

A Blog—a shorthand term that means Web log—is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. In the course environment, blogs are only able to be viewed by enrolled users. They can be used as a graded assignment or ungraded to gather opinions and information. Collaboration occurs as entries from multiple people collect in one place, but each participant's entry is only editable by that person.

Blog writing assignments are another medium for reflective learning. With this type of assignment, students are expected to display their research, analytical, and communication skills through a series of commentaries meant for public consumption and comment.

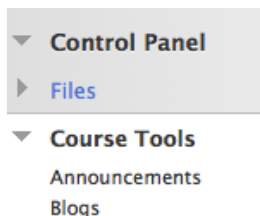
Blogs are, by default, designed to be visible to and allow comments from everyone in the class. With an Individual Blog, each person posts entries to their own blog but everyone can see and comment on them.

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 they are not a member of the group. Your instructor can also offer comments and grade individual entries.

Creating Blog Topics

Instructors can create one or more Blogs for use by students in their courses. Blog topics must be created before students can add their entries.

1. In the Control Panel, expand the Course Tools section.
2. Select Blogs.
3. On the Blogs listing page, click Create Blog on the Action Bar.



4. On the Create Blog page, type a Name for the Blog.
5. Type optional instructions for the Blog. Format the text and add images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments using the functions in the Text Editor, if needed. Attachments added using the Text Editor can be launched in a new window and have alternate text added to describe the attachment.
6. Under Blog Availability, select the Yes option to make it available to users.
7. Use the Display After and Display Until date and time fields to limit the availability of the blog. Select the Display After and Display Until check boxes in order to enable the date and time selections.
8. Under Blog Participation, select Individual to All Students or Course.
 - Individual to All Students means that entries and grades are separate to each student. To view entry, you click on the student's name.
 - Course indicates that all student entries are listed together when entering the blog, and all students get that same grade.
9. Under Blog Settings, select Monthly or Weekly Index Entries. This indicates how long that the blogs are visible.
10. Optionally, select the check box to Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries.
11. Optionally, select the check box to Allow Users to Delete Comments.
12. Select No grading or the Grade option and type the number of Points possible. Points possible will apply to one or more entries made by the user to the blog topic. Once a

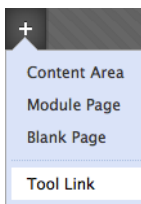
blog is set to be graded, a column is created for it in the Grade Center. It is permanently gradable and cannot be set to No grading.

13. Click Submit.

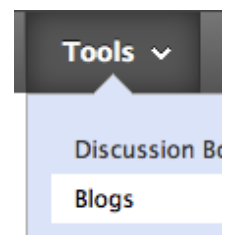
The blog topics appear in alphabetical order on the Blogs listing page. Columns can be sorted by clicking the column title or caret.

Making Blogs Available

Blog topics can be made available in several areas of the course. Blogs are automatically available in the Tools -> Blogs. However you can create more direct routes to access Blogs.



Create a menu link/button by selecting the plus icon at the top of the menu, and then selecting Tool Link. Title the link. Choose Blogs from the drop-down list and make available to students.



It is also possible to insert blogs within content areas, folders, and modules. In any content area, choose Tools, then select Blogs. From this view you can create a new blog topic or link to one that is already created.

Comparing Blogs, Journals, Wikis, and Discussion Boards

	BLOG	JOURNAL	WIKI	DISCUSSION BOARD
Common Uses:	A shared online diary for use in class.	Personal writing space for self-reflection and private communication with the instructor.	A collaborative space where all students can view, contribute and edit content.	Online discussions that are organized hierarchically with forums, threads and replies.
Potential Uses:	"What we did / will do in class" saves instructor having to answer individual inquiries; online discussions about related topics; a place to hand in evidence of class participation.	Reflect on personal growth throughout semester; record things learned on field trip; express oneself; document clinical experiences; all are private.	Creative writing; group research projects; student-filled study guide for test (Instructor provides the outline and students collaboratively fill it in.)	Since we've had the discussion board in Blackboard since the beginning, this is a tool you might be comfortable with for online discussions.
Notes:	Blogs are less structured than the Discussion Board, and they're chronological. The format is more open and conversational in style.	If you set Permit course users to view journal, the journal will not be private, making it more like a blog with commenting turned off.	When a student is updating a wiki page, the rest of the students are locked out of it until it is released. This is the only Bb tool that allows multiple students to collaborate within the same text entry area.	Discussion boards are easily collapsed, expanded and searched. Users can Subscribe to a forum or thread and receive an email update every time someone adds to it.