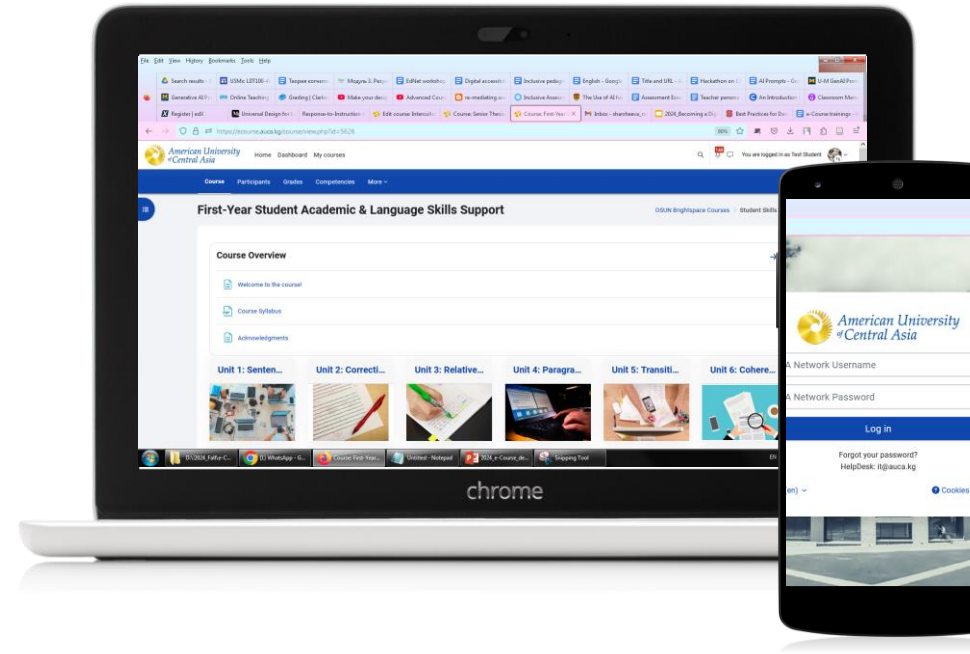


Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology

# 4 steps to design a good course

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 office #201



# Contents

- ① Apply principles of Graphic Design to enhance course aesthetics.
- ② Use a Grid format to organize content into manageable pieces.
- ③ Use e-Course tools to break up text-heavy sections.
- ④ Embed images to make content more engaging and memorable.



# Step 1: principles of Graphic Design



## Contrast

Making elements different increases understanding



## Repetition

Repeat visual elements to create strong unity



## Alignment

Each element's position should be purposeful, not arbitrary



## Proximity

Related elements should be placed together

# Contrast simply means difference

## Purpose

- Create interest and grab attention

## Method

Make elements stand out:

- Color
- Font
- Shape
- Size



## Contrast in action



GOOD



BAD

# Repetition simply means unity

## Purpose

- Create unity and consistency

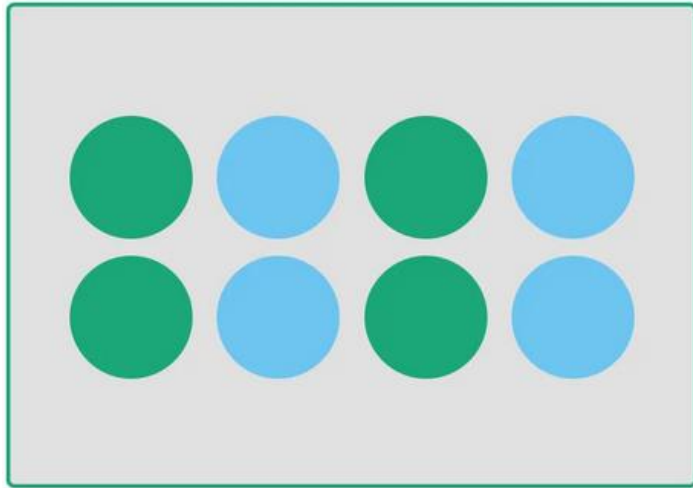
## Method

Reuse certain elements:

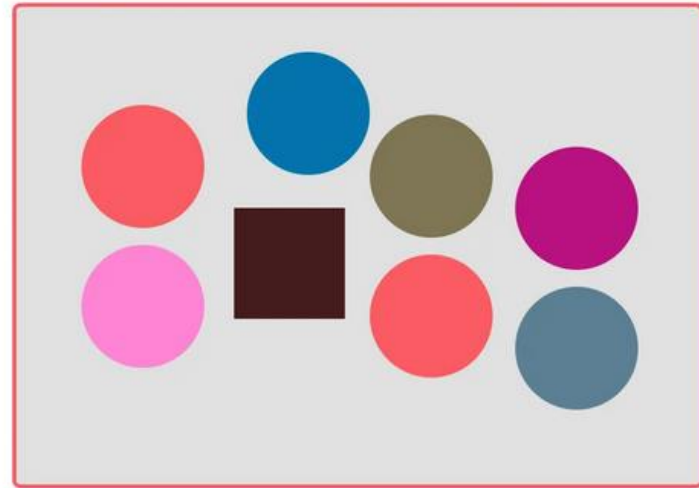
- Color
- Font
- Shape
- Size



# Repetition in action



GOOD



BAD



# Alignment simply means well-positioned

## Purpose

- Create visual order and structure

## Method

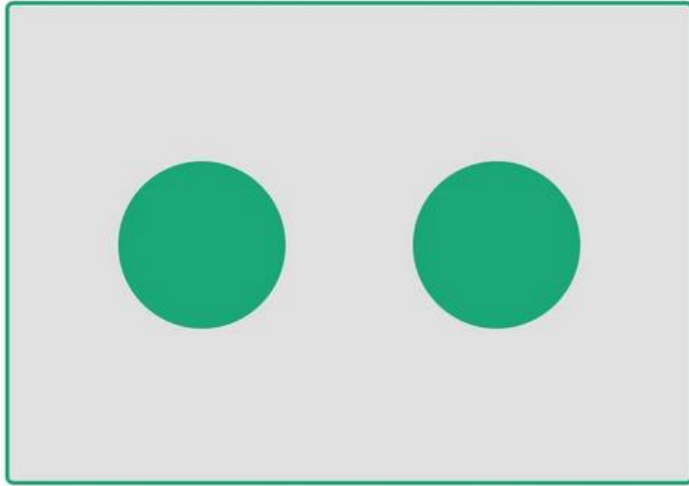
Line up elements on a page:

