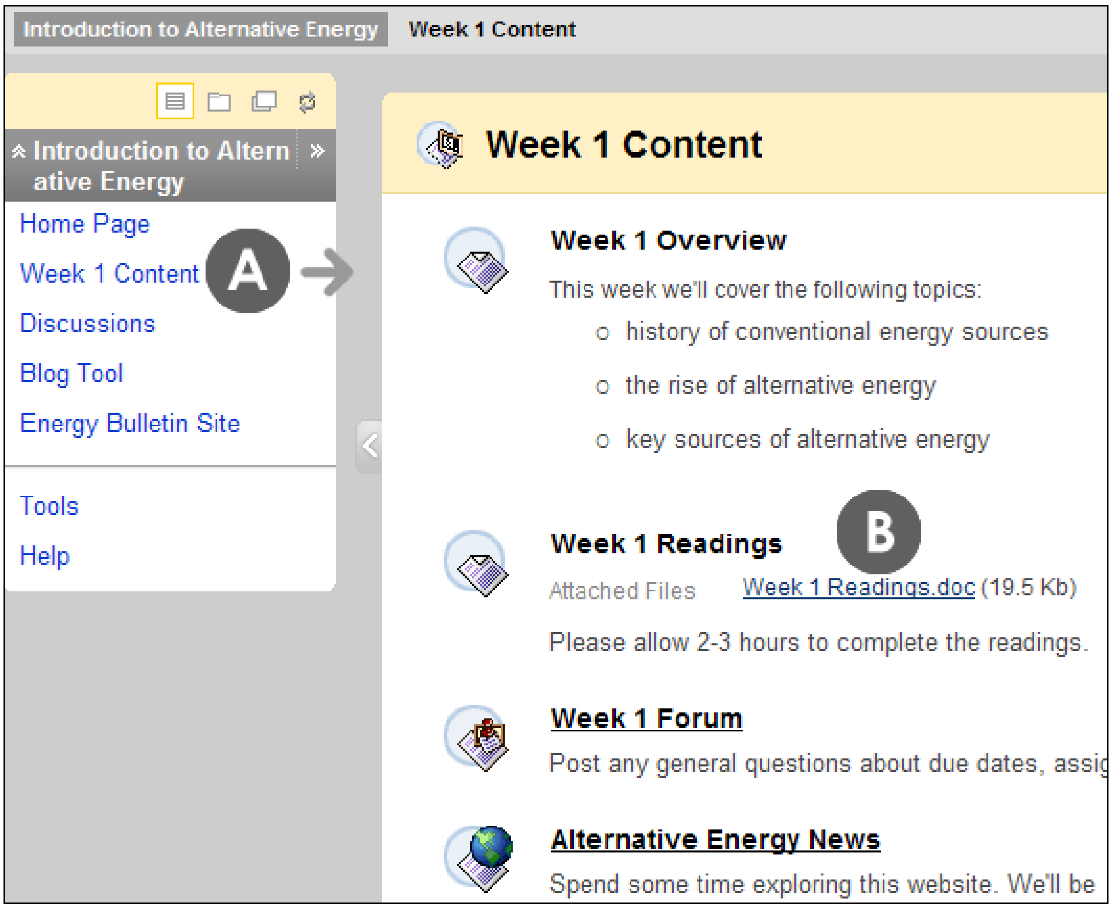


Figure 6.1

Take Note

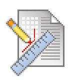
To navigate Content Areas:

A On the Course Menu, click the name of the Content Area. The content appears in the content frame.

B In the content frame, click a link to access its content, such as a Discussion Board link or a file link.

Accessing Content in Content Areas

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

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
	Folder – further organizes content
	Item – text or file
	Assignment – link to an assignment
	Course Tool or Course Link – link to a tool or other area in course
	External Link – link to a Web site
	Test – link to a test

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

Breadcrumbs

As you view the items and links presented in a Content Area, use the breadcrumbs to navigate to previous pages. In the example below, click the title of the course in the breadcrumbs to return to the course Home Page.

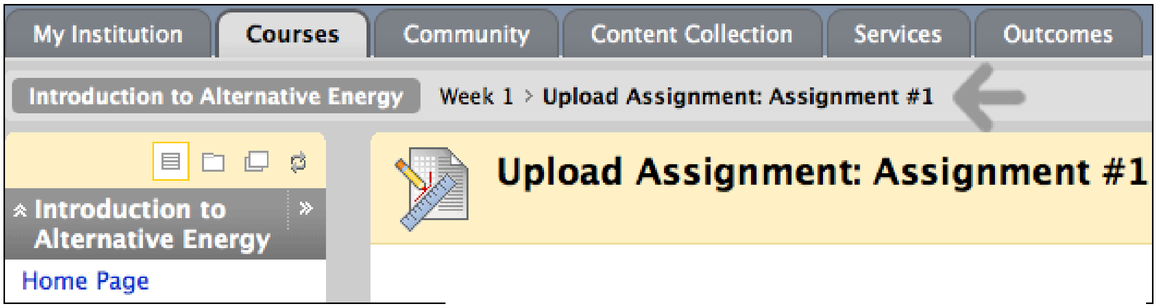
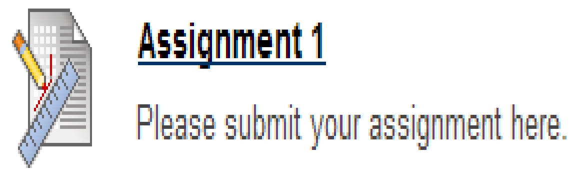


Figure 6.2

Changes to Assignme



Now when you attempt to subr ed to tell Blackboard to “attach” the

1.) Click on the assignment.
2.) Select your file.
3.) Now click on the “Attach File” button
4.) You will see the filename across from the Attached files section.
5.) Now click “Submit” at the button of the page to complete the assignment.

Student Experience

Using the Tools Link

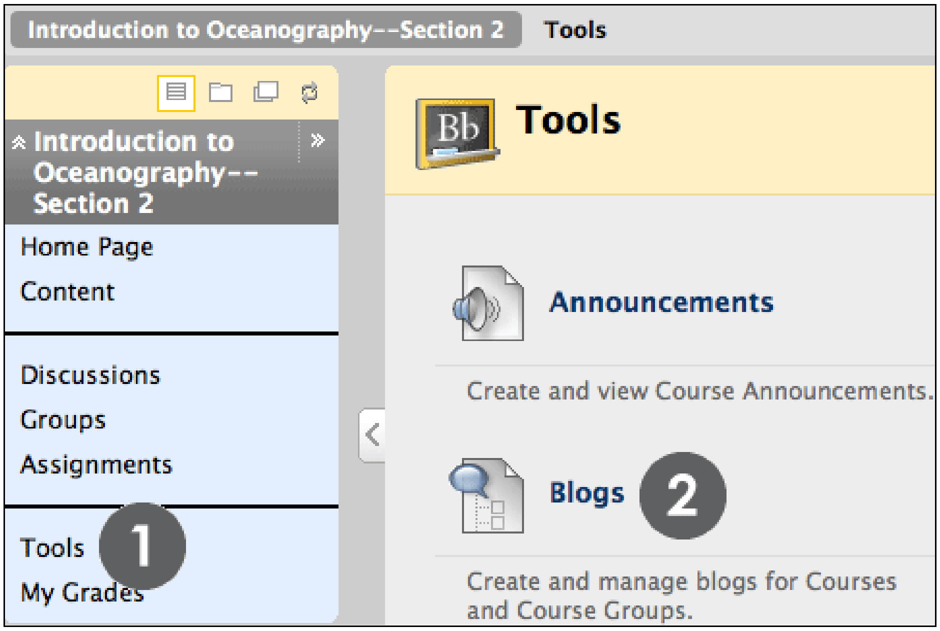


Figure 7

▸ ***QUICK STEPS:*** **accessing tools using the Tools link**

1 From the Course Menu, click **Tools**.

2 Click the name of the tool to access.

The Tools link contains links to all of the tools the instructor has made available in the course.

Presenting Content

Student Experience

Accessing a Learning Module

Learning Modules are used to package and present content. A Learning Module is similar to a folder and allows instructors to organize related content together.

Students typically access Learning Modules from Content Areas.

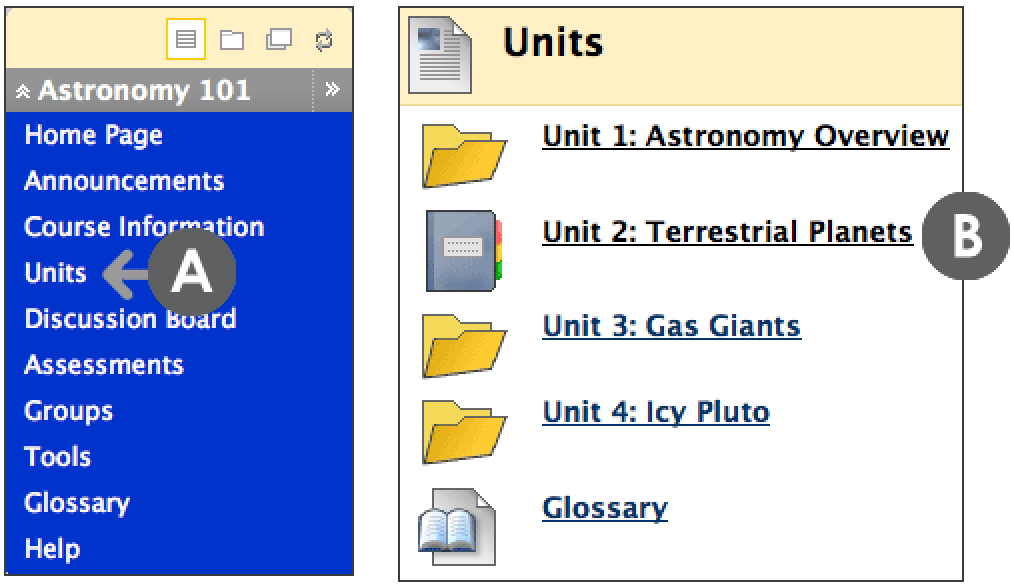


Figure 1

▸ **Take Note**

A. On the Course Menu above, click the *Units* Content Area which holds a Learning Module.
B. The Learning Module is designated by an icon.

The system administrator selects the icon set for the institution so you may see different icons than shown above.

Student Experience

Viewing Content in a Learning Module

Depending on how an instructor sets up a Learning Module, students can view content in one of two ways:

- Sequentially: material is viewed in a specific order.
- Non-sequentially: material is viewed in any order.

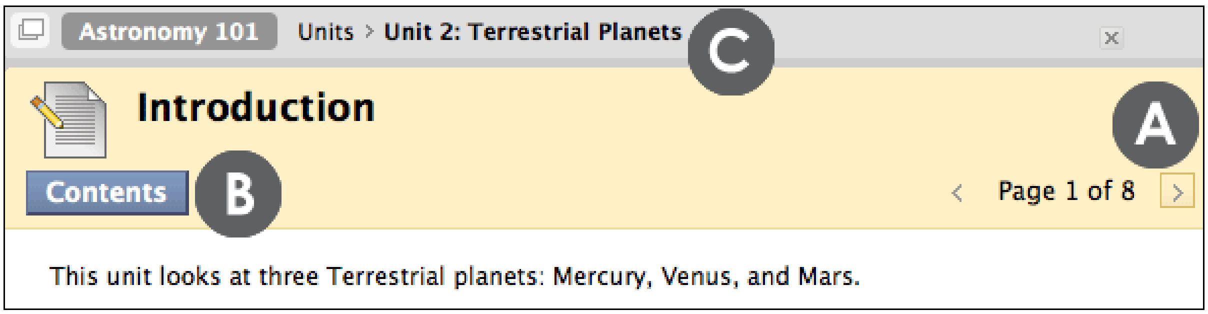


Figure 2.1 – Student view of a Learning Module's first page

▶ **Take Note**

A. On the Action Bar, click *Next Page* for sequential viewing. As you progress through the Learning Module's pages, the ***Previous Page*** function will be active.
B. On the Action Bar, click *Contents* to display a Table of Contents.
C. Use the breadcrumbs to return to the Content Area.

Viewing Content in a Learning Module

The Learning Module's Table of Contents allows students to quickly see a list of available items. A Learning Module can contain different content types, such as discussion forums, assignments, and tests.

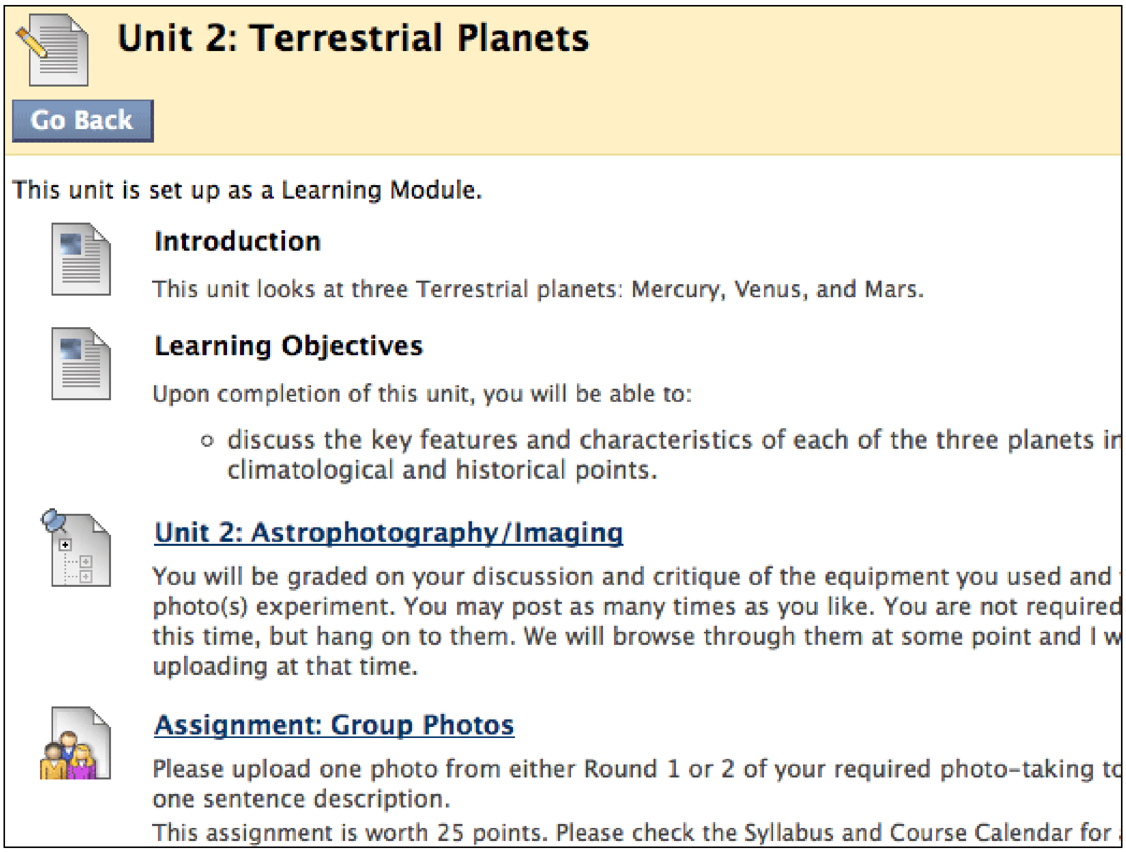


Figure 2.2

For non-sequential viewing, students can click any link in the Table of Contents. If the instructor has selected sequential viewing, the items in the Table of Contents are not links, are numbered, and must be viewed in order using the Next Page function.

Student Experience

Viewing a Glossary

Specific terminology and vocabulary related to the course can be presented in a Glossary. A Glossary helps students find and learn definitions for course-related terms in one convenient location.

The Glossary is found in Tools on the Course Menu. You can also add a link to the Glossary directly on the Course Menu, within a Content Area, or within a Learning Module. The Glossary below has been added to a Content Area.

