



University Center for Teaching and Learning

How-To: Create a Custom Home Page

Introduction	This resource was created to walk you step-by-step through creating an attractive and useful Front Page to serve as a home page for your Canvas course. This presentation is self-paced, giving you time to follow along in your own course.
1. Getting Started	Open the course that you wish to make a new Home page for. Navigate to that course's Pages page.
2. Create a New Page	Click the +Page button at the top right. Give the new page a title such as "Welcome" or "Home".
3. Add Content	<p>Now it's time to add content to this page. Think about what you want your students to see when they enter your course every time they visit. What would be most useful for them to have easy access to? Use the menu below to learn how to create each of these types of page content.</p> <p>Find in this document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add One or More Images [Page 2]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Stock Photos [Page 2]○ Course Images [Page 3]○ Upload Image [Page 4]○ User Images [Page 5]• Add Text to Your Page [Page 6]• Create Links to Other Parts of The Course [Page 7]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Add a Text Link to Your Page [Page 7]○ Add an Image Link to Your Page [Page 8]○ Making "Buttons" [Page 9]• Include a Video [Page 10]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Include a Course Intro Video [Page 10]○ Include an Informal Welcome Video [Page 11]○ Include a YouTube Video [Page 12]• Add Documents and Files [Page 13]
4. Save and Publish Your Page	Once you are done putting content on your page, it's time to save and publish it so it can be used as your course's Home Page. At the bottom of the page, click Save & Publish .

5. Designate Your Page as the Front Page	Once your page is published, click the three-dot icon at the top left and select Use as Front Page from the menu. Once you do this, that page will get a “Front Page” badge in the Pages list.
6. Set the Course Home Page	Return to your course’s current Home Page by clicking the Home link at the top of the left-hand course navigation menu. Click the Choose Home Page button on the right [1], then select Pages Front Page [2] and click Save [3].
Your New Course Home Page	<p>Your course Home Page is now set to display the page you designated as a Front Page.</p> <p>Should you want to edit this page, you can do so in the same way you’d edit any other page in your course.</p> <p>There can be only one page designated as Front Page at a time. If you designate another page as the Front Page, the original will lose that status. You may choose another Home Page (e.g. Modules or Assignments) at any time by clicking the Choose Home Page button (Step 6).</p> <p>Questions? Educational Software Consulting is here to help! Email us at edtech@teaching.pitt.edu.</p>

Add One or More Images

Add One or More Images	<p>Adding images to your home page can help both you and your students orient themselves to which course they are working in, as well as provide visual interest or information about the course content and faculty.</p> <p>Using the Rich Content Editor (RCE), you can add images to your pages using the Insert Image button in the toolbar.</p>
-------------------------------	---

	<p>Click the down arrow next to the Insert Image button and select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload Image to upload an image that you have on your computer (this is the most common) <i>or</i> to insert a royalty-free stock photo from the integrated Unsplash service. Course Images to insert an image you have previously uploaded to this course. User Images to insert an image you have previously uploaded to your user files (files associated with your user account, not a course).
--	---

Add One or More Images: Use Stock Photos

Stock Photo Step 1	Find the Insert menu <i>or</i> the Add Image button
Stock Photo Step 2	Select Upload Image from the menu
Stock Photo Step 3	Click the Unsplash tab

	Unsplash is a royaly-free Creative Commons stock photo service now integrated with Canvas.
Stock Photo Step 4	Type a key word or words into the Search box Click on the image you want to use to select it.
Stock Photo Step 5	Enter Alt Text (or Designate as a Decorative Image) After selecting an image, scroll down to address important accessibility settings. Alt Text is what a blind student using a screen reader to access your course will hear when they reach the part of the page with the image. Images that contain information, course content, or contribute to the students’ understanding of course materials should have descriptive alt text that fully describes the image. Below the Alt Text box is a checkbox to instead designate the image as decorative. Decorative images are ignored by assistive technologies used by blind students. This box should be checked for images that do not contribute to informational course content or the students’ experience in the course. Click Submit when you are done.
Stock Photo Step 6	Access Image Options to resize or edit Once the image is inserted, click anywhere on it to access Image Options. Click the Image Options pop-up text to get a slide-out menu on the right.
Stock Photo Step 7	Resize the image Images that are too large can make your page hard to read. You can easily resize the image by changing the pixel dimensions or using the pre-set size dropdown menu. Click “Done” when you are finished.
Add One or More Images: Course Images	
Course Image Step 1	Find the Insert menu or the Add Image button Course images are images that you have previously uploaded to this course and wish to re-use.
Course Image Step 2	Select Course Images from the menu
Course Image Step 3	Browse the images that have been uploaded to your course Click on the image you wish to add to the page.
Course Image Step 4	Access Image Options to resize and create Alt Text Once the image is inserted, click anywhere on it to access Image Options. Click the Image Options pop-up text to get a slide-out menu on the right.

