

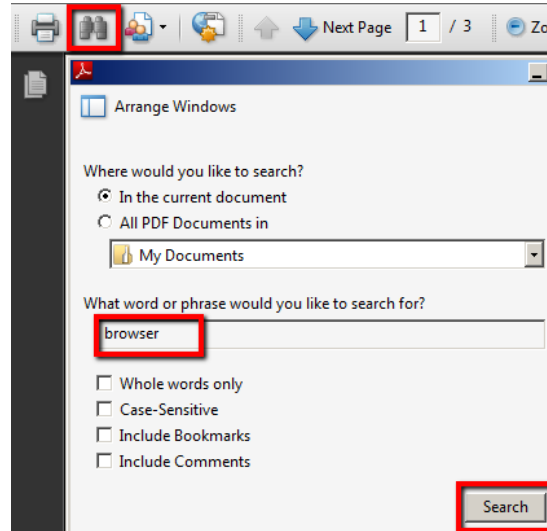
Blackboard Learn: “Best Practices” for Taking Online Tests

Tip: To locate information quickly, search this document by keyword (s).

-Click the **binoculars icon** to open the search window, or, go to **Edit > Search**.

-Type the keyword(s) (e.g. browser).

-Click **Search**.



Browser Compatibility: Use a certified browser, preferably Firefox or Safari to take online tests. If using Internet Explorer 8 or above, make sure that the **compatibility view is set**, otherwise the timer will block the Submit button.

Test Settings: Most online tests are set to **allow only one attempt**. The tips listed in this document will help you avoid common problems when taking online tests.

Before Attempting an Online Test:

1. Choose a familiar and stable computer on which to take the test.
2. Reboot computer to terminate all background processes.
3. **Use only certified browsers** for the current version of Blackboard when taking online assessments.
4. To minimize problems when submitting the test, make sure that you do not have any other browser windows open.
5. Check your computer for the latest updates (Operating system patches, virus updates, java).

6. **Disable all window pop-up blockers** (in browsers, in third-party toolbars such as Yahoo and Google, as well as utility software such as Norton products).
7. Shut down distracting activities such as Instant Messaging and Email.
8. **Use a hardwired connection** rather than a wireless connection. Make sure that you disable the wireless receiver so that it does not interfere with, or override the wired connection.
9. If using a dial-up connection to the internet, disable call waiting. Answering calls while taking a test might erase all your test responses.
10. **Maximize the browser screen.** Any other setting might hide critical functions such as the **Save** or **Submit** buttons. Resizing the browser while taking an assessment is **not recommended**. Some browsers will refresh the page when the screen is resized, causing possible loss of work already completed, and/or blocking access to a test where only one attempt is allowed.
11. Check scheduled Blackboard system outages posted on the Blackboard login page under System Alerts. Check your campus email for other notifications about technical maintenance and downtimes.
12. If your computer is connected to the Internet through an Internet Service Provider make sure that your ISP time-out settings are set at the highest allowable time.
13. If your Internet service is shared among multiple users (e.g. in an apartment complex), it is likely you will experience slow connectivity and possible disconnection when taking an online test. **Recommendation: Take online tests using more stable connections.**
14. **Clear the cache on your computer** before taking a test.
In Internet Explorer:
 - From the menu, click **Tools > Internet Options**.
 - On the **General** tab in the **Browsing History** area, click **Delete**.
 - Select all the checkboxes; click **Delete**.
 - On the **Content** tab in the **Certificates** area, click **Clear SSL State**.
 - Click **OK**.
In Mozilla Firefox:
 - From the menu, click **Tools > Clear Recent History** (on a MAC, the option will be **Clear Private Data**).
 - Select all the checkboxes in the **Details** area.
 - Click **Clear Now**.

In Safari:

- From the menu, click **Safari > Reset Safari**
- Select **Empty Cache** checkbox
- Click **Reset**.

15. Schedule to take the test long before the deadline to allow ample time to resolve any problems.
16. Do not click the link to take the assessment **until you are absolutely ready to take it**.