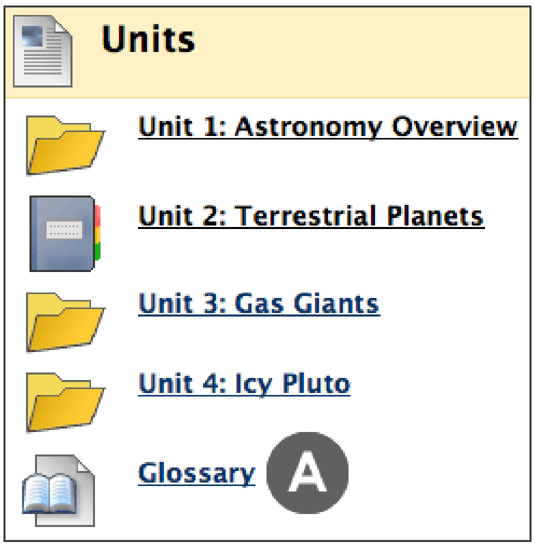


Figure 3.1

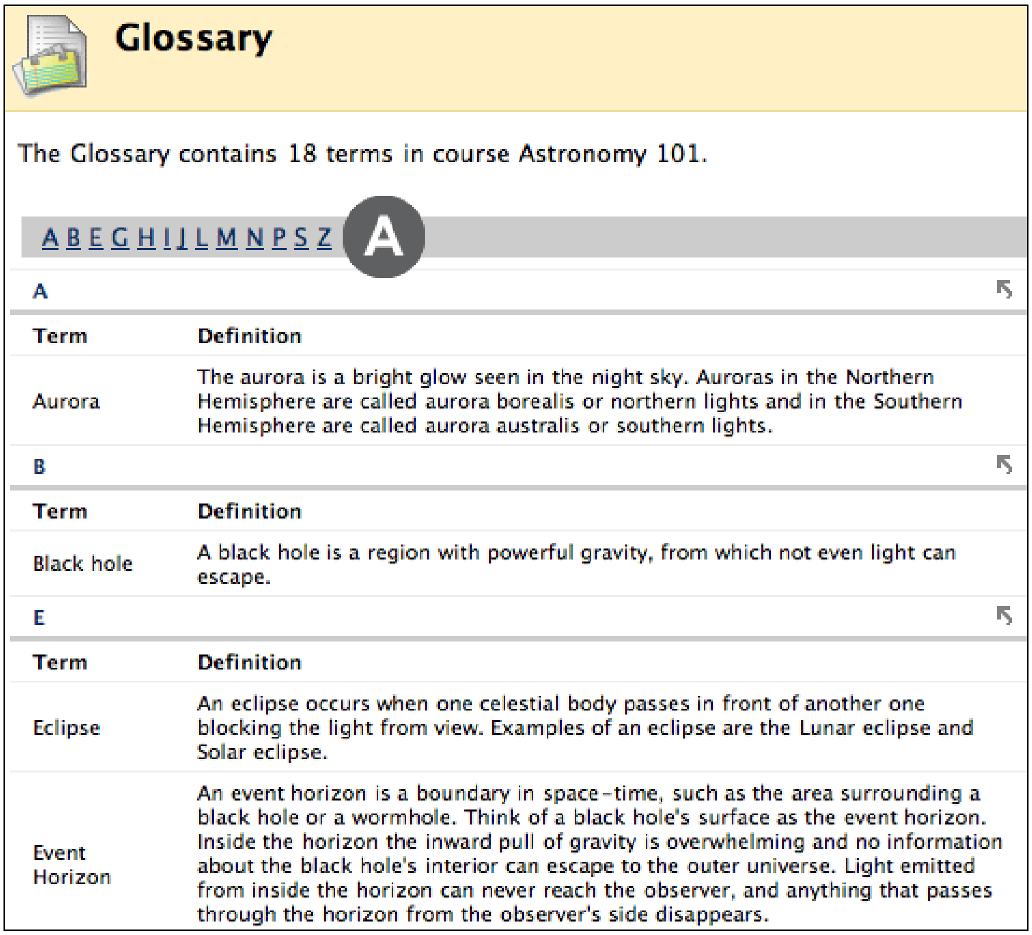
▶ **Take Note**

A. Click *Glossary* to open the Glossary page.

Student Experience

Viewing a Glossary

Glossary terms automatically appear in alphabetical and numerical order.



Glossary

The Glossary contains 18 terms in course Astronomy 101.

A B E G H I J L M N P S Z

A

A

Term	Definition
Aurora	The aurora is a bright glow seen in the night sky. Auroras in the Northern Hemisphere are called aurora borealis or northern lights and in the Southern Hemisphere are called aurora australis or southern lights.

B

Term	Definition
Black hole	A black hole is a region with powerful gravity, from which not even light can escape.

E

Term	Definition
Eclipse	An eclipse occurs when one celestial body passes in front of another one blocking the light from view. Examples of an eclipse are the Lunar eclipse and Solar eclipse.
Event Horizon	An event horizon is a boundary in space-time, such as the area surrounding a black hole or a wormhole. Think of a black hole's surface as the event horizon. Inside the horizon the inward pull of gravity is overwhelming and no information about the black hole's interior can escape to the outer universe. Light emitted from inside the horizon can never reach the observer, and anything that passes through the horizon from the observer's side disappears.

Figure 3.2

Take Note

A. To search for a word, click its first letter.

Testing 1

Student Experience

Accessing Tests

Students typically access tests from a Content Area. Instructors may provide information below the test title, if desired.

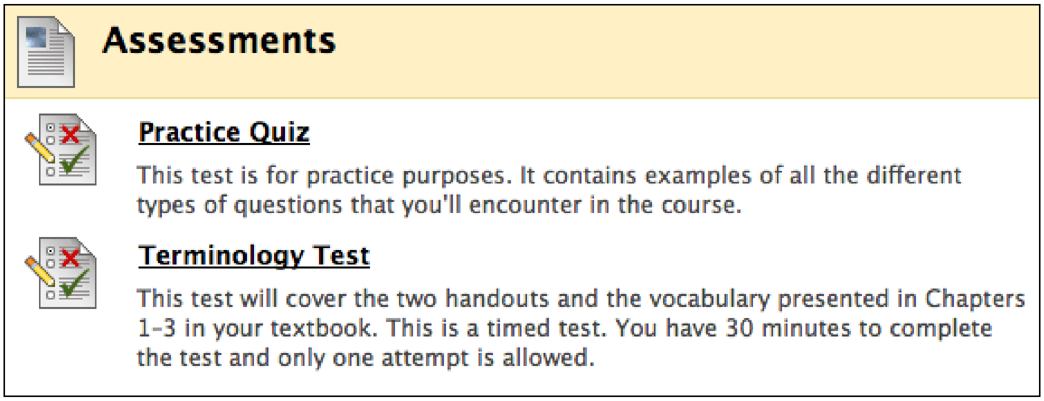


Figure 1.1

After the test is selected, click Begin and the test appears. Any instructions provided by the instructor are located at the top of the test. If the test is timed, the timer starts once Begin is clicked.

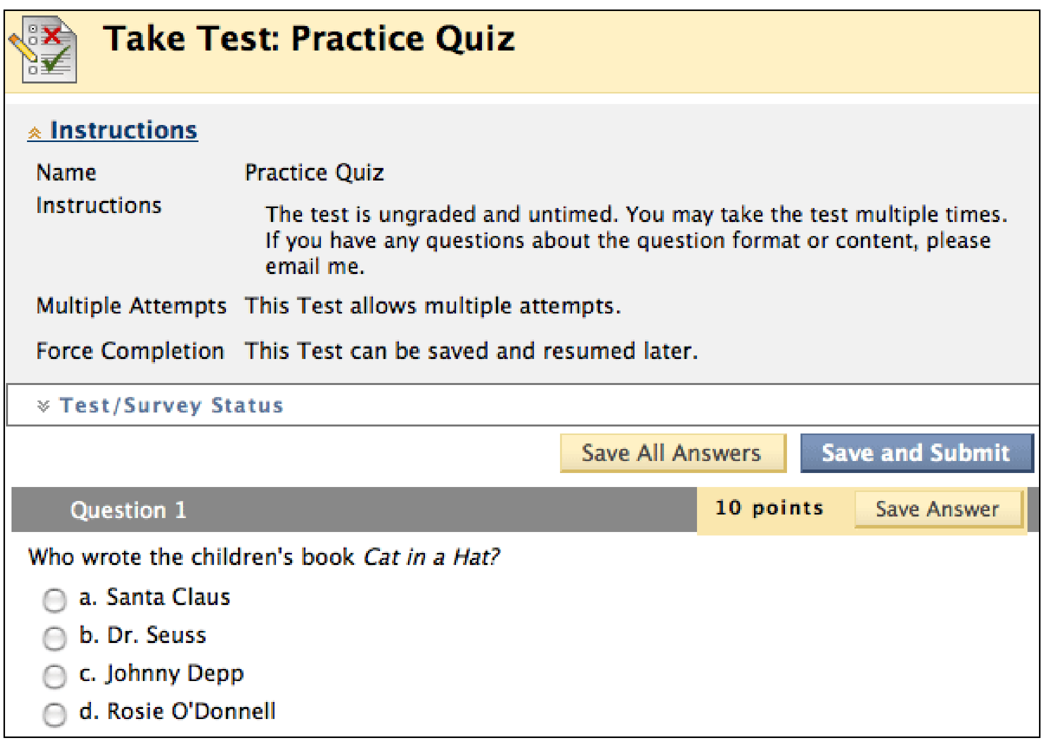


Figure 1.2

Communication

Student Experience

Viewing the Calendar

Students can consult the Calendar to see events the instructor has added, such as:

- Reminders of course meetings and chat sessions
- Due dates for assignments and projects
- Suggested milestones to help keep students on track

By default, students access the Calendar from the course Home Page. It can also be accessed by clicking the Tools link on the Course Menu.

NOTE: The instructor may rename links on the Course Menu.

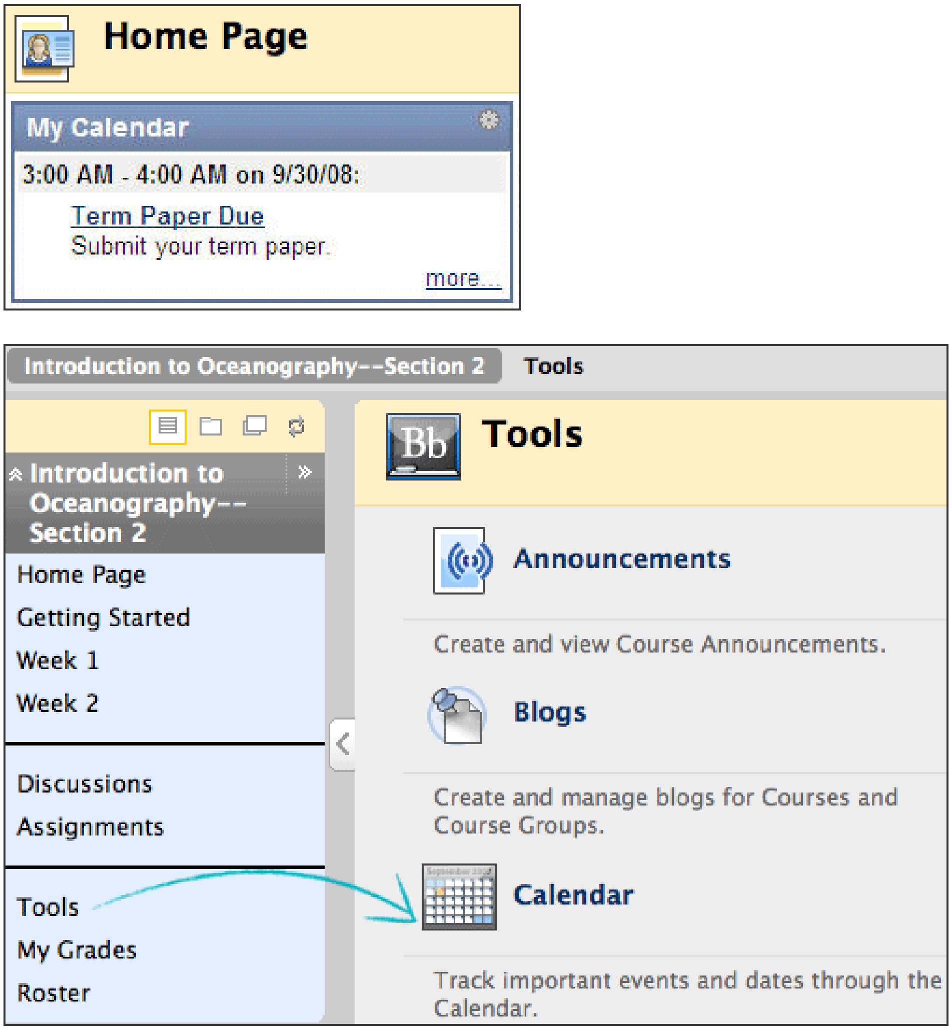

Home Page
My Calendar
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM on 9/30/08:
Term Paper Due
Submit your term paper.
more...
Introduction to Oceanography--Section 2
Tools
Introduction to Oceanography--Section 2
Home Page
Getting Started
Week 1
Week 2
Discussions
Assignments
Tools
My Grades
Roster
Tools
Announcements
Create and view Course Announcements.
Blogs
Create and manage blogs for Courses and Course Groups.
Calendar
Track important events and dates through the Calendar.

Figure 3.1

Student Experience

Viewing the Calendar

Figure 3.2

If viewing by month, only the first few characters of the event title appear on the Calendar. Click the link for details.

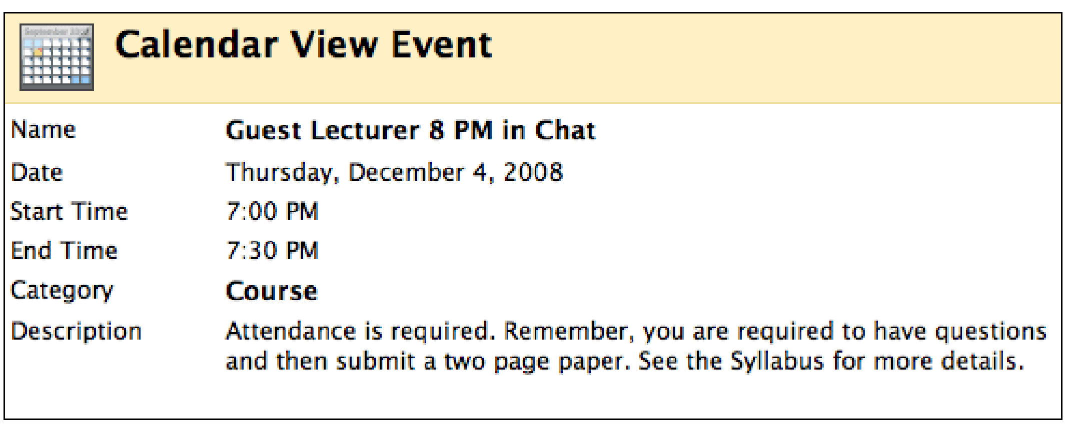


Figure 3.3

Student Experience

Viewing Course Tasks

The Tasks tool is used to keep track of work that must be completed. Each task has a status and a due date. The instructor identifies the course tasks and adds them to the list. The instructor may create a list of tasks for the entire term or just for a project.

Students can use this list to keep themselves on track and may be required to report their status for each task.

Students access Tasks from the Tools link on the Course Menu.

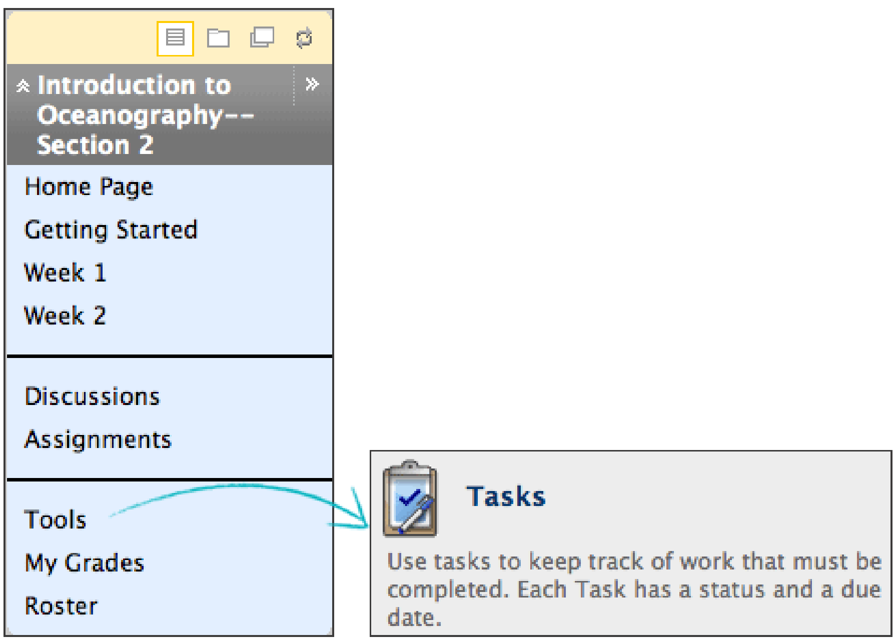


Figure 4.1

Viewing Course Tasks

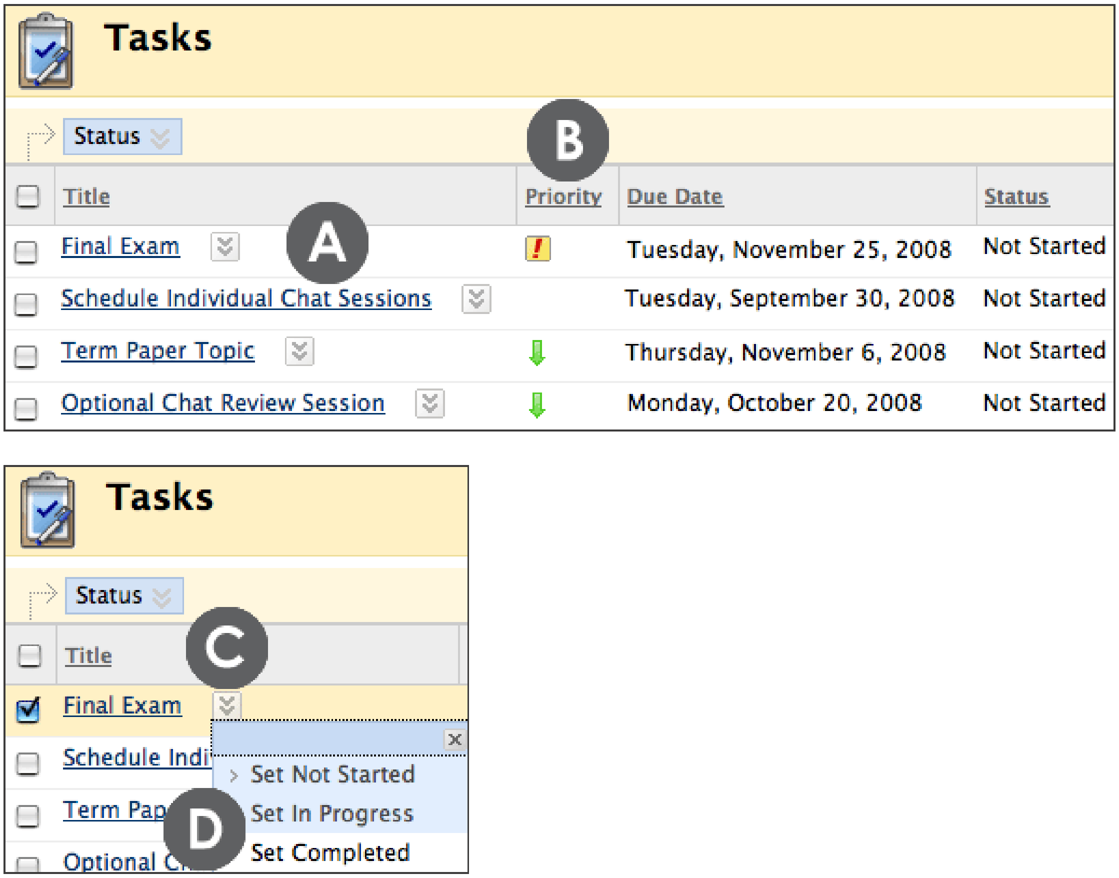


Figure 4.2

Take Note

F Click a task link to view the description.

