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## Adding an External Link

Once instructors determine which course areas will appear in the course menu (see **Manage Course Menu** tutorial), various content sections can be added to each course area. Instructors can use **Items**, **Folders**, **External Links**, **Course Links**, and **Learning Units** to build a course.

**Items**, **Folders**, **External Links**, **Course Links**, and **Learning Units** can be added to *any* course content area. Instructors may add these content sections by accessing the content area through the **Control Panel** or by using the **Quick Edit** tool, which can be found in the top right corner of each course content area.

### Choosing a Content Area

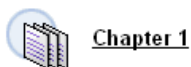
1. Open a course that you are teaching.
2. Choose a **Content Area** that will house the content. (For example, instructions for **Chapter 1** may be placed in a **Chapter 1 Folder** under **Course Materials**. **Course Materials** would be the **Content Area**.)

#### Option 1

If you access the **Content Area** by clicking a button on the left side of the course, click the desired content area button and then click the **Edit View** link in the right corner at the top.

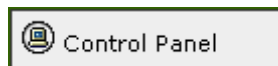
[COURSES](#) > [TRAINING LEWIS](#) > [ASSIGNMENTS](#)

[EDIT VIEW](#)



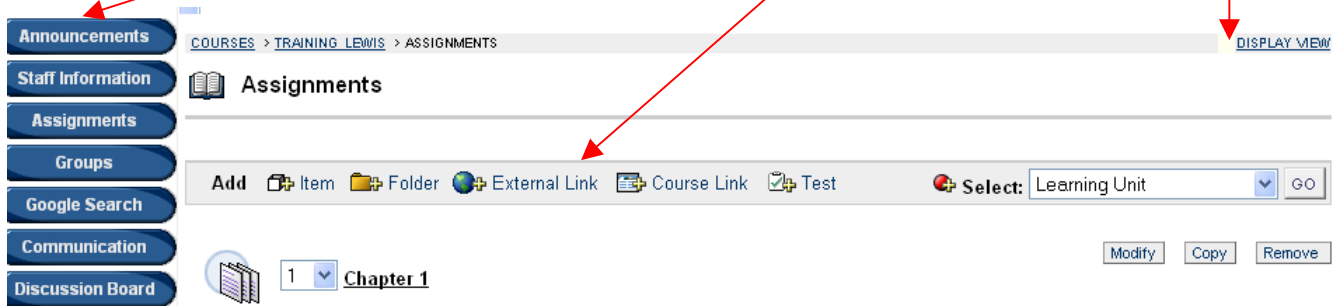
#### Option 2

If you choose to access the **Content Area** through the **Control Panel**, enter the **Control Panel**.



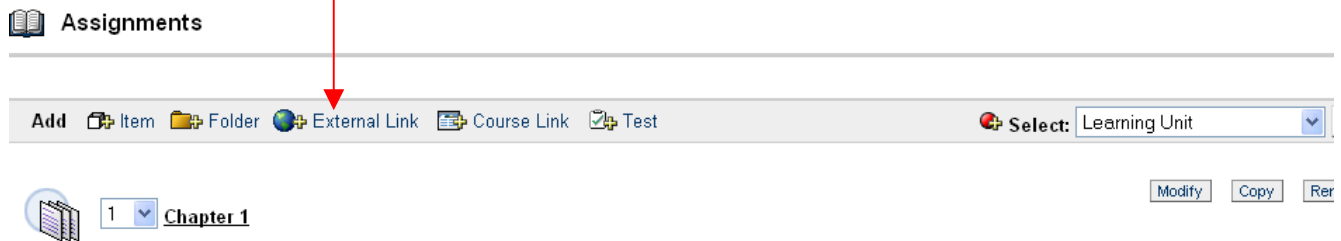
Under **Content Areas**, click the desired content area.

3. If you have accessed the **Content Area** using the **Edit View** link, you will continue to see buttons on the left, editing options in the center, and a **Display View** link on the right side.



The **Edit View** and **Display View** links allow you to switch between the “editing view” and the “students’ view”. You can also click the content area button to switch to the “students’ view” of the course material.

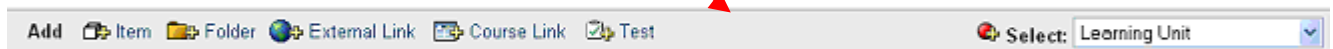
If you have accessed the **Content Area** using the **Control Panel**, you will only see the editing options at the top.