- Left or right
- Center or middle
- Top or bottom

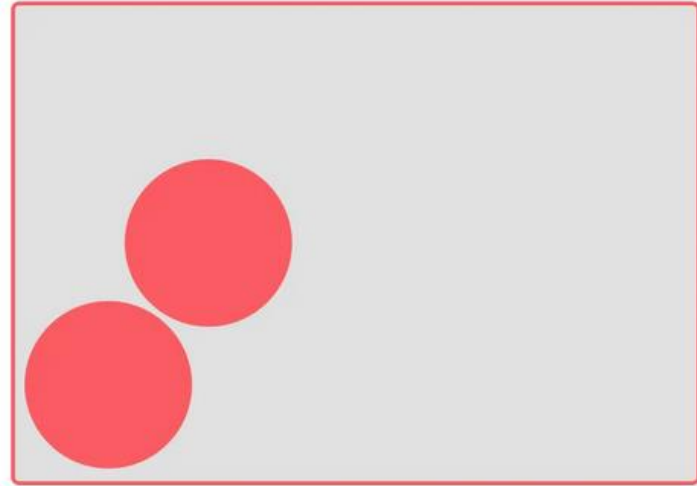




# Alignment in action



**GOOD**



**BAD**

# Proximity simply means grouped

## Purpose

- Create a sense of spacing

## Method

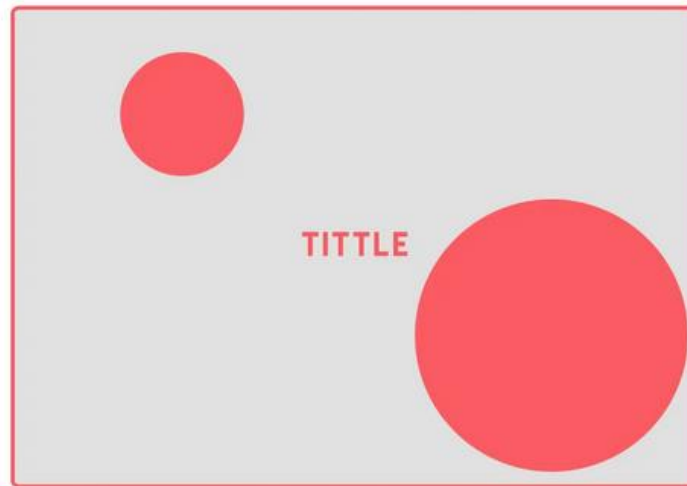
- Group related elements together
- Separate unrelated elements



## Proximity in action



GOOD



BAD

The screenshot shows a course page with a blue header containing navigation links: Course, Settings, Participants, Grades, Reports, and More. Below the header, a session titled "SESSION 3: June 16 (10 am - 12 pm)" is displayed. A callout box points to the session title with the text "Items align left". Below the session title, a green text block states: "Upon completion of this session, you will be able to: outline the basic concepts and characteristics of good graphic design".

The page is divided into sections. The first section is titled "README" in orange. A red arrow points to this title. Below it are three blue links: "Essential guide to visual design", "Visual design basics", "What is visual design?", and "Reading 13: graphic design". A callout box points to these links with the text "Related items grouped together".

The second section is titled "FREE DESIGN TOOLS" in orange. Below it are three blue links: "Adobe color wheel", "Colors palettes", and "Color contrast checker". A callout box points to these links with the text "Repeated color and size".

Below the sections is a discussion area with a speech bubble icon and the text "Discussion a scenario to develop visual aids for YOUR online courses". Below this is a prompt: "Please, share here your ideas and thoughts related to developing visual aids." A red arrow points to the bottom of this section.

At the bottom of the page is a task icon (a hand holding a document) and the text "Prepare a scenario on design visual aids for YOUR online courses".

## C.R.A.P. in action

Some best practices to improve your course design immediately:

- give concise and descriptive names for each module, including dates if necessary;
- choose a consistent style for fonts and colors (too many variations can be confusing);
- use high-contrast, readable color combinations (dark text on light background is the most accessible);
- use headings, subheadings, and bold or italic formatting to emphasize key points;
- use action verbs for activity name, such as 'SUBMIT your essay here';
- consider indenting items to nest them under others, creating a clear visual hierarchy.

# Step 2: Grid format benefits

## Visual Clarity

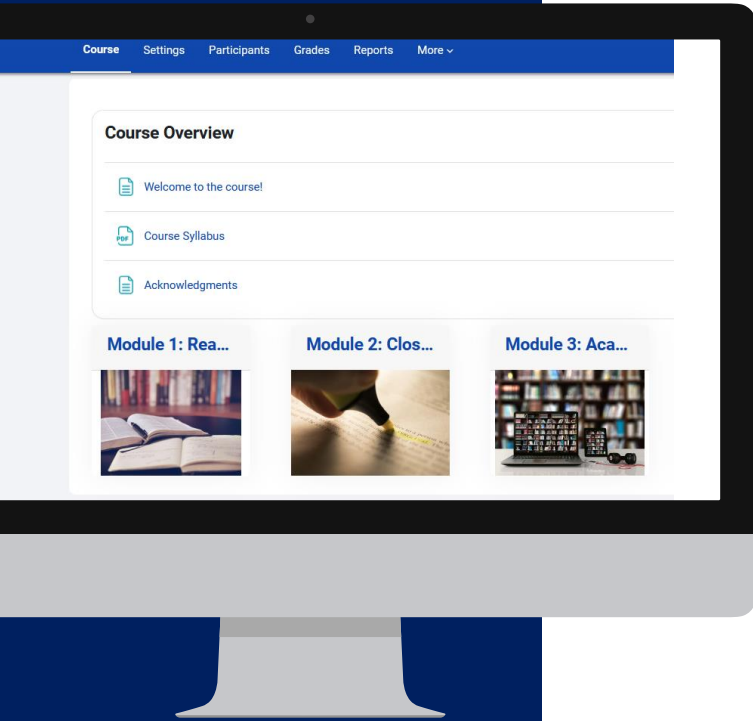
- Each module or topic is clearly segmented

