

Getting Started with Moodle

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A New Empty Site: The Basic Elements

The Moodle screen is divided into four functional sections. Across the top is a banner which indicates various aspects of your current within Moodle (See "A" in Illustration #1). Below this are three sets of blocks. In the centre are the blocks which contain links to the teaching content and activities of the course ("B" in Illustration #1). On either side are found a variety of function blocks ("C" in Illustration #1).

Illustration #1: Default Beginning Screen

Model Course: Getting Started You are logged in as [Roger Kenner \(Logout\)](#)

Ideas > Getting Started [?](#) [Switch role to...](#) [Turn editing on](#)

People -
[Participants](#)

Activities -
[Forums](#)

Search Forums -
 [Go](#)
[Advanced search](#) [?](#)

Administration -
[Turn editing on](#)
[Settings](#)
[Assign roles](#)
[Grades](#)
[Groups](#)
[Backup](#)
[Restore](#)
[Import](#)
[Reset](#)
[Reports](#)
[Questions](#)
[Files](#)
[Unenrol me from](#)
[Getting Started](#)
[Profile](#)

Weekly outline

[News forum](#)

2 November - 8 November	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 November - 15 November	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 November - 22 November	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 November - 29 November	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 November - 6 December	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 December - 13 December	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 December - 20 December	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 December - 27 December	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 December - 3 January	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 January - 10 January	<input type="checkbox"/>

Latest News -
[Add a new topic...](#)
(No news has been posted yet)

Upcoming Events -
There are no upcoming events
[Go to calendar...](#)
[New Event...](#)

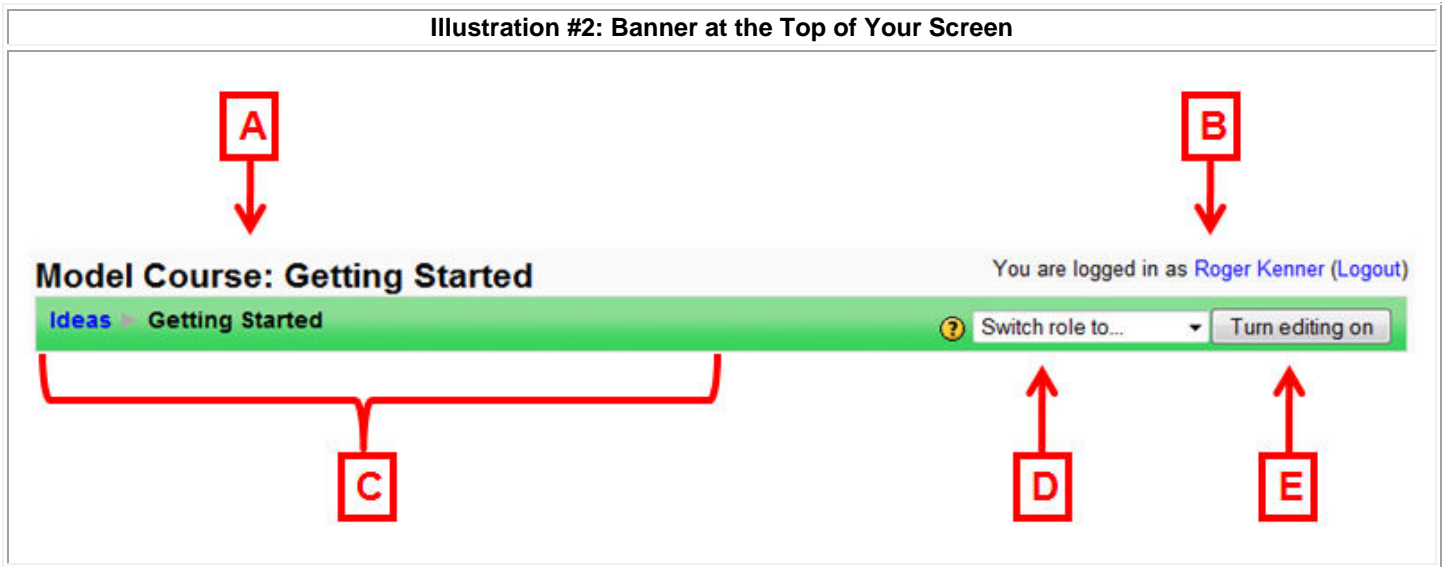
Recent Activity -
Activity since Sunday, 2 November 2008, 02:26 PM
[Full report of recent activity...](#)
Nothing new since your last login

Course categories -

C. Function Blocks **B. Course-Content Blocks** **C. Function Blocks**

A

The banner at the top of the Moodle screen shows your current location and status, as well as offering you important control options.



