

The 5 Essential Skills You will Need

To Build Courses in Blackboard 9.1

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Dear Faculty,

Welcome to the latest version of Blackboard!

This manual introduces you to the 5 essential skills that you will need to master.

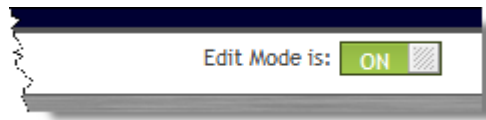
Of course there is more to learn. For example, you will need to master some of the new tools and enhanced features introduced in this version of Blackboard. However, mastering these 5 essential skills will enable you to start building courses right away in this new environment. They form the bedrock for everything else that you do.

The following pages will help you get started...



1 The Edit Mode Button

First, you need to know how to use the *Edit Mode* button. The button looks like this:



When the button is in the *ON* mode, you can modify your course (reorder items, add documents, create exams, etc.). When it is in the *OFF* mode, you cannot edit any of the pages in your course. However, the *OFF* mode lets you see what the course looks like from the student perspective.

But where is it? Let's look at a screenshot of a Blackboard course:

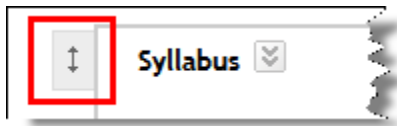
The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a course titled "Intro to Blackboard 08_BB_New". The page is titled "Announcements" and has "Edit Mode is: ON" in the top right corner. A red arrow points to this button. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with items like "Announcements", "Syllabus", "Course Materials", "Assignments", "Homework", "Exams", "Exams 2", "Quizzes", and "Discussion Board". Below this is a "COURSE MANAGEMENT" section with items like "Control Panel", "Files", "Course Tools", "Evaluation", "Grade Center", "Users and Groups", "Customization", "Packages and Utilities", and "Help". The main content area shows three announcements: "Syllabus", "Test 1", and "Welcome!". Each announcement includes a title, a brief description, and the author "Sam Spade".

The **Edit Mode** button is in the upper right-hand corner of the page. In this case, the *Edit Mode* button has been toggled to *ON* mode. This allows the instructor to make changes to the course.

Let's look at some of the new ways you can make changes to a Blackboard course...

2 How to Reorder Items

There is a new way to reorder items on your course page. Look at the image below:



Notice that items now have a 'handle' (consisting of vertical arrows). You use this handle to drag the item up or down to a new location. Just left-click on the handle, keep your finger pressed down on the mouse button, and drag (see image below).

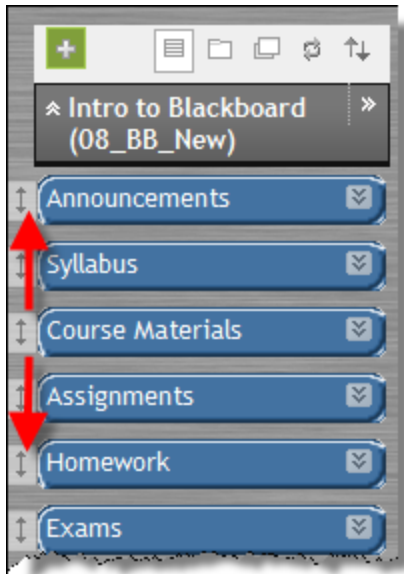
The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a course titled "Intro to Blackboard 08_BB_New". The main content area is titled "Announcements" and is in "Edit Mode". It features a list of announcements with handles (up and down arrows) for reordering. The announcements are:

- Syllabus**: The syllabus has been posted within the Syllabus link. Please download it and bring it to the first day of class.
- Test 1**: Test 1 is now available on Blackboard. You have until May 25th at 11:59pm to take it. Please remember to finish all three sections of the exam and do not leave any questions blank.
- Welcome!**: Welcome to the class! Please print the syllabus and bring it on the first day of class. I look forward to having you class.

Red arrows point to the handles of the "Syllabus" and "Test 1" items, indicating they can be moved. The left sidebar contains a course menu with items like "Announcements", "Syllabus", "Course Materials", "Assignments", "Homework", "Exams", "Exams 2", "Quizzes", and "Discussion Board". Below this is a "COURSE MANAGEMENT" section with items like "Control Panel", "Files", "Course Tools", "Evaluation", "Grade Center", "Users and Groups", "Customization", "Packages and Utilities", and "Help".

Notice in the above image that you can move the *Test 1* item up or down – giving it more primacy or less in the order of items.


Now look on the upper left-hand side of the page. Notice that the course menu buttons have 'handles' as well.