G The instructor can assign a level of priority for tasks:

- Low priority icon – an arrow pointing down
- Normal priority – no icon
- High priority icon – exclamation mark

H Click a task's Action Link to access the contextual menu.

I A student can select the status of the task:

- Not Started
- In Progress
- Completed

Student Experience

Finding Staff Information

On the Contacts page, students can view the instructor’s contact details, office hours, and other personal data. They can also learn about teaching assistants and upcoming guest speakers.

Students access this information by clicking the Tools link on the Course Menu and selecting Contacts.

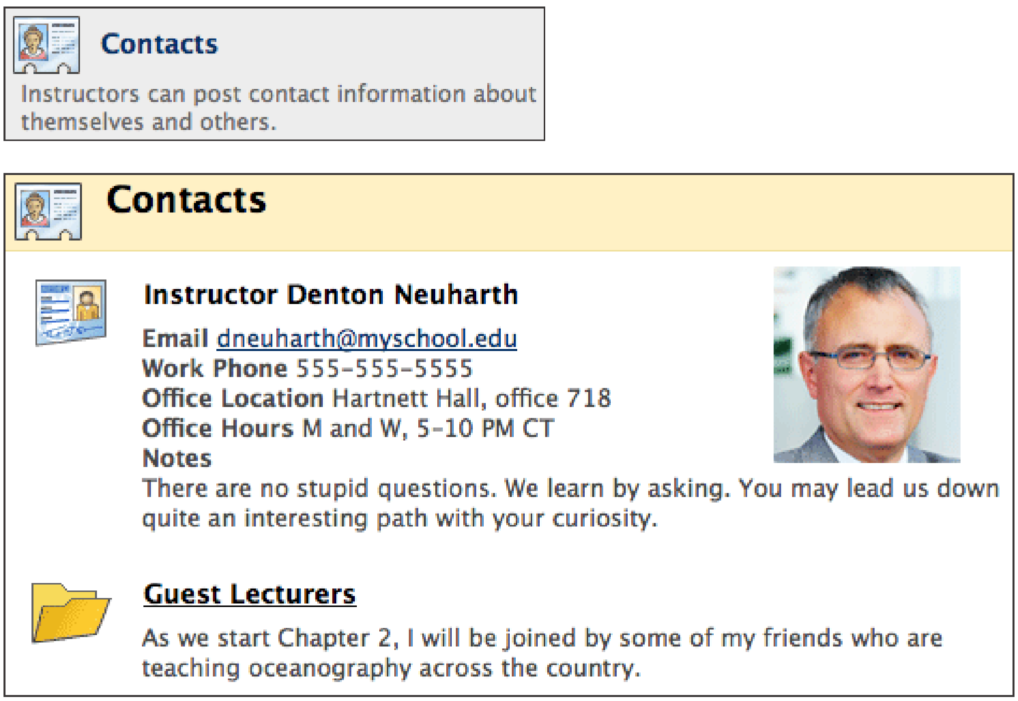


Figure 6

Student Experience

Sending Email

In your Blackboard Learn course, you can send email messages to other course members' external email addresses.

QUICK STEPS: sending an email

1 Access **Tools** and click **Send Email.**

2 On the **Send Email** page, click the link for the desired recipient group. A new page appears.

3 For **Select Users** or **Select Groups**, click to select the recipients in the **Available to Select** box and click the right-pointing arrow to move them into the **Selected** box.

4 Enter the **Subject** and **Message**.

5 Optionally, **Attach a file**.

6 Click **Submit.**

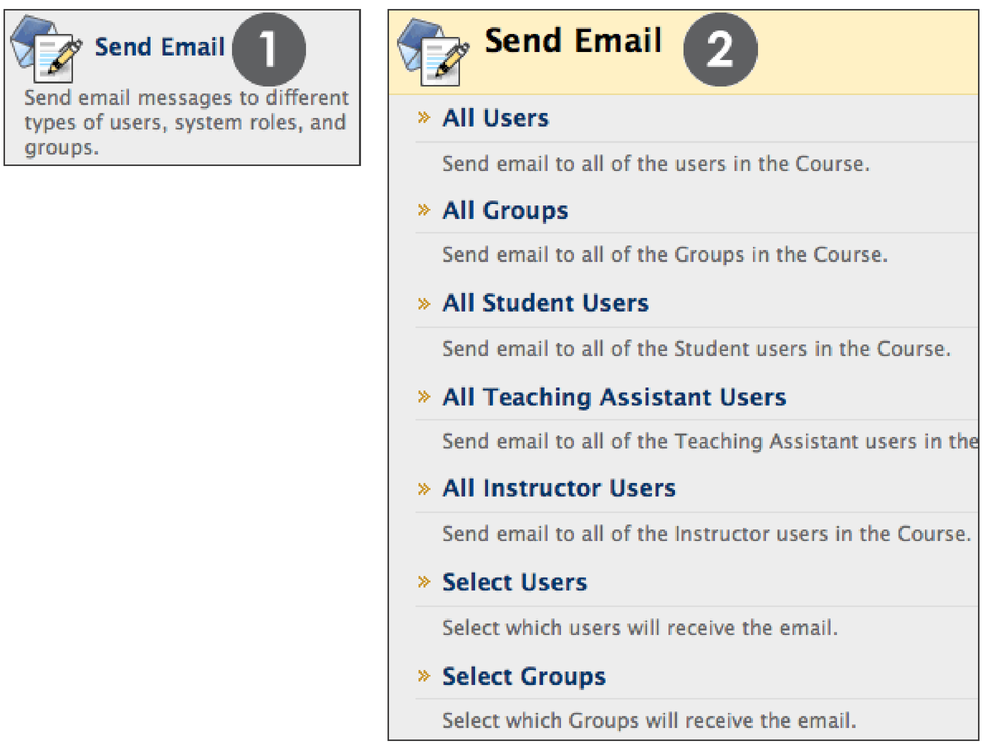


Figure 7.1

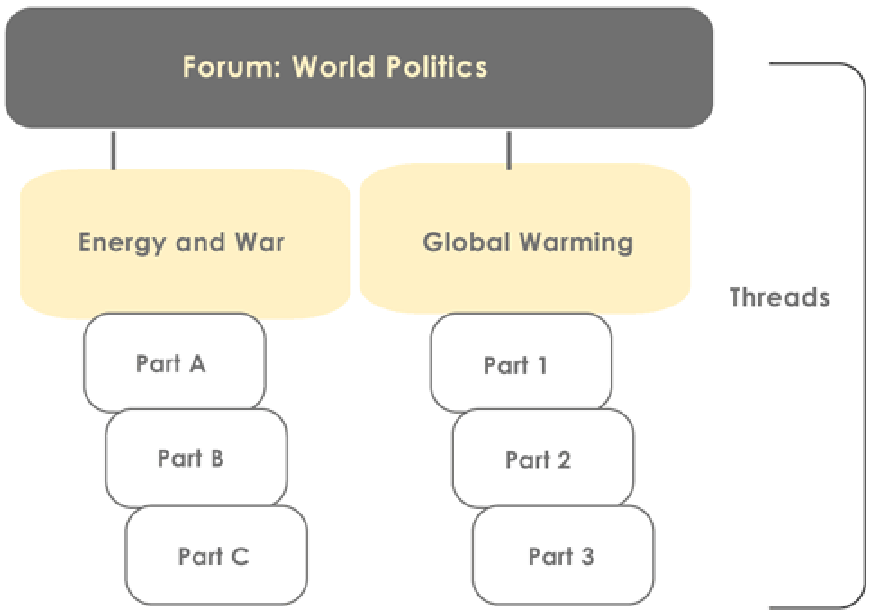
NOTE: From a Blackboard Learn course, you cannot send email to anyone who is not a member of the course.

Student Experience

The Discussion Board

Depending on how the course has been set up, access the Discussion Board from either the Course Menu or a Content Area.

Each Discussion Board contains one or more forums. A forum is an area where a topic or a group of related topics are discussed. Within each forum, there can be multiple threads.



In addition, special Discussion Boards can be set up for smaller groups of students by using the Groups tool. Group Discussion Boards are available only to users who are members of the Group. If a Group Discussion Board has been set up, access it from the Groups link in the Course Menu or Control Panel.

Student Experience

The Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is commonly accessed from the Course Menu, although an instructor may provide a link to it elsewhere.

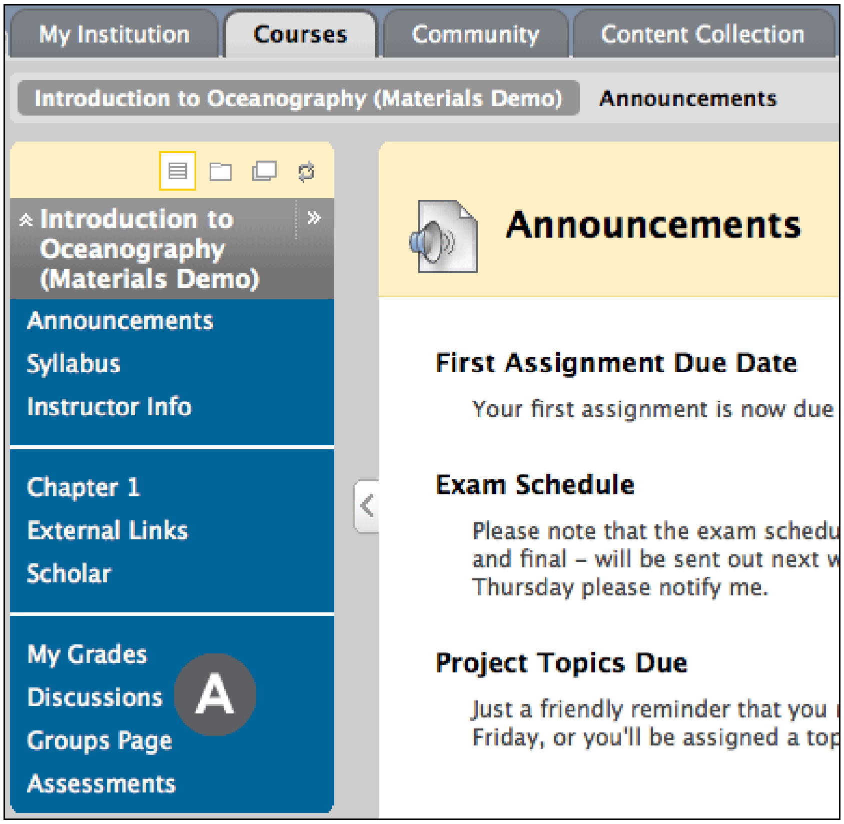


Figure 1.1

▶ Take Note

A The instructor may rename the link.

Student Experience

The Discussion Board

The main Discussion Board page displays a list of available forums. For each forum, the page displays the total number of posts, the number of unread posts, and the number of users who have participated in the forum.

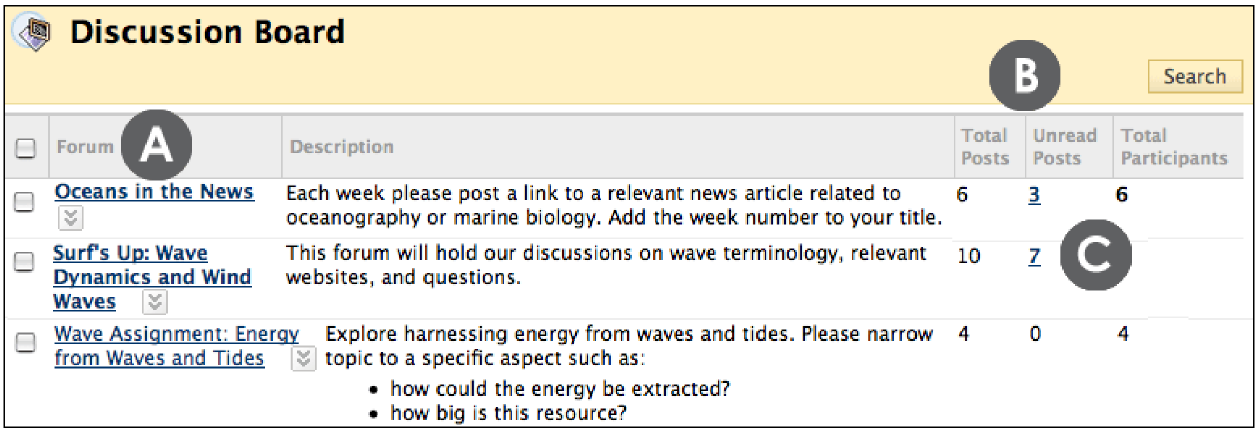


Figure 1.2

Take Note

J Click the forum title to view the messages. Forums containing unread posts appear in bold.

K View data on the number of posts and participants.

L The Unread Posts column provides one-click access to the forum’s unread messages.

Student Experience

Within a Forum

Within a forum, a list of threads is displayed. The following information is included for each thread:

- Date: when the thread was created.
- Author: the person who created the thread.
- Status: indicates whether the thread is published, hidden, or a draft.
- Unread Posts: the number of posts not yet accessed.
- Total Posts: includes both read and unread posts.

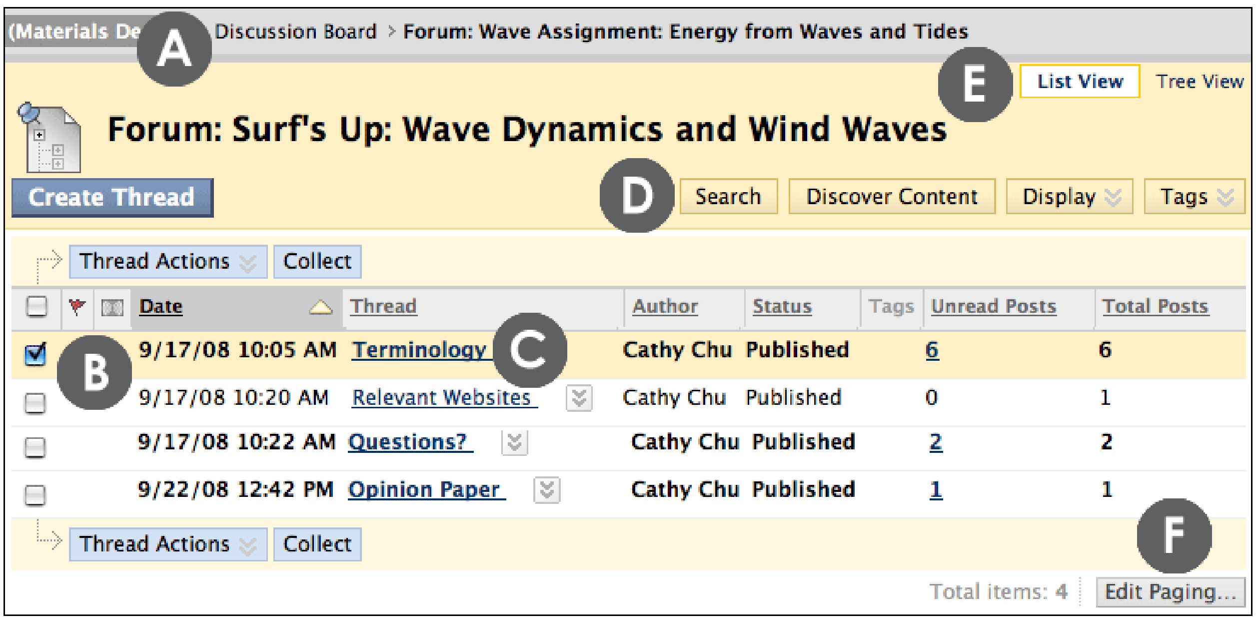


Figure 2.1

▸ Take Note

A Use the breadcrumbs to navigate to a previous page.

B Check box allows for individual thread selection. Select the box in the header row to select all threads.

C Click the thread title to read the posts.

D Search field hidden by default to save screen space.

E View threads in either List View or Tree View.

F Edit Paging allows you to enter the number of items to view per page.

Within a Forum

List View and Tree View

After clicking a forum title, all of its threads are displayed. The page can be viewed in either List View or Tree View. This choice remains in effect until the student changes it; it can be changed at any time.

In List View, threads are presented in table format. Threads containing any unread posts are displayed in bold type.