(In reference to Illustration #2)

A. The full name of your current site

B. The state of your connection to Moodle: The 'Logout' link allows you to close your Moodle connection.

You are logged in as Roger Kenner (Logout)

At times you may select the option (under 'Participants') to log in temporarily as one of your students. Clicking on your own name will restore your normal connection.

[Roger Kenner] You are logged in as Marlene Dietrich (Logout)

C. The 'Breadcrumb Bar': This navigation tool shows you your current location within the hierarchy of pages and tools within your site. You may use it to return to a previous level. (In fact, you should get in the habit of using the 'Breadcrumb Bar' instead of your browser's 'Back' button.) The first link in the bar takes you to the list the sites within the Moodle installation to which you have access. The second link is the short name of your current site and clicking on it will bring you back to the opening page.

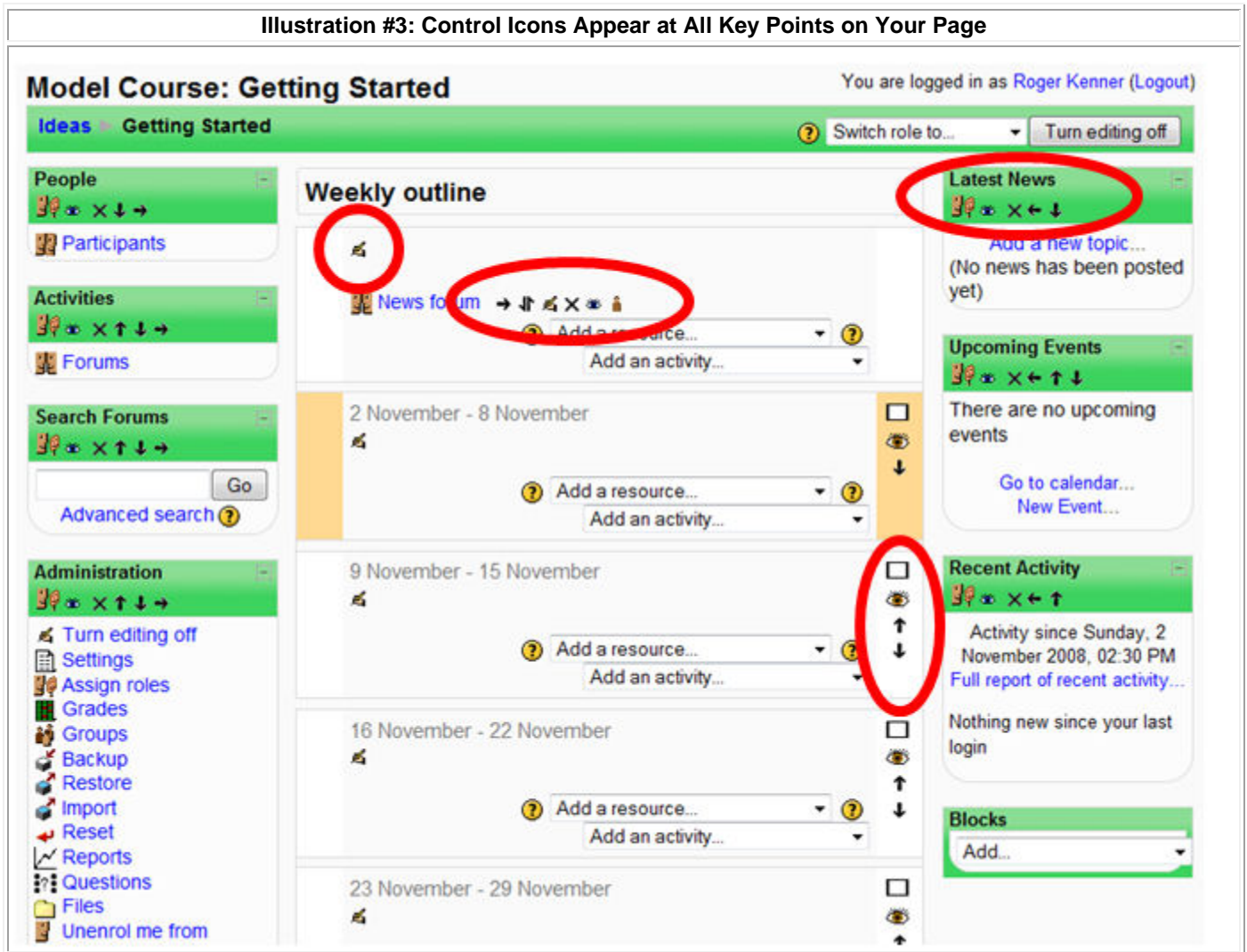
Ideas > Getting Started > Edit week 0

D. Switching Roles: You may use this option when you want to view your site as a student might see it.

Switch role to...