## Easy Access

- Students find materials quickly, no scrolling

## Flexible Design

- Customizable images to reflect course themes



# Set up a Grid format



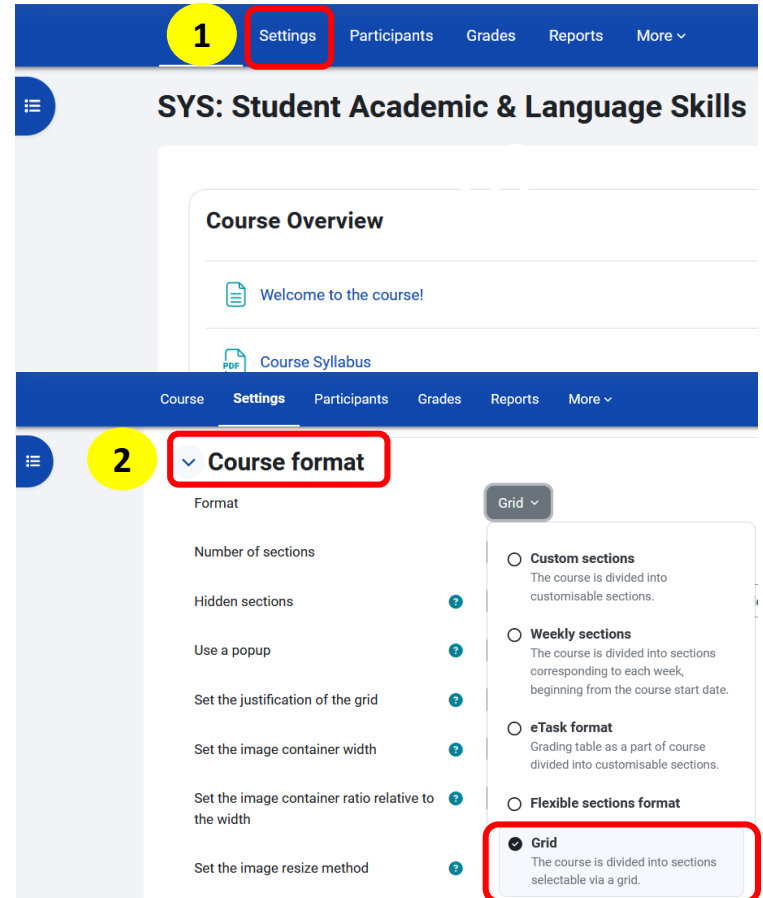
Click on **Settings** in the blue menu banner at the top left.



Go to **Course format** and select Grid from the drop-down list.



Wait for the page to refresh, scroll down and click **Save and display**.



The screenshot shows the LMS interface for a course titled "SYS: Student Academic & Language Skills". At the top, there is a blue navigation banner with a yellow circle containing the number "1" next to the "Settings" link, which is highlighted with a red box. Other links in the banner include "Participants", "Grades", "Reports", and "More". Below the banner, the course title is displayed. A "Course Overview" section contains links for "Welcome to the course!" and "Course Syllabus". A second blue navigation banner is visible, with a yellow circle containing the number "2" next to the "Course format" link, which is also highlighted with a red box. Below this banner, a list of settings is shown, including "Format", "Number of sections", "Hidden sections", "Use a popup", "Set the justification of the grid", "Set the image container width", "Set the image container ratio relative to the width", and "Set the image resize method". To the right of these settings is a dropdown menu for "Grid", which is highlighted with a red box. The dropdown menu contains four options: "Custom sections", "Weekly sections", "eTask format", and "Grid". The "Grid" option is selected, indicated by a radio button and a checkmark.