<p>Course Image Step 5</p>	<p>Enter Alt Text (or Designate as a Decorative Image) Use the Image Options to address important accessibility settings.</p> <p>Alt Text is what a blind student using a screen reader to access your course will hear when they reach the part of the page with the image. Images that contain information, course content, or contribute to the students’ understanding of course materials should have descriptive alt text that <i>fully</i> describes the image.</p> <p>Below the Alt Text box is a checkbox to instead designate the image as decorative. Decorative images are ignored by assistive technologies used by blind students. This box should be checked for images that do not contribute to informational course content or the students’ experience in the course.</p>
<p>Course Image Step 6</p>	<p>Resize the image Images that are too large can make your page hard to read. You can easily resize the image by changing the pixel dimensions or using the pre-set size dropdown menu. Click “Done” when you are finished.</p>
<p>Add One or More Images: Upload Image</p>	
<p>Upload Image Step 1</p>	<p>Find the Insert menu <i>or</i> the Add Image button</p>
<p>Upload Image Step 2</p>	<p>Select Upload Image from the menu</p>
<p>Upload Image Step 3</p>	<p>Drag and drop an image or click anywhere in the dotted line</p>
<p>Upload Image Step 4</p>	<p>Enter Alt Text (or Designate as a Decorative Image) After uploading your image, scroll down to address important accessibility settings.</p> <p>Alt Text is what a blind student using a screen reader to access your course will hear when they reach the part of the page with the image. Images that contain information, course content, or contribute to the students’ understanding of course materials should have descriptive alt text that <i>fully</i> describes the image.</p> <p>Below the Alt Text box is a checkbox to instead designate the image as decorative. Decorative images are ignored by assistive technologies used by blind students. This box should be checked for images that do not contribute to informational course content or the students’ experience in the course.</p>
	<p>Click Submit when you are done.</p>
<p>Upload Image Step 5</p>	<p>Access Image Options to resize or edit Once the image is inserted, click anywhere on it to access Image Options. Click the Image Options pop-up text to get a slide-out menu on the right.</p>

Upload Image Step 6	<p>Resize the Image Images that are too large can make your page hard to read. You can easily resize the image by changing the pixel dimensions or using the pre-set size dropdown menu. Click Done when you are finished.</p>
<p>Add One or More Images: User Images</p>	
User Image Step 1	<p>Find the Insert menu <i>or</i> the Add Image button User images are images that you have previously uploaded to your Canvas user files. This is a fairly rare circumstance.</p>
User Image Step 2	<p>Select Course Images from the menu</p>
User Image Step 3	<p>Browse the images that have been uploaded to your user account Click on the image you wish to add to the page.</p>
User Image Step 4	<p>Access Image Options to resize and create Alt Text Once the image is inserted, click anywhere on it to access Image Options. Click the Image Options pop-up text to get a slide-out menu on the right.</p>
User Image Step 5	<p>Enter Alt Text (or Designate as a Decorative Image) Use the Image Options to address important accessibility settings.</p> <p>Alt Text is what a blind student using a screen reader to access your course will hear when they reach the part of the page with the image. Images that contain information, course content, or contribute to the students' understanding of course materials should have descriptive alt text that <i>fully</i> describes the image.</p> <p>Below the Alt Text box is a checkbox to instead designate the image as decorative. Decorative images are ignored by assistive technologies used by blind students. This box should be checked for images that do not contribute to informational course content or the students' experience in the course.</p>
User Image Step 6	<p>Resize the image Images that are too large can make your page hard to read. You can easily resize the image by changing the pixel dimensions or using the pre-set size dropdown menu. Click "Done" when you are finished.</p>

