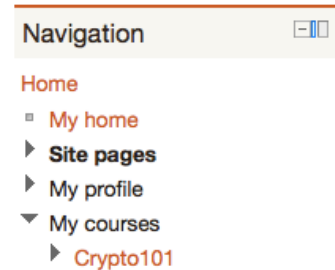


7 Things to Remember about Moodle

1. Home, My Home, and My Courses

The **Navigation Block** is the most reliable way to find your way around Moodle.

- **Home** is the entry page for all of Moodle.
- **My Home** lists the courses in which you are currently enrolled. Anyone can customize their *My Home* page by adding blocks such as the Calendar or Upcoming Events, to show deadlines and events for the classes they are teaching or taking.
- **My Courses** lists each **Course** in which you are enrolled.
- **Course Hompages** are listed by their “short names.”

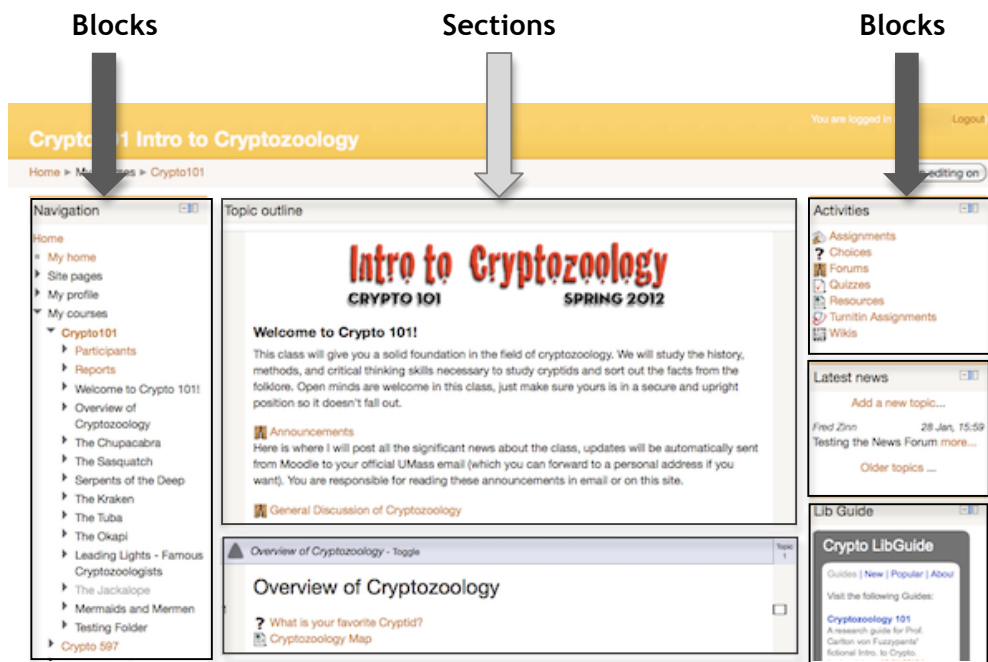


Note: In the **Navigation bar** (or “breadcrumb links”) at the very top of the page, *Home* links to the entry page for all of Moodle, not the Course homepage! Also, unlike with most Web sites, some locations in the Navigation bar may not be clickable.



2. Moodle is structured around “Blocks” and “Sections”

In Moodle, a course is delivered via a **single page**, divided into columns. The sides contain **Blocks** and the center contains **Sections**.



Blocks

The side columns of a Moodle page contain **Blocks**. The *Navigation* and *Settings* blocks are required, but other blocks are optional. You can also rearrange the blocks in the sidebars and set whether particular blocks show only on the course homepage, or on all pages.

Most blocks update themselves dynamically with information about the course. For example, blocks such as *Calendar* and *Upcoming Events* update themselves when date-based activities are added to the course. The *HTML block* can be added to post static text in a side column. The *Remote RSS Feed* brings in the latest blog posts or other RSS content from outside Web sites.

Which blocks show at any moment depends on where you are located in Moodle. The blocks displayed on your Course homepage are different from those displayed when viewing an assignment or forum. Which blocks are displayed also depends on your *Role*. For example, teachers see blocks that students don't see.

Sections

The central column is divided into **Sections** where your course content and activities are shown. You can use the sections as you might have used *Folders* in SPARK to organize your course by topic. Or, you can have Moodle automatically provide a section per week.