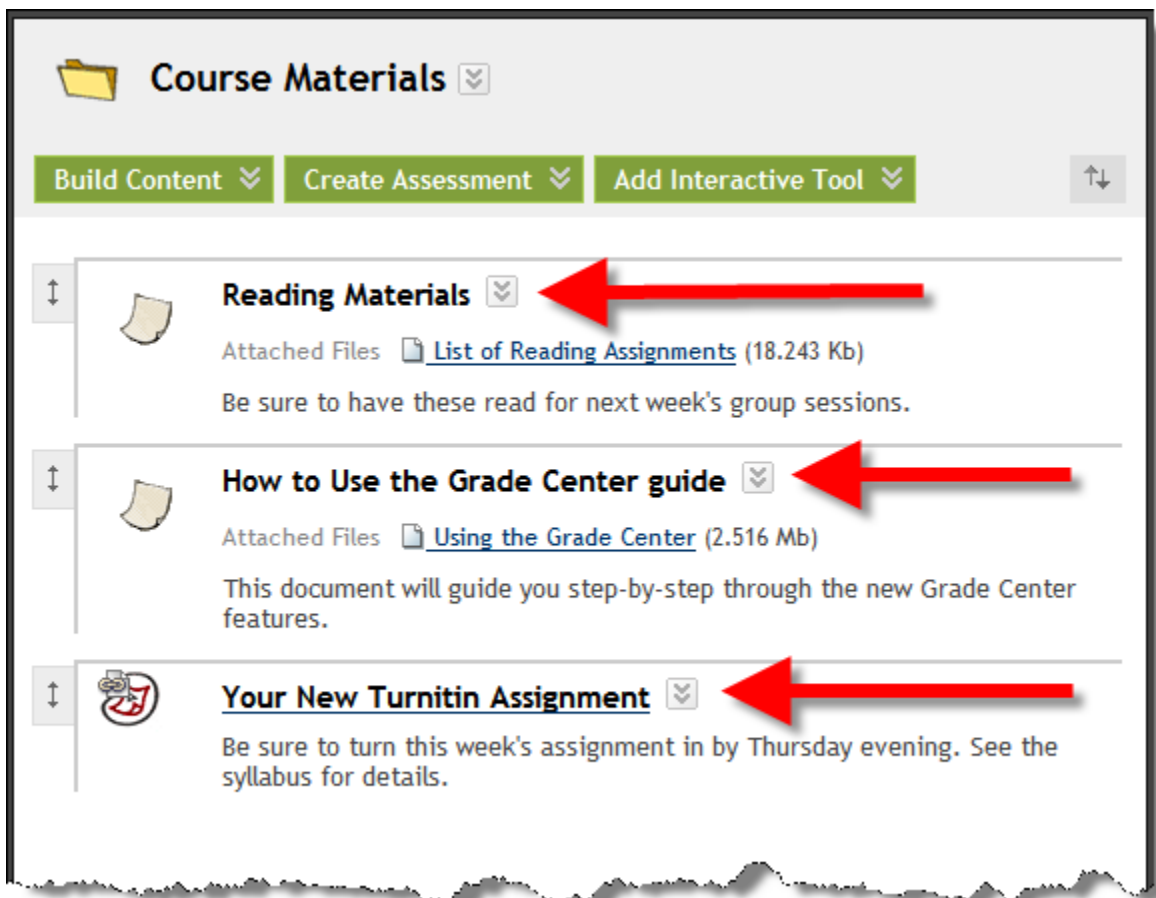


Course menu buttons can be reordered just like items on a course content page.