Add Text to Your Page

	<p>Text in multiple sizes and formats can be added to your page to present information and describe images.</p> <p>The Rich Content Editor (RCE) provides several text formatting options, but to keep your page accessible for users with disabilities, please keep the following in mind:</p> <p>Use the text styles dropdown menu to create headers and subheaders rather than increasing font size or using bold text.</p> <p>If you use tables to format your page or present data, or used colored text, be sure to use the Accessibility Checker and follow its instructions for adding table captions and headers.</p>
Add Text Step 1	<p>Highlight text to add formatting or use it as a link</p> <p>The Canvas Rich Content Editor (RCE) behaves much the same as popular word processing applications you are already familiar with.</p>
Add Text Step 2	<p>Use the Styles dropdown to create headings and subheadings</p> <p>The Styles dropdown menu is an important accessibility tool. Use this for creating section headings and subheadings rather than increasing text size or using bold/italic text to designate a new section of the page.</p>
Add Text Step 3	<p>Center text with the alignment menu</p> <p>The alignment menu will change the alignment of the highlighted text or paragraph.</p>
Add Text Step 4	<p>Create links to other websites with the link button</p> <p>Highlight the text you wish to be a link, click the link button and select External Link</p>
Add Text Step 5	<p>Enter Alt Text (or Designate as a Decorative Image)</p> <p>Use the Image Options to address important accessibility settings.</p> <p>Alt Text is what a blind student using a screen reader to access your course will hear when they reach the part of the page with the image. Images that contain information, course content, or contribute to the students' understanding of course materials should have descriptive alt text that <i>fully</i> describes the image.</p> <p>Below the Alt Text box is a checkbox to instead designate the image as decorative. Decorative images are ignored by assistive technologies used by blind students. This box should be checked for images that do not contribute to informational course content or the students' experience in the course.</p>

Add Text Step 6	<p>Resize the image</p> <p>Images that are too large can make your page hard to read. You can easily resize the image by changing the pixel dimensions or using the pre-set size dropdown menu. Click “Done” when you are finished.</p>
<p>Create Links to Other Parts of the Course</p>	
	<p>Since this is the first page that students will land on every time they enter your course, you may want to include links that help them navigate to the most important parts of the course.</p> <p>Links can be made from text, or from images. They can link to other parts of the same course, or other websites outside of Canvas. Use the menu below to select the type of link you’d like to make.</p>
<p>Add a Text Link to Your Page</p>	
Text Link Step 1	<p>Highlight the text you want to use as a link</p> <p>The Canvas Rich Content Editor (RCE) behaves much the same as popular word processing applications you are already familiar with.</p>
Text Link Step 2	<p>Use the Link dropdown to select the type of link</p> <p>With the text still highlighted, click the Link dropdown and select either external or course link. An External Link is a link to a site outside of your course. Even other Pitt-associated links are considered external. A Course Link is a link to some other part of your course or piece of course content.</p>
Text Link Step 3	<p>Creating an External Link</p> <p>If you select “external” for your link, you will get a pop-up with a field to paste or type in the link you want to send users to when they click the highlighted text. Then click “Done.”</p>
Text Link Step 4	<p>Create a Course Link</p> <p>Highlight the text you wish to be a link, click the Link button and select Course Link. A panel will slide out from the right displaying several sub-menus that can be expanded by clicking the > arrows. The first six menus allow you to select <i>specific</i> items to link to from your course content, such as a particular assignment or single discussion board. The final menu, called Course Navigation, allows you to link to an <i>entire</i> area of your course, such as the Assignments or Discussions areas. Please note that you can create links to many parts of your course as well as course content, but not all. Click on the content item or area of your course that you wish to link to create the link. Close the panel with the X at the top right.</p>
Text Link Step 5	<p>Remove or Edit a Link</p> <p>After creating either an external or course link, the link may be edited or removed if necessary. Click to place your cursor anywhere within the linked</p>