Inside the Sections, you will put links to **Resources** (PDFs, HTML pages, URLs, etc.), and **Activities** (discussion forums, assignments, quizzes, etc.). The *Label* resource can be used to add text, pictures or even links directly into any section.

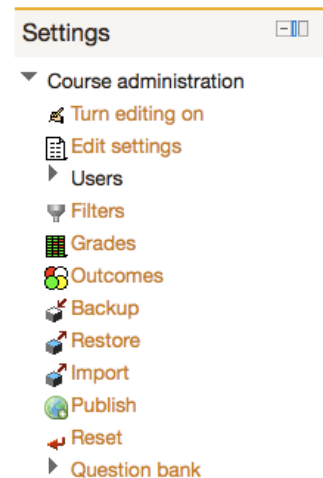
3. "Settings > Course Administration > Edit Settings"

The overall settings for your course are found in the **Settings Block** of your Course homepage. Click **Edit Settings** to make changes.

Some settings are populated automatically with information from SPIRE when the course is created. Other settings are up to the instructor.

The Edit Settings page is where you format the course *by Topic* or *by Week*, choose how many sections appear in the center column, choose a theme (visual style), and make Grades visible to students.

Note: The Settings block is context-aware! To edit the settings for your course, you need to be on your Course homepage. To edit the settings for a forum, go to the forum and then to the Settings block.



4. Click "Turn Editing On" to add content to your course homepage

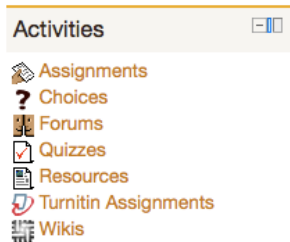
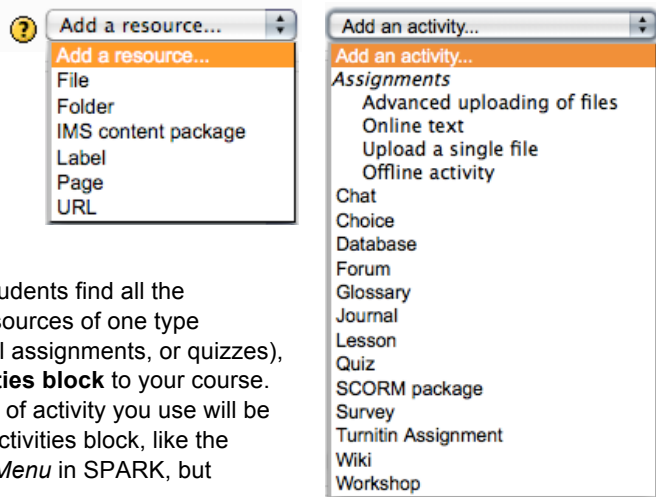
There are two ways to turn editing on and off: the **Turn editing on** button in the upper right-hand corner, and the **Turn editing on** link in the Settings block.

When editing is on, small icons will appear next to each editable element on the page. Rolling over an icon tells you its name and what it does.



5. Add Resources and Activities to Sections

To add content or activities to your course, first go to a section, and then use the drop-down menus in that section to add a **resource**, or **activity**.



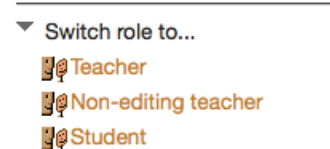
Tip: To help students find all the activities or resources of one type (for instance all assignments, or quizzes), add the **Activities block** to your course. Each new type of activity you use will be added to the Activities block, like the *Course Tools Menu* in SPARK, but automated!

6. You have different "Roles" you can use to view your course

Within Moodle, each user has a default *role*.

- **Teacher** (default role for instructors) - can add resources and activities, change course settings, grade student activity.
- **Non-editing teacher** (default role for TAs) - can view content, review and grade student submissions.
- **Student** (default role for students) - can view resources and participate in activities but can not create them

Depending on your role in Moodle, you may be able to switch to other roles; for instance, if you are a **Teacher**, you can switch to a **Student** role to see how the course looks to a student, or a **Non-editing Teacher**.



7. Need help? Click the yellow circle.

Throughout Moodle, you will see *yellow circles* with question marks "?" or an "i" in them. Click these to get information about the associated element. Some are simple glossary entries; others offer more details or links to help pages on the Moodle.org site.

