

## Weekly Journal

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Step 1 – Create a new RStudio Project</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Step 2 – Install and load the course package</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Step 3 – Download your starter journal</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Step 4 – Load the Journal Helper Function</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Step 5 – Add a new week chapter</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Step 6 – Handling Multiple Entries on the Same Day</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Step 7 – Choose your prompt, then write</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1	Choose <b>one</b> prompt to answer . . . . .	11
7.2	Response . . . . .	11
<b>8</b>	<b>Step 8 – Render the entire journal (unified output)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Step 9 — Submit via GitHub</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Visual Workflow</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>FAQ</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Weekly checklist (quick self-audit)</b>	<b>20</b>

Start with the **Student Guide** below.

Your **course journal** is a Quarto **book**. Each **week** has a chapter with **three prompts**—you answer **one**.

Word ranges are enforced when you render:

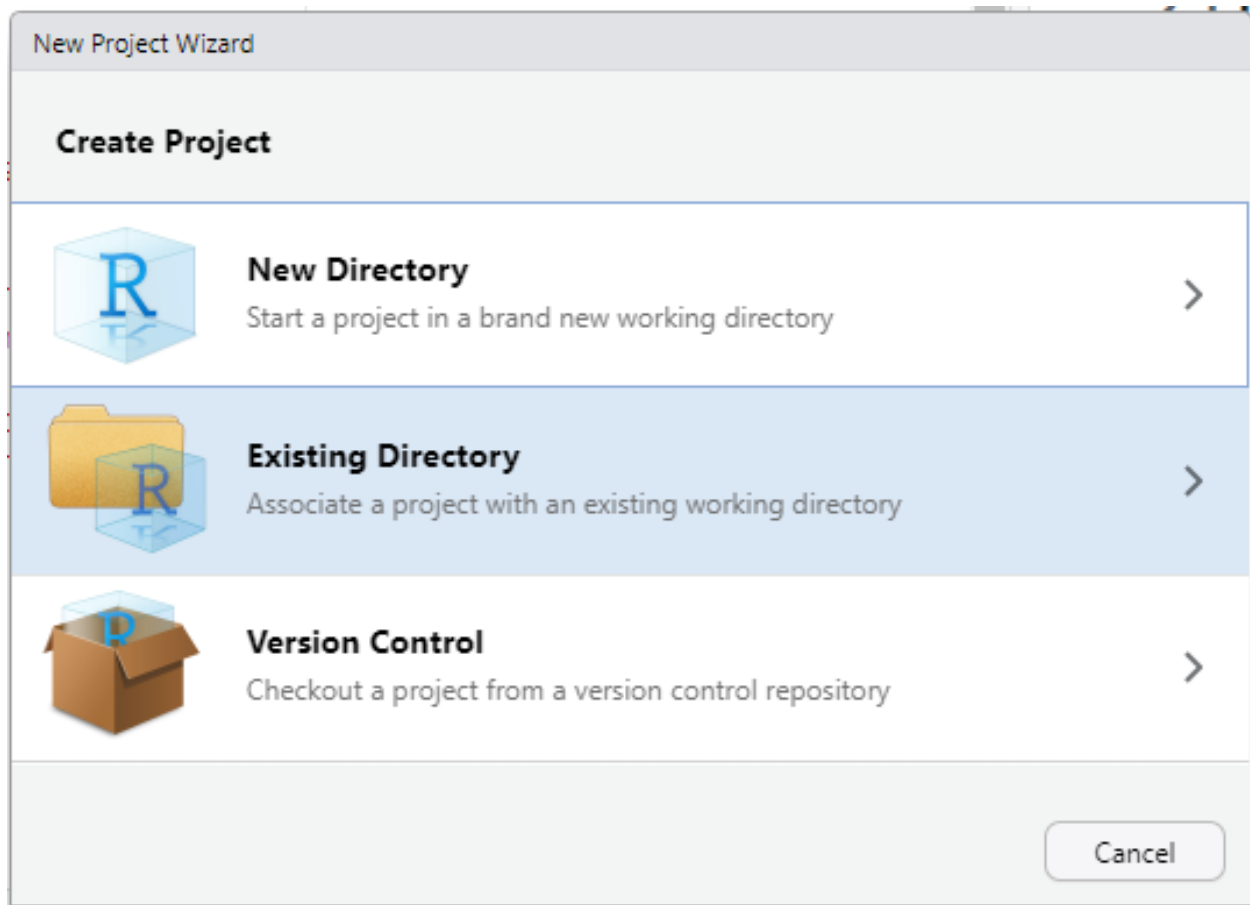
- **MC 451: 250-300** words
  - **MC 501: 450-500** words
-