	text (you do not need to highlight the entire link) and click the Link dropdown again. You can choose to either edit the link or remove it entirely.
Add an Image Link to Your Page	
Image Link Step 1	<p>Place an image onto your page This tutorial will begin after you've already added an image to your page that you want to use as a link.</p> <p>If you need instructions for how to put an image onto your page, click here to jump to the tutorial. Remember, alt-tags for images are required for accessibility, and are especially important if you are using images as links!</p>
Image Link Step 2	<p>Click the image to select it Single-click the image to select it. You will know it has been selected when you see that it has a blue border around it with four square "handles" at the corners. Do <i>not</i> click the Image Options pop-up.</p>
Image Link Step 3	<p>Use the Link dropdown to select the type of link With the image still selected, click the Link dropdown and select either External or Course Link. An external link is a link to a site outside of your course. Even other Pitt-associated links are considered external. A course link is a link to some other part of your course or piece of course content.</p>
Image Link Step 4	<p>Creating an External Link With the image you wish to be a link selected, click the link button and select External Link. You will get a pop-up with a field to paste or type in the link you want to send users to when they click the image. Then click Done to save the new link.</p> <p>(Step 5 covers the creation of a Course Link.)</p>
Image Link Step 5	<p>Creating a Course Link With the image you wish to be a link selected, click the link button and select Course Link.</p> <p>A panel will slide out from the right displaying several sub-menus that can be expanded by clicking the > arrows. The first six menus allow you to select <i>specific</i> items to link to from your course content, such as a particular assignment or single discussion board. The final menu, called Course Navigation, allows you to link to an <i>entire</i> area of your course, such as the Assignments or Discussions areas.</p> <p>Please note that you can create links to many parts of your course as well as course content, but not all. Click on the content item or area of your course that you wish to link to create the link. Close the panel with the "x" at the top right—the new link is automatically saved.</p>

Image Link Step 6	<p>Remove or Edit a Link</p> <p>After creating either an external or course link, the link may be edited or removed if necessary. Click to select the image and then click the Link dropdown again. You can choose to either edit the link or remove it entirely.</p>
Making “Buttons”	
Making Buttons Step 1	<p>Understanding Buttons</p> <p>“Buttons” that you see on web pages (such as the “Menu” button below) are simply images that have been used as links. When the user clicks on the image, they are taken to the location specified by the link. The process for creating the link for a button on your Canvas course home page is the same as creating any other image link but you may be wondering how one creates such an image in the first place.</p> <p>There’s no need to be a graphics expert to make customized buttons—you can use PowerPoint to do it quickly and easily by following these instructions.</p>
Making Buttons Step 2	<p>Open a new PowerPoint presentation</p> <p>Open PowerPoint and select Blank Presentation. If there are any text boxes or placeholders on the new presentation, you can delete them, they will not be needed.</p>
Making Buttons Step 3	<p>Insert a box, rectangle or other shape</p> <p>Using the Insert menu, use the Shapes dropdown to select a shape to use as your button. A button can be any shape, though a rectangle or rounded rectangle are typical. Once you have selected the shape, drag and drop on the slide to create the button. (Tip: Make sure your display is zoomed to 100% so you get an accurate idea of how big it is.)</p>
Making Buttons Step 4	<p>Label and customize your button</p> <p>By double-clicking inside the shape you drew in Step 3, you will be able to type into it. You can now also customize your button’s fill color and outline with the Format menu.</p>
Making Buttons Step 5	<p>Save your button as an image</p> <p>Once you are happy with your button’s shape, size, color and text, you can now save it as an image. Right-click on the button and select Save as Picture. Save the image to a location on your computer where you will remember where you put it (and give it a name that will help you distinguish it from other images).</p>
Making Buttons Step 6	<p>Make the next button</p> <p>Now that you’ve saved the first button as an image, you can go back to your PowerPoint slide and replace the text with the text of the next button you want to create. This will help you keep your buttons a consistent size and format. Save it using the right-click Save as Picture method and give it a different name from the original button. Since you are saving each button as a</p>