# Step 3: reduce visual clutter with tools

## Book

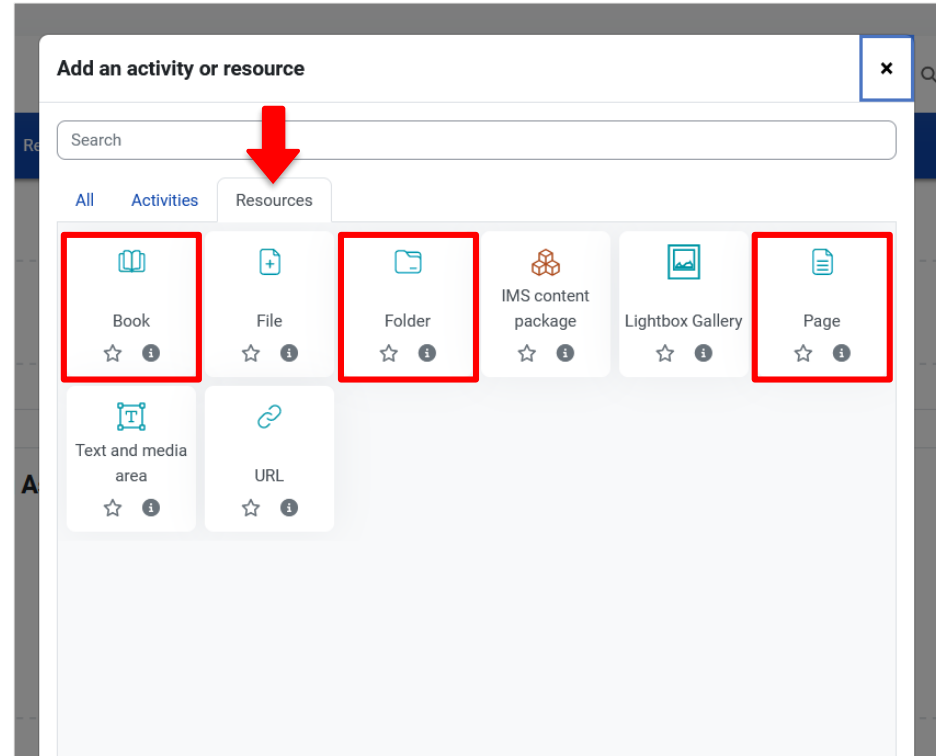
Using a **Book** to break extensive content into chapters and subchapters improves readability and helps students focus on one point at a time.

## Folder

Putting multiple files into a **Folder** with a descriptive title makes the course page less overwhelming for students.

## Page

Grouping lengthy information - such as text, hyperlinks, multimedia - on a separate **Page** saves space and minimizes scrolling.





# Book in action

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a course page for American University of Central Asia. The URL is <https://ecourse.auca.kg/mod/book/view.php?id=200699&chapterid=96>. The page features a blue navigation bar with a 'Book' button and a 'More' dropdown menu. A red arrow points to the 'More' dropdown, which contains 'Print book' and 'Print this chapter'. The main content area is titled 'STUDY GUIDE' and includes a breadcrumb trail: 'Sociology > Fall2024 > 2024\_Fall\_SOC493(Shadymanova) > Study Guide > STUDY GUIDE'. The current section is '1.3 Course Information', which includes a sub-section 'Reflection Journals'. A purple box highlights the '1.3 Course Information' heading. A red callout box points to this heading with the text: 'Make headings simple and descriptive so students can go directly to the content relevant to them.' Another red callout box points to the 'Reflection Journals' sub-section with the text: 'You can add text, images, audio and video, links to assignments or quizzes, and even upload your own files here.' A third red callout box points to the '1.3 Course Information' heading with the text: 'Give a clear title that will explain what it contains.' On the right side, there is a 'Table of contents' sidebar with links for '1.1 Syllabus', '1.2 Getting Started', '1.3 Course Information', and '1.4 Course Academics', with 'Reflection Journals' and 'Discussion Boards' listed under '1.4 Course Academics'. The page also includes a 'Font size' control (A-, A, A+) and a 'Site color' control (R, A, A, A).

