

Ten Stops on the Road to Building a Canvas Course

This document is a quick reference guide that may be used to help instructors get started with key tasks to create a course in Canvas. Each of the ten stops provides information on what to do and links to more detailed instructions provided by Canvas.



Start the Engine: Access Canvas



Choose the Destination: Plan



Customize the Ride (Part I): Profile & Notifications



Customize the Ride (Part II): Edit Course & Instructor Information



Map the Route: Create the Module Framework



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Start the Engine: Access Canvas

Log into Canvas at: <https://canvas.jefferson.edu/index.cfm>

Your Dashboard should have a number of course cards that reflect your teaching assignments as they appear in Banner (about four weeks prior to the term). The Dashboard may also have one or more sandboxes and the self-paced “Growing with Canvas” course.

Canvas Video Guide | [Canvas Overview](#)

If you

- cannot access Canvas
- require a personal sandbox
- want additional sandboxes or
- would like access to “Growing with Canvas”

Email the Academic Commons at EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu

Contact your program director if your course assignments do not appear on your Dashboard.



Choose the Destination: Plan

Use the linked Planning Sheet to map out the major course content areas.

Click the resource link on the right for an editable copy of the planning sheet.

Resource | [Planning Sheet](#)



PLAN

Take a few minutes to plan what you want your learners to experience. Use this organizer to help you plan what you should put into your Canvas course. Try to keep one to two weeks ahead of your learners.

Step	Determine Your Goals	Identify Your Materials and Activities	Know what Canvas calls this...
A	Identify where you'd like to start. What topic/unit/project will you focus on?	Put the name of the topic/unit/project here	<i>This will be your first Canvas Module.</i>
B	Identify your resources. What do you typically use to teach this content?	Is there an online textbook?	<i>You will be able to link these in Canvas.</i>
		What documents such as PowerPoint presentations, note-taking guides, and articles should be uploaded?	
		Are there videos to link from YouTube or another site? Can you record yourself giving directions or information?	
		Are there web resources that support the learning of the content to link?	
C	Identify your practice. How will you have students practice with the information they are learning?	Think about how they would practice this. You can give them directions to practice on their own, or you can have them submit it to you.	<i>This might be a great offline activity. If you want to see the student practice, they can submit it in Canvas as an Assignment, Discussion, or Quiz.</i>
D	Identify your assessment. What will students submit to you to show they are learning your content?	Students will be able to submit a number of ways - uploading files, creating videos, submitting photographs.	<i>You will likely want to have this submitted to you in Canvas as an Assignment, Discussion, or Quiz.</i>

Tip: Complete one of these for each unit, week, module, chapter in your course.



Customize the Ride (Part I): Profile & Notifications

Notifications in Canvas tell the system WHAT information you wish to be sent outside of Canvas, HOW OFTEN, and WHERE it is sent.

From the **Account** badge on the global navigation menu, select the **Settings** link.

Under **Ways to Contact** on the right (or at the bottom depending on your screen resolution), add any desired additional contact methods (e.g., a second e-mail address or account, SMS/text messages) and confirm each as directed.

You may customize your **Settings** by adding a profile image, changing your time zone and/or indicating your preferred pronouns.

Click on **Update Settings** to save your changes.

Once you have updated your settings and included any additional communication methods, access the **Notifications** section. Review and customize each to reflect the information you wish to be sent, the frequency and where it should be directed.

Canvas Video Guide | [Notifications Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Edit Your Profile](#)

Canvas Guide | [Add a Profile Picture](#)

Canvas Guide | [Notifications Preferences](#)



Customize the Ride (Part II): Course & Instructor Information

All courses should have information that provides an overview of the course and information about the instructor.

This information may be on the same page or on different pages. Most templates include a button that links to this information from the course home page.

Navigate to the appropriate page.

Select **Edit** from the upper right-hand corner of the page.

The **Rich Content Editor (RCE)** will open.

Position the cursor in the RCE box to edit or add text.

Type text or copy and paste from another source into the RCE. The RCE includes several formatting tools that allows you to modify text much like the tool ribbon in Microsoft products.

Click **Save**.