	<p>separate image, you do not need to save this PowerPoint slide at any point--you're just using it as a method to create button images.</p> <p>You can now upload these images to your Canvas page and link them to external or course links as outlined in other areas of this tutorial. Remember that it is important that image links have descriptive alt-text</p>
Include a Video	
	<p>It may be beneficial to include a video on your Home page. This video could be an introduction to you and how-to for using your course, an informal welcome to your students or perhaps a video about an inspiration in your field.</p> <p>Videos can be included in Canvas in a number of different ways. Select from the options below to learn about best practices and get instructions for each.</p>
Include a Course Intro Video	
Course Intro Step 1	<p>What's a Course Intro Video?</p> <p>Typically, a course introduction video spends about 5 minutes introducing yourself as the course instructor and then showing the students around the Canvas course site using screen capture video. This will help ensure that students know what your expectations are for their use of Canvas, as well as showing them where to see their assignments, quizzes, course content and course announcements. Every instructor designs their Canvas course a little differently, so this can be extremely beneficial to students who are taking a full course load and must navigate many differently designed courses per semester.</p> <p>Because of the need for screen capture in order to create this type of video, we recommend using Panopto for this. Panopto is fully integrated with Canvas and the steps we give here take advantage of that integration.</p>
Course Intro Step 2	<p>Enable Panopto Video for your Canvas course</p> <p>To link your course up with Panopto, you must first enable the Panopto Video course menu item. In your course, click on Settings and then the Navigation tab. Once there, find Panopto Video and make sure it is enabled. If it is not, click the three-dot icon and select Enable. Then click Save at the bottom of the page</p>
Course Intro Step 3	<p>Choose a Panopto Recording Application</p> <p>Click the Panopto Video link in your course menu, then click the blue Create dropdown at the top of the page. You may use the Panopto for Windows desktop application (Panopto Recorder instructions here) or the new Panopto Capture web-based recorder (instructions in the next step).</p>
Course Intro Step 4	<p>Record your video</p>

	<p>When opening Panopto Capture, you will be asked by your browser to verify that your camera and microphone have permission to connect with Panopto. Click Allow on these prompts. To record your screen as you give a “tour” of your Canvas course, click the Screens and Apps button at the top right, select your browser and click Allow. You will likely get a “hall of mirrors” effect—this is normal and expected. The red button at the bottom of the page is your record button. You’ll get a 5-second countdown once you click it. As you begin recording you may navigate to the browser tab that Canvas is running in and begin your video. It may not appear that anything is being captured, but it is.</p> <p>When you are finished, navigate back to the Panopto tab and click the red square. Your video will upload to Panopto automatically. Look to the top right for a message about when it’s safe to close this browser window. See also the “Redo” button at top right to delete this video and start all over again.</p>
Course Intro Step 5	<p>Edit your video and add captions</p> <p>Back in your Canvas course, go back to the Panopto Video area and refresh the page to see the video you just recorded. To insert automatic closed captions into your video, mouse over your video and click the Edit button. Select the Captions tab at top right [1], pull down the Import captions menu [2] and select Import automatic captions [3]. Edit any captions that are inaccurate. Click Apply at the top of the screen to save. See our article about editing in Panopto for more information about editing videos.</p>
Course Intro Step 6	<p>Embed the video in your Home Page</p> <p>Navigate to the Home Page you’ve been working on in the Pages area of your course (or create a new one). Click Edit to begin editing this page and place your cursor at the part of the page that you want the video to appear. In the toolbar at the top of the screen find the Panopto Icon, which resembles a green triangle. Choose the video you made previously by selecting its radio button. Click Insert.</p>
<p>Include an Informal Welcome Video</p>	
Welcome Video Step 1	<p>A short, informal welcome video</p> <p>Canvas includes some built-in video-recording features that you can take advantage of if you want to quickly and easily make a short, informal video welcoming your students to your course. Canvas’s video tool does not allow for screen capturing or editing, so we do not recommend using it for longer videos or videos that require editing or effects.</p>
Welcome Video Step 2	<p>Locate the Record/Upload Media button</p> <p>Click on the part of your page that you’d like the video to appear. In the toolbar, click the down-arrow next to the Record/Upload Media button in the Rich Content Editor (RCE) toolbar and select Upload/Record Media.</p>