E. Turn Editing On: Most updates to your page and to the content of your site begin with this button. Control icons should appear next to all functions, blocks and documents on your opening page (See the circled icons in illustration #3). Once you have activated the function, the button will read 'Turn Editing Off'.

Illustration #3: Control Icons Appear at All Key Points on Your Page

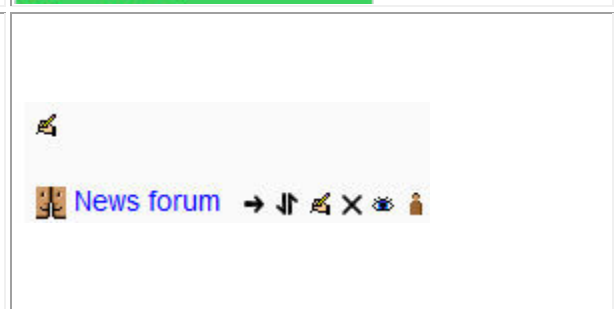


(With reference to illustration #3)

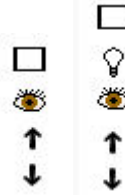
You may control each of the function blocks: hiding them, moving them or removing them from your screen.



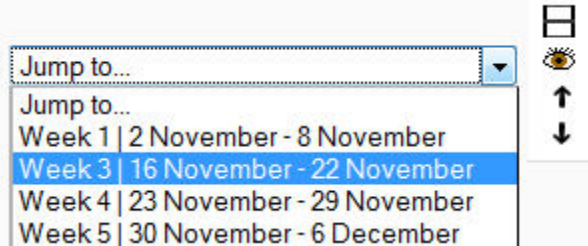
You may control each content element, be it a course document or an activity. You may indent the link, move it to another part of the page, edit it, remove it, hide it or control its 'group' status. There is also an 'edit' icon for each content block, allowing you to add titles and summaries for the weeks or topics. The 'Add a resource' and 'Add an Activity' pull-down menus allow you to add new course elements and interactive activities to the particular content block.




When you choose a 'topic' organization rather than a 'weekly' organization of your content blocks, you may indicate the current topic by clicking on the 'lightbulb' icon. (If you have chosen 'weekly' organization, the setting of the current week is automatic.). You can also control the order of the course-content blocks and whether they are visible to students or not.





You and your students may choose to view only one content block at a time. This is a personal choice over which you have no control. Viewing only one block at a time is beneficial when the opening page of a site contains lots of material and therefore loads more slowly. The selection can be reversed at any time. When students have elected to view only one content block at a time, it is the current one which appears when they first access the site.




When editing is on, you will encounter some of the following control icons:


 The **Edit** icon allows you to modify the settings of each individual document link or activity within your content area. You may also add or modify block titles and summaries, as well as 'labels' and web pages you have created through Moodle .



 The **Help** icon opens up windows containing context-sensitive help. These help snippets represent some of the most useful documentation you will encounter while working with Moodle.


 The icon of the open eye is the **Hide** icon. You may hide any document or you may hide an entire week or topic block. A choice on the 'Settings' page allows you to choose to have hidden blocks appear in greyed out form or to be totally invisible to students. Once you click on the open eye, the icon changes to that of a closed eye.


 The icon of the closed eye is the **Reveal** icon, the opposite of the Hide icon shown above.

 The right-arrow icon allows you to **indent** the link to a document or activity. Once a document has been indented, a left-arrow will also appear, allowing you to reverse the process. When you have a long series of links, skillfully indenting some of them to various levels of indentation allows you to provide a visual structure to your page. Students will see at a glance which set of links go together and which links are dependent upon others.


 The **Move** icon allows you to move a selected link to some other location within your content.


  Once you begin the process of moving something, boxes will appear at every location on the screen where you might move the document or link. You must complete the process by clicking within one of those boxes.

 The **Erase** icon allows you to remove the document, link or activity. In the case of a link to a document file, only the *link* is erased, not the original file. **Be careful, however!** In the case of a document created through Moodle (using "Compose a Web Page"), the entire document will be irretrievably lost. A similar situation exists for on-line activities such as assignments or quizzes. (Thus, it is a good idea to back up these components.)

























 The icon of a single person is one of the forms of the **Group Status** icon. In this form, it indicates that the group selection is not activated for this activity (most typically "discussion forums" or "wikis"). Two people appearing together means "Visible Groups" and two people with one of them greyed out means "Separate Groups".

