

Resource Guide

Building the Journal Tool in Canvas

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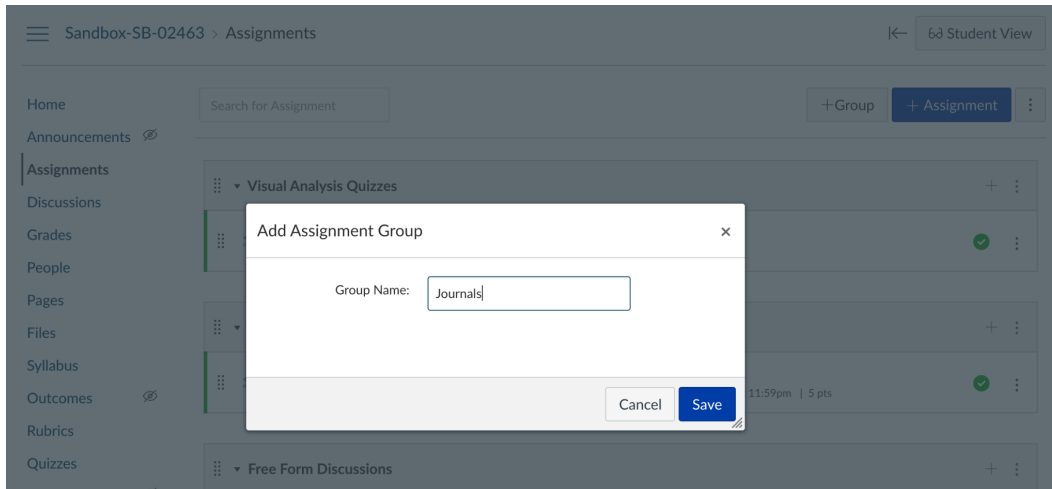
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Journal assignments are helpful pedagogical tools to host in your Canvas learning management system. Journals can be used to encourage various informal short student writings, such as reflective journals covering lectures, readings, or assignments (for in-class, after class, or online/hybrid courses). Journals can be used for metacognitive reflections over how students approached assignments, responses to readings, or responses to lectures. Journals can be used to ask how they worked through a text, mathematical or scientific problem, or even their thoughts on the course and work so far.

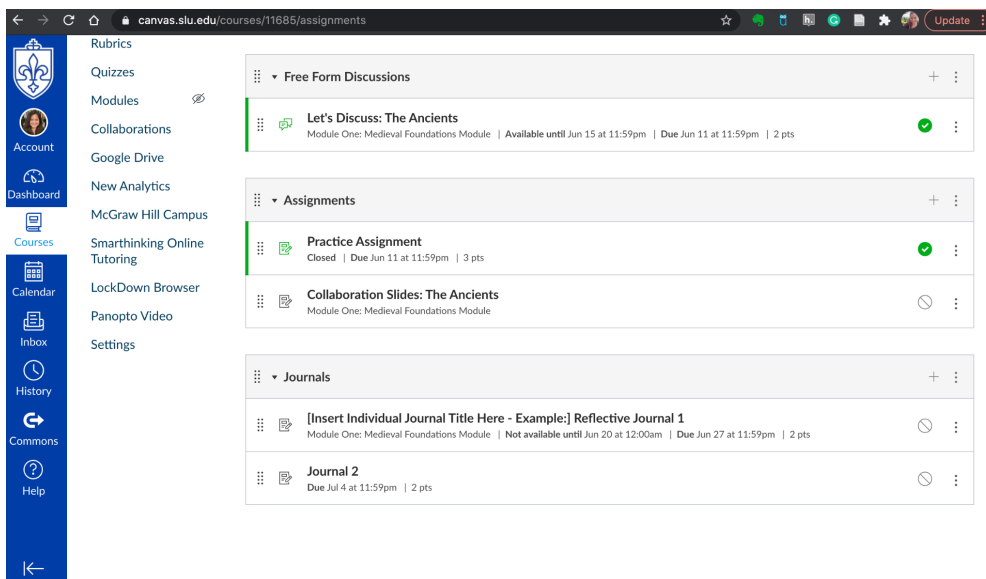
At first it appears that there is not a "Journals" tool in Canvas as there is in Blackboard; however, it is simply a different setup that allows you to build a more intuitive journal assignment with diverse upload options (and it is more visually pleasing than Blackboard's journals tool!)

1. Creating a Journal Assignment Group in Canvas:

In Canvas your "Assignments" section is where you can set up Journals. Go to the top right of your assignments page and click the "+Group" button. A pop-up titled "Add Assignment Group" will appear. You can title the group name anything. Here I did "Journals".