# Chapter 1

## Step 1 – Create a new RStudio Project

1. Open **RStudio** -> **File** -> **New Project** -> **New Directory** -> **New Project**.
2. Choose a location (e.g., Documents/MC451/) and name it (e.g., journal\_project).

**FIGURE**



# Chapter 2

## Step 2 – Install and load the course package

In the **Console**:

```
pak::pak("SIM-Lab-SIUE/mccoursepack")  
library(mccoursepack)
```

If prompted, restart R after installation.

**FIGURE**

```
> library(mccoursepack)  
mccoursepack: run `mccourse_setup()` once to install Quarto, TinyTeX, and core packages.  
> mccourse_setup()  
— mccoursepack: setup —  
Your system is ready to build packages!  
✓ Quarto available: 1.7.33  
✓ TinyTeX is already installed.  
✓ Setup finished. If Quarto/TinyTeX were just installed, restart RStudio.
```

## Chapter 3

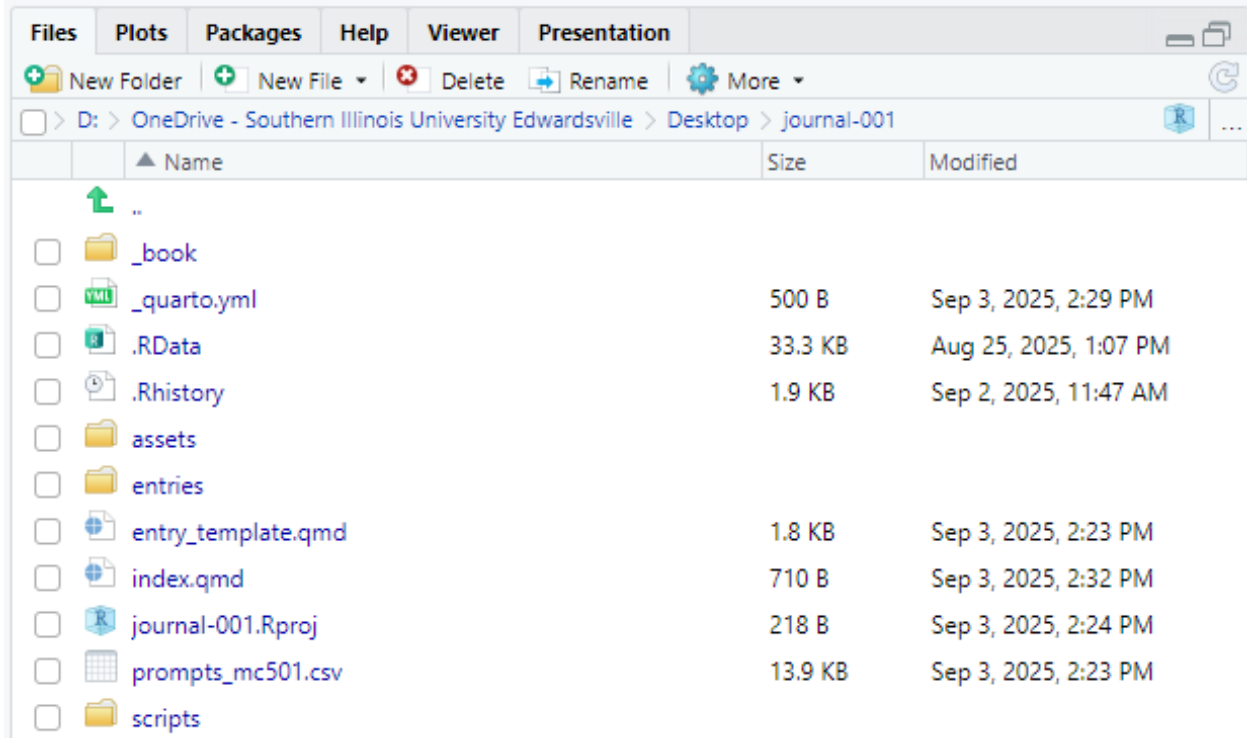
### Step 3 – Download your starter journal

