

Reading and Posting to Wikis in Blackboard

What is a wiki?

A wiki is a collaboratively constructed web site. Wikis consist of “pages” that can include images, video, attached files, links to other web sites, and links to other pages within the wiki. Most wikis maintain a history showing how the wiki was changed and who changed it. The best known example of a wiki is Wikipedia, a collaboratively authored, online encyclopedia.

Accessing wikis in Blackboard

1. Your instructor/organization leader will tell you where in the Blackboard course site your wiki is located. Wiki sites are marked with an  icon next to the title. Click on the **View** link to access the wiki.



2. You will see the wiki homepage. If no one has edited the wiki yet, the home page will be blank, as in the example below. If there are additional pages in the wiki, they will be listed in the right sidebar under **Site Navigation**.



NOTE: Students who are able to edit a wiki are called wiki members. Your instructor can set up a wiki in different ways. Some wikis can be viewed only by wiki members, while other wikis can be viewed by anyone in the class (but edited only by wiki members). The **Privacy** section in the right sidebar will tell you if your wiki is viewable by all class members or by wiki members only.

Editing a wiki page

If you are a wiki member, you can edit any page and can add new pages. You can add to existing content on a page or change the content that is already there, even if it was initially created by someone else.

To edit a wiki page:

1. Click the **Edit** link in the right sidebar under **Page**.



2. You will see an editor window, with buttons on the toolbar similar to a word processing toolbar. These buttons allow you to format text, add images and links, and attach documents. Holding your mouse pointer over any button will produce a brief explanation of its function.
3. Type your text into the editing window and click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page to publish.



NOTE: A wiki page cannot be edited by more than one person at a time. If a page is being edited and another member tries to edit that page, a message appears stating that the wiki is unavailable. This is not an error message; it just means that you should return to the page at a later time.

NOTE: You can view individual contributions to a wiki by clicking on the **History** link in the **Page** section of the right sidebar. You can also revert to a previous version of the page.

Inserting text from MS Word or Notepad:

When copying text from a word processor, **do not** use the paste function in your browser;

instead, use one of the paste icons  in the wiki editor so that the content displays properly:

1. Copy the text in MS Word as you usually would using your keyboard or mouse.
2. Go to the wiki page where you will insert the text and go into editing mode. You should see a toolbar containing the tools shown above.
3. Use the paste from Word icon  on the editor to paste text from MS Word to a wiki page. If you are using another word processor, use the paste plain text  icon. **NOTE:** When you use the paste plain text icon, only the text will be copied. The formatting will not be copied.

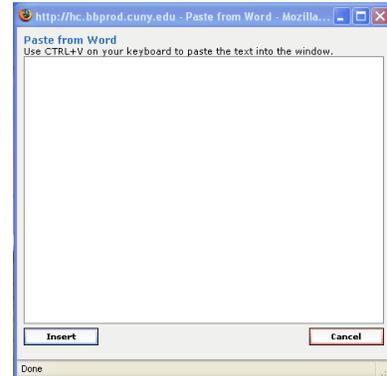
Internet Explorer users

You will see the dialog box shown to the right. Click the **Allow access** button to paste the text into the wiki page.



Firefox users

You will see an empty text box, as shown to the right. Paste the text into the box as you usually would, then click the **Insert** button to insert the text into the wiki.

