

What is Canvas?

Canvas is a Learning Management System. To learn more about Canvas terminology and definitions, visit [How does Canvas define the terms used to describe its features and functions?](#)

Because Canvas is a web-based system, it doesn't need to be installed on your computer. However, you'll want to make sure that your [computer and web browser meet the basic requirements to run Canvas](#).

Canvas for Elementary

[Canvas for Elementary](#) is a Canvas setting that displays a simplified interface and experience designed for younger learners.

Canvas Guides

The [Canvas Student Guide](#) has over 200 articles that each answer a question that relates to using the Canvas interface as a student. Each article also includes Next and Previous links so you can easily navigate to related content.

Canvas Overview

Once your account is set up, take a minute to familiarize yourself with the Canvas user interface. The articles below show you how to navigate Canvas and use a few of the tools that link across all your courses.

- [How do I use the Global Navigation Menu as a student?](#)
- [How do I use the Dashboard as a student?](#)
- [How do I use the Inbox as a student?](#)
- [How do I use the Calendar as a student?](#)
- [How do I use Files as a student?](#)
- [How do I add and modify text in the Rich Content Editor as a student?](#)

How do I use the Global Navigation Menu as a student?

To view your user information, click the **Account** link. A menu will expand and display links to access your [user settings](#), [notification settings](#), [personal files](#), and [ePortfolios](#) (if enabled). If your institution has enabled Profiles, you can access your [profile](#).

You can also use the Account link to [log out](#) of Canvas.

The [Dashboard](#) is the landing page after you log in to Canvas. The Dashboard can be toggled to a course view, list view, or recent activity view and shows notifications for all current Canvas courses.

To view your courses, click the **Courses** link [1]. The Courses menu displays your list of favorite courses, or, if you haven't selected any favorite courses, the menu displays current courses where you are enrolled. If a course includes term dates, the name of the term will appear as part of the course listing.

To view a course, click the name of the course [2]. To [customize your courses list](#) or [view all your Canvas courses](#), click the **All Courses** link [3].

If you are enrolled in Groups, view your groups in the **Groups** link [1]. A menu will expand and display all groups in current courses where you are enrolled.

To view a group, click the name of the group [2]. To view all your groups, click the **All Groups** link [3].

Note: Groups cannot be customized in the drop-down menu.

To [view your Calendar](#), click the **Calendar** link.

To [view your Conversations Inbox](#), click the **Inbox** link. Conversations is the Canvas messaging system where you can communicate with other users in your courses. The number of new messages are shown as part of the Inbox icon.

To view your recent Canvas course page view history, click the **History** link. Recent History displays up to three weeks of your Canvas course page view history.

To [get help with Canvas](#), click the **Help** link . Select the help option that is relevant to your needs.

Note: Depending on your institution settings, the Help menu may display different options.

To expand or collapse the Global Navigation menu, click the **arrow** icon.

The Global Navigation Menu will be automatically collapsed for tablet screens.

How do I use the Dashboard as a student?

The Dashboard is the first thing you will see when you log into Canvas. The Dashboard helps you see what is happening in all your current courses.

You can return to your User Dashboard at any time by clicking the Dashboard link in Global Navigation.

In Global Navigation, click the **Dashboard** link.

The Dashboard is your landing page in Canvas. Depending on your institution, your Dashboard may default to one of three views: Card View, List View, or Recent Activity View.

- [Card View](#): displays course cards for quick access to all your favorite courses (the same courses display in the Courses link from the Global Navigation Menu)
- [List View](#): displays all course to-do items in an agenda view
- [Recent Activity View](#): displays all recent activity for all courses

The Dashboard may also include global announcements, which are announcements created by your institution. To remove the announcement from your dashboard, click the **Remove** icon.

If you dismiss a global announcement, you can view dismissed announcements on the [Global Announcements page](#).

To change your Dashboard view, click the **Options** menu and select your preferred viewing option.