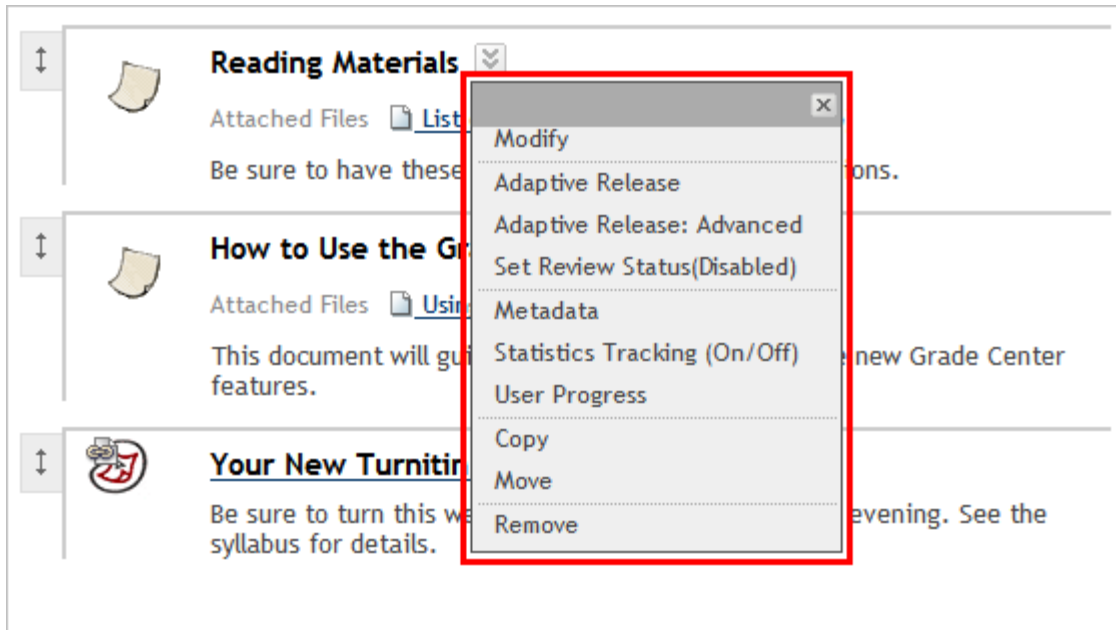
Now that you know how to reorder items, let's look at how you *modify* them.

3 How to Modify Items

There is a new way to modify items in Blackboard 9.1. In the screenshot below, notice that each item has a button () associated with it.



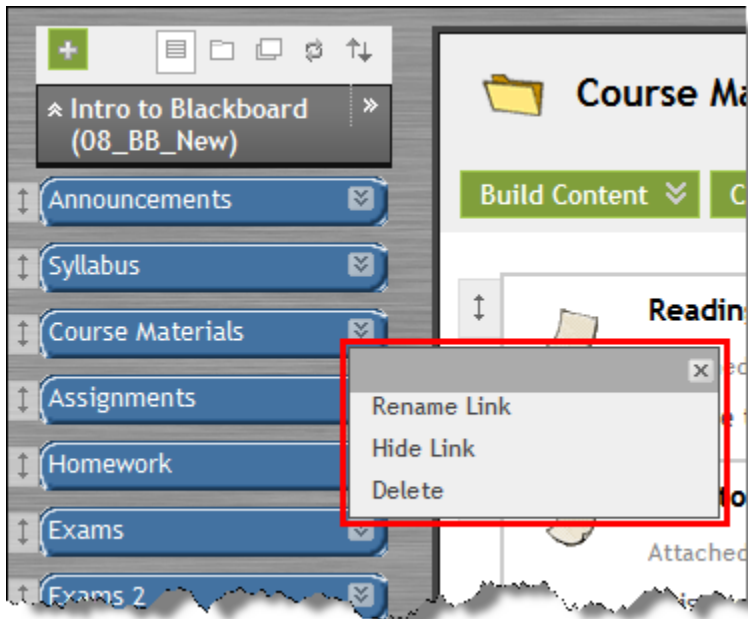
Clicking this button opens drop-down menu:



To modify the item, click the *Modify* option. Notice that you can also copy, move, or even remove the item.