 The light bulb icon allows you to indicate **Current Topic** when you are in topic mode.

 Clicking on the single white box allows you and your students to opt to view only **one week or topic at a time**.

 Clicking on the double white box **returns you to the default setting**, showing all the weeks or topics at once.

It is on the "Settings" page, you may select among two of the most popular organization types for your content:

Illustration #4: The Most Popular Organization Types	
Weekly Layout	Topic Layout
<p>Weekly outline</p> <p> News forum →      </p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p> <p>2 November - 8 November</p> <p></p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p> <p>9 November - 15 November</p> <p></p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p>	<p>Topic outline</p> <p> News forum →      </p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p> <p>1 </p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p> <p>2 </p> <p> Add a resource... Add an activity...</p>

Managing the Function Blocks

Your first task is to reorganize the page to give prominence to your course content rather than to the function blocks. By first removing those blocks which are not needed and then by moving those that remain to one side or the other, the space taken by the content blocks grows to take up the empty space (when 'Editing' is off). The users' eyes are then drawn to the more prominent content blocks and the function blocks are given minor importance.

Illustration #5: Opening Screen After Removing Unnecessary Function Blocks

Model Course: Getting Started You are logged in as Roger Kenner (Logout)

Ideas > Getting Started Switch role to... Turn editing on

Weekly outline

- News forum
- 2 November - 8 November
- 9 November - 15 November
- 16 November - 22 November
- 23 November - 29 November
- 30 November - 6 December
- 7 December - 13 December
- 14 December - 20 December
- 21 December - 27 December
- 28 December - 3 January
- 4 January - 10 January

Latest News

Add a new topic...
(No news has been posted yet)

People

Participants

Search Forums

Advanced search ?

Administration

- Turn editing on
- Settings
- Assign roles
- Grades
- Groups
- Backup
- Restore
- Import
- Reset
- Reports
- Questions

Explanation of some of the Function Blocks

Blocks

The Blocks Block is the only one you cannot erase. It only appears when you have editing on. The list contains all the possible function blocks that are not currently activated. Any block you remove can be easily put back on the screen. While many interesting functions are available, you will also find many that are not really useful. You must select carefully so that you have all the functionality you need, without cluttering your screen. You may only have one instance of each block posted on your screen at a time.

Blocks

- Add...
- Add...
- Admin bookmarks
- Blog Menu
- Blog Tags
- Calendar
- Course/Site Description
- Global Search
- HTML
- Loan calculator
- Mentees
- Messages
- Network Servers
- Online Users
- Quiz Results
- Random Glossary Entry
- Remote RSS Feeds
- Section Links
- Tans

Activities

The Activities Block provides a shortcut to your documents and activities according to activity type. It can be a useful tool where you have many instances of the same type of activity spread throughout your content area. You could have, for example, a weekly quiz within each content block. Under the "Quiz" link in "Activities", students would find a short menu containing just the quizzes.

There is often confusion about the "Summary" box that appears whenever you create a link or a document. These summaries only appear when students click on the "Resources" link within "Activities", where they might serve to differentiate a long list of documents whose titles did not sufficiently explain their contents.

Activities

- Assignments
- Chats
- Choices
- Databases
- Forums
- Glossaries
- Lessons
- Quizzes
- Resources
- Wikis

Administration

The Administration Block provides you with access to the administrative functions you need to manage your site. The student version of this block is much simpler and takes up far less space.



[See below](#) for a detailed description of each administrative link.

Administration

- Turn editing off
- Settings
- Assign roles
- Grades
- Groups
- Backup
- Restore
- Import
- Reset
- Reports
- Questions
- Files
- Unenrol me from
- Getting Started
- Profile

Calendar

You may display a calendar on your site, in order to post important course events, such as exam dates, activity deadlines, etc.

- Site Activities** are posted by the site administrator and touch all sites within the Moodle installation.
- Course Activities** are posted by the teacher and are visible to all students who have access to the course site. They also receive email notification.
- Group Activities** are visible only to students in the target group. They also receive email notification.
- User Activities** are only visible to that particular user. This provides each user with a personal course calendar. **Be careful here!** This is the default setting for each new posting. Be sure to change it before posting an event to all your students (or it will only be a personal posting). If you have more than one site on the Moodle server, be sure to select the appropriate site when posting an announcement, as all your sites will appear on your instance of the calendar.



Calendar

◀ August 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
					1
3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29
31					





Events Key

- Global
- Course
- Group
- User

My Courses

The "My Courses" block allows students to easily switch to other Moodle sites in which they may be registered. Note that the first link in the "Breadcrumb Bar" has the same effect. This box might be useful where there is a "Meta-Course" associated with regular course sites. ("Meta-Courses" allow students inscribed across a number of different sites to all have access to an additional site that may contain common course materials.)