Canvas Video Guide | [New Rich Content Editor \(RCE\)](#)

Canvas Guide | [Editing Canvas Content](#)

Canvas Guide | [Add & Modify Text in the New RCE](#)



Map the Route: Create the Module Framework

You already may organize your course by thematic topics, units, weeks, or chapters. Canvas uses Modules to organize the learning experience. It may be helpful to think of the module as a titled chapter in the “book” of your course.

For this step, you’re simply building the overall Module structure or the table of contents for your course.

You named your modules in Step Two. Consult your Planning Sheet(s) from Stop 2 for reference.

Access **Modules** from the course menu on the left.

Click on the **+ Module** button to add the first named module. Repeat until you have created a table of contents (module structure) with chapter titles (module titles) for your course.

Canvas Video Guide | [Modules Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Add a Module](#)



Roadside Attractions: Create the Assignments

Adding or creating an Assignment automatically adds a column to the gradebook for that item. You must create an **Assignment**, graded **Discussion**, or graded **Quiz** for any item you wish to appear in the grade center. This may include quizzes, papers, projects, presentations, discussion board contributions, participation, exams, etc.

Access **Assignments** within the course menu at the left.

Click on the **+ Assignment** link.

Give the Assignment a name.

Select a Due Date (if applicable).

Assigned Due Dates will automatically populate the Course Calendar and the learner's to-do list.

Indicate the total points possible.

Extra credit assignments should have 0 points possible so that they are calculated as extra points.

Choose a Submission Type (how you want to receive the work—online, on paper, or in real-time with a presentation).

Click on **Save & Publish**.

Note: *Publish each assignment to make them available to learners.*

Canvas Video Guide | [Assignments Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Create an Assignment](#)

Canvas Video Guide | [Discussions Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Create a Discussion](#)

Canvas Video Guide | [Quizzes Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Create a Quiz](#)

Canvas Video Guide | [Canvas Calendar](#)



Fill in the Gaps: Add Content

You created the Module structure for your course in a previous step. In this step, you will create and associate Pages with these Modules. Pages organize course materials and resources.

You can add a variety of content to a **Page**, including text, Word documents, PDFs, pre-recorded lectures, YouTube clips, weblinks and images.

Start with one of the earliest modules. Click the **+ icon** next to the module title.*

Select Page from the drop-down menu.

Identify this as a **New Page**.

Name the **Page**.

Click **Add Item**.

Select the new link.

Use the **Edit** button to add content to the page using the Rich Content Editor (RCE).

You must publish each module and the individual items you add to make them available to learners.

The **+icon button also allows you to add Assignments, Quizzes, Files, and Discussions to Modules. Previously developed materials will automatically appear.*

Canvas Video Guide | [Pages Overview](#)

Canvas Guide | [Create a Page](#)

Canvas Guide | [Uploading a Document](#)

Canvas Guide | [Rich Content Editor Index](#)



Post the Itinerary: Add the Syllabus

In Canvas, you can upload your syllabus as a Word document or a PDF. You can copy/paste the text of your syllabus directly into Canvas.

Click on the **Syllabus** tab in the course navigation menu or the **Syllabus** button on the course front page.

Select **Edit**.

Paste the text of your Syllabus within the edit window OR upload a Word or PDF Document.

Click **Update Syllabus** to save.

Canvas Guide | [Canvas Syllabus Tool](#)

Canvas Guide | [Uploading a Document](#)



Looking Ahead: Preview the Course in Learner View

Prior to publishing a course, it is a good idea to view the course in **Student View** in order to test it fully before it is published.

Access **Settings** within the course menu at the left.

Click on the **Student View** button.

Preview the course as a student: view pages, view the syllabus, view quizzes, view the calendar, and view the scheduler.

Click on **Leave Student View** at the bottom right when done with the preview.

Note: *Attendance, conferences, conversations, collaborations, differentiated assignments, external apps, groups, peer reviews, and profiles do not work in the Student View.*



Hit the Gas: Publish

In order for students to see a Canvas course, you need to publish the course.

Access **Home** within the course menu at the left.

Locate the **Course Status** button.

Click on the **Publish** button. The publish button should be green once published.

Note: *Publishing a course does not publish content that has been designated as 'draft' or unpublished. To publish content, assignments, modules, etc. you must click the publish icon next to each item.*