← → ↻ 🔒 <https://ecourse.auca.kg/mod/book/view.php?id=200699&chapterid=96> 67% ☆ 📌 Other Bookmarks

<https://lp2.hm.com/h...> [Кымылыз Мулк - Бизн...](#) [Be prepared for the...](#)

Font size A- A A+ Site color R A A A

American University of Central Asia Home Dashboard My courses

Book More ▾

Print book  
Print this chapter

Sociology > Fall2024 > 2024\_Fall\_SOC493(Shadymanova) > Study Guide > STUDY GUIDE

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1.3 Course Information

#### Reflection Journals

At times throughout this subject, a purple box like this one will pop up and you will be asked to complete activities in your Reflection Journal. Your Reflection Journal will be provided to you in the first week of each subject.

The Reflection Journal is a tool you can use to apply your learnings to your country context. If you wish to receive a Certificate of Attainment for your participation in kNOwVAWdata, you are required to:

1. Submit a Reflection Journal for each subject – we recommend submitting about 1 month after commencement of the subject.
2. Receive an assessment of 'Competent' or 'Highly Proficient' for each Reflection Journal.

Please [click here](#) to read more about the kNOwVAWdata Online Course certification and requirements.

#### Table of contents

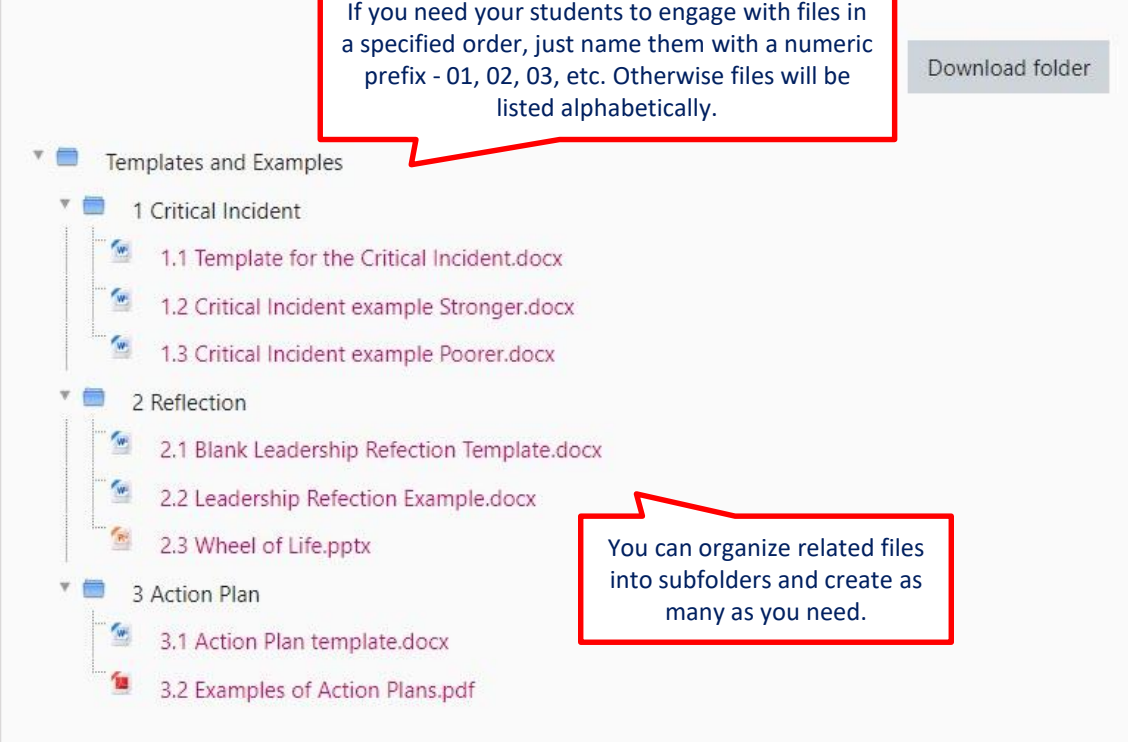
- 1.1 Syllabus
- 1.2 Getting Started
- 1.3 Course Information
- 1.4 Course Academics
  - Reflection Journals
  - Discussion Boards

# Folder in action

If you have a file-heavy course with many presentations or documents, move them to a **Folder** instead of listing one by one.

It works with all file types - just drag them into one place for quick access and better organization:

- text files (pdf, docx, pptx, xlsx);
- media files (jpg, png, mp3, mp4);
- web-based content (html files);
- e-books or digital publications (ePub files);
- and many others.