Run:

```
download_journal("mc451", dest = ".") # or "mc501"
```

This populates your project's main folder with the complete journal structure.

**FIGURE**





## Chapter 4

### Step 4 – Load the Journal Helper Function

Before you can add a new entry, you need to load the helper function that creates the file for you.

1. In the **Files** pane (bottom-right), navigate into the `scripts` folder.
2. Click on the file `new_journal_entry.R` to open it in the editor.
3. Click the **Source** button in the top-right corner of the editor pane.

This loads the `new_journal_entry()` function into your R environment for the current session.

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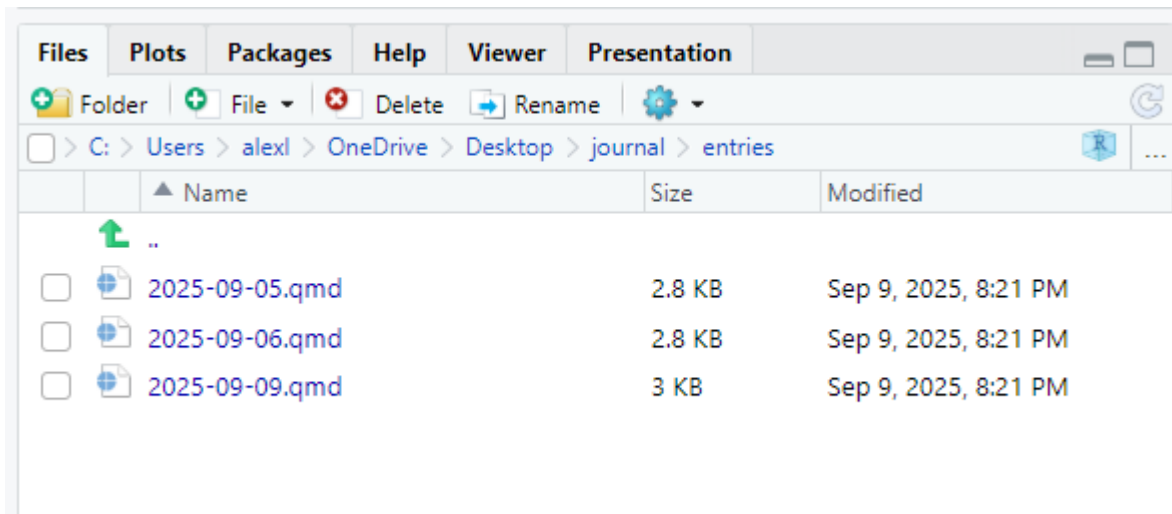
# Chapter 5

## Step 5 – Add a new week chapter

In the **Console** pane at the bottom-left, run:

```
# Pick your week number (2-14). Example:  
new_journal_entry(week = 3)
```

**FIGURE**



What happens:

1. A new chapter is created and named with **today's date**: `entries/YYYY-MM-DD.qmd`.

2. The **three prompts for that week** are inserted.
3. The correct **word range** for your course is set.
4. `_quarto.yml` is **automatically updated** to add the new chapter to the book's table of contents.

**FIGURE**

```
> new_journal_entry(week = 3)
Created: entries/2025-09-03.qmd
> new_journal_entry(3)
Created: entries/2025-09-03.qmd
```

**Troubleshooting:** If you run the command twice **on the same day**, the file will be overwritten (same date name). If you need to keep both, rename the first file (e.g., `2025-09-03b.qmd`) before running again.