Modifying course menu buttons

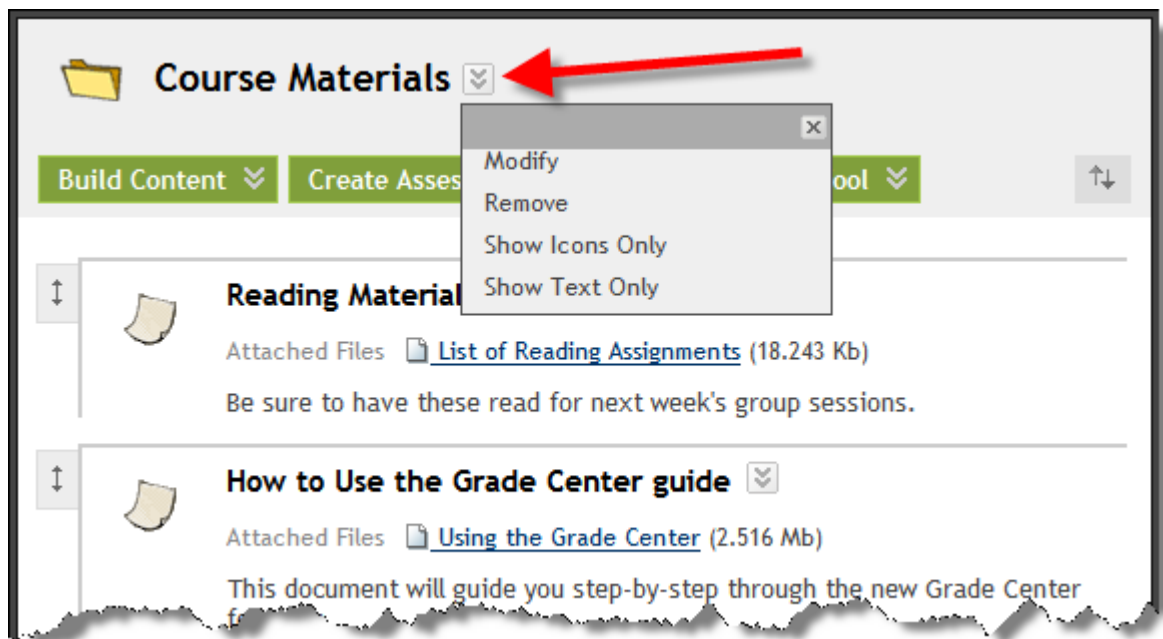
Course menu buttons can be modified in the same way. Clicking the button opens a drop-down menu with several options:



Notice that you can (1) rename the link, (2) hide it so that students cannot see it, and (3) delete it.

Modifying course content areas

Each content area has a button that allows you to modify that area.



Notice that you can both modify and remove the content area.

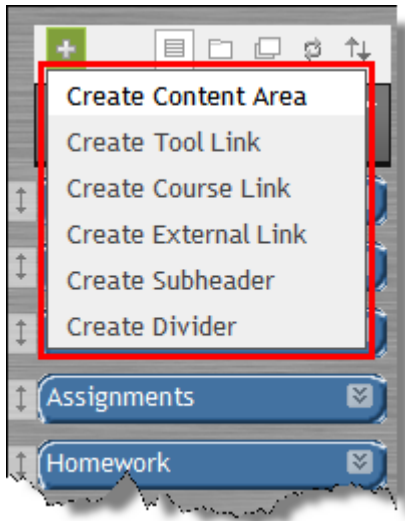
OK. We now know how to modify items. **But how do we add new content areas to our course?**

4 Adding New Content Areas

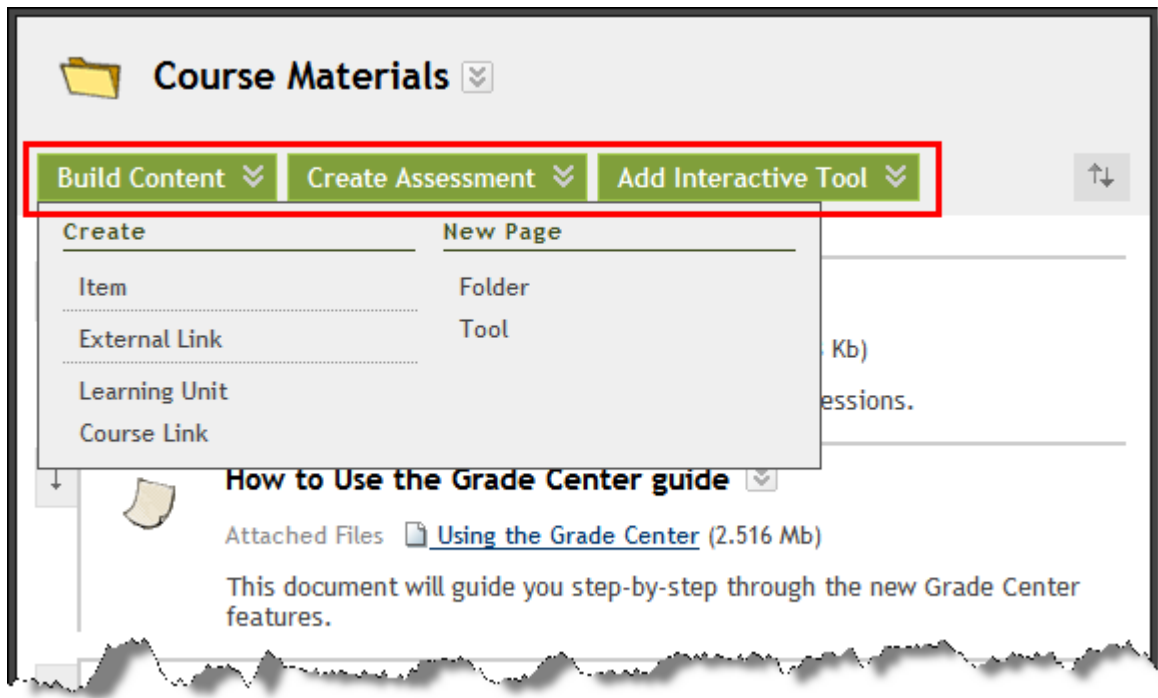
Adding new content areas is easy (once you know what button to click!). This is where you can find the *Add Content* button:

The screenshot displays the Blackboard course management interface for a course titled "Intro to Blackboard 08_BB_New". The page is titled "Announcements" and shows an "Add Announcement" button. A red arrow points to the green plus sign icon in the top left corner of the course navigation menu, which is used to add new content areas. The main content area displays three announcements: "Syllabus", "Test 1", and "Welcome!". The "Syllabus" announcement states: "The syllabus has been posted within the Syllabus link. Please download it and bring it to the first day of class." The "Test 1" announcement states: "Test 1 is now available on Blackboard. You have until May 25th at 11:59pm to take it. Please remember to finish all three sections of the exam and do not leave any questions blank." The "Welcome!" announcement states: "Welcome to the class! Please print the syllabus and bring it on the first day of class. I look forward to having you class." The "Add Announcement" button is located at the top right of the announcement list. The "Edit Mode is: ON" indicator is visible in the top right corner.

Clicking this button opens a drop-down menu (illustrated in the image below).



Notice that you can create content areas just like the ones you created in Blackboard 8. Once you create a content area, you *add content to it* via the content area menu bars.



Notice in the above image that the instructor has clicked the *Build Content* menu bar. A drop-down menu allows the instructor to add a new item, an external link, a folder, etc.

Let's look at one more feature in Blackboard 9.1 – the new Control Panel.

5 The New Control Panel

The Control Panel is no longer located on a separate page:

The screenshot displays the Blackboard course interface for 'Intro to Blackboard 08_BB_New'. The main content area is titled 'Announcements' and shows three posts: 'Syllabus', 'Test 1', and 'Welcome!'. A red arrow points from the 'Control Panel' option in the left sidebar to the 'Test 1' announcement, indicating its location.

Intro to Blackboard 08_BB_New **Announcements** Edit Mode is: **ON**

Announcements

Add Announcement

Syllabus Posted by: **Sam Spade**
Posted on:

The syllabus has been posted within the Syllabus link. Please download it and bring it to the first day of class.

Test 1 Posted by: **Sam Spade**
Posted on:

Test 1 is now available on Blackboard. You have until May 25th at 11:59pm to take it. Please remember to finish all three sections of the exam and do not leave any questions blank.

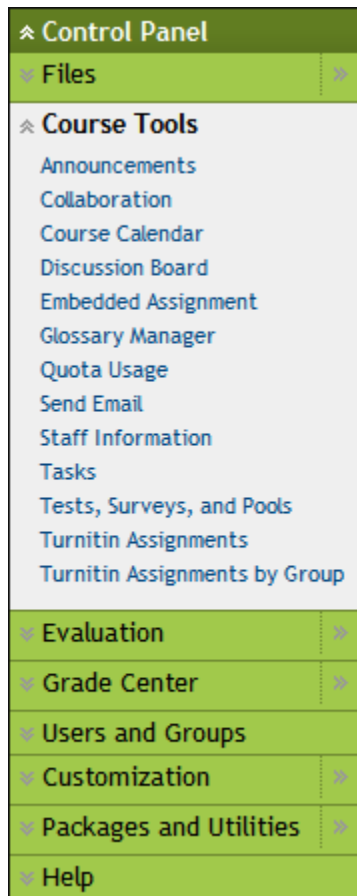
Welcome! Posted by: **Sam Spade**
Posted on:

Welcome to the class!
Please print the syllabus and bring it on the first day of class. I look forward to having you class.

COURSE MANAGEMENT

- Control Panel
- Files
- Course Tools
- Evaluation
- Grade Center
- Users and Groups
- Customization
- Packages and Utilities
- Help

However, you will be able to perform the same actions that you were able to perform in the old Control Panel. For example, by clicking the *Course Tools* link, you will see a list of all the tools available for that course. Each item in the list is a link. When you click the link, a page opens that allows you to work with that tool – or even make it unavailable to students.



In addition, this is how you get to the Grade Center, the roster, any groups you may have created, exams, and the help pages.

That's it! **You have now gained the 5 essential skills for working in the new Blackboard environment.**