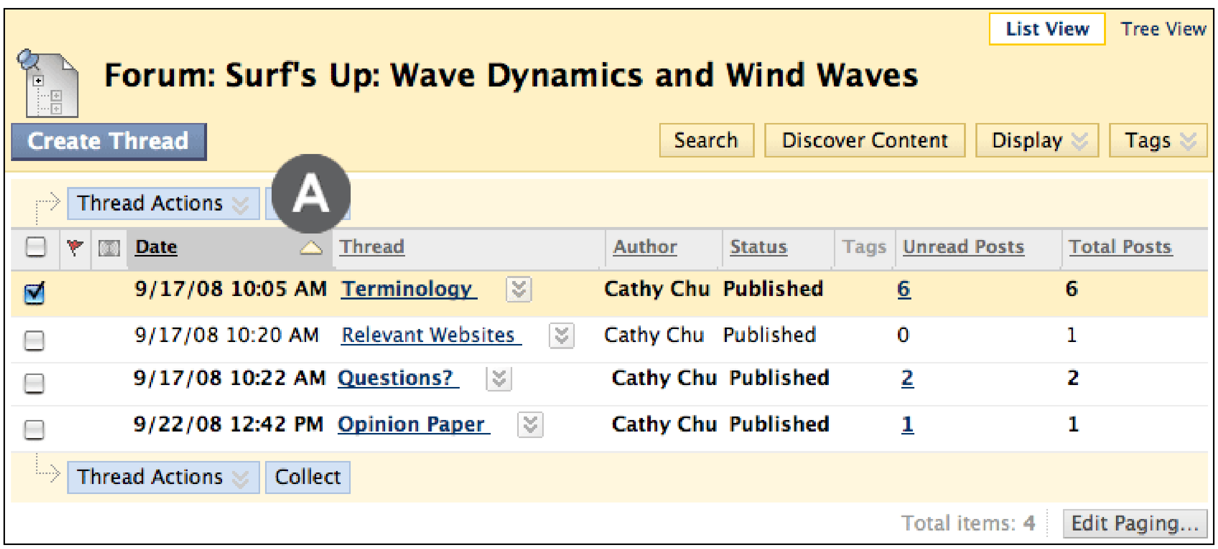
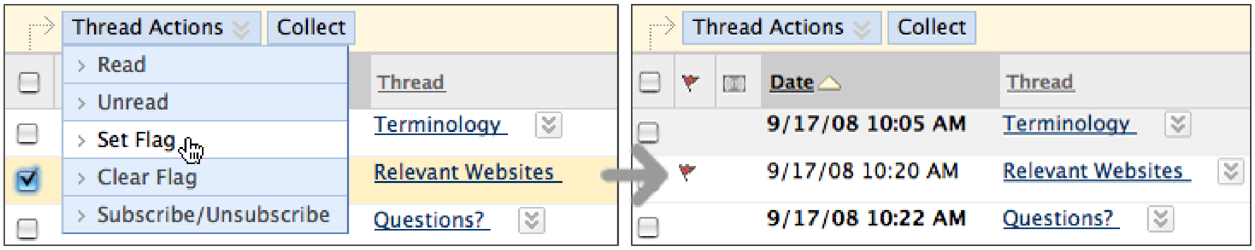


Figure 2.2

▸ Take Note

A Threads can be sorted by clicking the carat at the top of each column. If the carat is not visible, click the column name to access the carat.

Using the Thread Actions drop-down list, students can flag important posts and delete the flags.



Thread Actions
Collect
Read
Unread
Set Flag
Clear Flag
Subscribe/Unsubscribe
Thread
Terminology
Relevant Websites
Questions?
Thread Actions
Collect
Date
Thread
9/17/08 10:05 AM
Terminology
9/17/08 10:20 AM
Relevant Websites
9/17/08 10:22 AM
Questions?

Figure 2.3

Within a Forum

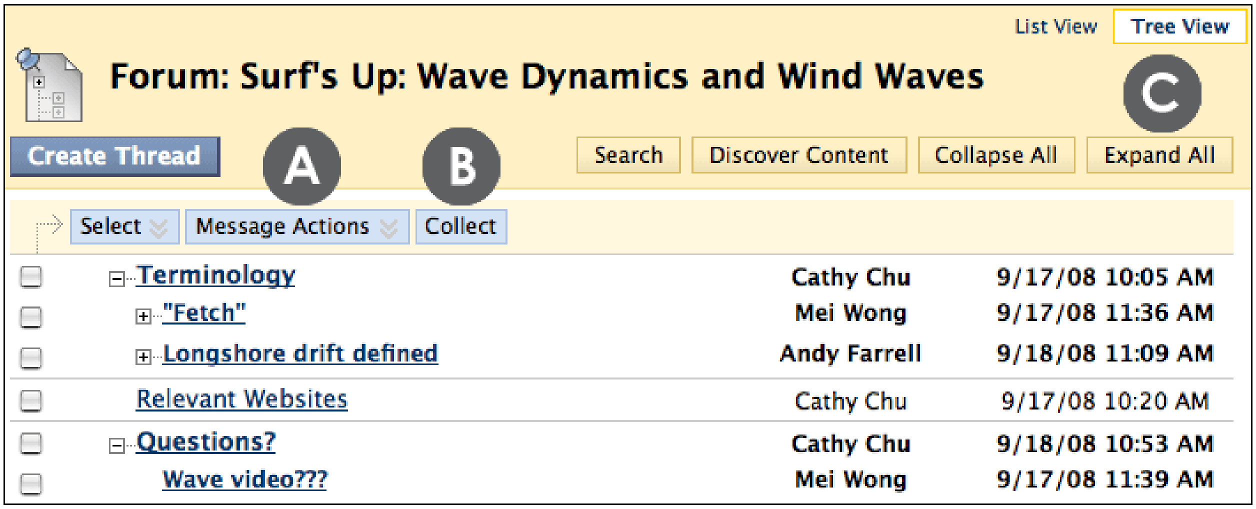


Figure 2.4

Take Note

F Use the Message Actions menu to flag a selected post or mark it read or unread.

G The Collect feature is used to gather posts onto one page where they can be sorted, filtered, or printed.

H Use Expand All to see all posts included in all threads.

Student Experience

Changing the Displayed Threads

The instructor sets the thread status (published, hidden, or draft), but students choose which type of threads to display. By default, published threads are displayed.

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* changing the displayed threads

3 Access the forum.

4 Select **List View.**

5 On the Action Bar, click **Display** to access the thread status options.

6 From the list, select the type of threads to view in the forum.

Figure 3

Changing the Displayed Threads

Thread Status

The table below describes the status settings for threads.

Thread Status	Definition
Published	A post with published status can be read and replied to by other users.
Locked Thread	Users may read the thread, but no longer edit or add posts. Locking a thread allows grades to be assigned without posts being changed or updated. Unlocking a thread changes its status to published, allowing users to edit and add to the thread again.
Draft Thread	A draft thread is saved to Blackboard Learn™ by the author for future editing, but is not submitted for publication. It becomes available to other users when it is published.
Hidden Thread	A thread that is locked and not visible by default. Students may choose to display hidden threads in List View, but may not reply to postings.

Student Experience

Within a Thread

When a user clicks a thread, the Thread Detail page appears. The page is divided into three parts:

Section 1: The Action Bar contains functions that allow users to select, flag, mark, or collect posts.

Section 2: The Message List contains all the posts in the thread, beginning with the initial post. The selected post is highlighted.

Section 3: The Current Post contains the text of the selected post.

Figure 4.1

Within a Thread

Figure 4.2

▸ Take Note

A **Subscribe** or **Unsubscribe**: when subscribed to a thread, the user receives an email alert when a post is updated or a reply is posted. The instructor must enable this function when creating the forum.

B **Previous Thread** or **Next Thread** arrows for navigating between threads in the forum.

C Arrange View functions:

- Swap Up or Down: moves the current message up or down in the display order.
- Hide or Restore: collapses or displays the threads.
- Maximize or Minimize: displays the entire list of messages, or the just the top few.

Student Experience

Replying to Posts

You can reply to posts if the thread status is published. You cannot reply to posts in locked threads.

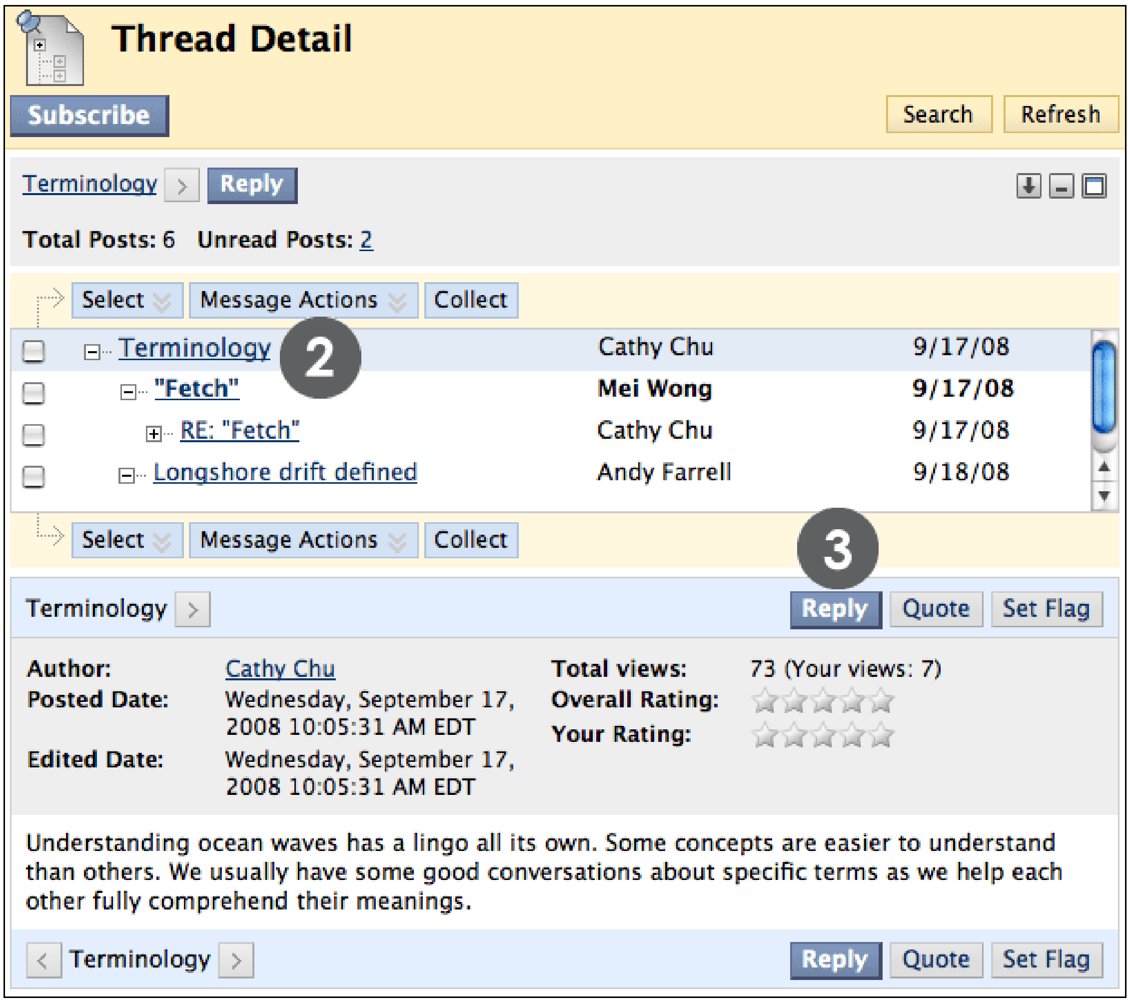


Figure 5.1

Replying to Posts

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* replying to posts

3 Access the forum and select the thread.

4 On the **Thread Detail** page, click the title of a post.

5 Click **Reply**.

6 On the **Reply to Post** page, edit **Subject**, if desired.

7 Enter the reply in the **Message** text box. If desired, use the Text Editor.

8 To attach a file, browse using the **Attach a File** function below the **Message** text box. Use the Text Editor to attach multiple files.

9 Click **Save Draft** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit**.

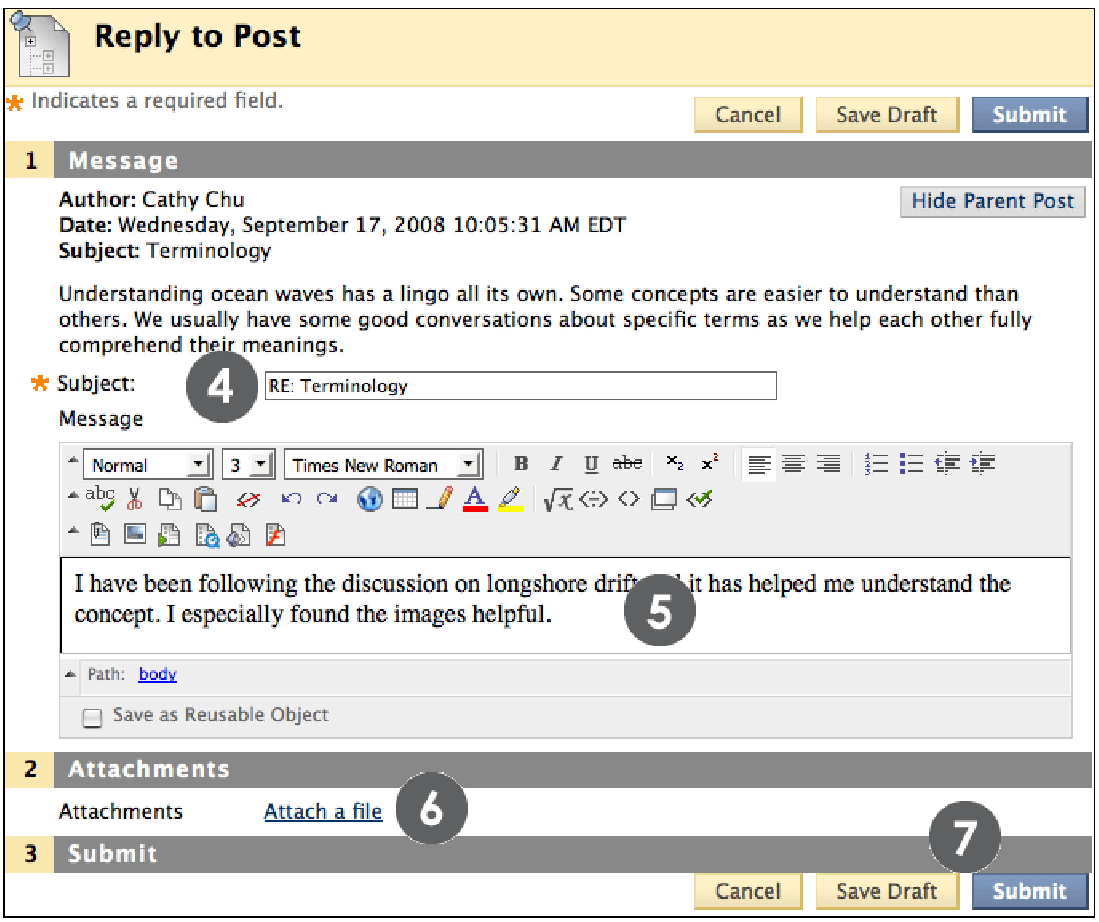


Figure 5.2

The original post may be viewed while replying as shown above.

Rating Posts

The Discussion Board is well suited for peer review. Students start threads and include their work in their initial posts. Other users review the work, assign a rating to the initial post, and may include comments in a response.

Rating posts also allows users to focus on messages considered especially informative or useful by others. Depending on the forum settings, posts may be assigned a rating using a 5-star system. The instructor may also rate posts.

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* rating posts

1 Access the forum and select the thread.

2 On the **Thread Detail** page, select the post to rate.

3 Next to **Your Rating**, select 1 to 5 stars.

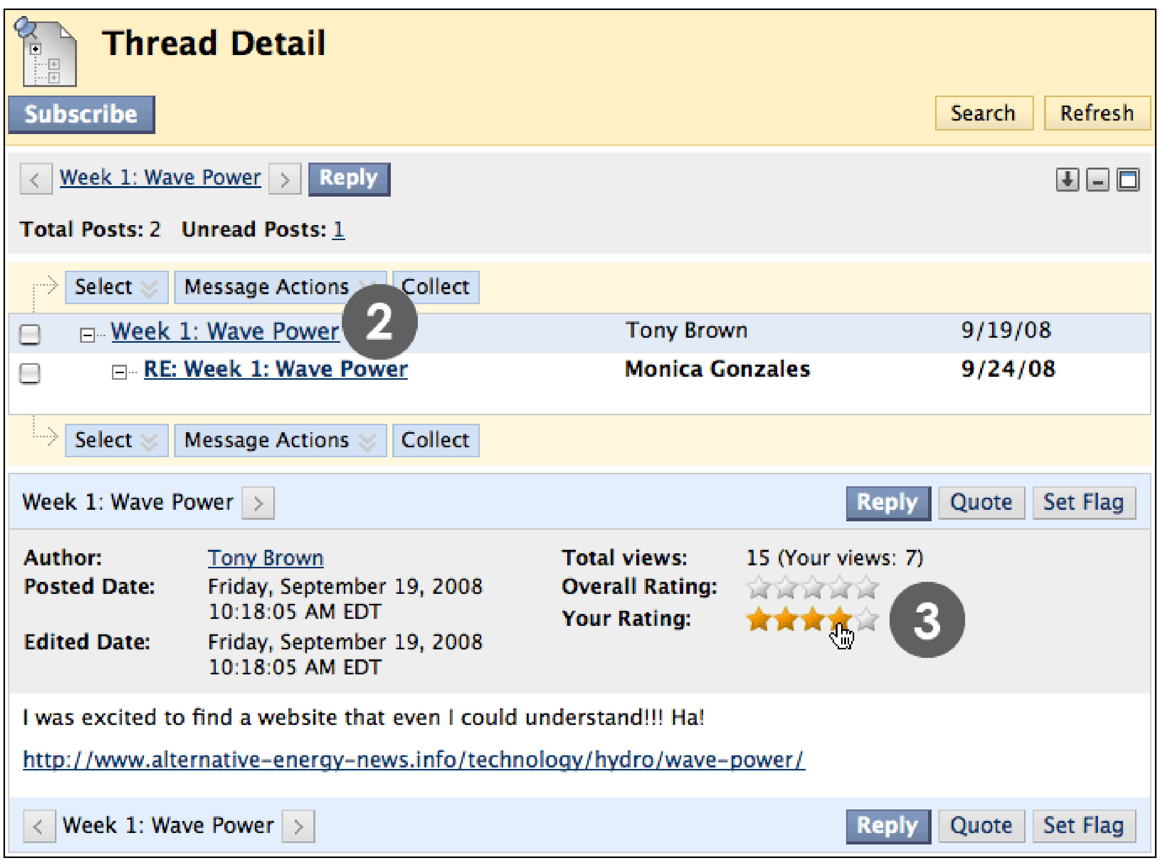


Figure 6.1

Student Experience

Rating Posts

The rating is now included in the Overall Rating, which is the combined rating of all users. The individual rating appears in Your Rating. More stars may be added at any time, but stars may not be deleted.