When set to Card View or Recent Activity View, the Dashboard also includes a sidebar. The sidebar includes a To Do list, upcoming assignments, links to recent feedback, and buttons for creating a course or viewing grades. [Learn more about using the sidebar.](#)

How do I use the Inbox as a student?

The Inbox is split into two panels and displays messages chronologically. You can view and reply to conversations and sort them by course or inbox type. The Inbox itself does not have any file size limits; however, attachments added to a conversation are included in the sender's personal files.

Notes:

- If you right-click or option-click on the Inbox link, you can open your Inbox in a new browser tab to keep it handy while you are doing other tasks in Canvas.
- Users display in conversations once they have an active enrollment in the course, and users cannot join a course unless it is published.
- Once a course has concluded, you cannot message users in that course.

In Global Navigation, click the **Inbox** link.

If the Inbox link includes a numbered indicator, the indicator shows how many [unread messages](#) you have in your Inbox. Once you read the new messages, the indicator will disappear.

The toolbar includes global message options. To load conversations, [filter your messages](#) by course or group [1] and type [2]. Filtering by type lets you filter messages by Inbox, Unread, Starred, Sent, Archived, and Submission Comments.

You can search for conversations by user in the **Search by user** field [3].

To [compose a message](#), click the **Compose** icon [4].

Once you have selected a conversation, you can use the other options in the toolbar to:

1. [Reply](#) to a conversation
2. Reply-all to a conversation
3. [Archive](#) a conversation
4. [Delete](#) a conversation
5. You can also use the More Options icon to [forward](#), mark a conversation as read or unread, and [star](#) conversations.

Conversations for your selected course and Inbox filter appear in the left Inbox panel.

The Inbox is organized chronologically from newest to oldest with the newest conversations appearing on top [1] and the older conversations at the bottom.

You can manually mark a conversation as read or unread by hovering over the conversation and clicking the circle to the left of the conversation [2]. To star a conversation, hover over the conversation and click the star to the right of the conversation [3].

When you select a conversation [1], all messages in the conversations thread appear in the right Inbox panel [2].

How do I use the Calendar as a student?

The Calendar is a great way to view everything you have to do for all your courses in one place. You can view calendar events by day, week, month, or agenda list. The calendar also includes access to the Scheduler, which is an optional scheduling tool in Canvas.

Note: If you change your language or locale preferences, the Calendar week start date may also change. Certain languages or locales change the Calendar week start date to Monday.

In Global Navigation, click the **Calendar** link.

The Calendar spans all courses and displays information for each of your enrolled courses and groups. In the navigation bar, you can choose to view the calendar in Week, Month, or Agenda view [1]. The view you choose dictates the style of the calendar window [2]. By default, the calendar appears in **Month** view.

The sidebar [3] shows a quick-view calendar, your list of courses and groups, and undated items for your courses and groups.

How do I use Files as a student?

As a student, Files allows you to store files and assignments within Canvas. You can upload one or multiple files, view all details about your files, and preview files. Files is built with responsive design to adjust for browser scaling. The folder navigation window, file displays, and even file names adjust to the width of the browser window.

You may have access to files (documents, images, media, etc.) in three different feature areas:

- [User files](#), located in your user account
- [Course files](#), located in each course where you are enrolled (if your instructor allows you to view Course Files)
- [Group files](#), located in each group where you are a member

The basic functionality within Files is the same within each files location, but some features may differ according to feature area.

The left panel [1] shows all folders for quick navigation. Some folders may be housed within other folders. To expand all folders, click the arrows next to the folder name.

When you click the name of a folder, all contents within the folder you are viewing display in the right panel [2]. You can also click folder names in the right panel to view folder content.

For each file, you can view the name of the file [1], the date the file was created [2], the date the file was modified [3] the name of the person who modified the file (if modified by another user) [4], and the size of the file [5].

You can also view the published status [6] for your user files.

Files are sorted alphabetically. To sort files, click the name of any column heading.

