

# Step 2: Edit and Build Content Areas

Handout Companion to the *How to Build a Canvas Course* Online Training Resource



## Format information and materials for student access.

Where do I put my materials? How do I format a Page, Announcement, or other content using the Rich Content editor? What's the difference between links and embedding or internal vs external links? How do I update the information moving forward?

- **Using the Rich Content Editor (RCE):** Your course is a website! Canvas is a WYSIWYG - "what you see is what you get" - system to build a website without needing to know HTML code. You will use the [Rich Content Editor](#) in every feature of the system to format information for your students to see. This feature works similarly to Word, with a menu bar at the top of the text box field.
- **Edit the Syllabus section:** The [Syllabus in Canvas](#) makes it easy to communicate to your students exactly what will be required of them throughout the course in chronological order. The Course Summary is automatically generated based on assignments and events within a course. You can choose to disable the Course Summary. Items within the Course Summary can only be changed by editing or deleting the assignments or events. All assignments (unpublished and published) are listed in the syllabus for instructors.
- **Edit Announcements:** Announcements allow instructors to communicate with students about course activities and post interesting course-related topics. Announcements are designed to allow instructors to broadcast information out to all members of a course or to all members of sections within a course. [View the Announcements Overview video.](#)
- **Edit Discussions:** Canvas provides an integrated system for class discussions, allowing both instructors and students to start and contribute to as many discussion topics as desired. Discussions allow for interactive communication between two or more people; users can participate in a conversation with an entire class or group. Discussions can also be created as an assignment for grading purposes (and seamlessly integrated with the Canvas Gradebook), or simply serve as a forum for topical and current events. Discussions can also be created within student groups. Discussion topics can be organized as focused or threaded discussions. Focused discussions only allow for two levels of nesting, the original post and subsequent replies. Threaded discussions allow for infinite levels of nesting. Focused discussions are relatively short-lived interactions, while threaded discussions allow replies within replies and may last for a longer period of time. [Watch the Discussions Overview video.](#)
- **Edit Pages:** Pages store content and educational resources that are part of a course or group but don't necessarily belong in an assignment. Pages can include text, video, and links to files and other course or group content. Pages can also be linked to other pages. They can also be used as a collaboration tool for course or group wikis where only specific users can have access. Canvas keeps the entire history of the page to account for changes over time. [Watch the Pages Overview video.](#)

## Tips for Content Design



**Consider visual hierarchy!** The arrangement, size, color, and contrast of visual elements determines their relative prominence and the order in which they are seen by the human eye. Use the built-in RCE style options and whitespace to convey information.



**Accessibility is important.** Design with everyone in mind and always try to make your content accessible for all students. Use the accessibility checker in the Canvas RCE for guidance as you build. WebAIM has a great article, [Introduction to Web Accessibility](#), that will help you understand more.

[Learn more about Canvas content design.](#)