Figure 6.2

Student Experience

Creating Threads

Depending on which forum settings the instructor has selected, students may be allowed to create new threads.

▶ *QUICK STEPS:* creating threads

1 Access the forum.

2 On the Action Bar, click **Create Thread**.

3 On the **Create Thread** page, enter a **Subject**.

4 Enter your reply in the **Message** text box.

5 To attach a file, browse using the **Attach a File** function below the **Message** text box.

6 Click **Save Draft** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit** to create a thread.

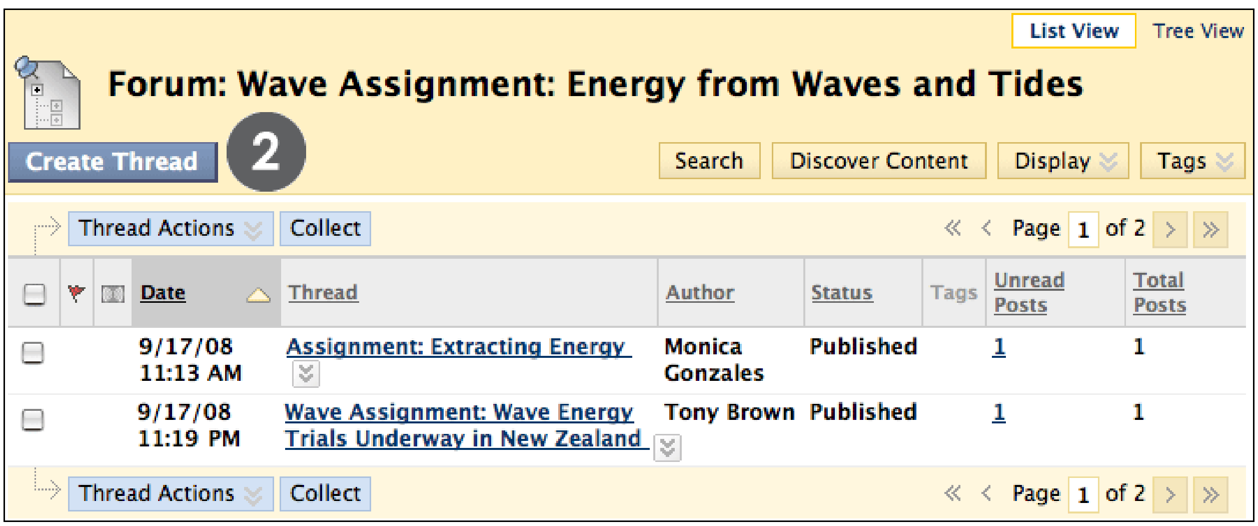


Figure 7.1

Creating Threads

Format the message and add multiple files using the Text Editor, if desired.

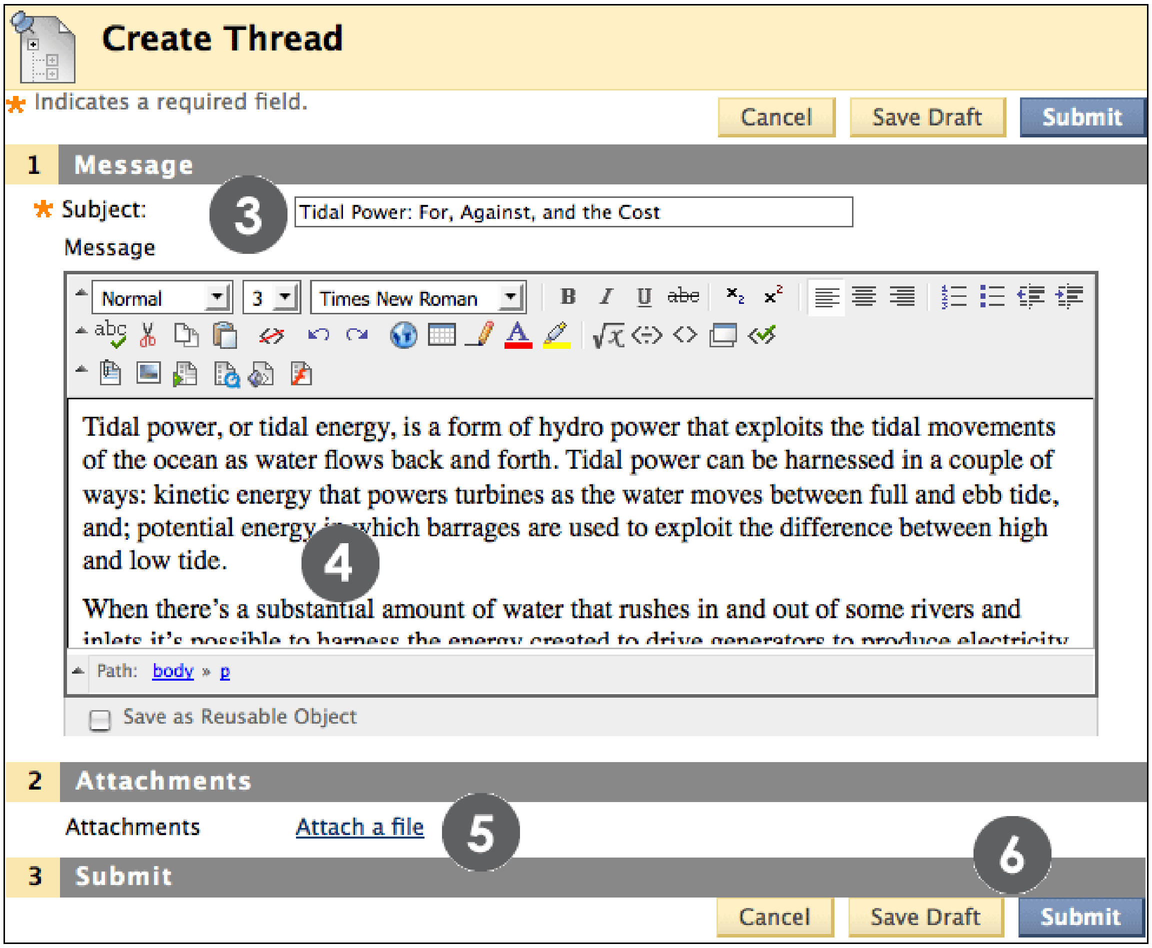
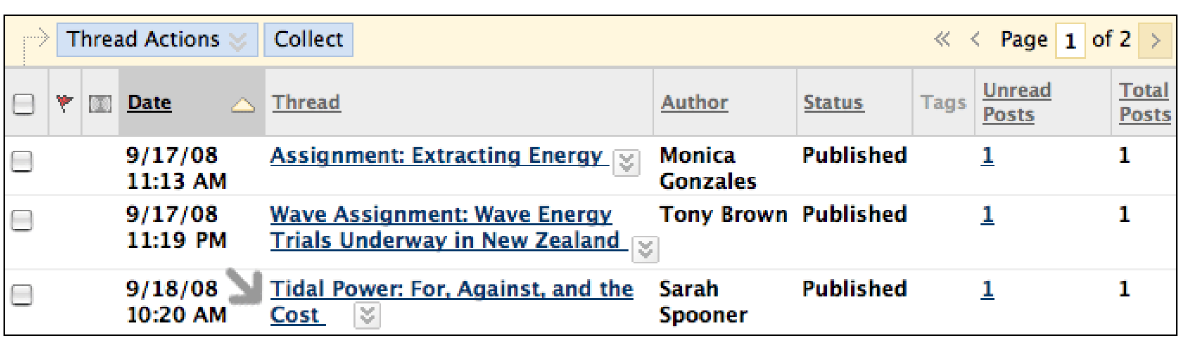


Figure 7.2

The new message is the first post in the thread.



Thread Actions | Collect | Page 1 of 2

			Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
			9/17/08 11:13 AM	Assignment: Extracting Energy	Monica Gonzales	Published		1	1
			9/17/08 11:19 PM	Wave Assignment: Wave Energy Trials Underway in New Zealand	Tony Brown	Published		1	1
			9/18/08 10:20 AM	Tidal Power: For, Against, and the Cost	Sarah Spooner	Published		1	1

Figure 7.3

Student Experience

Collecting Posts

From the Thread Detail page, only one post can be read at a time. Use the Collect feature to read multiple posts from the same page. Once posts are collected, they can be filtered, sorted, and printed.

For example, a student posts a question to request help and seven classmates reply. The initial post and the replies can be collected on one page and printed.

▸ ***QUICK STEPS:* collecting posts**

1 Access the forum and select the thread.
2 On the **Thread Detail** page, select the boxes of the posts to collect.
3 On the Action Bar, click **Collect**.
4 On the **Collection** page, filter, sort, or print the posts.

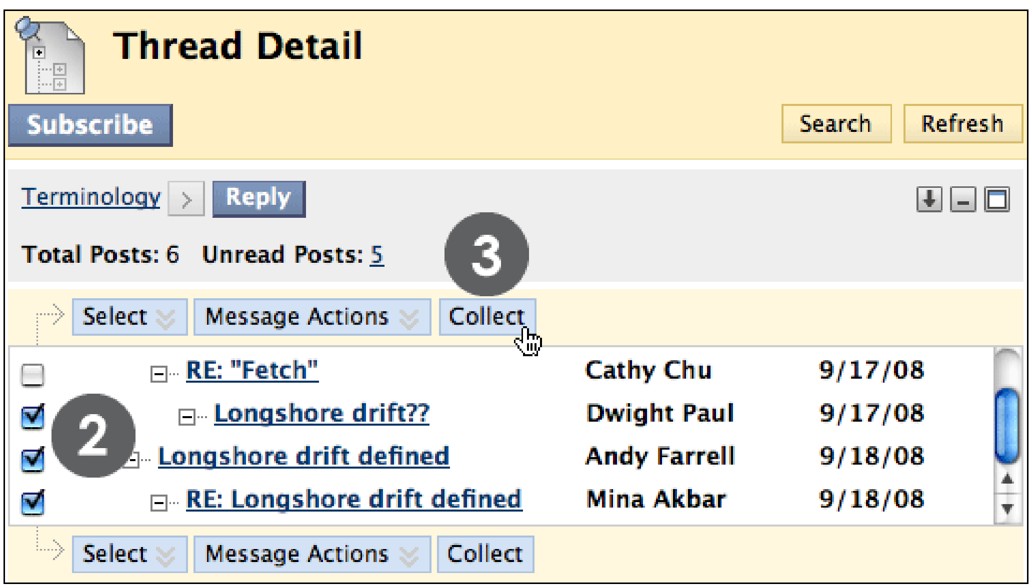


Figure 8.1

TIP: The Collect feature is also available from the forum page, where it is used to gather postings from different threads. Once collected, sort them by subject or date to further organize them.

Student Experience

Collecting Posts

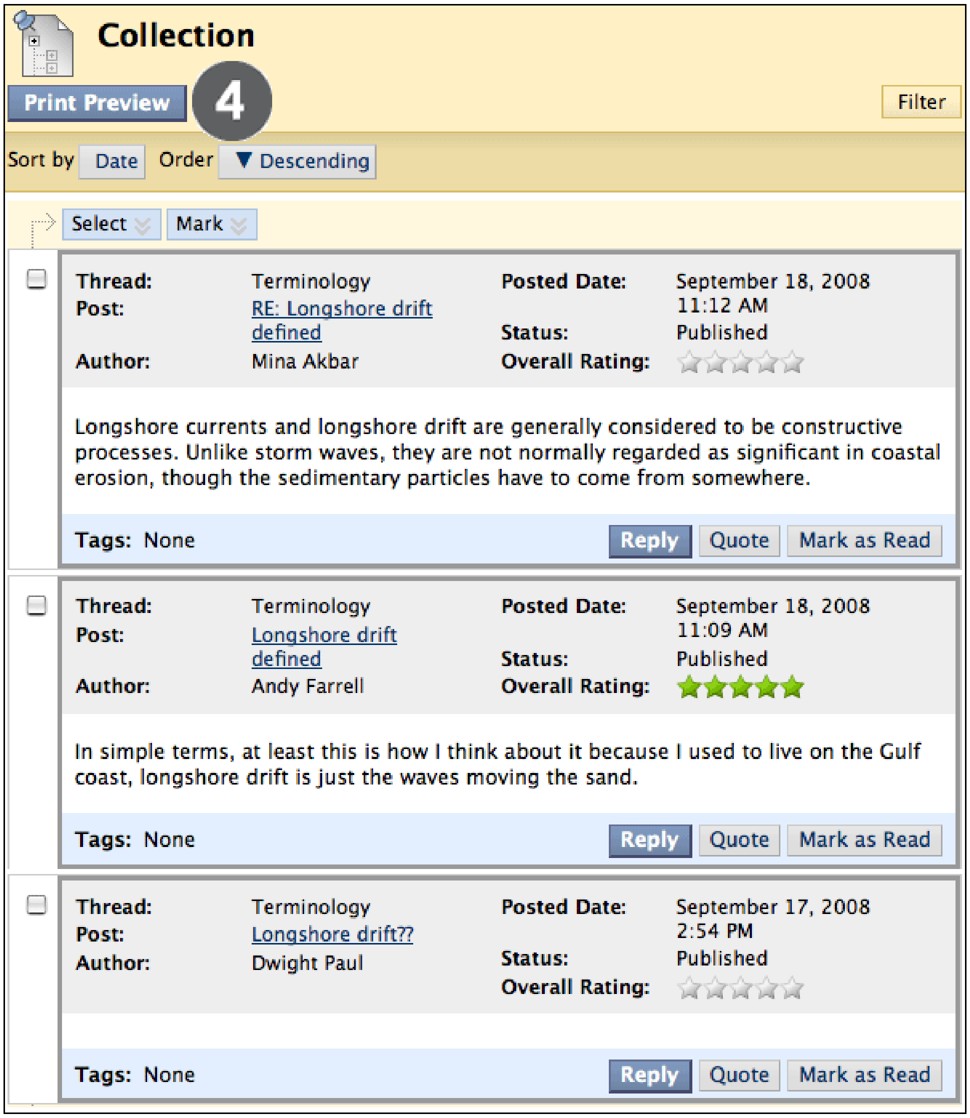


Figure 8.2

Sort options for messages include the following:

- Author’s Last Name
- Author’s First Name
- Subject
- Date
- Thread Order
- Overall Rating

Filtering Collected Posts

You can filter collected postings to further organize messages based on selected criteria.

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* filtering collected posts

1 On the Action Bar, click **Filter**. The **Filter** field expands.

2 Select one or more options from the drop-down lists.

3 Click **Go**.

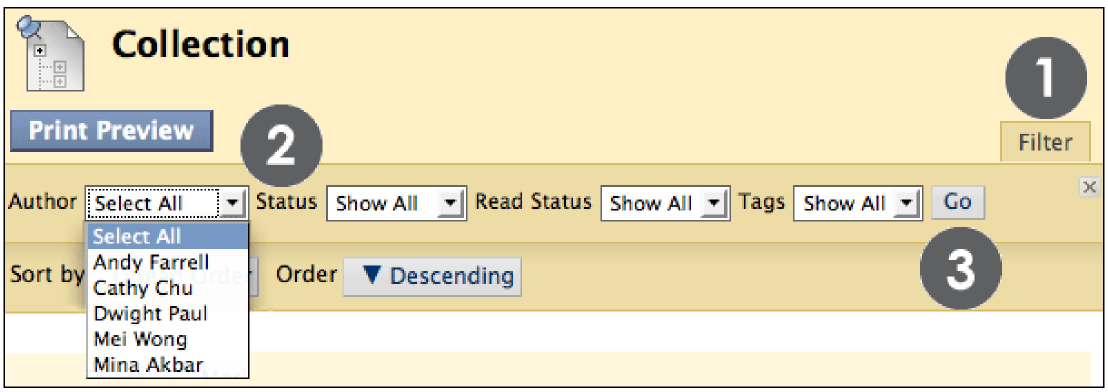


Figure 9

Tags can be selected only if the instructor has enabled post tagging for the forum. Tags, which are text labels that act like bookmarks, are discussed in the *Managing Discussions* section of this manual.

Searching Posts

Students can search for specific text (a phrase, word, or part of a word) in the Discussion Board.

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* searching posts

1 On the Action Bar, click **Search**. The **Search** field expands.

2 Enter a search criterion in the **Search** text box.

3 Select an area to search from the drop-down list.

4 Optionally, use the date and time boxes to further narrow the search results.

5 Click **Go**.

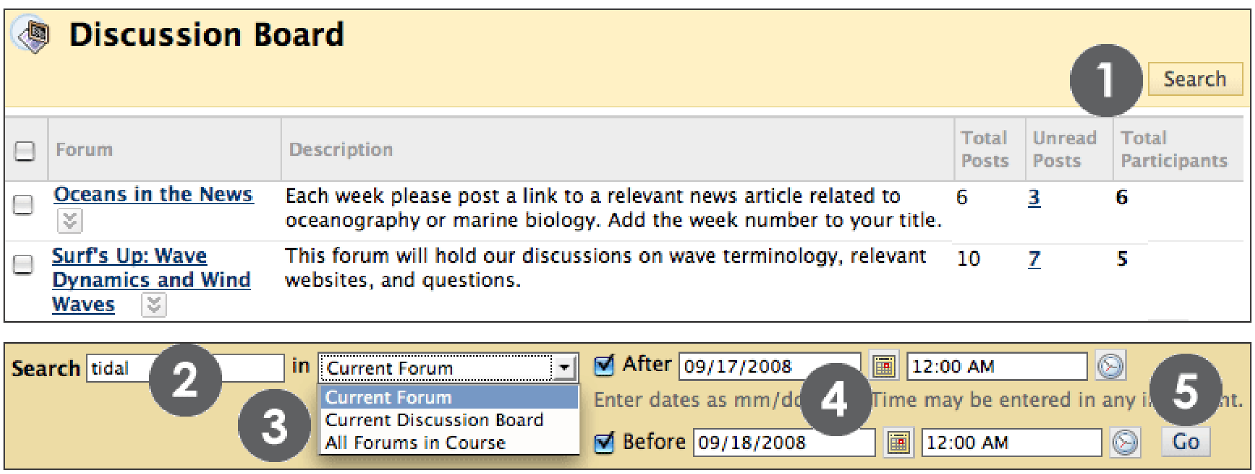


Figure 10

A Search Results page will appear which you can sort using the Sort by drop-down list. This page can also be filtered and printed using the functions on the Action Bar.

