

# **USING ANNOUNCEMENTS TO DO MORE THAN ANNOUNCE!**

**A Quick-Start Guide for Teaching and Learning**

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# Using Announcements to Do More Than Announce!

If you would prefer a video tutorial on using Bb Announcements click here:

<https://youtu.be/UFsPszU0l1k>

## Teaching and Learning Considerations

**As faculty**, we spend a lot of time thinking about the flow of a classroom and how to create a progression a student might take through their course work. And that workflow is very important in order to ensure that students know where to center their attention when they “click” into the classroom. We need to establish a pattern for our classes, one that hinges on content, but also connects with our students.

**This can be accomplished** with a clear communication strategy—something separate from content and grounded in pedagogy. The **Blackboard Announcements** tool is an ideal way to post time-sensitive information critical to course success. Add announcements for these types of course activities: due dates for assignments and projects, changes to your syllabus, corrections/clarifications of materials, and exam schedules.

**The announcements** we post form an essential first point of contact, a touchstone for students every time they log into the classroom. And because these announcements are so visible, in such a high traffic area of the course, it’s important to use this tool for more than just a weekly greeting or rundown of course policies.

**Using announcements in your course** is a significant opportunity way to enhance instructor presence in the classroom, which leads to heightened student engagement and builds rapport as well. Additionally, your “presence” will implicitly communicate high expectations for student work! We can leverage announcements to deliver just-in-time logistical information, concentrated instructional content, and enrich a sense of the educational journey students are on.

## Best Practices

**Frequency:** To avoid a jam of information in the Announcement space, consider if the information you’re posting makes more sense in a module as developed content, where there is more time for consideration. Generally, determine the number of announcements you’ll post during each class week and stick with that throughout the course so students can start to expect the pattern you’ve established. For example, you might always post an announcement on the first day of each week to provide some kick-off orientation and lecture content. You might even post an announcement at the end of a week to synthesize/summarize what has

occurred that week, connecting to community or national events that relate to your course content. Or both!

**Function:** Blackboard supports additional tools that can be used in creating announcements. Consider using enriched media as a way to engage students more dynamically, and try to integrate a variety of media options, like hyperlinks, source existing audio/video clips, or create your own using YuJa in your weekly Announcements. And don't just tell students to click into your lecture in a module, or to proceed to the discussion board. **Make sure you create a narrative for the week or unit and build some context by explaining how a student might benefit.**

**Creating a Road Map:** Setting expectations is an important part of managing the delivery of instruction in your classroom. We do it when we provide scaffolded information in our course content to lead to assignments, so there's no reason why we shouldn't do the same in our Announcements. You could structure each message in 3 parts:

**Course Policies.** In this section of your announcement, you can focus on the logistical aspects of your class. Due dates, current assignments, or perhaps discussion board expectations for that week, separate from the actual prompt.

**Instructional Content:** In this section of your announcement, you can post ideas and resources directly related to the learning outcomes and assignments that week. Since this is typically the first announcement of the week, you can also preview some of the important things coming up that week and provide additional information and motivation to keep students on track.

**Dig Deeper:** In this section of your announcement, you can provide extra information on weekly course topics to provide students with the advanced tools they need to broaden their understanding. Typically, these announcements occur during the week (on that patterned day you have determine) or the end of the week. Connect them to real world examples, events, campus resources, that can help them prepare to view the course content in their modules as having bigger implications.

Keep in mind, what you title each section is up to you. Perhaps they are aspirational tags or fun sub-headings. The important thing is to have a structure students can expect on a weekly basis.

## Getting Started

Announcements appear in the order you post them. The most recent announcement appears first. To begin, access Announcements in your navigation area. By default, all Bb shells have this tool listed in this area. Select "Create Announcement."

## Announcements

New Announcements appear directly below the repositionable bar. Reorder by dragging announcements to new positions. Move priority announcements above the repositionable bar to pin them to the top of the list and prevent new announcements from superseding them. The order shown here is the order presented to students. Students do not see the bar and cannot reorder announcements.

Create Announcement

**Type a Subject**, which appears as the title of the announcement on the Announcements page. Type your message and use the functions in the content editor to format the text (you can also add images and multimedia).

### ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION

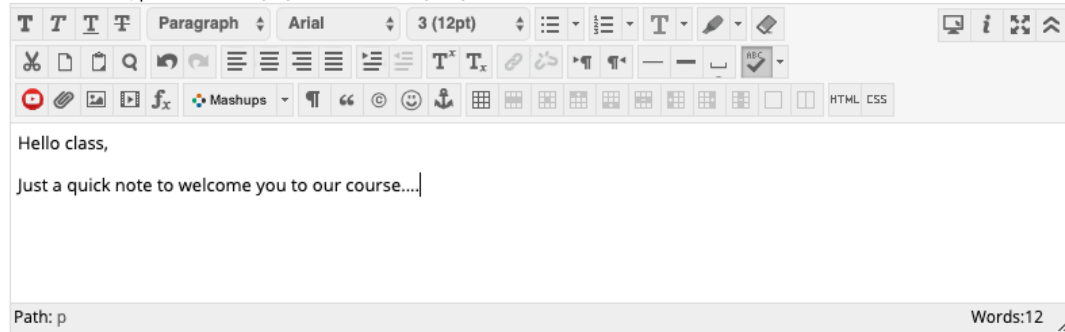
\* Subject

Welcome to the Class

Black

Message

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



The screenshot shows a rich text editor interface. The toolbar includes options for Paragraph, Arial font, 3 (12pt) size, and various text formatting tools like bold, italic, underline, and link. Below the toolbar, the message content reads: "Hello class, Just a quick note to welcome you to our course...". At the bottom left, it says "Path: p" and at the bottom right, "Words:12".

In the **Web Announcements Options** section, choose whether or not to restrict the announcement by date, and whether or not to send students an email with the announcement. We recommend **NOT** restricting the announcement by date, and also **SENDING** the email with the announcement.

### WEB ANNOUNCEMENT OPTIONS

Duration

Not Date Restricted

Date Restricted

Email Announcement

Send a copy of this announcement immediately

*Students are still notified of this announcement even if this option is not selected*

Optionally, in the **Course Link section**, select Browse to link to a course area, tool, or item.

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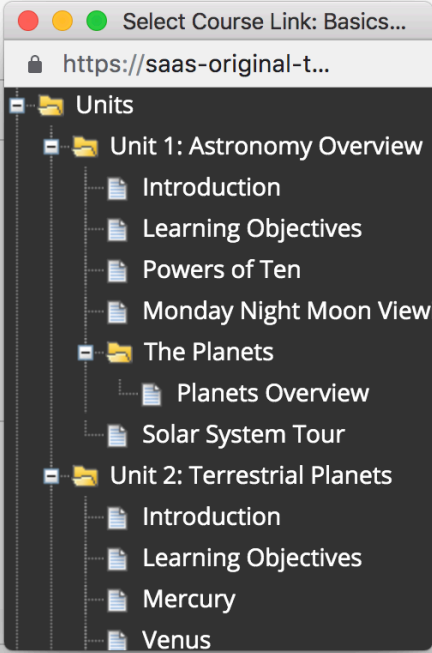
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**COURSE LINK**

Click **Browse** to choose an item.

Location

*Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.*



The image shows a screenshot of a web announcement form with a file browser overlay. The form has two main sections: 'WEB ANNOUNCEMENT OPTIONS' and 'COURSE LINK'. In the 'COURSE LINK' section, there is a 'Location' text box and a 'Browse...' button. A purple arrow points from the 'Browse...' button to a file browser window. The file browser window, titled 'Select Course Link: Basics...', shows a directory structure for 'Units'. The 'Units' directory contains two sub-directories: 'Unit 1: Astronomy Overview' and 'Unit 2: Terrestrial Planets'. 'Unit 1' contains files for 'Introduction', 'Learning Objectives', 'Powers of Ten', and 'Monday Night Moon View'. 'Unit 2' contains files for 'Introduction', 'Learning Objectives', 'Mercury', and 'Venus'. The 'The Planets' directory is also visible under 'Unit 1' and contains 'Planets Overview' and 'Solar System Tour'.

And finally, when you are ready to publish the announcement, select **Submit**.

**It's important to realize** that the announcement functionality in Blackboard can be more than just a greeting, or a way to wrangle a list of due dates. It's the start to a roadmap--not only to your course, but to a larger idea of academic and personal success.