## Adding an External Link

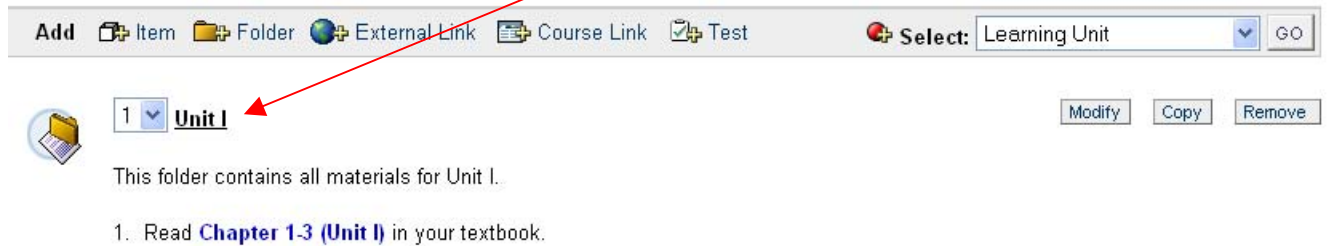
**External Links** are links to outside websites. Instructors can incorporate websites relative to course material and assign activities based on the websites. **External Links** can be added to any content area and can stand alone or be placed inside folders or learning units.

Once the content area has been selected (see the **Choosing a Content Area** section above), a menu bar will be provided.



1. To add an **External Link** to a folder or learning unit, the folder or learning unit must be **opened** first.

To open a folder or learning unit, click the **name** of the folder or learning unit.



Once the folder has been **opened**, the **name** of the folder or learning unit will appear at the top. (This will be an indication that the external link will appear **inside** the folder or learning unit).




**Folder empty**

External links can also stand alone. They can be placed directly in a content area, outside a folder or learning unit.

2. To add an **External Link** (outside a folder or learning unit), select the **External Link** icon from the menu bar.



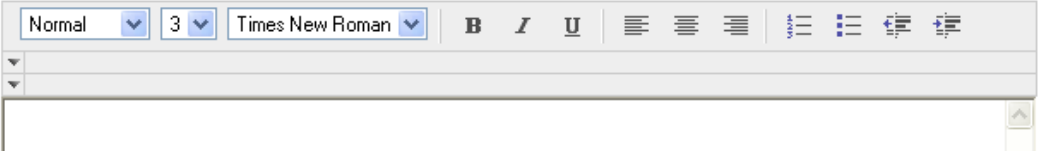
3. The **Add Item** page will appear for the **External Link**.

 Add Item

**1 External Link Information**

\*Name:

\*URL:   
*For example, <http://www.myschool.edu/>*

Description: 

4. Under **Section 1**, you will add the **External Link Information**.

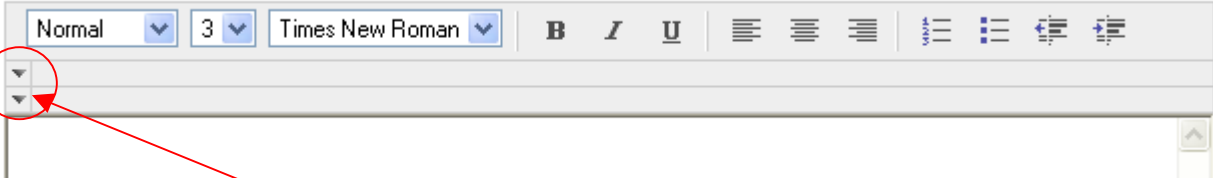
5. Under **Name**, you will determine the name of the **External Link**. This name will be the link that the students will click to access the website.

\*Name:

6. Under **URL**, you will type the complete address of the website. The website address must begin with **http://** If this portion is omitted, the external link will **not** work.

\*URL:   
*For example, <http://www.myschool.edu/>*

7. A **Description** can be included with this external link. A brief message that describes the external link could be provided. Directions for an assignment using the external link could also be provided in the description box. Information can be cut and pasted from a Microsoft Word document.

Description: 

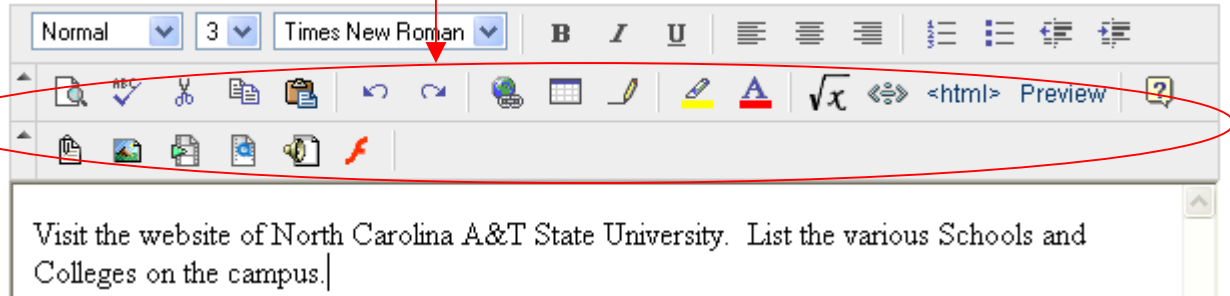
**Helpful Tip**

To expand the options for editing text, click the down arrows to display additional options for the **text editor**.