My courses

-  [Moodle for ESL Worksh](#)
Aug 08 - Group Site
-  [Moodle Quiz Workshop:](#)
25-2008
-  [Gradebook 1.9 Explorat](#)
-  [Gradebook 1.9](#)
Explorations2

People

The People Block contains the "Participants" link, without which it would be difficult for instructors to manage their site well. You can quickly see all the students registered in the site, as well as the last time each was present. This function provides additional tools for the instructor as well, such as listings of all the discussion forum messages a given student may have posted throughout the semester. If teachers do not feel at ease sharing the student list with other students, they may hide the block, revealing it only momentarily when they need to consult it.

People

 [Participants](#)

Sample Moodle for ESL Workshop

Participants

Blogs

Notes

My courses Moodle: ESL

Use

Current role All

All participants: 7

First name : All ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Surname : All ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

User picture	First name / Surname	City/town	Country	Last a
	Marlene Dietrich	Montreal	Canada	Never
	Katheryn Hepburn	Montreal	Canada	Never
	Bela Lugosi	Montreal	Canada	Never
	Spencer Tracy	Montreal	Canada	Never
	Boris Karloff	Montreal	Canada	Never
	Rudolph Valentino	Montreal	Canada	Never

Select all

Deselect all



With selected users...

Search Forums

If you choose to use the Forums as a tool for class discussion of course material, students will find it very useful to be able to search through the contents of all the postings, looking for a key word. If you are not using forums, this block serves no purpose, as only the forums are searched.

Search Forums



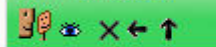
Go

Advanced search ?

Online Users

You or your students may find it useful to know who is currently connected to the site. There is a "Chat" tool, available under the "Add an Activity" menu, which permits simultaneous exchanges. Even the communication within a discussion forum, though technically *asynchronous*, can be fairly immediate.

Online Users



(last 5 minutes)

Marlene Dietrich

Administrative Options

Among the administrative options you will find...

- **Settings:** It is through the "Settings" link that you can truly take control of your site. Here, for example, is the choice between weekly or topic organization, and the number of weeks or topics. **Be careful, though**, as the "Settings" page contains numerous fields used by the site administration. Changing the wrong field may result in your students losing contact with your site. Consult the document specific to the Settings page before proceeding.
- **Assign Roles:** It is through this link that you may add to your site students who were not automatically registered. (You may also allow them to self-register, using the "Enrolment Key" described in the document specific to the Settings page.) Although you could theoretically un-enroll students as well, this would probably not have any permanent effect where there is a system of automatic enrolment in place. You can also use this link to give additional people access to your site in teacher mode. You may have a co-teacher or an assistant who will maintain your page. Through "Assign Roles", you can only grant access to those individuals who already have an account on the Moodle server. In most cases, you cannot create new accounts on the server; this is typically done by your institution's Moodle administrator.
- **Grades:** Even though you may use a different system for advising students of their interim marks, you will need this link in order to gather the results of any interactive activities you may set through Moodle. A choice on the Settings page allows you to hide this link from students. And of course, for those who wish to use it, Moodle offers a full-featured on-line grade book.
- **Groups:** It is through the "Groups" link that you establish work groups in your class and place students within particular groups. Depending on the course, it might be useful to separate the students into groups. You can give each separate group its own private forum, for discussion and the exchange of drafts. Each group can have its own private Wiki, for collaborative work. Other specialized Moodle functions also depend on the group settings.
- **Backup/Restore:** You can at any time make a backup copy of your entire site, or you can selected portions of the site. These backup files can be downloaded to your own computer and subsequently re-loaded into any Moodle in the world. Upon restoring a Moodle site, you can choose to restore everything or only certain portions of the site. **It is strongly recommended** that you backup your site regularly, especially after having done major work.
- **Import:** You can transfer documents and activities to your site from another site you may have on the same Moodle server.
- **Reset:** **You should avoid this selection!** You run the risk of erasing all the work done by your students within the site.
- **Reports:** Through the "Reports" function, you can closely track the activities of any given student or the activities of all the students with respect to a given document or activity.
- **Questions:** The "Questions" link is the entrance to the Question Bank, the essential element behind all on-line testing.
- **Files:** This link provides direct access to the file space on the server that is related to your Moodle site.
- **Profile:** You may modify aspects of your personal account on the Moodle server: You could add your picture, for example. There is an advanced setting which will automatically "subscribe" you (for email notification) to any forum in which you post a message. You may want to change this default setting.