The "i" at the bottom of a page links to the Moodle Docs help for the page-type. moodle.org offers many pages of documentation and forums which should provide answers to most questions about Moodle. Just keep an eye on the date of the posts, and the version of Moodle being referenced--we are using Moodle 2.0.

As this project evolves OIT will provide additional handouts and tutorials.

And, of course, instructors and TA's can always contact the Instructional Media Lab with questions: (413) 545-2823 or instruct@oit.umass.edu.

More things to consider ...**The Back Button Works!**

You can use the navigation in your browser to move around in Moodle.

Use the "Eye" Icon to hide things.

To hide sections, blocks, activities or resources from your students, click *Turn Editing On* and click the *Eye icon* next to the thing you wish to hide or show.

URLs can link directly to your course site.

If you want to bookmark your course, or put a link to it in an email or on a Web page, you can use the URL in your browser's location bar to link directly to your Moodle course. A log in screen will control access, and only those enrolled in the course will be given access.

Moodle doesn't have a File Manager.

When you upload a file to your course, it goes into the *System Files* for your course. Moodle does not provide a tool for managing those files; rather, if you delete the link to a file from your course homepage, it deletes the file from the course's System Files. Be sure you have a backup on your own computer!

The grade book in Moodle has many built-in functions

As with SPARK, students are populated into Moodle from SPIRE automatically. The Moodle grade book is a vast improvement over the SPARK's. Most of the common grading tasks that required byzantine equations in SPARK are now built-in tools: these include marking tasks as extra credit, dropping the lowest X scores from a category, ignoring blank grades in a category if the work is optional, and the ability to sum up the total score in a given category (e.g. all quizzes) and make it a percentage of a final grade.

The News Forum is really an Announcements tool.

Every course comes with a special forum, *the News Forum* that acts something like *Announcements* in SPARK. The News forum has some unique behaviors:

- **Can only live in the top section**
The News Forum is always located in the **top section** of your course. If you don't wish to use the New Forum you can hide it (click the Eye icon).
- **The Latest News block and News Forum are interconnected**
The Latest News block displays the titles of your most recent posts to the News Forum, and links to the posts.
- **Subscribing to the forum sends new posts as emails**
By default, the News Forum forces all members of the class to subscribe, which sends an email of your posts to the entire class. You can make subscription optional or disable it, but when subscription is forced, the News Forum is a great way to email notices to your entire class, as there is no mail tool in Moodle.
Moodle gives you half an hour to edit a new post before it is sent out as email—unless you are feeling very confident and check the *Mail Now* option before posting.
- **Who can post to the News Forum?**
By default, only the instructor can post to the News Forum and there is no commenting. The instructor can extend the ability to make posts to any class member by setting *Locally assigned roles*.

"Mail" in Moodle is a little different!

Moodle does not have a separate *mail* tool like SPARK for sending individual and mass emails. If you've relied a lot on SPARK's mail feature, you'll need to adapt. Moodle does provide many ways for you and your students to stay in contact:

- **Subscribing to Forums**

Forums provide the closest thing to SPARK's mail if you like to keep all communications within the course. Subscribers to a forum get an email when new posts are added.

As with News Forum (described above) the instructor can force subscription or make it optional. Class members can also opt to receive emails from forums as a daily digest or each time there's a new post. You can limit participation in a forum to particular groups as a way to facilitate group communication.

- **Messages**

Moodle's Messages module (in My Profile) is most reliable for synchronous one-to-one messaging (like IM, or messaging in Facebook). Once you add someone as a contact, messages are logged and you'll be able to access the history of exchanges with a particular student.

Note: Messages are people-based, not course-based. Individuals determine (in My Profile Settings) how they want to handle incoming messages: they can choose to see a pop-up notification on-screen, receive an email when a new message comes in, or they can choose neither.

- **Mail settings in "My Profile"**

You and your students can go to My Profile Settings to set up Moodle to send emails about a number of other activities. For example, you can get an email when posts are made to particular forums, or students can get an email when they receive feedback on an assignment, or if they want a receipt confirming they completed a quiz.

- **Moodle sends email to your official UMass address**

Moodle sends all messages to official UMass email addresses. If a student (or instructor) wants to have email delivered to a different address they can set up a forwarding address in the UMail Post Office.