If you need your students to engage with files in a specified order, just name them with a numeric prefix - 01, 02, 03, etc. Otherwise files will be listed alphabetically.

Download folder

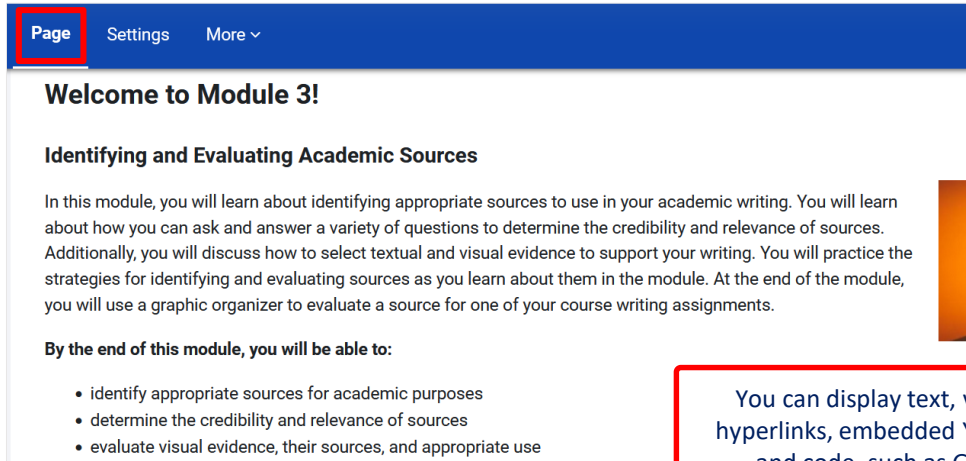
You can organize related files into subfolders and create as many as you need.

The screenshot shows a file explorer interface with the following structure:

- Templates and Examples
  - 1 Critical Incident
    - 1.1 Template for the Critical Incident.docx
    - 1.2 Critical Incident example Stronger.docx
    - 1.3 Critical Incident example Poorer.docx
  - 2 Reflection
    - 2.1 Blank Leadership Reflection Template.docx
    - 2.2 Leadership Reflection Example.docx
    - 2.3 Wheel of Life.pptx
  - 3 Action Plan
    - 3.1 Action Plan template.docx
    - 3.2 Examples of Action Plans.pdf

# Page in action

If your modules contain lengthy paragraphs, a set of hyperlinks, images, or videos, consider arranging them on a separate **Page** to enhance student interaction with the content.



**Page** Settings More v

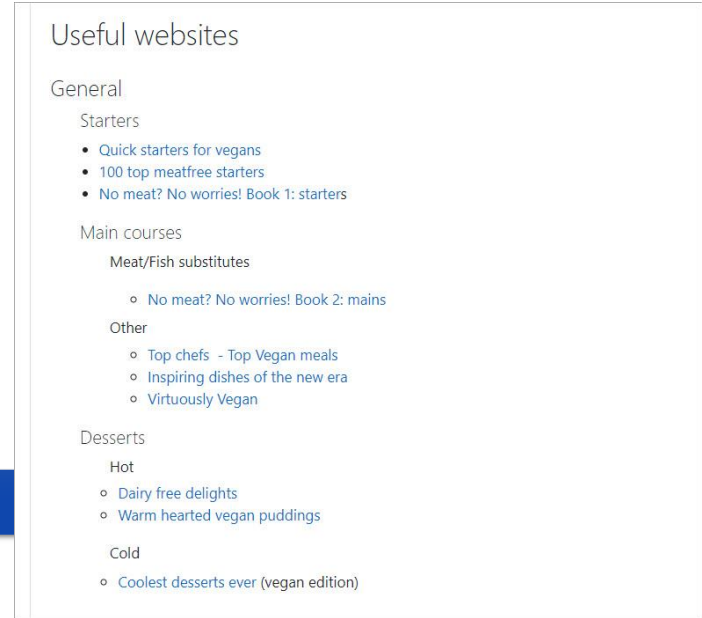
## Welcome to Module 3!

