

Lessons: How to Build a Well-Designed Subpage

Sakai sites for online and hybrid courses should utilize the **Lessons** tool, with a **subpage for each week** of the class. As stated in Durham Tech's [Curriculum Online Course Guidelines](#), weekly subpages should contain clear instructions, due dates, and links to activities and assignments. This will make it easy for students to find everything they need in one place and will provide a consistent experience for students across courses.

This handout reviews how to create Lessons subpages and provides instructions for adding various types of content to your subpages – including text, links to files, and links to forums, tests and quizzes, or assignments.

Step 1: Enable the Lessons tool

If the Lessons tool is not already present on your course menu, here's how to add it:

- Go to **Site Info > Manage Tools**, select the **Lessons** tool, click **Continue** (twice), click **Finish**.

Step 2: Create a subpage for each week of the class

Create a new subpage in Lessons for your class:

1. Click **Lessons** on the course menu.
2. At the top of Lessons, click **Add Content**, then **Add Subpage**.
3. In the Add Subpage dialog box, type a **title** for your subpage, such as: *Week 1* (or *Week 2*, *Week 3*, etc).
4. Click **Create**. You are now on the weekly subpage you just created. The subpage is currently blank. (When a page is blank, basic Help information is displayed; it will disappear once you add some content.)



IMPORTANT: Before creating a subpage for another week, you must **return to the main Lessons page** (which lists all weekly subpages), by clicking **Lessons** at the top of the web page or by clicking on the “Lessons” link in the breadcrumb trail below the Lessons toolbar. Once you’re back on the main page, you can follow the steps above to add another weekly subpage.

Step 3: Add a due date to your weekly subpage

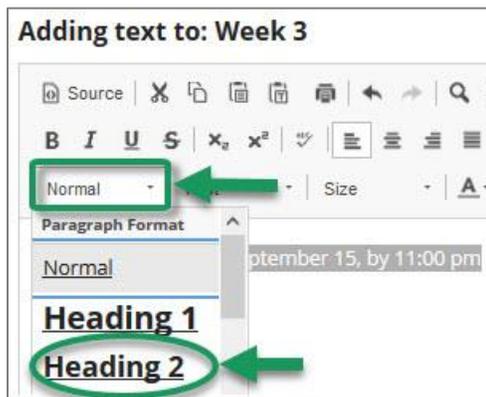
Let’s start adding content to your weekly subpage. We will add the due date at the top so students will see it.

1. Before you begin, make sure you are ON one of your "blank" weekly subpages (where Help info is displayed). If on the main *Lessons* page, click on a **subpage link**, such as *Week 3*.
2. At top, click on **Add Content**, then **Add Text**.
3. In the Text Editor box, type the due date for the week's assignments. For example:
Due Date: Thursday, September 15, by 11:00 pm

TIP: Do not make assignments due at midnight – it's confusing to students!

Here's why: Midnight (12 AM) on June 1, for example, is the start of that day, not the end of it. Thus, assignments due at 12 AM on June 1 are actually due at the end of the prior day (May 31). If an assignment is due by the end of June 1, you can make the assignment due at 11:55 PM on June 1.

- To make the heading accessible to students who may use assistive devices:
 - Use your mouse to highlight the heading text (in this case, *Due Date: Thursday, September 15, by 11:00 pm*).
 - On the editing toolbar, click the **Format** drop-down (which says **Normal** by default), and select **Heading 2**. Your text will be enlarged, bolded, and double-spaced.



- Click **Save**. The due date is now displayed at the top of the subpage.

Step 4: Add a learning objective

It's a good practice to communicate learning objectives each week – and perhaps also an overview of the week's activities – so students will know what they will learn and why it's important.

