



## What is a Blog?

A blog is a website that contains written entries about a particular subject such as urban development, global warming, or 20th century literature. Entries are displayed in reverse chronological order, and often allow for comments by blog readers. Blog entries can include text, images, multimedia, and links to other blogs and websites related to the blog's topic.

Each Blackboard™ course has one Central Course Blog and can have many individual or group blog sites.

## Configuring the Central Course Blog

By default, the Central Course Blog is set up such that the instructor is the only user who can edit and create pages. To change settings for this blog, use the Configure Blog Tool.

1. Click Control Panel> Configure Blog Tool.
2. Select if students can create entries in the blog. Choose "No" if the instructor will be the only person posting entries. Choose "Yes" if students can post as well.
3. Select post visibility. Choose "Yes" if students can see other students' entries. Choose "No" if students should only see their own entries.
4. Select purge control. Choose "Yes" if students are allowed to permanently delete entries in the blog.
5. Select comment control. Select "Nobody" to turn off the comments function, "Instructor Only" if the instructor is the only person who should add comments, or "Everyone in Course" if students can also participate.
6. Choose blog editing dates. Specify the time range within which students can edit pages. By default there are no date restrictions placed on editing, if editing is enabled for students.
7. Choose blog view dates. Specify the time range within which students can view pages. By default there are no date restrictions placed on viewing, if viewing is enabled for students.
8. Select how students will be identified. If students are posting to the blog, use this option to specify how their names will appear on the screen.
9. Choose a primary text direction. If the blog uses a language that is read right-to-left, such as Arabic, you can set the primary text direction.

## Wiki vs. Blog

### Wiki

A website that allows users to add and edit content collectively.

### Blog

A frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and web links.

## Blog Uses

### Q: How can I engage students in reflective writing?

A: Blogs can serve as a platform for reflective writing. Students can consider and explore course readings, class discussions, or field experiences. Through the journals, the instructor gains insight into his students' experiences in the course and can efficiently provide individualized feedback.

### Q: How can I facilitate learning via peer review and feedback?

A: Students learn through peer review when blogs are configured for group access. Students can view one another's posts and provide comments and suggestions. Such sharing gives students the opportunity to learn by both example and critique.

### Q: How can I encourage critical thinking and creativity?

A: Using blogs for group or course-wide blogging fosters lively discussion of course topics and concepts. When engaged in written debate, students are motivated to sharpen their critical thinking and rhetorical skills. They can also exercise creativity by adding images, external links, and uploaded files to their posts.

# Blog

## Creating a Blog

Blackboard™ instructors can create blogs within Content Areas such as Assignments or Course Documents.

1. Go to the course Control Panel.
2. Choose a content area (i.e. Course Documents or Assignments) where you wish to create the blog.
3. Select the "Blog" from list in the right corner of the action bar.
4. Click the Go button to create the blog.

## Configuring a Blog

Once the blog is created, it must be configured for use. Complete the following information in the Create Blog form:

1. Enter a blog name and description.
2. Choose members who will create entries in the blog. You can mix and match individuals and existing groups or select "All Students."
3. Select blog visibility. Choose "No" if the blog should be hidden from all students. Choose "Yes" if it should be visible.
4. Select post visibility. Choose "Yes" if students can see other students' entries. Choose "No" if students should only see their own entries.
5. Select purge control. Choose "Yes" if students are allowed to permanently delete entries in the blog.
6. Select comment control. Select "Nobody" to turn off the comments function, "Instructor Only" if the instructor is the only person who should add comments, or "Everyone in Course" if students can also participate.
7. Choose blog editing dates. Specify the time range within which students can edit pages. By default there are no date restrictions placed on editing, if editing is enabled for students.
8. Choose blog view dates. Specify the time range within which students can view pages. By default there are no date restrictions placed on viewing, if viewing is enabled for students.
9. Select how students will be identified. If students are posting to the blog, use this option to specify how their names will appear on the screen.
10. Create a Gradebook entry. If the blog will be graded, complete the "Create a Gradebook Entry" option. To remove this entry from the Gradebook after creating it, do so from the Gradebook.
11. Choose a primary text direction. If the blog uses a language that is read right-to-left, such as Arabic, you can set the primary text direction.

## Individual Blogs

This is the typical kind of blog on which an individual student posts entries and others can view and comment, but on which other students cannot post original entries.

Instructors can create an Individual Blog by adding and configuring a "Blog" content type within any content area (such as Assignments or Course Documents).

To create an Individual Blog, follow the directions in the *Create a Blog* and *Configure a Blog* sections and choose the following options while completing the steps:

1. When selecting members, select an individual student.
2. Choose "Yes" for the "do you want to make the content visible?" option.
3. Consider changing other options to suit your particular usage.

## Private Journals

A Private Journal is a blog that is configured as a private writing space that only an individual student and the instructor can see. Instructors can create a Private Journal by adding and configuring a "Blog" content type within any content area (such as Assignments or Course Documents).

To create a Private Journal, follow the directions in the *Create a Blog* and *Configure a Blog* sections and choose the following options while completing the steps:

1. When selecting members, select "All Students."
2. In the Options section, choose "No" for the "do you want to allow users to view posts by other users?" option.
3. Consider changing other options to suit your particular usage.

Under these settings, students will only see their own entries in the journal and will be unaware that other students are posting into the same space.

The instructor can see all of the students' work in one place. To see everyone's work at once, choose "All Authors." This will chronologically display all entries by all students in the blog. If you want to view just one student's work, use the select box on the right side of the action bar. It shows a list of all of the people who have posted in the journal, along with the number of entries they have made.

## Group Blogs

A Group Blog is a collaborative writing space where multiple people post entries into the same blog. Instructors can create a Group Blog by adding and configuring a Blog content type within any content area in a course (such as Assignments or Course Documents).

To create a Group Blog, follow the directions in the *Create a Blog* and *Configure a Blog* sections and choose the following options while completing the steps:

1. When selecting members, add multiple members. You can mix and match individuals and existing groups or select "All Students." You must create a group in Blackboard™ before it will appear in this area.
2. Select "Yes" for the "allow users to view each other's posts" option.
3. Consider changing other options to suit your particular usage.