Here is how that will appear in your assignments page:



As you can see I have already populated it with two journals as examples. You will also notice that the first journal notes underneath the title that it is attached to a module, when it is available, the due date, and the grade points. I will show you later in this document how to attach the journal to a module.

2. Setting up Individual Journals within the Journal Assignment Group:

Click on the “+Assignment” button in the top right of the Assignments page. The following image is what should appear. Title the assignment (Journal 1, etc...) and then in the text box you can

include your instructions for the assignment. You can add PDFs, a video, images, or keep it to textual instructions.

The screenshot shows the Canvas LMS interface for editing an assignment. On the left is a navigation sidebar with icons for Home, Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, History, Commons, Help, and McGraw Hill Campus. The main content area is titled "Sandbox-SB-02463 > Assignments > [Insert Individual Journal Title Here - Example:] Reflective Journal 1". It includes a "Not Published" status indicator and a "Home" link. The assignment title is entered in a text box. Below the title is a rich text editor with a toolbar containing options for font size (12pt), paragraph style, bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, text alignment, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, image, video, audio, and embed. The main text area contains the following instructions: "[Insert Journal Instructions in this text box - Example]" followed by a paragraph: "Write a 400-word Reflective Journal over your writing process and rhetorical process from your latest essay. Answer how you changed or didn't change your writing process from previous writing assignments. When evaluating your own rhetoric do you think you had a particular audience in mind? Did you, etc...". Below the text is a due date: "This Journal is due at the same time as the essay: Sunday, June 27th, by 11:59pm". At the bottom of the text area, it shows "74 words" and icons for undo, redo, and source code.

Following the instructions text box are the assignment options where you can select what assignment group this will be grouped under. Here you can also add the points you wish to assign to the assignment, how grades are then displayed, and also, what submission types you will accept. You can allow for just text entries, media recordings, file uploads, and even external tools that you want to incorporate into the assignment. You can also restrict which file types you want uploaded (ie. if you absolutely only want .docx files and no PDFs):

The screenshot shows the "Settings" section of the Canvas LMS assignment editor. It includes a sidebar on the left with navigation options. The main content area shows the following settings: "Points" set to 2, "Assignment Group" set to "Journals", and "Display Grade as" set to "Points". There is an unchecked checkbox for "Do not count this assignment towards the final grade". The "Submission Type" is set to "Online". Under "Online Entry Options", the following are checked: "Text Entry", "Media Recordings", and "File Uploads". There is an unchecked checkbox for "Restrict Upload File Types". At the bottom, there is a field for "Submission Attempts" which is currently empty.

Following those options are how many submission attempts you are willing to accept, whether this is a group assignment, peer reviewed, and finally who it is assigned to, when it is due, and when it is available. Click "Save & Publish" and it will be made available for students.

3. Adding a Rubric to a Journal:

Click on “+ Rubric” for the option to find a rubric or create one for the journal.

Sandbox-SB-02463 > Assignments > Journal 2 Student View

- Home
- Announcements
- Assignments**
- Discussions
- Grades
- People
- Pages
- Files
- Syllabus
- Outcomes
- Rubrics
- Quizzes

Journal 2

Publish
Edit
⋮

No Content

Points 2

Submitting Nothing

Due	For	Available from	Until
Jul 4	Everyone	-	-

+ Rubric

Related Items

The following image depicts the rubric selection/creation options:

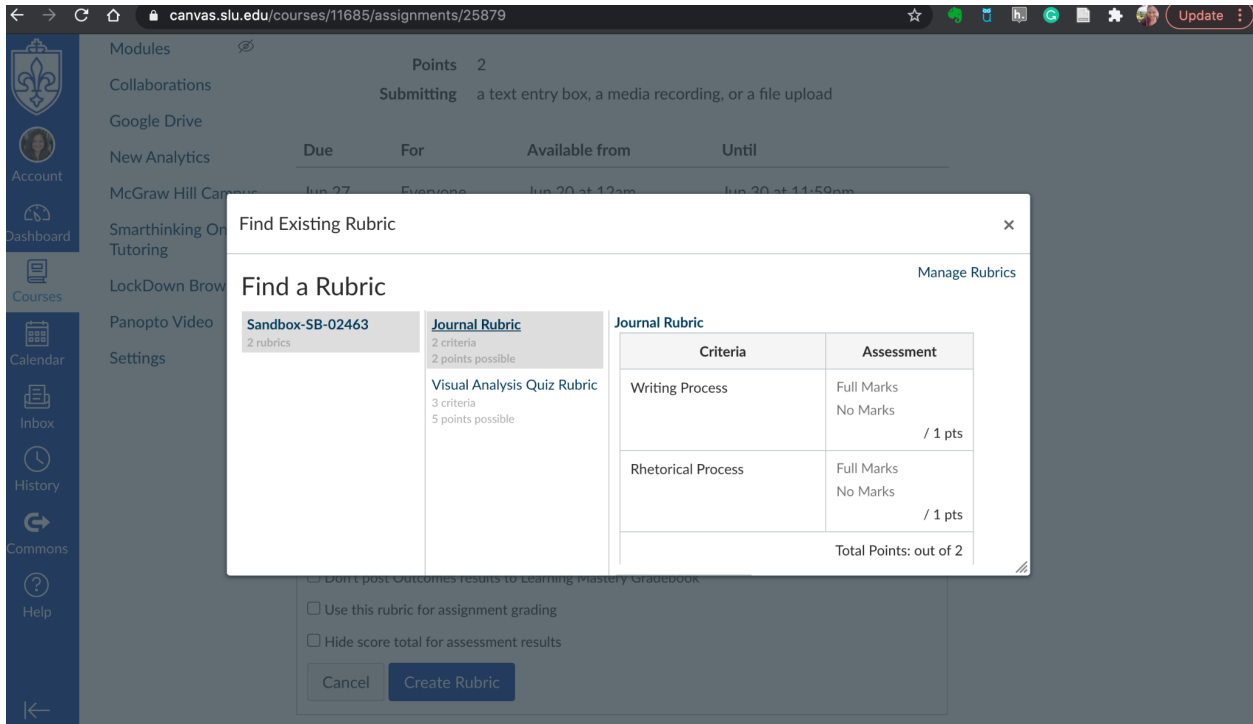
Points 2
Submitting Nothing

Due	For	Available from	Until
Jul 4	Everyone	-	-

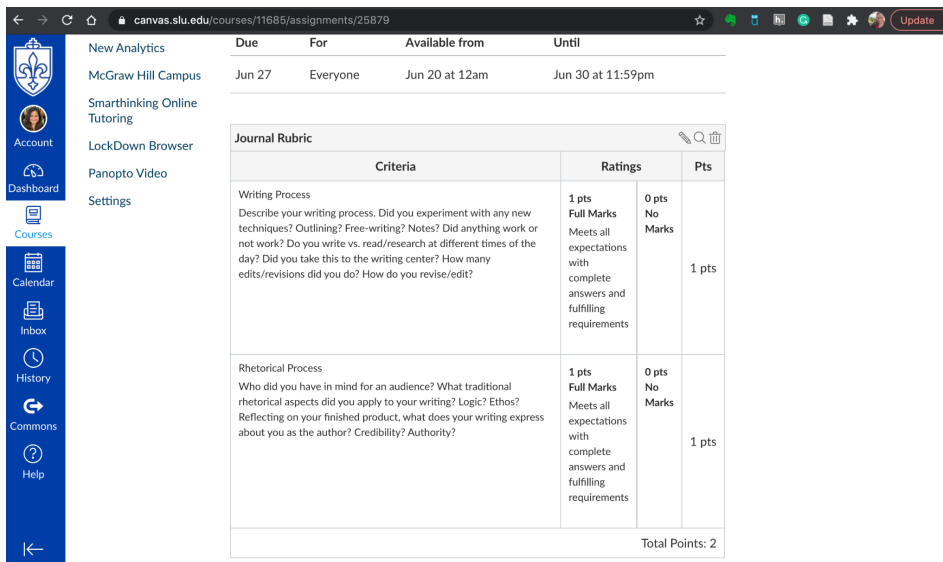
Title: 🔍 [Find a Rubric](#)

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
Description of criterion ✎ 🗑 Range <input type="checkbox"/>	5 pts + 0 pts Full Marks - No Marks	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text" value="5"/> pts
+ Criterion 🔍 Find Outcome		Total Points: 5
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll write free-form comments when assessing students <input type="checkbox"/> Remove points from rubric <input type="checkbox"/> Don't post Outcomes results to Learning Mastery Gradebook <input type="checkbox"/> Use this rubric for assignment grading <input type="checkbox"/> Hide score total for assessment results		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Cancel Create Rubric </div>		

If you click on the search magnifying glass it will give you the following pop-up where you can select a rubric you have already created in your rubrics page for the course (which might be most expedient if you have the same criteria for multiple journal assignments). After you have selected the desired rubric, click on the “use this rubric” button underneath the preview of the rubric (you may have to scroll down within the pop-up for this button to appear).