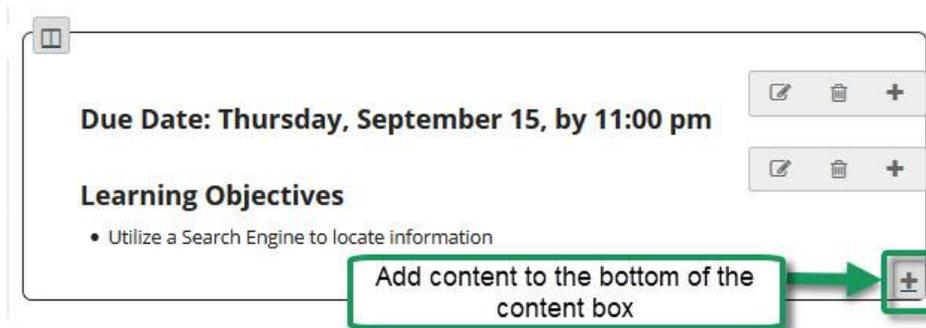
- On your weekly subpage, click **Add Content** at the top, and then click **Add Text**.
- In the Text Editor box, type a heading, such as *Learning Objectives*.
- To make the heading accessible to students who may use assistive devices:
 - Use your mouse to highlight the heading text (in this case, *Learning Objectives*).
 - On the editing toolbar, click the **Format** drop-down (which says **Normal** by default), and select **Heading 2**. Your text will be enlarged, bolded, and double-spaced.
- Below the heading, type at least one Learning Objective for the week, such as *Utilize a Search Engine to locate information*.
- Click **Save**. Your Learning Objectives are now displayed on your subpage.



Step 5: Add a textbook reading assignment

Using similar steps, let's add a textbook reading assignment for the week.

1. On your weekly subpage, click **Add Content** at the top. Or you can click the “plus” (+) icon in the lower right corner, which does the same thing. Then choose **Add Text**.



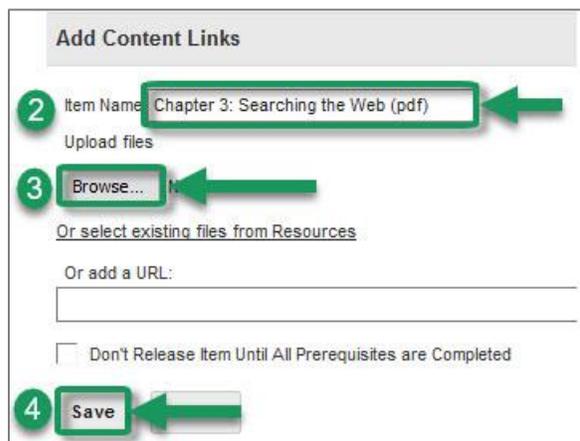
2. In the Text Editor box, type a heading, such as *Reading Assignment*.
3. To make the heading accessible to students who may use assistive devices:
 - Use your mouse to highlight the heading text (in this case, *Reading Assignment*).
 - On the editing toolbar, click the **Format** drop-down (which says **Normal** by default), and select **Heading 2**.
4. Below the heading, type in the reading assignment details – for example:
Discovering the Internet, Chapter 3: Searching the Web.
5. Click **Save**.

Step 6: Upload and link to a document

In addition to a textbook reading, you may have other documents for students to review, such as PowerPoints, Word docs, PDFs, etc. In Lessons, on the **Add Content** menu, there is an option to **Add Content Links** – which lets you upload files and create links to them.

NOTE: Before proceeding, be sure you have a document to upload (such as a PowerPoint, Word doc, or PDF).

1. On your Lessons subpage, click on **Add Content** (or click the “plus” icon in the lower right corner). Then click **Add Content Links**.
2. In the *Item Name* box, type a human-friendly document title, such as *Chapter 3: Searching the Web (pdf)*.
3. Click on **Choose Files** or **Browse** button; locate and select a file from your computer to upload.



4. After choosing your file, click **Save**. You'll see the new link to your document added to the subpage.

Important "Behind-the-Scenes" Information: When you *upload* a file in Lessons, Sakai automatically creates a folder in **Resources** with the title of your subpage (such as *Week 3*) and stores the file there. Therefore, it is important that you **do not delete folders (or their contents)** in Resources if they match the names of your Lessons subpages, or you will delete your Lessons content!



Step 7: Add a link to a website

If you want to include links to websites on your subpage, you can use **Add Content Links** for that too.

To add a web link to your subpage:

1. Click on **Add Content** (or click the "plus" icon in the lower right corner). Then choose **Add Content Links**.
2. In the *Item Name* box, type in a user-friendly title.
3. In the *URL* box, type or paste the web address you want to link to.
4. Click **Save**. The link now appears on the subpage. (When you or your students click on it, the website opens in a new browser tab or window. Simply close the tab or window to return to Sakai.)
5. If you'd like to provide a descriptive note with the web link, you can click the **Edit** icon to the right of the link. In the *Item Description* box, type a *description*, then click **Update Item**.