Student Experience

About Assignments

The Assignments tool is used to present a variety of learning activities to students, allowing them to view and submit assignments from one location. Assignments can be submitted as the following:

- Text entered on the Upload Assignment page
- Attached files
- A combination of both text and attached files

The Assignments tool provides several key benefits to students, including:

- Increased time-on-task with an efficient way to view and submit assignments
- Submissions returned with feedback only, allowing students to improve their work before resubmitting for a grade
- Easier implementation of alternative assessment techniques, so instructors can promote active learning

Student Experience

Viewing and Submitting Assignments

Students access assignments in a Content Area by clicking an assignment title. From the Upload Assignment page, students can:

- View instructions and access files attached by the instructor
- Complete their submissions by entering text or attaching files
- Submit their work for feedback or grading

▶ *QUICK STEPS:* submitting an assignment

1 From a Content Area, click an assignment's title.
2 On the **Upload Assignment** page, review the **Instructions** and any attached files.
3 If instructed, enter text in the **Submission** text box.
4 If instructed, **Browse** to attach a file.
5 If desired, enter **Comments** for the instructor.
6 Click **Submit**.

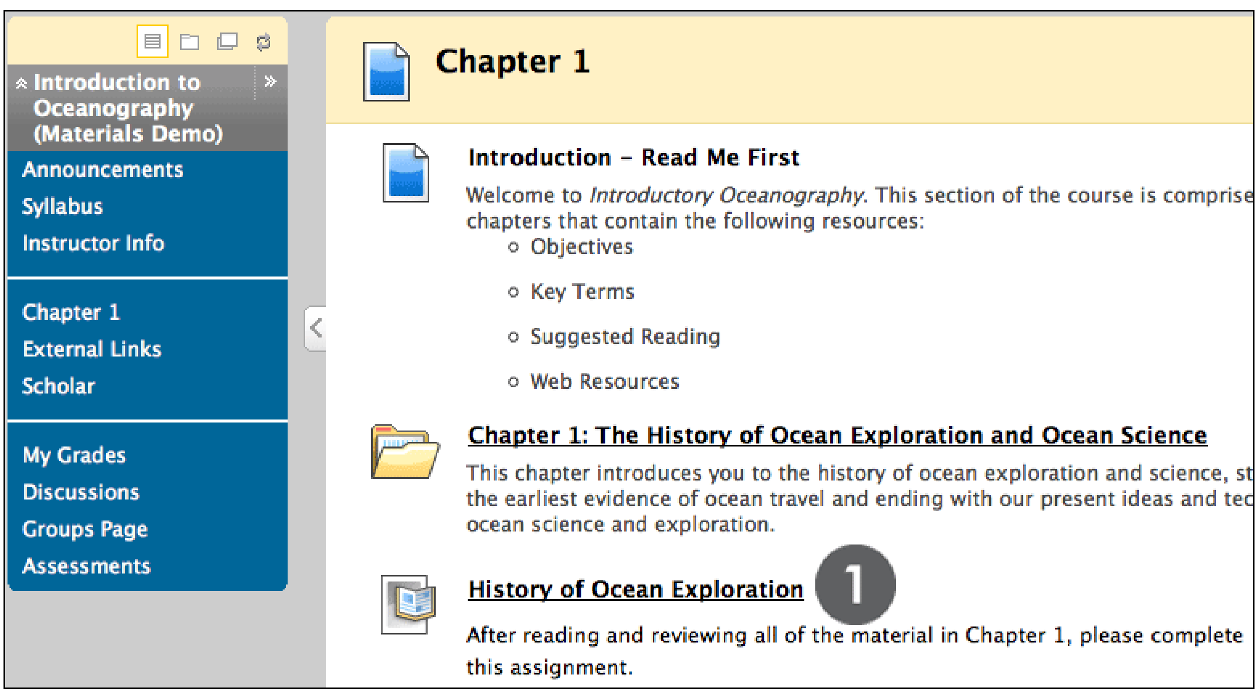


Figure 1.1

Viewing and Submitting Assignments

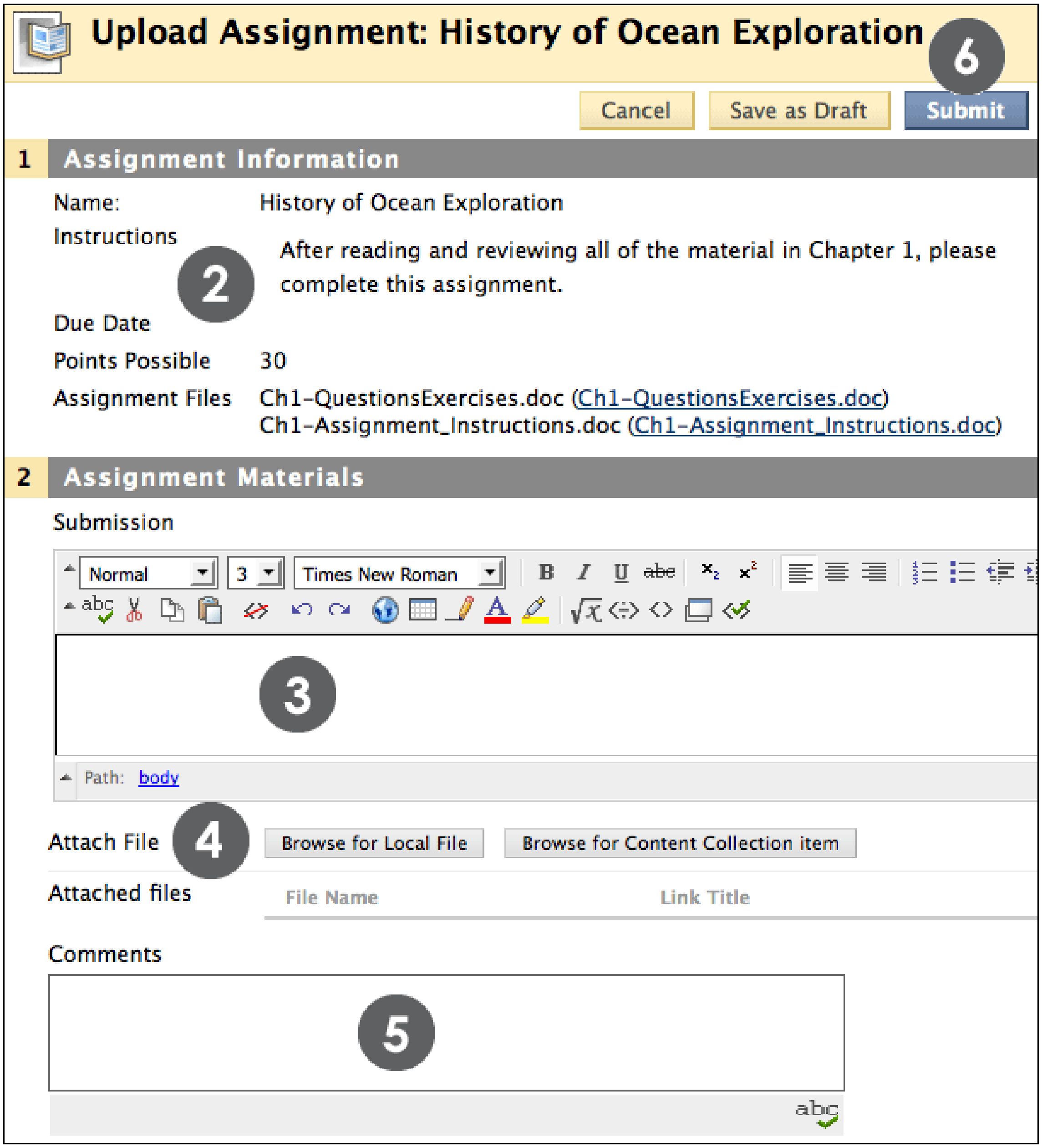


Figure 1.2

Student Experience

Viewing Assignment Grades and Feedback

Students view assignment scores from My Grades, which displays a spreadsheet of their grades for the course.

If the assignment has been submitted and graded, the points will be displayed. Otherwise, a symbol will show in the grade column.

▸ *QUICK STEPS:* viewing grades and feedback

1. On the Course Menu, click **My Grades**.
2. Click an item's grade to see feedback.
3. Click an item's exclamation mark to see if the submission has been returned, ungraded with comments.

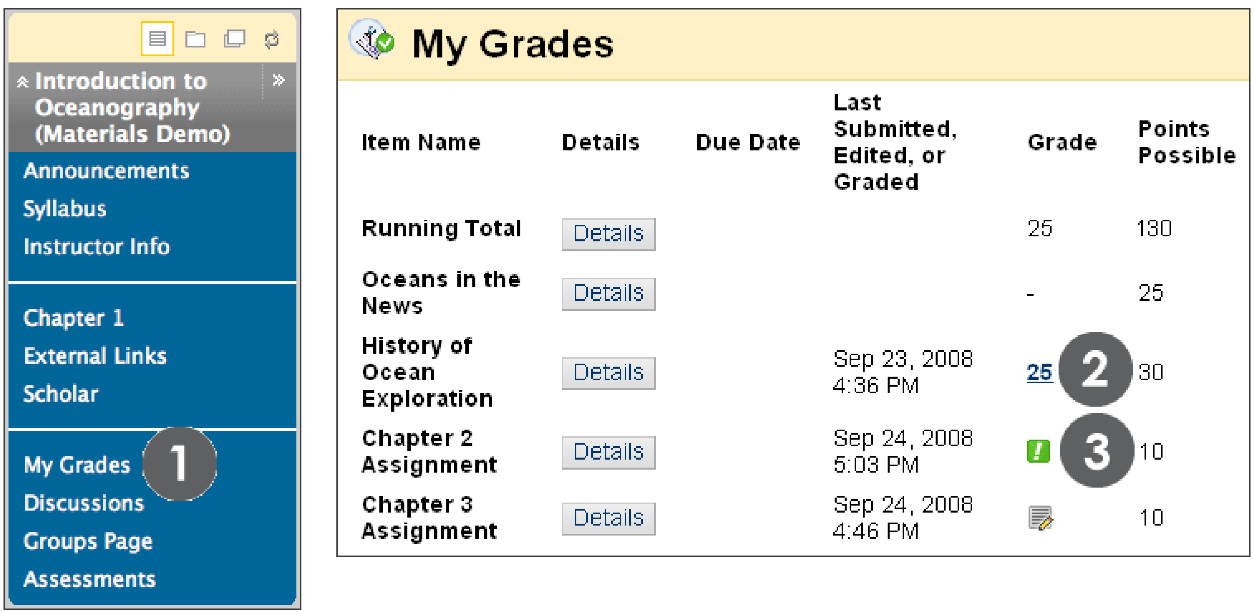


Figure 2.1

Viewing Assignment Grades and Feedback

The table below describes the symbols displayed on the My Grades page.

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
	Submitted; waiting to be reviewed by the instructor OR Submitted; reviewed by the instructor and returned ungraded, with comments
– (dash)	No information
	Not submitted; item is in progress because the student has saved it as a draft

Viewing Assignment Grades and Feedback

Student View of Submitted Assignment Results

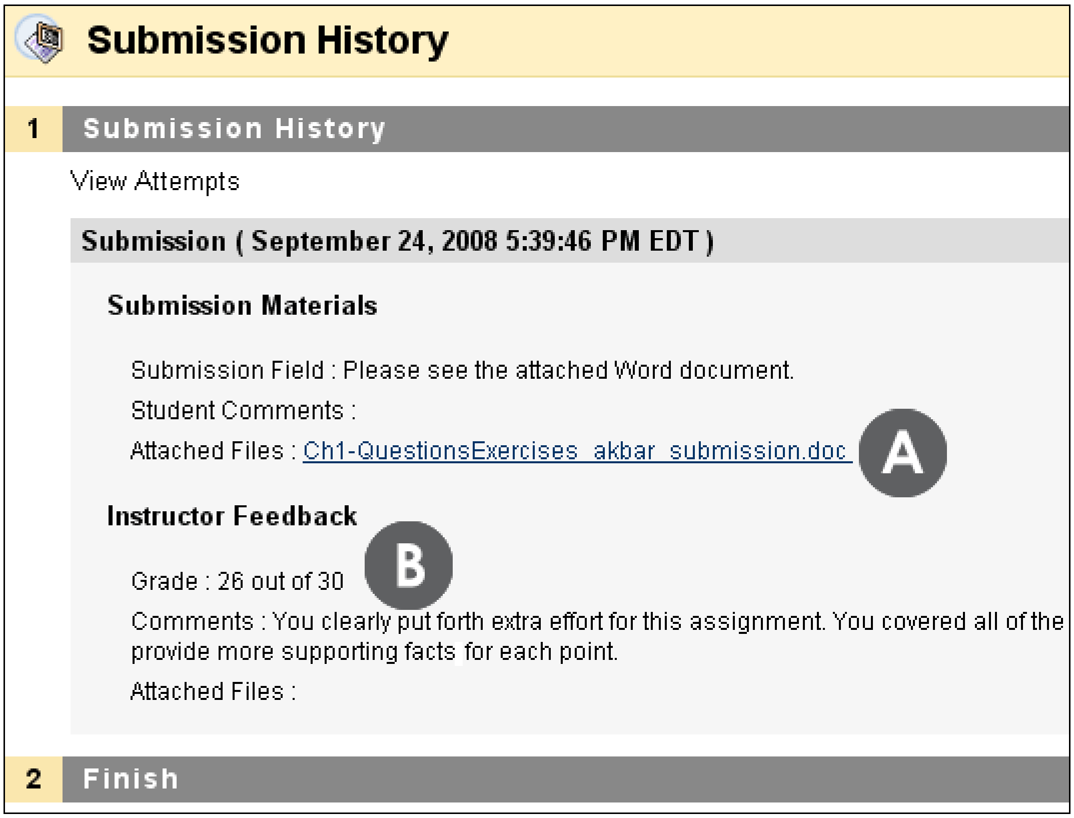


Figure 2.2

▸ Take Note

G The student attached a file to fulfill the assignment, which the instructor downloaded to view and grade. In the example above, the student added his last name to the file name before uploading.

H The instructor added a grade and feedback for the student.

Student Experience

The Journals Tool

Journals are a personal space for students to communicate privately with the instructor. The owner of each journal can create an entry and the instructor can add comments. 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 the instructor.

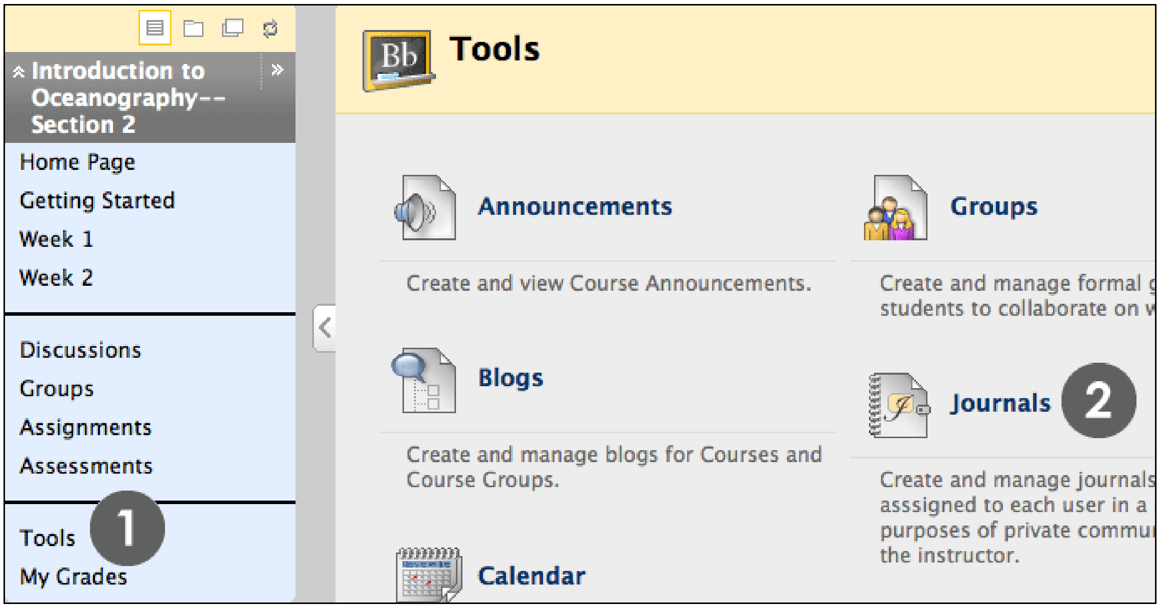
Journals are ideal for individual projects. For example, in a Creative Writing course, the student can refine a section of a writing assignment over a period of time by using the comments made by the instructor.