### Identifying and Evaluating Academic Sources

In this module, you will learn about identifying appropriate sources to use in your academic writing. You will learn about how you can ask and answer a variety of questions to determine the credibility and relevance of sources. Additionally, you will discuss how to select textual and visual evidence to support your writing. You will practice the strategies for identifying and evaluating sources as you learn about them in the module. At the end of the module, you will use a graphic organizer to evaluate a source for one of your course writing assignments.

**By the end of this module, you will be able to:**

- identify appropriate sources for academic purposes
- determine the credibility and relevance of sources
- evaluate visual evidence, their sources, and appropriate use



## Useful websites

### General

#### Starters

- [Quick starters for vegans](#)
- [100 top meatfree starters](#)
- [No meat? No worries! Book 1: starters](#)

#### Main courses

##### Meat/Fish substitutes

- [No meat? No worries! Book 2: mains](#)

##### Other

- [Top chefs - Top Vegan meals](#)
- [Inspiring dishes of the new era](#)
- [Virtuously Vegan](#)

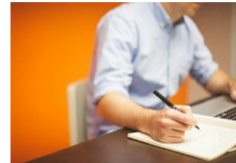
#### Desserts

##### Hot

- [Dairy free delights](#)
- [Warm hearted vegan puddings](#)

##### Cold

- [Coolest desserts ever \(vegan edition\)](#)



You can categorize the links in an order useful to you and your students.

You can display text, visuals, sound, hyperlinks, embedded YouTube videos, and code, such as Google maps.

# Step 4: adding relevant graphics to words improves learning

Students learn better from words and pictures than from words alone. A mix of text and visuals provides context and clarifies complex ideas, helping students process and integrate information more easily.

You can add visuals in many places in e-Course, including:

- module overview to visually introduce topics;
- quizzes to make questions more interactive;
- assignments to provide examples or illustrate expectations;
- forums to draw attention to important updates;
- feedback to offer visual reinforcement or encouragement.



We process images thousands of times faster than text.

# How to properly embed media content in your course

Include media elements to support learning objectives:

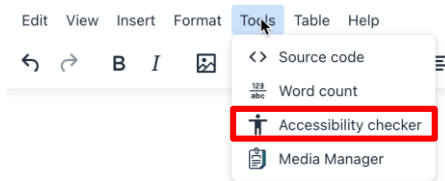


- images for visual explanations;
- videos for demonstrations or lectures;
- audio for language practice or additional commentary.

The **Accessibility Checker** can help you identify potential issues, including:



- contrast between font color and background;
- long blocks of text that need to be broken into sections with headings;
- tables that require captions and row or column labels.



**General**

Name

Description

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help

Whenever you edit a resource or activity, e.g. Assignments, Questions, Forum posts, you can use the editor toolbar to insert media and emojis, add links, embed code samples, create tables, record audio/video, check accessibility, and more.

0 words

# Visuals in action

Quiz

Settings

Questions

Results

Question bank

More ▾

## Question 7

Not yet  
answered

Marked out of  
1.00

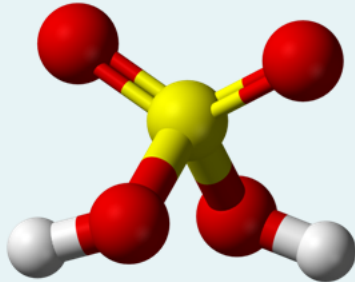
[Flag  
question](#)

[Edit  
question](#)

v1 (latest)

This is an example of a true/false question including an image

This image shows the molecular structure of water, H<sub>2</sub>O



Make your Quizzes  
more interactive

Select one:

True

False

# What if I need more help with e-Course?

Please contact the e-Course admin:

[ctlt@auca.kg](mailto:ctlt@auca.kg)

office #201

+996 (312) 915-000/ext.331



# References

- <https://www.digitallearninginstitute.com/blog/mayers-principles-multimedia-learning>
- <http://ellingtonmontessori.ca/2017/01/17/the-power-of-personalization>
- <http://howtwosondesign.blogspot.com/2012/03/crap-theory.html>
- <https://sites.google.com/auca.kg/auca-ctlt/visual-design?authuser=0>
- <https://unsplash.com>
- <https://www.zekagraphic.com/12-principles-of-graphic-design>