Step 8: Add tool links to activities

In Lessons, it is super easy to add a "tool link" to a specific activity that you have created in any of the major Sakai tools: *Forums*, *Assignments*, or *Tests & Quizzes*.

Adding tool links to your subpage means your students don't have to go hunting around in Sakai looking for a particular assignment, quiz, or other activity. Everything they need for the week is all on one subpage.

Before adding tool links, let's add a heading to get our students attention.

You can add a generic heading such as *Activities* or *Assignments*, or state the names of the tools.

1. On your weekly subpage, click **Add Content** at the top. Then choose **Add Text**.
2. In the Text Editor box, type a heading, such as *Activities*.
3. To make the heading accessible to students who may use assistive devices:
 - Use your mouse to highlight the heading text (in this case, *Activities*).
 - On the editing toolbar, click the **Format** drop-down (which says **Normal** by default), and select **Heading 2**.
4. Click **Save**.

Follow the steps below to add one or more tool links to your weekly subpage.

Note: To add a tool link, you must have already created an activity in one of the major Sakai tools – for example, created a topic in the Forums tool, created an assignment in the Assignments tool, or created and published an assessment in Tests & Quizzes. Assuming you’ve already done one of those, follow the steps below to add a tool link in Lessons.

To add a link to a Forum Topic:

1. On your Lessons subpage, click **Add Content** at the top (or click the “plus” icon in the lower right).
2. Click on **Link to a Forum or Topic**
3. A list appears showing any existing Forums and Topics. Select the radio button for the *topic* you want to link to, as shown below.
4. Then click **Use selected item**. You'll see that a link to the activity has been created.



5. To **add** a description for your activity, click on the **Edit** icon to the right of the tool link:



Enter an **Item Description**, to provide brief information about the assignment or activity. For example, you could remind students when the topic posting is due. Click **Update Item** to save your changes.

To add a link to an Assignment:

1. On your Lessons subpage, click **Add Content** at the top (or click the “plus” icon in the lower right).
2. Click on **Link to an Assignment**
3. A list appears showing any assignments you’ve created. Select the radio button for the assignment you want to link to. Then click **Use selected item**. You'll see that a link to the activity has been created.
4. You can click the **edit** icon to the right of the tool link to add an **item description**, such as a reminder of when the assignment is due. Click **Update Item** to save your changes.

To add a link to a Test or Quiz:

1. On your Lessons subpage, click **Add Content** at the top (or click the “plus” icon in the lower right).
2. Click on **Link to a Test or Quiz**
3. A list appears that shows any *published* assessments. Select the radio button for the assessment you want to link to. Then click **Use selected item**. You'll see that a link to the activity has been created.
4. You can click the **edit** icon to the right of the link to add an **item description**, such as what your students should study before taking the quiz. Click **Update Item** to save your changes.

Step 9: View Lessons using Student view

Let's see what your new subpage looks like to students. In the upper right area of the web page, click on the "View Site As" drop-down box, then select **Student**. If needed, click on the *Week 3* subpage link.

- None of the instructor controls will be displayed on your Lessons page, and you'll be able to see what it looks like to students.



Click around and review your content to see how it will look to students.

Due Date: Thursday, September 15, by 11:00 pm

Learning Objectives

- Utilize a Search Engine to locate information

Reading Assignment

Discovering the Internet, Chapter 3: Searching the Web ← **Students can access all of their weekly activities in one location**

📄 [Chapter 3: Searching the Web \(pdf\)](#) ←

Make sure you study the Google Searching information carefully-you'll use these techniques in your assignment this week.

🔗 [How to use Google to Search the web](#) ←

Be sure to study the Advanced Searching techniques.

Activities

💬 [Week 3 Search Topic](#) ←

Remember, all posts and replies are due by Thursday at 11 pm. Please review the Discussion Forum Grading Rubric in the Syllabus area and attached to the topic.

📄 [Week 3 Google Search Assignment](#) ←

You must read Chapter 3 in your textbook before working on your assignment!

✅ [Quiz 3](#) ←

Study Chapter 3 in your textbook, this week's pdf and web site, and the forum questions and answers before taking your quiz.

IMPORTANT: When you finish browsing in student view, be sure to click **Exit Student View** so you'll be able to access your instructor controls again.



For more information about how to organize your content on your lessons page: Go to our [Sakai Instructors Lessons](#) page. In "Getting Started", we've provided a Weekly Lessons Template and Template Guide [<https://go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-lessons>].