---

## Chapter 6

### Step 6 – Handling Multiple Entries on the Same Day

The `new_journal_entry()` function names files by date (e.g., `2025-09-04.qmd`). If you want to write a second entry on the same day for a different week’s prompt, you should rename the first file to something more descriptive before creating the new one.

For example, you could rename `entries/2025-09-04.qmd` to `entries/2025-09-04-week3.qmd`.

The good news is that you **do not need to manually edit** `_quarto.yml`. The journal is set up to automatically find all `.qmd` files in the `entries/` directory every time you render it. This means you can add, remove, or rename your entry files, and the book will always build correctly.

---

# Chapter 7

## Step 7 – Choose your prompt, then write

Open the new file (e.g., entries/2025-09-03.qmd). You'll see **Choose one prompt** first, then **Response**.

Keep **ONE** prompt and delete the other two in the *Choose one prompt* section. Then write your answer **only** inside the **Response** block.

### 7.1 Choose one prompt to answer

**Prompt A:** r params\$p1 **Prompt B:** r params\$p2 **Prompt C:** r params\$p3

### 7.2 Response

*Write your answer to **one** of the prompts here. Do not write anything else in this chapter.*

Stay in range:

- **MC 451:** 250-300 words
- **MC 501:** 450-500 words

**FIGURE**

```
14
15- ## Choose **one** prompt to answer
16
17 > **Prompt A:** `r params$p1`
18 |
19 > **Prompt B:** `r params$p2`
20
21 > **Prompt C:** `r params$p3`
22
23- ---
24
25- ## Response
26
27 <!-- RESPONSE-START -->
28 *Write your answer to **one** of the prompts here. Do not write anything else in this
chapter.*
29 <!-- RESPONSE-END -->
30
31- ---
```

---

# Chapter 8

## Step 8 – Render the entire journal (unified output)

You have two equivalent options. Use **one** of them:

### A) Click **Render** on `index.qmd`

- In the Files pane, click on `index.qmd`.
- Click the **Render** button in the editor toolbar.

### B) Use the Console

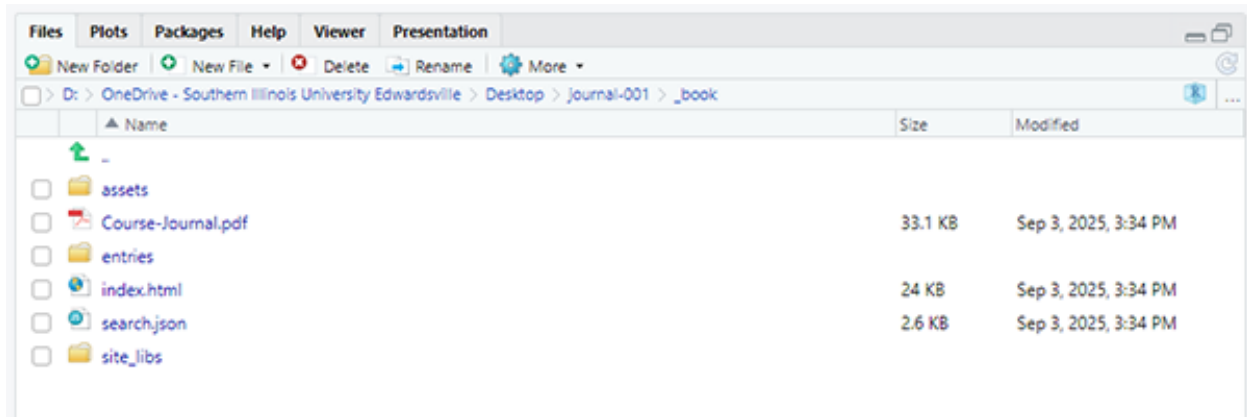
```
# Run from the project's root directory
quarto render
```

Outputs are in the `_book/` directory:

- An **HTML** book (always, multi-page site with navigation = unified entity).
- **PDF/EPUB** if you have TinyTeX installed.

If a PDF fails to build, run:

```
quarto install tinytex  
# or  
mccourse_setup()
```

**FIGURE**

**Tip:** Rendering a single chapter file will **not** produce the unified journal. Always render `index.qmd` (or run `quarto render`) to build the whole book.