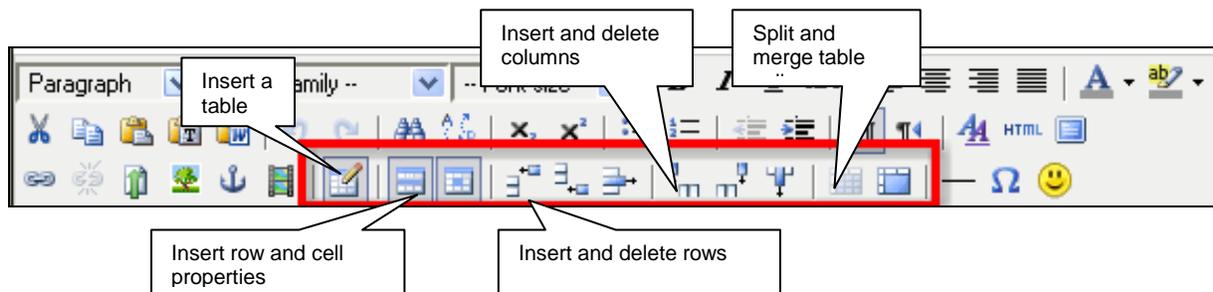


Inserting tables

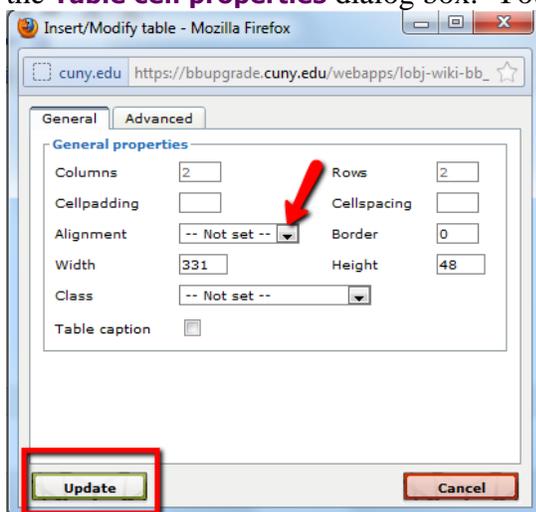
You can use tables to structure your wiki page content and design a layout for your images and text as shown in the example to the right.



Use the icons on the editor to insert a table, merge or split a table, or insert or delete columns and rows and create the desired layout (see toolbar below).



Once you have created your table, you can click on the **Table cell properties** icon to align your image or text within the cell (see image, right). By default, text will appear in the center of the cell and the cell will expand to fit the text. You can change the alignment of the text in a cell in the **Table cell properties** dialog box. You can also change the cell's width or height.



Inserting links

You can create links to web sites and to other pages within the wiki:

1. Highlight text that you want to hyperlink.
2. Click the **Insert Link** icon () on the toolbar.
3. You will see a dialog box with four options:

a. Link to a new page

Selecting this option will create a link to a new blank page. Type a name for the new page.

b. Link to an existing page

Selecting this option will create a link to an existing page within the wiki. Select the page to which to link from the list that appears.

c. Link to an external page

Selecting this option will create a link to a website outside the wiki. Type or paste in the address of the site to which you want to link.

d. Link to an anchor

Selecting this option will create a link to a specific point on the wiki page you are editing.

Note: Before creating this link, you must insert anchors in the wiki page first. Use the insert/edit **Anchor** icon () to insert anchors on the wiki page.



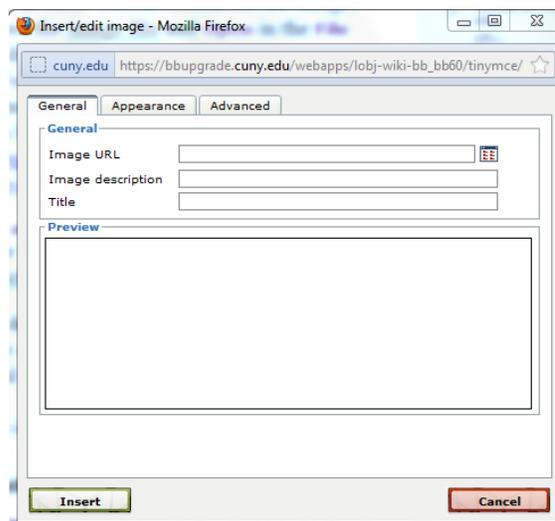
Inserting images

1. Click on the **Insert Image** button ()
2. You will see a dialog box with two options:
 - a. **Upload an image**

Click the **Browse** button to look for the image, then select the image file and **Open** in the **File Upload** dialog box.