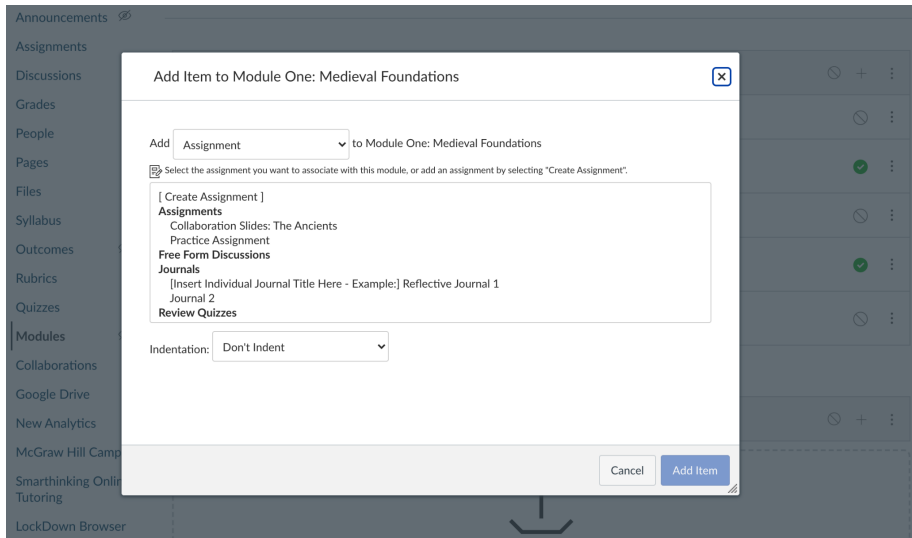


The completed rubric attachment will look like this underneath the journal instructions and due date for the journal assignment:

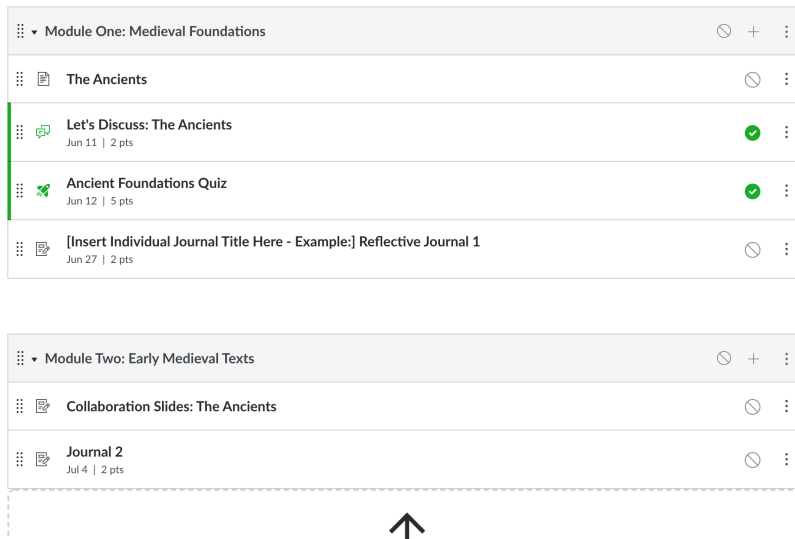


4. Adding a Journal to a Module's Workflow:

This allows for students to be able to access the journal through the module workflow; however, depending on your design of the course, they can also access it through their Assignments tab. Go to the course Modules' page and in the appropriate module's main header click the "+" button. The following pop-up will appear where you can attach any assignment:



Since you've created a group in assignments for journals, they will be under their own bold header as seen above. Select the correct one, click "add item", and there you have it! You have added the journal to that module's workflow and can move it from there within your module list to where you would like it best in the flow.



5. Student View of Journal Assignment

The final result will be something like this for the students. They will have a button to “start assignment” and can see the instructions, all other relevant information, and the rubric before starting the assignment:

[Insert Individual Journal Title Here -
Example:] Reflective Journal 1

Start Assignment

Due Jun 27 by 11:59pm **Points** 2

Submitting a text entry box, a media recording, or a file upload

Available Jun 6 at 12am - Jun 30 at 11:59pm 25 days

[Insert Journal Instructions in this text box - Example]

"Write a 400-word Reflective Journal over your writing process and rhetorical process from your latest essay. Answer how you changed or didn't change your writing process from previous writing assignments. When evaluating your own rhetoric do you think you had a particular audience in mind? Did you, etc...."

This Journal is due at the same time as the essay: **Sunday, June 27th, by 11:59pm**

Journal Rubric			
Criteria	Ratings		Pts
Writing Process	1 pts	0 pts	
Describe your writing process. Did you experiment with any new	Full Marks	No	

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by [email](#).