---



# Chapter 9

## Step 9 — Submit via GitHub

When you add or edit a chapter, **two files are modified**:

1. The new chapter file: `entries/YYYY-MM-DD.qmd`
2. The book’s table of contents: `_quarto.yml` (updated automatically by the pre-render script)

In RStudio:

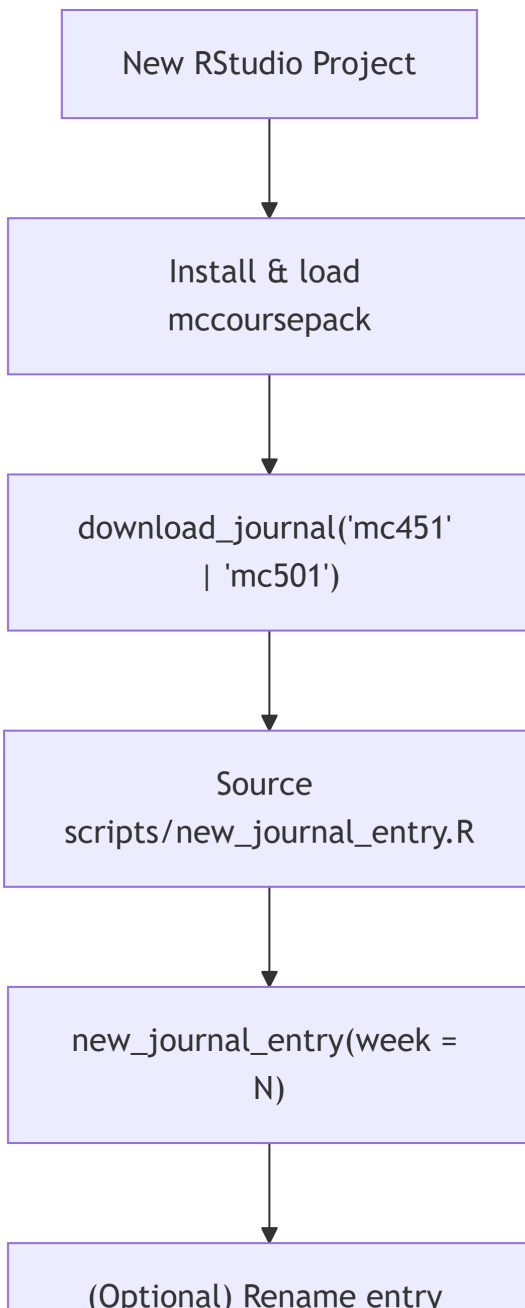
1. Open the **Git** pane.
2. **Stage** both changed files.
3. Add a commit message (e.g., “Week 3 journal entry”).
4. **Commit** and **Push**.

If you forget to commit the changes to `_quarto.yml`, your new chapter won’t appear in the published book.



## Chapter 10

### Visual Workflow





# Chapter 11

## FAQ

**It didn't ask me for the week number. Is that okay?** Yes. In RStudio you usually call the function directly: `new_journal_entry(week = 5)`.

**My word count says “Out of range.”** Edit until you are within the range for your course.

**The new chapter doesn't appear in the rendered book.** Be sure you rendered the **whole book** (Render `index.qmd` or run `quarto render` from the project root). The pre-render script automatically updates the chapter list, but only when the entire book is rendered. Also, make sure you have committed **both** the new entry file and the automatically modified `_quarto.yml`.

**Can I revise later?** Yes. Edit the same `entries/YYYY-MM-DD.qmd`, then commit and push again.

---

# Chapter 12

## Weekly checklist (quick self-audit)

- ☐ I created/updated a chapter for **this week** using `new_journal_entry(week = N)`.
- ☐ I sourced the `new_journal_entry.R` script first.
- ☐ I kept **one** prompt and deleted the other **two**.
- ☐ I wrote my answer **inside the Response block** only.
- ☐ My word count is **in range**.
- ☐ I **rendered the whole book** by rendering `index.qmd` (or running `quarto render`).
- ☐ I **staged, committed, and pushed** my new/modified entry file(s) and the updated `_quarto.yml`.