Journals can also be used as a self-reflective tool that allows students to post their opinions, ideas, and concerns about the course, or discuss and analyze course related materials. These assignments can be broad and student-directed as the students reflect on the learning process and document changes in their perceptions and attitudes. Students can describe problems faced and how they solved them. Instructor-directed journal entries can be more formal in nature and can narrow the focus by listing topics for discussion.

▸ ***QUICK STEPS:*** **accessing the Journals tool**

1 On the Course Menu, click the **Tools** link.

2 On the **Tools** page, click the **Journals** link.



Introduction to Oceanography--Section 2
Home Page
Getting Started
Week 1
Week 2
Discussions
Groups
Assignments
Assessments
Tools
1
My Grades
Tools
Announcements
Create and view Course Announcements.
Groups
Blogs
Create and manage blogs for Courses and Course Groups.
Journals
2
Calendar

Figure 3.1

Student Experience

The Journals Tool

Only the instructor can create journal topics. The journal topics will display in alphabetical order on the Journals page.

▶ *QUICK STEPS:* creating a journal entry

1 On the **Journals** page, click the desired journal title.

2 On the journal's main page, click **Create Journal Entry** on the Action Bar.

3 On the **Create Journal Entry** page, enter a **Title** for the journal entry.

4 Enter text in the **Entry Message** text box. If desired, use the Text Editor to format the text.

5 Under **Journal Entry Files,** browse for a file to attach to the journal entry, if desired.

6 Click **Post Entry** to submit the journal entry or click **Save Entry as Draft** to post the entry later.

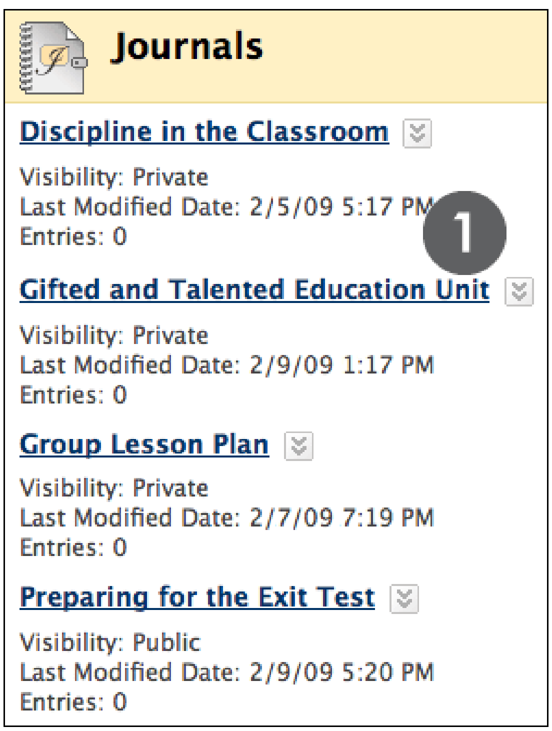


Figure 3.2

Note: Instructors have the option to make journals public so all course members can read entries. From the main Journals page, under each journal title, students can see if their entries will be private (between the student and the instructor) or public.

The Journals Tool

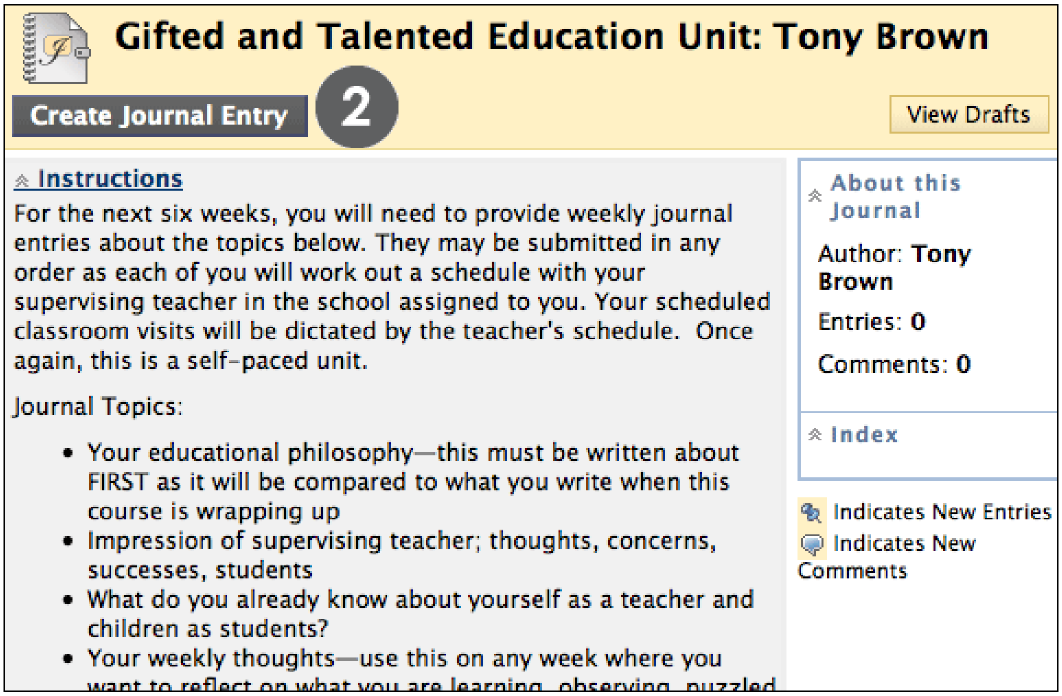


Figure 3.3

- The instructions for the journal topic appear below the Action Bar.
- Information about the journal appears on the right side of the page.
- Any entries saved as drafts can be accessed by clicking View Drafts on the right side of the Action Bar.

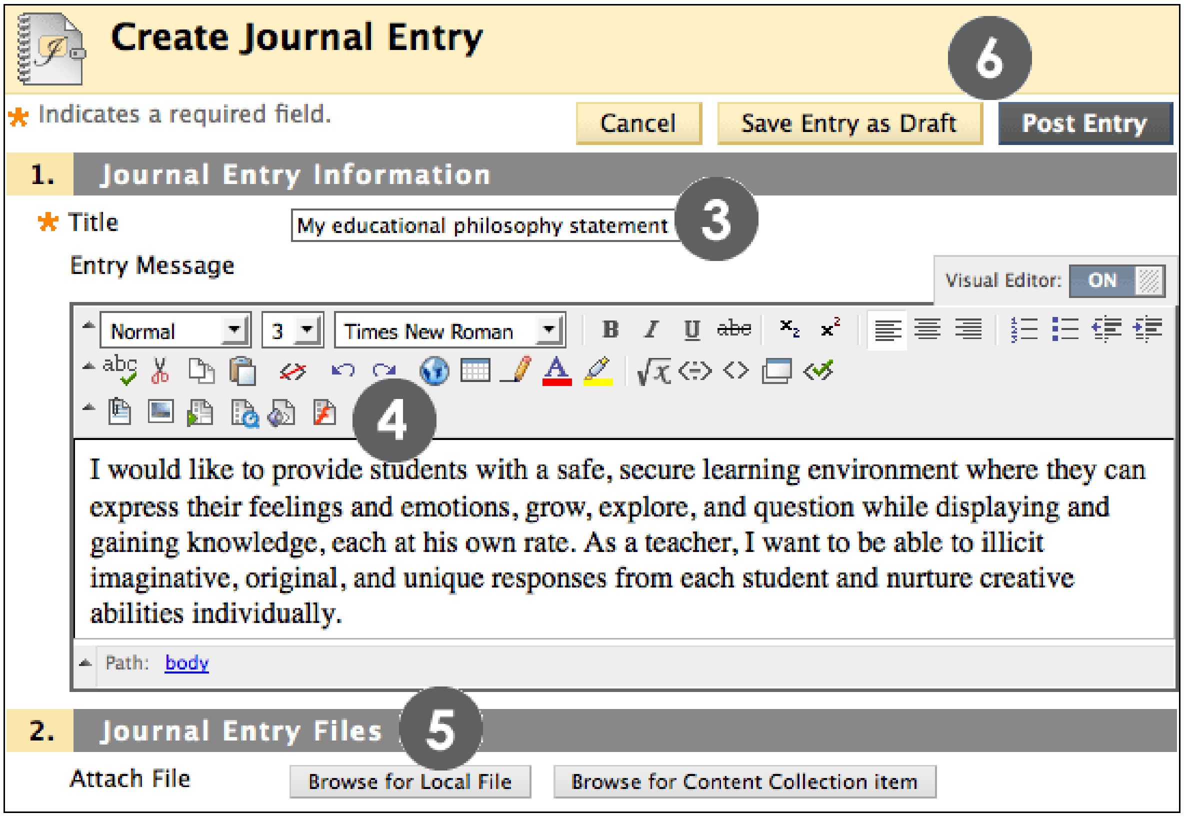


Figure 3.4

Images attached under the Journal Entry Files section will appear as a link in the student's journal. To display an image directly on the journal page, the image can be added using the Attach Image function in the third row of the Text Editor.

Student Experience

The Journals Tool

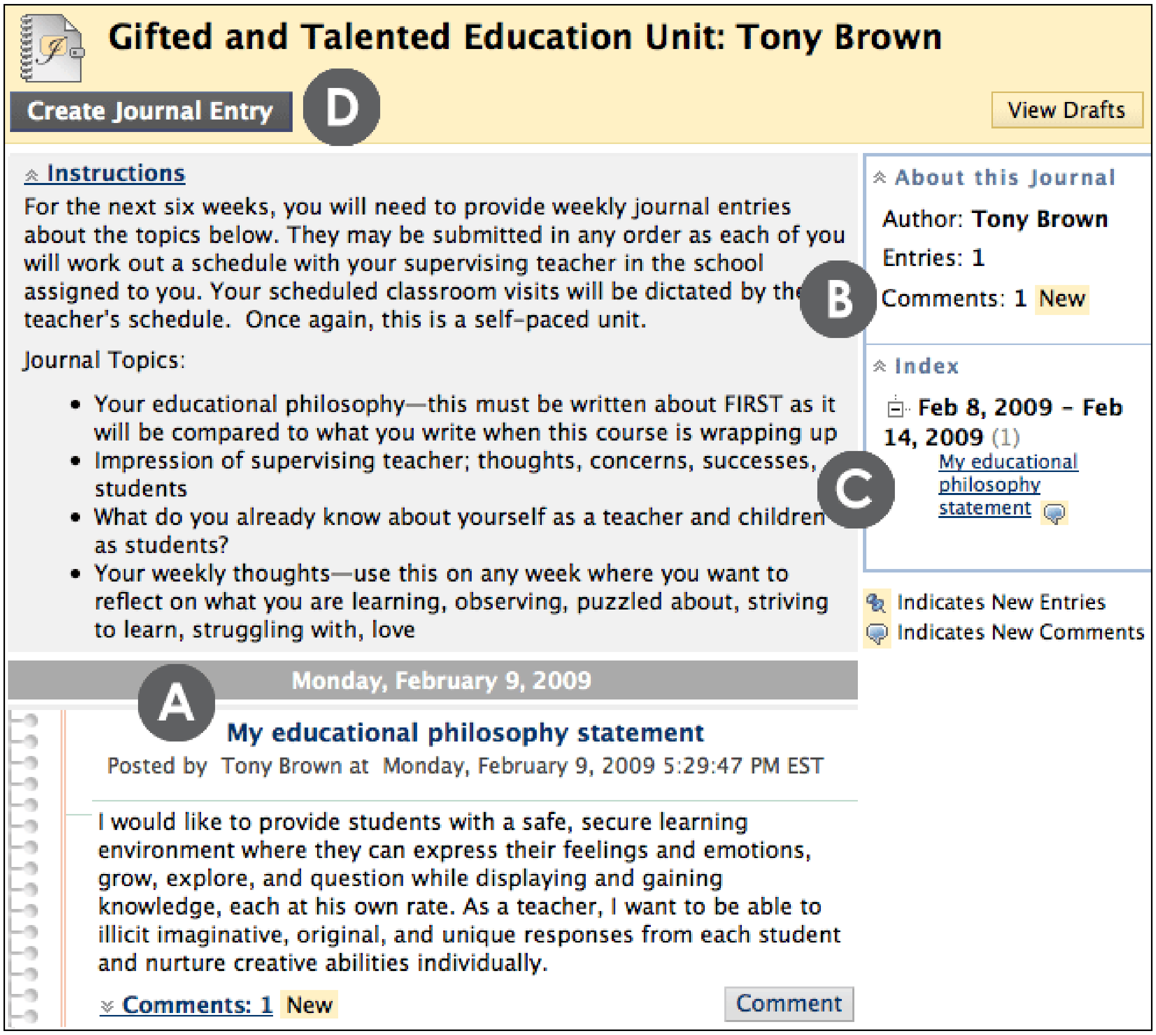


Figure 3.5

Take Note

A The student's journal entry appears below the instructor's journal instructions. Below the entry, the student can view if comments were made.

B The *About this Journal* area provides at a glance information about the journal.

C The *Index* section lists the titles of the selected user's entries for either the week or the month, determined by settings the instructor makes during journal creation.

D The student can make another journal entry for this topic at any time.

Note: In this example, the student cannot edit or delete his journal entry. The instructor determines if students can edit or delete entries during journal creation.

Student Experience

The Blogs Tool

A blog—a shorthand term that means Web log—is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Each blog entry can include any combination of text, images, and links. Blogs encourage people to clearly express their ideas and addresses the need to expand various aspects of social learning. Blogs are an effective means of gaining insight into students' activities and provide a way to share the knowledge and materials collected.

In Blackboard Learn, only enrolled users can view and author blogs. The owner of the blog creates multiple entries over a period of time and the instructor and course members can add comments. In the Group area, all members of a group can create entries for the same blog, building upon one another. Any course member can read and comment on a Group Blog, but cannot make entries if not a member of the group.

Many blogs provide commentary on a particular subject. In a course setting, blogs become the perfect arena for students to display their research, analytical, and writing skills. For example, in a Horticulture course, students can track the crop production in their weekly labs with each blog entry. In a Qualitative Research course, students can speculate on and monitor the impact social networking has on marketing over a period of time.

▸ ***QUICK STEPS:*** **accessing the Blogs tool**

1. On the Course Menu, click the **Tools** link.
2. On the **Tools** page, click the **Blogs** link.

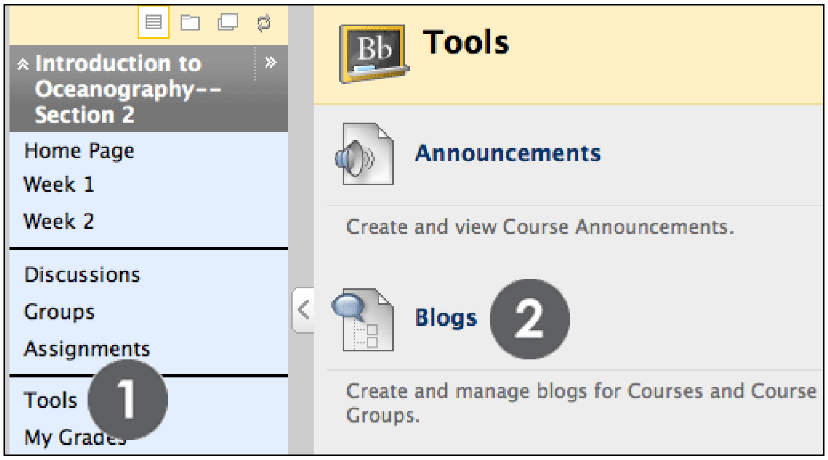

Introduction to Oceanography--Section 2
Home Page
Week 1
Week 2
Discussions
Groups
Assignments
Tools
1
My Grades
Tools
Announcements
Create and view Course Announcements.
Blogs
2
Create and manage blogs for Courses and Course Groups.

Figure 4.1

The Blogs Tool

Only the instructor can create blogs. The blog topics will display in alphabetical order on the Blogs page.

QUICK STEPS: creating a blog entry

1. On the **Blogs** page, click the desired blog title.
2. On the blog's main page, click **Create Blog Entry** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Blog Entry** page, enter a **Title** for the blog entry.
4. Enter text in the **Entry Message** text box. If desired, use the Text Editor to format the text.
5. Under **Blog Entry Files**, browse for a file to attach to the blog entry, if desired.
6. Click **Post Entry** to submit the blog entry or click **Save Entry as Draft** to post the entry later.

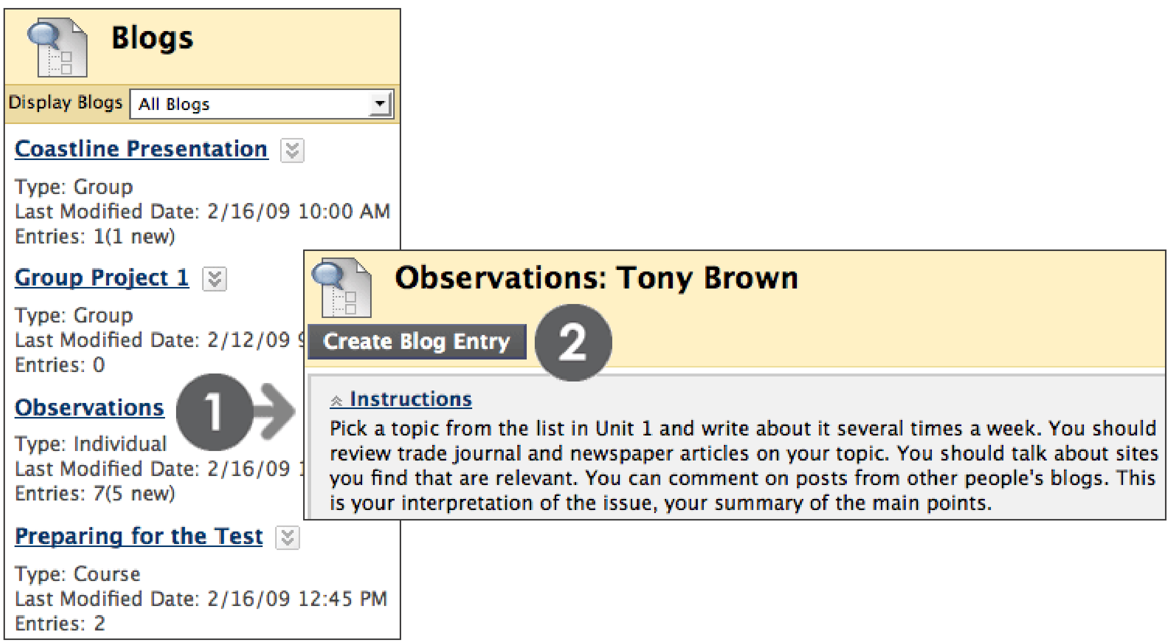


Figure 4.2

From the main Blogs page, under each blog title, students can see if the blog belongs to a group, the course, or to individual students. As stated earlier, Group Blogs can be read by all course members, but to make an entry, you must be a group member.