## Helpful Tip

Instructors can format text and attach **images, video clips, sound files, hyperlinks, tables, and mathematical equations** to the external link by clicking the icons in the **text editor**.

Description:



- Under **Section 2**, additional documents can be attached to the external link. Under **File to Attach**, you can **Browse** and attach a document or presentation to this external link.

**2 External Link**

Files can be attached to the above information. Click **Browse** to select the file to attach and specify a name for the link to this file.

File to Attach:

Name of Link to File:

Special Action:

- Under the **Special Action** drop-down menu, you will determine an action for the file once the student clicks the item.

Special Action:

- Create a link to this file
- Create a link to this file**
- Display media file within the page
- Unpackage this file

There are three (3) special action choices: **Create a link to this file**, **Display media file within the page**, and **Unpackage this file**.

The default action is **Create a link to this file**. If you attach a document, PowerPoint presentation, or image, a link will appear for this file. Students access the file by clicking the link. If you would like to create a name for the link (other than the name under which the file was saved), type the new name in the **Name of Link to File** text box.

The **Display media file within the page** option is used if some type of media (image, video, etc.) has been attached. If you choose this option, the media will be embedded in Blackboard – displayed directly in the external link area. For example, if you attach an image, the students will automatically see the image without having to click any links. If you would rather the students click a link to view the media file, leave the special action as **Create a link to this file**.

The **Unpackage this file** option is used for items that were packaged (compressed or zipped) and contain several files. If you have a file that was packaged, you must select this option so Blackboard unpackages the file.

10. After you have added text and/or attached a file, you can add additional options to the external link under **Section 3**.

**3 Options**

**Make the content available**  Yes  No

**Open in new window**  Yes  No

**Track number of views**  Yes  No

**Choose date and time restrictions**

<input type="checkbox"/> Display After	<input type="checkbox"/> Display Until
Aug 17 2006	Aug 17 2006
02 35 PM	02 35 PM

**Make the content available:** Once **Yes** is selected, students will have access to the external link. The **Default** option is **Yes**. If **No** is selected, the external link will be available to the instructor, but not the students.

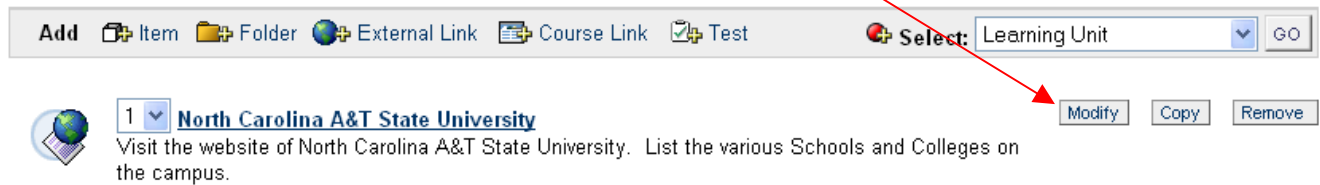
**Open in new window:** If **Yes** is selected, the website will open in a separate browser window once the link is clicked. The **Default** option is **No**.

**Track number of views:** Tracks the number of times users access the external link. Statistics can be found under Course Statistics (under the Control Panel). The **Default** option is **No**.

**Choose date restrictions:** Instructors may add date restrictions if an external link is expected to **appear** on a specific date and **disappear** on a specific date. (This section is **optional**. If no restrictions are applied, the external link will follow the selection made under **Make the External Link available**.) To apply date restrictions, click the **Display After** box and the **Display Until** box. Select a **date** and **time** for each item.

11. After the details for the **External Link** have been added, click **Submit**. Click **OK** to acknowledge receipt of your external link.

12. The **External Link** will now appear in the content area. To modify, copy, or remove this item, choose the appropriate option.



The screenshot shows a toolbar with options: Add, Item, Folder, External Link, Course Link, Test, and a 'Select:' dropdown menu set to 'Learning Unit' with a 'GO' button. Below the toolbar, there is a globe icon, a dropdown menu with '1', and the text 'North Carolina A&T State University'. Underneath, it says 'Visit the website of North Carolina A&T State University. List the various Schools and Colleges on the campus.' To the right of this text are three buttons: 'Modify', 'Copy', and 'Remove'. A red arrow points from the text in step 12 to the 'Modify' button.

### Helpful Tip

The **Item** will be visible to students only if the instructor makes it available to the students. Under the item **Options** section, if the instructor chooses **No** under **Make the External Link available**, the item will not be available to students. Setting date restrictions will also determine whether the item is available to students.

13. Instructors may add an unlimited number of **external links** to a content area or course.