<p>Welcome Video Step 3</p>	<p>Choose to record media In the pop-up, click on the Record Media tab.</p> <p>Note: If you wish to record your video using some other application on your computer, you can use the Upload Media tab to upload and embed that video instead.</p>
<p>Welcome Video Step 4</p>	<p>Grant your browser permission to access camera and microphone Your browser will pop up a dialogue asking you to give permission to access your webcam and microphone. If you have multiple video or audio devices connected to your computer, the dropdown menus will allow you to select which devices you want to use for the recording. (Note: Every browser's dialogue window will look and behave slightly differently. Pictured below is Firefox.)</p>
<p>Welcome Video Step 5</p>	<p>Record your video You can adjust your microphone and camera choices (or turn off your camera entirely) before recording your video. Click the Record button to begin and the Finish button to end your recording. Once you have finished your recording, you can give it a name and click Save, or the Start Over button to delete what you recorded and start over.</p>
<p>Welcome Video Step 6</p>	<p>Video Options Once you've saved your video, it will automatically embed on your page. Clicking on it will pop up a Video Options button. This will give you the ability to rename the video, adjust its size on the page, as well as upload a closed caption file. Unfortunately, at this time Canvas does not offer autocaptioning for video. For information about using free third-party tools to create captions and upload them to your Canvas videos, see this captions documentation from Canvas.</p>
<p>Include a YouTube Video</p>	
<p>YouTube Video Step 1</p>	<p>Including videos from other sources If there's a video from YouTube or another video hosting platform that you'd like to include on your home page, you can do that using either Canvas's YouTube integration. Videos from other sources (such as Vimeo) can be embedded using their embed code.</p>
<p>YouTube Video Step 2</p>	<p>Opening the YouTube Plug-In Find the Plug-In icon in the Rich Content Editor tool bar and pull down its menu to find the YouTube plug-in. A pop-up window will appear where you can search YouTube for videos. Tip: If you already have the URL for the video you want to use, you can paste that into the search field to locate that video.</p>
<p>YouTube Video Step 3</p>	<p>Selecting a video</p>

	Once you've searched and found the video you want to embed, you can either click the Embed button or click the arrow next to the Embed button to select the size you want the video. As soon as you select the embed, the window will close, and the video will now appear on your page.
YouTube Video Step 4	<p>Embedding media from other sources</p> <p>A number of different multimedia hosting services (e.g. Vimeo, Soundcloud or Scribd) provide embed codes that allow you to embed their resources into other websites, like Canvas. If you have such code, you can add the resource to your page by going to the Insert menu and selecting Embed.</p> <p>Paste the code into the box provided and click Submit.</p>
Add Documents and Files	
	<p>You can include embedded or linked documents and files to your front page, such as a syllabus, an important reading, or course policies.</p> <p>When you upload a document, you have the choice to automatically embed a preview, make the preview optional, or disable it entirely. No matter what you choose, your students will always be able to download the document in order to save or print it on their own.</p>
Add Documents Step 1	<p>Insert a document</p> <p>Click the down-arrow next to the Insert Document icon to find three choices for where this document will be retrieved from: your own computer (Upload Document), a file that has already been uploaded to your course previously (Course Documents) or a file that has already been uploaded to your personal user files previously (User Documents).</p> <p>To upload from your computer, click Upload Document.</p>
Add Documents Step 2	<p>Upload a File from Your Computer</p> <p>Either drag-and-drop or click anywhere inside the dotted line to open a file browser to find the document you want to upload. Click Submit once you have located the correct file.</p>
Add Documents Step 3	<p>Insert a file that's already been uploaded</p> <p>You can insert a link to a document or file that's already been uploaded to your course and included in other course content by selecting Course Documents from the Insert Document menu. A panel will slide on the right allowing you to browse all the files in your course to find the one you want. Click on the one you want to add.</p>
Add Documents Step 4	<p>Understanding file previews</p> <p>In Canvas, a file preview displays certain types of documents (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, PDF as well as some less-commonly used formats—for more information see the Canvas documentation) right inside the Canvas</p>

	<p>page without requiring students to download and open the document on their own computers. Students still have the option to download the document should they choose to, but can also view its contents inside Canvas.</p> <p>After you upload a file to your page, you have some options about how you want these previews to function. The default is to allow students to control how they preview the file, but there are other options. Click Step #5 to learn more.</p>
<p>Add Documents Step 5</p>	<p>Set preview options The default for documents inserted into pages is to allow the user to choose whether or not to open a full-sized document preview inside Canvas, by clicking the small “Preview the document” icon next to the file link [1].</p> <p>You can alter this default behavior by clicking on the Link Options pop-up that appears when you click anywhere in the file link [2] and selecting either Disable in-line preview or Automatically open an in-line preview from the slide-out on the right [3].</p>