The instructions for the blog appear below the Action Bar.

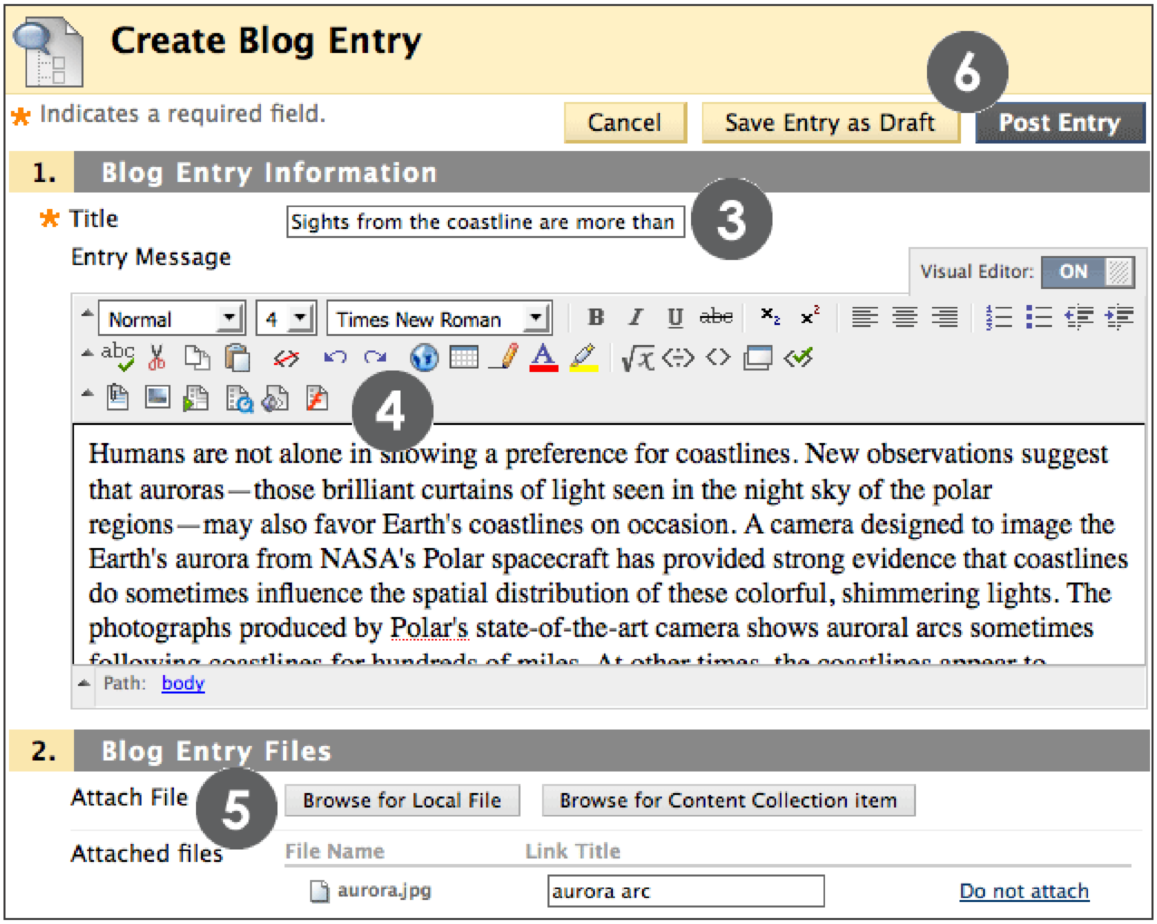


Figure 4.3

Images attached under the Blog Entry Files section will appear as a link in the student's blog. To display an image directly on the blog page, the image can be added using the Attach Image function in the third row of the Text Editor.

The Blogs Tool

A student's blog entries appear in reverse-chronological order. Below the entry, the student can view if comments were made and click the link to view them.

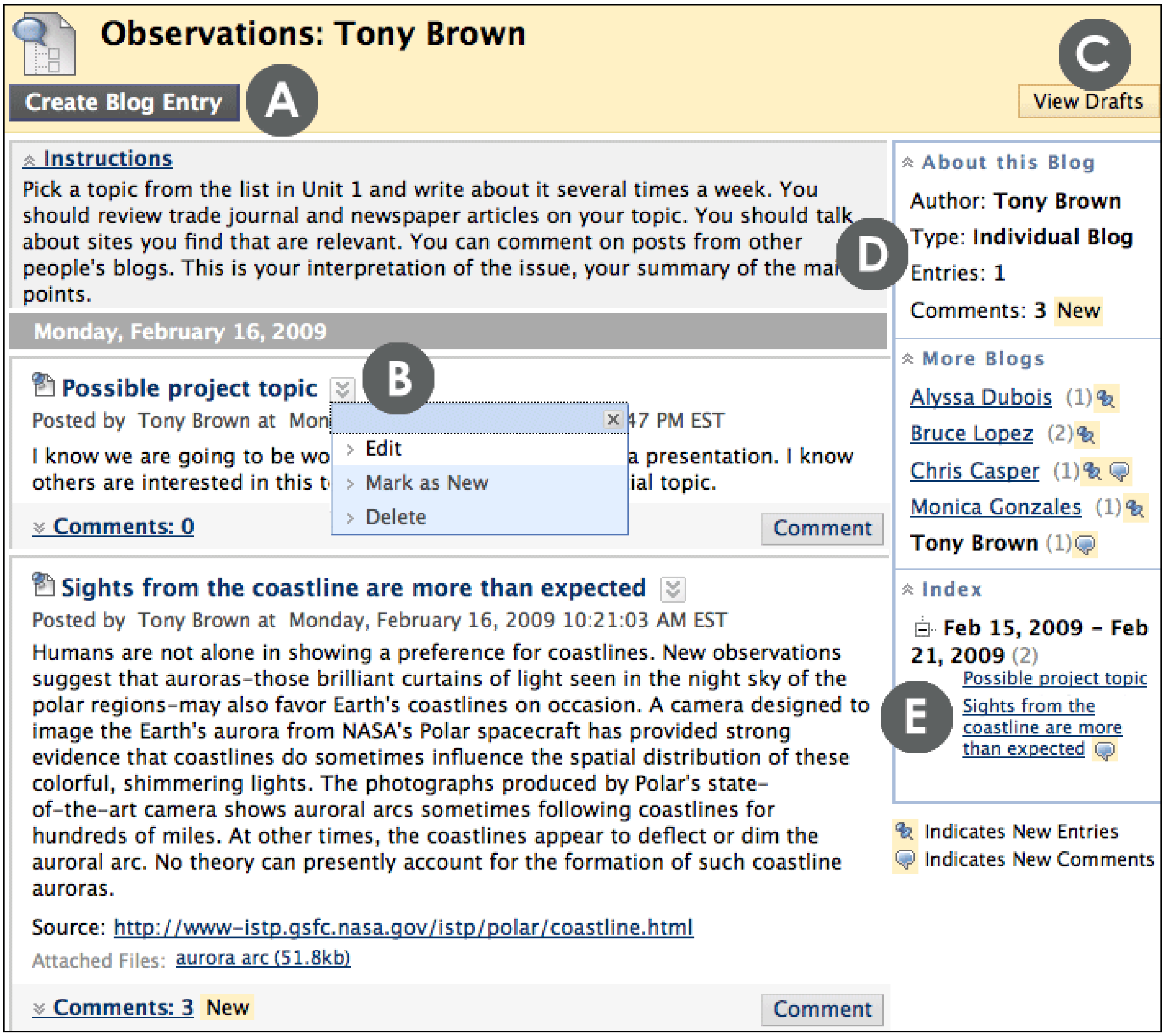


Figure 4.4

The Blogs Tool

Take Note

A The student can make another blog entry at any time.

B Students’ ability to edit or delete blog entries is based on settings made when the instructor creates the blog. Click the entry’s Action Link to access the contextual menu and select Edit or Delete.

C Any entries saved as drafts can be accessed by clicking View Drafts.

D The *About this Blog* area provides at a glance information about the currently selected blog.

E The *Index* section lists the titles of the selected user’s entries for either the week or the month, determined by settings the instructor makes during blog creation. The most recent entry title appears first.

Student Experience

Sending Email

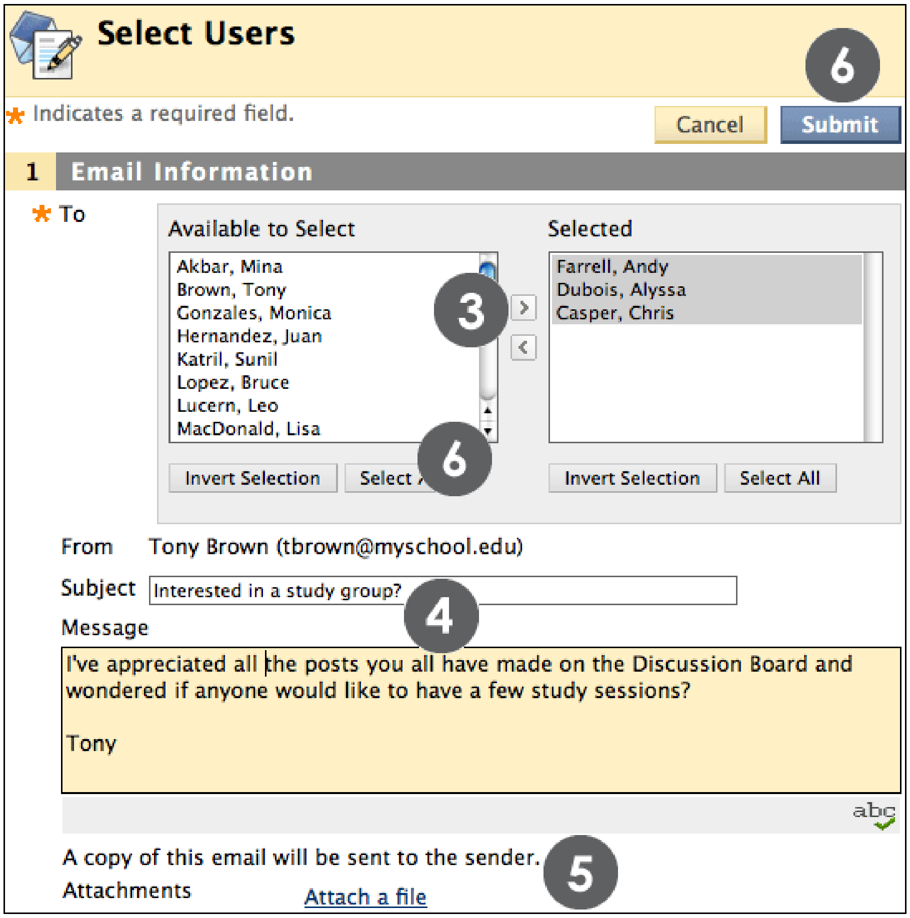


Figure 7.2

To select multiple users in a row, hold down Shift and click. To select users out of sequence, hold down the Control Key and click individual users.

Important Tips

- Blackboard Learn keeps no record of sent emails. You will receive a copy of your email in the Inbox of your external email account. Keep a copy of important messages in case you need them at a later date.
- Blackboard Learn will NOT recognize files or email addresses with spaces or special characters, such as #, &, %, $, and so on. Use only alphanumeric file names and addresses in Blackboard Learn in general.
- Do not send email through Blackboard Learn without content in the subject line. Leaving the subject line blank may prevent the message from being deliver.

Student Experience

Accessing My Grades

Students view their course grades from the My Grades tool. Grades are available by default; however, instructors may choose to make a grade unavailable.

Students access My Grades from the Course Menu.

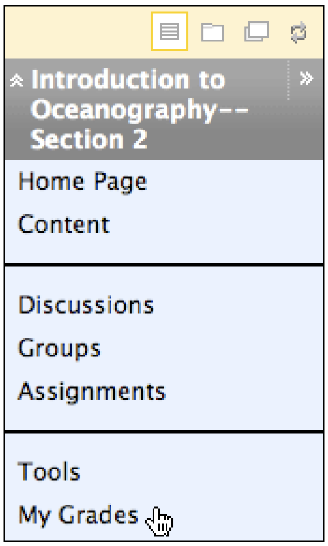


Figure 1

Viewing Grades

My Grades displays the following information by default. The instructor can customize the information students see.

- Item Name – each item is a column in the Grade Center, such as a grade column.
- Details – contains the description the instructor entered when creating the column, or the default description if the column was automatically created.
- Due Date – information appears only if the instructor entered a due date when creating the column.
- Last Submitted, Edited, or Graded – displays the date a student submitted the item or the instructor graded or returned the item.
- Grade – if the item has been graded, the grade is a link to the submission and instructor feedback; if it has not yet been graded, a symbol shows the item's status.
- Points Possible – value entered by the instructor when creating the test or assignment, or when creating the column.
- Comments – if the original grade is overridden, the instructor can provide feedback to the user.

My Grades

Item Name	Details	Due Date	Last Submitted, Edited, or Graded	Grade	Points Possible	Comments
Total	Details			104	170	
Weighted Total	Details			–	0	
Participation	Details		Sep 28, 2008 10:21 AM	21	25	
Ch 1 Wksht	Details		Sep 25, 2008 1:02 PM	28	30	
Chapter 1 Test	Details		Sep 25, 2008 1:33 PM	40	50	
Oceans in the News	Details		Sep 25, 2008 11:09 AM		25	
Chapter 2 Test	Details		Sep 27, 2008 5:41 PM	15	40	
Chapter 3 Test	Details		Sep 28, 2008 11:11 AM	!	50	

Figure 2

Student Experience

Viewing Grades

In the Item Name column, you may see rows displaying a Total and Weighted Total. We will discuss those in more detail later.

In the Grade column, a symbol represents the item’s status.

The table below describes the symbols displayed on the My Grades page.

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION
	Submitted; waiting to be reviewed by the instructor. OR Submitted; reviewed by the instructor and returned ungraded, with comments.
– (dash)	No information.
	Not submitted; attempt in progress because the student has saved it as a draft.
	Item has been completed. For example, for a survey, the check mark icon indicates the student has completed the survey.
	Error.
	Grade exempted for this user.

Viewing Feedback

The content of the Submission History page varies depending on the item type. For assignments, the submission is displayed with the instructor's feedback, if given. For assessments, only the grade is displayed.

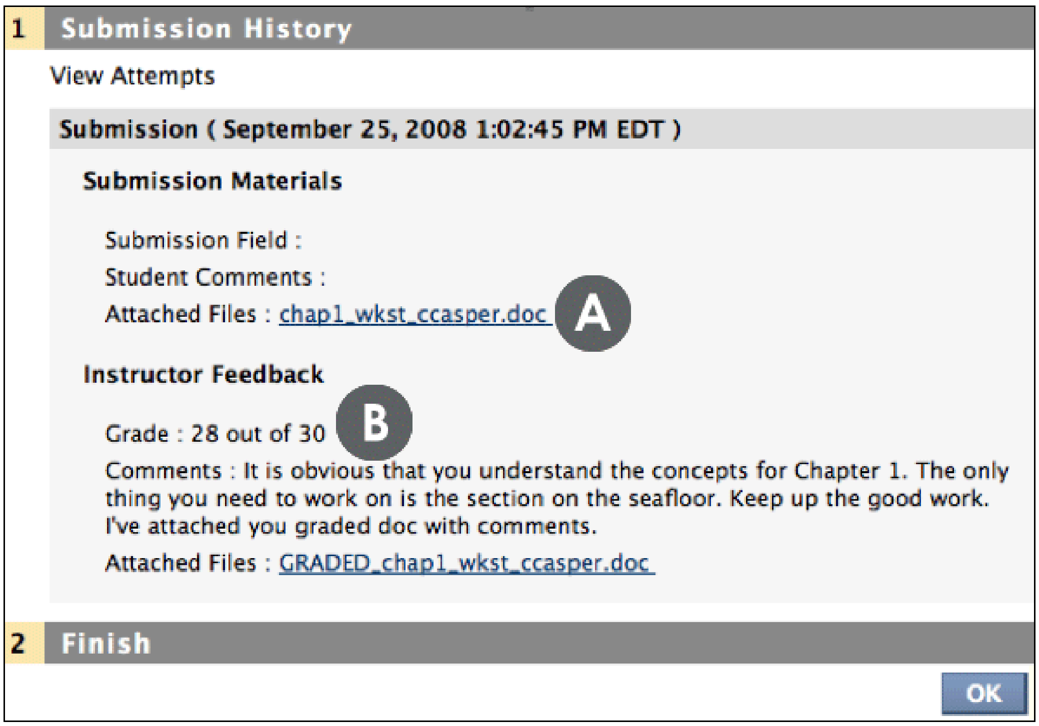


Figure 3

▸ Take Note

M The student attached a file to fulfill the assignment, which the instructor downloaded to view and grade. In the example above, the student added his last name to the file name before uploading.

N The instructor added a grade, feedback, and attached a file with comments for the student.