Note: We recommend that you resize your image before embedding it in the wiki. You could use a program like Paint or iPhoto. See our documents [Preparing Images with Paint](#) and [Preparing Images with iPhoto](#).
 - b. **Include an image from an external web site**

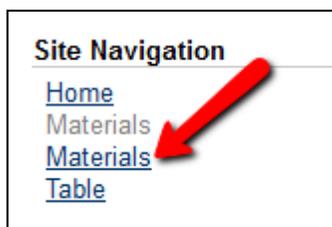
Copy the web address of the image into the URL field. (If you are using Firefox, right-click on the image to copy the image location.)



3. Enter an image description. “Alt text” is what appears as a replacement of an image when the image cannot be displayed. We recommend that you always enter “alt text” because it is especially useful for people who use screen readers.
4. Click **Insert** to upload the image.

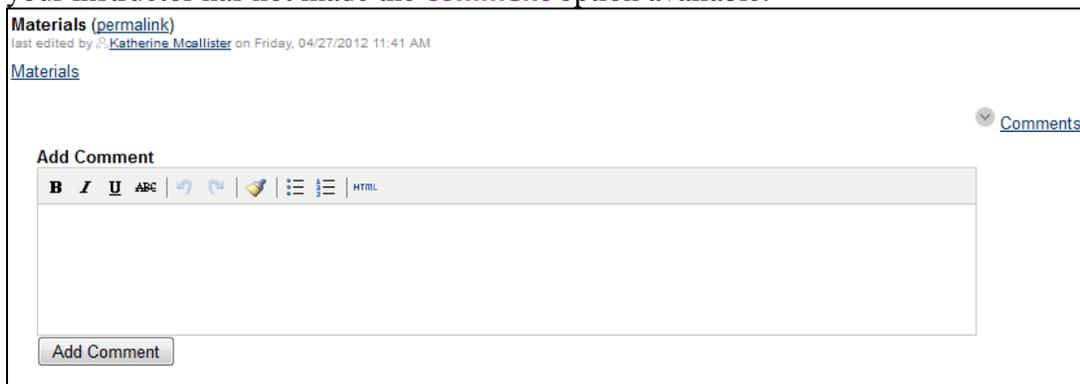
Creating a new wiki page

1. Click on the **New** link under **Page** in the sidebar on the right.
2. Enter a title in the **Page Name** field. In this example, we call the new page “Materials.”
3. Add content to the page, as described in the “**Editing a wiki page**” section of this document.
4. Click the **Save** button. Your new page will appear in the **Site Navigation** section of the sidebar. You can now create a link to your new page from any other page in the wiki, as described in the **Editing a wiki page** section of this document. **NOTE:** An alternative method of creating a page is to create a link to a new page, as described in the “**To insert a link**” section of this document.



Commenting on wiki entries

Comments may be added to any page in the wiki if your instructor has enabled the comment feature. To view or create a comment, click on the **Comments** link at the bottom of the wiki page. You will see any comments that have already been made and can add a new comment using the **Add Comment** form. The number in parenthesis behind the word **Comments** represents the number of existing comments. **NOTE:** If you do not see a **Comments** link, then your instructor has not made the **comment** option available.



Getting Help with Wikis

Additional help can be accessed within the wiki page by clicking the “question mark”  located on the upper right corner of the screen. **NOTE:** This link leads to a web site created by Learning Objects, the company that created the wiki add-on in Bb.

STUDENTS: If you have further questions or need technical assistance, please contact your professor or the Student Help Desk at (212) 650-EMAIL (3624), studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu. Additional Blackboard documents are available at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/blackboard/student-documentation-and-support-for-blackboard>.

FACULTY: If you have further questions or need assistance, please email bb@hunter.cuny.edu or contact the [Technology Resource Center](#), C104 Hunter North, 212-650-3358. For assistance designing learning activities that incorporate wikis, please contact one of ICIT’s educational technologists at edtech@hunter.cuny.edu. Additional Blackboard documents are available at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/blackboard/blackboard-9.1-faculty-resources>.