Taking an Online Test:

1. **Click Begin only once** when you are ready to launch the test.
2. **Allow the page to load completely** before answering questions. If you begin scrolling or answering questions before it loads completely, some questions might not load.
3. **Read all the instructions carefully.** Note important information provided such as:
 - Force Completion:** Once you begin the test, you will be required to complete it in one session. If you leave the test by clicking elsewhere, you will not be able to access it again unless **Multiple Attempts** are allowed. Leaving the test will count as one attempt.
 - Timed Assessment:** Length of time allowed to take the test
 - Allow Multiple Attempts:** You may start and stop the test within the time allowed. When completed, **Save and Submit**.
 - All at Once:** All test questions appear on the page at once. The **Save Answer** button will appear next to each question. It is good practice to **save each response**. In case of technical difficulties, the saved answers will be recorded.
 - One at a Time:** When the test is set to display one item at a time, the **Save Answer** button will be available for each question. Save your response to proceed. The system will prompt you to confirm that you wish to submit your response. If **'Yes'**, your answer will be submitted, and the next question displayed. If **'No'**, you will have the chance to modify and resubmit your answer.

If backtracking is permitted, you can use the **forward** or **backward arrows** to navigate to adjacent questions at any time. If backtracking is prohibited, you can only move forward one question at a time.

Clicking the **double-back arrow** will take you to the first question; clicking the **double-forward arrow**, will skip to the last question. If you are running out of time, you may need to click the double-forward arrow to reach the end and **Submit** the test before the time expires. However, if the test is set to **Force Submission**, your test will automatically be submitted once the time limit expires.

4. Do not use the **Back, Forward, or Refresh buttons** on the browser, or **Backspace** on the keyboard while taking the test.
5. Pace yourself and **keep track of time**. Blackboard times out after 3 hours of inactivity. Your Internet Service Provider might time out sooner if no activity is detected. Save your answers frequently to reset the inactivity clock. **Saving will not reset the allotted time for the test.**

Blackboard will display a warning 1 minute before the time limit expires, but your browser settings may prevent this warning from appearing. If the test is timed, the clock will start from the time the test is launched; it will not stop if you are disconnected or save the test to resume the same attempt later.

6. Most instructors set a limit (“window”) when the test is available to students. After the window expires, you will not be able to access the test. **Only instructors can extend the test window**; contact them if you need additional time to complete your test.
7. **Do not resize the browser**; resizing should be done before starting the test.
8. Do not open a new web browser window while taking the test; this could reload the assessment, and deny you access if only one attempt is allowed. The current Attempt may be counted as completed when **Multiple Attempts** are allowed, and **Force Completion** is enforced.
9. Do not navigate to any Course menu links such as 'Announcements' while taking the test. This could cause an incomplete attempt to be submitted.
10. Type each answer to essay questions in Notepad, Wordpad, or Textpad rather than MS Word. Ms Word contains ‘hidden formatting’ that may interfere with the way your document is displayed in Blackboard. Save the essay as a backup copy. Copy/Paste document into Blackboard.
11. **Prepare for the unexpected:** If a dialog box stating, **“The application’s digital signature has been verified. Do you want to run the application?”**, click **Run**. Among other things, this will allow you to use Blackboard’s Visual Text Box editor, the text area into which you can type.

[After Completing an Online Test](#)

1. Submit:

Click the **Save and Submit button once** when the test is completed. **Do not press “Enter”** on the keyboard in place of clicking **“Submit”**. The system will not record any score if the test is not submitted. If the submission was successful, the system will display a confirmation. Clicking Save and Continue button does not submit the test.

While the submission is in progress, **do not hit the Submit button again** or the Return/Enter key.


2. Confirm your Submission:


If you received confirmation, your score was recorded successfully (unless some items need grading manually by the instructor).

If you do not receive confirmation, go back to the area where the test was posted, locate the test link and click it. Blackboard will display a message about the status of your test submission.

3. Check your Grade:

The default location for checking grades is **My Grades** located under **Tools**.

If you see a grade score for your test or an exclamation point icon () , then the submission was successful. This icon means that the instructor needs to grade some items, or, you exceeded the allotted time. Instructors may penalize submissions that exceed the time limit. Your score will be manually entered by the instructor.

If you see an Attempt in Progress icon () after submitting a test, contact the instructor immediately. **Only the instructor can reset (or authorize resetting of) a test.** Make note of the error messages, time, and activity that might have prevented a successful submission.